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Preacher's Magazine Volume 66 Number 01

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Denny, Randal E. (Editor), "Preacher's Magazine Volume 66 Number 01" (1990). *Preacher's Magazine*. 609.
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SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER/NOVEMBER/1990

THE Preacher's MAGAZINE

EXCITEMENT ABOUT EXPOSITORY PREACHING

THE PASTOR AND THE ALCOHOLIC

THE SEDUCTIVE PARISHIONER

WAITING IN PRAYER

ANOTHER LOOK AT CHRISTIAN PERFECTION

MY MISSION

I am a nobody
Telling everybody
There is Somebody
Who can save
anybody.

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Church—Our Extended Family

by Randal Denny
Spokane, Wash.

Inscribed on the porch of a parish church outside London are these words:

To all who are weary and seek rest;
To all who mourn and long for comfort;
To all who struggle and desire victory;
To all who sin and need a Saviour;
To all who are idle and look for service;
To all who are strangers and want fellowship;
To all who hunger and thirst after righteousness;
And to whomsoever will come:
This church has opened wide her doors and, in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, says to all of you,
Welcome!

That inscription belongs over the door of my church as well. Today I am finishing my pastor's report to the congregation and to the district assembly. I have been reflecting on the church—that volunteer, redeemed family of God. Born as an only, lonely child, I have inherited a wonderful family—the church. The church has wrapped around me in love and support and encouragement like a big family. My people give me a sense of belonging. My goal is that no one will feel out of place among us as we gather at the feet of Jesus.

I have a dream for my church family:

1. That we glorify God in praise and obedience.
2. That we have an eager hunger to know the Bible as God's Love Letter to our world.
3. That we indeed love one another as Jesus models for us.
4. That we accept everyone as significant because Jesus died for each one.
5. That we encourage one another in spiritual growth by a balanced participation in celebration, class, and cell—public worship, Sunday School classes, and small-group discipleship units.
6. That we be true to our mission: "To make disciples of Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit and to exercise God-given spiritual gifts for building up the body of Christ."

How do we accomplish our mission?

1. We must encourage one another to make conversation with God a way of life.
2. We must practice the prayer of intercession.
3. We must train our people in how to lead someone to Jesus Christ.
4. We must be sensitive to and dependent upon the power of the Holy Spirit.
5. We must give our people opportunity to serve others and make full use of their spiritual gifts.
6. We must be Christ-centered by learning to obey and teach "everything I have commanded you," as Jesus said (Matt. 28:20).

I cut out an advertisement for church steeples from a religious magazine. The advertisement had emblazoned in big letters: "THE CROWNING GLORY OF YOUR CHURCH." But the glory of the church is *never* in steeples or buildings or preachers or musicians or programs. It is in the reflected glory of Jesus, who said, "Love one another. . . . All men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another" (John 13:34-35).

Even church families have problems in an atmosphere of love. Dr. Walt Lanman, our district superintendent, read the following lines at a preachers' meeting:

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THE Preacher's MAGAZINE

Volume 66 Number 1
September/October/November 1990

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The Preacher's Magazine is published quarterly by Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 2923 Troost Ave., Kansas City, MO 64109. Editorial offices at 6401 The Paseo, Kansas City, MO 64131. Address all correspondence concerning subscriptions to your denominational publishing house. Subscription price: $7.50 per year. Copyright 1990 by Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City. Litho in U.S.A.

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EDITORIAL

CHURCH— OUR EXTENDED FAMILY

(Continued from page 1)

Live churches have parking problems; dead churches don't.

Live churches change methods; dead churches don't.

Live churches have lots of noisy youth; dead churches don't.

Live churches evangelize; dead churches don't.

Live churches are deficient on workers; dead churches have surplus.

Live churches move out on faith; dead churches operate totally on sight.

Live churches' expenses exceed their income; dead churches take in more than they spend.

Live churches are filled with tithers; dead churches with tippers.

Live churches grow so fast you forget people's names; in dead churches everybody knows everybody's name—for years.

Live churches support missions enthusiastically; dead churches care only for themselves.

I'm glad for problems—even within the church family!

An appropriate prayer for any church comes from the doorway of the old rectory at Crowhurst, Sussex, England: "O God, Make the door of this house wide enough to receive all who need human love and fellowship, narrow enough to shut out all envy, pride, and strife. Make its threshold smooth enough to be no stumbling block, but rugged and strong enough to turn back the tempter's power. God, make the door to this house the gateway to Thine eternal kingdom, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen."

I Believe in Preaching

by Brook Thelander

I have a confession to make. I'm in love. I don't recall exactly how it happened. It wasn't all at once, though. It occurred subtly, working into my subconscious like termites eating their way into an old wooden house. The surface appeared undisturbed, but major structural changes were occurring underneath.

Now I want to get it into the open: I am consumed with the art of preaching.

This newfound relationship is not exempt from work and discipline, however. Pulpit supply experiences and weekend revivals during college days taught me that preaching is a difficult undertaking at best. Discerning and articulating God's Word for the urgent needs of persons means challenge. What minister has not felt with Clyde Fant that although God's Word is never irrelevant, his preaching is?[1] What preacher has never seriously questioned the decision to be a herald of God's mysteries? Between my own feeble efforts at preaching and the abuse I've suffered at the hands of other pulpiteers, I might conclude the evidence sufficiently warrants giving up on it altogether.

In spite of some legitimate criticisms, however, I remain convinced that while preaching may be difficult, it is not impossible. And the more time I spend in the "laboratory" setting, the warmer my love affair with proclamation grows, strengthening my desire to preach well.

I cannot write from the perspective of someone else's experience, only my own; but hopefully I *can* share practical insight. My desire is to help preachers examine *why* we preach, renewing motivation to minister effectively. So when asked, "Why *do* you believe in preaching?" I offer these affirmations.

First, preaching possesses a strong theological flavor. Sermons help form concepts of God, man, sin, grace, salvation, and the other great biblical themes. The preacher helps people see the relationship to biblical truth and the world in which they live. He continues the conversation of the biblical text into the present and future,[2] so that the distance between 1st-century Jerusalem and 20th-century New York can be negotiated with less difficulty.

Technique may make us orators, but theology shapes preachers.[3] Every preacher is a biblical theologian, teaching scriptural truth through the sermon. A great deal is at stake.

At the same time, theological communication in preaching includes more than content alone. *Form* as well as *content* must be a matter of conviction. Fred Craddock rightly insists that the preacher who goes to the Bible in search of *what* to preach, without lingering long enough to learn *how* to preach, has not remained within its sacred pages long enough.[4] In fact, *how* one preaches can often be a truer expression of theology than the actual content of the sermon. Some preachers turn the gospel into "bad news," contradicting the message of hope through harsh, bitter proclamation. Others bring healing through positive sharing of the Good News. In both cases, sermons are theological statements that convey a genuine view of the ministry.

Second, preaching commends itself because it is the primary way God builds the Church. The contemporary argument by some that modern preaching is obsolete does not corroborate biblical testimony. Beginning with Moses and continuing with the prophets, the greatest story ever told boasts a rich history in its telling. The retelling of the story by Jesus and the apostles lends further significance to this proven method of communication. Jesus, the greatest preacher, witnessed to His listeners the incarnate truth, and the kingdom of God came alive within them.

The apostle Paul also defended preaching, arguing its relevance convincingly. His assertion in Romans 10 that "faith comes from hearing" (v. 17) necessarily implies something proclaimed, for he asks, "and how shall they hear without a preacher?" (v. 14, KJV).

In another instance he charges Timothy to "preach the Word" in season as well as out of season (2 Tim. 4:2), implying that the proclamation of the gospel is never out of vogue, but always appropriate.

Yet the centrality of preaching is easily overlooked in our age of ministry specialization. But if preaching is God's primary method of building His Church, the dominant priority of the pastor should be his ministry of the Word of God. As vital as the growing specializations of ministry are (e.g., counseling, Christian education, youth, outreach), the church still grows primarily on the nourishment of the preached Word.

Third, God transforms people through the ministry of preaching. My life was touched through hearing the Good News, and anointed proclamation stirs my soul even today. As one writer says, good preaching supplies Christ with feet and a mouth, so that He comes to those who have assembled to listen.[5] The teenage Spurgeon dropped into a little church on a stormy day and heard a sermon titled "Look and Live." That message got through to him, and Christ transformed his life!

This human transforming power of preaching astounds me. When God, cooperating with finite, fallible instruments, changes people, I marvel anew at the "foolishness of preaching" (1 Cor. 1:21, KJV). My amazement intensifies when people remember my strangest sermons. Messages weak and powerless to me

(Continued on page 6)

Excitement About Expository Preaching

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

I am increasingly excited about preaching expository messages. This has not always been so. For a quarter of a century, I have preached mainly topical sermons. Nevertheless, I am now discovering the adventure of preaching expositionally on a continuing basis.

Expository preaching is one answer to the dryness that inflicts much of Protestant preaching. How can a careful exposition bring new life to the pulpit?

1. Exposition focuses on a *new passage* with each new sermon. The divine insights within those passages yield their own variety. For example, while preaching from 2 Corinthians, I marveled at the different dimensions of truth that Paul covered from chapter to chapter. Many of those truths the apostle assented had never really been dealt with properly in any one of my sermons over the years. Expository preaching took care of that weakness.

2. Exposition *delves deeply.* A superficial reading of one biblical chapter revealed little worth in the way of sermonic development. However, when lingering with that chapter for 15 to 20 minutes, I found that each verse contained so much material worth sharing that it took a sensitive winnowing of the details to keep the overall accent in balance. It ended up that there was plenty of data to work with, much of it enticing for an in-depth exploration.

3. Exposition suggests more *powerful delivery* in preaching. Because there is so much attention given to the actual Word rather than detours into personal opinion giving or of "cute" stories, the preacher senses within his own soul the power of the divine communication. That is, he deals with eternal material that begs for the telling.

Consequently, when actually delivering the message, the preacher can feel the drive within himself to proclaim. There is an urgency to get out the truth.

There is a real need for sensible proclamation from the pulpit today. Therefore, when the preacher saturates himself with the biblical truth in sermon preparation, that dynamo in turn grips the congregation because of the pastor's own increased conviction. The result is one message after another that is the bold proclamation of the gospel.

4. Exposition yields a *biblically literate laity.* When I preached topical sermons, the congregation usually closed their Bibles after the scripture passage was read from the pulpit. However, now that I preach mainly expository sermons, the laymen keep their Bibles open throughout the entire message. I even provide them with a brief outline of the sermon, printed in the bulletin. Before the sermon begins, I invite the hearers to keep their Bibles open with the outline alongside the passage so that they can follow me verse-by-verse throughout the preaching.

Over time, there will be a certain percentage of laymen who will keep those printed outlines as personal study guidelines. As the expositions increase, their knowledge of specific passages will deepen.

5. Exposition *brings out color* in the sermons. Over the years I was finding myself using familiar phrases and thought concepts that were becoming too frequent. However, when I moved into expository preaching, I was forced to create other communication patterns in order to make a point of truth. Likewise, I was compelled to be more imaginative in tying in illustrative material to amplify the passage.

Because new accents were being uncovered in the variety of biblical sections dealt with, new ways of carving out those accents became delightfully necessary.

6. Exposition keeps the *adventure of sermon preparation growing.* As years pass, it is not uncommon for the preacher to become weary regarding the next Sunday's sermons. What is there that is new? How can he say the old, old story in new language? Consequently many preachers—often without realizing it—begin to drag; the momentum slows down. Therefore, a verbal doodling takes place from service to service when it comes to the delivery of those sermons.

Preaching expositionally, however, keeps the sermonic study hours alive. Each new biblical section contains its own life force. Therefore, when researching that section afresh, one comes upon brand-new treasures that have never been unearthed before. In the discovering, then, is the vibrancy, the desire to get back into that pulpit to speak once again concerning the wonder of God.

For the minister to live at his best, he needs to stay close to the Word, especially in the sermon preparation segments of his workweek.

7. Exposition actually cuts out wasted time; it makes for *more efficient use of sermon research.* Instead of procrastinating preparing the next Sunday's sermons, expository preaching entices the preacher to begin early in the week. The reason? He knows that he is going to come to biblical material that abounds, waiting for the molding into a sermon. The preacher is not left trying to scout around for some new brainstorm, some clever innovation to keep the people awake for another service.

Every minister knows about "the panic." It is the tremor that takes hold when nearing Sunday and there is still no message on the burner. Usually this occurs because the pastor has run out of sermon themes; nothing baits his imagination. The temptation may then be to resort to service entertainments to replace

sermons or fill up the worship time with an increase in liturgy in order to abbreviate the time allotted for the message.

However, when the pastor comes faithfully to the Bible with the purpose of coming upon new material from a selected passage, he will conclude that he can uncover plenty of alluring content for still another sermon in efficient order.

8. Exposition *lifts the Word* into its central priority. Laymen over a period of time will then come to know whether or not the pastor enjoys his own preaching. If he doesn't, the message will probably get the intentional shuffle. That is, it will be wedged in a little here and there, eventually treated as some necessary evil.

Does an earnest pastor actually want this? Does he really want a shallow people, basically ignorant concerning the faith? Certainly not! The genuine minister of the gospel desires a zealous people, totally committed to the Scriptures.

Expository preaching will keep the listeners close to the Word because the Bible will have been elevated to its lofty place within the worship itself. The Book will have received the honor due it, particularly under the leadership of the person behind the pulpit.

9. Exposition cuts through criticism from those who would complain that the preacher is doing nothing more than peddling his own pet peeves or personal tirades. Expository preaching keeps the preacher under *the integrity of God's Word.* Whatever is chiefly preached during the sermons is straight out of the Book. When the pastor does that, he becomes a new person in Christ—afresh for each week's duties. The people then pick up on that so that the sincere ones grow into that same aliveness. They make connection with the divine integrity.

There is a real need for sensible proclamation from the pulpit today.

Continued diets of even the preacher's wise opinions are not enough for a congregation's spiritual growth. The same can be said for constant "specials"—visiting musical groups, gospel films, and the like. Finally, humanity thirsts for the water from God's well. And that supply flows from His Word.

10. Exposition makes for *continuity* with both pastor and laity. I have discovered that preaching from one of Paul's letters or straight through one of the Gospels brings a healthy cohesiveness to the congregation. It keeps us in step together. There is not the lostness in thought that frequently comes to a listening body over the months when they are segmented by each new sermonic theme.

Furthermore, when informing the congregation of the Bible book to be dealt with in future sermons, listeners may even find it convenient to use those same passages for their own personal devotional readings. Naturally, this lends its own depth.

11. Exposition grows its own fruit of *spiritual growth within the preacher.* The preacher will naturally realize the deepening in his own soul because of spending more time in the Bible, not only in his daily quiet renewing but also in those sermon preparation hours.

The Word simply works its own harvest when given the chance. Too many times, however, we preachers are caught up in other things: community meetings, driving about town on errands, talking on the phone, arranging the weekly newsletter and bulletin. Consequently, we experience that awful lack. How can we beat it?

One way is to commit ourselves to disciplined expository preaching. The determination to carve more biblical messages because of giving more attention to the Book will be blessed of the Lord in ways beyond our expectations.

I Believe in Preaching *(Continued from page 4)*

find a way of lodging permanently in memory banks. Like small flowers sprouting through the cracks of a sidewalk, they are reminders that ultimately preaching is God's work. I'm merely the earthen vessel and cannot own the credit for the treasure. As Martin Copenhaver points out, "A wick does not take credit for a flame, any more than a cello accepts praise for a sonata."[6] The dynamic life of the gospel transcends any feeble attempt to proclaim it. The Holy Spirit, energizing frail efforts, communicates God's truth.

Preachers, *why* do we proclaim the gospel? Is preaching a peripheral exercise habitually done for the sake of tradition? Is it simply a nice amenity you provide your community? Or is it God's chief vehicle for changing your world?

We preach because the pulpit is a place of eternal significance to those who listen. We preach with theological conviction, knowing that ultimately right living is a by-product of right thinking. We preach because God builds His kingdom through the ministry of the Word, the task consistently requiring the most expertise. And we preach because God uses our proclamation, changing hearts. What motivation! Working with God, the transformation of human history remains the greatest calling possible! That's why I am in love with preaching.

NOTES

1. Clyde E. Fant, *Preaching for Today* (New York: Harper and Row, 1975), 41.
2. Fred B. Craddock, *Preaching* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1985), 27.
3. John Stott, *Between Two Worlds* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1982), 92.
4. Craddock, 16.
5. Stott, 108.
6. Martin B. Copenhaver, "The Word Gets Around," *The Christian Ministry* 16, no. 3:34.

COME BEFORE WINTER

by Clarence Edward Macartney

EDITORIAL NOTE:
Dr Macartney built his evening services by significant preaching. This sermon was preached in 1915 and roused such interest among students and people of the city that he preached it annually for 40 years. He said, "It is the best-known sermon that I have ever preached."

*"Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me. . . . Do thy diligence to come before winter" (2 Tim. 4:9, 21, KJV).**

Napoleon Bonaparte and the apostle Paul are the most renowned prisoners of history. One was in prison because the peace of the world demanded it; the other because he sought to give to men that peace that the world cannot give and that the world cannot take away. One had the recollection of cities and homes that he had wasted and devastated; the other had the recollection of homes and cities and nations that had been blessed by his presence and cheered by his message. One had shed rivers of blood upon which to float his ambitions. The only blood the other had shed was that which had flowed from his own wounds for Christ's sake. One could trace his path to glory by ghastly trails of the dead that stretched from the Pyrenees to Moscow and from the Pyramids to Mount Tabor. The other could trace his path to prison, death, and immortal glory by the hearts that he had loved and the souls that he had gathered into the kingdom of God.

Napoleon once said, "I love nobody, not even my own brothers." It is not strange, therefore, that at the end of his life, on his rock prison in the South Atlantic, he said, "I wonder if there is anyone in the world who really loves me." But Paul loved all men. His heart was the heart of the world, and from his lonely prison at Rome he sent out messages that glow with love unquenchable and throb with fadeless hope.

When a man enters the straits of life, he is fortunate if he has a few friends upon whom he can count to the uttermost. Paul had three such friends. The first of these three, whose name needs no mention, was that One who would be the Friend of every man, the Friend who laid down His life for us all. The second was that man whose face is almost the first, and almost the last, we see in life—the physician. This friend Paul handed down to immortality with that imperishable encomium, "Luke, the beloved physician," and again, "Only Luke is with me."

The third of these friends was the Lycaonian youth Timothy, half Hebrew and half Greek, whom Paul affectionately called "my son in the faith." When Paul had been stoned by the mob at Lystra in the highlands of Asia Minor and was dragged out of the city gates and left for dead, perhaps it was Timothy who, when the night had come down, and the passions of the mob had subsided, went out of the city gates to search amid stones and rubbish until he found the wounded, bleeding body of Paul and, putting his arm about the apostle's neck, wiped the bloodstains from his face, poured the cordial down his lips, and then took him home to the house of his godly grandmother, Lois, and his pious mother, Eunice. If you form a friendship in a shipwreck, you never forget the friend. The hammer of adversity welds human hearts into an indissoluble amalgamation. Paul and Timothy each had in the other a friend who was born for adversity.

Paul's last letter is to this dearest of his friends, Timothy, whom he has left in charge of the church at far-off Ephesus. He tells Timothy that he wants him to come and be with him at Rome. He is to stop at Troas on the way and pick up his books, for Paul is a scholar even to the end. Make friends with good books. They will never leave you nor forsake you. He is to bring the cloak, too, which Paul had left at the house of Carpus, in Troas. What a robe the Church would weave for Paul today if it had that opportunity! But this is the only robe that Paul possesses. It has been wet with the brine of the Mediterranean, white with the snows of Galatia, yellow with the dust of the Egnatian Way, and crimson with the blood of his wounds for the sake of Christ. It is getting cold at Rome, for the summer is waning, and Paul wants his robe to keep him warm. But most of all Paul wants Timothy to bring himself. "Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me," he writes; and then, just before the close of the letter, he says, "Do thy diligence to come before winter."

Why "before winter"? Because when winter set in, the season for navigation closed in the Mediterranean, and it was dangerous for ships to venture out to sea. How dangerous it was, the story of Paul's last shipwreck tells us. If Timothy waits until winter, he will have to wait until spring; and Paul has a premonition that he will not last out the winter, for he says, "The time of my departure is at hand." We like to think that Timothy did not wait a single day after that letter from Paul reached him at Ephesus, but started at once to Troas, where he picked up the books and the old cloak in the house of Carpus, then sailed past Samothrace to Neapolis, and thence

*In this article, all Scripture quotations are from the King James Version.

traveled by the Egnatian Way across the plains of Philippi and through Macedonia to the Adriatic, where he took ship to Brundisium, and then went up the Appian Way to Rome, where he found Paul in his prison, read to him from the Old Testament, wrote his last letters, walked with him to the place of execution near the Pyramid of Cestius, and saw him receive the crown of glory.

Before winter or never! There are some things that will never be done unless they are done "before winter." The winter will come and the winter will pass, and the flowers of the springtime will deck the breast of the earth, and the graves of some of our opportunities, perhaps the grave of our dearest friend. There are golden gates wide open on this autumn day, but next October they will be forever shut. There are tides of opportunity running now at the flood. Next October they will be at the ebb. There are voices speaking today that a year from today will be silent. Before winter or never!

Voices speak today that a year from today will be silent.

I like all seasons. I like winter with its clear, cold nights and the stars like silver-headed nails driven into the vault of heaven. I like spring with its green growth, its flowing streams, its revirescent hope. I like summer with the litany of gentle winds in the tops of the trees, its long evenings, and the songs of its birds. But best of all I like autumn. I like its mist and hazel, its cool morning air, its field strewn with the blue aster and the goldenrod; the radiant livery of the forests —"yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic red."

But how quickly the autumn passes! It is the perfect parable of all that fades. Yesterday I saw the forests in all their splendor, and Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But tomorrow the rain will fall, the winds will blow, and the trees will be stripped and barren. Therefore, every returning autumn brings home to me the sense of the preciousness of life's opportunities —their beauty but also their brevity. It fills me with the desire to say not merely something about the way that leads to life eternal but, with the help of God, something that shall move men to take the way of life *now,* today. Taking our suggestion, then, from this message of Paul in the prison at Rome to Timothy in far-off Ephesus—"Come before winter"—let us listen to some of those voices that now are speaking so earnestly to us and that a year from today may be forever silent.

THE VOICE THAT CALLS FOR THE AMENDMENT AND THE REFORMATION OF CHARACTER

Your character can be amended and improved, but not at just any time. There are favorable seasons. In the town of my boyhood I delighted to watch on a winter's night the streams of molten metal writhing and twisting like lost spirits as they poured from the furnaces of the wire mill. Before the furnace doors stood men in leathern aprons, with iron tongs in their hands, ready to seize the fiery coils and direct them to the molds. But if the iron was permitted to cool below a certain temperature, it refused the mold. There are times when life's metal is, as it were, molten and can be worked into any design that is desired. But if it is permitted to cool, it tends toward a state of fixation, in which it is possible neither to do nor even to plan a good work. When the angel came down to trouble the pool at Jerusalem, then was the time for the sick to step in and be healed. There are moments when the pool of life is troubled by the angel of opportunity. Then a man, if he will, can go down and be made whole; but if he waits until the waters are still, it is too late.

A man who had been under the bondage of an evil habit relates how one night, sitting in his room in a hotel, he was assailed by his old enemy, his besetting sin, and was about to yield to it. He was reaching out his hand to ring the bell for a waiter, when suddenly, as if an angel stood before him, a voice seemed to say, "This is your hour. If you yield to this temptation now, it will destroy you. If you conquer it now, you are its master forever." He obeyed the angel's voice, refused the tempter, and came off victorious over his enemy.

That man was not unique in his experience, for to many a man there comes the hour when destiny knocks at his door, and the angel waits to see whether he will obey him or reject him. These are precious and critical moments in the history of the soul. In your life there may be that which you know to be wrong and sinful. In His mercy God has awakened conscience or has flooded your heart with a sudden wave of contrition and sorrow. This is the hour of opportunity, for now chains of evil habit can be broken, which, if not broken, will bind us forever. Now golden goals can be chosen and decisions made that shall affect our destiny forever.

We like to quote those fine lines of the late Senator John J. Ingalls:

Master of human destinies am I!
Fame, love, and fortune on my footsteps wait.
Cities and fields I walk; I penetrate
Deserts and fields remote, and, passing by
Hovel and mart and palace, soon or late,
I knock unbidden once at every gate!

To many a man there comes the hour when destiny knocks at his door.

If sleeping, wake; if feasting, rise before
I turn away. It is the hour of fate.
And they who follow me reach every state
Mortals desire, and conquer every foe
Save death; but those who doubt or hesitate,
Condemned to failure, penury or woe,
Seek me in vain and uselessly implore—
I answer not, and I return no more.

We all recognize the truth of this in the things of this world, but in a far more solemn way it is true of the opportunities of our spiritual life. You can build a bonfire anytime you please; but the fine fire of the Spirit, that is a different thing. God has His moment!

We cannot kindle when we will
The fire that in the heart resides.
The Spirit bloweth and is still;
In mystery the soul abides.

THE VOICE OF FRIENDSHIP AND AFFECTION

Suppose that Timothy, when he received that letter from Paul asking him to come before winter, had said to himself, "Yes, I shall start for Rome; but first of all I must clear up some matters here at Ephesus, and then go down to Miletus to ordain elders there, and thence over to Colossae to celebrate the Communion there." When he has attended to these matters, he starts for Troas, and there inquires when he can get a ship that will carry him across the Macedonia, and thence to Italy, or one that is sailing around Greece into the Mediterranean. He is told that the season for navigation is over and that no vessels will sail till springtime. "No ships for Italy till April!"

All through that anxious winter we can imagine Timothy reproaching himself that he did not go at once when he received Paul's letter, wondering how it fares with the apostle. When the first vessel sails in the springtime, Timothy is a passenger on it. I can see him landing at Neapolis, or Brundisium, and hurrying up to Rome. There he seeks out Paul's prison, only to be cursed and repulsed by the guard. Then he goes to the house of Claudia, or Pudens, or Narcissus, or Mary, or Ampliatus, and asks where he can find Paul. I can hear them say: "And are you Timothy? Don't you know that Paul was beheaded last December? Every time the jailer put the key in the door of his cell, Paul thought you were coming. His last message was for you, 'Give my love to Timothy, my beloved son in the faith, when he comes.'" How Timothy then must have wished that he had come before winter!

Before winter or never! "The poor always ye have with you; but me ye have not always," said Jesus when the disciples complained that Mary's costly and beautiful gift of ointment might have been expended in behalf of the poor. "Me ye have not always." That is true of all the friends we love. We cannot name them now, but next winter we shall know their names. With them, as far as our ministry is concerned, it is before winter or never.

In the Old Abbey Kirk at Haddington one can read over the grave of Jane Welsh the first of many pathetic and regretful tributes paid by Thomas Carlyle to his neglected wife:

The Holy Spirit, when He invites men to come to Christ, never says, "Tomorrow."

"For 40 years she was a true and loving helpmate of her husband, and by act and word worthily forwarded him as none else could in all worthy he did or attempted. She died at London the 21st of April, 1866, suddenly snatched from him, and the light of his life as if gone out." It has been said that the saddest sentence in English literature is that sentence written by Carlyle in his diary, "Oh, that I had you yet for five minutes by my side, that I might tell you all." Hear, then, careless soul, who are dealing with loved ones as if thou wouldst have them always with thee, these solemn words of warning from Carlyle: "Cherish what is dearest while you have it near you, and wait not till it is far away. Blind and deaf that we are, O think, if thou yet love anybody living, wait not till death sweep down the paltry little dust clouds and dissonances of the moment, and all be made at last so mournfully clear and beautiful, when it is too late."

On one of the early occasions when I preached on this text in Philadelphia, there was present at the service a student in the Jefferson Medical College, Dr. Arnot Walker, New Galilee, Pa. When the service was over, he went back to his room on Arch Street, where the text kept repeating itself in his mind, "Come before winter." Perhaps, he thought to himself, I had better write a letter to my mother. He sat down and wrote a letter such as a mother delights to receive from her son. He took the letter down the street, dropped it in the mailbox, and returned to his room. The next day in the midst of his studies a telegram was placed in his hand. Tearing it open, he read these words: "Come home at once. Your mother is dying." He took the train that night for Pittsburgh, and then another train to the town near the farm where his home was. Arriving at the town, he was driven to the farm and, hurrying up the stairs, found his mother still living, with a smile of recognition and satisfaction on her face—the smile that, if a man has once seen, he can never forget, till

. . . with the morn those angel faces smile;
Which I have loved long since and lost awhile!

Under her pillow was the letter he had written her after the Sunday night service, her viaticum and heartsease as she went down into the River. The next time he met me in Philadelphia he said, "I am glad you preached that sermon, 'Come Before Winter.'" Not a few have been glad because this sermon was preached. Let us pray that it shall move others to do that which shall make their hearts glad in the years to come.

Twice coming to the sleeping disciples whom He had asked to watch with Him in the Garden of Gethsemane, Christ awakened them and said with sad surprise, "What, could ye not watch with me one hour?" When He came the third time and found them sleeping, he looked sadly down upon them and said, "Sleep on now, and take your rest." One of those 3, James, was the first of the 12 apostles to die for Christ and seal his faith with his heart's blood. Another, John, was to suffer imprisonment for the sake of Christ on the isle that is called Patmos. And Peter was to be crucified for His sake. But never again could those 3 sleeping disciples ever watch with Jesus in

His hour of agony. That opportunity was gone forever!

You say, when you hear that a friend has gone, "Why, it cannot be possible! I saw him only yesterday on the corner of Smithfield and Sixth Avenue!" Yes, you saw him there yesterday, but you will never see him there again. You say you intended to do this thing, to speak this word of appreciation or amendment, or show this act of kindness; but now the vacant chair, the unlifted book, the empty place will speak to you with a reproach that your heart can hardly endure, "Sleep on now, and take your rest! Sleep! Sleep! Sleep forever!"

THE VOICE OF CHRIST

More eager, more wistful, more tender than any other voice is the voice of Christ that now I hear calling men to come to Him, and to come before winter. I wish I had been there when Christ called His disciples, Andrew and Peter, and James and John, by the Sea of Galilee, or Matthew as he was sitting at the receipt of custom. There must have been a note not only of love and authority but of immediacy and urgency in His voice, for we read that they "left all and followed him."

The greatest subject that can engage the mind and attention of man is eternal life. Hence the Holy Spirit, when He invites men to come to Christ, never says, "Tomorrow," but always, "Today." If you can find me one place in the Bible where the Holy Spirit says, "Believe in Christ tomorrow." or "Repent and be saved tomorrow," I will come down out of the pulpit and stay out of it—for I would have no gospel to preach. But the Spirit always says, "Today," never "Tomorrow." *"Now* is the accepted time." *"Now* is the day of salvation." "Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts." "While it is called Today."

The reason for this urgency is twofold. First, the uncertainty of human life. A long time ago, David, in his last interview with Jonathan, said, "As thy soul liveth, there is but a step between me and death." That is true of every one of us. But a step! What shadows we are, and what shadows we pursue! An old rabbi used to say to his people, "Repent the day before you die."

"But," they said to him, "Rabbi, we know not the day of our death."

"Then," he answered, "repent today." Come before winter!

The second reason why Christ, when He calls a man, always says Today, and never Tomorrow, is that tomorrow the disposition of a man's heart may have changed. There is a time to plant, and a time to reap. The heart, like the soul, has its favorable seasons.

"Speak to my brother now! His heart is tender now!" a man once said to me concerning his brother, who was not a believer. Today a man may hear this sermon and be interested, impressed, almost persuaded, ready to take his stand for Christ and enter into eternal life. But he postpones his decision and says, "Not tonight, but tomorrow." A week hence, a month hence, a year hence, he may come back and hear the same call to repentance and to faith. But it has absolutely no effect upon him, for his heart is as cold as marble, and the preacher might as well preach to a stone or scatter seed on the marble pavement below this pulpit. Oh, if the story of this one church could be told, if the stone should cry out of the wall and the beam out of the timber should answer, what a story they could tell of those who once were almost persuaded but who now are far from the kingdom of God. Christ said, Today! They answered, Tomorrow!

Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow,

. . . . . .

And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
The way to dusty death.

Once again, then, I repeat these words of the apostle, "Come before winter"; and as I pronounce them, common sense, experience, conscience, Scripture, the Holy Spirit, the souls of just men made perfect, and the Lord Jesus Christ all repeat with me, "Come before winter!" Come before the haze of Indian summer has faded from the fields! Come before the November wind strips the leaves from the trees and sends them whirling over the fields! Come before the snow lies on the uplands and the meadow brook is turned to ice! Come before the heart is cold! Come before desire has failed! Come before life is over and your probation ended, and you stand before God to give an account of the use you have made of the opportunities that in His grace He has granted to you! Come before winter!

Come to thy God in time,
Youth, manhood, old age past;
Come to thy God at last.

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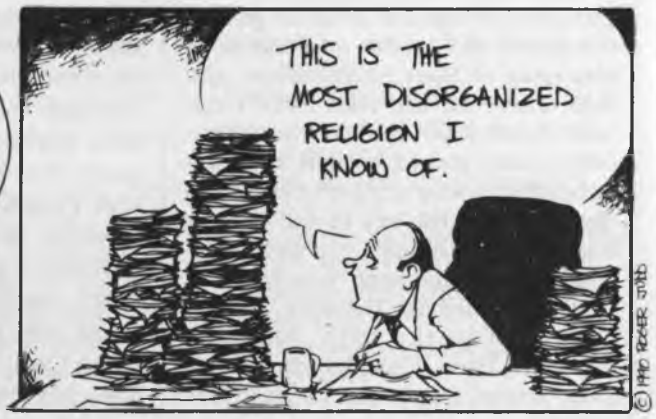
BEYOND BELIEF



WISDOM FOR OUR DAY

by Gordon J. Thomas
Manchester, England

Blessed is the man who finds wisdom (Prov. 3:13).

As we rake over the embers of the 1980s and brace ourselves for the triumphs and tragedies that may await us in this decade, we Christians naturally pause to ask: "Is there a word from the Lord? Does God have a word for us today that will serve as a lamp to our feet and a light to our path as we cross the threshold of another year?"

I am not a prophet nor the son of a prophet, and I have no pretensions of uttering the definitive word for the next 10 years. However, a verse of Scripture has come alive for me over the past year and has a bearing on a whole range of biblical, theological, and practical issues in our Christian lives.

In Prov. 3:13 we read this beatitude: "Blessed is the man who finds wisdom, the man who gains understanding." The writer then extols the virtues of wisdom as preferable to silver, gold, or rubies, alleges that wisdom leads to long life, honor, and peace, and rounds off the saying by declaring that "those who lay hold of her will be blessed" (v. 18).

"Blessed is the man who finds wisdom." That sounds good, but what does it mean? In the light of Scripture as a whole, I believe wisdom means at least three major things:

1. WISDOM IS A BODY OF KNOWLEDGE

Nearly every ancient Near Eastern culture contained a body of knowledge that the older generation felt should be transmitted to the younger generation in order to help youngsters follow the right pathway through life. In Egypt teachings of the wise mainly instructed young men on how to get along in Pharaoh's court. In Israel wisdom tradition was more interested in guiding a young person along the right moral and spiritual path through life, taking as its basic axiom: The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.

Jewish sages acknowledged God's revelation of himself through law and prophet but felt the need to take things further. In particular:

a. They sought to earth the great general principles of love and justice in the reality of everyday life under the sun.

b. They raised questions in areas where God had not yet uttered a definitive word:

—Why do the righteous suffer? (Job)

—Is there such a thing as judgment after death for people who get away with it in this life? (Ecclesiastes)

Deuteronomy catalogues the blessings for the obedient and the curses for the disobedient in the here and now. The wise men of Israel, weighing that against their experience of life, saw that a simple Deuteronomic health and wealth theology is insufficient as it stands. The righteous do not always prosper; the wicked do not always suffer. If the promises of Deuteronomy 28 are not to be falsified, they must be tempered by further teaching. Thus the doctrine of the life to come, with eternal rewards and punishments, gradually emerges to supplant the older Jewish belief in a shadowy end for all, good and bad alike, in the underworld of Sheol.

The Wisdom Tradition then was a body of knowledge in which the revealed truths of Law and Prophets were grounded in the practicalities of everyday life, as a result of sanctified reflection upon sacred revelation.

This body of knowledge was not meant to be rediscovered afresh by every individual but was part of a common spiritual heritage that each generation added to and passed on to the next. This ongoing process is portrayed in Prov. 4:1-5:

> Hear, O sons, a father's instruction, and be attentive, that you may gain insight; for I give you good precepts: do not forsake my teaching. When I was a son with my father, tender, the only one in the sight of my mother, he taught me, and said to me, "Let your heart hold fast my words; keep my commandments, and live; do not forget, and do not turn away from the words of my mouth. Get wisdom; get insight" *(RSV).*

We find a similar pattern throughout the New Testament. Christians do not discover the gospel by themselves. A body of knowledge is faithfully handed down. Although Paul had his own encounter with the risen Christ on the Damascus road, he still told the Corinthians: *"What I received I passed on to you* as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures" (1 Cor. 15:3, italics added).

What Paul received from the Jerusalem apostles, he passed on. He "enriched it with his own theological insights and ethical applications, and then he expected the process to be repeated ad infinitum. We hear him telling Timothy:

> The things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others *(2 Tim. 2:2).*

So we have a chain of transmission: Jesus→apostles→Paul→Timothy→faithful men→others.

"Blessed is the man who finds wisdom." He can learn by mistakes of others; he is not condemned to learn only from his own mistakes. "Blessed is the man who finds wisdom." He receives the baton in a relay race that has been in progress for centuries. He is not dependent merely on his own resources; he can tap into the

accumulated wisdom from generations of godly men, because wisdom, first, is a body of knowledge.

Application

In this decade of the 1990s, I anticipate that holiness churches will acquire an ever-deepening respect for the ancient traditions of the Christian Church—for creeds, for liturgies, for devotional writings of great saints of the past. If holiness churches wish to find wisdom in our growing up, we need to drink deep at the wells of our spiritual ancestors. Over the past 20 years I have observed a number of my Anglican friends discovering the joys of the Spirit-filled life and of lively, informal worship. I have also observed the opposite trend, with some of my Pentecostal friends discovering the riches of traditional Anglican worship. There isn't a reason in the world why the holiness movement cannot enjoy the best of both expressions of spirituality.

"Blessed is the man who finds wisdom." The first thing he finds is a body of knowledge.

2. WISDOM IS A BIPOLAR WAY OF THINKING

What is meant by "bipolar"? Bipolar is not too difficult to understand. Just imagine a bar magnet. From science courses at school you must surely remember that a magnet has a north pole (positive) at one end and a south pole (negative) at the other end, that one end of it attracts and the other end repels. To speak of magnetism, then, involves a bipolar way of thinking. It won't do to say that a magnet attracts. That's only half the truth. It won't do to say that a magnet repels. That is an equally misleading half-truth. Nor can we split the difference and say that the truth lies in the middle—that a magnet neither attracts nor repels. A wise Christian theology is essentially bipolar in structure, built around pairs of seemingly contradictory biblical texts.

In Deuteronomy 6 we find the foundational text: "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is *one*" (v. 4, italics added). Jesus includes within the Great Commission a command to baptize converts in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Matt. 28:19). For a Jew, the name is synonymous with the person. So a Christian is to be baptized into *three* Persons.

According to the Bible, God is One and God is Three. Two poles of truth! Let go of either pole, and you are a heretic. Split the difference, call God a pair, and you can found a new sect of your own. Our wise forebears held onto both truths and hammered out the mysterious, paradoxical, but orthodox doctrine of the Trinity, of God as Three in One.

Another example is the person of Christ. John 1:1 says the Word was God, and verse 14 that the Word became flesh. Was Jesus divine or human? Or was He half and half? Controversy raged over this in the Early Church until councils of church leaders were convened to thrash the matter out once and for all.

At a place called Chalcedon in the year A.D. 451, ancestors of the modern Eastern Orthodox church and those of the Western Catholic and Protestant churches agreed on a standard definition of the person of Christ. Listen to their words of wisdom:

> Therefore, following the holy Fathers, we all with one accord teach men to acknowledge one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, *at once complete in Godhead and complete in manhood, truly God and truly man . . . of one substance with the Father as regards his Godhead, and at the same time of one substance with us as regards his manhood;* like us in all respects apart from sin [italics added].

Wisdom tradition was grounded in practicalities of everyday life.

Here's the answer: not God only, not man only, and most definitely not some kind of hybrid, half-and-half, semidivine creature. Our Lord Jesus Christ is truly God and truly man—100 percent God, 100 percent man. Remember that next time you read the Gospels, and realize that this cardinal truth is also bipolar in structure.

Application

I wish to apply this thesis that wisdom is bipolar in structure to one of the topical issues of the moment: the downfall of communism in Eastern Europe. Can sound theology help us to interpret the signs of the times correctly? Or are theology and politics separate compartments?

I believe that the affairs of the nations, that is, global politics, should be viewed by Christians in the light of the doctrine of God's kingdom. This kingdom, this kingly rule of God, like the globe on which it is exercised, is essentially bipolar.

How? In Luke 11:20, Jesus defends himself against slander after casting out demons. He says that if He drives them out "by the finger of God [rather than by the power of Beelzebub], then the kingdom of God has come to you." His miracles prove that the kingdom of God, God's rule over evil, is a present reality. Strangely, though, earlier in the same chapter (v. 2), Jesus has been teaching His disciples in the Lord's Prayer to pray for the Kingdom to come (implying that it has not yet arrived). So in the same chapter we are given a bipolar concept of the Kingdom as *both present reality and future hope.*

I served as a missionary teacher in Swaziland in 1976 when Soweto went up in flames and refugees started pouring into Swaziland across the South African border. It had not been long since the Portuguese colonial empire had collapsed, and Mozambique and Angola had fallen under communist domination. My Nazarene missionary colleagues in Mozambique, Armand Doll and Hugh Friberg, were imprisoned by the new Frelimo government. Our mission stations were taken over and used to reeducate people in Marxist ideology. Some of our African pastors were beaten or killed.

As a way of keeping up my spirits, I read books by men like Haralan Popov and Richard Wurmbrand, who had endured years of imprisonment and torture in Bulgaria and Romania, respectively, for the sake of the gospel. My friend Richard Reynolds was teaching a series of Bible studies in his home on the Second Coming. All Nazarene missionary personnel had been warned to keep a suitcase packed and a tankful of petrol in case a sharp exit was required. This was a

directive I willfully ignored. If I'd packed my suitcase, I'd have had nothing left to wear. And a tankful of petrol isn't much good if you don't have a vehicle to put it in.

On my theological horizon I could foresee wars and rumors of wars, earthquakes, famines, a genocidal bloodbath in South Africa, and anarchy in Swaziland after the death of the old king. What could I do but prepare my students as well as possible to undergo great tribulation while we all awaited Armageddon? My eschatology, my view of the kingdom of God, in keeping with the political scenario I envisaged, was almost completely futuristic. I lost sight of the fact, or rather I'd never been taught properly, that the kingdom of God is also a present reality.

Now, 14 years later, I feel rather foolish. Swaziland has a stable constitutional monarchy, the gradual dismantling of apartheid in South Africa seems to be beginning, and so far from a communist empire enveloping the world, making war on the saints and ushering in Armageddon, 1989 witnessed the collapse of the Communist bloc. Unbelievably, in recent months we've seen Solidarity take power in Poland, peaceful revolutions in Hungary, East Germany, Czechoslovakia, and Bulgaria, and the bloody overthrow of the Ceausescu police state in Romania. God's kingly rule is becoming a present reality.

Am I now in danger of abandoning the future pole of Kingdom theology and putting all my eggs in the present basket? Will I be making another pendulum swing in my attitudes a decade hence? I don't think so.

Christians who believe in the authority of the Bible and the need for repentance and personal faith in Christ do not have a good track record where the kingdom of God is concerned. Evangelistic preaching from John the Baptist onwards has tended to write off contemporary society as doomed, to pin all hopes on the coming of Christ, and to enforce a strict separation from the world. In bipolar language, the future hope of the Kingdom has been grasped feverishly, but the concept of Kingdom as present reality has been abandoned at times.

In my judgment our holiness heritage has shared this lopsidedness to some extent. Too often we have understood salvation as the salvation of the soul alone and sanctification as withdrawal from society—especially from politics.

With all my heart I believe that we should focus much more on the manifestation of God's kingly rule in the here and now. In the 1990s we should be praying and, when possible, working for:

—the renewal of our inner cities
—the reformation of the penal system
—the defeat of terrorism
—the defeat of drug trafficking
—the prohibition of pornography on cable and satellite TV
—a reduction of the time limit for abortions
—an end to the sectarian hatred in Northern Ireland
—social justice in Latin America
—an end to tribal wars in black Africa
—reconciliation of the different factions in Lebanon
—an end to Israeli oppression of Palestine Arabs
—an end to the civil war in Sri Lanka
—deliverance from Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge for the Kampucheans
—democracy in China
—social and economic reform in the Philippines
—the preservation of the rain forests
—access to clean water and sufficient food for every man, woman, and child in the Third World
—a major commitment by the EEC, North America, Japan, and the Soviet Union to eradicate world poverty

Wisdom was not meant to be rediscovered afresh by every individual.

This world is God's creation, and it ought not to be written off simply because we hope for a better world to come. In the beginning God made mankind responsible for the stewardship of this world by giving him dominion over it, and we are still responsible for it. As stewards we are obligated to strive to ensure that our Master's will is done on earth as it is in heaven. The fact that it will never be done completely until the Kingdom comes in its fullness does not let us off the hook. Whether we like it or not, God holds us accountable for the management of the planet He has made for us.

Striving to improve our present world and hoping for Christ's return are not mutually exclusive alternatives. They are opposite poles in our biblical doctrine of the Kingdom, and both must be held with equal firmness.

3. WISDOM IS A SPIRITUAL GIFT

"Blessed is the man who finds wisdom." He recognizes, first, that it is a body of knowledge amassed for his benefit by his elders. He realizes, second, that it is also a bipolar way of thinking that learns to hold conflicting biblical truths in tension. Third, he must acknowledge that wisdom is a spiritual gift. We read in Prov. 2:6: "For the Lord gives wisdom, and from his mouth come knowledge and understanding."

It is all very well to master the body of knowledge by acquiring a first-rate theological education. It is all very fine to learn to think in a bipolar way. But neither of these advantages has much practical use if you don't know how to minister to people. It's one thing to understand God's Word in general; it's quite another to know which particular word God has for a specific individual or group at a specific time. Acquisition of wisdom is more than training of the intellect; it's also a spiritual discipline. The wise man is the man who stops before he speaks and listens for the still, small Voice. He has learned in the place of quiet prayer and meditation to discern the difference between his own thoughts and feelings and the promptings of the Holy Spirit.

CONCLUSION

Christians do and say a lot of foolish things. Blessed is the man and the woman who find wisdom. In the 1990s let us remember the words of Prov. 4:7:

> Wisdom is supreme; therefore get wisdom. Though it cost all you have, get understanding.

CONGREGATIONAL RECOVERY: Hope and Healing Following Pastoral Sexual Failure

by Donald M. Joy
Wilmore, Ky.

There stood the bishop, ready to give the Sunday morning sermon. Late in the week a dark rumor had spread among the nearly 2,000-member congregation. The pastor was nowhere in sight. The choir had come into place on schedule. I could count off the other full-time staff. Only the pastor was gone. Now this:

> I regret to tell you that Mark Walter Goodson has been relieved of pastoral responsibilities at this church. It has been established beyond reasonable doubt that he has been for some time guilty of personal indiscretions. These disqualify him and prevent him from continuing as your pastor. The district pastoral appointment committee is convening tomorrow. By tomorrow night a new senior minister will be appointed to the post vacated now by Mark Goodson. If you have questions, you may call the church office on Tuesday morning.

The bishop then used the next 20 minutes to unfold a homily vaguely focused on sin and responsibility, but the formal statement had worked like an anesthesia. We were all numb. I doubt that any of us were able to follow the sermon. **"The King Is Dead! Long Live the King!"**

Like the death and immediate replacement of a British monarch, pastors are removed and often replaced in a single swift event. And while the process used to remove sexually failing pastors may vary, the effects are quite uniform:

1. *Shock, sensations of being numb, of incredulity.* These are like anesthesia—they numb us to help us survive. "Denial," the clinical studies on grief call these spontaneous strategies. In any substantial loss, denial is the first response. It is not so much that we choose to avoid reality but that the full force of reality would kill us instantly. So we buffer our loss with numbness. For those who walk away from the church on that first shock event, the denial may be for a lifetime. For those who stay, the grief can begin to move toward healing and hope.

2. *Anger, resentment, feelings of having been betrayed.* The introvert response of anger tends to show up as withdrawal, absenteeism, even removal of membership as a protest of the betrayal. Among those who remain, the anger may focus on the pastor or the pastor's family members but more often shows up quickly as members of the congregation unleash their anger on each other. Anger is a way of self-protecting, promising never to be vulnerable again, so the rage turned outward typically prevents ever trusting again. The arrested anger response often lingers in a congregation for decades after the loss occurred for which no intentional grieving was done. I am now watching a formerly great congregation begin to mangle its third pastor since the loss of one who broke his marriage before their very eyes. The anger episodes have depleted the membership and attendance constituency, but it has been targeted, logically, on the successors to the failing minister. Without intentional and systematic grief work, congregations often are transformed in a downward spiral, every way, by unresolved denial and anger.

3. *Bargaining, trying to figure out how to fix the problem.* The energy now turns to traditional "fix it" strategies, often simultaneously blaming the bishop and the district committee for the pastoral failure, and often mixing in residual anger along with advice to the new or interim minister. The restlessness of the bargaining phase of congregational grief often extends across an entire interim pastor's service. Bargaining is inevitably egocentric—self-protecting. The blame gun is pointed outward, and grief cannot move ahead until the responsibility begins to point inward. There is, in virtually all grief, a need to finally admit to vulnerability, and often, to blame that is larger than the simple egocentric accusations suggested.

4. *Depression, the dark night of a congregational soul, characterized by a deep funereal sense of gloom and hopelessness.* While the depression phase looks a bit like the shock/denial phase, there is this difference: The loss has been articulated, processed, debated, and ventilated. There has been a careful focusing of anger, fixing of responsibility, and a replay of signals they missed that were early warning of trouble.

Depression that is constructive is well-informed and carries with it a sense of shared guilt. In many cases, the congregation is able to name itself as contributing to the tragedy. It is depressing to accept corporate responsibility for a pastor's sexual failure. There is no pleasure in accepting the fact that "We are our brother's keeper," responsible to monitor his work load and his working environment, and to accept his marriage and family responsibilities as somehow our responsibilities too. "We've never had such a hardworking, effective pastor!" may now ring in our ears as we realize: "We may have set him up for this by encroaching on his time for his own marriage and family."

In other cases, the shared guilt may not be so clear, yet a well-informed depression phase includes mourning for a lost hope and vision, and grieving for the loss of a once-promising congregational leader. And ultimately, where high levels of trust have been established, the depression is a time for assessment: "Having trusted and been betrayed, will we ever trust again?"

5. *Acceptance, the closing of the case, and the decision to survive, to live again.* In the depression phase, the question finally came down to this: "Will we pay the price for integrity, face the truth, including our corporate guilt, and do the costly repenting and restoration we need?" If these issues of righteousness and holiness are not faced, then the survival will be flawed, a mere veneer of well-being. But when the grieving and the restitution are done, a congregation can rise up wiser, stronger, and safer than before.

Congregations in Grief

Pastoral sexual failure inevitably spreads devastation through a congregation. A pastor might be convicted of tax fraud, shoplifting, or substance abuse, and many people would stand by him and see him through sentencing and rehabilitation. Sexual failure, however, is failure at the core of personhood, and since ministry and sexuality are both assumed to move from this core of his person, his ministry cannot be separated from his sexual failure.

So what do congregations say to a pastor's sexual failure? Most of the time they say nothing. This frozen silence can turn a congregation into a Siberian wasteland. Typically the pastor is gone without explanation, and veiled references to "personal indiscretion" or resignation from the church and "surrender of his credentials" provide no data at all on which to work for congregational healing. Consider the vacuum that surrounds the loss of a pastor involved in sexual failure:

a. Congregations rarely can discover whether the pastor voluntarily confessed and removed himself from ministry, or whether he was reported by a victim or by eyewitnesses to some alleged immoral sexual events.

b. How was the pastor identified in his failure? Did he voluntarily confess, and who broke the confidential contract that accompanies such confession? Or was he whistled down by the victim or witnesses to his activities? Could the scandal have arisen from the typical distortion or exaggeration that characterizes malicious rumors?

c. Most often there is no indication at all of whether the pastor is living in arrogant rebellion against truth or is practicing repentance and continuing obedience to Jesus.

Like the death and immediate replacement of a British monarch, pastors are removed and replaced in a single, swift event.

In cases where the pastor has been arrested and convicted by civil authorities for specific illegal sexual activities, the congregational grief can be equally specific. But look at the frustration of healthy congregational grieving in the more typical cases I have outlined:

1. *The pastor is missing without formal explanation.* This is the grief equivalent of having lost someone at sea. Since we have no corpse, the efforts to schedule a funeral and to orchestrate the grieving are futile in dealing with the deep loss. We have an instinctual fear of ghosts. The fear is partly a result of our feelings of undefined self-guilt, of ignorance of what really was going on, of having been betrayed. But the greatest ghost monger of all is our lack of "closure with the corpse." At one level it consists of this: "I never got to 'say goodbye.'" At another, it is the fear of a sudden close encounter of that awful kind as you are confronted with a person you had hoped was dead and would never appear again in your reality. This unfinished grief syndrome is the first reason many congregations cannot get into deep grief and find the blessing of acceptance and comfort.

2. *The specific nature of the sexual failure is not named.* In a world that fears sexual crimes, sexual seduction, sexual perversion, not to mention sexual promiscuity, sexual inversion, and sexual diseases, the fantasies are often worse than the facts. How long was the sexual failure infecting the pastor's ministry here? Are there now visible roots during his life before arriving here? Was he sexually involved with another woman? Has he violated his own or other people's children? Has he been pursuing pornographic and other sex-for-hire services?

Since our trust of the pastor was as a person, our sense of loss is best served if we know how he was mortally wounded in our presence: What slings and arrows of outrageous misfortune brought him down? Can he furnish us a face-to-face report? A videotape? A letter of discreet but specific confession? As I gaze into the coffin of my lost friend who went down in flames, I need to know how it happened—both to grieve specifically and deeply and to teach myself to identify the pathway to disaster in the hopes of avoiding the same path and detecting its symptoms earlier in other friends.

3. *Did the pastor volunteer his confession to authorities and suggest the resignation?* If it was a confidential confession, how did it explode into this public parade of shame? Having absolved others as a matter of professional and redemption responsibility, must I now conclude that "himself he cannot save"? If our pastor's vocational career placed him in daily jeopardy, mixing as it does compassion and "unloading space" for others' sins, who is his confessor and confidant? Who is my pastor's pastor? Has he, or has his profession, or have we in our expectations isolated him into predictably impossible vulnerability?

4. *Or was he confronted?* Was the confrontation based on hearsay or on

eyewitness information? Was the confrontation based on New Testament principles targeted toward restoration and confidentiality? How was private sin turned into public scandal? If he was not handled in radically Christian regard by us and our ecclesiastical leaders, who will protect him? Shall we advise him to consort with the heathen in order to receive decent protection? Should he be advised to get civil legal counsel? But these are speculations. We almost never know answers to these questions, and it is the lack of information that complicates our grieving. If he was a sinner, but we sinned in our corporate handling of the episode, then crimes abound, and we have greatly complicated and proliferated our losses. If we find hope and healing from this grief, we will spend long nights in depression and integrity confession and restitution before we see light again.

5. ***What is the pastor's attitude about his own failure? Is he penitent or brazen, vulnerable or self-protecting?*** How is the mighty fallen? Since he won us over to lives based on candor, a good confession, and repentance, is he now skilled at practicing those Christian strategies? His pastoral care actually created a safe place for us, yet did we learn well enough from him so that we created a safe place for him? When he received our painful confessions, did he use them to humiliate us? When he had to confront us, did he destroy us?

But since congregations virtually never have any substantial reading on these issues, they tend to piece together the sudden departure and occasional glimpses of the pastor and the pastor's family and read them for full negative content. The bottom line is this: If we can paint him as a despicable sinner, then we will look innocent by comparison. It is as if we are competing for saving face. The worse we can make him look, we imagine, the better we really are. We forget the basic Christian reflexes: "Weep with those who weep" (Rom. 12:15, RSV) and "we are our brother's guardian" (cf. Gen. 4:9). More often, our lips are sealed. We act, we suppose, to protect ourselves, to survive. And our uneasy conscience is certain, then, to be complicated by our loss of contact, absence of facts, and our inability to reach across the silence and ask for ourselves the real questions essential for having a good grief.

A congregation can rise up wiser, stronger, and safer than before.

In all of this we are losers, and I have not even yet raised the issue of how a failing pastor may best be restored and rehabilitated. That will come in a later installment. Here we are focusing on congregational healing:

A Liturgy of Grief

Congregations that suffer sudden loss of a pastor may choose whether to go ahead with business as usual or to devote an interim period to intentional grief work.

1. *A time for grieving.* Grief is never fun. We avoid it when we can. And institutional grief time is even harder to orchestrate than personal grief. We need to "keep a stiff upper lip," so the missing employee, executive, or pastor is quickly banished to unspoken memories. Socially, we aim for safe conversational topics. The last thing we are ready to do is to open a subject on which we might lose control. But in a congregation we can surely take Jesus at His word: "Blessed are those who grieve!" (cf. Matt. 5:4). This may mean that we need to instruct our interim or newly installed pastoral leader to walk with us into our chambers of painful loss:

a. Our tendency to deny and avoid the sealed closet of our loss

b. Our pockets of anger

c. Our corporate guilt and need for repentance

d. Our need to revisit the memories and replay the images in search of redefining congregational/pastoral roles and relationships for everybody's good

2. *Grief work facilitator.* Pastoral sermons, homilies, Bible studies easily focus in on core human needs. In the leadership vacuum created by pastoral failure, the visible congregational leader, even though an interim, needs to be empowered to address real and not artificial issues when a congregation is in the shock of sudden loss. It is critical that Sunday morning services not be scheduled into a series of "guest performances" following a loss. Some arrangement must be made to bring in a resident pastor, even though interim, perhaps from retirement, or perhaps on sudden leave from another setting and on loan. The sense of having a stable, on-site replacement is urgent if grieving is to get under way.

Beyond these "pastor in residence" issues, it may be important to schedule special events:

a. A grief seminar, for example, led by a grief work specialist who is also a therapist, would be a worthwhile event for an intensive weekend or Saturday.

b. If the church offers pastoral counseling services beyond that of the senior pastor, those services need to be publicized in the wake of pastoral loss. In any case, however limited the congregation's resources, it is appropriate to arrange for a professional and competent Christian counselor to book part of the therapy load on the church premises. Many people deserve to know that people who want to be healthy are those who are strong enough to go for help. It may be possible to underwrite congregational appointments with the therapist, distributing part of the expense to individuals but accepting church responsibility for part of the therapy expense.

Pastoral sexual failure inevitably spreads devastation through a congregation.

3. *Second-mile restitution.* When pastoral sexual failure occurs, it is reasonable to anticipate that the congregation will, sooner or later, need to do some corporate repentance. Jesus insisted that even when we are assaulted or robbed, we should turn the other cheek and add additional items to the loot. This "going the second mile" may be based on the principle of "doing as we would be done by," but it is also a hedge against the almost inevitable self-accusation that will come later: If we retaliate quickly, we will have to repent twice when we have reflected on our likely role in setting up our pastor to fail.

Congregations that grieve well consistently have followed an early impulse to take responsibility for the transition and for the pastoral family and their needs for stress and rehabilitation counseling. So the first congregational response to pastoral failure might be this: ***An orderly process is needed by which the pastor and his family are stabilized following the public exposure of sexual failure.*** The goal here is to prevent the "loss of the corpse" and to prevent later congregational guilt by underwriting pastoral and parsonage family rehabilitation.

The specter of parsonage children carrying lifelong scars from an episode that occurred at this church is enough to cause a congregation to go the extra mile to prevent the millstone judgment pronounced against them from the lips of Jesus. This could mean that a three- to six-month transition time is announced, during which time the pastor's entire family might remain in the pastoral residence, and all would be in weekly therapy. The pastor's resignation might be received, even requested, but with the insistence that immediate support and rehabilitation be begun now at congregational expense. During the transition period, a pastoral care committee might be transformed out of existing structures or formed fresh. They would be responsible for engaging professional direction for the rehabilitation and pastoral family transition process but would orchestrate congregational communication with the pastor and his family. A series of dining out occasions should be arranged with key people to provide the data base for good grieving.

Find a way to combine rehabilitative discipline while keeping the community intact.

Left to ourselves, all of us avoid a corpse. Pastors who fail are the new lepers, the living dead among us. "My phone never rings," one unfrocked pastor told me when I discovered him missing six months after the expulsion. He was 500 miles away but broke into tears. "There were people who phoned me every week for years who suddenly abandoned me. Nothing!" he complained. Quite apart from the pastor's needs, congregations need to have a "good grief," and good grieving requires facing the loss.

Keeping the pastoral family in the community, even within the care of the congregation, is an instant cure for denial. It is also an opportunity to demonstrate how our alleged "healing community" works. Compare the pain of this intentional recovery program with the long-term effects of "shooting our wounded" and carrying the lifelong shame and guilt that infected both the sinner and the judging congregation. "How Christian is our congregation as it deals with pastoral failure?" becomes the acid test question for the larger community. If we are radically Christian, we will not try to self-protect by expelling the sinner but will find a way to combine rehabilitative discipline while keeping the community intact. If we cannot handle a failing pastor, why should the heathen believe they can be helped if they risk coming among us in their honest condition?

The focus here has been on congregational healing in the face of pastoral failure. Sexual failure in pastors, as in the entire human species, is as complicated as the uniqueness of people themselves. But there are three specific kinds of failure I want to unfold with you. I named them in the first installment of this series. In a final section, I will offer what we know today about healing from the double bind of adultery, recovery from sexual addiction, and the transformation of the tournament male.

This article is second in a series of three dealing with pastoral failure and recovery potential for congregations and for clergy. The author, Dr. Donald M. Joy, is professor of human development at Asbury Theological Seminary and occupies the Ray and Mary Jo West Chair of Christian Education. He is a specialist in family life, bonding, and issues surrounding sexual integrity. He is most widely known through his appearances on "Focus on the Family" but has served the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the Office of Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention. He is a Staley Lecturer and has appeared in lectureships on human development and intimacy issues on more than 20 college campuses in recent years.

BEYOND BELIEF

I Can't Minister to the Handicapped Because...

by Lillian Johnston
General Coordinator
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"We don't have any handicapped people in our church."

Why not? An estimated 12 percent of every community's members have some type of disability. With that high a percentage, we can be sure that many of these people and their families are being left out of the church's efforts to spread the gospel.

"It costs too much to build ramps and toilet facilities for handicapped people. We just can't afford to remodel our church structure like that."

Several states require all public buildings to be accessible to wheelchairs. Many other states are rapidly following suit. You may be wise to start planning now to make your church as accessible as possible. Here are some facts to consider:

1. Only 10 percent of those who are handicapped are in a wheelchair. Many handicapped (such as your senior citizens) people have knee problems and are unable to negotiate stairs. An entrance ramp would aid the people in wheelchairs and those with other walking difficulties. Handrails would also be helpful. In an existing building it might be more economically feasible to build a ramp into a side entrance or to make a new door with a ramp (not too steep). Be sure the door is at least 36-38 inches wide and swings out.
2. Shorten a pew or two to allow "parking space" for wheelchairs. This keeps the person in the wheelchair from feeling as if he is always in the way of ushers and other people who must walk around him to get to their seats.
3. For rest rooms to be accessible to wheelchairs, the stall should be at least 42″ x 42″ and the door should be *at least* 32″ wide. Install handrails in the stalls. Sliding curtains or swing-out doors on the stalls are necessary.
4. Smooth and slant all doorsills that a wheelchair must cross.
5. If you'd like to capitalize on all these improvements in accessibility, go one step further and rent a van equipped with lifts. Run it on Sunday morning to the local nursing home, the VA hospital, or a children's hospital. Many of these people would be delighted to come to church if they had transportation. Some communities have free van service for handicapped people. If you rent a van on Sunday, advertise this service in the newspaper and on the radio. This is an excellent community outreach and will give your church a reputation as a church that cares.

"The only handicapped person I know is so bad off he can't go anywhere. His mind is still in a state of innocence. He probably doesn't need to come to church anyway."

That may be true, but his family probably does need spiritual help. By ministering to one handicapped person, you minister to his family and their friends as well!

One of the most helpful things you can do is to make it possible for primary caretakers to take time off occasionally. Many of them cannot get away for church services and finally drop out of the family of God completely. Ask someone in the church

to form a volunteer group (with the family's permission) to offer *respite* to the family. This volunteer group could be trained by the primary caretaker in caring for the homebound person. They would then take turns staying with him while the family attends church services or attends to other necessary tasks. As an outreach, if you have enough willing people, this could be extended to the community as well.

"I don't mind people with physical disabilities coming to church, but I'm afraid that people with mental disabilities will disrupt the service. I feel as if people will be paying attention to them and not to the service. Isn't there a danger that people may quit coming if we bring a lot of those kinds of people into the service?"

It's true that people with mental impairments have been known to disrupt a church service. But when it happens, the roof doesn't cave in, and people don't get up and stomp out! And there are ways to greatly lessen the chances of disruption.

1. If they are not accustomed to attending church, perhaps you could have a special class during church time for them. In this class, train them in acceptable church behavior. Have sessions so that they can practice what they learn.
2. The pastor is usually revered by mentally retarded people. He could visit the Sunday School classroom once a month, or even once a week for a while, and tell them what behavior he expects from them during the worship service. The assurance of a handshake and a visit with those who are well-behaved will often work wonders.
3. Try a field trip to the pastor's office, where he will talk about his expectations of them. This may be just what they need to motivate good behavior. Busy pastors will find that this is time well spent.
4. Sunday School teachers should spell out behavior expectations in positive terms: "When we are in church, we watch the preacher and the song leader. We always keep our faces turned to the front and do not watch other people. We try to keep our hands still and in our laps, not on our faces, in our mouths, or near our eyes or nose. We go to the rest rooms before we go into service, and we get our drinks then too. We stand up only when others are standing. We turn pages in our Bibles or songbooks when others are doing this." Teachers should take the pupils to get drinks and to the rest room before church. They should also be aware of any physical problems that might cause one of their students to have to leave. That one can be kept toward the back, where he can leave without disturbing others.
5. Mentally handicapped people should not sit by themselves or in a group without a teacher or someone else. One young man who was retarded used to sit alone on the front pew. He was seldom noisy, but he would scoot up and down the seat and do other distracting things. Finally, one loving man began to sit beside him with his arm on the boy's shoulder. That solved the problem immediately. It is good for the pastor to occasionally publicly take note of how well behaved certain people are during church service.

"I'm not always sure what I should say to people with handicaps—and I am always unsure of myself around mentally handicapped people."

We all need to guard against judging people by their exterior appearances. Ignore differences in action, appearance, or speech, and treat handicapped people the same way you would treat anyone else that you love and respect. It will help if you get to know the person outside of the church setting first. No one will be watching, and you will feel more at ease. To help you think of them as individuals with full personhood, instead of as handicapped, try to put yourself in their place:

If you were in a wheelchair, but your mind still worked well, would you want people to ask someone standing beside you how you are? Would you feel hurt if they ignored the abilities you still had? Would you want to be useful and minister to others?

If you steered your own wheelchair, would there be times you would like to have help but would hate to keep asking for it?

If you sat in a wheelchair, would you appreciate others sitting rather than standing when they talked with you?

If you were blind or visually impaired, would you want people to baby you, to tell you where you could sit in church, or try to lead you without first asking if you wanted help? Would you like being left out of conversations because someone assumed you have no opinions, since you can't see?

If you were disfigured or malformed, would you like to be avoided? Or would you like for people to look you in the eye, shake your hand, and speak to you as they do to others? Would you like for people to slow down and keep pace with your ambling gait so that you would have company while walking?

If you had trouble speaking clearly, would you appreciate people who wait patiently for you to form words? Would you appreciate questions that call for short an-

Teach your congregation love and compassion through ministry to people with handicaps.

swers? If you could not talk at all, would you appreciate an alphabet or a picture board at church so that you could communicate with others?

If you were deaf and knew only sign language and lip reading, would you like for your pastor to at least be able to sign, "Hi! How are you?" Would you enjoy having the songs as well as the sermon signed? Would you appreciate people who spoke to you in a normal tone so that you could read their lips more easily? (Shouting changes the shape of the lips as they form words.) Would you like to have people get your attention by a slight touch before they begin to speak to you?

If you were mildly mentally retarded (this makes up 89 percent of those who are mentally retarded), would you appreciate being treated with respect according to your chronological age, rather than as a child? Would you like to have someone listen to you? Would you come to trust someone who seemed to care about you? Would you be glad to have a special person (such as the pastor) shake your hand and be your friend? Wouldn't that make you feel better about yourself? Wouldn't you be willing to listen to anything this friend told you about your behavior?

"I have to prioritize my time, and —let's face it—there are a lot more productive people that I could minister to."

If you are seeking to bring people with money into your church, handicapped people will probably be low on your priority list. If you are looking for people who will be up-front leaders, you will not find them too often among handicapped people. But if you want to teach your congregation love and compassion, one of the best ways to do it is through ministry to people with handicaps.

If you want your people to learn to overcome their own difficulties in life, let them get to know someone with greater difficulties. Let them help a handicapped person find what abilities he has and find ways he can use those abilities in the church. Besides what handicapped people can actually do, their very presence will be a ministry to others.

If you want your congregation to develop a Christlike acceptance and love of others—a compassionate spirit instead of pride and self-centeredness—having handicapped people in the church provides an opportunity for you to show them how to love. Teach them how to respond to the needs of others and how to accept differences.

The question is not in our abilities or disabilities but what we do with them.

"I hesitate to start something that I can't finish. How can I know if my people will respond well?"

See how they respond to children. If they are generally loving and understanding of children's noise and nonadult behavior, there is a good chance they will react the same way to people with handicaps.

If your people are already more concerned about people than they are about buildings and structures, you can be reasonably sure they will be open to these people who have been neglected so many times.

If you have even one family with a handicapped person in your church, there will be others in the church who feel an empathy with that family.

"I don't know what to tell people who have permanent handicaps. Did God cause the handicap as a punishment or a test? I can't explain to them why they are the way they are. I almost feel as if I have to make excuses for God."

When a person gets old and his hearing gets bad, do we blame that on God? Few people would think that God *caused* that hearing loss. Yet a large portion of handicapping conditions are age-related. Aging is a law that is built into our bodies. We don't blame God for it; it is a result of man's sin, which brought about his mortality.

Disease is another result of sin, and it sometimes brings disfigurement and maiming. We tend to blame God for disease only when it strikes us or someone we love. Disease does not care whom it strikes; it just depends on germs, malnutrition, and other such circumstances to do its work. God has not chosen to suspend the "law" of disease for Christians. We are as vulnerable as non-Christians are. Disease is not a punishment because of a person's sin, but rather a consequence humanity suffers because of sin (collectively).

Mutations are another primary cause for handicaps. Sometimes they are the result of drugs, medications, or poor prenatal care. Who can say why other mutations happen? We are assured in Ps. 139:13 that we are "knit . . . together" by God in the womb. That means He knows why some people have extra chromosomes and why some will have birth defects. That same psalm also says that God has a plan for us (v. 16), just the way He made us. We do not know the mind of God, but we do know that every person has a purpose in this life.

Accidents cause many handicaps. Was it God's fault that someone driving while intoxicated hit a car or overturned his own? Was it God's fault that someone who was not watching the road carefully hit a motorcycle or a child? Was it God's fault that a person went to sleep at the wheel? Is God to blame when a pilot makes an error in judgment and crash-lands, killing and handicapping hundreds of people at one time? If God is to blame for accidents like these, then we must blame God for allowing us to retain our humanity with all its faults and failures.

In short, it is our humanity that is to blame for our handicaps, not God! The question is not in our abilities or our disabilities but what we do with them! We can use them to develop into the kind of person God has planned for us to be, or we can choose to blame God and become bitter about our fate in life. All people need to learn an acceptance of themselves as God-loved and God-planned individuals. It is even harder for handicapped people than it is for others.

The Pastor and the Alcoholic—Enablement or Confrontation

by D. W. Lamkin
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Plymouth, Ind.

There are, by conservative estimates, 10 million alcoholics in the United States today. If I assume that each alcoholic critically affects the lives of three to four other people, we are faced with a monumental problem. Alcoholism is the third leading cause of death in the United States. It is a moral and spiritual problem, as well as a physical and psychological one.

What role does the church and the pastor play in the lives of these millions of people? There are positive and negative effects. A pastor usually occupies a somewhat privileged position in the community. When families face crisis, who do they turn to? Usually their pastor. The pastor can be a powerful tool of redemption as he endeavors to minister to the alcoholic as well as to his family.

Unfortunately, most pastors become enablers to the alcoholic. That is, they protect the alcoholic from the consequences of his behavior by not confronting him with his problem. This action is read by the alcoholic either as endorsement or callousness toward him and his problem. According to a University of Iowa study on alcoholism, it generally takes seven years from the onset of alcoholism before a client first seeks help at a treatment center. This means that there have been a great number of people who suspected others of alcohol abuse but for whatever reason didn't confront the person about the problem. The alcoholic's family lived through seven years of hiding, lying, isolating, and making excuses for their loved one.

Many chaplains within the alcohol and drug rehab hospitals maintain that creating a crisis may, in the long run, be beneficial to the alcoholic. Diplomatic silence, in fact, enables the alcoholic to deny his problem and continue indulging in his self-destructive life-style.

What role does the pastor play in regard to arresting alcoholism? Certainly it is not to sit in judgment. Jesus always ministered to the needs of individuals in crises of their own making. He confronted them with "honest love." In my role as a chaplain, many clients have shared that they will not seek help from pastors who take a hard, dogmatic approach. The clients state, "They had already judged and condemned me; they didn't show any love or take time to listen."

Only 2 to 5 percent of all alcoholics are on skid row. The rest are in the remaining strata of life. This means that alcoholism is all around us—and it is *in our churches.* You may say, "Not in *my* church." But alcoholism affects one out of every five families in many conservative evangelical churches.

Joseph Kellerman, former executive director of the Charlotte, N.C., Council on Alcoholism, quotes a statement that reflects the attitude of many people: "A Boy Scout with a bottle of aspirin, a pup tent, understanding, and compassion can affect better treatment for an alcoholic than a pastor with the finest biblical background who is hostile and prejudiced toward the alcoholic."

Some pastors may detect or suspect alcoholism in a church family but fear confrontation. But there are several tools at the pastor's fingertips. Alcoholics Anonymous is one of the best that can be employed. And if there is an A.A. meeting at his church, all the better. A.A. is tough, supportive, and nonjudgmental, three ingredients that seem to work for the alcoholic. Another is Scripture. God's Word is still true. The Books of James and 1 John deal openly and realistically with people in crisis. Third, be educated about alcoholism.

One of the first goals in counseling alcoholics is to have them admit they are powerless over alcohol. Along with powerlessness comes unmanageability. That our lives are out of control and we're powerless to do anything about it is a statement few people want to make. But many leaders in this field feel that unless this step is taken by the alcoholic, further drinking is inevitable. Unless they accept powerlessness and unmanageability, how can they ever see how Jesus Christ can be a positive factor in their lives?

Not Wimber or Wesley

by Mike MacNeil
Sussex, N.B.

The following article is a response to the article "Signs and Wonders: Wimber or Wesley?" which appeared in the June, July, August 1989 issue of the Preacher's Magazine.

On a recent trip to California for my denomination (Wesleyan), I decided to do a little investigative reporting on John Wimber's Vineyard. Wimber is a controversial name to mention within the holiness movement. I've enjoyed his books. I've read both positive and negative reactions to the Vineyard movement. I've been encouraged to follow the movement by some holiness people and warned not to by others. In this swirl of conflicting information I've often felt like the audience on the old TV game show where the announcer finally has to say: "Will the real ——— please stand up!" That always settled the issue and separated the truth from the misinformation.

Will the real John Wimber please stand up!

The Anaheim Vineyard has to be the most unassuming megachurch that I have ever seen. It is located in an industrial park. As I drove there on a warm December Sunday night, I kept wondering if my directions were correct. I was moving away from the city, passing darkened warehouse after darkened warehouse. Just as I was beginning to feel lost, I spotted a warehouse with a couple of thousand cars around it. There was no sign on the building to identify it. This must be the place, I thought. I was right.

Inside I encountered about 3,000 people of all ages and descriptions. They were worshiping God freely, but not wildly or in an unorderly fashion. The sanctuary was a vast, flat room filled with movable rows of chairs. The decor was simple. Other than a stage and the carpet on the floor it looked like a warehouse. The bulletin was a yellow, photocopied sheet. There was nothing slick or promotional about the place at all. In fact, it seemed to defy all of the church-growth image-building principles I'd ever heard of.

John Wimber sat at the piano in a casual, open-necked shirt. The worship leader led the congregation in praise choruses. It was a beautiful time of worship.

John Wimber did not preach that night. A man named Paul Cain did. The heart of the message was that we'd better not be presumptuous and look to see visions because what we really need is to hear the Lord and obey.

What I found most interesting about the Vineyard was its current emphasis. Are you ready for it? Holiness. There was a deeply repentant attitude about the whole place. I do not mean to mislead here. The Vineyard is definitely charismatic. Prophecy was another emphasis that I noticed. However, even the prophecy revolved around holiness and absolute honesty before God. I did not find a church running after "some esoteric emotional worship experience."[1] Nor did I find a church concerned more with "our pleasure-oriented, affluent life-styles"[2] than with meeting human need. What I found was an alive, maturing fellowship of believers. What I learned was this:

1. We need to be careful of measuring what God is doing now by our tradition. It is very easy to forget how John Wesley was viewed by his contemporaries. It is easy to forget how there have been periods of imbalance in our own movement. In any growing fellowship new emphasis and insight takes precedence for a time until it settles into a bigger picture. All movements have gone through this.

2. We need to stop looking at the minor things that separate us and start looking at the multitude of things that bind us together in Christ. We may place barriers between ourselves as Christians that God does not want there at all. In other words, we have more in common than we think we do.

Let me give you an example from an article I found by John Wimber in *Equipping the Saints:*

> Repentance, promises, and signs and wonders lead next to purity of heart and devotion to God. . . . The Lord is hard at work putting holiness and purity in the Vineyard. He's showing us that many of our

habits and standards are not based on His Word, and that His ways are higher than ours. He's calling us to emphasize standards that are clearly in the New Testament and apply to all Christians at all times. But we hadn't been emphasizing and obeying them!

God is taking us on the "Way of Holiness," and the standards of behavior there are much higher than those under which we have lived in the past. Behavior that the Lord once tolerated in us will kill us on this path, for with greater privilege and revelation come greater responsibility and consequence.

He's calling us to be careful with our tongues, and dedicated in prayer and Scripture study, careful to avoid all evil and even appearances of evil, upright with our finances, diligent with our time, faithful to our families. God's saying, "If you're going to walk on my highway, you've got to do it my way."[3]

It seems to me that while we in the holiness movement have been watching the Vineyard with a suspicious eye, doubting whether the miracles that have been reportedly happening there were really from God, the Vineyard has been following God into the way of holiness! The test of anything spiritual is the fruit it produces. I may be premature, but I believe that the fruit being produced at the Vineyard is good.

The lesson is this: It is not really a matter of choosing theology as we choose brand names at the supermarket. It is not Wimber *or* Wesley. It is Jesus and following *Him* that is important. As we follow Him, we will lay aside our suspicions and the minor "distinctives" we so proudly hold onto. We will not look to measure others by ourselves or the heroes of our tradition. We will look instead to see vital relationship with God. We will have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Christ will wash us clean.

No, it is not Wimber *or* Wesley. It is Wimber, Wesley, and us in Christ, our living, reigning Lord!

NOTES

1. Levi Keidel, "Signs and Wonders: Wimber or Wesley?" *Preacher's Magazine*, June, July, August 1989.
2. Ibid.
3. John Wimber, "The Way of Holiness," *Equipping the Saints* 3, no. 4 (Fall 1989).

Pastor, Be Encouraged

The Soul of the Church

by C. Neil Strait
Grand Rapids, Mich.

I read something recently that was encouraging. It pointed out that the soul and strength of the church is in people whose jobs are not prominent or glamorous, but they just tough it out, hang in there, ride out the storms, and cheer the pastor on. Every pastor needs members like this and thanks the Lord frequently when he finds them.

Don McDullough, writing in "Waking from the American Dream," tells the story of Winston Churchill during World War II. Churchill called labor leaders to a meeting to enlist their support. At the end of his presentation, he asked them to picture in their minds a parade that he knew would be held in Picadilly Circus after the war. First, he said, would come the sailors who had kept the vital sea-lanes open. Then would come the soldiers who had come home from Dunkirk and then gone on to defeat Rommel in Africa. Then would come the pilots who had driven the Luftwaffe from the sky.

"Last of all," he said, "would come a long line of sweat-stained, soot-streaked men in miners' caps. Someone would cry from the crowd, 'And where were you during the critical days of our struggle?' And from ten thousand throats would come the answer, 'We were deep in the earth with our faces to the coal.'"

The point that stuck with me was the phrase, "We were deep in the earth with our faces to the coal."[1] Now, there is nothing glamorous about work that keeps your "face to the coal." It is not the job one seeks on the ladder to prominence. But let it be clear, without the people who keep their "faces to the coal" there is no glamour for anyone else, no prominence—in fact, no church!

As I look across the church, more and more do I appreciate the people with their "faces to the coal." For without them, we do not do anything: We do not raise money for missions or ministry, we do not have revivals, we do not build buildings, nor do we raise a pastor's salary. They are the soul and strength of the church, and someone needs to recognize their toil and faithfulness.

I have observed, more than once, that, all too often, the people who raise the most fuss in a congregation have not had their "faces to the coal." They have been glamour-seekers and ladder-hoppers. They have, all too often, been more adept at telling others how to do than at being doers themselves. Neither does the church go forward by them, nor does its existence depend on them.

Pastor, your future and mine depend on the people who have their "faces to the coal." They are "the salt of the earth" people. Because they are busy in the trenches, they do not have time to criticize. Because they are at their tasks, they see every pastor as shepherd and partner with them in a great mission.

So, Pastor, be encouraged by the people who have their "faces to the coal." They are the real heroes, your boosters, your supporters. When others feel the hard times, they are there looking to you for leadership through their soot-stained eyes. They pray for you, love you, support you. When the bills are to be paid, they pay them. When the budgets are to be raised, they raise them. When the pastor gets a raise in pay, usually they pay it. And after all their work, they go back to the "faces to the coal" work rejoicing and looking for better days.

Look around you, Pastor! There are more "faces to the coal" people than there are the other kind. I know they are not as vocal, nor as critical, nor as self-prone. But they are on your side, carrying your load, holding you up in prayer, being Jesus-people where it counts.

Thank God for them, and be encouraged that they are, somewhere, in every church!

[1]Don McDullough, "Waking from the American Dream," *Leadership* (Carol Stream, Ill.: Christianity Today), vol. 10, no. 3 (Summer 1990): 42.

Understanding Church Growth

by O. Dean Martin

Unless we explore the real meaning and means of church growth, someone may falsely conclude that any talk about being "decisive" and "invitational" is simply due to the fact that a number of mainline churches are facing drastic membership decline. This is certainly the correlation many United Methodists have in mind today when we hear such things as, "The United Methodist Church must become a more evangelistic church!" "We must become a church that reaches people for Christ!" "We must get our zeal back," and so on.

One quickly discovers what some people are fearfully saying: Let's reverse membership loss. Let's get to work so we can hold our heads up again. Let's extend "evangelistic invitations" *because* we need more members to survive.

If you doubt this assessment, ask yourself how often you recall hearing the phrase "we must become more evangelistic" *before* our membership graph began dropping like a lead balloon! At most, there was a voice here and a voice there, crying in the wilderness.

So, when we speak of extending the evangelistic invitation, and do so in a period of membership decline and mixed motivations, let us be clear about the nature of church growth.

As By-product

First we must understand church growth, not as getting more members, but as the logical by-product of being a church worth joining. We should see that growth is not the goal but that relevant Good News is the goal. Increased membership follows as a result; that if preachers (and any other group, for that matter) will preach a practical gospel worth responding to, and actually extend a clear invitation to respond, nobody will have to concentrate on church growth.

Churches will pursue one of two alternatives: Be a church worth joining or, lacking that, learn how to make people join even if the experience is meaningless to their personal lives. The second alternative focuses on getting more members.

As D. Elton Trueblood once observed, the primary reason for the decline of mainline Christianity is that it is dull. People want help. Everyone is reaching out for security, encouragement, practical assistance, challenge, and meaningful involvement. The churches that are growing are ministering to these needs because such churches are worth joining.

Put another way, if people are not joining a church, it is either because there is something wrong with their faith, or there is something wrong with the church soliciting their involvement. Therefore, the "invitation" is not to join a church or buttress up a flagging institution. Church growth is about being the kind of church worth joining so that people who have a faith that needs fixing will have somewhere to go to get it fixed. Saving the institution is never the point.

Jesus gave us significant forewarning that "whoever attempts to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it." Church growth is about the business of growing because people are being invited to give their lives to Christ and share His concern for the world. These are the churches that are growing, the ones that are trying not to save themselves but salvage as much of the world as can possibly be salvaged.

A professor once visited my office. He was a member of the faculty of the University of Florida, just down the street from the church, and he was transferring to a new faculty position at another university. He was a new Christian with minimal background in faith and most anxious to find a new fellowship that would help him keep his faith and continue to grow in his life. His question to me was, "Is there a church of our denomination where I am moving?" I said, "Certainly! We've got thousands of churches all over the country." "Really?" he said rather incredulously, "I don't know much about churches, as you know, but I've never noticed an 'Exciting United Methodist Church' anywhere in my life!" I had no idea why he was talking this way and asked for further enlightenment. Finally he called my attention to one of our blue shield road signs down on the corner and said, "That church! That denomination!" Then, realizing his very minimal religious background, I finally understood.

When I first came to Trinity United Methodist Church in Gainesville, Fla., we were surrounded by four major intersections and had no church signs anywhere. Most people didn't even know Trinity existed. I ordered eight new signs, two for each intersection, but did not waste time with printing that said "Two Blocks," "Welcome Three Blocks," etc. I simply had a large arrow printed at the bottom of each sign pointing in the direction of Trinity Church. Above each arrow I had printed one word representing our goals for ourselves as a fellowship. This meant that at

each intersection there was a different adjective describing what we were determined to be. I figured people would read such words over and over again. A sign that says "Two Blocks" runs out of inspiration pretty quickly! Our selected adjectives (goals) for the four intersections were: "Alive," "Involved," "Caring," and "Exciting." My friend lived near the sign that said "Exciting," and, knowing no more than he did about churches or denominations, he had assumed that was the name of the denomination. And he wanted to find another "Exciting United Methodist Church!"

The first thing we need to understand about church growth is that we should not push for new members. We should give every ounce of strength, vision, and commitment to being a church of Jesus Christ worth joining!

As Legitimate Choice

Second, while everybody needs a church, not everybody needs any church! People have different needs, hopes, dreams, tastes in liturgy, and understandings of both worship and gospel (what, in fact, at this time in their lives is Good News for them). They will be making legitimate choices of what they consider to be churches worth joining based on those present needs.

This being true, growing churches or denominations are actually meeting a real or imagined personal need. This growing church does not even attempt to "be all things to all people and nothing to nobody." Instead, it zeros in on its specific message for its specific world.

For instance, the latest research data on church growth shows that growing churches tend to be loving churches. That is, congregations whose members possess an experience in Christ that fosters and promotes a loving environment are seeing church growth as a result of that environment. In fact, a loving environment is so essential to church growth that all of us know churches that work on *contrived* love, often called "love bombing." This contrived love is superficial, manipulative, and pragmatic. But it serves to fortify the premise that love, real or contrived, is so essential to church growth that, if such an atmosphere does not come via legitimately changed hearts and minds, then your group will likely learn to fake it! Faking it is not recommended. Possessing it, or rather being possessed by it, is far more commendable. People seek out a congregation that meets real needs, and perhaps one of the greatest needs of our day is the need to feel loved.

It is no wonder people are flocking to "loving" churches, contrived *or* authentic. Many of us are like the little boy who was left on the pediatrics floor of All Saints Hospital in Salt Lake City. His nurse hurried down to the office for a minute, turned on the intercom in his room to monitor his well-being by listening to his play, heard nothing, and finally said, "Billy! Billy!! Say something, Billy, I know you are in there!" Finally, after a long and frightening few moments, little Billy said, "What do you want, wall?"

Like little Billy, most of us prefer warm, loving presence! We are tired of sterile, proper, staid, sanctified, and petrified assemblies. The church growth experts rightly observe that the loving congregations are seeing the most growth, but this is but an expression, a symptom, of the basic premise that people join churches that meet specific, immediate, and real needs!

The need to be loved, feel accepted, and discern warmth and appreciation is but one expression of specific needs aching to be met. Others are just as hungry for a church actively involved in its community and world. Still others are seeking a message of positive possibility, or help in healing. Perhaps their need is for a message of prophetic judgment. Whatever their message, churches must concentrate on legitimate messages from God that meet real human needs.

The movie industry understands this principle of zeroing in on a specific group or need. They make little serious attempt to produce a movie that will "appeal to everyone." Instead, precisely because they want their theaters full, they concentrate on movies that appeal to teenagers, kung fu lovers, or romantics. The music industry does not attempt to put out a sheet of music that will appeal to everyone. Rather, various companies will concentrate on opera, operettas, light opera, Grand Ole Opry, rock and roll, hard rock, religious music, standard romantic, or perhaps country and western. Whenever they publish, they select a special segment of society to target.

Allow a brief restatement of my fundamental premise. I am not saying that you find a message that will appeal to someone who will fill your church and help make its budget. I am saying, however, that you and I, as preachers of the gospel, have a message that is uniquely God's and special to us. If we preach that message —God's message as we have been enlightened—there are many people hungering for just that message! On the other hand, if we try to give them everything, if we continue to offer up some nebulous "invitation to Christian discipleship," we will continue to address predominantly empty pews. We must prayerfully and faithfully discern and affirm our special message from God and lovingly and *deliberately* share that message (or tone, or accent, or emphasis) with our world.

Norman Vincent Peale presented his message with inordinate integrity. E. Stanley Jones did the very same thing with his message of evangelism and within the framework of intellectual respectability. *Time* magazine (Spring 1986) pointed out that, in their opinion, Jimmy Swaggart has concentrated his ministry on fear, Robert Schuller on peace, and Oral Roberts on health. Each of us, like each of these men, may adequately and meaningfully cover other or all aspects of the gospel. Our preaching, our personal message accent may be fear, or personal peace and prosperity, or health, or missions, or social concerns, or any of a number of affinities or preoccupations. We are all different, and each of us has a very special message from God. Share it gladly and decisively, and someone will hear it gladly

Not long ago two friends, both members of an American Baptist church in another state, were discussing the hypothetical question of what would happen to their church if I . . . were to come as their pastor. After a moment of reflection one friend said, "The church would be half empty by the middle of the first year. Then we would have to tear the

building down and build one twice as large!"

He was simply saying that many of the folks who presently attended the church legitimately did not need my personal message from God, or did not think they needed it, or just plain wouldn't accept it. But once the new message of the new messenger was established, there would be, in their opinion, many others who would respond eagerly!

I think we must begin understanding this fundamental premise of communication. If the United Methodist Church, or any church, is to grow again, it must take seriously what the book publishers, the moviemakers, and the songwriters already know. Be specific! Have a message that is authentically yours, that comes genuinely from God through you, and share it with deliberateness and decisiveness. You may and should center that message around the church year, the lectionary, or some other vehicle promoting a full review of the gospel story, but it must be your special and specific message.

While sharing your special message throughout the cycle of years (be it hope, tolerance, healing, social concern, personal conversion, etc.)—you will, in the course of the years, touch on everything you know and feel about the gospel in general, but that message must retain its specific integrity. If you do that, the people who can and will respond to your specific message will hear you gladly

I've often stated the same premise in various pastors' schools and retreats. Churches that are full and growing are not full because they "preach the gospel" (as smug fundamentalism asserts) but because they meet needs. We who are United Methodists are often and unnecessarily cowed by the accusation that we are in decline because we do not "preach the gospel." Not true! In my travels all over this country, over and over again I've seen churches packed to the rafters that preach little more than a mixture of Old Testament gloom and doom coupled with promises of riches here and in the hereafter for blind compliance. There is not a touch of the gospel anywhere in sight. I have also seen churches where a loving Good News of God was shared regularly but in a very general way void of invitational decisiveness and, despite the gospel message, remained mostly empty. Gospel is not what *fills* churches. One may preach the gospel, say all the right words, without any relevancy, and people will not come. Meeting needs, scratching where somebody itches, is what fills churches and as a by-product causes churches to grow.

Some of these "needs" are legitimate, and some needs are but souls collecting preachers who will say what their itching ears long to hear. I know this danger of relativity, but I also know that I, prayerfully and carefully, can give my very special message, give it intently and decisively, and people will respond.

Remember that people tend to join churches in direct relationship to (1) their personal mental health and (2) individual emotional stability. Let's look briefly at these needs.

Simply if not simplistically stated, some people need a church where they are told exactly what to think and precisely how to act. You and I may counter by saying, "If that's the way they are, then that kind of church is exactly what they do not need." True! But people have to start from where they are, or they aren't going anywhere. Consequently, some people emotionally need a church with a Big Daddy. You and I, who do not operate as "Big Daddies," need not feel badly because they choose such a church. There are plenty of other people wanting to make different choices. Nevertheless, a church that says, do this, believe that, follow my exact directives, and God will "cover you with His umbrella of mercy," or some such solicitous guarantee, will find people of that need attending.

Still other auditors go about looking for a faith communion that will give them an authentic voice but allow them room to think for themselves! We have a world full of frightened people looking for a substitute parent, but we also have just as many, perhaps many more, who are saying, Give it to me straight, but then give me room, and don't manipulate me.

Many years ago Dr. Carlyle Marney, the late great Southern Baptist preacher and pastoral counselor, came to Gainesville, Fla., for a preaching mission at First Baptist Church. I went down one morning for a breakfast session with Dr. Marney. I was particularly anxious to hear him because, better than most, he understood the emotional dimension of faith and choice. The hall was full of Baptist ministers, Carlyle Marney, and me. A decade later I still distinctly recall two specific things Dr. Marney said that early morning.

The first thing was, "We are Baptist not by theology but by temperament." That's true of each one of us! You are an Episcopalian, not because Episcopal beliefs are different, but because you are temperamentally an Episcopalian. She is Roman Catholic, not because she reads a different Bible, but because this suit fits. He is Baptist, not because Baptists have a corner on the gospel, but because he is a Baptist. Pentecostals are Pentecostals because they are temperamentally Pentecostals.

The second thing I recall Dr. Marney saying had everyone pointing at me and giving me a very friendly chiding. Marney said, "If you attend a Church of God, you hear the minister say, 'GOD says.' If you attend a Church of Christ, you will hear the minister saying, 'CHRIST says.' If you attend a Baptist Church, you will hear the minister say, 'The BIBLE says.' If you attend a Methodist Church," he continued, "you will hear the minister say, 'It means to *me* . . .'"!

Give every ounce of strength, vision, and commitment to being a church worth joining!

Everyone pointed at me and roared with laughter. Then, when things quieted down, Dr. Marney said, "But never forget this also. Until you, as a minister of the gospel, can say, 'It means to ME,' your faith is not really your own!"

That's precisely where modern-day United Methodists have a wide-open opportunity to evangelize, truly reach unnumbered millions of today's people with our message from God. As John Wesley said 200 years ago (and I paraphrase for clarity's sake): Only two things are required of a person to become a Methodist—a desire to know Christ *personally* and the will to think and *let think!*

Another factor giving shape to the message is the leader. As we look at the list of reasons why people are filling churches, one becomes quickly aware that leadership is a common denominator. Each pastor, whatever his motivation, gives clear and decisive leadership! Therefore, it is pointed out, people are not looking for content as much as they are looking for deliberate and decisive containers. Marshall McLuhan was right all along, "The medium is the message." *Pray God your leader gets the message right!*

Such reflections on why some churches are full and others, even where a great gospel is lovingly preached, remain empty is given further credibility by a cursory look at a sample list of leaders. Today, people are responding to Billy Graham, Bob Schuller, Sun Myung Moon, Jimmy Swaggart, Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh, Ernest Ainsley, and Norman Vincent Peale—just to give a sampling of the better-known crowd gatherers. What do they have in common? Not the message but leadership!

Take another sampling. Look around your own community and identify the churches with full parking lots and full pews. The message given throughout every church in your community may even be the same. But some churches are growing, and others are simply groaning. Why? The same reason. Growing churches have real leadership, and holding or dwindling churches have caretakers. The growing church has a minister; the holding church has a chaplain.

Therefore, we are looking for a leader, motivated by the love and compassion of God, sharing his special message from God, and doing so in a specific, decisive, and compassionate way. These are the people who are seeing the masses respond.

Here decisive, invitational evangelism becomes so important in understanding the real nature of church growth. And this is where the United Methodist Church, among others, is losing out today. We tend, with many magnificent exceptions, to shoot from the hip, to use a scattergun. We often proclaim a message geared to please everyone and address no one. We shoot at everything and aim at nothing. Other churches, those experiencing the by-product of growth, are using a rifle and are aiming from the shoulder. They are targeting their constituents and inviting them to come and get rich, become healed, speak in tongues, have better mental health, or whatever the market they want to exploit.

in this country that is sharing its unique message of nonmanipulated surrender to Christ and the continued use of the mind (pluralism, tolerance, etc.) is probably growing in significant numbers.

We must come to understand that people are going about making legitimate choices today about what churches meet their needs, if not actually auditing their proclamation in accordance with their need category, and many are saying, "Give us more churches that proclaim good sense to people like us. Give us people who want faith, even a costly faith, but do not want to have to give up their brains!" We must understand this about the nature and dynamics of church growth.

The Trust Factor

One policy that continues to hurt the United Methodist denomination is the tendency to run the modern church within the confines of a

Have a message and invite people to do something about that message.

Declining churches need also to "target" and share a legitimate, specific message steeped in prayer, preparation, and integrity. We must have a message and invite people to do something about that message. Then, ask our listeners to say, Yes, No, or Wait in response to our personal and practical proclamation. We must give leadership and be decisive. We must be leaders and be invitational!

There are people milling around our towns and cities today who do not want to be spoon-fed. They don't believe for a minute that accepting certain doctrines and tithing to some "one true church" will make them healthy, wealthy, and wise. They are desperately looking for a church that targets them, saying, "Give yourself a chance to have a personal, intelligent, demanding, meaningful relationship with Christ and, when you have done that, keep using your own mind and encourage others to do the same." Each United Methodist church

horse-and-buggy mentality. On the American frontier a minister was given an appointment with the knowledge that he would be in that particular charge two, three, or perhaps four years. This was a good approach for that day, a day of highly stable communities and villages, a day where continuity of spirit and society was maintained by the community itself. The minister could come and go, and knew that would be the case. He knew he would be unable to settle in and get comfortable. Even if he were not so inclined, he would of necessity be required to get back to work—hit the ground running.

Today, everything is different except the bureaucratic mentality. Like the British at Omdurman or Balaklava, our bureaucracy charges into the modern era, seemingly oblivious to its new firearms and breach-loaded artillery, believing that short-term itinerancy, like the cavalry, will

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The Seductive Parishioner

by Jay Harold Keiser
Ravenna, Ohio

Physicians, attorneys, and ministers have one thing in common: They can be innocent objects of a seductive person.

The female parishioner said to the male minister, "Pastor, you are so understanding. My husband doesn't seem to have time for me the way you do. Sometimes I feel so lonely. Do you ever feel lonely the way I do, Pastor?" This statement may be accompanied with body gestures that imply sexual overtures. The minister may find himself squirming. He may be visiting the parishioner in the home or hospital with intent to minister and do good, but he may find this talk exciting and flattering.

The discovery that he might be sexually attractive to someone may lead him into equally seductive maneuvers toward that parishioner. Often ministers have tried to deny their sexuality in attempts to portray a holy life-style, giving the impression that sanctified people have either no desire for sex or that they are "too holy to be affected" by such flattery.

If the minister responds with interest or engages in jesting or seductive teasing, he is in trouble. If seductiveness culminates into sexual intercourse, the minister has violated his own marriage relationship and sinned against his wife and God. He has violated his professional ethics and has taken advantage of his professional role to gratify his own needs. Also, he does personal and psychological injury to his parishioner, even though he may not have been the aggressor. As a serious consequence, he has put himself outside of God's law. The person he had wished to help may be eternally lost as a result of his failure.

The indiscreet minister faces being embroiled in an alienation of affections legal case in which he is the "other man" and would be subject to scorn and also a lawsuit. He may lose his own companion and/or family. Either through admission or church trial, he will lose his credentials with the church he had vowed to serve.

If the parishioner becomes hysterical or neurotic, developing regret and guilt, the minister may be accused of rape by the guilt-ridden woman.

The wise minister must consider the meaning of the parishioner's behavior and preplan strategies for dealing with seductive persons.

Usually behind a seductive person's facade are some real problems of pain, loneliness, sexual unfulfillment, the desire for control or recognition, or even hostility. The seductive person may express in confidentiality to her minister, "I wish I had a relationship like I used to have. But since my husband's surgery for prostate cancer nine years ago, I have been deprived of sexual intimacy. My only release has been from masturbation."

Instead of giving in to sexual arousal that such a confession may trigger in the minister, he must find a therapeutic and appropriate response to the depression and loneliness. If the person is looking for another sexual encounter, he must explore and clarify motivations behind this behavior. She may be just teasing or trying to make him uncomfortable out of hostility to men.

An elderly lady was placed in the Coronary Care Unit of our hospital. As chaplain, I talked to her about her church affiliation and her relationship with God. With a broken heart she said, "Chaplain, you don't need to call my pastor. He is having enough trouble. He is with his wife in a distant city clinic. She has just had a bilateral mastectomy. About six months ago a lady in our church who wanted him to retire and leave accused him of trying to make love to her. He is such a kind and caring pastor; I can't understand why people are so mean."

Even without wanting to be involved in sexual encounter, neurotic seductive persons, often widows, who would never stoop to adultery would provocatively entice someone to force a compromising situation that would result in the minister's dismissal.

If seduction is intentional, explore the person's attitudes toward authority. The parishioner may be playing out a fantasy for recognition, affection, or revenge with the minister as an authority figure in a way that she was never able to do with her parents or teachers in early life. In this case, the minister becomes only another character in a childhood play she is reenacting. The minister may wisely consult with a psychiatrist about the person's behaviors or make a referral to a Christian psychiatrist. If competent to deal with the situation directly, the pastor may consider some of these strategies.

The minister may confront the parishioner. Ask a clarifying question: "Are you suggesting that our relationship should no longer be that of a pastor-parishioner?"

A more subtle approach is to share some of his own feelings: "I do feel lonely sometimes. But what you are saying is making me quite uncomfortable. As you must realize, I am your minister. I'd like to keep the relationship friendly but still professional." Thus you haven't paraded your own "goodness" nor made the person feel strongly condemned for her behavior.

This approach clarifies the issue and reduces the pressure enough to allow further exploration into motivations and an openness to continued pastoral relationship of faith, trust, and prayer. Let the fantasy be kept secret so that no further hurt occurs.

The minister may acknowledge the seductive maneuver and respond

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How to Make That "Other" Bible More Useful

by William W. Hull
Shaker Heights, Ohio

If you've become a slave to your date book, there is a planning and scheduling technique that can help you.

There's an apocryphal tale of the American Indian who sold blankets at the train station in Albuquerque, N.Mex. He was reputed to have a phenomenal memory. A Santa Fe passenger decided to test him one day. When the train made its stop, the Indian was asked, "What did you have for breakfast on July 1, 20 years ago?"

"Eggs," said the blanket pusher.

As the train was pulling out, the passenger realized that he had no way of checking on the Indian's answer. So he got back on board and thought little about it until his next trip through Albuquerque about a year later. Seeing the Indian, he greeted him.

"How!"

"Scrambled," came the unhesitating answer.

Many a busy pastor wishes for such a good memory. Being frail humans, we must depend heavily on a pocket or wall calendar. The calendar takes on an importance far beyond its innocent-looking date squares. "The Gospel According to the Sun and Moon," one pastor calls it. If the pocket calendar gets lost, or a date isn't recorded, inevitable conflicts cause embarrassment. Busy pastors have expressed their wishes for three or four additional hours in each day to accommodate their schedules.

Surprisingly, there are time expanders that can help the church leader accomplish more in the same period of time—and do it with less effort! They have been developed by social scientists and engineers for business and industry as aids to program planning and scheduling. They help keep track of a myriad of details and help meet deadlines like those a busy pastor faces in his role as the leader of a congregation. They are logical, useful tools that enable the user to pack more work into a given time span, to plan more effectively, to give more control over projects involving many people, and to provide an "early-warning system" to prevent things from going awry *before* the fact.

One that has been used in churches and institutions effectively is an adaptation of the Performance Evaluation and Review Technique—PERT for short. It is easy to learn and use and, by using it, will hone a pastor's program planning skills, allowing more to be accomplished without an additional expenditure of energy. Here's how it works.

PERT has four major elements:

1. A detailed list of all the activities necessary to complete a project.
2. A logically ordered arrangement of the activities.
3. A formula for arriving at the Expected Elapsed Time activities will take.
4. A completed calendar that includes Start and Complete dates along with an early-warning system that allows ample time to take remedial action when projects or programs are going awry.

We know from research that most church programs and projects are not as successful as they could be because small, but critical, details tend to either be forgotten or overlooked. One of the single most valuable aspects of PERT is that it forces the user into getting into the habit of *thinking through all the details of a project before starting it.*

The steps in using PERT are simple but require that the planner spend a good deal of honest effort in the planning stage. The more detailed the planning, the less likely it is for unexpected problems to crop up. It should be noted that PERT can accommodate any size project, from the production of a simple church dinner to complex activities involved in producing an entire program year with all the logistics involved in coordinating several groups (men's and women's clubs, youth group, worship services, etc.), including programs and services for the community. The steps include:

1. Learning to break large units of effort into their smallest components
2. Learning to express these small segments as PERT activities
3. Learning to think logically about the order of activity
4. Learning how to time activities to allow realistic spans of time for their completion and allowing enough slack time to insure they are completed *on* time
5. Transferring the PERT network of activities into a meaningful, useful calendar format

First, it is necessary to pick a project. That could be one or several or an entire program year if you are ambitious. In order to learn the technique, it is better to choose something a bit more modest until you get the hang of it. For the purpose of understanding how to use PERT, we will illustrate with the production of a church dinner.

Learning to break the large activities into component parts is really one of the most difficult things to learn. Partly because, as church leaders, we have a multitude of details in our minds, we tend to leave them out of written statements or *assume* that they are written when they really aren't. "After all," some planners might say, "everyone knows that you need napkins for the table!" True enough. But in a complex project for a church, with several volunteers involved, more than likely someone might forget them. To avoid things being forgotten, PERT demands that you leave nothing out. In learning to create activity statements when using PERT, it is necessary to record *all* the details.

What is an activity? An activity is anything that uses time, energy, or resources. An activity requires action by *somebody*. It must be accomplished by a person. Therefore, all activity statements should be couched in behavioral terms—not general terms.

Good Activity Statement
"The volunteer assigned by dinner chairperson completes table setting."

Poor Activity Statement
"Table setting completed."

One of the more useful aspects of PERT is that it helps you properly organize a project. A general statement, like the second one above, can be easily overlooked. If all the activities are written as though people must accomplish them, you will find that even as you plan, you are getting some idea about how to budget personnel for the project. And it will be easy for those involved to understand their parts. The sooner you can change the word "volunteer" to Mrs. Smith and "chairperson" to Mr. Jones, the better. In short, the more specific and detailed you can be, the better. Write only *one* task per activity. Later on, as you deploy personnel, you can "gang up" activities appropriately.

Here again, PERT can be of great service, because by thinking through a project *in detail,* you begin to get a different look at common things that could save time and effort but are otherwise overlooked. For instance, it would seem that the task of buying paper products for a dinner—plates, tablecloths, napkins, coffee and cold drink cups—would be a natural job for one person. Perhaps in your community, however, paper tablecloths of the kind and size needed for the social hall tables must be purchased clear across the city at a wholesaler, whereas the rest of the products can be purchased at any number of stores downtown.

In the past, solely because of that tablecloth, the only volunteer assigned to "paper products" was someone with a car. But by getting a new look at all the details through PERT, you have now opened up the job so that any number of volunteers could do it. The trip to the wholesaler might be combined with the trip for the meat because the meat market is nearby, and both the roll of paper cloth and the meat are bulky and heavy.

It is recommended that each activity be written on a single 3″ x 5″ or 4″ x 5″ card. A successful method is to sit down with a pile of cards and think about the project. Write them down as they come to you in no particular order. Write down all the activities you can think of from beginning to end. Don't be surprised at the number of cards you may amass for even a small project. That's the point. The more the better. It means you are really getting down to details.

Watch for crowding. It is easy to get two or more activities combined. The activity, "Mr. Jones will see to ticket printing," represents seven separate activities. In this case, one activity for each word. Someone will have to:

—Design the ticket.
—Get estimates of how much they will cost to have printed from at least two printers.
—Select the printer.
—Order X number of tickets.
—Pick up tickets from printer.
—Decide on method of distribution of tickets.
—Distribute tickets.

The term "See to" is not a useful phrase when using PERT. Such vague terms inevitably lead to trouble when you're producing the project. Also, avoid phrases like "Take care of," "handle," and "cover." Remember, with PERT, the more detailed and specific, the better.

Now you have a stack of cards that represent all the individual activities that people will have to engage in to produce a church dinner. The next step is to put them in logical order by laying them out on a table and arranging them in order of *dependency.* Some will be obvious, like "buying carrots and potatoes" comes well before "serve dessert." There will have to be several intervening cards.

Working backward will make the ordering of the cards easier. Start with the card that says, "Pastor turns out lights on clean social hall after successful annual dinner," and move to the left. If that signals the completion of your dinner, the card upon which that activity depends relates to cleaning up—there will be several of these, garbage, mopping, dishes, folding tables, chairs, etc.

Note that sometimes activities can parallel each other. For instance, if it will take 10 days for the printer to print the tickets, other things can also be happening during that time. These parallel activities should be placed above and below each other in the natural progression across the table upon which you are laying out the cards.

Now you have a graphic display of *all* the separate and detailed activities it will take to produce a successful dinner. Next, you need to estimate how much time it will take for each activity.

On each activity card make three estimates:

1. An OPTIMISTIC time estimate
2. A MOST LIKELY time estimate
3. A PESSIMISTIC time estimate

Your time estimates must include *all* the time involved in an activity. A trip to the store, for instance, includes travel time, etc. Remember, an activity will use time, energy, and resources.

In making the OPTIMISTIC estimate, try to imagine how long it will take to accomplish if everything goes exceptionally well.

A great deal of behavioral research has determined that only about 1 percent of the time do most of us accomplish tasks in situations where *everything* goes smoothly, everyone is exceptionally cooperative, and there are *no* problems. To put it another way, usually there is only 1 chance in 100 for things to go that well! Make the estimate anyway. Assume that no one's car will break down at a crucial moment, no one will get sick, and all your volunteers will show up when promised and do exactly as they are told.

Make all your time estimates using the same unit of time. For most projects, estimations in days is adequate.

Next, you should make an estimate of how long each activity will take if everything goes along like it does most of the time. This is the MOST LIKELY time estimate. Be very, very honest here. How long does it *usually* take for a committee to come up with a specific date, for instance. If it is an activity you are not familiar with, consult with someone who has done it before to get the estimate. How long, for instance, does it usually take to mop the social hall?

The third estimate of time is the PESSIMISTIC calculation. This is the longest time that could reasonably be expected for the activity to take if *everything* went wrong that could go wrong short of a flood or earthquake. Again, researchers have proven that over the course of completing millions of normal activities, you have a 1-in-100 chance of that ever happening.

Now you have all the information needed to complete a written plan that provides appropriate times at which to start specific activities. It also provides early warning signs if things start to go wrong. Let's see how it works.

First, translate your time estimates into single time spans showing the EXPECTED ELAPSED TIME for each activity. PERT provides a formula for that, and you will find it will provide uncannily accurate estimates, providing you have been as accurate as possible in your estimates.

Multiply the MOST LIKELY time estimate by four, then add all three estimates together and divide by six. The result will be the EXPECTED ELAPSED TIME each activity is expected to take.

For instance, your three time estimates for the purchase of meat might have been:

Optimistic	1 day
Most Likely	2 days
Pessimistic	9 days

One day, plus 8 days (4 times the MOST LIKELY estimate), plus 9 days equal 18 total days. When divided by 6, the result (in this case, 3 days) will be the EXPECTED ELAPSED TIME for that activity. In your planning and on your calendar allow 3 days for this activity.

Here you may see how PERT gives you elbow room to avoid problems. If it normally takes only one day for the activity, and you have allowed three, you will have two days of slack time to use somewhere else in the project. Or, if your meat shopper becomes ill, or the wholesaler is closed on the day you planned to shop, disaster won't set in. You have time to take remedial action.

If you have selected a specific date for the dinner already, you can now put dates for the start and completion of each activity. Starting backward from the dinner date, and in the order that the activities are laid out, you can transfer the dates to your pocket calendar or to the larger calendar in your office.

Some users of PERT transfer the cards to a large diagram, putting dates on the various activities for all to see. This helps others to know where their activity fits and that other activities are dependent on theirs. It provides a spur to keep people on schedule. Date books are fine, but a visual of the entire project will also show vital relationships and give you a way to see how things are shaping up at a glance.

If others are involved in developing the PERT schedule, it gives them a greater sense of responsibility, and it will be a good reminder that their committee or organization or particular interest is only part of the whole.

Try PERT on a single small project first. It will also serve to get you into the habit of thinking through projects in detail before tackling them. Bon voyage!

The Seductive Parishioner

(Continued from page 28)

to it. For example, he might say: "You're a very attractive woman, Mrs. Smith. I'm sorry that you're feeling so lonely. Perhaps you could tell me more about it."

In this way the minister preserves his dignity as well as that of the parishioner. At the same time he provides her with recognition she has apparently been seeking. Be careful that the parishioner does not interpret this as one more step in the seduction process and miss the pastor's attempt to maintain his professional stance.

The minister may ignore the hint of sexual feelings and direct attention on the feelings of loneliness, responding appropriately and empathetically. For example, he might say, "It must be difficult for you to feel so lonely. How do you spend your days? Are there other people in your life that are important to you? What are you and your husband doing together these days since the children have all left the nest?"

Such an approach should clarify the position the minister is going to take and make it easier to work through the problem of loneliness or the frustration of having a husband who seems to be neglecting her. This helps the parishioner look more clearly at her problem and discover better ways of handling her feelings.

When all else fails, the minister might look at his own behavior to see if it lends itself to seduction attempts. If so, he must modify such detrimental behavior to prevent future problems.

This writer once faced this issue by risking vulnerability: "I find you are sexually very attractive to me. I want your friendship. I need your help so that I will always be spiritually strong when any temptation presents itself." In this incident, the writer gained the respect of the parishioner and left with the assurance that with every temptation God will make a way of escape. There was never a recurrence of the woman's behavior, nor was there ever a reminder of what had happened. As a result, the pastor-parishioner relation continued, and both individuals experienced spiritual and emotional growth.

In today's sexually oriented society there is probably someone looking for thrills, real or fantasy, that in counseling could become emotionally or sexually involved. However, the power of Jesus Christ through the impartation of the Holy Spirit within leads to spiritual strength and personal holiness. When a minister sins, he does so only by his own lustful desires. That disqualifies him from ministry, "having loved this present world" (2 Tim. 4:10, KJV). The Bible gives assurance: "Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world" (1 John 4:4, KJV).

WAITING IN PRAYER

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

My soul waiteth for the Lord (Ps. 130:6, KJV).

Deepening prayer is a waiting on God for everything. It is patience in praying. No wonder patience is listed as a part of the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23). Yet how difficult it is to maintain such prayer patience.

Next to the persistent questions *why? why? why?* must be *when? when? when?* Not only do we ask of God *why* He permitted this or that to happen, but we continually ask Him *when* He is going to perform this or that.

We are sick. We ask Him when we are going to be well. We are in financial strain. We ask Him when we are going to come into economic security. We are pressing for a new pastorate that doesn't come. We want to know when. We are leveled with injustices from our enemies. So we ask God when we are going to see justice. We are surrounded by unpleasant circumstances. This prompts us to badger God with, "When am I going to be set free from this?" We have unsaved loved ones for whom we have been praying for years. When, O Lord, are they going to come to Jesus?

When? When? When!

Then it is that we need to come in prayer to Ps. 31:15: "My times are in thy hand" (KJV). And to believe Isa. 30:18: "Blessed are all they that wait for him" (KJV).

Robert Leighton wrote:

> My times are in Thy hand, O Lord! And, surely, that is best. Were I to choose, they should be in no other hands, neither mine own, nor any others. When He withholds mercies or comforts for a season, it is but till the due season. Therefore it is our wisdom and our peace to resign all things into His hands, to have no will nor desires, but only this, that we may still wait for Him. Never was anyone who waited for Him miserable with disappointment.

Waiting is not new to God himself. After all, He waited through six periods of time in creation of this planet before resting during the seventh. And it was God incarnate in Jesus Christ who waited 30 long years before revealing himself as the long-awaited Messiah. Further, it was Jesus' mother, Mary, who waited more than 30 years to see her oldest son show himself in a miracle-working power to the world. Then the 120 waited—tarried—in prayer in Jerusalem's second-story flat till they were endued with Spirit power. Since then, almost 2,000 years have gone by with the Church waiting for the second advent of Christ. The planet itself—with its animal and vegetable kingdoms—will wait still longer through the millennium for the new heaven and the new earth.

Consequently, we wait in good company!

But why does God sometimes allow us to wait in prayer so long? Certainly to cut through our impulsive natures, to corral our bullheadedness, and to pull in our headstrong tendencies to have our own way! Also, waiting in prayer deadens our foolish belief in our own conceits.

Contentment comes from
moment given
To Father's plan for yielded life,
Not from the things the world
would bait
That pay with emptiness and
strife.

Waiting in prayer brings us closer and closer to God alone. It humbles us. Further, it revives the sanctified blessing within our souls and drives us further into the Word so as to circle us round to a moment-by-moment walk with Jesus.

In the Christian hymn "Take Time to Be Holy," we sing: "Run not before Him, / Whatever betide." Yet we do; we run ahead of God. That is why He would have us wait in prayer.

So stop running and start resting. Stop stumbling and start serving. Stop tackling and start trusting.

So patiently I keep my pulse
To measure motion by His
pace.
Then calm in Christ shall settle in
So as to see nought but His
face.

Preacher, wait till you see His face in prayer. After all, the repentant thief waited in pain to see Jesus' face. And when he did, he saw paradise as well. So will you in waiting prayer.

Remember that God is not concerned so much with your *calendar* as He is your *character.* We are bound by time—minutes, hours, days, months, years. God is not. We are imprisoned by our appointments, schedules, and commitments. God is not. We ask ourselves why we are so spiritually weak, so shallow. It is because the calendar has produced hurry, helter-skelter, and hype, whereas God wants for us a character of holiness, humility, and honoring Him. Wait in prayer before the Lord until your calendar recedes and a holy character takes hold in hungering and thirsting.

But why the pain in waiting and the anxiety with its uncertainty? The reason: to bring us closer to the cross of Jesus, a mentioning that is barely sought in this age of luxury and affluence, even within the confines of the church.

To the cross I'd wed myself
So as to see my own will die
In order to know the Father's will
That knows no error, nor no
lie.

The more we wait in prayer, the more we draw into the Cross's power. And the more we settle into the Cross, the more the anxieties leave us in the tarrying. After all, it is in the waiting near the Cross that we grow as the seed grows in time in the soil

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OLD IS GOOD

by Rolland R. Reece
Akron, Ohio

I'm 58 years old. It's a ho-hum age—too young to be revered as a wise old man, too old to be part of an innovative youth movement.

I don't feel at home with the Pepsi generation, nor do I yet have a senior citizen discount card. Occasionally my gray beard prompts some smiling young clerk to give me a discount. I make an effort to smile appreciatively. After all, 42 cents is 42 cents.

What's most dreadful about my age is the realization that I no longer have a long future ahead of me. Charlie, my insurance man, told me last summer—in solicitous and somber tones: "You're getting to that age when you need to get things squared away." Charlie can't bring himself to say, "Death," so he looks down at his necktie and breaks the news to me gently: "Someday you will leave us."

I zinged him: "What I have ahead of me is death, right, Charlie?" He straightened the papers on his desk and adjusted his tie.

When I was in high school and college, people told me, "You have a great future ahead of you."

I liked that. It was exciting. I thought: I'll do this, and I'll achieve that.

And your young men shall see visions (Acts 2:17, RSV).

Then I did a silly thing. I kept myself locked into looking forward to my future. Somewhere, on my way to 50, I made the discovery that I was a long way into my future. How could this have happened to such a nice young man?

Now I hear people saying terrible things to me. "Hey, let us younger guys carry the tables." "That's all right, Mr. Reece, we'll get it out of the trunk in a jiffy." "No, Mr. Reece, you sign on the line above—well, that's all right, we'll correct it later."

My children grew to adulthood overnight. Now they inquire about my health and warn me not to go into certain parts of town: "It's pretty rough over there, Dad."

My glorious future is gone. Now I am to prepare for the golden years: the time of harvest, the autumn of life. I know what those words mean: "Get off the playing field, Pop, you had your turn."

No one puts a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old garment . . . Neither is new wine put into old wineskins (Matt. 9:16-17, RSV).

Get off the field? For all they know, I may still have a few tricks up my sleeve. Well, as a matter of fact, I don't. What I have up my sleeve is what I've always had up my sleeve. But I don't have novelty working for me anymore.

The magazines and papers aimed at the "mature reader" urge me to "get in there and fight for my rights and benefits." I will, but my heart isn't in it. Seniors who drive sports cars, dress in red, and compete in track events get my grudging admiration. But they have abandoned their friends. There must be another way than mimicking the young.

No one after drinking old wine desires new; for he says, "The old is good" (Luke 5:39, RSV).

I'll stay by the things I've learned and put into action. Not out of defiance but in joy, for they have sustained me well across the years.

My grandfather, an Ohio farmer most of his life, moved to California when he was 80 years of age and purchased a citrus ranch. He did what he had always done: connected himself to agricultural experts, used his knowledge and love of the land, worked with his hands, and accepted the challenge of growing a different crop. The complete farmer! I wouldn't be surprised if he is still farming in heaven.

The righteous . . . bring forth fruit in old age (Ps. 92:12, 14, RSV).

I may never be in style again. That's all right. Some of the prizes I won came at a very high cost. I'll not turn away from those investments now. I want the younger generation to know that when they become seniors, they can still enjoy themselves without being driven to act like someone they're not.

Ask for the ancient paths, where the good way is; and walk in it (Jer. 6:16, RSV).

SOUNDS GREAT!
Improving Your Church's Acoustics

by Dennis Baldridge

Have you ever visited another church and wondered why its small choir sounded louder than your choir, though twice the size? Do your church members comment that they have difficulty hearing your sermon or soloists? Has the joy of congregational singing disappeared? After rebuilding your platform, have you noticed that music doesn't sound as good as before? If you identify with any of these problems, then you may have an acoustical problem in your church.

The science of sound engineering, known as acoustics, is an extremely sophisticated and complex subject. However, several aspects can be easily understood and applied to our church settings. The capacity of a speaker to be heard clearly in a church is affected by three basic acoustical aspects: volume level, background noise, and reverberation time.

Volume level refers to how loud a voice is. This is what we hear directly from the person himself and that which is reinforced by a sound system. If the voice is too soft, it will be impossible to hear clearly. There is a general range of volume levels where our ears respond best to sound and easily discern what is being spoken. Technically, this is from a range of about 70 to 90 decibels and roughly corresponds to the sound level of an average factory or loud orchestra.

Background noise is sound that is not specifically needed or wanted during our public services. It can hinder or mask what the speaker is saying. Sources of background noise include heating and air-conditioning systems, traffic, or machinery in a nearby room. A sound technician knows that noise should be at a minimum, especially in the 500- to 4,000-hertz range. This is the frequency range in which we are able to best distinguish what is being spoken.

The feeling of liveness or deadness of a room to sound is known as the reverberation time. It is the number of seconds it takes for a sound to diminish to a specific level. The more lively a room is, the longer the reverberation time. If you were to pop a balloon, you would hear not only the initial pop sound but also sound at reduced levels bouncing off walls, floors, and other surrounding objects. It may take from less than one-half of a second for this sound to go away to over several seconds, depending on acoustics of the room. The time factor is affected by the volume of the room, the amount of surface area represented in all sides of the room, and the material of which the surfaces are made. Hard walls and ceilings reflect sounds, whereas curtains and carpeting absorb them, reducing the overall reverberation time.

In general, speech intelligibility is improved by lowering the reverberation time. This is especially important for children and older adults. Rooms primarily used for children below the age of 13 and adults over the age of 50 should be tailored for these persons. Young children have less-developed listening skills, whereas older adults suffer hearing losses. For these reasons, classrooms for them should have a minimum amount of background noise and a reverb time of no more than 0.4 seconds. The ceiling should be acoustically reflective to provide the best use of the first sounds from the speaker. The floor should be carpeted to soak up as much of the background noise as possible. Unless a sound system is provided, the room should not be over 30 feet in length or width.

On the other hand, acoustical needs for *music* in your church differ greatly from those for speech. Musicians need to be able to hear each other and any accompanying instruments. Choir members especially need to hear each other to stay on pitch and properly harmonize. Musicians love a reverberation time of up to several seconds. It helps give them energy in the music they are providing. Too short a reverberation time yields a lifeless performance.

Congregational singing is the most important musical aspect of our worship service. At this time we are united together singing praises to our God. A sanctuary with a reverberation time that is too low will present problems for congregational singing. Singing together may even seem like a drudgery because the people cannot adequately hear each other. For this reason, we need to be sure that a sanctuary is lively enough for this important aspect of corporate worship.

The optimum reverberation time for a sanctuary changes greatly, depending on the activity. It varies from a short time to give clarity to the pastor's sermon to a long time for lively choral music. A good compromise in reverberation time is from 1.4 to 2.2 seconds.

What can be done to overcome acoustical problems in your church?

1. Remember that *acoustical problems require acoustical solutions.* No amount of sound equipment can completely compensate for an improperly designed room.
2. *Develop an acoustical plan.* Hire an acoustician, not only an architect, when you plan changes. Many builders may create a beautiful room and totally ignore acoustical needs.
3. *Keep the overall sound level loud enough* to maintain optimum speech intelligibility. Slightly "too loud" is better than "not loud enough."
4. If your congregational singing suffers due to an acoustically

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A CHURCH MONEY-SAVER

by Bob Barrett

Erie, Pa.

A problem for many churches is the high cost of maintenance and repair to its property.

Volunteer workers from the congregation can do a great deal of the necessary repairs and upkeep, but there seldom seem to be enough people. Therefore, the church either hires workmen, or, more often, the work lies in default from year to year.

Harry Hill, of First United Methodist Church in Brevard, N.C., found a solution for their shortage of volunteers. He invented the "Ten Hour Club."

When Hill became chairman of the Board of Trustees, he found few available volunteers, and those were called on too often. He came up with a solution that reversed their situation. Rather than a few people doing a lot of work, he found a way to get many people to do a little amount.

The premise of the Ten Hour Club asks each volunteer to contribute only 10 hours of work a year. The solution is so simple that one wonders why no one thought of it before.

What church member could refuse giving only 10 hours out of a whole year? Ten hours involves only a little over three hours a day for three days.

Hill's plan became an overwhelming success. During 1986, the first year, 1,371 hours of time were donated to First Methodist by 110 persons.

Here is a sampling of accomplishments: extensive repainting, minor electrical and plumbing work, door repairs, new library walls, shelving, furnishings and curtains, landscaping, and a Communion table built. Similar work was done at the parsonage.

In 1987 the plan continued under the leadership of Trustee Nels Glesne with 1,718 hours donated. The nursery, toddler, and kindergarten rooms were renovated; additional painting and cleaning were done; tables were repaired; landscaping was further improved; and parking lot lines were painted. Again, similar work was accomplished at the parsonage.

One way to measure the amount of work accomplished is to consider what the church saved in dollars—or rather, what was accomplished at no cost for labor. What would it have cost the church to have hired the 1,718 hours of work done by specialists?

The Ten Hour Club has been so successful because the volunteer is asked to contribute such a small amount of time that he can hardly find a reason to refuse.

The important feature is the limit on the amount of time requested. Without a limit, many church members would refuse to contribute even one hour of work. They are afraid that if they volunteer for even one hour, they will be put on a list to be called on for unlimited work time. The Ten Hour Club plan removes this fear. Once the volunteer has put in his 10 hours, he is free from further assignment.

Hill points out that, in practice, many volunteers actually worked many more than the required 10 hours. But they were not required to do so. Thus they feel that their extra hours are genuinely a freewill offering.

Although the Ten Hour Club plan works, Hill points out that it does not work automatically. Telephone calls to volunteers is only part of it.

Each project must be planned. A time must be chosen. Volunteer workers must be allocated to projects. The leader should give each volunteer advance notice at least a week early. Then the volunteer should be called again just before the workday to remind him.

Hill feels that it is important for the leader to be on hand during each project. Although the leader will put in many more hours than any one volunteer, the volunteers will have a better attitude. They, will not suspect that they are toiling at the church while their leader plays at the lake. Furthermore, Hill suggests that the leader should work along with the others, not merely supervise.

All needed materials for the project should be available before the work begins. For example, paint should be purchased ahead of time, and not sent for after workers are on hand. The delay not only wastes time but also destroys the working mood. When painting, the leader should be aware that he is working with amateurs. He should have huge amounts of floor covering to catch the spills and drops.

"Another practice I consider very important," Hill says, "is to include everyone who holds a church job—from the minister to the chairman of the official board to the music minister. It helps when the others see the staff working with them."

The required work should be within the scope of the volunteer's abilities, of course. If no one is available within the congregation for complicated wiring or heavy plumbing, these jobs should be hired out to specialists. You don't want amateurs taking the boiler apart or tinkering with the air-conditioning system. Hill advises never letting volunteers work higher than 12 feet above floor level.

Benefits to the church from a Ten Hour Club are obvious. But there are benefits to the workers as well. One reward is the fellowship generated by several people working on a common project. Morale runs high. There are jokes, banter, and repartee that always occur in work groups. Some volunteers who seldom come to church begin to take more interest and pride in the building.

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A Society Without Crime

by William Goodman
Leavenworth, Kans.

Americans are discussing crime, courts, judges, laws, sentences, prison, rehabilitation, reform, and safety for citizens to live in a free society. America has become a nation tormented by crime and the fear of crime.

Though known as "a law and order society," citizens are fearful on the streets and in their homes. It has been stated: "At one time we locked up criminals; now the innocent lock themselves in their homes and businesses." Indeed millions are being held hostage to crime on our own streets. After centuries of criminal justice science, it seems we don't know what to do about crime and criminals. Some studies indicate that judges are sentencing more people to prison and giving longer sentences, especially for sex offenders.

However, a person will have to commit many crimes and have been on parole several times before going to prison.

The trend today is to build more prisons, send more people to prison, and give longer sentences. Parole boards are required to scrutinize inmates closer before release; thus overcrowding is occurring in the prison system. There is constant legislation to alleviate the cruel and unusual problems of overcrowded jails and prisons. While judges are sending more people to prison, other judges are ordering wardens to release inmates to end overcrowding in prison. In one situation, a sheriff took a sentenced man to prison to serve his sentence, but the prison officials would not admit him because of overcrowding. The sheriff handcuffed the prisoner to the prison gate and drove off. The warden had to empty a toolshed and put a cot in it; it soon became a home for 10 inmates.

Over 80 percent of those who go to prison have alcohol and drug problems. The largest percentage of those incarcerated have been abused either mentally or physically as children. To reduce crime in our society, we need to deal with basic problems: alcohol, drugs, pornography, and sadistic materials. During a police seminar on crime prevention, all of the police officers agreed that if America could rid itself of alcohol and drug use in our society, crime would be significantly cut, and their jobs would be in jeopardy. But they concluded: "No one will go for that!"

With all that we know about negative aspects of alcohol and drug abuse, why is it unthinkable that we should try to rid ourselves of these evils in our society? People want the right to partake of alcohol, and significant numbers participate in the use of illegal drugs even with the knowledge that it contributes to crime in society. Personal rights to participate in an elected evil must be surrendered for the total good, health, and sanity of society.

Prohibition was working in the United States for all the right reasons. The only failure of Prohibition was that it was not given a chance to work. During Prohibition there was a decrease in crime, alcoholism, diseases (cirrhosis of the liver), unemployment, and family strife. America gave in to the demands of a minority motivated by greed and self-interest in the alcohol business. Total abstinence of alcohol and drug use in our society will reduce crime, criminals, and prison populations.

On the constitutional grounds of freedom of speech, a large segment of society participates in pornography. Consenting adults claim the right to legal voyeurism, announcing: "What we do in private is our business." Yet what one person does in America affects all of society. Statistics reveal the epidemic explosion of sexual crimes with its terrible, traumatic injury to victims as a result of increased acceptance of pornography.

New incest victims increase by 250,000 children yearly. Sex offenders victimize an average of 76 victims before apprehension. An average of 8 victims per apprehended rapist is the result of excessive freedom in a society that has freed itself to self-destruct with pornography. Pornography is addictive. Pornography causes tolerance and escalation. Bigger and bigger doses of emotional stimulation develop. Pornography desensitizes humans to the extent that they no longer are shocked at bizarre presentations of sexuality. People hooked on pornography desire to participate in acts that they observe; thus the increase of sexual crimes in America. Pornographic peddlers defend their rights to make megadollars. The root cause for sexual crimes has to do with permissiveness in a sexually explicit, pornographic society.

Those who demand their constitutional rights to pornography and those who do not want morality legislated must accept responsibility for the sickness and crime against children and the innocent. Society will have to answer for allowing greedy people to take advantage of the weakness of human nature.

We add more police patrols, develop improved social settings, decrease poverty, put more people in prison, give criminals longer sentences, modernize prisons, and allow basic causes of evil to exist, and wonder where it will end. People cause crime, and we must deal with people to solve the problems of crime.

Without God mankind quickly degenerates into subhuman behavior. Without acknowledging God, our source of ethical vitality is disappearing. Morally we are becoming nothing more than a species of clever animals. The man without God is doomed. Evidence found in our society proves that as the vision of God

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The Pastor and the Public School: A Call to Mission and Redemption

by James E. Copple
Wichita, Kans.

At the center of the social, cultural, intellectual, and athletic life of most of our communities is the public school. Pastors and staff serving outside major metropolitan areas find the public school to be the primary meeting place for a variety of activities. These activities include concerts, lectures, forums, and sporting events. The children in our congregations are, for the most part, enrolled in public schools, and public school teachers worship and serve in our churches. In communities with populations below 200,000, the public school system is probably the second- or third-largest employer. Somebody in every congregation is directly affected by the public school system. It is the one pervasive and consistent social influence in the life of the church. Because of this reality, it is essential that spiritual leaders of the church see the public school, not as an enemy to be combated, but as a field for mission, a source of social influence, and the object of compassion.

Many persons within evangelical Christianity have dismissed the public school system and have, instead, created alternatives with the hope of improving educational standards and providing a moral environment more consistent with Christian values. The impulses behind these efforts merit our understanding and, in many cases, our support. Most alternative schools fall to the wayside, however, because churches cannot support alternative education at a cost within the realm of the average middle-class congregation. Therefore, many students will return to the tax-supported public school system. Until, and in the unlikely event, vouchers or tuition tax credits become a reality, the tax-supported public school needs our commitment, not our withdrawal.

The public school should not be feared any more than any other sphere of mission. Because the public school is charged with the educational welfare of our children, it draws considerable public attention and is the object of intense public scrutiny. Emotional concerns for the educational and moral welfare of our children need to be transformed into rational and systematic approaches to education reform. Community involvement was a major component in the 50 reports calling for educational reform that have surfaced since the appearance of the 1983 *A Nation at Risk* report. The church is a part of that community. The pastor and staff can be a vital resource to the schools.

Historically, the church has had an important voice in shaping public education. When discussing church-state issues, we must remember that it was the church that initiated the separation between church and state. It was the church that sought to establish the wall of separation that seeks to keep the institutions apart. Religious leaders of the 17th and 18th centuries did not want the state to encroach upon their religious practices. Supreme Court decisions aside, a pastor and his congregation can influence school board policies, administrative decisions, and classroom performance by becoming an active and positive influence in the life of the school. We must never abandon the vision for an education that enlightens the hearts and minds of children. The public schools can be a part of that vision.

In order to create a rational and healthy relationship with the public school, we must move beyond traditional and often emotional issues that have alienated us from public education. These issues include prayer in public schools, the fear of secular humanism, textbook bias, and the belief that the classroom is the center of valueless and godless hedonism. To be sure, these are, and should remain, concerns. But when the church is perceived by the public as being preoccupied with only these issues, the church will have no choice but to stand outside the institution, looking for ways to enter in.

As a public school teacher, administrator, and pastoral staff member of a congregation, I see the above issues as important items for discussion, but they must not be the issues that define my relationship or attitude toward the local school. Mission, redemption, and living out the incarnation of Jesus Christ must guide our attitudes and relationships. As Jesus was enfleshed in the midst of a broken and confused humanity, so we are to be enfleshed, seeking to embody His holiness and purity. Each Christian living and working within the public school should view the institution as a place for redemption.

The schools are a microcosm of society at large. The staff of our schools see hurt and pain in the lives of children who have encountered divorce, alcoholism, and abuse. Unfortunately, these events come from adults and consequently distort a child's perception of responsibility and compassion. The metropolitan area in which I live has 15 schools with 51 percent of the children coming from single-parent families. Thirty-four percent of all children living in urban centers are living below the poverty line. The Children's Defense Fund has argued that in just one day in the United States, 72 babies die before one month of life; 110 babies die before their first birthday; 9 children die from gunshot wounds; 5 teenagers commit suicide; and 609 teenagers are diagnosed as having sexually transmitted diseases. The report of the Children's Defense Fund also revealed that in one day in the United States, 988 children are abused; 3,288 children run away from home; 49,322 children are in

public juvenile correctional facilities; 2,269 illegitimate children are born; 2,989 kids see their parents divorced.[1]

Ask any public school teacher in your congregation about his daily encounter with the loneliness and hurt of children who suffer from the consequences of sin and brokenness. Children are the victims, and the people of God working and living within the public school should be healers providing the encouraging word of the gospel. The Christian involved in the public school may be the only positive and encouraging force in a child's life. The gospel affects the way we live. Our actions need not be conspicuous or abrasive.

Many evangelical Christians have dismissed the public school system.

The people of God should view this reality as an opportunity to share in the cross of Christ and not as an opportunity to publicly "bash" the school for its failures. Our repeated indictment of the schools to adequately address what we perceive to be the educational needs of our children is an indictment of ourselves. For the local school is a reflection of the community in which we live and serve. Our schools and the public institutions we fund take great pride in local control and community support. As members of that community, the pastor and congregation should ask what their opportunity is for support, not condemnation.

There will always be policies and actions in our schools that disturb us and challenge the way we think. These should be addressed as positively and as redemptively as possible. You are more inclined to be heard when you have been seen at a school function and when you have demonstrated your concern for children. These are people whose opinions are valued. As an administrator in a public school system, I have seen the damage by people within the broader evangelical community who only react and fail to be involved and to choose to enter into community dialogue. These people attack the school system. You can anticipate when they will attack and usually how they will attack. Teachers' reputations are destroyed and board members indicted under broad and sweeping accusations; and, finally, it is the children who suffer most when caught in the crossfire.

As a pastor or staff member in a local congregation, you have potential for being a positive, constructive force in the public school system. Due to the predominance of the school system within our communities, you should make it a focus of your time and effort. To assist you in that endeavor, I have listed several specific suggestions and have identified several programs that might strengthen your witness to the school system.

1. Know the Players. If you have not already done so, make an appointment with the school superintendent and, where possible, the principal of your major high school. Let them know that you want to be supportive of the district and are available, when appropriate, to serve on district committees and should be a resource to individual students and faculty. An important place for service can be textbook adoption committees. Timothy L. Smith has written extensively on what religious issues should be included in textbooks.[2]

2. Attend Board Meetings. At least once a month, attend board meetings of your school district. Introduce yourself to school board members and central office staff. Let them know you are there because you care about the education of our children. Community members who attend board meetings only when there is trouble are the least effective in communicating their message.

3. Be on Campus. Schedule lunches on the campus of the school with students, faculty, and administrators who attend your church, provided the rules permit. Be at important athletic and cultural events held at the school. Be visible and be supportive.

4. Be a Community Resource. You can send a letter to teachers within the district whose teaching responsibilities might include an area of your expertise. Classes in comparative religion, world history, psychology, history, and family issues are classes that often need a minister to speak. You should be the first person that comes to their mind when a speaker is needed to address religious or moral issues. I have seen some creative ministers develop programs based on their travels and expertise in a particular area. Teachers are always looking for additional resources.

5. Back-to-School Prayer Breakfast. If your community does not already sponsor a back-to-school prayer breakfast, you and key Christian business leaders could sponsor one. The prayer breakfast could be held at a church or even school site with a featured Christian author or speaker to address teachers, administrators, and staff of the district. Custodians, paraprofessionals, kitchen staff, and all employees of the school district should be invited. This is an excellent way to begin a school year, for it demonstrates your commitment to be a supportive community activist.

6. Latchkey Programs. The working and living conditions of our society are changing. More and more children are living in single-parent homes or homes where both parents work. The need for quality day care has become a national crisis. As much as we might like a parent to always be at home and available to his children, the economic pressures of our society demand that we face other realities. Seventy-two percent of women over the age of 20 are working for a variety of reasons. Your church can help. You can start a latchkey program that provides early morning and late afternoon day care for children whose parents work. The parents pay a minimum fee, and you pick up and discharge the children at

Historically, the church has had an important voice in shaping public education.

their appropriate school. You can employ several workers who are available from 6 A.M. to 9 A.M. and then from 4 P.M. to 6 P.M. The parents pay them directly for their service. This gives your church increased visibility in the community and in the school. There is little or no expense to the church, and you have provided an important, meaningful ministry to your neighbors. The security of knowing that your children are being cared for by responsible, caring adults is a security being sought by millions of working parents.

7. Early Christian Bible Study. An excellent tool of evangelism and discipleship is an invitation to students and faculty to participate in Bible studies conducted one day a week, or as often as you like, before beginning the school day. This allows students opportunity to be together in a spiritual context before confronting the challenges of their day. It builds community within teen groups. Exciting and interesting ministries can evolve from this experience.

These are only several suggestions designed to better our relationship and ministry to the public school. Many of you are providing these ministries and much more. It is important that we begin to see the public school as a field for mission, a source of influence, and an object of our compassion. We must be healers in their midst. We must seek to serve, not condemn. It is easy to criticize, to stand outside an institution and reject all that it stands for. God, in Christ Jesus, chose to be enfleshed in the midst of a broken and corrupt world. Can we do less as His disciples? I think not. Being enfleshed in the midst of the most pervasive social institution of a democratic society is taking the claims of Jesus seriously. The Church, if we are to be an effective change-agent in our world, must not sound the trumpet of retreat but of engagement. As we become engaged, we live, speak, and proclaim the word of redemption.

NOTES

1. See "Save the Children: Too Many Promises, Too Little Help," *U.S. News and World Report*, November 7, 1988, 34-44.

2. See *Religion and Public Education* 14, no. 4 (Fall 1988), for a reprint of Smith's views on textbook selection in public schools.

Waiting in Prayer

(Continued from page 32)

of the pot. On the other hand, in the rush, we grind to powder.

Waiting in prayer allows the necessary time for the joy to grow in our hearts. That is why the Bible can speak of joy in tribulations (e.g., 2 Cor. 7:4, KJV). How so? Because of the joy in a closer fellowship with Jesus, the Source of "joy unspeakable and full of glory" (1 Pet. 1:8, KJV).

Waiting in prayer assures us furthermore that we want from Him not only things but himself. Waiting in prayer tests whether or not we are sincerely seeking first the kingdom of God or our own kingdoms of things, success, comfort, and power.

In other words, seek first the Kingdom that is eternal, and let all else wait!

I would resign my right to know
The morrow with its mystery hidden.
'Tis only God who has the right
To hold the key from now till heaven.

In the meantime, wait in prayer.

SOUNDS GREAT!

(Continued from page 34)

dead room, *try singing the hymns slightly faster.* This tends to smooth out rough areas and help avoid some gaps between notes.

5. Remember that *different materials affect sound differently.* Hard surfaces reflect sounds, and soft ones absorb them. Use these to control or boost the sound as needed. For example, place a piece of Plexiglas on the floor under your grand piano to take advantage of the sound coming from the underside of the instrument. If the piano rests on carpet, most of the sound is absorbed. Plexiglas, a hard surface, reflects the sound where needed, and yet it is visually acceptable. On the other hand, placing a noisy object such as a fan on carpeting would soak up the unwanted background noise.

In summary, remember to have the proper sound level, minimum background noise, and appropriate reverberation time for the sanctuary or classroom. Applying these principles encourages participation and active listening in public services.

Society Without Crime

(Continued from page 36)

fades, men first become like clever animals, then prey on one another. Great political power has been placed in the hands of men who have no respect nor fear of God. Many of them believe themselves restrained by no absolute code of conduct. Thus we have rampant evil and crime in our great society.

If we can restore our vision of God, we may halt the increase of crime among us. A society influenced by God's Word will be less self-destructive if it respects moral rules that cannot be changed at the whims of lobbyists and politicians. A living God is the only valid source of moral living. Founded on standards of righteousness, legislating morality has worked for centuries.

Belief in God works to restore decency in society. We must resolve to be a society that acknowledges God and follows His guidance to righteousness and clean living. Through grace, God illuminates our minds. God himself helps us bring human nature under control. With God's moral principles working in human society, good men do not commit crimes.

People say, "You will never get everyone to quit drinking alcohol, using drugs, being involved in pornography, and committing crime." Our Heavenly Father inspires us to work to help perfect our society and ourselves. With God, we have inner peace. So let His peace flow to others; through Jesus Christ people can be changed and peace can come in our land. The good news of Jesus is our only hope.

At the Edge of Calvinism Again

by Joseph Seaborn II
Marion, Ind.

At the Methodist Conference of 1745, Wesley raised the question, "Wherein may we come to the very edge of Calvinism?" His answer was multifaceted. "In ascribing all good to the free grace of God. In denying all natural free-will, and all power antecedent to grace. And, in excluding all merit from man; even for what he has or does by the grace of God."[1]

For all its brevity this statement encompasses a broad range of common ground. Typical of his persistent commitment to a balanced view, Wesley, even in the heat of theological controversy, refused to place a whole system under interdict because he detected here and there certain serious flaws. The very fact that he was willing to venture near the edge of a theological system that on a pragmatic level had caused him enormous grief is a sign of Wesley's magnanimity and discernment.

Of course, Wesley decried the rigid decrees of Calvinism. He revolted from the premise that human free will was a useless label incompatible with the nature of a sovereign God. Of course he did not dulcify his stance against the stringent points of double predestination in order to placate the Calvinists within his societies. Nor did he compromise his position on free will in order to make his teachings more widely palatable.

Wesley was a reformer of the highest order, and reformers must hemorrhage in order for others to bleed. He was about the business of transforming society, and his radical calling thrust him to the ultimates of his theology. Either free will was a genuine article, or else it was not. Wesley lived and died believing that it was. He put the point succinctly: "Let it [Scripture] mean what it will, it cannot mean that the Judge of all the world is unjust. No scripture can mean that God is not love, or that his mercy is not over all his works; that is, whatever it prove beside, no scripture can prove predestination."[2]

But what startles the contemporary reader of Wesley is the stunning appreciation he showed toward Calvinists in the practical matters of faith and life. For all his virulence against predestination, he recognized that in points of practice many Calvinists preached and behaved as if human will made a difference after all. That was a welcomed pattern to Wesley, who realized early and correctly that logic is a marvelous thing, but it does not always rule the day.

In the flow of history, human thought and practice have a way of making armchair logic yield to real-life reason, and in this instance Wesley was delighted with what he saw. He knew where Whitefield stood, but he also saw the harvest of souls from Whitefield's preaching. He knew that his societies contained members who leaned more toward predestination than toward free will, but in dealing with this mixture, Wesley exhibited a wisdom born of observation; the end result for both should be the same. All people needed to grow in the nurture and admonition of God; and what better place for growth to occur than in the societies?

When an enemy accused Wesley of ousting preachers from his conference because of their stand on predestination, he roundly denied it. "There has not been," he declared, "a single instance of this kind. Two or three voluntarily left us after they had embraced these options. But it was of their own mere motion."[3] We may deplore the term *tolerance* in theological circles, but given the vitriolic nature of the arguments over predestination and the numerous confrontations that Wesley had with those of the Calvinist cause, the level of his charitableness is remarkable. He was as aware as anyone that church history was ravaged with examples of organizations that had seized and overdone individual fragments of the truth. In his weaker moments, Wesley must have been tempted to monomania himself. The clarity of his positions and the forcefulness of his person would certainly have won him a delightfully bigoted following. But by his own insistence, extreme polarity never occurred.

If Wesley were with us today, I wonder if he wouldn't call Wesleyans and Calvinists to a new level of friendship. Would he argue that our points of commonality now outweigh our points of division? Consider these issues.

A. ONCE SAVED, ALWAYS SAVED. A more careful statement by Calvinists of what that maxim means shows that a growing number of them do not treat it as a neat formula as rigid as the double decree. If, after an apparent conversion, a person reverts to the old way of life, many Calvinists are willing to wonder out loud about the genuineness of the original commitment. On the other hand, Wesleyans are striving zealously to assure their followers that salvation is not as easy to lose as one's umbrella. They are arguing accurately that conversion is not required after every sin. Somewhere along the way, if both sides continue in the same direction, there may be a meeting of the minds.

B. OUTREACH AND EVANGELISM. Calvinists are a long sea mile from the days when the purist version of their theology taught that God's will so superseded human will as to make the latter of no effect. The evan-

gelism campaigns of the past generation alone are evidence that Calvinists have in fact taken the lead in seeking to evangelize the world and persuade men and women to exercise their wills and turn to Christ. Wesleyans, too, have pursued evangelism with intense zeal. The number of people engaged in the task are different in each camp, but none can doubt but that our goals are precisely the same.

C. HOLINESS. The spreading of scriptural holiness in the land has long been a hallmark of the Wesleyan movement. But John Wesley taught and Wesleyans today know that perfection does not mean that every thought that enters the mind is pure. On the other hand, close attention to the Calvinist preachment of today will reveal a surprisingly strong call for holiness in heart and life. We may still be differing on the hour and article of entering into one aspect of this experience, but is it possible that our aim is again remarkably similar?

Perhaps in the days ahead there will emerge an awareness on both sides that if the gospel is to get out, we need each other more than we know. If we can borrow from the Calvinist doctrine of assurance and they can benefit from the Wesleyan teaching on holiness, the whole of evangelical fervor can gain a new impetus for the task ahead. At the very least we should refrain from propping up barriers that should have been allowed to crumble long ago. The Kingdom's work is too crucial and our energies are too limited for that.

Do you suppose that if Wesley were with us today he would call for a closer look at the ties that bind us rather than the matters that divide us? Would he think it was time for Wesleyans and Calvinists to look at their edges again?

NOTES

1. John Wesley, *The Works of John Wesley*, 3rd ed., 14 vols. (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1978), 8:285.
2. Ibid. 7:383.
3. John Wesley, *The Journal of the Rev. John Wesley*, ed. Nehemiah Curnock (London: Epworth Press, 1938), 5:116.

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Juggling Motherhood with Ministry

by Sharon R. Harvey
Montreal

A first child has a way of taking over the time you spent before in ministry. Bleary-eyed and up all hours of the night, a new mother can find even ordinary church activities overwhelming. As the baby's needs cry loudly, one feels like saying no to all requests that come along.

As a mother, it is important to know to what God is now calling you. Suddenly you are the caretaker of a life that is depending on you. The influence of your nurture and care affects the eternity of the young life you now hold.

Motherhood helps us focus again on our priorities. Like a zombie going through motions of diapering, feedings, and laundry, one realizes the need to rely on the Lord for strength and endurance. The babyhood stages that make us utterly desperate at times teach us more about prayer.

Because a new child exhausts all one's emotional resources, one must continue to cultivate the inner life. It is easy to neglect daily devotions after a trying day, but you'll find yourself empty spiritually without those few moments asking God to speak through His Word. Those missed moments accumulate to bring despair.

Reserve two things for yourself—first a nap and then a quiet moment to continue reading. Books can spark vitality, motivating us to continue on joyfully.

Mothers must decide what God wants them to do in ministry. For some, the care of a baby may be enough to expect for a while. For others, unavoidable responsibilities continue. In our situation, I knew that going with my husband in visitation was necessary to plant a new church. Since our fixed income did not allow for the cost of baby-sitting, we took our son with us. We canvassed together in snow and rain. And can you believe it! Our son got us in many doors!

Look for new opportunities. Life is meant to be shared. Get out of your house and join other mothers. There is a tendency to isolate yourself and not go anywhere, since it seems like such an effort.

Starved for conversational exchange and fellowship with other mothers, a friend joined me to start a Young Mothers Club in our community. This support group took some effort on our part, but it was rewarding in many ways. We enlarged our friendships as we identified with other mothers. At the same time, we received helpful information regarding baby care from professional sources.

Through this ministry, though not sponsored by the church, my friend came to accept Jesus into her life. New mothers are often receptive to the gospel.

Perhaps as never before, a woman desires to make her life count for God. Daily demands of a growing child press for attention. But a mother can learn that ministry is an integral part of her life, touching all she does.

Can Ministers Opt Out of Social Security?

Submitted by the Board of Pensions and Benefits USA of the Church of the Nazarene

A Question Often Asked

"My adviser has recommended that, as a minister, I can elect out of Social Security and put my money into an annuity program, thereby securing a better retirement. Is this true? Is it legal? What forms might be involved?"

A Law Often Misunderstood

The Tax Code does provide a means for *some* ministers in *some* denominations to exercise an option to terminate Social Security coverage for their ministerial earnings. The proper form (IRS Form 4361) must be used, and it must be filed on the correct basis of religious belief. If approved by the IRS, only earnings from ministerial services are exempt from self-employment tax. Form 4361 specifically states, "Once the exemption is approved, you cannot revoke it."

Some are of the opinion that the form may be filed anytime. However, the current version of Form 4361 (revised August 1989 and not scheduled to expire until October 31, 1991) states that the form must be filed "by the date your tax return is due, including extensions, for the second tax year in which you had at least $400 of net earnings from self-employment, any of which came from services performed as a minister." Some have misunderstood this provision to mean "two years after ordination." However, in some denominations a district-licensed minister may file taxes as a minister prior to ordination. It is at this same point that the two years must begin.

The individual filing the Form 4361 must certify, by signature, that specific statements are correct. The first statement is as follows:

> I certify that I am conscientiously opposed to, or because of my religious principles I am opposed to, the acceptance (for services I perform as minister . . .) of any public insurance that makes payments in the event of death, disability, old age, or retirement; or that makes payments toward the cost of, or provides services for, medical care. (Public insurance includes any insurance system established by the Social Security Act.)

Under the Tax Reform Act of 1986 and effective after December 31, 1986, any minister who applies for exemption from Social Security based on conscientious opposition is required to inform the ordaining, commissioning, or licensing body of his denomination that he is conscientiously opposed to the receipt of "any public insurance that makes payments in the event of death, disability, old age, or retirement; or that makes payments toward the cost of, or provides services for, medical care, including the benefits of any insurance system established by the Social Security Act." The second statement deals with certifying that the applicant has informed the denomination.

The third statement certifies that the applicant has not filed Form 2031. (Before 1968, one had to sign Form 2031 to elect into Social Security. Now, all ministers are included automatically unless there is a basis for electing out.)

The fourth statement deals with the specific request for exemption and certifies an understanding as to which earnings the exemption would apply if granted.

According to the Form 4361 "General Instructions," before your application can be approved, the IRS must *again* certify that you are aware of the grounds for exemption and that you want the exemption on that basis.

> When your completed form 4361 is received, IRS will mail you a statement that describes the grounds for receiving an exemption under section 1402(e). You must certify that you have read the statement and seek exemption on the grounds listed on the statement. The certification must be made by signing a copy of the statement under penalties of perjury and mailing it to the Service Center that issued it, not later than 90 days after the date the statement was mailed to you. If it is not mailed by that time, your exemption will not be effective until the date the signed copy is received by the Service Center. Once the exemption is approved, you cannot revoke it.

These measures are to prevent persons from seeking exemption simply on economic grounds.

A "Catch" Often Overlooked

Key words in qualifying for exemption from Social Security coverage on ministerial earnings are "religious principles" and "conscientiously opposed to the *acceptance* of any public insurance." The tax regulations and court decisions are quite clear. Religious principles cannot be simply the personal conviction that perhaps Social Security will not be there when you retire, or that a better retirement can be purchased through an annuity. The belief must be an integral part of your religious system of beliefs, your theology.

Further, this religious principle must be one that would prevent you from ever asking for the benefits from such a plan based on your church salary. No basis exists for an objection to paying the taxes, or to the level of the taxes to be paid. It is as though you would be saying, "Even if I have to pay the taxes, I can never file for the benefits, since my theology will never allow me to accept them."

The Church of the Nazarene, for example, has one of the highest lev-

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TEACHING KEENAGERS

by Lois Hoadley Dick
Newton, N.J.

The aged in America are no longer second-class citizens. They are almost 30 million strong with great political and economic clout. In 1900 the average life expectancy was 47; today it is 75. In 10 years it may be 80. And in the next decade—100?

Americans not only are living longer but also are more influential than any other older generation of the past.

Therefore, a Sunday morning adult class in the church, which lumps together everyone over the age of 20, cannot possibly meet the needs of retired people.

Senior citizens are not raising families. More than 85 percent of seniors over age 65 are no longer employed. This presents a vast untapped source of energy and know-how. Many seniors who appear unresponsive are bored. Not everyone looks upon a cruise around the world as the ultimate goal of retirement. The continual menu of never-ending recreation offered seniors soon palls.

Retired people love to learn. Witness the night courses at high schools, studies through the mail, and college credits available to older people. In the church, seniors relate more readily to a teacher their age, or middle-aged, than to a young person. The Bible class does not have to be on Sunday morning in a building located on a certain street, though this is certainly desirable.

The class may be in a housing project, an apartment development, a retirement home, or a nursing home—anywhere in a neighborhood where seniors are found. Many elderly people do not drive, have no public transportation, and have no driver to pick them up.

The scriptures used should meet their needs. Address fears common to seniors. Deal with physical and emotional feelings that come with age. Settle the memory of failures and regrets of the past that tend to return in later years. Offer seniors a future in the church.

Seniors need to be stimulated to learn and will enjoy the feeling of satisfaction that follows. End the fallacy in thinking that says, "Memorizing is for kiddies," and "The adult class is for passive listening." "All things being equal, there is no significant loss in basic memory function until after the age of 80—again, probably for reasons other than age," states Dr. Muriel Oberleder in her book *Avoid the Aging Trap.*

Seniors should have more motivation to attend a Bible class than simply "loyalty to the church." The right teacher and Bible lessons will provide this motivation.

How do I know? One year I taught a class of ladies in their 80s and 90s in a retirement home. About half of them were able to attend their own churches on a Sunday morning, so I chose lessons that would not sound like a sermon or duplicate Sunday morning teaching. I used visualized lives of famous Christians, both on flannelgraph and flash cards.

Visual aids for grown-ups? Why not? "The eyes are 1,000 times more effective in sweeping up learning as the ears," according to one educator. Yet some teachers use "talk" as their only tool with adults.

We also memorized—sometimes several verses at a time. Since seniors have difficulty in *retrieving* stored information, it is important to *review.* Not to review is to leave the work half done. I made 8½″ x 11″ flash cards with reference and first word printed in large letters. We learned at least a verse a week and reviewed continually. My ladies already knew familiar passages of Scripture that are read often at memorial services, Communion services, and on holidays, so we added them to our repertoire.

Our class was not a worship service, not especially a Bible study, but simply "story time." And as a teacher, I had to compete with prime-time television, since we met Saturday evenings.

A common language between teacher and class is a must. Today's slang would not be appreciated nor understood. Seniors have lovely, old-fashioned values and old-fashioned ethics. The era in which they grew up is of great interest to them, the years when memory was strongest. Seniors with a church background also remember the pioneer missionaries of the 1800s and love to hear those stories retold in a modern way with pictures.

In my class, no one was blind, but all had hearing impairments of various degrees. Deafness is even more isolating than blindness. A teacher of seniors must speak loudly, slowly, and clearly without using amplification, which magnifies noises for those with hearing aids.

Each week I photocopied a "Mystery Question" as homework and gave it out after the story. I began with, "Was Abraham a Jew?" since a few of us had discussed this. I listed references in the Bible to look up.

"Mystery Questions" had nothing to do with the lesson; they were chosen to arouse curiosity and encourage the ladies to open their Bibles and search. One of my class joined us each week especially because she looked forward to this homework. A neighbor who did not attend church met with us.

Most of the ladies came from Christian backgrounds. I kept my teaching nonsectarian and avoided any controversy. Old age brings so many fears and ailments that one of my goals was to be sure they knew there was more to God's grace than "saving grace." There is also "grace to help in time of need," for which we may "come boldly" (Heb. 4:16, KJV). We also discussed heaven,

worsening world events, why Christians suffer persecution, besides reviewing from time to time the major Bible doctrines.

With seniors, a smile and gentle manner often hides great physical suffering. When is the last time you saw an elderly person cry or give vent to their emotions? They have lost that power of expression, and it is very hard on them.

Seniors have a short attention span, so lessons and stories should not drag. I tried to avoid stories that continued from week to week. My class lasted only 30-40 minutes.

Seniors bring a wide experience of life with them. The teacher feels rewarded, knowing that they understand life and that it is not necessary to explain as one does with children. Also, there is no discipline problem in teaching seniors.

One of the worst fears of old age is feeling useless. Depression follows. Many seniors are lost without work of some kind. The suicide rate for American men is four times higher after retirement than at any other age.

In the church, the class of seniors who have so much leisure time may be offered volunteer work. The American Association for Retired Persons, for example, has 350,000 registered volunteers. Seniors may teach their wisdom and skills to younger ones in the nursery. With so many single parents and working mothers today, seniors are urgently needed to serve the Lord.

They may be mediators to settle minor problems. They may work in the needle arts for missions, cook for church suppers, baby-sit, offer chauffeur service, prepare crafts and handwork for busy teachers, be a prayer partner to a new Christian, give financial advice to young married couples, tend a church bookstore, or send weekly cards to the absent.

Seniors in a church will feel they belong if the teacher phones them once a week whether they need it or not! Be sure each senior member has a listing of phone numbers of all the others and a preferred time that each person would enjoy a phone call from a friend.

My ladies still read widely, so we started a library of Christian books, especially those in large print. We added a few moments of prayer time before we parted. Awards, simply for being there, pleased them. Awards were very inexpensive: a butterscotch candy, a bookmark, a homemade cookie, a decorated felt cutout, pens, pencils. Many items can be found in dime stores for $1.00 a dozen. Or even a 15¢ postcard to write a friend. Creatures made from pom-poms. Fruit, especially, is always welcome. Oranges, peaches, and plums often sell at six for $1.00.

What are the rewards of teaching the elderly? Just hearing an occasional answer to prayer is one reward. Greta told this story:

> During World War I, I worked in a factory in Germany. We girls sat around a long table, cutting patterns and sewing. Everything was rationed. One day I had used all my food coupons, and there would be nothing for supper. I prayed. "God will send bread," I told my friends. "He will send it before I leave tonight at five o'clock." Around noon the girls began to poke fun at me. No bread.
>
> By two o'clock they laughed. "Will God drop bread from the sky?" they asked. "Will it walk in through the door?"
>
> By four-thirty, no bread. I never lost my faith. I knew God would answer prayer. At five minutes before five a knock came on the factory door. "Does Greta Muller work here?" A strange man handed in a large shopping bag. "Please give her this." It was full of bread!

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Can Ministers Opt Out of Social Security?

(Continued from page 42)

els of participation in Social Security of any denomination of its size or larger. This has been true since the very earliest days of Social Security coverage for ministers. Most local churches have a practice of reimbursing part, if not all, of the minister's Social Security tax, as well as that of lay staff. By practice and polity, there appears to be no basis for an exemption from Social Security self-employment tax for Nazarene ministers.

If You Made a Mistake in a Past Election for Exemption

Some ministers who previously made an election for exemption have become aware that they made their decision based on erroneous information. As a result of their expressed desire to reenter the Social Security System, Congress made provision in the Tax Reform Act of 1986 for a brief "window of opportunity" to be opened to those persons to opt back into Social Security without having to pay the back taxes (SECA). Of course, no Social Security coverage was to be retroactive for the years one was exempt from SECA tax. (Only earnings on which SECA tax was paid is included when one's benefit is calculated.) The "window of opportunity" closed as of April 15, 1988.

The Pensions office of the Church of the Nazarene is unaware of any formal provision that now exists to allow ministers to revoke previous exemptions and "opt back into" Social Security. If there were such a formal provision, no doubt it would include paying the back taxes, interest, and penalties. Usually, amended tax returns can only be filed retroactively for three years. If you are a minister who has opted out of Social Security based on erroneous information and wish to now participate, it will no doubt require the services of professional legal and tax advisers to determine for your unique situation if there is any course of action that may accomplish that end.

The information contained in this article is of a general nature. It is not offered as specific legal or tax "advice." Each person, local church board, and district should evaluate their own unique situation in consultation with their local legal and tax advisers.

Our Responsibility to Train Musicians for Church Music Ministry

by Evonne Neuenschwander
Hastings, Nebr.

Music is one factor that keeps churches small.

Paul instructed his understudy, Timothy:

Devote yourself . . . to teaching. Do not neglect your gift . . . Be diligent . . . give yourself wholly to them . . . Persevere in them [students] because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers (1 Tim. 4:13- 16).

The Church of the Nazarene was founded by educated leaders but in its beginning days ministered predominately to the poor. The poor often do not have the means to obtain a formal education, therefore many of our ministers were self-educated. Our leaders, of course, saw the need for an educated ministry, so they designed the Ministers Course of Study. Also, the Church of the Nazarene early began the establishment of colleges and universities. Today we are proud to have 30 institutions of higher education.

Thirty or 40 years ago there were not many professional people in our churches. Dr. Howard Hamlin said that we "Nazarenes have raised our professional members, not won them to the church, for the most part."

Perhaps this accounts for the fact that even though we were early known as a "singing church," we probably were rarely accused of having formally educated musicians, except near our colleges.

Today, happily, we do have many educated musicians, both raised in and won to the church. However, many of our churches have inadequate music programs. It would be shocking to know how many churches have *no* keyboard accompaniment at all.

It is not uncommon for a church board to ask the question, when considering a minister as pastor, if his wife can play the piano or organ.

Our son and his family moved to a university city where he taugnt in the physics department. On Sunday morning, as he and his wife and two small children would leave their home, the music from the great pipe organ in the church next door would ring out the great hymns that he dearly loved to hear, played in a way he loved to hear them. When they arrived at their church across town, they walked into dead silence, except for conversation with friends—and on many, many Sundays, no accompaniment of any kind for the congregational singing. The one and only person in the congregation who could play a little was an air force pilot who was out on flying missions more often than he could attend the service. This meant the people sang a cappella much of the time.

Our daughter and her husband moved to a city in Texas near the army base where he is stationed. Their first Sunday in that local church found *no* accompaniment and the pastor leading the singing out of necessity. Since our son-in-law sang a little, and because he was willing, he was appointed song director the very next Sunday. His directing simply meant calling out the hymn number to be sung. They still have no accompaniment of any kind other than tapes for special music.

If you have traveled much across the church at the grass roots level, you know the problem—unless you have brought your musicians or been the speaker or singer where musicians have been brought in for you.

Perhaps you are saying, "But those must be very small churches." The fact is *most* churches *are* small

churches. In my opinion, far too often, the music is *one* factor that helps *keep* them small.

According to Dr. B. Edgar Johnson's office as of June 3, 1989, in the Church of the Nazarene:

> Only 5.9 percent of our churches have more than 300 members; 6.3 percent have 200-300 members; 21.4 percent have 100-200 members; 29.9 percent have 50-100 members; 34.4 percent have 50 members or less.

Approximately two-thirds of our churches have 100 or less members. More than half of those churches have 50 or less members.

The district my husband serves as superintendent has 39 churches. Two of these churches have exceptionally good music programs. Two others are excellent: something you would tell your friends about. Eighteen have acceptable music—nothing offensive, but nothing you would probably write home about or invite your neighbors and friends to especially hear. Eleven other churches have *much* to be desired musically. The remaining 6 have no musicians at all. They may have a person willing to do the best he can; any of us would agree it is totally unacceptable, but only the most loyal Nazarene would stay for the service and endure the pain. The musicians themselves are pleading for help!

IS THERE A SOLUTION TO THIS PROBLEM? What can be done to strengthen areas of weakness at the local level of church music?

We need many Timothys—or ministers gifted in music, not neglecting their gifts, and giving themselves diligently to teaching others. We need to extend our own ministry, "saving ourselves," if you please—not a "take it or leave it" proposition. Therefore, I suggest four steps toward a solution.

STEP 1: EACH CHURCH MUSICIAN SHOULD HAVE AN UNDERSTUDY WHERE HE SERVES AND SHOULD CHALLENGE ALL CHURCH MUSICIANS TO DO THE SAME.

I mean, not only have students in the classroom, though we must do that, but have an understudy—a person receiving on-the-job training. Allowing him to stand by our side during choir practice, directing along with us, and leading the choir. Give them opportunities to direct congregational singing, teach them proper technique that enhances freedom and the liberty of the Spirit. It could mean placing a second piano in the sanctuary and allowing your understudy to play along with you, feeling the tempo and interpretation with you as you feel it. Teach him skills that not only include proper technique but also enhance the spontaneity of the Spirit. Perhaps the organ student could sit by the organ bench, watching the organist at work, learning to anticipate his every move as the particular needs arise.

Musicians are pleading for help.

In an excellent church in Nebraska, a husband and wife team, graduates of a very fine local college, served effectively as ministers of music on minimal salary. Their talent far exceeded what the local church was able to pay. Therefore, when an offer came, they left, but the church suffered a drastic decline. If, when they had left, this music team had been training someone consciously and consistently by example and person-to-person, on-the-job training, that church might not have lost nearly so much of its "flying high" altitude to a near "crash landing." A musically unskilled layman was left to direct the congregational singing, the pastor directed the choir numbers, and a lady had to play the piano who plays predominantly by ear.

I would challenge all church musicians to *not* neglect to give themselves to teaching others, whether on a formal or informal basis.

STEP 2: ENCOURAGE CHURCH PLANTER MUSICIANS.

District superintendents talk about church growth and the need for church planters. The need is equally obvious for church planter musicians who would give themselves as completely as the church planter pastor to assist with the important ministry of music in the church. Without it the church planting endeavor is greatly hindered, and the goal of church growth is not realized.

A friend of mine whose husband pioneered a church in Minnesota was forced to become the church pianist. There was *no one else* to do it. My friend did her best, even though she had had only three months of piano lessons, with only one lesson per week. She could play the piano with her right hand only.

Wouldn't it have been helpful if a denominational leader could have looked through a file of applicants for church planter musicians and with the Lord's guidance selected a person or a couple who had said, "I will give two years to help a church get started. I'll work full-time to support myself, if necessary, give my time to the church, and have a music program that will honor the Lord and the church. Non-Christians hopefully will come to hear and be drawn to Christ and the church and return, bringing others with them. I'll also train someone else while I am there to carry on after I leave, if the Lord provides the person who is willing to learn. I believe God will supply an income to meet my needs."

The church could encourage and recognize church planter musicians, home mission musicians, or musicians willing to assist any church. Many musicians would be willing to contribute their services for a designated period of time, not only providing adequate music, but also, by means of training, leaving that church with an acceptable music program that would enhance church growth.

The church has this kind of volunteer ministry for other programs, but very little, if any, for the music needs of the church. We appreciate local volunteer musicians. What a difficult time we would have without them, but we need musicians *willing to go BEYOND* their local congregations to be used as musician missionaries.

In other areas, volunteers apply, are brought into headquarters for training, sign a contract, are given an assignment, and upon completion of that assignment receive recognition for their services. This could and should be done with musicians. We need church planter musicians, church musicians willing to sacrifice

the comforts of multi-musician churches and willing to seek out churches with needs where they can minister and train, to persevere in teaching, receiving a blessing themselves, and saving others—perhaps even saving a church. It would help make small churches into larger and/or more effective churches for winning the lost to Jesus Christ.

STEP 3: ENCOURAGE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES TO MAKE MORE ROOM FOR PREPARING MUSICIANS TO SERVE AND TEACH AT THE LOCAL CHURCH LEVEL.

We are grateful for the foresight of our early leaders to establish institutions for the training of ministers and laymen for academic excellence in a Christian environment. Where would we be without them? However, far too few of our church pianists and organists have learned the skill of improvisation at a holiness college.

Only a certain percentage of our congregations attend or have attended one of our colleges. Of those who do attend, only a small percentage choose music as their major studies. Of those students with music majors, subtract music educational majors that prepare for state certification in the public school with little or no time for electives. Then subtract students who choose an instrument other than piano, organ, or voice. From those who do study these instruments, subtract those who study serious music only, or major in performance. Then of the very, very few who do receive adequate training in hymn improvisation or of those who receive a church music degree, how many actually return to their home church to minister and train?

A lot of churches need musicians, trained in church music. A lot of Nazarene musicians with degrees feel inadequate to teach, or even play for the church service, unless it is a written arrangement. If it is difficult to find a piano teacher inside the church who can teach improvisation, it is almost impossible to locate one in the local community.

A brilliant young lady, a junior in one of our colleges, is majoring in music and is the accompanist for the college concert choir. This young lady is asked by her parents and grandparents every time she comes home for a holiday or the summer, "Have they taught you to play the piano for church yet?"

Each time, though eager to learn hymn improvisation, she replies, "Not yet. They tell me there *may* be a course offered in hymn improvisation next semester—or the one after that."

Her mother told me recently, "We sent her to a holiness college because we thought for sure she would learn how to play hymns for church. But she cannot, and we are terribly disappointed." I have heard statements like this from one end of the continent to the other.

Nazarene schools require that all students seeking a degree must pass a course in Old Testament and New Testament. Why can't we require that *all* Nazarene keyboard majors take classes in hymn improvisation? Sadly, some of our colleges and universities do not offer hymn improvisation, even as an elective on a consistent, in-depth basis.

Academic deans often suggest that there is no room in the schedule for such a program. They know they must prepare students with music majors for positions where they can earn money upon graduation. I believe that our schools could offer a degree that would prepare a student for a full-time job teaching class and private piano and organ if hymn improvisation pedagogy were included in their requirements. What preparation could better meet the description of the purpose of our Nazarene colleges to **"meet the needs of our churches"** as described in the Education Commission report? Surely this is not asking too much to "save" ourselves, as Paul said to Timothy.

STEP 4: ENCOURAGE THE INCLUSION OF MUSIC COURSES IN THE COURSE OF STUDY AS A REQUIREMENT FOR ORDINATION OF MINISTERS.

The colleges and universities requiring music courses for an A.B. degree with a major in religion are to be commended.

In colleges where music is offered as an elective, I know of student ministers most needing the training in music who stayed as far away from those courses as possibe. They avoided music like a dreaded disease.

In one college where a course in music is required for ministers, a student was overheard to say, "Well, I may not have learned much about music in this class. But I can tell you for sure, *I will appreciate the musicians in my church from now on."* Thank the Lord for new insight in this future minister. He will be a better minister for having had this required class.

Each church musician should have an understudy.

Unfortunately ministerial training programs often have not dealt with this problem. *There is not ONE, not even ONE course of music of any kind, not even music appreciation, listed in the entire course of study required for ordination of elders in the Church of the Nazarene.* Therefore, a planned, adequate music program for the church worship service has not been a priority with many of our pastors. Who can blame them for their lack of understanding?

It has been said that John Wesley ministered with the Bible in one hand and his hymnbook in the other. With often half of the church service given to music, is it asking too much that the importance of music be emphasized in our ministerial training program? *How can the local church expect to grow if such an important part of the ministry is neglected?*

CAN WE IMPROVE THE MUSIC PROGRAM OF THE CHURCH? I THINK WE CAN.

We have barely scratched the surface of a great need. We have a lot to do at the grass roots level in our churches concerning music. Music is the universal language that speaks to the heart of all mankind!

I know the devil trembles at the vibrations of a hymn, sung or played, to the glory and honor of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!

THE REST OF THE STORY

by Charles Gailey
Olathe, Kans.

Some pastors feel compelled to trot out the Great Commission and "Jesus Saves" on missionary night, as though that amounted to the total call to mission. No wonder people don't show up! Pastors like that are missing a great truth. They are missing—the rest of the story.

The truth is that God has always been a missionary God. Much of the romance of the Bible centers around God using persons to reach out to persons in other cultures. This doesn't begin in the New Testament but the Old, not in Matthew but in Genesis.

God's purposes for the world are illuminated in Genesis. He created persons with freedom of choice, "in his own image" (1:27). God desired to reproduce His traits of holiness and love in human beings. His purpose was frustrated when man and woman failed the test. But in that early hour, God began a great salvage operation for the world. In His judgment on the serpent (3:14-15), He heralds His redemptive plan for humans.

In God's call to Abraham we see that God is going to wrap His redemptive message up in persons. He states that "all peoples on earth will be blessed through" Abraham (12:3). From the start, God makes it clear that the covenant with Abraham is not to be a narrow, ethnocentric covenant. Abraham is to be not just a recipient but a vehicle of His love. He repeats to Abraham, several times, not just a recital of blessings but also that "all nations on earth will be blessed through you" (cf. 18:18; 22:18). In virtually the same language, the charge, "through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed," is also delivered to Isaac (26:4) and Jacob (cf. 28:14). It is clear at this early time that the children of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were not to simply bask in God's blessings and soak them up. They were rather to be a vehicle and a conduit of bringing God's blessings to others. His salvage plan was not for one people or one city but for the whole world.

This principle continued in God's covenant with David. David echoed a world vision in much of his writing, including the beautiful Psalm 96: "Declare his glory among the nations" (v. 3; see also 1 Chron. 16:24-32). Psalm 67 is another missionary psalm, reflecting the Aaronic benediction of Num. 6:24-26, but enlarged, so "that your ways may be known on earth, your salvation among all nations" (Ps. 67:2). It is clear that God wanted to use Israel as His vehicle of salvation to the world. It should not surprise us that the New Testament begins by introducing Christ as "the son of David, the son of Abraham" (Matt. 1:1).

My own call to missionary service came through the words of David's son, Solomon, on that great day of the dedication of the Temple: "So that all the peoples of the earth may know that the Lord is God and that there is no other" (1 Kings 8:60). Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Isaiah (esp. chaps. 9; 42; and 49) all confirm that God planned to use Israel to reach all nations.

This message is beautifully encapsulated in the Book of Jonah. Nearly everyone knows about the Book of Jonah, especially its more sensationalistic aspects, but few seem to grasp the main point: Jonah is a missionary book! Jonah was called to deliver God's message cross-culturally to the Ninevites—the Gentiles. He didn't want to go; he ran away from God's call. When Jonah finally grudgingly relented, that whole great city repented! Pastor, why not preach on Jonah for your next missionary message? And the following Sunday, you could preach about Jonah's bad attitude (chap. 4) because he cared more about his own reputation than about people being saved. In fact, Jonah in that sense can also be seen as an archetype of the children of Israel, who constantly seemed to withdraw into their ethnocentric nationalism. Again and again God witnessed the failure of His chosen instrument. God then sent Jesus, that "other Israel," into the world.

Christ was the ultimate missionary, bridging the gap between heaven and earth. He inspired and instructed His disciples to become missionaries. He showed us that the idea of mission is central to the Christian faith.

The New Testament clearly teaches that God desires all people "to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. 2:4). The infant Church was to bring to fruition what Jesus did and taught (see the Book of Acts). Mission is a basic ingredient in the Christian faith. The salvation theme of the Bible is the rescuing and saving of Israel and all of the other nations of the world. This is why God sent Jesus: "to save the world through him" (John 3:17). That is why the missionary travels of Jesus' disciples are recorded. I recently heard a professor of New Testament say, "If you take mission out of the New Testament, you have nothing left."

Peter had a difficult time getting the message (the sheet was let down three times), but he finally caught on that God intends His followers to cross cultural boundaries with the gospel. Finally, John had a vision on the isle of Patmos. He saw standing before the throne, "a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language" (Rev. 7:9). John repeats this wording over and over in the book (10:11; 11:9; 13:7; 14:6; 17:15), thus highlighting the cross-cultural universality of the gospel.

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LION HEART

by Albert J. Lown
Keighley, West Yorkshire, England

With characteristic understatement of his own accomplishments in World War II, Winston Churchill disclaimed for himself the mantle of Richard the Lionheart, declaring, "It was the British nation that was the lion, but I had the luck to utter the roar."

The world-renowned warrior-statesman kept his date with destiny in assuming the leadership of Britain in 1940. No one can doubt that he possessed the heart and roar of a lion. His was the voice that literally growled at Hitler when minions and allies of the Nazis were grovelling before his juggernauts and jackboots. His voice uttered sentiment and satire, conviction and defiance, comfort and prophecy that will be cherished as long as literature and freedom exist and as long as English is spoken. This voice reached occupied countries and concentration camps, nerving men and women to resist the oppressor, to fight, hope, and die.

Steeped in History

From the darkest days of the war came memorable words that stir imagination and abide yet in the minds of those who heard. Exquisite in the craftsmanship of oratory and spirited as only the fighting chivalry of a noble family intertwined with Britain's history since the days of Charles I could impart. A lion's roar. A John Bull growl. A modern Elizabethan. The speech of Parliament and the Bible, of the public school and political arena, of the trumpets of war and the pipes of peace. Sayings that enriched the English language, as a few well-known gleanings from a single year reveal:

> I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears, and sweat. We have before us an ordeal of the most grievous kind. (His first speech as Prime Minister when the war had taken a desperate turn, May 13, 1940.)

> We shall not flag or fail. We shall go on to the end. . . . We shall fight on the beaches . . . on the landing grounds . . . in the fields and in the streets . . . in the hills. We shall never surrender. (Part of a speech held to be one of the most moving ever delivered in the House of Commons, June 4, 1940.)

> Let us brace ourselves to our duties, and so bear ourselves that if the British Empire and its Commonwealth last for a thousand years, men will still say, "This was their finest hour." (This clarion call coincided with the capitulation of France, leaving Britain to fight on alone, June 18, 1940.)

> Here is this strong city of refuge which enshrines the title deeds of human progress . . . we await undismayed the impending assault. . . . Be the ordeal sharp or long, or both, we shall seek no terms, tolerate no parley. We may show mercy; we shall ask for none. (France had fallen; America was friendly but nonbelligerent. In isolation Britain awaited the fury of Germany and Italy, July 14, 1940.)

> Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few. (The few were the outnumbered, valiant pilots who won the Battle of Britain, August 20, 1940.)

> Like the Mississippi, it just keeps rolling along. Let it roll. Let it roll on full flood, inexorable, irresistible, benignant, to broader lands and better days. (A reference to the U.S.A., still not in the war, and the British Commonwealth getting "some of their affairs . . . mixed up together . . . for mutual and general advantage," August 20, 1940.)

Bible Based

The voice of Britain's Lionheart was quietened in death on January 24, 1965. His passing was tranquil after a peaceful approach to the river that hath no bridge. It was a contrast to a life so full that it is difficult to conceive of one man playing so many parts in a span of 90 years. Not everyone would include the profession of religious faith as a vital contribution to Churchill's stature. Leading a Commonwealth that is "a unique association of races and religions," a wartime Prime Minister faced the dilemma of relating Christian faith to total war in a nation that included "all creeds, classes, and every recognizable shade of opinion." Nevertheless, the wartime speeches of an eloquent warrior reveal an underlying faith essentially biblical and Christian in inspiration.

In a series of direct appeals to the Almighty in 54 speeches—"God bless you," "In God's time," "under Providence," "with God's help"—these were never political stock-in-trade or theatrical oratory. "Ah, yes, there are times when we all pray," he admitted, recalling his early years at Bangalore, India. There he had written that whatever he might think or argue, he did not hesitate to ask for divine protection when about to come under fire. So too, as leader of the free world, he "prayed long and earnestly for help and guidance," and was able to record, "My prayer . . . was swiftly and wonderfully answered."

Churchill used religious phrases like "cities of refuge," "cast into the pit of death," "better a millstone," "Ask, and it shall be given you," "let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed," "the wages of sin," "the unprofitable servant," "the eye of faith," "the mills of God," and "God helping us, we can do no other." His frequent use of words in his speeches like "deliverance," "destiny," "the good cause," "faith and hope" are an unconscious revelation of heritage and

attitude. Thankfulness also abounded: "If the Almighty God in His mercy should lighten or shorten our labors and the torment of all mankind, all His servants will be thankful." This is but one instance and a moving plea.

Graced with Humility

Humility is not generally associated with Churchill; yet the constant use of the passive tense in his speeches indicates this grace: "We have been delivered, led, upheld, spared, saved, persevered: our cause will not be suffered to fail. Bearing ourselves humbly before God—I hope, indeed I pray, that we shall not be found unworthy. More than that it would be boastful to say—I hope I do not speak vain or boastful words." Beyond rhetoric there was reverence and dependence.

Churchill's conviction insisted, "It is not given to the cleverest and most calculating of mortals to know with certainty what is their interest. Yet it is given to quite a lot of simple folk to know every day what is their duty." He appealed to duty, justice, honor, and truth with the assertion: "We did not make this war; we did not seek it. We did all we could to avoid it. We did too much to avoid it"—meaning that the policy of appeasement had failed.

Faith and Duty

Since war could not be avoided, Churchill said, "We must stand without flinching in faith or duty"; praying, "Let God defend the right; heed the call of duty and honor, and see that our policy and conduct are upon the highest level, and that honor should be our guide." And he gave a most moving plea: "We must cherish the strong courage of when you are doing your duty, and you are sure of that, you need not worry too much about the dangers or consequences; we shall not be denied the strength to do our duty to the end."

Who can fail to be moved by Winston's White House Christmas broadcast with President Roosevelt aboard the *Prince of Wales* battleship, including "that gleaning flash of resolve which lifts the hearts of men and nations, and springs from the spiritual foundations of life itself." Reflecting later, he wrote: "But all comes out right at the end of the day: all will come out yet more right at the end of all the days." His perspective of history and philosophy for life and service did not lack faith in the sovereign justice of God. He possessed the conviction that all things must work together for good to those who are called by God.

His favorite hymn, sung at his funeral service, was John Bunyan's "Who would true valor see, / Let him come hither." Each verse of the "Pilgrim" song is eloquent testimony to Churchill's faith and courage in dark days:

No foes shall stay his might,
Though he with giants fight;
He will make good his right
To be a pilgrim.

PREACHER'S EXCHANGE

Wanted:

Works of John Fletcher (4 vols.) by John Fletcher.

A Compendium of Christian Theology (3 vols.) by Richard Watson.

Contact Glenn Kell, c/o Nazarene Bible College, P.O. Box 31766, 10101 Lusaka, Zambia.

Church Growth

(Continued from page 27)

always have an honored place on the field of battle. In fact, we are fond of saying that the commitment to short-term pastorates is the mark of a faithful minister. We hold to the idea that someone "who is part of the itinerancy," someone who will live with us in the past, is a true and faithful servant of the order. And many local pastors join the bureaucracy in this mentality. They do so because they know it is easier to move as old sermons run out. Also, many see short-term itinerancy as a good way to get into position to climb the next rung of the ladder without having to do it where they are currently assigned. The mood of the 17th and 18th century was, "Give us variety, for we have none!" The 20th century cries, "Give us stability, for we have none!"

Show me one church, of any denomination, that is vital, growing, and burning the world up for Christ, where the minister has not enjoyed the luxury and privilege of long-term involvement! I have been in hundreds of churches, worked in several dozen conferences all across the nation. I can't name one! On the other hand, I can name numerous churches that are alive, prosperous, missional, socially involved, and growing like a weed. In these churches the minister has had time and occasion to win trust and bring stability.

He has grown weary of hearing someone say, "I sure would like to move to your church, but I know you won't be here long, so I guess I'll stay where I am." They have become embarrassed by the mentality that says stay here three or four years, don't rock the boat, and then move up to "a better appointment." These pastors sense the need to succeed where they are, or they don't deserve a better appointment. They are saying, "Give me a chance to compete from a solid and stable base!" They are saying, "Move me if you need me, but don't move me just to be moving me!"

By giving the pastor a stable place of ministry, the church can become the place of trust, continuity, and stability. In this atmosphere, the preacher can extend an invitation that motivates.

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Altar Training Through Role Demonstrations

by Rickey Short
Oklahoma City

Good altar work is an asset following a time of moving by the Holy Spirit in a revival or special service. Often seekers wait for the pastor to move from person to person because many concerned people are not sure what to do. Equipping laypeople with good altar-work skills increases the effectiveness of the altar call.

Altar worker training combined with a role demonstration communicates concepts and principles necessary for good altar work. During a role demonstration a person may see and hear proper methods. Learning theory teaches that people remember much more of what they see *and* hear than what they hear *or* see. The most effective kind of learning occurs when a person is also allowed to practice under supervision what they have just seen and heard. Thus the most effective kind of altar work training should involve a demonstration and practice session.

Why practice? A role demonstration combined with a practice session insures that your altar workers are following good procedures. The practice session allows people to become comfortable with new skills and to be assured in their own mind that they are doing the work correctly. Since the session is only practice, they can relax and focus on learning.

Two training sessions with two short demonstrations and one practice session are recommended. Session One deals with "Guidelines for Working with Seekers at the Altar." Session Two deals with "Helping a Person into the Experience of Heart Holiness." The schedule for each session would fit a Wednesday evening study time. The basic schedule can be easily adapted to other formats. It would be helpful to read at least one of the following resources: *It's Altar Time,* by Wilbur Brannon; *You Can Be a Better Altar Worker,* by Norman Oke; *You Need a Family Altar,* by Joseph Gray.

These resources supplemented by your own experiences will help you prepare a brief lecture for each session.

SUGGESTED SCHEDULE FOR SESSION ONE

Guidelines for Working with Seekers at the Altar

Song: "Have Thine Own Way, Lord"
Song: "O to Be like Thee"
Announcements
Prayer
Offering (if appropriate)
LESSON:
1. Lecture—6 minutes (prepared by pastor)
2. Group Discussion—6 minutes
3. Role Demonstration—8 minutes (pastor and helper)
4. Closing Discussion/Application/Review—7 minutes

Closing Prayer

Materials and Preparation Required for Session One:

a. It's Altar Time, by Wilbur Brannon

b. Role-play helper who can practice ahead of time

c. Copies of review sheet for everyone to take home

d. Chalkboard, overhead projector, or newspaper pad for brainstorming

How to Do Session One

1. *Introduction and Lecture* (4-6 minutes)

Prepare brief introductory comments related to the importance of the altar call. Share some of your personal views or experiences. Explain that the two meetings will focus on training altar workers.

2. *Group Discussion* (4-6 minutes)

Set up an overhead projector or chalkboard for use during discussion time. Record comments suggested by your group.

Conduct a discussion of the following three questions:

a. What are some attitudes we would like to see in our church when someone goes to the altar? (List four or five.)

b. What do you think are some of the basic qualifications for someone to be an effective altar counselor? (List four or five.)

c. When should we come down to help someone who is praying at the altar? (New in church, a lifetime member, a child, a visitor.)

Encourage people to discuss issues around each question. Do not look for the "right" answer. Watch your time.

3. *Role Demonstration* (6-8 minutes)

Recruit someone to play the role of "seeker" for the demonstration. Set up a time to practice role play.

4. *Closing Discussion* and *Review Session* (5-7 minutes)

Ask for people to share a new concept, new skill, or something helpful from the lesson/demonstration that they will be able to use in helping someone at the altar.

When a person shares a specific behavior, make an appropriate comment like, "Yes, that is an important part of working with someone at an altar. Why do you think it is important?"

Duplicate the following guidelines for everyone attending the session, and review it briefly following the demonstration.

BASIC GUIDELINES FOR WORKING WITH SEEKERS AT THE ALTAR

1. Pause and pray for guidance before speaking.
2. Introduce yourself and ask his name, if not known.
3. Ask if he can share with you why he has come to the altar.
4. Repeat what the seeker said to make sure you understand.
5. Give simple Bible guidance on what to do.

6. Ask the person if he wants to do this.
7. If he does, give encouragement and further guidance on how to pray.
8. Encourage him to pray aloud; follow up with a prayer by the counselor.
9. Give the seeker assurance that God has heard and answered prayer. Offer further help and support he may need.
10. Emphasize to the seeker the importance of making a public testimony concerning any spiritual decisions he has made.

Role Play for Session One

GUIDELINES FOR WORKING WITH SEEKERS AT THE ALTAR

Use the following role play in Session One or create your own.

Before beginning the role demonstration, you will need a folding chair, piano bench, or small table to use as an altar. Position the "altar" so that everyone will be able to see the demonstration. You should be positioned sideways to the audience. Have your helper kneel beside the chair as if he is praying at the altar.

In your own words say or read the following, "I would like to demonstrate a simple method of how to find out why a person has come to the altar. While a person is at the altar, he will be very sensitive spiritually to what we have to say. It is important that we understand why he is at the altar so that we can provide the help that he needs if at all possible. We should never assume that we know why the person has come to the altar."

Kneel on the opposite side of the chair. Pause for a moment of silent prayer before speaking to the person. Using your hand on the side opposite of the audience, reach out and touch the shoulder of the praying person to attract his attention. When he looks up, introduce yourself by saying, "Hello, my name is ———. Can you tell me your name?" After the helper has told you his name, say:

"———, can you share with me what you are asking God to do for you?" Or, "———, can you share with me why you came to the altar?" Or, "———, is there something I can help you pray about?"

The helper should say something like this: "I want Jesus to come into my life and forgive my sins."

Pastor: ———, you are here because you are ready to ask Jesus to forgive your sins and come into your heart so that your life can be different.

Seeker: Yes.

Pastor: ———, would you let me show in God's Word how your sins can be forgiven and you can invite Jesus into your life? (After your helper consents, open your Bible and act as if you are talking and explaining the Scripture for a few seconds. Your helper should continue to respond as if he understands what you are explaining.)

Pastor: ———, if you are sincere and really mean it in your heart, you can pray this prayer right now, and God will hear you. Is that what you want to do? (Helper consents.) You pray first and then I will pray.

Pastor (to audience): After ——— has prayed, I would close in prayer, thanking God that He has forgiven ——— and that ——— has invited Jesus into his life. I would want to thank God for hearing this prayer and coming into his life. At this time I would also want to encourage him to make a public testimony in this service, sharing what has happened in his life. I would encourage him to begin his new walk with Christ by sharing in a public way what God has done for him at the altar.

Allow your helper to return to his place.

At the conclusion of the role demonstration, distribute the Basic Guidelines handout in order to review the role demonstration.

SUGGESTED SCHEDULE FOR SESSION TWO

Helping a Person into the Experience of Heart Holiness

Song: "Jesus, I Come"
Song: "Take My Life, and Let It Be"
Prayer
Offering (if appropriate)
Announcements
LESSON:
1. Introduction of Material —5 minutes
2. Extended Role Model by Pastor—7 to 10 minutes
3. Practice Session (breaking into pairs)—15 to 20 minutes
4. Review and Sharing of Experiences—5 minutes

Closing Prayer

Materials and Preparation Required for Session Two:

a. One copy of role play for every two people attending
b. Role play helper
c. Introductory lecture and review

How to Do Session Two

1. *Introduction and Lecture* (5 minutes)

Review the Basic Guidelines shared in last week's session. Explain that this session involves practicing at the altar with another person. Share from your personal experiences the importance of helping a person into the experience of holiness.

Some of your people may experience anxiety at the thought of "practicing" with another person. Allow them to express that anxiety. Gently encourage them to participate. Read or share the following in your own words:

WHY PRACTICE ALTAR WORK?

People ought to be able to practice a task before they are charged with full responsibility for it. This is the basis for internship in medicine and in the practice teaching of educators. It is a learning and testing time.

Altar work is important enough for people to do well. Each person who volunteers to help others at the altar should learn proper skills for the task. A practice period can be a time where new and old experiences are blended to better equip the spiritual seeker.

2. *Extended Role Model by Pastor* (7-10 minutes)

Recruit someone to play the role of "seeker" for the extended role demonstration. Set up a time to practice the role play.

Make a copy of the role play material, "Be Filled with the Spirit," for everyone participating in the session. This presentation is a basic plan for explaining the way into holiness. Encourage the group to follow the presentation during the demonstration.

During the demonstration and practice session, the altar counselor should simply read the material to the "seeker." The seeker should respond appropriately to each question. A few brief illustrations or scriptures may be added as deemed necessary.

3. *Practice Session* (15-20 minutes)

After completing the role play demonstration, ask for comments or questions. Keep this time brief.

Divide "trainees" into groups of two persons. Be sure each team has a copy of the role play. Ask them to begin as if they were starting to help someone at the altar who wanted to be sanctified. Have them take turns reading the material to each other. Allow each person about 10 minutes.

Circulate among the groups, providing assistance and help as needed.

4. *Review and Sharing of Experiences* (5 minutes)

Call all your teams back together and allow them to discuss their experiences as they shared the role play material. Ask how the role play helped them, what was difficult, or any general comments they wish to make.

Role Play for Session Two

BE FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT

Use the following material in the role demonstration segment of Session Two. You may substitute your own or other prepared material if so desired. This material is used after qualifying why the person is at the altar.

How to begin the role demonstration

Begin with your seeker kneeling as in Session One. Approach the seeker. Kneel on the opposite side of the chair. Pause for a moment of silent prayer before speaking to the person. Using your hand on the side opposite of the audience, reach out and touch the shoulder of the praying person to attract his attention. When he looks up, introduce yourself by saying, "Hello, my name is ———. Can you tell me your name?" After the seeker has told you his name, say:

"———, can you share with me what you are asking God to do for you?"

The seeker should say something like this, "I want a deeper Christian experience."

Begin reading the role play

Do you remember when you accepted Jesus Christ as your personal Savior? Everything seemed so new. Perhaps you felt a great weight lift, and life seemed so fresh. Christians soon discover that, as great as this new life in Christ is, they begin to have problems. They discover that they are not able to be the kind of Christian they want to be deep in their heart. They know that they are not living on the level Jesus talks about in the Scripture.

This struggle is described in the Bible:

"For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want" (Gal. 5:17).

Since your conversion, have you experienced this kind of struggle in your spiritual journey?

Would you like for me to share how you can find God's solution for this struggle?

GOD'S PATH TO LOVE, JOY, AND PEACE

God desires that we live a clean and holy life. Power to live that kind of life only comes by being filled with the Holy Spirit. This filling is called "sanctification" in the Scripture. When a person is saved, he finds forgiveness from acts of sin. But it is through sanctification that God has chosen to cleanse the sin nature as well.

Sanctification is a wonderful work that God does in a moment of time and then continues to do. He not only fills us the moment we are sanctified by faith in Him; He keeps filling us day by day. Sanctification is not a condition in which we stop growing and have all of God. Rather, it is a relationship that opens our life to a moment-by-moment walk with Jesus.

WE ARE TOLD TO RECEIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT BY ASKING

"If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!" (Luke 11:13).

IN FAITH

(Christ speaking) ". . . so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me" (Acts 26:18).

GOD IS WILLING TO CLEANSE AND FILL US WHEN WE ARE SPIRITUALLY READY

The following questions will help you decide if you are ready to ask the Father to cleanse and fill you with the Holy Spirit.

1. Have you accepted Jesus Christ as your personal Savior?
2. Do you want to end the fight between your spiritual nature and the sin nature?
3. Do you have a growing desire for more of God's work in you?
4. Do you believe it is God's desire for you to have a spiritual life of love, joy, inner peace, and victory over the sin nature?
5. Are you willing to give Jesus Christ control of every area of your life? (Your struggles, talents, abilities, your very self?)
6. Can you say, "I surrender all of me"?

SOME GOOD NEWS

If you answer, "Yes," to these questions, you have described what we mean by the word "consecration." In order for God to act on our behalf and fill us with His Spirit, we must be willing to totally consecrate—surrender ourselves and every area of our life—to Him.

"Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness" (Rom. 6:12-13).

THE KEY QUESTION

What is the deep desire of your heart?

ASKING FOR GOD'S SOLUTION TO THE STRUGGLE

The best way to express our faith is by a simple prayer, telling God that we want Him to cleanse our heart from all inner sin, to fill us with His Holy Spirit, and to give us power to live and witness for Him.

When we pray that kind of prayer —and really mean it—we receive the sanctifying fullness of the Holy Spirit by faith. There may or may not be a great emotional response at this time. A deep conviction comes that God has done what He has promised to do. You will sense that God is here, releasing His love and power through you.

Is this what you want to do? If so, you may say the following prayer:

"Father, I want to give You complete control of my life. I want to

(Continued on page 61)

ANOTHER LOOK AT CHRISTIAN PERFECTION

by R. B. Acheson
New Smyrna Beach, Fla.

Phil. 3:4-16

Two old men were passing a holiness church, and one was heard to say, "What does this church teach?"

"Oh, they say you've got to be perfect, and you know there ain't nobody like that."

Many sincere people are confused by the term "perfection" as applied to Christian experience and life. But the Bible uses the word! God said to Abram, "Walk before me, and be thou perfect" (Gen. 17:1, KJV). Jesus said, "Be ye . . . perfect, even as your Father . . . in heaven is perfect" (Matt. 5:48, KJV). The author of Hebrews exhorted, "Let us go on unto perfection" (6:1, KJV). The word "perfect" appears too many times to be ignored.

Our text sheds some light on the problem. In verses 12 and 15 there is a perfection Paul claims to have and a perfection he does not claim. While the NIV translates it "mature" in verse 15 and "perfect" in verse 12, it is from the same root word in the Greek; *teleios* and *teleioō* mean "complete" or "end." Paul is saying, "I am complete and not complete! I have reached the end but still have a distance to go!" It may sound like a contradiction, but it isn't. In verse 15 he testifies that, as a Christian, he is sanctified wholly (completely). In verse 12 he testifies that, as a person, there is plenty of room for improvement in his walk with God.

I. PAUL SPEAKS WHAT EVERY SANCTIFIED CHRISTIAN UNDERSTANDS.

He was saying, "I know my sins are forgiven. I'm walking in all the light I know. My consecration is complete, yet I'm not as good as I would like to be. I am satisfied with Jesus, but I'm not satisfied with myself!" It is normal for sincere, honest, and pure-hearted Christians to feel this way.

A little four-year-old was working in the garden with his daddy when it occurred to him that his dad might be thirsty. To surprise him, he slipped away and returned with a glass of cold water. Dad hesitated when he saw mud trickling into the water from two little dirty fingers. But seeing the look on his son's face, he gulped it down, mud and all, and then gave him a big hug of thanks. Technically, it was not a perfect deed, but it was the best the boy could do. Dad saw the imperfection and through love thought it was perfect.

In Psalm 103, David said that God pities us as a father pities his children; He knows our frame and understands us better than any earthly father ever could. That little boy's dad will expect more from his son when he is older. Even so, our Heavenly Father expects us to grow, to learn better, and do better; but there will always be room for improvement.

H. PAUL SPEAKS FROM PERSONAL EXPERIENCE.

Certainly Paul was not perfect physically. According to tradition, Paul was neither robust nor handsome. There is evidence in the Book of Acts that he suffered from a chronic illness. No one should know this better than Luke, who wrote the account. Since he was a medical doctor, he was a handy and providential companion during Paul's missionary journeys. The apostle quoted some of his critics in Corinth as saying, "His letters . . . are weighty and powerful; but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible" (2 Cor. 10:10, KJV). Later in chapter 12 Paul tells of his "thorn," something he felt to be a real handicap to his ministry. He sought God three times for its removal, but God's answer was always, "No!" So Paul accepted it, quit chafing under it, and quit praying for its removal. God was pleased to use Paul like he was—handicap and all!

Paul was not perfect in knowledge. He admitted to these Philippians that he didn't know it all: "I haven't learned all I should even yet" (v. 12, TLB). This is especially interesting since this is written seven years before his martyrdom. At this writing Paul had been one of Christ's brightest pupils for many years. It was Saul, the egotistical Pharisee who had Christians jailed and killed; Saul, the bigoted Jew who hated the Lord Jesus and believed he was ordained of God to stop the spread of His gospel. But something happened at Damascus that changed Saul into Paul, a lifelong seeker after truth. After his conversion, God led Paul to Arabia for an extended course in New Testament theology. It took only three days at Damascus to fix his heart; it took much longer to fix his head. Now he is in a Roman jail, much older but still learning.

Most of us are rather slow to admit ignorance. I thought I knew more at age 16 than I'm sure I know now. Converted in a Calvinist group, I fully accepted their doctrines and standards. I had all the answers and was impatient with anyone who disagreed. The Corinthians were like that, divided into little "know it all" groups, always fussing about something. Some adopted Paul and were labeled liberals; others adopted Peter and considered themselves conservatives.

One of the Corinthian controversies concerned meat that had been offered to idols that later found its way into discount markets. The church was divided over whether or not it was all right to eat this meat. Paul wrote, "Next is your question about eating food that has been sacrificed to idols. On this question everyone feels that only his answer is the right one! But although being a 'know-it-all' makes us feel important, what is really needed to build the church is love. If anyone thinks he

knows all the answers, he is just showing his ignorance. But the person who truly loves God is the one who is open to God's knowledge" (1 Cor. 8:1-3, TLB). To set out to discover what God knows is to engage in a lifetime pursuit: walking humbly, ever learning, with ever more to learn.

Even sanctified folk should make some changes as they walk humbly with our Divine Teacher. John Wesley kept a detailed journal of his life. The account shows that he made some interesting changes across the years. It is evident that the years mellowed him. He confessed that in later years he sometimes slept until 8 A.M. Commenting on this, he said, "Fifty years ago I would have said you were on your way to hell for such a practice." He said he used to teach that sanctification "delivered from moods and human fears"; later, however, he admitted that this was too strong. He used to teach that "Christian perfection ends all spiritual struggle" and later admitted this was misleading.

To discover what God knows is to engage in a lifetime pursuit.

Sanctified people can and should change their minds occasionally. One old preacher testified, "Bless God, I haven't changed a bit in 60 years." Neither Paul nor Wesley could say that! Nobody gets perfect knowledge imparted to him at conversion. It is detrimental in your spiritual journey if you cannot or will not be humble enough to learn and make changes. God has so much to teach us throughout life. We need to learn the difference between essentials and nonessentials, traditions and truth, the voice of God and the voice of people. We need to learn the difference between convictions and notions.

It seems hard for most of us to admit when we have been wrong. We may fear what people may think of us. But what is important? Will I follow my Divine Teacher? Do I want to "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ"? (See 2 Pet. 3:18.) Paul wrote, "When I was a child I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. Now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know [only] in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known" (1 Cor. 13:11-12, KJV). When it comes to knowing what God knows, we will always be children. To admit our mistakes and to be ready to change is a mark of Christian humility. Some of the most important words for church members are, "I am sorry. I was wrong. You were right." More churches would enjoy the unity of the Spirit if their members could practice the simple rule: "Don't be afraid to vote with the minority, but be ready to cooperate with the majority." Imperfections! We all have them. Only when we are able to admit our shortcomings can we work at the job of self-improvement.

A scriptural view of perfection will help us to be charitable, not so quick to condemn others who aren't exactly like us.

There was an old Scottish teacher who, on the first day of school, wanted to set some disciplinary standards. He had the students stand, "Raise your papers in your right hands." One boy held his in his left hand, and the old teacher reprimanded him harshly.

"But, sir," said the boy, "I have no right hand"—and he held up a stump.

The old man put his arm around him, tears in his eyes: "I'm sorry, lad, I just didn't know."

It is often the case that we judge and act harshly when we really don't know.

III. PAUL CLAIMED PERFECTION OF HEART.

By His grace we can be perfect in heart and pure in motive. Christian perfection is the state of being fully committed to God's will, to the best of our knowledge and ability. The purest saint yet has a mortal body, a finite mind, and a soul that was designed to live in the perfect environment of Eden. This explains why the sanctified are still dissatisfied. Redemption will not be complete until the Day of Resurrection.

Paul testifies for us all: I know Christ, but long to know Him better. "I don't mean to say I am perfect. I haven't learned all I should even yet, but I keep working toward that day when I will finally be all that Christ saved me for and wants me to be. No, dear brothers, I am still not all I should be but I am bringing all my energies to bear on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead, I strain to reach the end of the race and receive the prize for which God is calling us up to heaven because of what Christ Jesus did for us.

"I hope all of you who are mature Christians will see eye-to-eye with me on these things, and if you disagree on some point, I believe that God will make it plain to you" (Phil. 3:12-15, TLB).

PRAYER:

"Heavenly Father, thank You for cleansing my heart from all sin. Thank You for being so patient with me as I work out my salvation with fear and trembling. I sincerely want my life to glorify the Christ I profess to know. Amen."

The Rest of the Story

(Continued from page 48)

When the apostle Paul began to study, he discovered the truth that we have already enunciated relative to the Old Testament scriptures. Paul says in Gal. 3:8: "The Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: 'All nations will be blessed through you.'" Paul had discovered something that many people do not know today. He discovered that God, even in the Old Testament, was trying to do missionary work all along: God is a missionary God, and the Bible, both Old and New Testaments, is full of mission.

Now that you know that mission is not founded solely on a few verses in Matthew, why don't you preach from one of the Old Testament passages next missionary service? There is nothing wrong with the Great Commission. It *is* great. But you don't have to use it *every* time because now you know—the rest of the story!

CLINICAL CHRISTIANITY

by Leon O. Hynson
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I remember the day of my visit to the medical center for tests that would determine if I had hypoglycemia (low blood sugar). First, I drank a bottle of an abominable glucose mixture, designed to make my blood sugar level accelerate like a jet in takeoff. Then, for the next five hours, at specific times, the nurse came to practice bloodletting, taking a vial of the precious substance to the technician for testing. After the ritual was finished, the physician showed me the pattern of change the "soda pop" had wrought in my system. For about an hour, the level of sugar in my blood climbed, peaked, then steadily descended until it first reached and then dipped below the normal level. When it dropped below that "Maginot Line," my defenses flopped, and I felt the kind of deep weariness and flushed countenance that I had previously experienced from low blood sugar. Sure enough, I was a victim.

Many Christians are acquainted with the clinical method with respect to their Christian lives. In what may be compared to the ritual of testing I experienced, they engage in frequent reflection upon their spiritual journeys. Beset by a compulsive fixation upon their spiritual health, they test, examine, and detail their condition. Plotting the trajectory of their emotional climb and descent, they alternate between exaltation and gloom. Their charts show their spirits' upward movement after experiencing some victory and the downward trend when life "tumbles in."

"Clinical" Christianity is characterized by recurrent self-examination, spiritual X rays, or pulse taking in order to gain an up-to-date picture. The quality of "my" faith is analyzed; the intensity of "my" devotion is criticized; the length of "my" prayers is observed; the adequacy of "my" witness is probed. In short, there is a subjective orientation that continually asks concerning the strength of "my" faith and keeps me from knowing the strength of His faithfulness. In Wesleyan theology, this subjective posturing appears more frequently than we wish to confess.

Wesley offered the world a concept of Christian life centered on experience. Christian experience is founded on the divine gift of grace taught in biblical revelation. For Wesley, our experience is to be tested by the Word of God. Our experience, in turn, assists us in a more faithful interpretation of Scripture. Further, Wesley gave particular attention to the witness of the Spirit, the union of God's Spirit and our own in a confident sensing of sonship. This "inner witness" is a subjective perception of the new life in Christ, characterized particularly by the "feeling" or sense of belonging to God. By itself, separated from other kinds of testimony concerning our spiritual position, this inner witness is fluctuating; it ebbs and flows at the affective (or emotional) level. This happens because our self-consciousness and self-awareness is a shifting pattern of feelings, impulses, cognitions, impressions, or sensations.

The words *By itself* are qualifying words. Wesley, however, did not permit the "inner witness" to become the sole criterion for judging the authenticity of our Christian life. He insisted that we consider also the "external witness," the testimony of the Word, of our works, and our participation in the ordinances and sacraments of the Church. While the inner witness is subjective (that is, centered upon the individual subject), the external witness is more objective. It homes in on the works that are evident to observers; on the testimony of God in Scripture, the Word of Him who cannot lie set forth in sure and certain promises; and the sacraments that too are given for our comfort and consolation.

John assures us that our faithful participation in the community of faith is a mark of our adoption. He further stresses that our works of love demonstrate our grounding in God who is love. Finally, the absolute truthfulness of God undergirds the promises that He has given us; that He will forgive, and cleanse, and sustain those who trust in Him. All of these—participation, works of love, the absolute integrity of God—are objective, i.e., standing apart from our personal "feelings." As such they prevent us from placing undue dependence upon inner impressions. Our faith is not certified or validated by a whispering wind that soon passes. When the subjective consciousness of sonship is joined to these objective realities, the Christian life is seen to be solid and sure.

Wesley taught that membership in the church of God was defined by three objective realities. The Church was found wherever:

1. There are faithful men, i.e., men of living, trusting faith, gathered together;
2. The sure Word of God is preached; and
3. The sacraments are rightly administered.

Each one of these offers an important objective dimension for secure faith. Faithful men gathered together! Pure word preached! Sacraments rightly administered!

Wesley believed that regular communing at the Lord's table was particularly important wherever the church was the Church indeed. The sacrament is a valid expression of the life of the Church, that is, of the life of men who have faith. In other Christian traditions—Catholic, Orthodox, Lutheran, Reformed Episcopal—the sacrament represents a comforting affirmation of Christ's presence. Cal-

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GOSPEL:
IS NO NEWS GOOD NEWS?

by Jerry Harvill

Mark Twain once said that the difference between the right word and the almost-right-word was the difference between *lightning* and *lightning bug*. Anyone who writes or speaks knows Twain was right. But getting the words right isn't easy, especially when the words are familiar.

Take, for instance, the familiar term *gospel*. In contemporary parlance, it covers everything from a genre of popular religious music, to a slang expression meaning you-can-rely-on-this-statement ("the gospel truth!"), to the theological category for a conservative Christian movement (*evangel*-ical = the Anglicized transliteration of the Greek word for *gospel*).

But what does the term *gospel* mean? More to the point, what does the term *gospel* mean in Scripture; what is its biblical use and meaning? Is it possible that our contemporary vocabularies, rich in *evangel*-terms, hide a changed meaning, so that although we use the same terms, we no longer mean by *gospel* what Paul meant by that word? Far from preserving our sense of biblical good news, our frequent *evangel*-terms dilute our sense of the significance of the word.

Biblical Use of *Gospel*

As in our own vocabularies, the term *gospel* is biblically frequent and important. This is especially true in the New Testament, where the verb and noun forms of the word occur some 130 times. The verb *euangelizomai,* "to evangelize," is found 53 times, only once in Matthew (11:5), 25 times in Luke—Acts, 20 times in Paul, and elsewhere in Hebrews (4:2, 6), 1 Peter (1:12, 25; 4:6), and Revelation (10:7; 14:6). The noun, *euangelion,* "gospel," is even more frequent, occuring 74 times: 12 times in Matthew/Mark, twice in Acts (15:7; 20:24), 60 times in Paul's letters (every Epistle except Titus), and elsewhere only at 1 Pet. 4:17 and Rev. 14:6. In addition there is the cognate noun, *euangelistes,* "evangelist," found three times (Acts 21:8; Eph. 4:11; 2 Tim. 4:5). It is curious that the verb is not found at all in Mark, John's Gospel or Epistles, James, 2 Peter, or Jude. Striking also is the fact that neither verb nor noun is found in the writings of St. John. It is worth noting from these statistics of distribution that *gospel* is a term favored by Paul, since almost two out of three of the total occurrences in the New Testament are found in his letters (63 percent).

Old Testament Background

Gospel in the New Testament was not a word in a linguistic vacuum but was a term with rich semantic links to the past. In Hebrew the verb *b-s-r* has the general sense "proclaiming good news," e.g., of military victory (1 Kings 31:9), or of the birth of a son (Jer. 20:15). Semitic linguists insist that a sense of joy is inherent in the basic meaning of this key Old Testament term.[1]

In the Psalms *b-s-r* is used of heralding the righteousness and salvation of God. This salvation may be a personal blessing the joy of which is proclaimed to the assembly (Ps. 40:10), or it may be declaring God's wonderful acts among heathen nations (96:2).

Of special importance for the meaning of gospel in the New Testament is the Old Testament expectation of the "new age" at the victory of Jehovah, His accession, and His kingly rule. Prominent in this expectation is the *m^e^baser,* "messenger," "herald," who announces the victory of the Lord over the whole world: he proclaims it, he publishes it, and it comes into effect. From a high mountain the *m^e^baser* proclaims to Zion and Jerusalem the glad tidings *(= gospel)* of God's appearing (Isa. 40:9). So joyous a situation is anticipated that all are called upon to admire the swift-footed messengers who bring the glad message (Isa. 52:7. Cf. Paul's "*. . . beautiful feet*" allusion, Rom. 10:15). But God's messenger does not bring good news to Israel alone, rather his proclamation signals a new era for the Gentile nations as well. *"Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous works among all the peoples . . . Say among the nations, 'The Lord reigns'"* (Ps. 96:3-10). Daily the glad tidings are to ring out among the heathen (96:2), so that they come themselves to Zion and proclaim the praises of the Lord (Isa. 60:6).

Here, then, the Old Testament *m^e^baser* is the messenger of God who proclaims the royal dominion of God, and who with his effective word ushers in the Age to come. This act of good-news-telling *(b-s-r)* is linked in scripture with righteousness (Ps. 40:9), salvation (Isa. 52:7), and peace (ibid.)—all of which merge in the New Testament application of *gospel.* Furthermore, it may well be this Old Testament concept of God's "messenger" which is the clue to why *gospel* is so prominent in Paul's writings: Paul saw himself as God's *m^e^baser* to the Gentile nations whose proclamation was ushering in the Age to Come. He certainly saw his commission as a divine selection to bear God's name before the nations (Acts 9:15), and he was in awe of the fact that God had chosen him "*. . . to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ*" (Eph. 3:8; cf. 1 Cor. 9:16; 2 Tim. 1:11).

Jesus and the Gospel

Jesus' application of Isa. 61:1 to himself and to His activity at the synagogue of Nazareth (Luke 4:18 ff.) certifies that in His proclamation of the good news of God the long anticipated New Age became actual: *"To-*

day this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing" (v. 21). Indeed, it was the fact that in His ministry *". . . the poor have the gospel preached to them"* which was offered by Jesus as proof of His Messiahship to the interrogators sent by John the Baptist (Mark 11:5; Luke. 7:22). Jesus, therefore, is not only the *m^{e}baser par excellence* who inaugurates the New Age, He is himself the *good news:* to His person is attached all three of the special Old Testament elements associated with the gospel of the New Age—salvation, righteousness, and peace (Luke 1:67-79).

"Gospel" in the New Testament had rich semantic links to the past.

Paul and the Gospel

However, it is in the letters of Paul that we find the New Testament home of *gospel* terminology. Almost two out of three occurrences of the word in the New Testament are found in Paul. He uses *gospel* in a variety of applications. It can be a kind of shorthand summary of the whole contents of the Christian message (Rom. 10:16), or it can be defined more particularly in its relation to God (1 Thess. 2:2), or to Christ (3:2), or to the apostle himself as entrusted with its proclamation (1:5; Rom. 2:16). At other times Paul draws attention to the characteristic aspects of his *gospel* by such phrases as *"the truth of the gospel"* (Gal. 2:14), or *"the faith of the gospel"* (Phil. 1:27).[2]

It would be a distortion, however, to think that *gospel* for Paul was simply a fill-in-the-blank term, capable of meaning whatever he wanted it to mean. A. P. Stanley was on target when he wrote a century ago in his commentary on First Corinthians, *"The Gospel is not necessarily limited to the historical facts of the death and the resurrection of Christ. . . . Still the historical meaning of the word is always implied, and is here predominant."*[3] This judgment is confirmed by Paul's identification of *gospel* with the act of preaching (e.g., 2 Cor. 8:18; Phil. 4:15; 2 Cor. 2:12). *Gospel* for Paul was not random good news but rather specific good news proclaimed and applied. The *gospel* Paul preached and applied carried always at its center the historical facts of Jesus' life, death, resurrection, and exaltation (Rom. 1:3-4; 1 Cor. 2:1-5; 15:1-8; 1 Tim. 3:16; 2 Tim. 2:13). Therefore, while gospel occasionally is applied by Paul in a broad, comprehensive sense, we need to see that the word *gospel* never loses for him its definitive historical reference.

The Historic Gospel

Explicit verification of this point regarding the specific denotative content of the biblical term *gospel* is found in the opening verses of 1 Corinthians 15. This passage is of special importance, first, because it preserves an explicit summary of what Paul preached as *gospel* to the Corinthians, but also, second, because this passage leaves no doubt as to the continuity of semantic meaning in the term *gospel* from the earliest Jerusalem disciples (v. 3), to the *"other apostles"* (v. 11), to Paul himself (vv. 1, 3, 7, 11). In the Early Church, gospel was not a generic fill-in-the-blank concept but rather a term that conveyed specific meaning.

> "Now I would remind you, brethren, in what terms I preached to you the gospel. . . . For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures, and that he appeared . . ." (1 Cor. 15:1-5, RSV).

This four-point summary of *gospel* is not exhaustive, since Paul elsewhere varies the particular points enumerated, e.g., Jesus' death/burial are not mentioned in Rom. 1:3-4, instead Davidic ancestry is mentioned, whereas Jesus' heavenly exaltation is included in 1 Tim. 3:16. Nevertheless the conclusion emerges from comparison of these lists, together with the sermons recorded in Acts, that although the data may vary, it all pertains to the person and work of Jesus Christ—not to speculations, or to hypotheses, but to the facts of what God has done in Christ. *Gospel,* therefore, is not the word of man's activity but rather the news of God's gracious initiative through Jesus Christ. Jean Héring is correct, therefore, when he says of this passage, *"For it was not with ideas, but with facts that the oldest narrative about Christ was written."*[4]

Characteristics of Gospel

From Paul's summary in 1 Cor. 15:1-5 several important characteristics of gospel may be extracted.

A. Gospel is good news.

That *gospel* is inherently good news is self-evident from the morphology of the Greek word, which contains the prefix *eu,* meaning "well" or "good," joined to *angelos,* the word for "message" or "communication." Paraphrases like "glad-tidings" or "joy-bringing-word" accurately echo the upbeat semantic tones in *euangelion.* Furthermore, in verse 1 Paul combines both the verb and the noun forms of *gospel* in an expression difficult to translate, but which emphasizes *"the goodness and gladness of the message,"*[5] literally saying, *". . . the good news which I goodnewsed you with."* Our English term *gospel* is the modern form of the Anglo-Saxon *godspell* = god-story, which in turn was originally *good-spell* = good-story.[6] Like the Old Testament word *b-s-r, gospel* is essentially a joy-bringing-proclamation-of-divine-events.

When, therefore, *gospel* is proclaimed as messages of psychological self-help, or as the power of positive thinking, or as the key to personal success and a Christian version of the American Dream, we have profoundly distorted the term's original God-centered meaning. Positive thinking may be good news in contemporary neurotic culture, but it is not *gospel.* What makes *gospel* good news is precisely its God-focus, since He is Good. To shift that semantic focus away from God's acts is to lose what is "good" in the *good news.*

Furthermore, the nature of the *evangel=gospel* vocabulary, with its etymology rooted in *good* news, calls into question the fundamentalists' reputation as "doomsayers." Fighting for issues such as biblical inerrancy, and crying out against excesses of contemporary secularity, are certainly legitimate pursuits and may even be viewed as having prophetic precedent. However, bad news, no matter how eloquently and passionately presented, is not the

good news, and to claim a reputation as a defender of the faith is to miss the heart of *evangel*icalism.

B. Gospel is historical news.

In the original text of Paul's summary of the apostolic *gospel,* there are four clearly marked grammatical ribs, each indicated by a "that" *(hoti)* clause. *That* Jesus died . . . *that* He was buried . . . *that* He was raised . . . and *that* He appeared to witnesses, was the substance of Paul's *gospel.* What is clear here is that the apostolic *gospel* consists of historical events in the life of Christ, selected in the light of the Christian experience of salvation. *Gospel* is, in other words, the glad-message of God visiting history, transforming human experience by real events that impregnate time with eternity.

This firm historical content to the apostolic *gospel* stands in sharp contrast to the blurred semantic content in our contemporary usage. What began in the Early Church as a strong denotative term having specific historical reference has become a slippery connotative term for us, dependent upon its context for meaning and often revealing more about the speaker than about historical events.

The consequence of this semantic shift is a form of linguistic inflation in which our words become devalued: We use more and more of them, but we're not sure what they're worth. An example of this is our glib use of *evangel*-words to label virtually everything except the historic message defined by Paul. We speak of evangelism, evangelists, and of evangelicals. But are we using these *gospel*-words in Paul's sense? "Evangelism" and "evangelistic" point more today to distinctive recruitment emphasis than to anything specific in the history of Jesus, while "evangelical" often merely distinguishes a "conservative" from a "liberal" believer.

But recruiting and conserving are not the same as *gospelizing.* To see this, one has only to remember that Christianity began in a world of competitive religious recruiting sponsored by Greek mystery religions, Roman emperor cults, and even Jewish synagogues. Membership drives were common then as now. It was not recruitment, therefore, which set the Early Church apart but rather the specific historic events that they proclaimed as the *good news=gospel* of Jesus. Furthermore, Paul and the Early Church faced their share of problems and issues, their share of conflict and error—as the First Epistle to the Corinthians simply demonstrates. In spite of those issues and threats, however, the gospel was not defined in terms of them but rather in unambiguous terms of the life of Christ. It is highly significant, therefore, that when Paul writes to his problem church at Corinth, a church so full of problems and in such jeopardy of losing its faith as well as its regard for Paul, the apostle does not recast *gospel* in terms that might "whip the Corinthian radicals into shape" but recounts to them the four-point story of Jesus' victory over sin and death. My point is that Paul could not do anything else, since *gospel* was not a fill-in-the-blank term capable of meaning different things but rather that in the Early Church it was a term with specific historical content and meaning. The church believed that something specific had happened which radically changed history, and it was telling about that "happening" in terms of its *good news* for men which made their message distinctive.

Now we may judge that Paul's meaning of *gospel* is too narrow and that we today require a broader sense. However, my point is that to retain biblical terms without biblical meanings is to risk diluting our language into form without substance.

C. Gospel is historic news.

In Paul's opening statement in 1 Corinthians 15, we have the sequence, *"I received . . ."* (v. 1), *". . . I delivered . . ."* (v. 3), *". . . You received"* (v. 1). This activity of faithfully delivering precisely what was received so that the same message is preserved intact is important in the New Testament (cf. 2 Thess. 2:15; 3:6; 1 Tim. 6:3; 2 Tim. 1:13). That which is faithfully delivered—the *paradosis,* the "tra-dition"—is the technical term in Greek for teaching that is historic in the sense that it is uniform with the original (1 Cor. 11:2; 2 Thess. 2:15; 3:6). Paul does not here identify his source as he does when he locates his information concerning the Communion as *". . . received from the Lord"* (1 Cor. 11:23). This does not require that Paul's general reference here in 1 Corinthians 15:3 be taken to exclude special revelation (cf. Gal. 1:11-12), since it may be deliberately unqualified, as Godet suggested long ago, *". . . that it might embrace both human tradition and Divine teaching."*[7]

The thrust of Paul's message here in 1 Cor. 15:1-11 is to match his own message with that of the other apostles. His meaning is clear: The *gospel* did not originate with Paul, or with anyone else, but was a communal message received and faithfully passed on, and ultimately is traceable to divine initiatives. It was important to Paul's relationship to the Corinthians to establish that he had neither tampered with the original contents of the *gospel* nor was he preaching a substandard, recent imitation of the Jerusalem original. He establishes this uniformity by arguing that there are not *gospels,* plural, but only *gospel,* singular, and chooses his language carefully, as Robertson and Plummer point out, so it *". . . indicates the exact agreement of what he received with what he passed on to them."*[8]

There is something here in Paul's commitment to preserve the original, historic sense of the *gospel,* which is strangely absent from our word usage today. He was *evangel*ical in a sense many today are not. To compare his usage and ours, just as he compared his and the other apostles', is to see two applications of the same vocabulary but reflecting very different centers of gravity. For Paul, handing on without modification precisely what was handed down to him, was the supreme priority. It's worth asking ourselves whether our own priorities have changed.

See that the word *gospel* never loses its historical reference.

D. Gospel is scriptural news.

Twice in Paul's brief summary he repeats that *gospel* is *". . . according to the scriptures"* (vv. 3, 4). It is interesting that the testimony of Scrip-

ture is here adduced before the apostolic testimonies that follow. Scripture in this case refers to the Old Testament and probably suggested examples of familiar *testimonia* such as Isaiah 52—53; Ps. 2:7; Isa. 55:3; Ps. 16:10 (see Paul's discourse at Pisidian Antioch, Acts 13:33-34). The point of this reference to "the scriptures" is that because the *gospel* is *"according to the scriptures"* there is no break or incompatibility between the Old Testament and the *gospel* but rather fulfillment of Old Testament promise.[9] Perhaps implicit in Paul's phrase *"according to the scriptures"* were semantic links for the original readers connecting in a pattern as follows: according to the scriptures = according to God's Word = according to God's will and purpose = according to God's salvation-history. Therefore the *good news* of Jesus is of one piece with the *good news* of God's redemptive acts throughout history, the only difference being that in Christ God's actions reach their goal (= *telos,* Rom. 10:4), the culmination of the process (Gal. 4:4, 5; Eph. 1:3-11). To put it simply: the New Testament *gospel* is the joyous proclamation that now God has done what in the Old Testament He promised He would do.

Paul's description of *gospel* as *". . . according to the scriptures"* opens complex issues of hermeneutics and biblical interpretation, which cannot be explored in detail here. However, what is certain in Paul's statement is his sense of continuity, of unbroken tradition, in his definition of *gospel.* There is here no trace of cavalier disregard for biblical roots nor an eagerness to abandon heritage by pioneering an alternative *gospel.* Instead, Paul models for us a sense of interconnectedness that stretches through time into eternity, and that requires the *gospel* together with everything else in life to be according to God's will.

Such a sense of molding, shaping, controlling heritage may appear curiously old-fashioned and restrictive to us today. However, integrity demands that when we read into scripture modern *gospels* of individuality and pluralism we remind ourselves where those imported notions originate. *Gospel,* as Paul knew it, was something very different. For him, *gospel* was embedded in the long course of God's salvation-history and could no more be separated from scripture than it could be separated from God.

E. Gospel is priority news.

In verse 3 Paul states that what he had received he delivered to the Corinthians *". . . as of first importance" (en protois).* This phrase is not a chronological reference to the initial things he talked about, but rather it is a qualitative valuation of the importance of the four-point *gospel* Paul delivered. This is clear from the fact that he did not say *en tois protois, ". . . among the first* (things)," but instead, he said more pointedly, *en protois,* which R. St. John Parry translates, *"first of all."*[10]

Retaining biblical terms without biblical meanings risks diluting language into form without substance.

Here, then, is Paul's version of first principles, his priority list of things to know and tell as a Christian. These priorities consist of historical facts surrounding the death and resurrection of Jesus. To Paul's mind these historical facts are not secondary but primary; they are not subpoints or rhetorical embellishments or footnotes at the bottom of the page. The historical facts of Jesus' death and resurrection were Paul's central theme.

It's worth asking ourselves whether those historical facts of Jesus' victory over death are our central theme today. Have we relegated to the periphery what was central for Paul, shifting his priorities away from the center to the edge of our concerns? What is it we're "delivering" today as *gospel?* Is contemporary televangelism, for example, delivering *". . . as of first importance"* the same things Paul emphasized? And what of our own personal witnessing? Do our personal "first principles" for faith-sharing match Paul's? Examination of last year's sermon outlines, or a check of our recent personal witnessing or teaching notes, may be revelatory. It seems to me that matching our contemporary practice to apostolic models is mandated for those of us most inclined to claim the *evangel*-vocabulary. Of all believers, we have least excuse for hawking apostolic language while abandoning apostolic priorities.

Conclusion

There's no doubt that getting the words right in Mark Twain's sense is no easy matter. Words, as the Hasidic Rabbis used to say, are living things, bringing forth either angels or demons, therefore we must take care how we release them into the world. Because language is dynamic and not static, words shift and alter their meaning over time, like coins worn and defaced with usage. This feature of all living languages is generally an asset, not a liability—except in the case of a living tradition founded upon unique historical events and dedicated to keeping alive an original set of values. In such a context, of which Christianity is an example, changes in the meaning of core words become critical for the future of the tradition.

Gospel, together with the cognate *evangel*-terminology built upon it, is a core term in Christian history which had specific original meaning. From its Old Testament roots in the Hebrew word-group surrounding *b-s-r* with its emphasis on joy-bringing news of divine events, to the New Testament usage and its home in the Pauline writings, *euangelion* meant good news of life-changing events in the life of Christ. Specifically, we found that in the Early Church *gospel* was not a fill-in-the-blank term but pointed to specific salvation-history events in the life of Christ: *that* He died for our sins, . . . *that* He was buried, . . . *that* He arose, . . . and *that* He appeared. In place of Greek philosophy's fatalism and despair the Early Christians offered faith, hope, and love by proclaiming the *good news* of God's dramatic invasion of history and the divine victory over sin and death. Their *good news* was authentically good,

it was historic, it was scriptural, and it was news that took priority over everything else.

To see Mark Twain's point about getting our words right is to know the world of difference there is between lightning and lightning bug. And to see *gospel* in its apostolic context is to know also that when it comes to *gospel,* no news is not *good news.*

NOTES

1. G. Friedrich, article "euangelion" in G. Kittel, ed., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964, E. T.), 2:707.

2. See the neglected but classic essay in the best matical exegesis, "On Euangelion, Euangelizomai" in George Milligan, *St. Paul's Epistles to the Thessalonians* (London: Macmillan, 1908), 141-44.

3. Arthur Penrhyn Stanley, *The Epistles of St. Paul to the Corinthians* (London: Greene, 1882), 185.

4. A. Robertson and A. Plummer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians* (Edinburgh: T and T Clark, 1914), 331.

5. Milligan, *Thessalonians,* 141, n. 1.

6. F. Godet, *Commentary on St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians* (London: Longman, n.d.), 2:330.

7. Robertson and Plummer, 333. See also T. C. Edwards, *A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians* (London: Macmillan, 1885), 392, where the point is emphasized that the doctrine of the Cross would have been so repugnant to Paul's Jewish consciousness that nothing short of divine revelation could have given him insight into its meaning.

8. "The *kai* indicates the exact agreement of what he received with what he passed on to them," Robertson and Plummer, 333.

9. G. Friedrich, TDNT 2:730.

10. So R. St. John Parry, *Cambridge Greek Testament: First Corinthians* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1916), 214. Also Robertson and Plummer, 332; Stanley, 286, et al.

Clinical Christianity

(Continued from page 56)

vin insisted upon the "spitiual presence" of Christ in the sacrament. We recognize and agree with Wesley's understanding that fellowship in the Christian ecclesia (the Church) and spiritual fellowship with Christ through the Lord's Supper are inseparable experiences of the people of God.

If Holy Communion is a mark of the Church the people of God (those who have living faith who gather together in fellowship), then it serves as a significant witness to the integrity of our faith in Christ. Of course, there are those who eat unworthily, which means to eat without recognizing the spiritual presence of Christ in His body—the Church ("Not discerning the Lord's body"—1 Cor. 11:29, KJV).

These "marks" of the Church, the identifying characteristics of the people of God, are constant, unwavering evidences of the divine life within us. Together they provide objective bases for Christian confidence. The subjective "inner witness" accompanied by these objective sources of certainty offer comfort for the soul.

Faith is always "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Heb. 11:1). Most highly blessed is he who believes without requiring the touch of the pierced hand (John 20:29). The glorious integrity of God our Savior offers us a sure foundation for the hopefulness of faith.

According to Helmut Thielicke, "Assurance can come only at the point where in faith we are not alone but creep into Christ and let the Word attested by the Spirit be mightily toward us. Those who believe in their own belief or their own unbelief often think they can see a psychological vacuum and therefore experience sharp 'fever-curves' and can find no stable point of certainty" (*The Evangelical Faith* 3:19-20). "Fever-curves!" Such is the experience of those who chart their own spiritual temperature rather than relying on the healing of the Sun of Righteousness. The Christian life is designed for rest of soul in a restless world. Those who are heavy laden by their fears may find rest under the yoke of Christ.

Altar Training Through Role Demonstrations

(Continued from page 53)

give You everything that is me. Will You cleanse my heart from all sin and fill me with Your Holy Spirit? Give me the power to live and witness for You. Amen."

BEGIN TO LIVE EACH DAY OPEN TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

God hears and answers the prayer of faith. "Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours" (Mark 11:24).

"May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful and he will do it" (1 Thess. 5:23-24).

Let's thank God that He has heard and answered your prayer. (Offer a simple prayer of thanksgiving for what God has done.)

Church Money-Saver

(Continued from page 35)

Another benefit to the volunteer is the satisfaction of working on the Lord's house, no matter how humble the work. I can testify that painting the interior of a chapel is a totally different experience from painting anything else.

A church considering a Ten Hour Club, Hill suggests, should start by establishing the need. At First Methodist Church, like many others, maintenance was falling behind. There was no money to hire work done.

Once the church has established that work needs to be done, "Find someone that's really committed to this type of thing. That person makes one-on-one contact with people in order to get their names on the list." Include women, of course. After the first year, Hill says you can just update the list.

When assembling volunteers, find out from each one what he can do and what talents he has. Also find out which days are best for each one to work. The list, once completed, can be divided into teams, such as painting teams, carpentry teams, electrical teams, etc.

"You should be assured that there is at least one skilled person in each group who can pay attention to the quality of the work being done," Hill states. "There has been a time or two when we had to do a job over, but that's the exception. By and large, the results have been outstanding."

Hill insists, "There is no reason for a church to be in bad repair if the people care."

TODAY'S BOOKS for TODAY'S PREACHER

PASTORAL CARE FOR SURVIVORS OF FAMILY ABUSE

by James Leehan
Westminster/John Knox, 1989
PA066-425-0254 $11.95

The purpose of this book is found in the preface. The author hopes that "it will contribute to a better understanding of the physical, psychological, and spiritual needs of the many survivors of family abuse. . . . Its goal is to instruct and inspire religious leaders of all faiths so that they will be more aware of the violence occurring in families, more responsive to the needs of the victims, and more committed to joining the struggle to end such abuse."

The content of the book came from years of counseling and therapy with "survivors" of family abuse. Leehan points out that he opts for the word "survivor" rather than "victim" because it sets a more positive tone for helping those who have experienced abuse. The author's understanding and expertise in the area of family abuse becomes more and more apparent as the reader moves through the book.

This is a well-written book with a great deal of helpful information. There is a good flow of thought through the book beginning with descriptive information moving toward methods of help and healing.

Leehan begins the book by disclosing the troubling reality that abused children and adults who were abused as children exist in every social strata of society. And they exist in our churches! Leehan then moves on to descriptions of the different kinds of abuse: physical, sexual, verbal, psychological, neglect, battering, sibling, elder.

The third chapter gives descriptions of recurring behavioral patterns of grown-up abused children: lack of trust, low self-esteem, poor social skills, etc. The author then follows up with a chapter titled "Behaviors That Try the Patience of a Saint." This chapter alone is worth the price of the book, for it helps those in pastoral/counseling roles understand the reasons for the behavior of victims; behaviors that would normally "try the patience of those they come into contact with."

Chapter 5 is a clear and balanced treatment of scriptural admonitions of disciplined parenting and how they differ from abusive behavior. Included in this chapter is an important discussion on the marriage/divorce issue. The author's view is that no partner should feel obligated to remain in a threatening situation. Leehan goes on in the book to present forms of spiritual guidance and ideas for pastors and churches of all sizes that will enable them to give help to survivors and abusers.

This is an important book. With the staggering statistics of family abuse, a book of this nature should be in the hands of every pastor and counselor. It was well written, scripturally sound, culturally relevant, and very helpful and useful for a pastor, even in a small rural setting. Wherever there are people, there will be some form of family abuse!

—Robert Sherwood

ON EAGLES' WINGS

by Geoff Gorsuch
Colorado Springs: Navpress, 1989
PA089-109-2625 $7.95

Veterans of the Vietnam War are many, and so are stories and books written of the experiences. If there is an underlying principle in many of the Vietnam books, it is that "war always changes a person." The experiences of combat necessitate change; however, what kind of change depends upon how each person inwardly deals with his struggles.

Geoff Gorsuch went into the heat of the Vietnam War and came out a changed person: a process that was not an easy one. *On Eagles' Wings* is not a simple, run of the mill, Vietnam biography. It is a story of how one's faith reacts to life's darkest moments. In this book the reader is brought along through many difficult times with Gorsuch, from flight school to the darkness of combat and back home again.

The stories are gripping. Many of them will keep you on the edge of your seat. Yet, they are not for mere entertainment but are shared to show how they tested and tried his Christian faith. He writes about how he came to the end of his answers and to the end of discovering why God allowed such evil to take place. The reader meets people and situations different in detail, but not in principle, from what a Christian may face in his daily "battles." It was not until he came to the end of his own answers that he was able to rely upon and understand God.

Gorsuch opens himself up in this book. There are some similarities to the person of Job. His emotional energy struggling with God in difficult times can be clearly felt by every reader. At times one may wish that the author would tell more of his stimulating stories and deal less with his theological questioning and answers, but the two go hand in hand in this book.

Written on the front cover is the phrase, "A Spiritual Odyssey of a Young American Pilot in Vietnam." That is exactly what it is—a journey of faith that begins asking, "Where is God?" and ends up resting on the wings of faith.

At times you may disagree with some of his conclusions. However, one needs to remember that this is something that has been worked out on the battlefield, a faith that has been through the fires of darkness and doubt. Developing a theology in a study on easy street is one thing, but what happens to one's theology on the difficult roads that a Christian sometimes has to travel?

Gorsuch shows us that one's faith and theology in dark times will either become stronger or die. Why don't you take some time to travel with Gorsuch on his journey. You too may come out a changed person.

—Scott E. Delbridge

LEADING THE WAY

by Paul Borthwick
Colorado Springs: Navpress, 1989
PA089-109-2781 $7.95

The subtitle, *Leadership Is Not Just for Super Christians,* grabbed my attention, and so did the first 10 pages. Borthwick helped me crystallize and substantiate some of my concerns. In a time of worldwide leadership transition, too few young people are willing to lead the way. The leadership vacuum in the church is growing larger. Interestingly, he says, this is our culture's problem too. It is of concern to secular writers and sociologists.

Gordon Fee of the University of Colorado's research, cited in *U.S. News and World Report,* is quoted: "In the seven years between 1973-74 and 1980-81, the proportion of faculty members over the age of 50 increased from 31.3% to 42%, while those under 35 decreased from 20.3% to 6.3%. The Carnegie Council on Policy Studies in Higher Education has estimated that by about the year 2000, professors over age 46 will constitute 65% of all faculty members." From Inter-Varsity Fellowship Donald Posterski observed a paradox many pastors have tried to understand and overcome as they try to identify local church leaders who will propel the church into the next generation: "Young people today hunger for friendship and simultaneously avoid leadership."

Not surprisingly, Borthwick insists that withdrawal from leadership involvement has not improved self-esteem or made people happier. Indeed, "Many young people in their twenties and thirties are entering adult life disillusioned, apathetic, or bored."

The remainder of the book was anticlimactic. Some choice lines are sprinkled throughout the text. They are not so much new insight as insights revisited and reinforced. Borthwick's chapters include the following assortment of topics: what we do and say is important; love must be evident if we are to live and lead with Christian impact; effective leaders will build their own faith, be committed to purity and enthusiastic for God; knowledge must be applied; and growing leaders will never lose an essential idealism—rather conventional wisdom, elementary, and tending primarily to the spiritual side of the leadership task.

The book, written for the leadership novice, is intentionally elementary in content, focusing on the importance of "being" as the foundation for what the leader does. The reader who wants to identify concrete handles for leadership development might be disappointed that more specific handles are not given.

The chapter urging readers to discover a good mentor offered such sufficient guidance that I will be inclined to use the book in special settings.

—Carl C. Green

NEW LIFE FOR YOUR CHURCH

by Doyle L. Young
Baker, 1989
PA080-109-9234 $8.95

The book *New Life for Your Church* is meant to be practical. The author has been involved both in academics as a seminary professor and in practics as a pastor of a semirural church. He states clearly in the preface, "This short work is not an exercise in ivory-tower reflection." Though the author remains true to this "practical" principle, the reader can see that Young has thought through, from an academic perspective, all that he proposes.

The message of the book is found on the first page of the introduction: "I suggest that Western Christianity may be in its death throes. The flames are leaping around the pyre. The institutional Church may well be breathing its last, in the ashes, struggling to rise and take new flight."

Young sees as the basic problem of the Church today that it has "been captured by our culture." There has arisen a "general secularization" of the Church in that it has allowed society to set the agenda. As a result, "the churches usually endorse and defend some set of 'cultural (not biblical)' values." Young then proceeds to explain how we can rise up from the ashes of a dying church.

Chapter 1 contains a description of the author's own development with reference to those who helped form his thought and position. I would have expected this material to be included in the preface. Though valuable information, it hardly warranted its own chapter, much less the first chapter of the book.

Chapter 2 is a plea for the Church to define itself: "Who are we?" After asking that question, Young gives descriptions of what the Church is or should be! The emphasis is found concisely in the last paragraph: "The Church is not a building, a program, a denominational headquarters, or an organizational unit. It is people—those called out by God."

Chapter 3 is a logical follow-up. Here the author attempts to identify and define the five principle tasks of the church: worship, fellowship, evangelism, nurturing, and service.

Chapter 4 discusses "principles that shape church life." Subjects discussed include strict obedience to Christ, leadership of the Holy Spirit, change or progress and opposition to change, the importance of putting people first. This chapter was especially hard-hitting and to the point. Included is a very important discussion on the difference between fundamental, essential tasks of the Church and historically conditioned methods.

Chapter 5 provides a historical sketch of churches/groups who attempted, or are attempting, to "rise from the ashes" of the dying Church. He briefly describes Hippolytus, Anabaptism, Pietism, the Moravian Brethren, and the Wesleyan movement. The purpose here was to put into tangible form and expression what was discussed in the previous chapter.

Finally, in chapter 6 is a very basic but helpful strategy for getting started with renewal. There are three simple points: (1) understand the principles of renewal, (2) make sure the people understand them, and (3) start!

One cannot read this book and not sense the burning in the heart of the author. He writes with brutal honesty and clear convictions. One can hardly read it without participating in Young's urgency. The book was well written and, for the most part, had a good flow of thought.

I'm not sure Young achieved what he had hoped in chapter 5. Were these examples actually instances of groups rising up from a "problem" or "dead" church, or were they schisms caused by differences of opinion on issues such as doctrine and methods?

This book forced this reader to evaluate why we do what we do. Perhaps there is a better, more effective way. This alone made it worth the reading! Sooner or later, every pastor will have to wrestle with the issues Young raises.

—Robert Sherwood

THE ARK ROCKER

The Irrelevance of Preaching

"Preaching ranks **ninth,** far behind greeters and nursery attendants," declared the Church Growth specialist, "in reasons why people choose a new church." His was only the latest in a mighty chorus of voices that have arisen in the last two decades—ironically from the ranks of ecclesiastical authorities, declaring that preaching is ineffective in winning converts, irrelevant to the real work of ministry, and unproductive in "growing a church."

As I reluctantly face the facts, I confess that preaching is as ineffective as a hymn sung by the sea at eventide, as a walk in the high country, as a love-note scratched in the sand, as a Handel's *Messiah* filling the Advent air.

It seems to me that the sociologists are right: preaching is as irrelevant as a father flying a kite with his son, as a rainbow on the edge of an autumn storm, as lovers walking hand in hand through dew-dusted meadows.

Who am I to argue with the studied conclusions of the experts? Namely, that preaching is as nonproductive as a whispered, "Will you marry me," as a spoken, "I do," as an announcement, "It's a boy," as my daughter gazing out over the vast expanse from the top of a mountain singing softly, "To God be the glory, great things He hath done."

What is preaching? Fundamentally, it is an act of speaking words: inconsequential little words like "God created the heavens and the earth," "God so loved the world that he gave," "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself," "This Jesus whom you crucified, God raised up again."

Why should we get excited when the Spirit of the Lord is upon us to preach good news to the poor, to proclaim release to the captives, to bind up the brokenhearted, to bring recovery of sight to the blind, and to set free those who are oppressed?

All that happens when the Word is biblically, prayerfully, and passionately preached is that light shines, darkness is dispelled, sinners are converted, saints are nourished, Satan falls like lightning from heaven, sin's power is broken, the Kingdom comes, God's will is done, and downcast souls rise on the wings of the Word to sit in heavenly places in Christ Jesus! That's all!

In view of the low esteem in which preaching is held, it is puzzling why, when pastoral vacancies occur, churches still doggedly insist upon calling a preacher, why young people continue to be aroused by a misty-eyed, soul-gripping, and all-consuming call to preach, and why the preaching services continue to draw more people than any other activity to which the Church regularly gives itself.

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

In short, it just doesn't make any sense at all why "it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe" (1 Cor. 1:21, KJV).

WORSHIP & PREACHING HELPS

September/October/November 1990

by David E. Downs

INTRODUCTION

There are few, if any, passages of scripture that are more significant to the life-style and theology of Christians than the Sermon on the Mount. It has been seen as a synthesis of the complete theology and ethics of Christ himself. It was preached to people who share much in common with many in our congregations. Jesus spoke to the downtrodden and disillusioned masses of His society. They were downtrodden by the Roman Occupation armies and disillusioned by the apparent failure of their religion, which to the common man was nothing more than an impotent system of unlivable rules and regulations.

To these downtrodden and disillusioned people, Jesus brought a remarkable, revolutionary, and radical message of hope. He brought to them in the Beatitudes, which make up the heart of the Sermon on the Mount, a prescription for blessedness, or as we would define it, "sheer happiness."

Our own people still desperately need to hear this message of hope. Many are still downtrodden and disillusioned. Today they are downtrodden not by occupying armies but by social systems, disease, fear, and materialism. They are often disillusioned as well. The basic themes of the Beatitudes are at least as contemporary today as ever.

It is an enjoyable challenge to preach from these exciting passages. Whenever I do, I find myself stretching to practice what I'm preaching. I used to think the Beatitudes represented unattainable ideals that only exasperated spiritual frustration for many. I have since discovered that they are, in fact, livable expressions of God's love and grace. They are more "user friendly" than most of our people suppose. I sincerely pray for, and expect, God's blessing upon our congregation and upon you personally as you rediscover the Beatitudes together.

EDITORIAL NOTE: The usual format of placing one sermon on a front and back page had to be altered in this issue due to the brevity of content.

—Randal E. Denny

THE BLESSEDNESS OF INSUFFICIENCY

Matt. 5:1-11
September 2, 1990

INTRO:

The Sermon on the Mount was preached by Jesus to downtrodden, ordinary, disillusioned people. They were downtrodden by the Roman soldiers who occupied their homeland. They were disillusioned by a religion that seemed to consist of unlivable rules and laws. They, like the downtrodden and disillusioned in our own time, needed to hear a message of hope and happiness.

The heart of the Sermon on the Mount is found in the Beatitudes. The Beatitudes have been called the "Owner's Manual" for Christianity. Jesus taught those who heard Him the true meaning of fulfillment, purpose, and happiness.

I. What Is the Biblical Meaning of Happiness?

The New Testament word most often translated "blessed" is *makarios.* It is an adjective that basically means "happy" or "blissful" but not in the normal sense. Human happiness depends on the circumstances of life. Christian happiness is different.

A. *Christian happiness* (makarios) *is not dependent upon wealth or circumstances but rather upon faith.* This world can rob you of everything but your faith.

If our hope of happiness is built on anything less than "Jesus' blood and righteousness," it is in precarious danger.

Illus. In human terms, Solomon had everything going for him. He was the wisest man alive. He came from a noble family. His palace was indescribably fabulous. His wealth was immeasurable. He ate luxurious foods. He had incredible stables with thousands of the finest horses. He had countless beautiful women. Yet, when he considered those things, all he could say was, "Vanity of vanities . . . ; all is vanity" (Eccles. 12:8, KJV). That leaves emptiness.

B. *Christian happiness, blessedness, cannot be taken away by man.* Jesus promises a coming day when "you will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy" (John 16:22).

Christians cannot be totally separated from the world, but they must not buy into its definition of happiness. For our society, happiness has become a sales commodity.

Illus. The fact that happiness has become a sales commodity is most evident in the recent generation of TV beer commercials. Rather than emphasizing taste, price, or tangible benefits of their product, beer producers emphasize happiness, winning, friendship, adventure, and excitement, i.e., "Here's to Good Friends."

Ironically, a recent ESPN documentary on the dangers of mixing drugs and sports was "brought to you by Miller Lite."

The world attempts to buy and sell happiness, but true blessedness *(makarios)* is found through faith.

C. *Christian happiness is a character trait.* It is a primary characteristic of godliness. In Ps. 68:35; 72:18; 119:12, and elsewhere, we read, "Blessed be God." We serve a happy and blessed God.

To be truly blessed, truly happy, we must be Christlike. Christlikeness begins by being "poor in spirit."

II. Poorness of Spirit Is Defined.

A. *Poorness of spirit is not:*
—meanness
—sadness
—moodiness
—a critical spirit

What a shame it is that many Christians are seen by others as possessing these ungodly characteristics.

B. *Poorness of spirit is humility.* It is recognizing our total dependence on God.

Illus. I recently attended the high school graduation ceremony of a small rural school district in Tioga Center, N.Y. I was very impressed by their custom of having each graduate's parents walk across the platform with their child to receive his diploma. The participants were acknowledging the fact that these students didn't reach this graduation alone. They shared the challenges, trials, and, now, the victory with their parents.

Poorness of spirit shares all the glory with our father (see Matt. 5:16). We don't deny happiness and light, but rather we share all the glory with Jesus, who sacrificed all glory for us.

CONCLUSION:

Christian happiness is a characteristic of God and of the godly. Blessedness is experienced not when our goal in life is to be happy but rather when our goal is to be like Jesus.

SUGGESTED WORSHIP ORDER

Call to Worship	Ps. 95:1-7
Hymn	"Jesus Is the Joy of Living"
Words of Praise	A Selected Layman
Choir	"Wonderful Saviour"
Welcome Guests/Announcements	
Tithes and Offerings	
Special Music	"Stepping in the Light"
Prayer Chorus	"Seek Ye First"
Pastoral Prayer	
Message	THE BLESSEDNESS OF INSUFFICIENCY
Closing Hymn	"In the Garden"
Benediction	Rom. 15:3

MOURNING ON THE ROAD TO HAPPINESS

Matt. 5:4
September 9, 1990

INTRO:

The Sermon on the Mount was delivered to downtrodden, ordinary, disillusioned people.

1. They were downtrodden by the Romans.
2. They were disillusioned by legalism.

The meaning of blessed is divine happiness.

Blessedness is a Christian trait because it is a godly trait. In Ps. 68:35, 72:18 and elsewhere, we read, "Blessed be God." To be blessed, we must allow Jesus to make us more Christlike.

This second beatitude is perhaps the most paradoxical —"blessed are the mourners." The promise is "happy are the sad . . . they will receive comfort."

I. God Understands Sorrow and Sadness.

Blessedness is a godly trait and so is sorrow.

A. *Jesus is using the most severe form of the word, "mourning."* He is making use of the idea, "Blessed are those who mourn for the dead."

Illus. At a recent seminar on ministering to the bereaved, Chaplain Earnie Stephensen of Lourdes Hospital in Binghamton, N.Y., made the following statement: "The most important thing we can do for those who are grieving is not to offer answers or even sympathy. But, rather, to validate their loss . . . to say to them, 'You've lost much. The pain is very real. It is normal; it is good to grieve.' "

Illus. Dr. James Hamilton's pastor friend entered the home of a grieving family who had just learned of their son's tragic death in a car accident. Throughout his visit, the pastor was completely silent. He sat with the anguished parents. He grimaced in empathy. He wept openly. He wrung his hands and shook his head in sorrow and shock. His spirit groaned with theirs. And then, silently, he rose and left. He had said nothing, but he had communicated everything.

God doesn't give us a lot of answers about mourning. Trite answers don't help very much anyway. God gives us His presence. He validates our loss. He knows what it means to mourn.

B. *In John 11:17-35, we read of Jesus' dealing with grief.*

Jesus knew the answers.

Jesus knew that He was the resurrection of life (v. 25).

Jesus knew Lazarus would rise again.

But when faced with the death of His close friend, Jesus wept (v. 35).

The Spirit groaned within Him (v. 33).

In that situation, Jesus was validating their mourning. As He spoke to the multitudes from the mount, and as He speaks to us today, He gives us strength to mourn for:

Death
Divorce
Failure
Disappointment

C. *The ability to cry is a gift from God.*

Tears of mourning are good and healthy. The Bible is filled with examples:

The Psalmist shed tears of *loneliness.*

Timothy shed tears of *discouragement.*

Jeremiah shed tears of *disappointment.*

Paul shed tears of *concern.*

"Jesus wept"—what a powerful phrase!

Blessed are they who have endured the bitterest sorrow that life can bring" (Barclay).

II. Blessed Are Those Who Are Truly Sorrowful for Their Sins.

Jesus refers to persons who are sorry enough, mournful enough to repent.

This doesn't suggest that we must be constantly dredging up sins of our past. Rather, we must maintain a constant experience of God's forgiving grace.

We can be truly happy when we are forgiven. We can only be forgiven when we've mourned our sins.

CONCLUSION:

Jesus was saying, "Those who mourn their sin, those who are as sorry for their sin as they are sorry for death itself . . . they are the ones who can be cleansed, comforted, forgiven. They can know true happiness."

SUGGESTED WORSHIP ORDER

Call to Worship	Matt. 11:28-30
Hymn	"When Morning Gilds the Skies"
Choir	"No One Understands like Jesus"
Welcome Guests/Announcements	
Tithes and Offerings	
Pastoral Prayer	
Special Music	"Hiding in Thee"
Prayer Hymn	"I Need Thee Every Hour"
Message	MOURNING ON THE ROAD TO HAPPINESS
Closing Hymn	"A Shelter in the Time of Storm"
Benediction	Jude 24-25

HAPPINESS IS FOUND IN RESPONSIBILITY

Matt. 5:5
September 16, 1990

INTRO:

Blessedness is characteristic: "Blessed be God."

A. *Blessed means joyful, happy, blissfulness, a deep abiding peace through trial.*

B. *Romans and Greeks hated the idea of meekness.* They misunderstood meekness.

I. Meekness Isn't Weakness.

A. *Jesus is often misrepresented as a blow-dried wimp.* He, in fact, was rugged, strong, and courageous.

B. *He wasn't weak; He was meek.* Jesus was meek, but He was strong (Phil. 2:5-8).

C. *The New Testament word used by Jesus is* praotes. *Praotes* was used often in ancient times to refer to a mighty beast that has been domesticated.

Illus. In certain parts of America's West there are still packs of beautiful wild mustangs. They deserve to live and roam free. But apart from their historical value and natural beauty, they serve no purpose because they are not domesticated.

Illus. I flew low in a small commuter plane over the Amish country near Lancaster, Pa., recently. Beneath us, in the fields, were powerful teams of plow horses carving agricultural designs into the farmland. They stood in stark contrast to the wild mustangs of the West, who possess strength and drive but lack the training and purpose of these Amish teams of horses.

Illus. Contrast the wild mustang with the beautiful, graceful horses of the Olympic equestrian events. These horses, once properly trained, are virtual extensions of their rider/master. So it should be with the Christian and his Heavenly Father.

Jesus was saying, "Blessed are those who are strong as I am strong, and yet whose strength and power are under control, under God's control."

Meekness is characteristic of obedience.

Illus. I overheard a conversation between my three- and four-year-old daughters recently. The older one declared to the younger, "I always obey my mommy—sometimes." Selective obedience prevails among many Christians who think of themselves as disciples of Jesus, but who, in fact, neglect to listen to His voice or obey His commands.

II. The Meek Shall Inherit the Earth.

Jesus' phrase could have two meanings.

A. *Jesus' phrase could refer to the glory of rulership in the new world.* We will be rulers with Christ. But, glory and rulership don't seem to mean much to the meek.

B. *Jesus' phrase could refer to Ps. 37:11.* The word "earth" is best translated land (i.e., Canaan, the Promised Land). To inherit the land is to take responsibility to love the land and care for it.

CONCLUSION:

Blessed are the meek, for they accept responsibility for the earth.

Illus. I have often seen on TV the faces of the homeless, abandoned, and poor. Until recent years, I did little or nothing to assist them. However, through volunteer work with an orphanage, I came to know many orphans. Two have become my daughters. They are now my personal responsibility. Jesus calls us to make His world our responsibility.

Orphans and abandoned children are easy to overlook until you adopt or inherit them. The meek, the blessed, accept responsibility for caring for the world.

SUGGESTED WORSHIP ORDER

Call to Worship	Ps. 95:1-2
Hymn	"Let All the People Praise Thee"
Hymn	"Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee"
Opportunity for Testimony	
Choir	"When I Survey"
Welcome Guests/Announcements	
Tithes and Offerings	
Prayer Chorus	"His Name Is Wonderful"
Pastoral Prayer	
Special Music	"O to Be like Thee"
Message	HAPPINESS IS FOUND IN RESPONSIBILITY
Benediction	Num. 6:24-26

THE BLESSEDNESS OF A RIGHT RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

Matt. 5:6
September 23, 1990

INTRO:

Blessedness of Christian happiness is experienced by Christians who have a healthy and dynamic relationship with God. This growing and changing type of relationship is experienced by those who really want such a relationship with God. There must be a desire for the things of God and His kingdom.

Jesus refers to this desire as "hungering and thirsting after righteousness." This beatitude teaches us three things about such a dynamic desire.

I. This Beatitude Is the Expression of Intense Desire.

A. *"Jesus speaks of the hunger of one who will die if he is not fed."* William Barclay points out that a working man, in Jesus' time, earned only a few cents daily. He ate meat only once per week. He was never far from the borderline of real hunger and actual starvation.

B. *Water was difficult to find in Palestine.* Occasional sandstorms filled men's mouths and nostrils with hot sand until they nearly suffocated. Today, few of us have had any experience of such thirst.

Illus. I'm not sure that he was correct, but my high school basketball coach believed that we should not often be allowed drinks of water during practice. Sometimes we would have a long, grueling session, complete with countless wind sprints, before he would allow us to race to the water fountain in the corner of the gym. The water tasted great because we were truly thirsty. We were willing to race to quench our thirst.

Illus. When I was a child growing up in Portales, N.Mex., we often experienced massive sandstorms while on the school playground. Our eyes, noses, and mouths would get coated with dirt. In each classroom a sink had been installed so that we could wash after each recess period. We learned at an early age the true meaning of the word *thirst.*

C. *Jesus is asking His followers, "How much do you want righteousness?"* As much as a starving man wants food? As much as a man dying of thirst craves water? To experience God, we must desperately desire Him.

II. This Beatitude Is a Description of the Object of Intense Desire: Righteousness.

A. *To be righteous means more than simply doing good.* It means to be cleansed. In John 16:5-8, we read that the work of the Holy Spirit is, in part, to convict the world in regard to righteousness.

In other words, the conventional definition of righteousness to which most Jews ascribe, "doing good and giving alms to the poor," is not enough. Righteousness is a matter of grace and faith. Jesus was saying, "Blessed are those who desperately desire the experience of God's forgiveness and grace. Happy are those with faith."

B. *Our desire should be like Paul's: "For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain"* (Phil. 1:21).

Illus. Fill in the blank. For me to live is _____. Therefore, for me to die is _____. If for me to live is *money,* then to die is total poverty. If for me to live is *popularity,* then for me to die is rejection. If for me to live is my *family,* then for me to die is loss of relationship and loneliness. But, if for me to live is *Christ,* then even death itself, and every other experience in life, is gain or profit.

III. This Beatitude Is a Promise of Satisfaction of Our Desire: "They Will Be Filled."

The splendid promise of 1 John 1:8-9 is for those whose greatest desire is to be filled with the righteousness of God.

CONCLUSION:

Righteousness is the result of desire, not of deeds. It is available to those who are consumed by a hunger and thirst for the things of God.

SUGGESTED WORSHIP ORDER

Call to Worship	Ps. 146:1-2
Hymn	"Praise Him, Praise Him"
Responsive Reading	"God's Goodness" (No. 545)
Choir	"Jesus Is All the World to Me"
Welcome Guests/Announcements	
Hymn	"More Love to Thee"
Tithes and Offerings	
Special Music	"The Closer I Walk"
Pastoral Prayer	
Prayer Chorus	"Spirit of the Living God"
Message	THE BLESSEDNESS OF A RIGHT RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD
Benediction	Rom. 15:5-6

MERCY: THE PREREQUISITE FOR HAPPINESS

Matt. 5:7
September 30, 1990

INTRO:

"Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy" (KJV).

Blessedness is a godly characteristic.

Blessedness is not a matter of packing up your troubles and smiling. Christian blessedness is not blind naïveté.

Illus. Pop philosophy has given birth to last year's biggest hit single, "Don't Worry, Be Happy." The spin-off T-shirts are still around today. The message of the song is basically, "Forget your problems, and they will go away." It has a nice thought and a catchy tune, but it is a far too simplistic worldview.

As Christians, we are not to be encumbered by worrying, but we are to face our responsibilities to God and other men seriously.

Blessing is not experienced by ignoring the issues of life but by developing a Christlike response to the major issues of obedience, mourning, persecution, and mercy.

Mercy is a godlike characteristic, and those who experience it are indeed blessed.

I. To Be Happy You Must Be Merciful.

A. *The Scriptures teach of the imperative nature of mercy.* Giving mercy is not optional for the Christian. (See Matt. 6:14-15; Col. 3:13; James 2:13; Luke 6:36.)

B. *Mercy begins with understanding and empathy.*

Illus. The Hebrew word for mercy is *chadeth.* It means much more than just feeling sorry for someone. It means genuine empathy. It means to get inside his skin and feel what he feels. To experience what he experiences. To truly relate to and attempt to understand someone.

When we do this in a relationship, we begin to be ready to express true forgiveness. In light of *chadeth* we can see the genuine merciful nature of the incarnation of Jesus.

C. *Understanding leads to desire to forgive.* God won't make you forgive if you don't want to forgive.

D. *True mercy is a gift from God.* Paul teaches us that merciful characteristics like patience, kindness, and goodness are characteristics of the fruit of the Holy Spirit, which is love (Gal. 5:22). Therefore, pray for love. Often we would like to forgive, but we don't want to love our enemy. Until we can love, we can't forgive.

II. To Be Happy We Must Receive Mercy.

A. *It is difficult for some people to receive forgiveness because they aren't certain that God loves them.* We can receive mercy from God because He loves us so much.

Illus. I recently received a letter from retired minister Thomas Thomas. On the envelope, beneath the return address, was printed the expression, "Jesus Loves Me!" What a healthy and beautiful thought! We are so quick to tell others that Jesus loves them. How good it is to know that "Jesus Loves Me." He loves us all.

The Bible teaches us that Jesus is faithful to forgive and cleanse (1 John 1:8-9).

B. *God's mercy transforms.* He cleanses us as we are forgiven.

Illus. Bob Lowry had been the town drunk in our small community for 50 years. Ever since he came back from World War II, he had been drunk. Everyone in town knew who he was, but no one had been able or maybe even willing to help. Finally Damon Tinkham took him under his wing. He sponsored Bob's trip to a detoxification hospital. He brought him into his own home as his adopted father and grandfather of his children. Damon gave Bob love and support.

Most importantly, he led Bob to Jesus. Now the entire community marvels at the transformation of Bob's life. Bob is truly transformed. He is sober, happy, and forgiven.

CONCLUSION:

True happiness is found and experienced through forgiveness. As we forgive others and as we experience the transforming experience of God's grace in our lives, we learn to forgive ourselves as well. Jesus invites everyone to come to Him who desires God's gift of forgiving others or His forgiveness for his sins.

SUGGESTED WORSHIP ORDER

Choir	"Wonderful Grace of Jesus"
Call to Worship	Ps. 30:4-12
Hymn	"Love Divine, All Loves Excelling"
Welcome Guests/Announcements	
Tithes and Offerings	
Hymn	"It's Just like His Great Love"
Special Music	"My Tribute"
Pastoral Prayer	
Message	MERCY: THE PREREQUISITE FOR HAPPINESS
Closing Hymn	"Give of Your Best to the Master"
Benediction	1 John 3:18

THE FOURFOLD MEANING OF COMMUNION

Matt. 11:28-29
October 7, 1990

INTRO:

Today is worldwide Communion Sunday. In countless languages and in countless cities, towns, and villages around the world followers of Jesus are coming to the Lord's table.

Though we do not fully understand the majestic significance of this feast, we partake in its symbolism and joy. The symbolism of Communion does not lessen its significance.

I. Communion Is a Symbol of Remembrance of Christ's Death.

A. *When we sing the song, "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross," do we mean what we are singing?*

Illus. We hired a crew to provide a complete topographical survey of our church property. They did a thorough job. They didn't simply look at our land. They didn't simply photograph it or describe it on paper. They took expensive equipment and meticulously surveyed it—every square foot. To survey the wonderful cross of Jesus is to carefully, meticulously consider its meaning in our own lives. We are urged not just to believe in it, not simply to appreciate it, but to "survey" it.

B. *To consider Jesus' death is to recognize that His suffering expresses God's ultimate love.*

1. Jesus experienced physical pain.
2. Jesus experienced public humiliation.
3. Jesus bore our sins. Jesus, without sin, bore all of the sins of the world on the Cross that day. His sacrifice was the greatest significance of His death. We celebrate today His sacrifice. Jesus is saying, "Come unto Me, you who are toiling with sin and death, and I will give you life."

II. Communion Is a Symbol of Thanksgiving and Praise.

A. *Communion is not a funeral.* Our celebration of the Lord's Supper is dignified but not defeatist. It is serious but not somber.

B. *When we consider the gift of abundant life made possible through Jesus Christ, we can no longer be defeated and discouraged.* Though Christians face difficulties and problems, we do not face them alone. Jesus offers victory and healing. Jesus is saying, "Come unto Me, you who are discouraged, you who are facing trial and defeat, you whose hearts are broken and lonely, and I will give you rest. I will give you cause for rejoicing and thanksgiving."

III. Communion Is a Symbol of the New Covenant in Christ's Blood. Read Jer. 31:31-33.

A. *Jesus' death on the Cross made this promised relationship possible.*

B. *The word "covenant" means testament or contract.*

1. The old covenant—contract/promise—was a testament of Law. That's the yoke of which Jesus spoke.
2. The new covenant is a contract of love and grace.

It's as if Jesus is saying, "Come unto Me, you who are struggling to do right and yet always failing, you who are seeking salvation through your own works, you who are frustrated and discouraged about religion and the law, and I will write My law on your hearts. I will be your personal Friend and Lord."

IV. Communion Is a Symbol of Christian Fellowship.

A. *There is something significant about sharing food with one another.*

1. Eating together breaks down barriers and builds bonds.
2. In most societies sharing food is a courtship rite.
3. Some psychologists point to the lack of eating together as a contributing factor to the breakdown of the family.
4. There is something equalizing about the breaking of bread and sharing of drink.

B. *As we eat this meal, it is symbolic of our fellowship with all Christians, particularly with each other.*

C. *Jesus desires for us all to share at His table.*

Illus. It hasn't always been easy, but my wife has continually made great effort over the years to protect our evening mealtime. It is often the only time when our whole family can be together to share events of the day as well as our hopes and dreams for the future. It grieved her when our oldest son, in his middle teenage years, began to miss this family time.

It was disappointing to prepare a meal, to look forward to the fellowship, and then to hear our oldest son make a typical teenage statement like, "I'm not hungry. I'm gonna skip supper." That was difficult for us both. Imagine Jesus' sorrow over people who will not come to His table.

Jesus is saying, "Come unto Me, you who are struggling with your relationships with each other: brothers, sisters, friends, husbands, and wives; you whose relationships are in turmoil. Come, and I will bring restoration."

CONCLUSION:

Communion is profoundly symbolic. In many ways Communion is like a lover's kiss—symbolic of love, but also conducive to a deeper relationship.

SUGGESTED WORSHIP ORDER

Call to Worship	Ps. 104:24-34
Choir	"How Great Thou Art"
Welcome Guests/Announcements	
Hymn	"At the Cross"
Tithes and Offerings	
Special Music	"Here at Thy Table, Lord"
Pastoral Prayer	
Communion	
Chorus	"There's Just Something About That Name"
Message	THE FOURFOLD MEANING OF COMMUNION
Closing Hymn	"Blessed Assurance"
Benediction	Gal. 1:3-5

THE HAPPINESS OF A HOLY HEART

Matt. 5:8
October 14, 1990

INTRO:

The sixth beatitude is a powerful challenge to every Christian. Jesus challenged us to live with spiritual stability and holy consistency. Those persons who are pure in heart, and they alone, will see God in His fullness.

I. This Beatitude Is a Call to Religion of the Heart.

A. *The people of Jesus' day were caught in an oppressive religion of human achievement characterized by legalism, sacrifice, and ceremonial cleansing.*

Jesus was saying, "Happiness is not found in these things; happiness is found in religion of the heart."

B. *To the Jew, the heart was the seat of a person's personality.* More than their emotions (or bowels), the "heart" was the mind and spirit.

Illus. The phrase, "I love you with all my heart," is often spoken frivolously. Such a phrase would mean much more to the Jews of Jesus' time. The heart was seen as the very essence of the person. More than an emotional seat, the heart was the very center of a person's being.

The Bible says, "As [a man] thinketh in his heart, so is he" (Prov. 23:7, KJV). Your heart—mind and spirit—can only be made pure by the cleansing power of God's Holy Spirit.

II. This Beatitude Is a Call to Christian Conspicuousness.

A. *Purity of heart means purity of life and action.* Purity does not simply mean sincerity. Sincerity or good motives are not enough.

Illus. Pilgrims often demonstrate their devotion to God and/or the church by climbing hundreds of steps up to the shrine on bruised, blood-stained knees.

Illus. In opposition to Elijah and Yahweh, prophets of Baal beat themselves and cut themselves in a vain effort to invoke the attention of their false god.

Illus. I was in Tokyo last year, shortly before Emperor Hirohito's death. Outside the walls of his palace gathered hundreds of sightseers, dozens of reporters, and a small group of people kneeling at the palace gate. They were praying for the emperor. They knelt for many long, uninterrupted hours.

People may have sincere, perhaps even pure motives, but they can be misguided and wrong. Their lives have not been made pure by sincerity alone.

The New Testament word for "purity" is *katharos.* It means cleansing from filth and iniquity or to be free from sin. It has to do with attitudes, integrity, and singleness of heart and action. In the Old Testament, Micah speaks of this type of purity of life (6:7-8). When Jesus spoke of heart purity, He was speaking of a cleansed life-style from within.

If your heart is pure, then your actions are pure. That means a Christian can't simply try to fit in. Our Christianity ought to be conspicuous. Too often we try to fit in at work, at school, and in church.

Illus. I rode a typically crowded subway car in Tokyo. Though the Japanese people are very careful not to stare at foreigners, nevertheless, I felt very conspicuous. I could not hide if I wanted to. I was different. I stood out. For one thing, I was about eight inches taller than anyone else in the car. By my very nature, I was conspicuous.

B. *Christianity ought to make a difference in our society.* It will if our hearts are pure. It is not an accurate statement to say that America is a Christian nation. In many ways, we are a pagan nation. Our culture has become predominately secular and godless.

Illus. I am specifically supportive of whales and also of the preservation of wildlife in general. However, I was puzzled last year as half the world watched with baited breath as the United States and Russia joined forces for weeks and spent millions of dollars to rescue two doomed whales in the Arctic.

During these weeks, thousands of people died of starvation. Countless unborn children were aborted. Crime, disease, and famine ravaged millions. We were confronted with the stark reality of the unbalanced nature of our priorities.

C. *Christians can only make a difference when they become conspicuous.* We only make a difference when our hearts are pure.

III. How Can Our Hearts Be Made Pure?

A. *Realize that we can't do it on our own.* Prov. 20:9 asks the rhetorical question, "Who can say, 'I have made my heart clean?'" (RSV).

B. *Allow God to cleanse our hearts by faith (see Acts 15:8-9).*

C. *Be obedient to God.* "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1:7, KJV).

CONCLUSION:

God is calling His Church to be holy. We must have clean, pure hearts. He is calling us to religion of the mind, spirit, and life-style. He is calling us to conspicuousness.

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God."

SUGGESTED WORSHIP ORDER

Call to Worship	Ps. 63:1-2
Hymn	"Rejoice, the Lord Is King"
Scripture Reading	Col. 3:1-14
Choir	"Rejoice, Ye Pure in Heart"
Hymn	"Holiness Forevermore"
Welcome Guests/Announcements	
Tithes and Offerings	
Special Music	"Glorious Freedom"
Pastoral Prayer	
Message	THE HAPPINESS OF A HOLY HEART
Closing Hymn	"Take Time to Be Holy"
Benediction	1 Thess. 3:12-13

TO BE CALLED A SON OF GOD: PEACEMAKING

Matt. 5:9
October 21, 1990

INTRO:

The Beatitudes seem to build up one another.

The first beatitude—"blessed are the poor in spirit"—is the root of all blessedness. Those who are poor in spirit:

—learn to mourn over the proper things.

—become meek in that they learn the proper time for anger; they discover the proper medium between too much and too little anger.

—hunger and thirst after what is righteous and good.

—are characterized by their ability to forgive and understand the motives of others.

The sixth beatitude—"blessed are the pure in heart"—speaks of the cleansing power of Christ's blood available for those who serve Him. We learned that it is possible for our motives to be pure in the eyes of God.

The final result of these beatitudes mentioned so far is that if they are practiced and experienced, the individual can experience true inner peace. The person who has this peace is a "pacifying force" to people around him. The truly peaceful person is a peacemaker.

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God" (v. 9).

I. What Is Peace?

A. *We often see peace simply as the absence of a disturbance.* "Where there is no war, there is peace." But this is true only in the negative sense of the word *peace.*

B. *"Peace" has a positive usage also.* It doesn't refer only to the absence of hostility; it also refers to the presence of something good and wholesome and satisfying. Peace is everything that makes for men's highest good. This kind of peace is possible only through Jesus. Medicine and medical vocation are peace in action. A kind smile is peace in action. Listening to the problems of another and trying to help is peace in action. Love, our expression of love, is peace in action.

C. *Peace is more than something you experience.* It is something you should make. "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God."

II. What Does It Mean to Be Called the "Sons of God"?

A. *The Hebrew language does not have many adjectives.* So a common way of describing a characteristic of someone was to refer to them as being the "son of" someone or something that he resembled.

1. Barnabas was called the "Son of Consolation" because he was known as being a consoling and comforting man.

2. Judas was called the "Son of Perdition."

3. A strong man might be called the "Son of Strength."

4. A peaceful man might be called the "Son of Peace."

B. *To be called a "Son of God" means that a man possesses a quality of the Almighty.* This phrase, "Sons of God," is not to be confused with the only begotten Son of God, who possessed all of the qualities of God. "For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form" (Col. 2:9).

To say, "Blessed are the peacemakers for they will be called sons of God" is to say, "Blessed and happy are the peacemakers, for they are doing a godlike work."

Are you a peacemaker? Some people are peacemakers, and some are peace disturbers.

III. God Is Our Only Source of True and Lasting Peace.

If we wish to bring lasting peace to the world, then we must first experience and share the peace only God can provide.

A. *He who makes the world a better place to live in does a good thing, but it is not necessarily an eternal good.*

1. The earth, as we know it, will pass away.

2. Though we endeavor to make worldly peace, only spiritual peace really counts in the long run. Jesus asked, "What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul?" (Matt. 16:26).

B. *What if we are able to live in peace with our brothers?*

1. What good will a few years of worldly peace do someone if people do not find spiritual peace and end up spending eternity in a place where there is no peace and no rest?

2. What good have we done if we break up a schoolyard fight, then allow hundreds of children to mature, age, and die without telling them about Jesus Christ?

3. In view of eternity, what good have we done by ending war in South America, or the Middle East, or Europe, or Africa, if we neglect to tell people about the one source of lasting peace: Jesus!

CONCLUSION:

What will we have gained if we save the world—but lose our own souls? Only as we experience and exhibit God's peace will we be worthy to be called the "sons of God."

SUGGESTED WORSHIP ORDER

Call to Worship	Rom. 5:1-2
Choir	"Near to the Heart of God"
Hymn	"He Keeps Me Singing"
Scripture Reading	Psalm 133
Hymn	"It Is Mine"
Welcome Guests/Announcements	
Tithes and Offerings	
Special Music	"Sweet Peace, the Gift of God's Love"
Prayer Chorus	"Breathe on Me, Breath of God"
Pastoral Prayer	
Message	TO BE CALLED A SON OF GOD: PEACEMAKING
Benediction	John 14:27

HAPPINESS IS A BY-PRODUCT OF PERSECUTION

Matt. 5:10-12
October 28, 1990

INTRO:

Jesus speaks of the happiness of genuine Christianity. But a price is paid by those who follow Jesus.

I. Jesus Tells of the Reception the Genuine Christian Receives at the Hands of the World.

A. *Christians do not receive universal acclaim.*

1. Jesus himself was the object of scorn.

2. Paul and other first-century Christians were victims of persecution.

B. *Those who live godly lives in Christ may suffer persecution.* Goodness provokes opposition.

II. Why Do True Christians Provoke Persecution?

A. *A genuine Christian is different.*

1. Samson admitted, "I'll become as weak as any other man" (Judges 16:7).

2. Our goal is not peculiarity but Christlikeness. If we are Christlike, we will be resented. (See John 15:18-20.)

Illus. Our three-year-old daughter, Courtney, wanted to be like her older sister. On the day Kimberly, age five, had her hair cut professionally, Courtney decided to cut her own hair. With a pair of scissors from my wife's sewing kit, she cut her hair in front down to the scalp. It took many months to grow out.

Her energy and efforts had followed her intense desire to conform to the image of her big sister.

Christians desire to be more like Jesus. Our energy and effort will follow our sincere desire.

B. *A genuine Christian is a constant rebuke to the world's sinfulness.*

Christians become living consciences. We are to be lights to the world. Some people will respect us; others will feel guilty beside us.

Illus. When I prearrange a pastoral call in a parishioner's home, I often arrive to find the Nazarene *Manual* on the coffee table, alongside their *Herald of Holiness.* Strangely, when I drop in, I seldom see the *Manual* or *Herald of Holiness.* The anticipated presence of a pastor slightly alters the reading or decorating habits of a Nazarene family. Imagine how the presence of godly people affects the people in their world.

C. *A genuine Christian stirs opposition because he interferes in the world's affairs.*

1. As a conscience, the Christian rebukes prejudices.

2. As a conscience, the Christian identifies atrocities.

3. As a conscience, the Christian interferes with sinful pleasures.

When the church speaks out, it is hated by society. The church moves against alcohol and drugs, against slavery, and against abortion.

III. What Is God's Response to Our Persecution?

God does not offer pity but congratulations: "Rejoice and be glad." There are some benefits to persecution for righteousness' sake.

A. *Persecution offers proof of Christian citizenship.* Satan doesn't waste his time on the unsaved.

B. *Persecution offers a pathway to spiritual growth.*

1. Persecution stimulates personal growth. (See James 1:2-4 and 1 Pet. 5:10.)

2. Persecution stimulates collective growth. Historically the Church has grown in the face of persecution.

Illus. Recent reports from Mozambique tell of drastic persecution experienced by Nazarenes, including beatings and violent murder of pastors and laymen. Yet, in face of this persecution, the annual growth rate of the church is nearly 25 percent.

CONCLUSION:

Persecution is still a significant aspect of Christian experience. In some cultures, persecution is subtle. We can hold steady. We can grow spiritually. We can draw closer to our Lord and the martyrs before us.

SUGGESTED WORSHIP ORDER

Call to Worship	2 Cor. 4:7-11
Hymn	"Christ, the Lord, Is Risen Today"
Hymn	"I Would Be True"
Welcome Guests/Announcements	
Choir	"Hallelujah, What a Savior"
Tithes and Offerings	
Scripture Reading	Matt. 5:43-44
Special Music	"It Is Well with My Soul"
Pastoral Prayer	
Message	HAPPINESS IS A BY-PRODUCT OF PERSECUTION
Closing Hymn	"O Jesus, I Have Promised"
Benediction	Eph. 6:10, 13

INTERNATIONAL PARTICIPATION: THE GIFT, THE PRIVILEGE, THE TEST

2 Cor. 8:1-7
November 4, 1990

INTRO:

In two weeks, many churches will participate in a Thanksgiving Offering for World Evangelism. At a time when the potential for reaching millions who have not heard of Jesus is at its greatest opportunity, many churches are retrenching. We need to rediscover, as did the church in Corinth, the joy of participating in the international mission of the church.

To understand 2 Cor. 8:1-7, we should realize that the Macedonian church had taken a love offering for their brethren in Jerusalem. In past years, the church in Jerusalem had looked down on Macedonian and other Gentile Christians. But the church in Macedonia, one of the poorest regions in the empire, wanted to participate in the international church.

I. Participation in the International Church Is a Gift.

A. *God makes our participation possible through His grace* (v. 1). Since grace is a gift, we should never boast about our giving. True generosity is a gift from God (v. 7).

B. *We must rediscover the wonderful gift of global participation.*

Illus. Our 11-year-old son was ecstatic. "Dad," he exclaimed, "there is a brand-new toy that is really fun. I've got to have one! All my friends are getting them. It's like a little flat ball that rolls up and down on a string attached to your finger. It's called a yo-yo!"

His generation was rediscovering an old friend of my childhood and of my father's childhood. Each generation makes its own discoveries of past knowledge. Ours must rediscover the knowledge and experience the joys of participating in the international church. We must rediscover world mission and missionary giving.

II. Participation in the International Church Is a Privilege (v. 4).

A. *God's work internationally is going to continue.* The real question for us is, "Do we want to be spectators or participants?"

B. *The Macedonian church saw themselves as participants in the international church.*

1. Their identity was wrapped up in generosity for others. Their gift is all that we know of them.

2. Every church has an identity. Let ours be generosity.

III. Participation Is a Test of Sincerity (v. 8).

Christian sincerity is tested by selflessness.

Illus. The timeless words quoted by John F. Kennedy on the occasion of his presidential inauguration still ring in the memories of all who heard them: "Ask not what your country can do for you. But ask what you can do for your country."

CONCLUSION:

The question facing every church is not, "What can the Body of Christ do for us?" But, rather, "What can we do for the Body?" Part of the answer is sacrificial, generous giving for world mission.

SUGGESTED WORSHIP ORDER

Call to Worship	Ps. 29:1-2
Choir	"All Creatures of Our God and King"
Prayer of Praise	
Hymn	"Springs of Living Water"
Responsive Reading	Church Growth (No. 572)
Hymn	"In the Service of the King"
Welcome Guests/Announcements	
Tithes and Offerings	
Pastoral Prayer	
Special Music	"The Morning Light Is Breaking"
Message	INTERNATIONAL PARTICIPATION: THE GIFT, THE PRIVILEGE, THE TEST
Closing Hymn	"We've a Story to Tell to the Nations"
Benediction	Heb. 13:20

CHRISTIAN COURAGE

Matt. 9:2, 22; 14:27
November 11, 1990

INTRO:

In the *Wizard of Oz,* the cowardly lion asked profound questions:

"What makes a king out of a slave?

"What makes the flag on the mast to wave?

"What makes the elephant charge his tusk, in the misty mist or the dusky dusk?

"What makes the muskrat guard his musk?

"What makes the Sphinx the seventh wonder?

"What makes the dawn come up like thunder?

"What makes the Hottentot so hot?

"What puts the ape in apricot?

"What have they got that I ain't got?"

Do you ever feel like that? I do. Most of us do. In fact, many psychologists agree that the most basic human emotion is fear. We experience it from birth. We saw it in the Garden of Eden. It is all around us. We know what it means to be afraid.

I think that Satan really likes it when we're afraid. Satan thrives on fear.

I. Fear Immobilizes People.

Satan likes it when people, especially Christians, are immobilized. Have you ever been so afraid that you couldn't move?

A. *Angels told the shepherds about the birth of the Christ child.* The Bible says, "They were terrified" (Luke 2:9). Or, "They were sore afraid" (KJV). Have you ever been that afraid? Have you ever been immobilized by fear? Satan loves fear—especially fear in Christians—because fear immobilizes people.

Illus. When I was a college student in Oklahoma City, I worked on the late-night shift transporting newspapers from the printer's shop to the distribution office. One night, while waiting in a van in the back alley behind the printer's shop, I was mistakenly identified by two police officers as a burglar. I was almost asleep when they threw open the door of the van and put a shotgun to my head, shouting, "Freeze!" I froze. I was sore afraid.

I learned an important lesson: "Fear immobilizes people."

B. *Some people here this morning may be afraid.* Some are afraid to step out on faith. Satan loves that. Couples may be afraid of an honest relationship. Some Christians may be afraid to tithe. Sinners may be afraid to seek forgiveness, and some are afraid to forgive. Some saints are afraid to really live because they are afraid to fail. Our enemy loves fear. The good news of Jesus changes things.

II. Jesus Offers Courage.

A. *Christian courage is a gift from Jesus.* Jesus bestows a certain type of courage on the Christian. Time and time again in the New Testament we read about Jesus giving hurting, downtrodden, fearful people the gift of courage. The New Testament word for courage is *tharsos.*

B. *There is a difference between human courage and Christian courage.*

Human courage comes from within. Have you ever experienced inner courage?

Illus. I was only seven or eight years old when my cousin and I fell through a thin layer of ice while skating near my grandfather's house in Nebraska. In three or four frantic, fear-filled, adrenalin-charged minutes, we wrestled breaking ice until finally we miraculously swam under the surface to the shore where we broke through to shivering safety.

A human courage seems to be built into people. It is psychological and biochemical, equipping for fight or flight.

C. *Another type of courage is given to us by Jesus.* It is *tharsos.* It is trust. *Tharsos* means "take heart, be of good cheer, be bold, be confident." It means "have faith." In the New Testament, it is almost always found on the lips of Jesus.

1. "Some men brought to him a paralytic, lying on a mat. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, 'Take heart, son; your sins are forgiven'" (Matt. 9:2).

2. "Just then a woman who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years came up behind him and touched the edge of his cloak: She said to herself, 'If I only touch his cloak, I will be healed.' Jesus turned and saw her. 'Take heart, daughter,' he said, 'your faith has healed you'" (Matt. 9:20-22).

3. "When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. 'It's a ghost,' they said, and cried out in fear. But Jesus immediately said to them: 'Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid'" (Matt. 14:26-27).

You can see that fear immobilizes disciples, but Jesus offers courage.

D. *Peter and Andrew knew about courage.*

To be a fisherman in those days meant to be courageous. To the Jews of Jesus' day there was great mystery and awesomeness surrounding the sea.

Illus. In the beautiful village of Mystic Seaport, Conn., there is a museum honoring the whalers and housing the whaling vessels of the Atlantic's port. Whaling was a highly dangerous occupation. Many sailors lost limbs and even lives. In the museum, I noticed the journal entry of one young sailor who wrote home to his wife, "Dear, I am afraid. The sea is so large . . . and my boat is so small."

When we Christians get to feeling fearful, Jesus comes to us and says, "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid" (Matt. 14:27). We need courage to cope. Human courage was not enough for Peter and Andrew in the storm. They needed Jesus.

III. Christians Need Courage to Contribute.

A. *We don't need courage to receive and be fed and be ministered to.* But if we wish to contribute, and make a difference, we need *tharsos,* a divinely given courage.

B. *Many Christians never tell anyone about Jesus or even mention His name.* Why? Because they are scared. They are fearful because they don't trust God to give them the necessary courage.

Illus. Melissa Ira was probably the most shy girl in our church's youth group. One Wednesday evening, the youth group was buzzing over the event in Melissa's life that had transpired that day, the first day of school.

The teacher in Melissa's 11th-grade homeroom had asked the students to stand and tell one important fact about themselves. The pressure mounted as each student stood and spoke. Most of them exaggerated. Finally it was Melissa's turn. She slowly stood, and as her voice cracked, she heard herself proclaim, "I'm Melissa Ira—and I'm a Christian!"

Illus. Gloria Jakat was worried as we drove to Leon and Thelma Hopkins' house for a personal evangelism call. "I wonder if Leon will remember me," she said. "Thirty years ago we worked together in the shoe factory. I often told him about Jesus, until one day he became very angry and demanded that I never speak to him about Jesus again. Shortly after that, I got another job. I haven't seen or spoken to him since then."

Gloria was quiet during the call. Leon, however, gloriously prayed through and received Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. It was truly a blessed event.

As we left, Leon spoke to Gloria. "Mrs. Jakat," he said, "I don't know if you remember me or not, but 30 years ago you used to tell me about Jesus. I never listened then, but I'm so glad you had the courage to tell me about Him. I'm so glad you were here tonight!"

If Melissa could do it, you can. If Gloria can do it, you can. It takes courage. But you can do it if you trust Him.

CONCLUSION:

Sometimes we feel like the whaler who said, "The sea is so large . . . and my boat is so small." But Jesus comes to us and says, "Take courage, My son, your sins are forgiven." "Daughter, take courage, your faith has made you well." "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid." "Take courage. Be of good cheer. Be bold. Follow Me."

Dorothy came to the Cowardly Lion and asked, "Your majesty, if you were king, you wouldn't be afraid of anything?"

He answered, "Not nobody, not no how."
"Not even a rhinoceros?"
"Imposserous."
"How 'bout a hippopotamus?"
"Why, I'd thrash him from top to bottomus."
"Suppose you'd meet an elephant?"
"I'd wrap him up in cellophant."
"What if it were a brontosaurus?"
"I'd show him who's King of the Forest." Courage.

SUGGESTED WORSHIP ORDER

Call to Worship	Ps. 46:1, 4
Welcome Guests/Announcements	
Hymn	"Come, We That Love the Lord"
Hymn	"Constantly Abiding"
Tithes and Offerings	
Choir	"Singing I Go"
Pastoral Prayer	
Special Music	"'Tis So Sweet to Trust in Jesus"
Message	CHRISTIAN COURAGE
Closing Chorus	"They That Wait upon the Lord"
Benediction	Eph. 6:10

BEYOND BELIEF

A LIFE OF THANKSGIVING

Rom. 12:1-2
November 18, 1990

INTRO:

On Thanksgiving, our greatest need is not to be reminded to be thankful. Nor do we need to be told to whom we should give thanks.

What the church needs to hear is, "How should our thankfulness be demonstrated?"

Words are cheap. Every parent has heard the words "thank you" vainly spoken—especially on Christmas.

It is important to sing praises to God. Unless heartfelt, those praises that are sung or spoken are totally in vain.

It is easy to sing praise. But God looks for something more. Through His grace, you may live a life of praise.

I. Paul Speaks of Living Sacrifices.

A. *Paul says, "Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God"* (v. 1, KJV). We realize that as Christians our bodies belong to God as much as do our spirits. The body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit works through our bodies—eyes, ears, feet, and even brain.

B. *The principle is to take your body—all the things that you do every day with it on the job, in the car, at your desk, in front of your TV, with your family—take that body and offer it as an act of worshipful thanksgiving to God.*

C. *What is the meaning of true worship?* It is more than sitting in a beautiful sanctuary, listening to beautiful music, and listening to profound words. That sacred hour of spiritual encounter is only the beginning of worship.

1. True worship is the offering of one's body to God.

2. True worship is the offering of one's everyday life to God.

II. Paul Wages, "Don't Be Conformed."

A. *"Be not conformed to this world"* (KJV)—or age, *aeon.*

1. Don't be the devil's fool! Don't expose yourself needlessly to spiritually dangerous material and experiences. Allow the Holy Spirit to guide you.

Illus. There was a lovely, elderly woman in my church who had a peculiar job during the Second World War. She painted the self-illuminating figures on the instrument panels of air force fighter planes. She used glowing, radioactive paint on a small brush, which she was taught to occasionally put in her mouth in order to keep the bristles pointed. This occurred long before defense contractors were fully aware of the dangers of radioactive materials. Such a practice would never be allowed today. Now we know better.

This dear lady is in her 90s and still going strong, but she does glow in the dark.

Illus. The largest, most modern office building has been vacant for years in Binghamton, N.Y. Shortly after the government office complex was completed, inspectors discovered large amounts of asbestos used in the construction. What a waste! Today we know better than to use asbestos in public and private construction.

Many Christians needlessly expose themselves and their families to morally and spiritually hazardous material regularly. They are conforming to this world.

2. There is an interesting twist to conformity. We are born into this world or age, therefore, we are originally conformed to this world. We cannot successfully "nonconform" ourselves.

III. Paul Announces That Christ Transforms Us by Grace.

A. *We are not rescued from our state of conformity to the world by our own decision to be nonconformists.* We are rescued by Christ's decision to transform us. We are sanctified by grace.

B. *"Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind"* (KJV). Let God place within you the "mind of Christ." The Greek word used for transformed is *metamorphosis.* Christian transformation is much like the metamorphic process of changing a caterpillar into a beautiful butterfly.

CONCLUSION:

Why are we to be transformed? "That ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" (v. 2, KJV).

We are called not to test God's will but to prove by our lives that God's grace is effective. That is how we can live a life of thanksgiving.

SUGGESTED WORSHIP ORDER

Call to Worship	Eph. 1:3
Hymn	"O Worship the King"
Responsive Reading	Thanksgiving (No. 555)
Choir	"Count Your Blessings"
Welcome Guests/Announcements	
Tithes and Offerings	
Hymn	"He Never Has Failed Me Yet"
Special Music	"Great Is Thy Faithfulness"
Prayer Chorus	"Thank You, Lord, for Saving My Soul"
Pastoral Prayer	
Message	A LIFE OF THANKSGIVING
Closing Hymn	"Now Thank We All Our God"
Benediction	2 John 3

THREE FEARS THAT CAN CRIPPLE COMPASSIONATE MINISTRY

Mic. 6:6-8; Isa. 58:6-12; Matt. 25:32-46
November 25, 1990

INTRO:

Today is Compassionate Ministries Sunday. Many churches around the world join today to pray for God's anointing as we serve people in need. We renew our efforts to feed the hungry and clothe the naked. We ask for God's forgiveness for neglect.

Each hour one person in a thousand dies of starvation. Yet many Christians do little to help. Why do Christians fail to obey Jesus' words? Three fears cause failure.

I. Many Christians Fear a Social Gospel.

A. *At the turn of this century, many Christians turned away from the message of salvation and focused their efforts entirely upon a "social gospel."*

B. *Evangelicals rejected the principles of liberalism, but in ministry to the poor we have thrown out the baby with the bath water.*

C. *Social concern is a central Christian tradition.*

1. The tradition of the early holiness movement included ministering to the poor.

2. The current standard of the holiness denominations include ministering to the poor.

D. *Today's answer is not either the social gospel or the evangelical gospel but both/and.* The compassionate ministry goes hand in hand with evangelism. The two must not be separated.

E. *Read Mic. 6:6-8.*

II. Many Christians Fear Ineffectiveness. (People wonder, what can one person or one church do?)

A. *The era of post-World War I developed social pessimism.*

Before World War I, there was a sense of invincibility, a frontier spirit among Americans, including church leaders. Following the war, a sense of pessimism and fatalism set into society. What could one person or one Christian or one church do to alleviate the world's growing problems?

The psychological effects of living in a nuclear age have taken their toll even upon the church.

Illus. A few years ago, my son, then about eight, asked me to mail a letter he had written to his grandparents. He said I could read it. At the end of a typical letter to Grandma, I was amazed yet shocked to read the closing sentence: "I hope to see you sometime soon, if we aren't all blown up by a nuclear bomb."

B. *Satan thrives on despair, but Jesus offers hope.* One of the major myths about world hunger is that there aren't enough resources in the world to feed everyone. There are enough but much is wasted.

Illus. Countless acres of the world's most fertile soil in the southeastern section of the United States are wasted. The U.S. government subsidizes production of tobacco products, supplying smokers throughout the world. What a great waste in face of worldwide starvation! Such a waste is an obscene outrage.

C. *There are specific things you can do.* Here are a few suggestions: (1) Begin a personal encouragement ministry to the lonely and poor. (2) Visit the sick and aging in hospitals and nursing homes. (3) Involve yourself in a Big Brother or Big Sister program. (4) Visit people in jail. (5) Give regularly to denominational Hunger and Disaster Funds. (6) Support with your ideas and your time a new social ministry organization in your church.

We can't do everything, but we must do something!

D. *Read Isa. 58:6-12.*

III. Many Christians Fear Anonymity.

Sometimes people don't serve because they are afraid they won't get credit for it.

A. *Everyone appreciates praise.* Some personality types seem to require more praise than others. There is much motivational power in praise.

B. *We have raised a generation of "praise junkies" who won't do anything good unless they get full credit for their actions.*

Illus. I was amused during the months leading up to the 1988 Olympic Games to notice the level of commercial sponsorship for the U.S. Olympic team. Sponsorship has always been needed, but the response has been traditionally low. Now that companies can receive a great deal of public recognition, the response has shot up. So we now have the official Band-Aid, soft drinks, tuna, and popcorn of the U.S. Olympic team.

C. *Praise can be dangerous spiritually.* Read Matt. 6:1-4. You can lose your reward from God if you strive to gain the reward of men.

D. *Our spiritual reward comes from knowing that we have obeyed God.*

E. *Our final reward comes in heaven.* Read Luke 14:12-14; Matt. 25:33-40. As surely there will be punishment for those who refuse to obey the Lord.

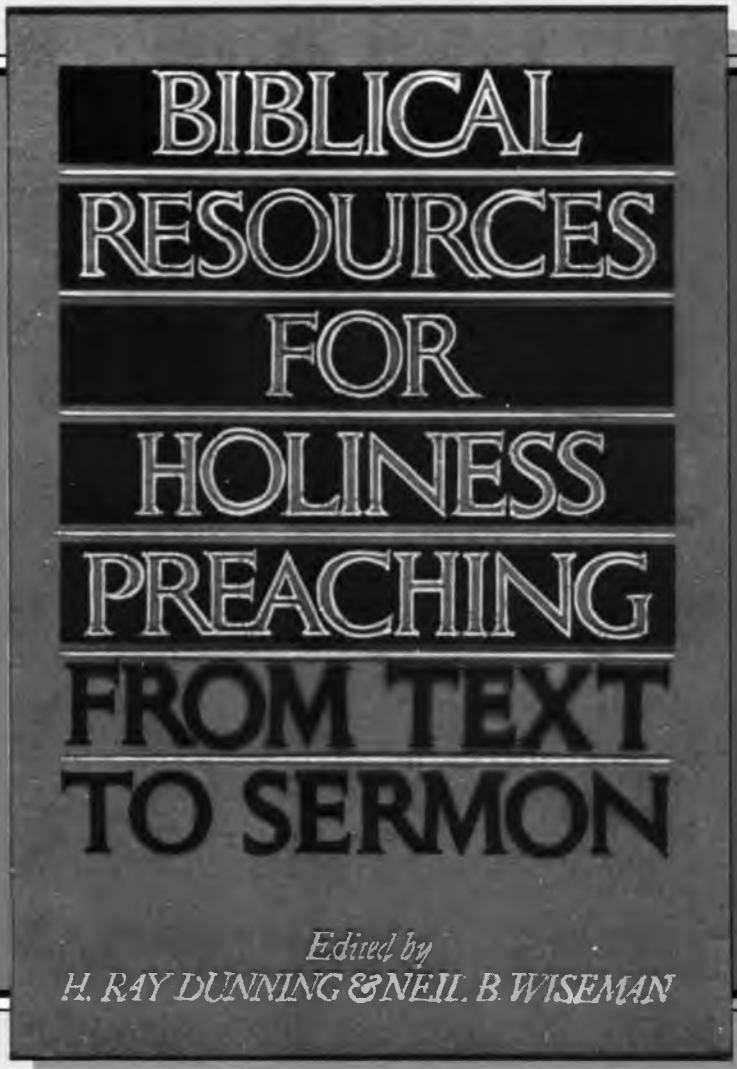
CONCLUSION:

The time has come for us Christians to overcome our fears, which have often crippled our ministry to the poor and needy. Join me in a renewed effort to be the body, the hands, the feet, and the mouth of our Lord Jesus Christ.

SUGGESTED WORSHIP ORDER

Call to Worship	Ps. 126:6
Hymn	"My Jesus, I Love Thee"
Hymn	"A Charge to Keep I Have"
Welcome Guests/Announcements	
Choir	"Bring Them In"
Tithes and Offerings	
Prayer Chorus	"Trust and Obey"
Pastoral Prayer	
Special Music	"I Love to Tell the Story"
Message	THREE FEARS THAT CAN CRIPPLE COMPASSIONATE MINISTRY
Closing Hymn	"Rescue the Perishing"
Benediction	1 John 3:18

FROM TEXT TO SERMON



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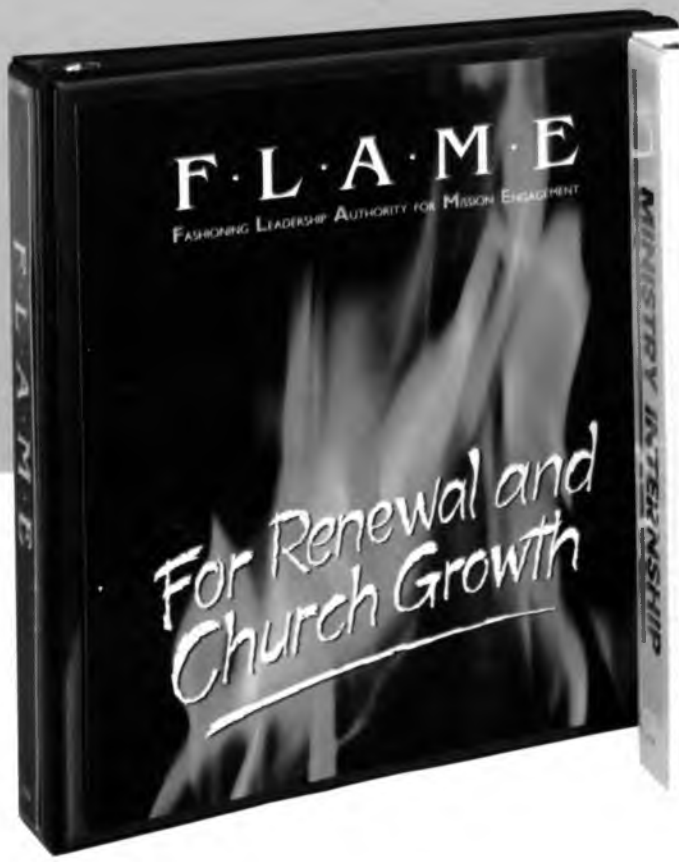

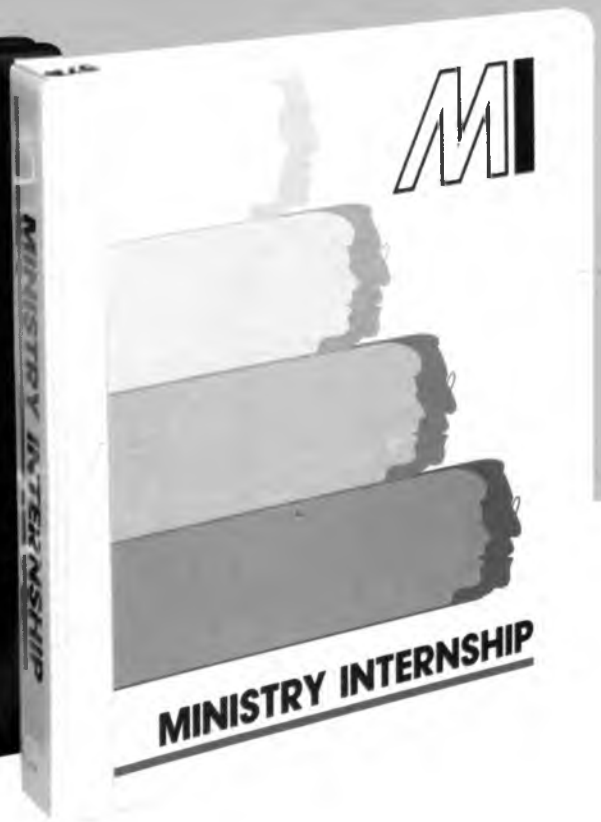

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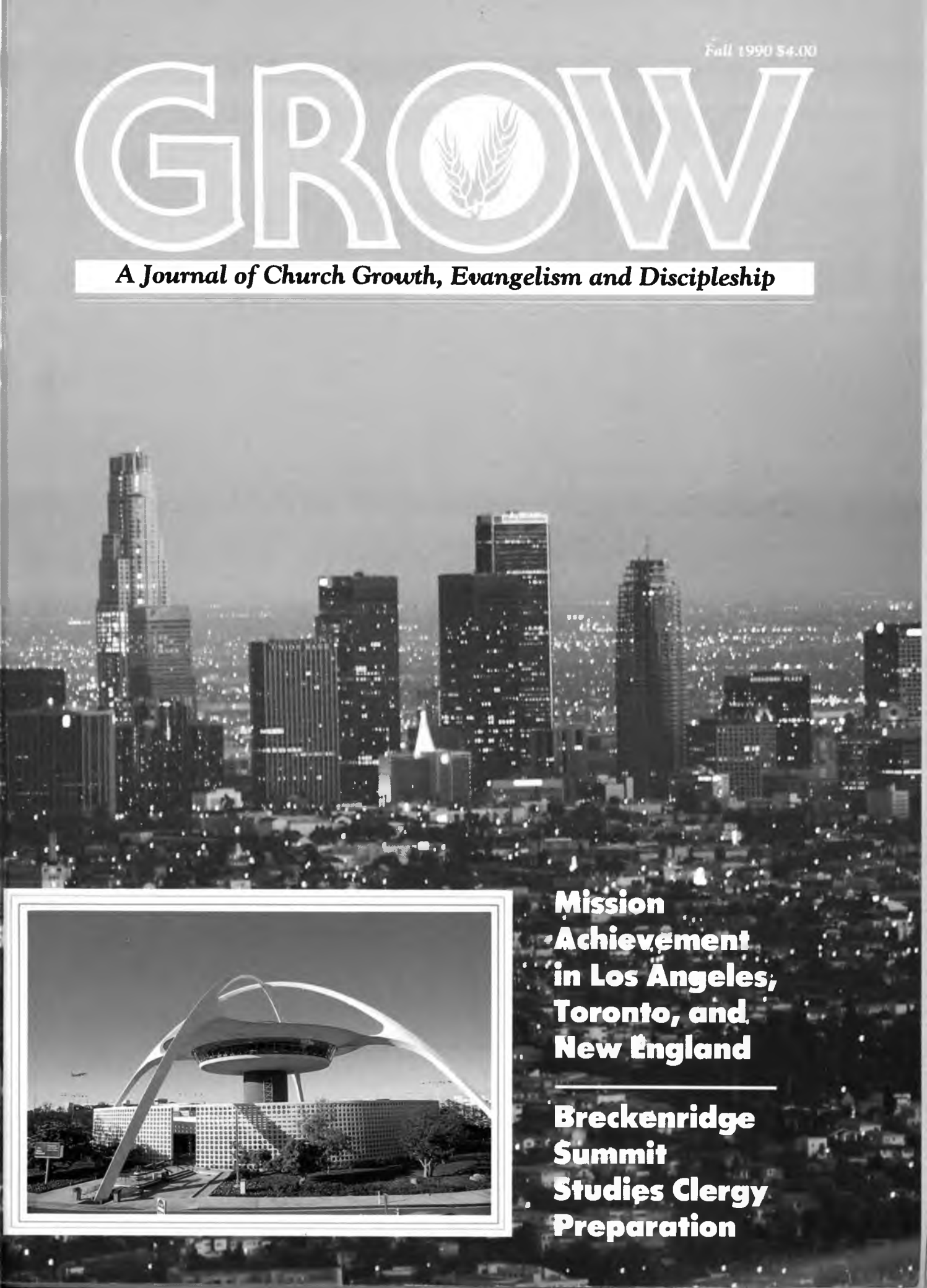
GROW

A Journal of Church Growth, Evangelism and Discipleship



Mission Achievement in Los Angeles, Toronto, and New England

Breckenridge Summit Studies Clergy Preparation

Ask Largely

"You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it" (John 14:14). Surely Jesus had some restraints in mind when He said this. He must not have intended selfish requests. Outlandish petitions were undoubtedly excluded. Even so, "everything" covers a lot of territory.

Jesus encourages His followers to ask largely. Perhaps what He wants to discourage is asking for small requests — like material goods and personal happiness.

Some people think that wealth and well being are large requests. Those petitions reveal a materialistic value system. They aren't too big. They are too small!

So what's big? John Knox is reported to have prayed, "O God, give me Scotland, or I die!" Now we are talking big — really big.

Moses prayed that the Israelites be forgiven or that his name be blotted out of the book that God had written. That sounds big to me.

Christians who pray for God to save their city are asking largely. God undoubtedly answers lesser prayers but He wants His followers to ask for something in keeping with the size of His love.

Ask largely — "That the World May Know."

Bill M. Sullivan

Mission of Church Growth Division

To contribute to the advancement of God's kingdom by fostering growth in the Church of the Nazarene.

To promote aggressive evangelism in all its many forms throughout the denomination.

To create an awareness throughout the church regarding the necessity for planting new churches, including the mission potential among cultural minorities.

To increase participation and effectiveness in a reproductive ministry that is engaged in Christian mission.

Children of Hope
at Community of Hope, Washington, D.C.

For the children of hope, the Community of Hope promotes academic excellence and teaches Christian values while nurturing self-esteem, creativity, and belonging in a caring environment. In response to the barriers faced by children growing up in Washington's drug-torn neighborhoods, we are committed to providing opportunity for enrichment and positive growth.

GOD IS REAL TO INNER CITY CHILDREN

The faces of homelessness are changing. The traditional portrayal of bag ladies and skid-row bums is no longer an adequate depiction of poverty. That image can no longer adequately describe our nation's homeless population. The picture of homelessness now includes families — mothers, fathers, little boys and girls, teenagers, and babies. The National Academy of Sciences estimates that on any given night in America, 735,000 people are homeless — of which 100,000 are children.

The Community of Hope, located in our nation's capital, is well noted for services that help homeless people move out of shelters and into affordable housing and employment, but it is best represented by its work with children. Its commitment to the development of young people at their most formative age expresses confidence and hope for impoverished people of the inner city.

Children of the inner city are basically no different than any other child living in America. They get excited when the ice cream truck approaches their block. Coloring, playing "Candyland," running, jumping, and swimming on a hot summer's day are favorite activities. Bedtime stories and snacktime are the most important activities of the day. Their hugs, smiles, and unconditional love bring joy to a proud parent. Sunday school songs are traditionally sung at the top of their voices with much enthusiasm. God is real to inner-city children. They are creative — you can step into their street-side cafe for a mud pie just about any day of the week, old mattresses are substituted for trampolines, and give them a board and an old barrel and they'll make one "bumpin'" teeter-totter. They are street smart. They know what is going on in their neighborhood, and, at this point in their lives, they want no part in the violence, crime, and the lie of drugs. Like all other kids living in America, if they are given a home, love, discipline, direction, and motivation, they just might make it in our competitive world. —by Rod Green, Community of Hope, and Jim Hubbard, photographer, with Tom Nees

CHILDREN OF HOPE

"I have a dream today that there won't be any violence or drugs. And also, I want D.C. to be a safe place to live. And my best friends won't die because they are special."

James Wilson
Age 9

CHILDREN OF HOPE

- 40 children attend daily Homework Lab.
- 9 teens employed as teaching assistants.
- 15 teens attend Teen "Family Life Skills" course, offered Thursday evenings.
- 25-50 children attend Chapel, held every Friday.
- 20 teens involved in basketball league.
- 15 parents are involved in parents' support group.
- 15 teen girls attend weekly discussion and Bible study group.

CHILDREN OF HOPE

I like coming to
Community of Hope.
I like the people.
I like the playground
I like the Books.
I'm glad to be at
Community of Hope.

Shanetta Wilson
Age 9

GROW

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Will Breckenridge Summit Shape Clergy Preparation?

75 LEADERS PLAN FOR NEW CENTURY

Theological educators, pastors, district superintendents, college presidents, and Church Growth Division personnel worked together for four days at Breckenridge, Colorado, June 20-24, in a Consultation on Nazarene Clergy Preparation for the 21st Century.

Sponsored by the Division of Church Growth, the conference faced spiritually weighty issues impacting ministerial training for the new century. Discussions centered on changing contexts for ministry, clergy economic struggles, theory vs. practice of ministry, how various preparation tracks impact the church, and the pressing need to build more evangelism, church growth and church planting training into existing curriculum strategies. Informative and friendly dialogue between practitioners and professors was one of the consultation's most significant values.

A group of highly skilled resource persons from outside the denomination and their topics included Dr. George Gallup, Jr., "Environment for Ministry in the 21st Century"; Dr. Tom Graham, "Assessment for Clergy Preparation"; and Dr. Ted Ward, "Creative Clergy Preparation." Ward also

Dr. Stephen Nease *offers counsel on clergy preparation.*

served as a facilitator for three plenary sessions.

General Superintendent Donald Owens presented an insightful paper, "Church Growth Concepts in Clergy Preparation," discussing Donald McGavran's book, *Effective Evangelism*. McGavran is considered by many to be the father of the modern church growth movement.

Other major presentations by Nazarene leaders included "History of Clergy Preparation," Paul Bassett and Gerard Reed; "How the Christian Faith Affects Clergy Preparation," Albert Truesdale; "Contemporary Nazarene Contexts for Ministry," Bill M. Sullivan; and "Creative Clergy Preparation," Ted Ward. Three devotional messages on "How the Church Nurtures the Call" were presented by Millard Reed, Steve Green, and Hiram Sanders.

Jerry D. Lambert chaired the Steering Committee; other members of the planning group were Wilbur Brannon, Stephen Nease, Terrell Sanders, Richard Spindle, Bill M. Sullivan, Albert Truesdale, and Neil B. Wiseman.

Nazarene Bible College faculty planned the Sunday worship service including the communion sacrament; Janet Smith Williams preached and Millard Reed led the singing.

The Division of Church Growth expects to offer follow-up information through the Course of Study Committee to help schools and districts implement the main concerns expressed at the conference.

—by Bill M. Sullivan with Jerry D. Lambert and Neil B. Wiseman

"Is it unrealistic to suggest that the demand and duty of the Great Commission be the integrative orientation of a theological training institution? Here's my challenge — the Great Commission across the curriculum in every school."

Donald Owens, General Superintendent

"I think you need to be clear on what each of your programs is actually doing. You need an agenda of next steps to take every one of those programs in its own unique direction in a way that is deeper, more thorough, or more rounded to the task. Diversity is a powerful strength if it is managed well."

Ted Ward, Resource Leader, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School

"We prepare ministers with the idea that they will pastor a church of 100 or more — probably more. Yet, three out of four of our churches are less than 100. We have Mercedes-Benz taste in clergy preparation and Yugo opportunities for pastoral service."

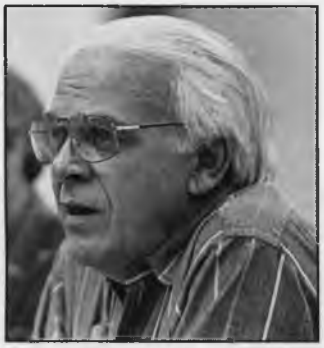
Bill M. Sullivan, Director, Division of Church Growth

"Denominations as well as individuals must choose whether the wide vistas and integrity of the Christian story will shape the ministry they practice or whether it will be formed principally by the prevailing political, economic, and cultural milieu of a particular era." **Albert Truesdale**, Academic Dean, Nazarene Theological Seminary

"In my recent research, I discovered most Nazarene ministers begin their ministry in small churches in small communities. The models used in our programs apparently tend to prepare them for larger congregations in growing communities. This discrepancy may result in an unnecessary frustration over worthy ministry in the smaller congregations." **Kenneth E. Crow**, Department of Sociology, Mid-America Nazarene College

"Professors — be sensitive to the power of your position and the lasting echo of every word you utter in the presence of the pliable minds under your influence." **Hiram Sanders**, Superintendent, Missouri District

"The equipping task must be placed in the authentic arena of theologizing. For the enterprise of doing theology only takes place in conversation between the theorist and the practitioner — a conversation which is possible only as we recognize and affirm our distinctiveness." **Millard Reed**, Pastor, Nashville First Church



"All of us involved in ministerial preparation can implement much of what we discover in this consultation by simply writing it into our courses without lengthy department or full faculty meetings." **Neil B. Wiseman**, Dean, Nazarene Bible College

"Are we now demanding of clergy preparation that it produce ministers who are safe and predictable rather than probing or even disturbing. Is it possible that we have reached the place that our religious symbols — the words and rituals — have become more important than the realities they represent." **Jess Middendorf**, Superintendent, N.W. Oklahoma District

"I would like to suggest Wesley's theology is nothing if it is not practical, and worship is not worship if it is not service in the world." **David Whitelaw**, Department Chairperson, Olivet Nazarene University

"Theological education is the church learning to think critically about its identity and mission in the context of its word. We deal with the church's responsibility to itself." **Roger Hahn**, Department Chairperson, Southern Nazarene University

"In considering the educational formation of ministers, three fundamental questions must be considered: 1) Who is the person to be? 2) What is the person to do? 3) What should be the results of their service?" **Donald King**, Pastor, Lompoc, California

"I want to go on record as strongly believing in the total educational program of the Church of the Nazarene." **Terrell Sanders**, President, Nazarene Theological Seminary

"The value of this consultation on the life and future of the church could possibly be greater than any of us can presently see." **Jerry D. Lambert**, President, Nazarene Bible College

"There is something about nurturing the call to ministry that has to do with getting people ready to hear but not telling them what they are to hear." **Steve Green**, Pastor, Cincinnati Springdale Church

"The part of the world where leaders and pastors are best prepared in church growth and evangelism is the part of the world where the greatest growth is being seen today — the third world." **Paul Orjala**, Professor, Point Loma Nazarene College

DENOMINATIONAL MEMBERSHIP SUNDAY
November 4, 1990

A DAY TO CELEBRATE MEMBERSHIP

Rejoice in the opportunities offered by membership in the Body of Christ

RECEIVE NEW MEMBERS ON THIS DAY

The most characteristic and uplifting of the manifestations of conversion is rapture — an inexpressible joy which suffuses our whole being, making our fears dissolve into nothing, and our expectations all move heavenward.

Malcolm Muggeridge

How can those who know nothing about it, who pray little or not at all, dare speak so frivolously of prayer?

Georges Bernanos

A spiritual gift is a supernatural attribute given by God's grace to each member of the body of Christ. The gifts determine the function of ministry. God's way of looking at the different kinds of people in the church is not by intelligence, education, beauty, or social status. These categories divide; God unifies through the use of spiritual gifts. All Christians should use their gifts to build up the body.

Kent B. Hunter

That's the problem with spiritual gifts — we have a preacher who wants to lead the music, a song leader who wants to preach, an organist who wants to head up the Christian Life Board. Now all we need is an usher who wants to play the organ.

It's obvious by now that the Church Board didn't understand when I asked for a ball-park figure for the church plant.

When applied to a church, web evangelism is the principle of the new convert reaching those closest to him or her. By working through web relationships, a church can evangelize its extended congregation and guarantee a smaller dropout of new converts and transfer members.

Elmer L. Towns

I knew it did not matter where our church was located; if we had something good, people would come across the country to get it.

Henrietta Mears

Most of the innovative companies get their best ideas from customers. That comes from listening, intently and regularly.

Thomas J. Peters

People today who respond to the Christian faith — its people and its message — are those who respond to the love and caring of Christ's people, not to a set of ideas or theological statements.

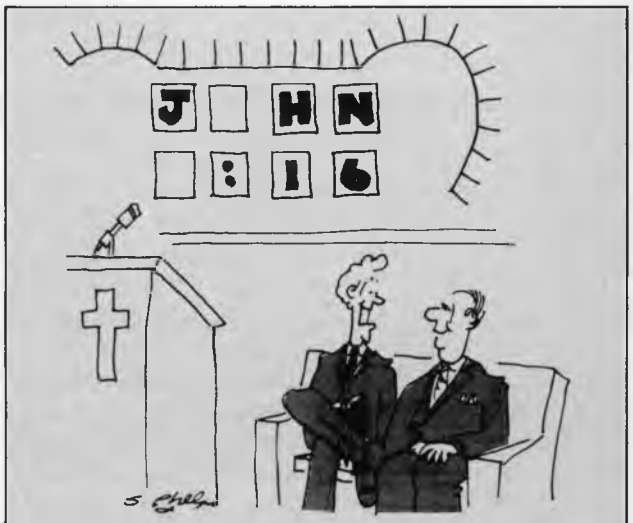
W. Charles Arn

The people least likely to become inactive members are those who become part of a group, where membership in that face-to-face small group is meaningful before formally uniting with that congregation. They are assimilated before they join.

Lyle Schaller

You would misuse Christ's gifts if you used them solely for the service of existing Christians.

Donald McGavran



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- ★ ***Family Wherever You Go,*** a directory of Nazarene churches near military installations around the world
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SENTENCE OF DEATH PROMISE OF LIFE

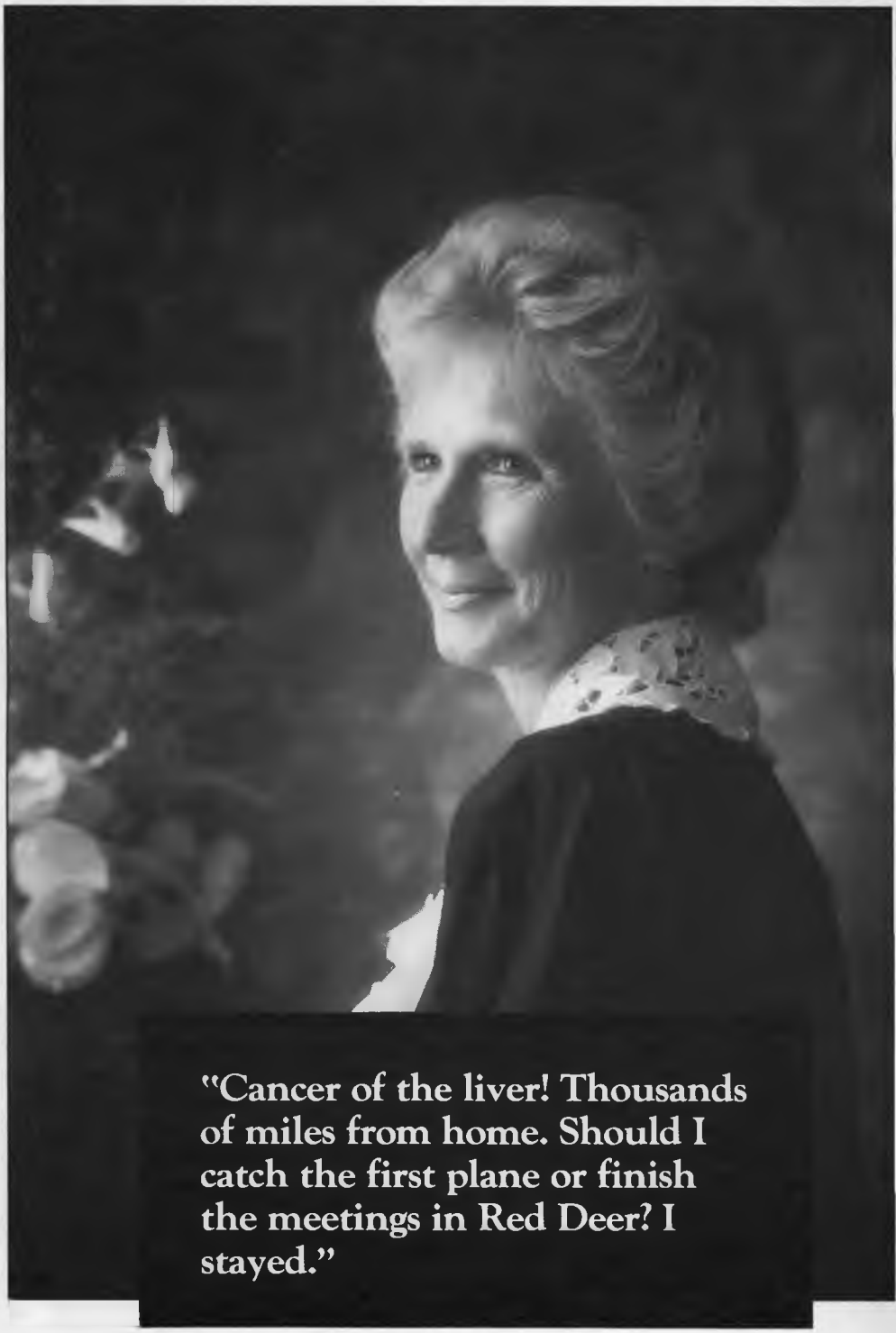
A first-person account by Evangelist Joyce Hughes

Autumn 1988. Fall months are heavy with revival meetings, and I had just enjoyed one night with my family before hitting the revival trail for an uninterrupted schedule of several meetings in the States, followed by four in Canadian churches.

Nine years earlier, doctors had informed my family and me that I was "full of malignant tumors and inoperable . . . three months to live, give or take a little."

After that startling sentence, I arose early the next morning in the hospital and informed the nurses that I would be in the chapel if anyone needed me. Kneeling at the altar, I prayed through on dying and said a complete yes to the will of God. However, as I prayed, God quietly assured me, "But you shall live."

I conferred with a cancer specialist who, after studying my case, informed me that the tumors could be removed, and the remaining cancer might respond to treatment. The tumors were removed and chemotherapy began — three months of light treatments followed by six months of hard ones. Following that extremely difficult period of suffering, my doctor felt that I had a 20-percent chance, and I knew God would add the other 80 percent. He had given me assurance.



"Cancer of the liver! Thousands of miles from home. Should I catch the first plane or finish the meetings in Red Deer? I stayed."

Sentence of Death, Promise of Life

Less than a year later, I was again scheduled for surgery, to make certain there was no cancer. Following surgery, the doctor told my family, "It's just plain spooky. There is no sign that she ever had cancer."

"Not spooky, doctor — miraculous!" my husband, Harold, responded.

In the nine years that followed, I customarily shared my miraculous healing experience on the last evening of each revival effort, closing with a time of anointing and praying for the sick. I was careful to explain that physical healing is temporary, for one of these days, if the Lord tarries, we shall all die. However, I honestly thought I would never face the dreaded sentence of cancer again.

Now, as I neared the end of a revival meeting in Canada, I noticed that my rib cage was definitely expanding. I'd better take myself for a medical check, I thought, before beginning in Red Deer West Park. That Sunday morning, a friend mentioned that she did not remember my belt being that tight in the midsection. It was a relief to share my suspicions with someone. There was no great anxiety, but Sophie gave me just the push I needed.

Monday morning, in the doctors' building in the small town of Bently, Alberta, my heart sank. The facilities were very unimpressive, and I felt that I should be in a city, with modern technology. When will we learn that God is always in control?

My doctor was a born-again Christian. After a brief examination, he informed me that I had a "greatly enlarged liver," and, before saying more, asked if he might pray. Taking my hands in his, he prayed a touching prayer; a holy presence filled the room. He ordered extensive bloodwork and suggested that I go ahead and preach in Red Deer, then return on Wednesday for the results.

I called Harold in Tennessee and two prayer partners, sharing what little information I had.

Preaching in Red Deer was difficult, but God gave strength for each day. On Wednesday, the doctor gave me the computer printout with the devastating diagnosis. Cell destruction of the liver was over 1,000 — 200 is considered high. He explained that the tumor was large. I was aware that cancer of the liver does not leave much hope.

I called home again. I can't remember the conversation, but I recall praying and weeping over the long-distance wires. Harold said that he would drive to Nashville to tell our son and daughter-in-law. I phoned my pastor, Dr. Millard Reed, for support and then my brother in Michigan. All urged me to catch the first flight home, but it seemed that God was asking me to finish the meeting at Red Deer.

Looking back on that week, it seems an impossibility, but God gives strength as we need it — sufficient unto the day.

The church had provided accommodations at a lovely inn at Red Deer, and God provided four angels to care for my emotional and physical needs during the remaining days of meetings. These four precious Nazarenes carried me on the wings of prayer and stayed with me each night until I felt sleep would come. We ate together, prayed together, and wept together. On Saturday morning, following a prayer breakfast, I shared my physical condition with Pastor Hugh Gorman and the minister of music, Steve Fillmore. We prayed together, then planned the Sunday service. We had previously agreed that it would be a hindrance to revival if we let the church know of my condition, diverting their attention to the evangelist's needs instead of their own.

Sunday evening I shared my past healing miracle, as I customarily did, and gave an evangelistic appeal. The devil fought me that night in a way I have never encountered. "You're telling of your healing, and you know you're dying even as you speak," was his persistent suggestion.

After the anointing service, I went back to the platform and shared my present need with my Canadian friends. We had another time of anointing with nearly everyone coming forward to pray. Jesus gave me peace that was to last and carry me through the long months that lay ahead.

Arriving in Nashville was dramatic. My familiy and my pastor met me and we had a time of hugging, crying, and praying. I thought, "Boy, Joyce, they don't think you'll ever fly into this airport again."

Then it was back to Dr. Spiegel, my oncologist, and the battery of tests that I had come to expect. The tumor on the right side of my liver, he explained, engulfed the entire side (15 ci.), as large as a baby's head. It would be difficult to remove, but he felt he could shrink it some with hard chemotherapy. The tumor seemed to be attached to the vena cava artery that leads to the heart.

"My suggestion, Joyce, is to give around-the-clock chemo non-stop for a week, then give a couple weeks of rest, and chemo again. Our only hope seems to be in the possibility of shrinking this and a faint hope of surgery to follow." He was emotional at times, and I had to reassure him that I was not living for this world, but there was a better land promised to the children of God. His response was, "There better well be."

Following what Dr. Spiegel felt was the best shrinkage he could get, he called in a leading surgeon. His prognosis was bleak. He advised a liver transplant, adding that he had seen only two people in my condition. One died on the operating table, the other a week later.

"Talk about a series of miracles! Each time there was a crisis, there was a miracle."

Dr. Spiegel consulted yet another surgeon, who confirmed that surgery was out of the question because of the location of the tumor, but he mentioned a special surgeon in Houston, Texas, at Anderson Cancer Center. As I caught these words, they seemed to me the leading of God and, after much urging, they got an appointment for me for the next day. Carrying all our cat scans and myriads of reports, we went to Houston, knowing well it was our last hope.

After further chemo, Dr. McBride said he was willing to try surgery, and the date was set for March 7.

Prayers from around the world and another special time of anointing in my home church helped to prepare me for that date. There were no visions in those days, only peace.

My eight hours in surgery were a difficult waiting period for my family, but I went in with peace. Two hours into surgery, a doctor came out and told Harold that it would be impossible to remove the growth, but possibly they could cut the blood supply to the tumor and go back in after a few months. That was their plan — but God had another.

Dr. McBride, the leading surgeon, told us afterwards that two hours into surgery, when that decision was made, he felt compelled to keep going. He could not explain why. Eight hours and 71 units of blood later (it flowed out as fast as they could administer it), I was wheeled off, with 16 life-saving attachments inserted into my body.

For three days, my husband and family repeated, 'Is she going to live?" The answer was, "We really don't know yet." The first thing I remembered hearing was Dr. McBride saying to me the night after surgery, "Joyce, I got you all the way to St. Peter's gate, and he turned you down."

The ten days in intensive, critical care were sleepless for Harold and my son, Kent. They interceded for me at the throne of God and, slowly, life was returning. Harold was my nursemaid during the slow healing process after I left intensive care.

Talk about a series of miracles! Each time there was a crisis, there was a miracle. In the doctors' record of surgery, we read that a thick coating surrounded the artery leading to the heart. "Medically unexplainable." I don't know when I received that coating, only that it was there when it was needed. Also inexplicable in the report: "An extra supply of blood flowed to the liver."

Fourteen days after surgery, my blood was not making platelets. The count was down from 360,000 to 4,000. A specialist was called in. He explained the grave picture and ordered a platelet transfusion, which my body rejected.

A bone marrow test was then scheduled. There was no hint of encouragement from the specialist, but tests were scheduled to see whether my son or my brother could give marrow. Again, we called the prayer line.

By morning, the count had risen to 26,000, and by the third day it was up to 86,000. Again, the word unexplainable appeared in the medical records.

Easter Sunday morning, I was in the chapel at Anderson Medical Center with many other cancer patients. What an Easter parade! We were celebrating our risen Lord, attired in our robes, our IVs, our tubes, and our bald heads. Easter had never meant more!

"What an Easter parade! We were celebrating our risen Lord, attired in our robes, our IVs, our tubes, and our bald heads. Easter had never meant more!"

Home again! A red-letter day. "Why are you crying, Joyce?" Harold asked me.

"I'm home! I'm home!" was all I could say, but in my heart I knew I was not really home, that one of these days I will truly go home where Jesus has prepared a place for me and has promised, "I will come again and receive you, that where I am, there you may be also."

Twice I have returned to Houston for checkups. Following surgery, I was left with only a small section of the left lobe of my liver. But the liver, being a regenerative organ, has grown back to its complete size and is in miraculous working order.

Presently, I have been in revival meetings for four months, and now I'm going back to Canada to preach in the churches where I had to postpone. I'm still living with dying grace, because there is a Balm in Gilead to make the wounded whole — there is a Balm in Gilead to heal the sin-sick soul.

Church on Wheels Plants Exposition Park Church

Innovation and Hard Work Start a Church

Holy Spirit-directed creativity, often an absolute necessity, always impacts the methods Nazarenes use to plant churches across North America and around the world. Recently, another innovation has been added with a Church on Wheels — a bus/truck-type vehicle similar to a mobile lending library — being used to plant a church-type mission in the Exposition Park section of Los Angeles.

Sponsorship for the new work involves many people through the combined efforts of Los Angeles Thrust to the Cities, Nazarene churches of the Bay Zone and the Los Angeles District.

Pastor Harrie Trotman and his wife, Juliette, started the work in 1987. Trotman, a product of Nazarene missions in Barbados, graduated from Northwest Nazarene College. His burden for Exposition Park developed

while he studied at the Bresee Institute at Los Angeles First Church.

As part of effective church planting strategy, the Church on Wheels concept makes it possible to test responsiveness before securing a building. Much different than a Sunday school bus, the Church on Wheels is an actual chapel — with pews, musical instruments, pulpit, and altar — where services are held.

In a neighborhood of Los Angeles that has recently changed from Caribbean Black to Belizian to American Black to immigrants from Central America, compassionate ministries are especially needed, including weekly food distribution and a thrift store.

With increasing attendance of more than fifty, the Exposition Park Church is outgrowing the Church on Wheels and has rented a hall for services. However, when the hall is not available, the church continues to meet in very crowded conditions in the Church on Wheels, or, in good weather, it may even meet out of doors. Such growth presents a wonderful problem. As the congregation secures permanent housing, the Church on Wheels will be used to start new churches in other areas of the city. And God keeps challenging us with the next place, the nearby neighborhood and the people across town.

—by Neil B. Wiseman
with Paul Benefiel

A NEW CHURCH FOR CHESTERFIELD CHARLIE

CHURCH COMMITMENT "IF YOU'RE GOOD ENOUGN FOR JESUS, YOU'RE GOOD EHOUGH FOR US."

"When I moved to Brandermill in Chesterfield County, Virginia, I made up my mind never to get involved in another church." That was Sandy Vance's stubborn determination on the day she received a blue brochure in the mail. But an attractive mailer inviting her to Christian Fellowship Church caught her attention with the lead phrase, "We are not perfect, but we're accepted!" Inside the folder she read a headline, "I'm Impressed With Christian Fellowship Church!" followed by testimonies from people who attend this new church. On the back of the mailer she noticed a picture of my wife, Denise, and me.

The Lord used this timely brochure to remind Sandy how spiritually indifferent she had become. "I also struggled with loneliness and depression," she said. "I knew I needed Christian friends, but I didn't want more of the close-minded, judgmental church scene I had experienced before. My heart was a mass of confusion, but I felt God wooing me to church through that blue brochure."

Sandy Vance is typical of many people who now attend Christian Fellowship Church of the Nazarene. It started when Denise and I answered God's call to leave an effective church we planted in Waterloo, Iowa, to begin a new work in upper middle-class Chesterfield

Christian Fellowship Church of the Nazarene at worship.

County, Virginia, near Richmond. Since this is our third church plant, we knew how to start from scratch. We used out knuckles as our starting point because we knew no one. After three months of door-to-door visitation and direct-mail advertising, 97 people attended the first Sunday. Now, two years later, we average 130 in Sunday morning worship.

Reaching Chesterfield Charlie is the main focus of our ministry. He is typically unchurched, living in Chesterfield County in the southwestern Richmond metro area. He is a baby boomer, average age 34, with two children. He is a successful business or professional man, and his wife is employed outside the home.

Let me tell you a little more about Charlie; I learned some of his characteristics from a profile article in *The Village Mill*, our small, local newspaper. Charlie and his family are always on the go; he has a middle to upper-middle income, is well educated, likes his job, enjoys where he lives, makes fitness a high priority, thinks he is enjoying life more than he did five years ago, is self-satisfied about his place in life, would rather be in a large group than a small one, is skeptical about organized religion, likes contemporary music, is over-extended in time and money, wants to exceed his present income, is heavily involved in the "me" generation values, does not know his children because of his work schedule, is competitive, and thinks "success" is the

"This church is refreshingly different! It's a church on the move... a place you feel like you want to be every Sunday.

I believe it is destined to become one of the strongest churches in Richmond..."

—Bill Poynter, church member

CHESTERFIELD CHARLIE'S NEW CHURCH HOME

most important word in the English language.

As you might imagine, trying to reach Chesterfield Charlie is not easy. We have learned the traditional church service will neither attract nor hold him. Those who now attend have taught us that Charlie comes into the sanctuary with four strong preferences:

- ✓ **I do not want to say anything; I just want to listen.**
- ✓ **I do not want to sing songs I do not know.**
- ✓ **I do not want to sign anything.**
- ✓ **I do not want to sacrifice anything.**

Since Charlie prefers the casual, the fact that we worship in a middle school cafeteria is a plus. Dress is informal; since Charlie wears a tie all week and his wife wears dress pumps, they want to dress down on the weekend. When Charlie comes to church, he wants to remain anonymous; he wants to watch without making commitments.

Our competition in getting Charlie's attention is not other churches. Hardly! Our competition is recreation — boating, sailing, golf, and Sunday brunches at 10:30 a.m.

So what kind of service will reach Chesterfield Charlie? From experience, we know it must be somewhat different from the typical edification-of-the-believers type service. Although edification happens, we intentionally plan our service around three concepts designed to appeal to Charlie: 1) **Celebration**, based on Psalms 122:1, "I rejoice with those who said to me, 'Let us go to the house of the Lord.' " Although our house begins as an empty cafeteria, a group of volunteers transforms it into a sanctuary complete with altars, sound system, orchestra equipment, carpeted aisles, trees, plants, and altar curtains."

"We have found a church our whole family enjoys attending."

—The Peterson family

2) **Inspiration**, based on Isaiah 40:31, "those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength." Everyone must feel lifted when they leave. 3) **Preparation**, based on Ephesians 4:11-12, which prepares people to face the week ahead.

In addition to Sunday morning service, we have 18 diverse groups meeting throughout the week and month to provide definitive teaching that brings change in people's lives. In these small groups, biblical answers to their problems are discovered. In addition to public services and small groups, we provide Christian growth classes through our Lay Ministry Training Institute. Although this three-pronged ministry is not the only way to build a church in the 1990s, it works for us. God transforms people's lives through these ministries.

Let me introduce you to Chesterfield Charlie's neighbors, Joe and Diane Tassone, Al Hillman, and Julia Bolger. Listen to their ideas about how Christian Fellowship Church has impacted them:

Joe: We first heard about Christian Fellowship Church when Pastor Larry came knocking on our door. Diane was looking for a church, but, being raised Roman Catholic, I was not. We had never really been involved in a church as a family. But from that first service, I noticed a big difference in the atmosphere of this church compared to anything I had experienced. I never knew how to talk to God, but now I talk to God just as I would to a close friend.

The Sunday night Bible study is relaxed; any questions are accepted. I have learned mountains of knowledge about Jesus.

I used to think Christians were square, but I know now that is not true. People in this church have given me examples of what to follow and what to do. Because of this, I have come to have a personal relationship with God. It has made a real difference in our home. We say grace before meals — something we never did before — and Diane and I have gotten on our knees together and prayed. It has changed our family.

"What impresses me most about this church is all the happy, friendly people. They are fun to be with! It's a great place to meet new friends and get to know my neighbors."

—Frances Hillman, church member

CHESTERFIELD CHARLIE'S NEW CHURCH HOME

Diane: I, too, had never prayed audibly in a group. Christian Fellowship Church and the Bible study have changed my life in a great way. This year, I made a spiritual recommitment of my life to God.

God's timing is perfect. He has intervened in our lives, and now we pray and try to communicate right values in our home. We try to focus on behavior that would be acceptable if Jesus were sitting in our family room. Christian Fellowship Church brought spirituality to our lives. It is exactly what we needed.

Al: At Christian Fellowship Church, no one, including the pastor, is ever on a pedestal; you are never talked down to.

You don't feel like you are being brought up, but you know you are being brought along. You do not feel like you are going to a place where everybody has been going for twenty years. You're accepted where you are, and, as you get involved, you see your life begin to change.

Julia: I really wanted and needed a close relationship with Jesus. I knew I needed to make a personal commitment to Christ. Now I have, and my priorities are back in order.

I find I can cope with my problems better. This church is one that spiritually rejuvenates you.

It is my belief that truth shared with a person in need will do its own work, just as it did with the woman at the well in the Bible. Truth need not be bludgeoning for the Spirit to bring conviction. When people have a felt need and we show them God's answer, they usually respond affirmatively.

Christian Fellowship Church of the Nazarene offers Chesterfield Charlie the Word of God, which does not need to be defended, just shared. Charlie holds out his cup to be filled. May God help us at Christian Fellowship Church to fill his cup to overflowing.

—by Pastor Larry McKain
Brandermill, Virginia

Christian Fellowship Nazarene Church Strategies

C lear Priorities — We are more interested in building people than buildings. We feel church buildings should be tools and not temples.

F ellowship — Fellowship is our middle name. We offer you friendliness, openness, and a genuine family atmosphere.

C ontemporary Worship — We offer music and a style of worship that is culturally different.

S imple Structure — We emphasize relationships, not organized religion.

T arget Defined — Our goal is to be responsive to the needs, hurts, and interests of the people of Chesterfield County.

R each Out by Advertising — We advertise because we want to share our church with you.

A cceptance — "If you're good enough for Jesus, you're good enough for us" is not just a slogan, but our commitment.

T EAM Ministry — Our members operate a network of different Lay Ministries. With all of us working as a team, we experience ministry together.

E ncouraging Preaching — Our pastor emphasizes the personal, practical, and positive solutions from God's Word for life's common problems.

G rowth Commitment — We plan to keep on growing, because everybody needs what Christ offers.

Y early Strategic Plan — We annually evaluate and plan our ministries to better serve you and your family. Everything at Christian Fellowship Church is guided by four purposes: 1) To celebrate God's presence; 2) To communicate God's Word; 3) To educate God's people; 4) To demonstrate God's love.

STEWARDSHIP SERVICES

HELP WIN A SOUL IN...

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PANAMA
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BOLIVIA
BRAZIL
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PERU
VENEZUELA . . .

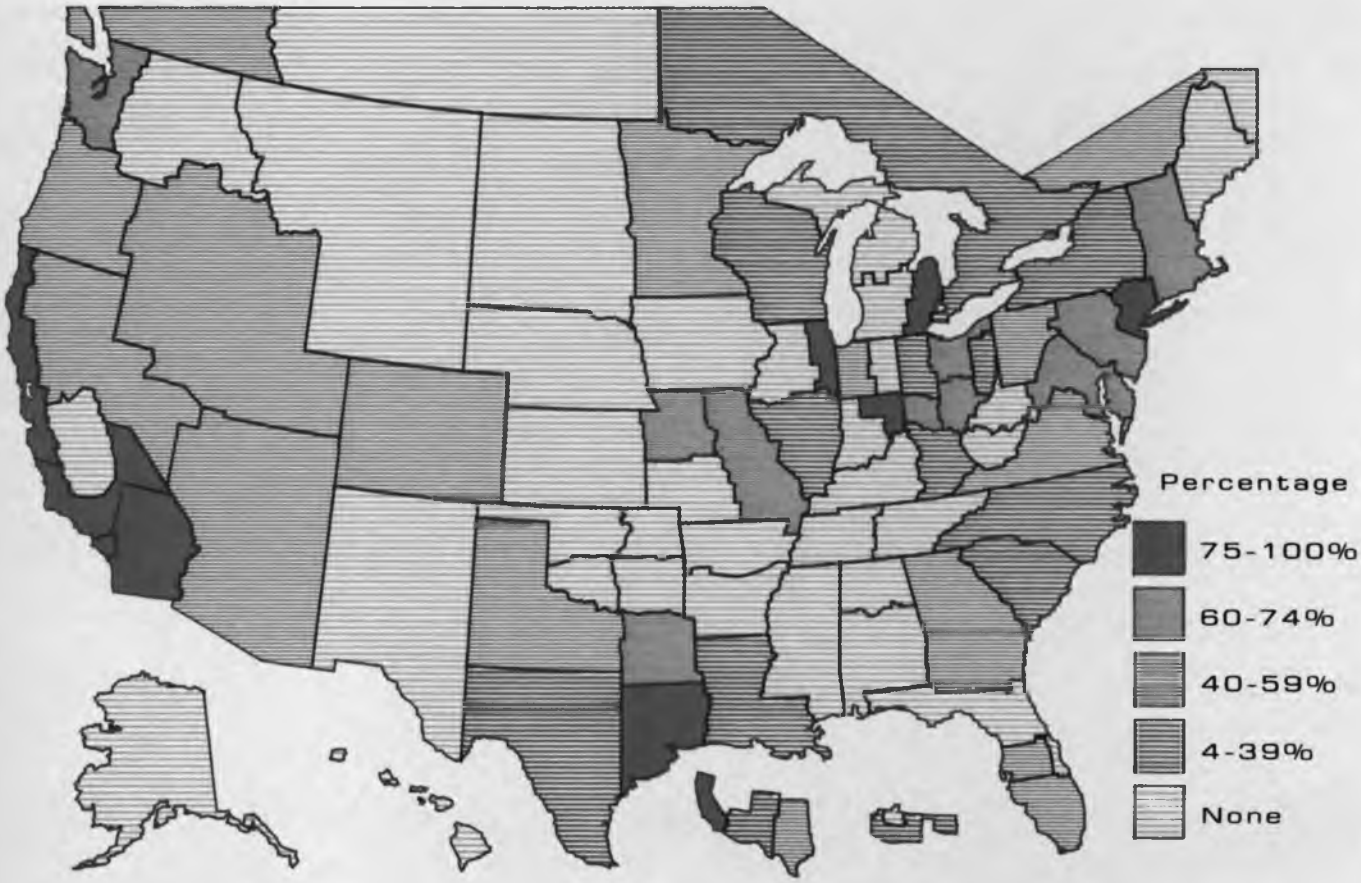
WITHOUT LEAVING HOME

THANKSGIVING OFFERING FOR WORLD EVANGELISM

CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE • STEWARDSHIP SERVICES

METRO AREA POPULATION CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE

Percentage of District Population in Metro Areas of 1,000,000 or more



The challenges facing Nazarenes in North America differ from district to district. Big city evangelistic strategies differ from those in small towns. But which areas call for which strategies? And which areas need both big city and small town strategies? This map, prepared by the Church Growth Research Center, shows the different metropolitan challenges faced in North America.

The entire Anaheim District population is part of the Los Angeles Consolidated Metropolitan Area. New York District has a few areas outside official metro definitions, but its 17 million metro inhabitants present the largest challenge of any North American district. At the other extreme, Northern Michigan and Navajo Nation districts have no metro areas of any size within their borders.

The Church Growth Research Center exists to help districts and local churches recognize the challenges facing them in proclaiming scriptural holiness.

How may we serve you?

Church Growth Research Center
6401 The Paseo
Kansas City, MO 64131

RESEARCH AND TRENDS

Provided by Church Growth Research Center
Dale E. Jones, Manager

Reverse Youth Decline

Age groups important in outreach. Nazarene churches have traditionally had large children's departments . . . 30% of enrollment throughout 1980s. Youth proportion has been declining during decade . . . 18% in 1980, 16% today.

Time to reverse youth decline . . . build up children. Projections for USA show growth in all children and teen groups . . . from kindergarten through senior high . . . for 1990s. Good time to reach entire families.

Attendance in Large Churches

Nazarenes are a denomination of large-church attenders and small churches. Nearly three-quarters of our North American churches average under 100 in morning worship . . . 72% of organized Canada/USA churches in 1989. But larger churches, by definition, hold more people . . . so nearly two-thirds of our attenders are in large churches . . . 63% worship with 99 or more others each week.

Small Churches and District Activities

When organizing district activities, do you want to attract people from each church? Then aim for the small-church crowd . . . do-it-yourself involvement, friendliness over polish. If you want to reach the largest number, try to draw from the large-church group . . . well-structured format, professional quality leadership.

Pastoral Training and Small Churches

Implications for pastoral training as well. The largest number of members expect professional, full-time clergy . . . the bulk of the week spent in sermon preparation, couseling, office administration. The largest number of churches may require bivocational pastors . . . much of the week spent in earning a living for the family in non-church work.

Pastoral Tenure

Nazarene pastors stay an average of three years at each church . . . according to a study done by Kenneth Crow in late 1980s . . . but over one-third tend to remain beyond four years. Study being updated to see effects of recent **Manual** changes on call of pastor. Many pastors new to the job . . . nearly half of all pastors began within last 10 years. Only one-fourth have 20 years or more experience in pastoral work.

Dick Willis, Board Chairman and fund-raising spark plug inspects construction.

A NEW SKID ROW MISSION GROWS IN HEART OF LOS ANGELES

Pastor Roger Bowman of Los Angeles Grace Church leads altar prayer.

Since Bresee's time, much has changed in Los Angeles — but the gospel's promise of hope, salvation, and a holy life remains the same.

The new Los Angeles Mission and Women's Shelter stands as an impressive testimony to the commitment of a group of holiness people who have a vision to do something significant for those at the end of the line.

Just a few blocks from where Bresee started the Church of the Nazarene at Sixth and Wall, this impressive 113,000-square-foot building is

NEW MISSION GROWS IN LOS ANGELES

being constructed to serve down-and-outers on skid row. Since Bresee's time, much has changed in Los Angeles — but the gospel's promise of hope, salvation, and a holy life remains the same.

Tom Bradley, mayor of Los Angeles, says of the mission, "When we see Rev. Mark Holsinger take homeless, hopeless persons off the street, clean them up, find them jobs, and renew their lives, we realize how important the lifesaving work of the mission is."

The mission's new building covers most of a city block. The new facilities include space to serve 2,000 meals per day, 160 beds for transient men, 35 beds for transient women, 98 beds for rehabilitation men, 3 classrooms, 4 counseling rooms, 400-seat chapel, 33 parking spaces, plus space for a barber shop, medical clinic, thrift shop, workshop, laundry, library, and recreation.

The Los Angeles Mission has historic roots in the Peniel Mission Movement, the spiritual birthplace of many Nazarenes. The mission, not a Nazarene-sponsored ministry, is led by a ten-member board of directors. Nine are Nazarenes: Dick Willis (chairman), Mike Edwards, G. A. Gough, Jack Holeman, Mark Holsinger, Marion McCandless, Tim McCandless, Herb Smith, and Howard Wooten; Mr. Dean Caliborne is a member of the Free Methodist Church.

Funds for building the mission— more than $10 million has been received to serve the hungry, homeless, and hopeless — have been raised through newspaper advertising, direct mailings to more than 250,000 people, interested individuals, and foundations. Although a few larger gifts came from TV/entertainment personalities and foundations, the main funding source is small gifts from individuals on the mailing list who have concern for the hurting people of the central city.

***GROW* salutes** these members of our Nazarene family who offer nutritious meals, comfortable shelter, generous love, and genuine hope. By experience and example, they show us that a hot meal and a warm bed sometimes lead to a new life.

—by Neil B. Wiseman with Dick Willis and Roger Bowman

PUT YOURSELF IN GOD'S HANDS

There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves, and two small fishes: but what are they among so many?

JOHN 6:9

STEWARDSHIP

SEPTEMBER IS STEWARDSHIP MONTH

EVANGELIST'S DIRECTORY

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An adequate budget for evangelism at the beginning of each church year is imperative for each congregation. A revival savings account is useful in building toward adequate support for the evangelist.

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Minister Becomes Missionary Without Leaving Home

PASTOR TURNER TUTORS IMMIGRANT CHILDREN

Somerville, Massachusetts, has experienced a tidal wave of immigrants during the last several years. Following Anglo flight to the suburbs, newcomers from around the globe are building new lives for themselves in Somerville, creating a mission field of 70,000 people packed into a 4.1-square-mile area.

Unlike world mission areas where people speak the same language and understand the same customs, these immigrants are forced to live among strangers even as they experience overwhelming diversity of color, language, and culture; this creates frustrating repercussions that none has faced before.

In this unpredictable environment,

Pastor Ken Turner ministers through an eighty-nine-year-old church that was organized in 1901. The church and community, as it might be expected, suffer from drastic changes in the businesses, neighborhoods, and schools. The situation is further complicated by the fact that old-time Nazarenes from the first and second generation have died, third generation Nazarenes are bewildered by the changes, and others have moved away.

Though positive response to change is always difficult, this church is doing exactly what Jesus wants done. Our Lord sent His disciples into the world, near and far, to share the good news with all people regardless of their color, custom, or culture. Through a tutoring ministry to young people, West Somerville Church earns the right to tell new immigrants' children about Jesus. As a result of their improved learning at school, the young people tell their families about the helpful people at the church and about the Christ those people represent. It is slow, hard work — a lot like missionaries learning new ways and languages — but the results are worth all the effort.

Here's how the Holy Spirit directed Pastor Turner to develop this evangelistic strategy of tutoring the refugees' children. The pastor called in the Vo home after their son, Khanh, visited West Somerville Church with a friend. During the pastoral call, Turner learned that the family were Buddhists from Vietnam who had lived for five years in the camps of Thailand before coming to the Boston area in 1985. Although the father, Duc Vo, was friendly, he and the pastor were barely able to communicate. But the minister prayed in his heart that this contact would provide an opening to start a Bible study in the Vo home.

About this time, Pastor Turner began teaching for two days each week as a permanent substitute at Somerville High School. The pastor happened to meet Khanh's sister, Tuyen Vo, in the school cafeteria a couple of days after calling in the Vo home. He remarked to Tuyen, "I hope your father understood what I was trying to say about God when I called in your home." Shaking her head, Tuyen responded, "I don't know anything about God; I am just having trouble understanding U.S. history."

As the pastor walked away, he felt impressed by the Holy Spirit: "If you are going to help Tuyen understand Christ, you will have to help her with her history." So he went to the Vo home a couple of nights during the next week to tutor Tuyen. Imagine how elated Tuyen, her parents, her teacher, and Pastor Turner felt when she earned a 90 on her history test the next Friday.

That was the beginning of a cross-cultural strategy of friendship evangelism for the West Somerville Church.

At the same time, Lan Mac, a fun-loving twelve-year-old girl in the seventh grade, began attending school. Her grades for the first quarter revealed a need for help in social studies, so the pastor began going to her home and Tuyen's home about two nights each week — a full schedule for one who also taught school two days per week. Then Tuyen wanted to know if her friend Tien Ong could study with them. In a few more weeks, Tien's brothers, Trong and Dai, started attending church and asked the pastor to help them with their school lessons. As a result, tutoring sessions were moved to the church and the van picked up the children.

Before Christmas of 1987, there were 12 or 15 students sharing in this ministry two nights each week. These students, their families, and their friends, along with a more established Cape Verde family, formed the nucleus for the church's growing cross-cultural ministry.

The tutoring continues to the present, with assistance from Samuel Finlayson, a graduate of Eastern Nazarene College employed by the Massachu-

setts Health Department, and Rosa Ann Orlando, a recent education graduate of Eastern Nazarene College. The amazing list of young people who have benefited from this program sounds like a United Nations roll call: Maria and Christina Nielsen, Korean-born adopted daughters of an economics professor from the University of Copenhagen; Tuyen Vo, Khahn Vo, Lan Mac, Chung Mac, Tien Ong, Trong Ong, Dai Ong, Thao Ly, and Hien Pham from Vietnam; Daniel Kwong from Hong Kong; Gloria Pinto, Gamaliel Pinto, and Ilidia Pinto from Cape Verde; Gannai and Mari Mayan from Haiti; Darla Salazar from Costa Rica; and Ranjith Suresh from India.

Think of the benefits of the tutoring ministry which are both Christ-exalting and evangelistic: **1)** It offers a safe harbor emotionally, physically, and spiritually for young people who have known lots of pain and suffering. **2)** It builds bridges between the church, the children, and their parents; it does what families cannot do for their children's learning because of language barriers. **3)**It helps identify the Church of the Nazarene as a place of compassion and care. **4)** It puts the children in frequent contact with the church for local, zone, and district youth functions including youth camps. **5)** It develops cross-cultural communication and ministry skills for all who are involved; once seventeen people from five different countries camped in one cabin at the district camp. **6)** It refocuses the church's work on its community and helps them reach out in ministry to their changing environment. **7)** The program provides a nucleus of potential leaders for the future. **8)** It brings missions close to home for the Somerville congregation as they worship Sunday by Sunday with people from ten or twelve nations. **9)** It helps the church minister to people they would never touch without the tutoring services. **10)** This entire effort allows benefits from the tutoring ministry to overflow into other ministries in the church and community.

"If you are going to help Tuyen understand Christ, you will have to help her with her history."

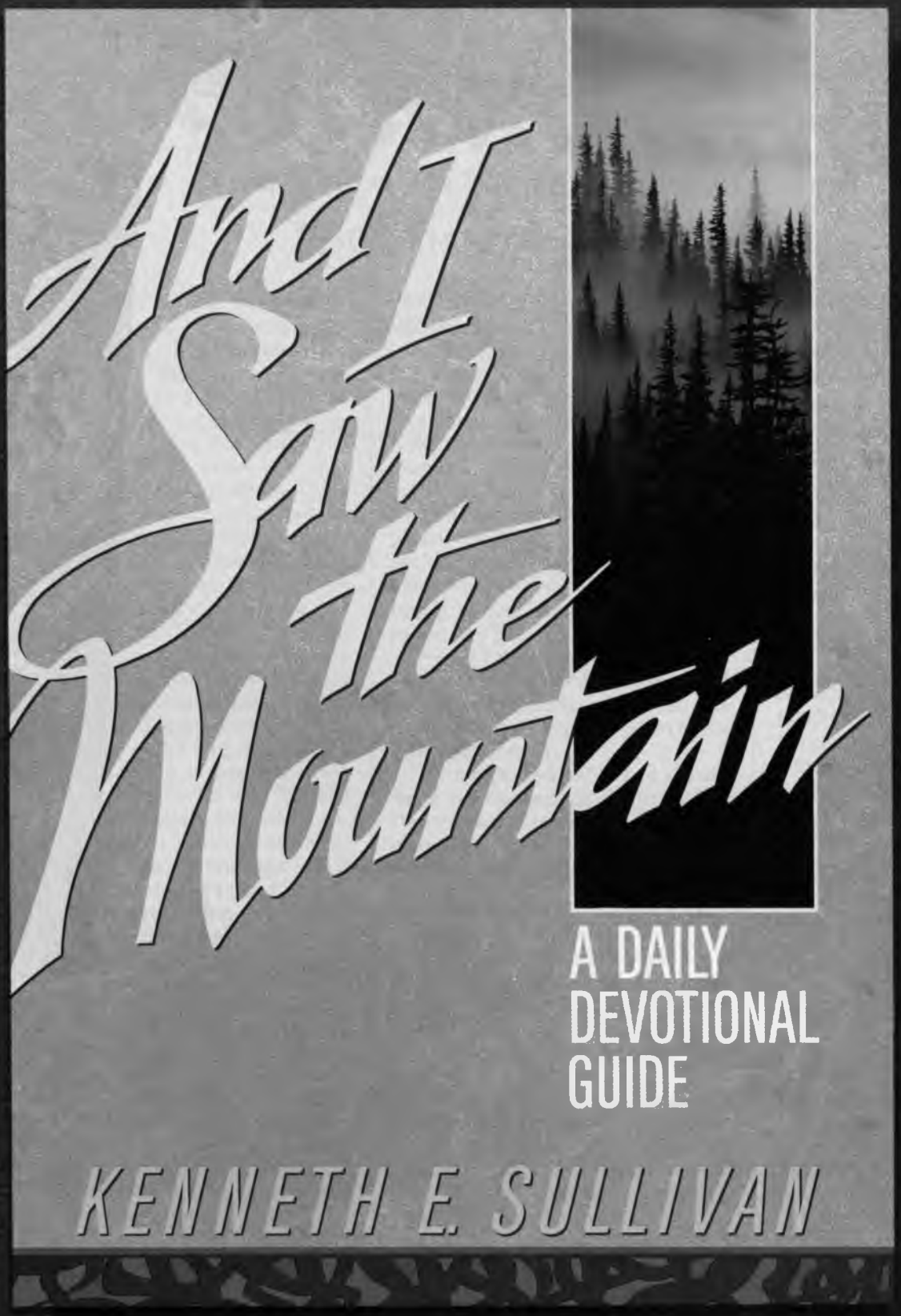
Specific results show young people baptized, worship services energized, families attending church and district camps together, Christian weddings, and new people loved into the Kingdom. Jesus clarified the significance of His kingdom a long time ago with these words: "I was hungry and you gave me something to eat; I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink; I was a stranger and you invited me in; I needed clothes and you clothed me; I was sick and you looked after me; I was in prison and you came to visit me." Apparently God has added a phrase for Pastor Turner and the West Somerville Church: "I was a refugee and you tutored me."

Of all the benefits of the West Somerville Church's tutoring ministry, the most touching comes from Pastor Ken Turner's heart. After describing real pain, loss, and even depression that lasted for years in his own life, he wrote, "However, my cup began running over with laughter and joy as I tutored Tuyen, Tien, and Lan. I literally lost myself in serving them, laughing and sometimes crying with them and finding a renewed depth of emotional joy I had not known since the death of my father. This joy remains and has helped to deepen my intimacy with Jesus."

A cup running over with laughter and joy is an experience every Christian shares when he discovers a God-given strategy for impacting his situation with the power of Christ.

—by Neil B. Wiseman with Ken Turner and Dennis M. Scott

For the year of the Sabbath



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PRAYER OF PARENTS ANSWERED. "I was raised in a godly Nazarene home. My parents were crushed when I announced at seventeen that I was an atheist; I claimed Christianity made no sense. For the next seventeen years, I lived life my own way, which included joining a traveling band, having affairs, living with different people, marijuana addiction, going through a divorce, and gaining custody of my young son. During this long rebellion, my parents kept praying, loving, and accepting me.

"Last October 30, I decided to admit these seventeen years of making my own misery were enough. At that time I said to God, 'If you are there, I'm going to listen to you. I don't know how to do this. It's been such a long time, but I'll listen.' I went back to church the next Sunday, only to find it was financial commitment Sunday. But when the altar call was given, I couldn't move fast enough; my commitment was much more than financial. I turned my life over to God — no strings attached. He saved me, and I asked the people around me to pray for my wife, because I knew she would not be thrilled about this. The church people faithfully prayed — and God answered. Early on Sunday, November 7, my wife and I knelt in our home and she welcomed Christ into her life. If you have a loved one you think is not going to make it to heaven, or if you wonder if God is still speaking to that person, never give up." **Dennis Manion**, data processing manager, Federal Reserve Bank

PERSONAL EVANGELISM CALL WAS FUN. **"The night an evangelism team came to our house was a fun time for me. I was comfortable with the belief that I was a Christian and welcomed these people from the church — but a seed was planted in my heart that night as my wife, Janet, accepted the Lord. I was happy about that. Janet completed the Bible studies and I could see she was growing in the Lord. I saw a big change in her life, and I began to feel something was lacking in my life.**

"I now know it is possible to grow away from the Lord. He came back into my life and saved me. He gave me strong convictions and an influential testimony.

"Then He helped me to see the need for the personal evangelism classes and for people who visit non-Christians." ***Mike Duncan*****, medical supply sales representative**

WAITRESS FINDS CHRIST. "I spent eleven years popping pills and drinking booze to help me cope with reality. But on July 17, I asked God to forgive my sins. I received Jesus Christ as my Saviour. What a high!

"No drug or booze could replace the elation within my heart for Jesus Christ. I could talk all night about the blessings God has given me during this past year." **Taresa Hartman**, waitress at Denny's

30 PEOPLE PRAYED FOR HER RECOVERY. "I was hospitalized and the medical team did not expect me to live. Neither did I.

"But, during my illness, someone told me that 30 Christians at church were praying for me. Two friends from the church presented the gospel and led me to rededicate my life to the Lord. I am thankful for the opportunity of serving Christ. The grace of God is something wonderful to behold." **Gloria Widel**, housewife

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HINDU HOUSEKEEPER MAKES CHRISTIAN PROFESSION. **"During a personal evangelism Work and Witness trip to Guyana, I shared the gospel with Bibi, a housekeeper in the home where we stayed.**

"Bibi said, 'I want to say something. No one ever sat down and talked to me or explained about God. Not my father, not my mother — nobody.' She had tears on her cheeks when she told the pastor's wife, Debbie, that she had invited Christ into her heart.

"The next day, just before we left, her husband, Errol, told me, 'I hope you live to be a hundred so you can help many other people find Christ.' " ***Beverly Burgess*****, personal evangelism coordinator, International Headquarters**

belt. The younger brother tried to intercede, protesting it was he who threw the ball, not John. But the father didn't stop until John was screaming and twisting in pain to the ground. Then he glared down at John and barked, "Well, maybe you didn't do it this time, but I know that you've done somethin'!" Sadly, this describes many people's concept of God — a stern, exacting disciplinarian who knows that "you've done somethin'!"

Paul's understanding of God, however, is quite different. What kind of a father is God? **He is the kind of father who could have a son like Jesus!** Rather than punishing sinners, He says to the paralytic, "My son, your sins are forgiven" (Mark 2:5). Instead of casting the first stone, He said to the woman taken in adultery, "Neither do I condemn you" (John 8:11).

God is the kind of father who runs to embrace the returning prodigal (Luke 15:20). The Psalmist testified, "The Lord is **compassionate and gracious**, slow to anger and abounding in loving-kindness" (Psalms 103:8).

WEEK FOUR

GOD IS MERCIFUL

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of Mercies" (2 Corinthians 1:3).

When the Apostle Paul describes God as the "Father of Mercies," he undoubtedly had in mind the Ark of the Covenant, the centerpiece within the Holy of Holies. God's instructions to Moses regarding the construction included this: "And you shall make a mercy seat of pure gold . . . And you shall put the mercy seat on top of the ark, and in the ark you shall put the testimony which I shall give to you" (Exodus 25:17,21). Then follows one of the greatest promises of the entire Bible — one that reveals the tender, compassionate heart of God: "And there I will meet with you, and from the mercy seat . . . I will speak to you" (v. 22).

Where does heaven touch earth? Not at the judgment bar, but at the mercy seat! Where does divinity intersect humanity? At the mercy seat! Where does a holy God meet unholy man? At the mercy seat! No wonder the author of Hebrews could exult: "For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. **Let us therefore draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need**" (Hebrews 4:15-16).

WEEK FIVE

THE GOD OF COMFORT

"Blessed be the God . . . of all comfort . . . who comforts us in all our afflictions" (2 Corinthians 1:3-8).

The Greek word for comfort is *paracletos*, the same word that Jesus utilized to describe the special office work of the Holy Spirit. It means "alongside of." It is variously translated as encourager, advocate, helper, counselor.

Because of a basketball injury, my daughter underwent major knee surgery. I was in the room when she was wheeled in. The nurse lifted the bedspread covering the metal cage protecting her knee. I saw blood seeping through the bandages and draining out of tubes into hemovacs. Immediately I headed for the door of the room and lost nearly every lunch I had eaten for the previous month!

Having spent 17 years as a pastor, I am not a stranger to hospitals or the sight of blood, so why was I so sickened this time? **It was my daughter's blood!** When she bleeds, I bleed. When she hurts, I hurt. When she suffers, I suffer.

If I, a human father, feel that kind of identity with my daughter, how much more is God's care for us! God's kind of love is Calvary love! The cross reveals a God Who really bleeds, Who really suffers, and Whose face is wet with tears. The Psalmist knew about the **God of all comfort:** "Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil; for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff, they comfort me" (Pslams 23:4).

WEEK SIX

THE MINISTRY OF COMFORT

". . . who comforts us in all our affliction so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God" (2 Corinthians 1:4).

A six-year-old girl's best friend died of leukemia. A few days later, her father asked her at suppertime, "Where were you this afternoon?"

"I was over at Mary's house."

"What were you doing?"

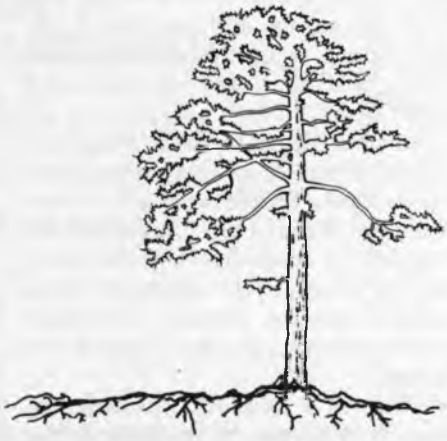
"I was comforting Mary's mom."

"But how did you do that?"

"I crawled up in her lap. I let her hug me. She cried. And I cried."

God comforts us so that we may have a genuine ministry of comfort to others who are going through a dark valley. The best kind of comfort we can give is not answers to their questions nor pious platitudes; it is to follow the example of this little girl. It is to be their **paracletos**, the one who comes alongside them, encouraging, strengthening, and enabling.

There is no more effective way of comforting those who are suffering loss and distress than to simply be with them, to hug them, and to cry with them. In so doing, we are embodying the personal care and loving concern of God Himself.



WEEK SEVEN

GOD IS NOT A KILLER!

"... we should not trust in ourselves, but in God who raises the dead" (2 Corinthians 1:9).

A woman recently shared that her daughter and all three of her grandchildren had been killed in an automobile accident.

"I'm so sorry," I responded.

"Oh, there's nothing to be sorry about," she replied. "Actually, it was a beautiful answer to prayer."

When I questioned her, she told me that while taking care of her grandchildren one day, she began to pray for them. She asked God that, if in His foreknowledge He saw that they would turn against Him in adulthood and thus lose their souls, He would take them while in their innocency. In less than a month, the accident occurred. She concluded, therefore, that God had answered her prayer.

I was horrified! What does this say about God? Is He a celestial "hit man"? A child killer? If it were in God's nature to peremptorily knock off those who might sin against Him and thus lose their souls, wouldn't it have been a far greater act of mercy not to create the human race in the first place? Or at least make sure Adam and Eve had no children?

Whatever else it is that we believe about God — the God Who has fully and finally revealed Himself in Christ — is that **He is not a killer**. "The wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23). Death is an "enemy" (1 Corinthians 15:26), and God does not deal with the enemy! Our God is a God Who, after sin has paid its "wages," **raises the dead!**

WEEK EIGHT

GOD IS NOT A DESTROYER

"[God has] delivered us from so great a peril of death, and will deliver us" (2 Corinthians 1:10).

"It was an act of God that devastated St. Croix last week," declared *Time* magazine, "blowing houses into splinters, closing down the hospital, shutting off water and electricity, leaving residents and tourists in a state of panic" (*Time*, Oct. 2, 1989, p. 18). It is a paradox of our times that a secular culture that is unwilling to credit God with creation nevertheless blames Him for destructive natural occurrences. No wonder people fear Him and flee from His presence! Who wants to cultivate a relationship with a malevolent deity whose power is manifest primarily in destructive acts?

The God revealed in Jesus is quite different. Isaiah the prophet said of Him Who was to come, "A bruised reed He will not break, and a dimly burning wick He will not extinguish" (42:3). To the contrary, the great heart of God is disclosed in this Messianic announcement: "The Spirit of the Lord God is come upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the afflicted; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to captives, and freedom to prisoners; to proclaim the favorable year of the Lord . . . to comfort all who mourn" (Isaiah 61:1-2). After reading this prophecy in the Nazareth synagogue, Jesus added, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled" (Luke 4:21). **God is not a destroyer, but a deliverer!**

WEEK NINE

GOD IS FOR US

"If God is for us, who is against us?" (Romans 8:31).

A hospital chaplain related two incidents that occurred on two successive days in his hospital. A pastor asked a woman in intensive care why she was there.

"The doctors say I've had a heart attack," she answered.

"Well, good enough for you," he responded. "Now, maybe God can get through to you!"

The second incident involved a pastor sitting with a parishioner while his wife was undergoing a mastectomy because of breast cancer. He suggested to the husband that, since his wife had taken up jogging and was thus showing undue concern for her body, perhaps God was trying to get her attention and change her priorities. She was not only a faithful member of the church, but a Sunday school teacher as well!

Paul's mighty declaration in Romans 8 presents a vastly different understanding of God, namely, **God is not against us!** God is not the one Who "condemns" (v. 34). Neither does He initiate "tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword" (v. 35).

To the contrary, **God is for us!** He is on our side, helping us "overwhelmingly conquer" (v. 37). We can trust Him because "nothing can separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (v. 39).

WEEK TEN

THE CHRIST-LIKE GOD

"God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself . . . " (1 Corinthians 5:19).

"I don't want to go to Sunday school anymore," a six-year-old girl announced to her mother one Sunday morning.

"Why not?"

"Because I don't like God!"

"Why do you say that?"

"Because He doesn't like me. The Bible says that I am a sinner and He sends all sinners to hell. But I *do* love Jesus," she continued, "because He died so that I won't have to go to hell."

This little girl expressed one of the widespread misconceptions concerning the sacrificial death of Christ — that of playing a loving Jesus against an angry God.

Nothing could be further from the truth. The whole Christ-event is heaven's grandest expression of the truth that "God so loved the world that **He gave** His only begotten Son . . . " (John 3:16). In the light of the total revelation of "God in Christ," we can confidently make these assertions: **Jesus did not die to change God's mind about men, but to change men's minds about God! Jesus did not die to appease the wrath of an angry God, but to demonstrate the love of a gracious God!** The cross reveals **a God Who would rather die than damn — and Who did!**

WEEK ELEVEN

GOD IS IN CONTROL

"And we know that God causes all things . . . " (Romans 8:28a).

In a praiseworthy but misguided desire to glorify God — not only *in* all things but *for* all things — there are many who believe that "God causes all things." Whatever comes into our lives, be it good or evil, comes from the hand of the sovereign God. Admittedly, there is comfort in knowing that somebody out there is driving the bus!

Yet, we must ask this question: If God causes cancer, heart attacks, car wrecks, bankruptcies, AIDS, then who needs a devil? Such a God would be more satanic than Satan in that He masquerades as a God of love!

It is vitally important that we read the whole verse: **"And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose."** The essence of God's character, as revealed in Jesus, is that of **holy love**. God cannot do anything contrary to His own nature. Consequently, He does *not* cause all things! "The wages of sin is death (disease, disasters, etc.), but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 6:23). God does not do evil that good may come.

The good news, however, is that God can take the broken pieces of our lives and make something beautiful out of them. He is the artist Who can blend even the dark and ugly pigments into a beautiful portrait to the praise of His great glory and grace.

WEEK TWELVE

THE FORGIVING GOD

"For God did not send the Son into the world to judge [condemn] the world; but that the world should be saved through Him" (John 3:17).

I was walking down the road of my imagination one day when I came upon Simon Peter, sitting on a stump, his large frame shaking with sobs. I overheard him repeating, over and over again, "He didn't even mention it!"

"Excuse me, Peter," I interrupted. "What are you talking about?"

"My denial, man!" Peter shot back. Then, apologizing for his abrupt response, he told me how he had so failed Jesus — his best friend — on the night before His crucifixion. But then he went on to share the incredible event that had occurred that very morning. Jesus Himself, risen from the dead, met them on the beach early in the morning. He had a fire going and fish broiling. And throughout their entire breakfast conversation, Jesus didn't bring up the matter of Peter's denial — not even once. "The only thing that Jesus really seemed to care about," Peter continued, "was whether or not I really loved Him. In fact, He asked me that question three times — the same number of times that I denied Him!"

As I continued on my way, I thought: How like Jesus, not even to mention our denials, our sins, our failures. The only question that really concerns Him is: Do we really love Him?

WEEK THIRTEEN

OUR SECURITY IN GOD

"For I know whom I have believed and I am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day" (2 Timothy 1:12).

Angie Tlucek, one of my students, concluded her term paper with this striking testimony:

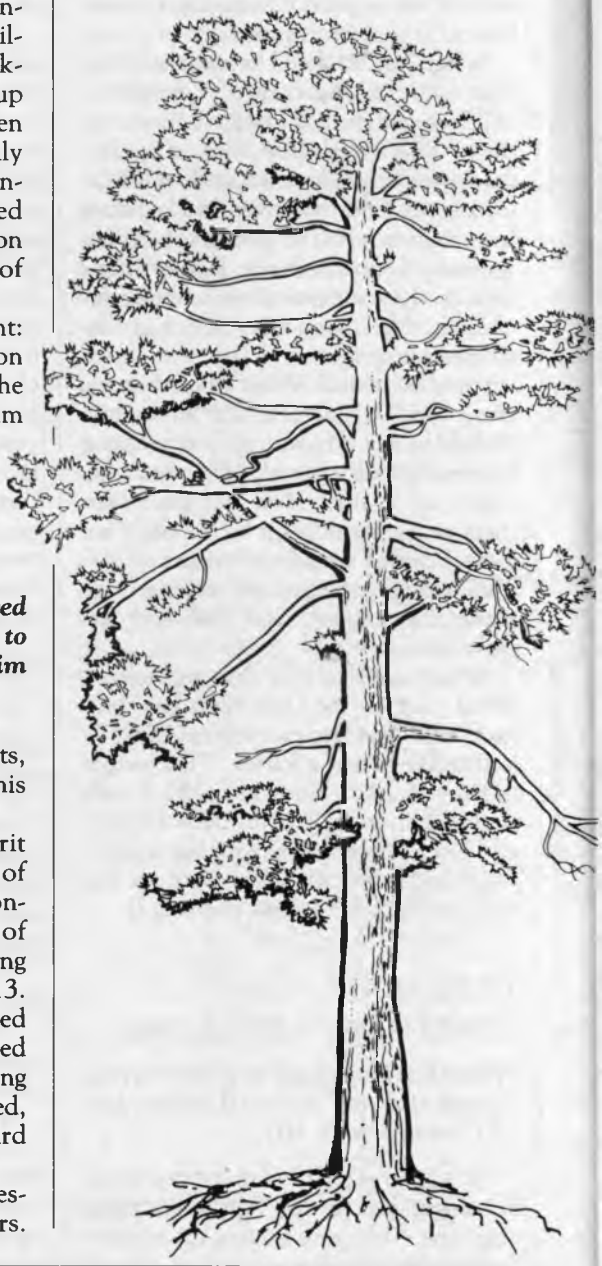
"In times of hurt or terror, the Spirit does not forsake us. I felt the glow of the Spirit sustain me when the monsters of the sky became the jaws of death in Denver two years ago during the crash of Continental Flight 1713. Upon takeoff, the plane wobbled, rolled over, and was jolted hard as it skidded on its back and broke apart. I hung upside down in my seat belt, terrified, as a ball of orange fire hurtled toward me. I prayed.

"Immediately I could feel the presence of the Holy Spirit easing my fears. I lost consciousness. I awakened five hours later in a Denver hospital.

"What a magnificent comfort God has given us! I know that even when the storms of life shake the very foundations of my soul, I can rest secure in Christ and whistle this confident tune:

"Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine!
Oh, what a foretaste of glory divine!
Heir of salvation, purchase of God,
Born of His Spirit, washed in His blood."

—by C. S. Cowles



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God Helps Nazarenes Plant New Works Everywhere

NEW WORKS VICTORY REPORT

TWO NAZARENE BIBLE COLLEGE GRADUATES TEAM IN CHURCH PLANTING: Tualatin Fellowship Church of the Nazarene (Oregon Pacific District) was organized with 56 charter members on October 29, 1989. Twenty-nine of those members joined by profession of faith. On August 8, 1988, the **David Whites** and **Chris Conrads**, recent Nazarene Bible College graduates, arrived in Portland to begin a team church-planting effort in southwest Portland, sponsored by the Oregon Pacific District. A third family, the **Lee Harts**, soon joined the team as ministers of music. Home Bible studies began in September 1988. The first service was held on March 5, 1989, in Tualatin Elementary School, with 177 present as a result of a telemarketing effort where 23,000 homes were called. The church now averages more than 90.

ARMY RETIREE STARTS CHURCH IN HIS HOME: China Regional Church (Maine District) met for four years before being organized on September 10, 1989, with 28 members — 15 by profession of faith. When Joe W. Kilgore retired from the army as a chief warrant officer, he moved his family to Maine, where they built a home near his wife's birthplace. In 1983, while leading the Sunday school in Augusta First church, God renewed Kilgore's call to the ministry which he experienced years earlier. In response to that call, **Pastor Kilgore** started a church in his own home. Kilgore was ordained at the 1989 district assembly.

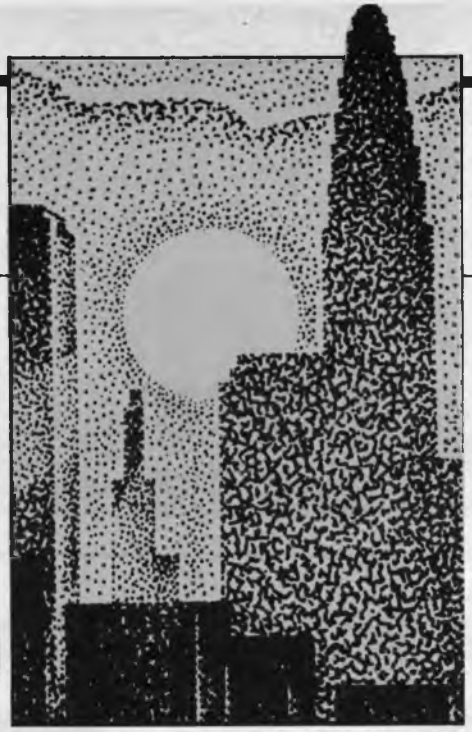
WORK AND WITNESS TEAMS HELP NEW CHURCH REPAIR BUILDING: Forks Church (Washington Pacific District) started in February 1988, and was organized on June 23, 1989, with ten charter members. The District Teen Work and Witness Team and local church teams from Centralia, Sumner and Grandview helped the infant church renovate a church building purchased by the district. Dozens of individuals came from other churches to help. Sixty-eight people attended the dedication. **Pastor Ken Pelts** leads this church in a ministry directed mostly to street people.

DISTRICT NYI AND GEORGIA DISTRICT START CHURCH WITH TELEMARKETING: Roswell Church (Georgia District) had 100 people present on its first Sunday. Twenty thousand phone calls were made announcing the start of a new church in this rapidly growing community. Seven months after its first service, the average worship attendance is 69. **Pastor Mike Jackson** serves as the pioneer pastor.

VETERAN PASTOR STARTS NEW CHURCH WITH 29 MEMBERS: Shepherd Community Church of the Nazarene, Lexington, South Carolina (South Carolina District) was organized on Easter Sunday, 1989. After nineteen years of effective pastoral service, **Pastor Jay R. Smith** moved to Lexington to plant a new church. On their first Sunday, June 5, 1988, they had 97 persons present in response to 6,700 phone calls in "The Phone's for You" program.

Their first convert, a deserted mother with two children, came as a result of their phone efforts. On the fifth Sunday, a medical doctor and his wife were saved. And within two months, two brothers, active members of a religious cult, were saved. After reading about their work in the newspaper, a woman called to say that, although she had to work every Sunday, she would send financial support. Every week since June 1988, she has sent the Shepherd church a tithe check. The church has also reached two couples who lived together without being married; both couples were converted and asked the pastor to marry them.

The first year, the church averaged 41 in worship, had 26 converts, and gave $33,830. Although they started in the Performing Arts Theater, they now have a worship center and hope to construct a building in the near future on a parcel of land they have purchased.



WITHOUT MONEY, CHURCH CLAIMS BUILDING FOR THE LORD: Carrollton Church of the Nazarene (Akron District) started in May 1987 with a week of evangelistic services and weekly Bible studies. In the beginning days of the Bible studies, the church prayed for a building. Soon they located a building just suited to their purposes offered for sale. The problem — they were not financially ready to consider buying a church. So they proposed a rent or lease arrangement, but the owners refused, insisting that they were only interested in selling the building. **Pastor A. E. Leonard** said, "In December 1987, after we claimed the church for the Lord, we were informed that the owners might be willing to enter into a lease agreement. They leased the building to us, and we held our first services in February 1988. In September 1988, we were able to organize, and one year later, in September 1989, we purchased the building." There are other miracles, too, such as God's supplying the church with organ, piano, pulpit furniture, copy machine, offering envelopes, bulletin covers, and tables and chairs as they moved into the building.

OVERSEAS MISSIONARIES START CHURCH IN LONG ISLAND: La Primera Iglesia del Nazarene (New York District) was organized on July 16, 1989, by Revs. Kenneth and Barbara Jones. After eighteen years of overseas mission service, the Joneses were asked in April of 1987 to explore the need and assist in beginning Hispanic work on Long Island. There, they found a Spanish-speaking population of nearly three hundred thousand, with no Hispanic Nazarene churches. The Joneses describe the potential, "From all over Latin America, Hispanics have streamed into the USA, some to escape persecution and poverty, others looking for the American dream. Instead, many have found themselves alone and penniless."

In August of 1987, Kenneth and Barbara were missionary speakers for the New York District family camp. At the camp meeting, thirty-two people met with them to share concern for beginning a Spanish church in the Brentwood area. Some in this group had been praying for eight years for the Nazarenes to begin a church for their people. This is the story for several Puerto Rican families who were established in English churches; nevertheless, they were concerned for Hispanics who were not able to understand English. The Joneses met with the district superintendent and it was decided they would begin Spanish services and lead the group until someone could be found to serve as pastor. The church started services on October 6 in a borrowed church. After some adversity, the Bay Shore English Church invited the baby church to share their building, so Sunday morning Sunday school and afternoon worship services began. God has put several immigrants from strong Nazarene backgrounds in touch with this new church. Overseas missions has come to Long Island with power and vigor.

Local

Minister's License Packet

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The licenses are now obtained through Pastoral Ministries by following these simple steps:

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   - *e.* Local Minister's License Information Card
2. Review the procedures and have the candidate fill out the application.
3. Schedule an interview with the church board using the Interview Guidelines.
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GROWTH REPORTS FROM NAZARENE CHAPLAINS

a missionary ministry in military and institutional settings

20 BAPTIZED BY CHAPLAIN AT FORT BENNING **Chaplain James G. Leston** reports on his evangelism efforts: "The gospel is continually being planted on a road march, in the field, during morning physical training, out on the ranges, or during the worship service.

"God has touched over fifty young men who have made personal commitments. Twenty have been baptized. All these soldiers have started on the Basic Bible Studies and have been encouraged to become a part of either a chapel on post or church when they enter their initial duty assignment. I see the chaplaincy as being a **missionary in uniform**."

JEWISH SOLDIER FINDS CHRIST **Army Chaplain Jim Roberts** shares the story of a young Jewish soldier named Jeremy who suffered great stress during basic training at Fort Knox. After a frightening dream, the soldier came to his chaplain asking about his dream and discussing his problems. Roberts suggested that Jeremy get acquainted with Jesus by **reading the gospels** of Matthew and John. Jeremy agreed and ten days later reported, "I've found Him."

After Chaplain Roberts explained the way of salvation, Jeremy prayed and received the Lord into his heart. Roberts reports, "As Jeremy prayed, 'Christ, come in and take over my life,' there was both joy and sadness in his eyes. He knew faith in Christ would require a high price to pay with his parents. He knew that now his family would no longer accept him as before. Yet he wanted to pray that somehow God would be able to use him to introduce his parents to Christ."

AIDS CHAPLAIN INSISTS NO ONE SHOULD DIE ALONE **Hospital Chaplain Michael J. Christensen** writes with obvious pain in his heart, "Melvin grew up as a Roman Catholic but, after getting married, he joined an evangelical fellowship in San Francisco. He told me of his tainted blood transfusion in 1985 and about his devoted wife and family. 'God only knows, God only knows,' he said repeatedly about why he now had AIDS.

"Mel drifted in and out of consciousness during our final conversation. The sound of fluid in his lungs and his deep and erratic breathing through his oxygen mask warned me that death was near.

"Placing my hand on his chest and feeling the perspiration soaking through his gown, I was impressed to pray for his troubled spirit. **I anointed him on his brow** in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit and quietly prayed for God to comfort him.

"Later, as Mel clutched his oxygen mask, gazing into his wife's loving, tearful eyes, I prayed a prayer of affirmation and release. Gently rubbing his chest that had become so thin, I attempted to say goodbye: 'Mel, the Lord loves you so much. Your family loves you, too, and thanks you for providing for them. We will all miss you. Your family will be okay. You can stay here with us as long as you wish, or leave us anytime. Whenever you're ready, whenever the Lord calls, just go and reach for the Lord's hand.'

"I left the hospital room about 8 p.m. Mel's wife and brother remained with him all night long. He died early the next morning, not alone, but **connected to the Source of eternal life**.

"I thank God that Mel didn't have to die alone. I am outraged that others do! Not everyone who dies of AIDS has loving family who will sit by his or her side and pass the long and lonely hours of approaching death.

"Not everyone who dies of AIDS knows the love of the Lord. I feel like I'm watching a gathering storm. Before the end of the decade, I predict that nearly every Christian in America will know someone who will die of AIDS. Most already do. As many as two million Americans may be infected, and we have only begun to feel the impact of this modern-day plague. What can we do? What will we do?"

POLICE CHAPLAIN SHARES CHRIST WITH COUPLE **Pastor Wally Johnson** tells how he, while serving as a police chaplain, first met a couple during a combative marital dispute when the neighbors called the police.

The couple asked Johnson for help and, during their third counseling session, he was able to share the plan of salvation and **they invited Christ into their lives**. They also went on to complete the Basic Bible Studies series.

Johnson writes, "I am grateful for the ministry opportunities that the chaplaincy provides. I'm also grateful that Christ can turn a scream in the night into an opportunity of hope."

—Reports supplied by Curt Bowers

A Retirement Income Plan To Meet A Diversity of Needs

Together We Can Make It Work!

Teamwork is the key to achievement. Ministers and laymen together can create retirement security for Nazarene ministers. It's a challenge Nazarenes have loved to accept through the years, because it means we care deeply for those who have served us well.

Dean Nesada

From the earliest days, the Church of the Nazarene has recognized an obligation to provide financial assistance for retired ministers. In the beginning, the Church "did what it could" through "benevolences." As time progressed, improvements were steadily made. The benevolences were replaced by stable pieces of today's four-fold Nazarene Minister's Retirement Program made of up four essential sources.

The Concept Has Been Developing Since 1919:

1919	1955	1963	1971	1982
Relief And Benevolence	Ministerial Social Security	Nazarene TSA Plan	"Basic" Pension Plan	Nazarene IRA Plan

The Nazarene Minister's Retirement Income Plan

"Are All the pieces in your plan?"

Today, the four essential sources of the Nazarene Minister's Retirement Program provide the framework for a financially secure retirement for every Nazarene minister. For detailed information about each segment of the program, contact the Pensions office. The program is in place, but it won't work for you unless you and your local church make it work. Together, let's make it work for you.

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(816) 333-7000, ext. 282

Benefiels Raise Young Family in Urban Ministry

Los Angeles — what a confusing place of make-believe, business, culture, and crowds; the city adds 1,000 people each day to its population, mostly ethnics.

Los Angeles — the metropolis of 9 million, 74 percent non-white, must be part of our Lord's command to go "to the ends of the earth." The massive needs are frightening and the contrasts are mind-boggling.

Los Angeles — the center of Nazarene history, includes names like P. F. Bresee, C. W. Ruth, and Seth Rees, and places like Sixth and Wall and the Glory Barn. The city continues to be creatively and redemptively served today by a number of Nazarene congregations.

Although the good news about the specific ministries through Los Angeles First Church has been told in several Nazarene periodicals, little has been

FAMILY IN LA

reported about Ron and Janet Benefiel, a parsonage couple who lead Los Angeles First Church.

Their courage for Christ and their commitment to Los Angeles is the same "everything" dedication that Christian workers have always made at home and overseas. Whether in steaming Afro-Asia bush country, metro asphalt jungles, or quiet country hamlets, effective service always costs relinquishment, but it pays Kingdom results.

Ron and Janet married in December 1980, only two years before Ron was called to be senior pastor of Los Angeles First Church.

But First Church has been home for a long time to both of them. Although Janet grew up in South Pasadena, she is a lifelong member of Los Angeles First Church; she is quick to say that she could not imagine living anywhere else. Ron's father pastored Los Angeles First Church, beginning in 1972, and Ron served on staff for more than six years as youth pastor, music director, and minister to single adults before coming as pastor in 1982.

A short while ago, the Benefiels decided to do what some consider a daring action when they moved their young family (Leanne, 5, and Robyn, 2½) from the suburbs to be near the church — three-fourths of a mile, to be exact.

They expect that the children will benefit by growing up "color blind," developing an automatic broader world view because they see and know people from many nations and enjoy the cultural advantages and excitement of the city.

Being near the church, Leanna and Robyn can count on seeing their pastor-daddy when he drops by to romp on the floor — a kind of therapy away from the pressures of city ministry for him, and pure joy for them. Another advantage is the fact that other city families know the parsonage family has firsthand understanding of the problems they face every day.

Then, too, closeness between home and church makes it possible for Janet to be active in church life, where she serves as nursery coordinator and leads a Mom's Bible Study dur-

Because life in the city is so transient, saying goodbye to friends happens too frequently for the girls.

ing the week. And her gift of hospitality shows in her home entertainment schedule.

Safety is one of the problems the Benefiels face; they must know exactly where the children are at all times. It just makes good sense to have security bars on the windows and high fences in the yard; a noisy dog helps, too. Because life in the city is so transient, saying goodbye to friends happens too frequently for the girls, but schooling will take place at the excellent Christian school sponsored by their church.

Of course, it's too soon for the Benefiels to know whether or not living in the heart of the city will be good overall for the children. But there are many gospel advances in Los Angeles because of Ron and Janet Benefiel's commitment, skill, and consecration — including their family's future. Two things are obvious: the Benefiels are more closely knit because of living in the city near the church, and the family invigorates Ron's ministry.

It could be that in two or three decades Leanne and Robyn will be front-line gospel workers to the city. Their parents love living in Los Angeles and think it is worth every cost to serve the city in the name of Jesus.

—by Neil B. Wiseman with Ron Benefiel and Janet Benefiel

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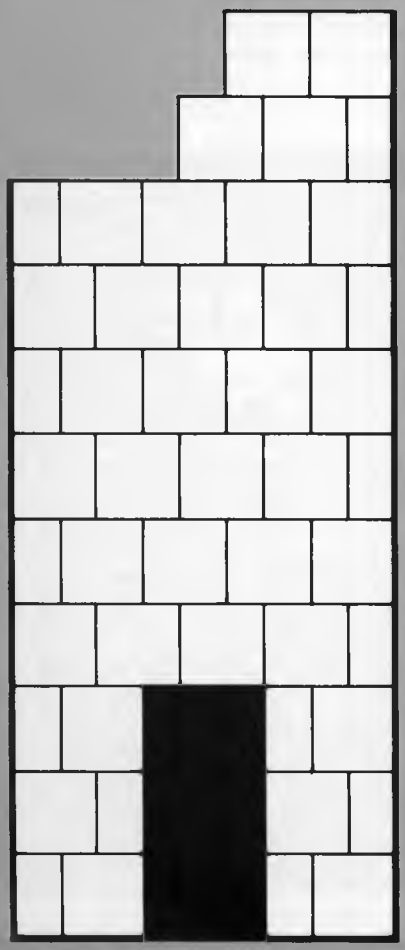

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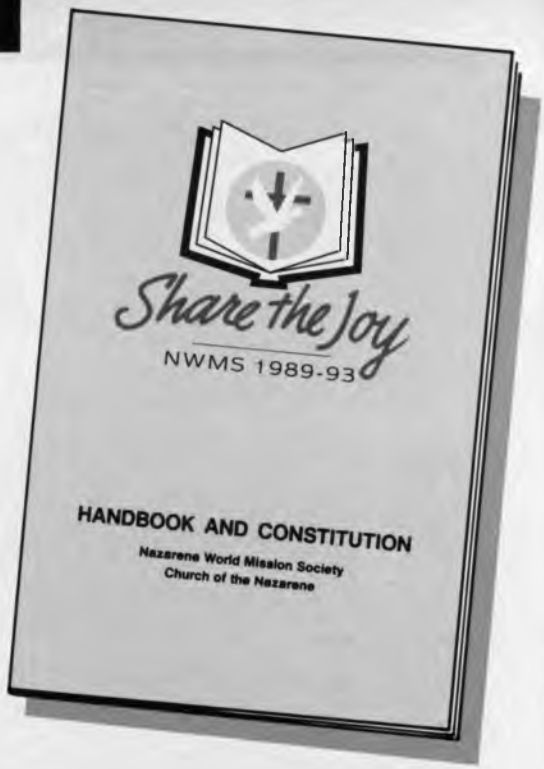

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NOTICE!

The NWMS 75th Anniversary Celebration and Project Promotional Packets of inspiring and helpful materials were mailed to the local churches in August.

REVIVALS REVIVALS REVIVALS

42 FIND CHRIST IN FLORIDA REVIVAL—During revival services at the **Perry, Florida, Church**, October 31 - November 5, 1989, ten teens, eight children, 19 adults, and five senior adults found Christ. This group of new believers included a teenager released from jail on bond, a cocaine addict, and a family of four. **Rev. David L. Canen** served as the evangelist for the series.

Pastor Mark S. Armstrong reports five persons were received into membership by profession of faith on the Sunday morning following the revival. Four were baptized the next Sunday. With gratitude, Armstrong commented, "There is nothing more exciting than seeing new converts express their faith by stepping forward to be baptized."

POWER OF PRAYER PRODUCES REVIVAL IN CALIFORNIA CHURCH—**Pastor Michael W. Allen** reports that prayer vigils involving children and youth, 24-hour prayer meetings in the always-open church, daily staff prayer meetings, and a fasting emphasis in the midweek services resulted in the best revival meeting in four years.

Evangelist Gary Haines led the **Wayside Church**, Tulare, California, in this awakening during January 6-10, 1990. Three entire families and many teens received Christ. Fifteen people sought sanctification and many committed themselves to consistent tithing. Allen added, "Haines' music was a great drawing card for new people. Our evangelist was a friendly, confronting preacher — a new voice motivating listeners to think about where they really were spiritually." The church plans to disciple new converts by using the *Basic Bible Studies for New and Growing Christians* by Charles Shaver.

REVIVAL IN FIRST PASTORATE REMINDS PASTOR OF HIS CONVERSION—In his first revival in his first pastorate, God reminded **Pastor Bruce Guillot** that he was converted in a similar revival only eleven years earlier and called to preach shortly thereafter. He reports, "Words cannot convey what God accomplished in the last week. It is good to see it happening again like it did eleven years ago." The meeting was held February 14-18, at the **Whitney, Texas, First Church of the Nazarene** with Evangelists Dan and Debbie Braaten.

About the results of the revival, Guillot said, "We averaged 89 during the six services and 103 on Sunday. That compares with an average attendance of 50 only nine months earlier. The biggest victory was the unity of the people and their increased willingness to volunteer for service in the church." Concerning the evangelists, the pastor added, "**Evangelists Dan and Debbie Braaten** have an unusual gift that many need to experience in our generation."

ASBURY REVIVAL MOTIVATES OKLAHOMA LAYMEN TO PRAY FOR REVIVAL—After hearing an account of the Asbury College revival, a lay member of the **Tulsa Regency Park Church** began weekly prayer meetings with three to five other people. After eight months, God honored their prayers with a genuine revival in their church. **Pastor Michael M. Hancock** reports, "God used the dynamic ministry of **Evangelist Nelson Perdue** and **Song Evangelists Tony and Tricia Bailey** to bring revival to our church. The Spirit of the Lord moved mightily upon several young couples who dedicated their lives and marriages to God."

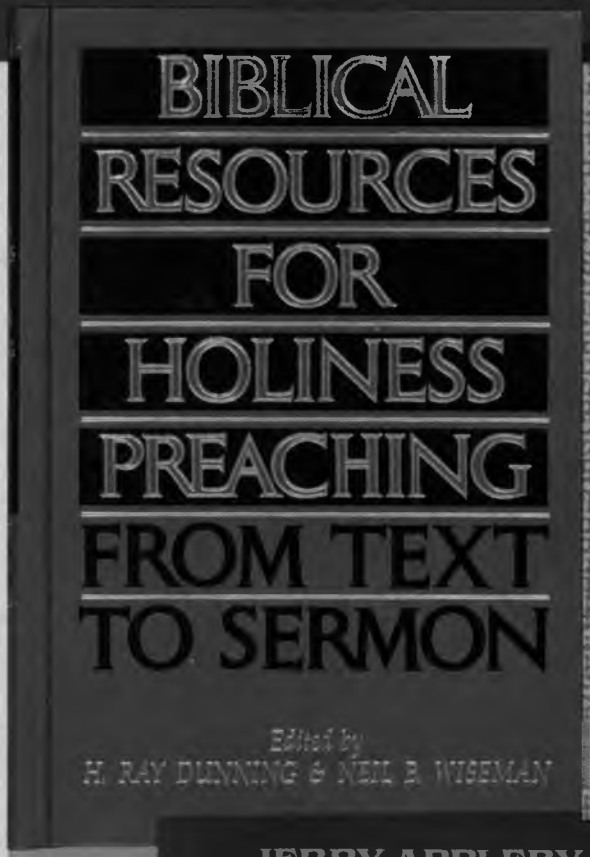
EIGHTY-YEAR-OLD RECEIVES CHRIST—**Pastor Claude Smith** of the **Gorham Church** in Illinois reports that an eighty-year-old man testified to God's saving grace in revival services held February 11-16, 1990. The series was led by **Evangelist Ronald W. Roth**. Pastor Smith summarized the work of God in this revival: "The Holy Spirit anointed Brother Roth as he ministered to our congregation. Roth and I have worked together in seven revival meetings since he became an evangelist in 1979. We will invite him back again."

FOUR WEEKS OF EXTENSIVE PRAYER PRECEDES OUTPOURING—**Trinity Church**, at Plainfield, Indiana, experienced a special outpouring of God's spirit in a revival series last fall. **Pastor R. C. Keeley** believes the revival was a result of four weeks of prevailing prayer by their church family. On Sunday morning, after **Evangelist P. L. Liddell** preached, eight persons recommitted their lives to Christ. As soon as they found victory and left the altar, another group of seekers knelt in a second wave of glory. Five persons sought the blessing of a clean heart. Keeley reports, "In my five years at Plainfield, this was the most magnificent outpouring of the Holy Spirit we have experienced."

Revival reports—The church wants news about how God uses revivals to change ordinary people and renew churches; one purpose of *GROW* is to report such miracles of grace. The editor welcomes revival reports, which should be typewritten in concise sentences, giving specific details, precise dates, and accurate spelling of church, city, and individuals' names. Your name, address, phone number, and mailing date should be typed on all items. We want to hear from you, even though revival reports cannot be acknowledged or returned because of the rush of publication deadlines. Revival reports can be sent to GROW Editor, 6401 The Paseo, Kansas City, MO 64131.

REVIVALS REVIVALS REVIVALS

2 NEW BOOKS FOR PASTORS



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Developing Multicongregational Churches

Jerry Appleby, pastor of Bresee Avenue Church of the Nazarene in Pasadena, Calif., gives us a practical guide for the ever-increasing number of pastors and Christian workers who are catching the vision of evangelizing and ministering to those of other cultures through multicongregational churches. The church is not a melting pot where the ingredients eventually meld into one flavor. Rather, the church is a stew pot where the ingredients maintain their individuality and come together around a common belief in Jesus Christ.

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"A great door is opened . . ."

(1 Corinthians 16:9)

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- **Is this perfect timing because the prayers of righteous people across a nation and a denomination are powerful and effective? (James 5:16)**
- **Is it because here in Toronto Nazarene eyes are finally opened to see the ripe fields?**
- **Is the Lord of the harvest opening doors because he knows the church in Toronto finally has the courage, faith, and enthusiasm to walk through this?**

Whatever the reasons — the doors have swung wide, and in each case the hand of the Lord is evident!

Frank Seixas is a young man from Brazil. He came into the Mississauga Bethel Church of the Nazarene and subsequently became a part of the Toronto Institute of Lay Training (a Target Toronto project). He felt God's call to begin a Portuguese church. Frank was having difficulty finding initial contacts. He presented this need during a Target Toronto monthly Celebration Service and 240 people stood to their feet to pledge daily prayer support for Frank during the coming week. Frank met eight good contacts that week. One month later, his father, a retired pastor in Brazil, arrived in Toronto for a two-month visit to help Frank establish the church. Twenty Portuguese people gathered at a banquet to welcome him. This church is on its way.

The "white apartments" are not just built with white bricks. They are "white apartments" because of the amount of "crack" prevalent in them. Two Nazarene sisters and their families, whom God had already placed in this needy area, opened their apartments for Bible studies. These meetings provided the nucleus for the Lawrence Avenue Church of the Nazarene, which now meets in a nearby school cafeteria. After three months, the average attendance is 36. This church needed partial help with rent, but can now cover this and is moving toward being able to support a full-time pastor.

A DOOR IS OPEN IN TORONTO

Professor David Ashton, Canadian Nazarene College, Dean of Training, and Rev. Ian Fitzpatrick, Target Toronto staff, Dean of Session, *provide an exciting practical eight-weekend course preparing lay-people for outreach ministries.*

Twenty-one students are commissioned for service *in Target Toronto ministries at the first graduation ceremonies of the Toronto Institute for Lay Training.*

Toronto Nazarenes *gather in a Celebration Service to meet the pastors and people of eight new church plants: Rosewood Chinese, Markhan Village, Lawrence Avenue, Toronto Spanish, Toronto Filipino, Toronto Portuguese, Toronto Egyptian, and Victoria Park Avenue.*

The Rosewood Chinese Church of the Nazarene Choir. *Another door opened when an Anglo area became 53% Chinese in a four-year period.*

Liz Erdis and Cathy Holmes opened their homes in the "white apartments" for Bible studies. The Lawrence Avenue Church began as a result.

Glen McLachlan was employed by Air Canada, where he met a fellow employee who was a recent convert. He needed some nurturing. Glen agreed to have Bible studies with him at lunch hour on a weekly basis. Meantime, Glen, who had graduated from Bethany Wesleyan College in New Brunswick some years before and was now attending the Rosewood Church of the Nazarene, began to hear the Lord talking to him about planting a church for the Toronto Thrust. The new convert told Glen that he had been saving up some money to give to a charity but felt the Lord would have him give it to Glen. The amount was $3,171, which provided the initial funds for this new church to be born.

Don Dearlove, a real estate man, was invited by a friend to study at the Toronto Institute of Lay Training. He was not a Nazarene, but was captivated by the Target Toronto vision. Don and some of his associates are now planning to plant three Nazarene churches in their part of the city. Their motto — "Reach Rexdale."

Rev. Sonny Accocoro was brought from the Philippines to Toronto to work for a parachurch group. Circumstances changed, and they were not able to use him. Sonny prayed for God's direction. He was led by the Lord into the Grace Church of the Nazarene, where he heard of Target Toronto. He had planted six churches for a sister denomination in the Philippines the previous year and his heart rejoiced at the news of 27 churches to be planted. Rev. Accocoro began the Nazarene Filipino Church on the east side of Toronto. He has just gone to Manila for his daughter's wedding. When he returns, he will bring a second pastor with him to plant a Nazarene Filipino Church on the west side of the city.

Five stories! There are many more! God is at work! May Toronto Nazarenes be able to see and walk through every door He opens.

—by Marjorie Osborne with Ian Fitzpatrick

Rev. Ian Fitzpatrick introduces Rev. and Mrs. Glen McLachlan and family *who are pastoring the new Victoria Park Avenue Church.*

Toronto waits for the gospel . . . "A great door is open."

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RICK WARREN

Rick Warren is the founding pastor of Saddleback Valley Community Church in Mission Viejo, Calif. In its first 10 years, the church has grown to 4,000 in attendance and sponsored 15 new daughter churches. Established with a specific focus on reaching the unchurched, over 65% of the members have been saved and baptized through the church's ministry.

DOUG ANDERSON

Doug is the founder and CEO of Nehemiah Ministries, Inc., a consulting agency serving not-for-profit organizations in planning development and fund-raising services. Doug brings years of experience to our school as a consultant.

H. B. LONDON

H. B. London, Jr., is the senior pastor at Pasadena First Church. Rev. London ministers with several staff persons and currently hosts a daily radio program titled "Lifeline to Truth."

JOHN VAUGHAN

John Vaughan is currently serving as professor of the Chair of Church Growth at Southwest Baptist University. Dr Vaughan is the assistant professor of Church Growth and the founder director of the International Mega-Church Research Center.

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- **Date:** October 15-19, 1990
- **Location:** Los Angeles, Calif.
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- Pastors desiring to register must have 250 members or average 250 or more in attendance for 1989-90 morning worship, evening worship, or S.S.

BOB KRIETNER

Bob Krietner is a senior lecturer in mangement at Arizona State University. He is presently a self-employed college textbook author and management specialist.

PETER WAGNER

Peter Wagner is a professor of Church Growth at the Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, Calif. He was a missionary to Bolivia, 1956-71, and author of over 30 published books.

BOB ORR

Rev. Robert Orr is vice president of Church Growth, Inc., primarily responsible for seminars and professional training. Bob is a keen leader and practitioner in the field of church growth.

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"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."
Matthew 28:19

GROW — A JOURNAL OF CHURCH GROWTH, EVANGELISM AND DISCIPLESHIP

Volume 1, Number 3, September 1990 Fall Issue $4.00

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—Graphic and page design by Don Ellis, art director, Wellspring. • Composition by Ada Fae Nichols, typographer, Wellspring.

GROW is produced quarterly, in March, June, September, and December by the Church Growth Division of the International Church of the Nazarene, 6401 The Paseo, Kansas City, Missouri 64131.

GROW is published by the Nazarene Publishing House, 2923 Troost Avenue, Kansas City, Missouri 64109.

GROW is designed by The Wellspring Advertising Agency, a division of Christian Booksellers Association, Colorado Springs, Colorado.

GROW welcomes local and district reports of revivals, church plants, and church growth but because of publishing deadlines, reports cannot be acknowledged or returned. Manuscripts on related subjects are also welcome, but unsolicited manuscripts can be returned only if accompanied with a return self-addressed envelope and adequate postage. Reports and manuscripts may be addressed to Neil B. Wiseman, GROW Editor, 6401 The Paseo, Kansas City, Missouri 64131.

Church Growth Lessons From *Newsweek*?

Newsweek published an editorial late last year titled "**The Excuse Industry**." In that article, Robert J. Samuelson complained about corporation executives, special interest government leaders and academic advisers who work hard — even overtime — to find excuses to explain why American industry does not compete well in the global marketplace.

As I recall, Samuelson's article appeared on the last page — probably not read by many. But as a print media connoisseur — or is it an editorial freak? — I often start to read magazines from the back. Perhaps that is one reason why his idea captured my attention.

After these months I still cannot shake his accusation that executives, production workers, bankers, and government officials might spend energies, creativity, and money to create clever and sophisticated strategies to excuse poor performance in the workplace. The notion is simple — it is easier to hype difficulties than to solve them.

The Excuse Industry — doesn't the term have an intriguing ring? **The Excuse Industry** — doesn't the idea sound out of sync with the way things should be?

Samuelson concludes that what is wrong with **The Excuse Industry** is that "someone else — or something else — is always to blame." Then he boldly declares, "Just the opposite is true."

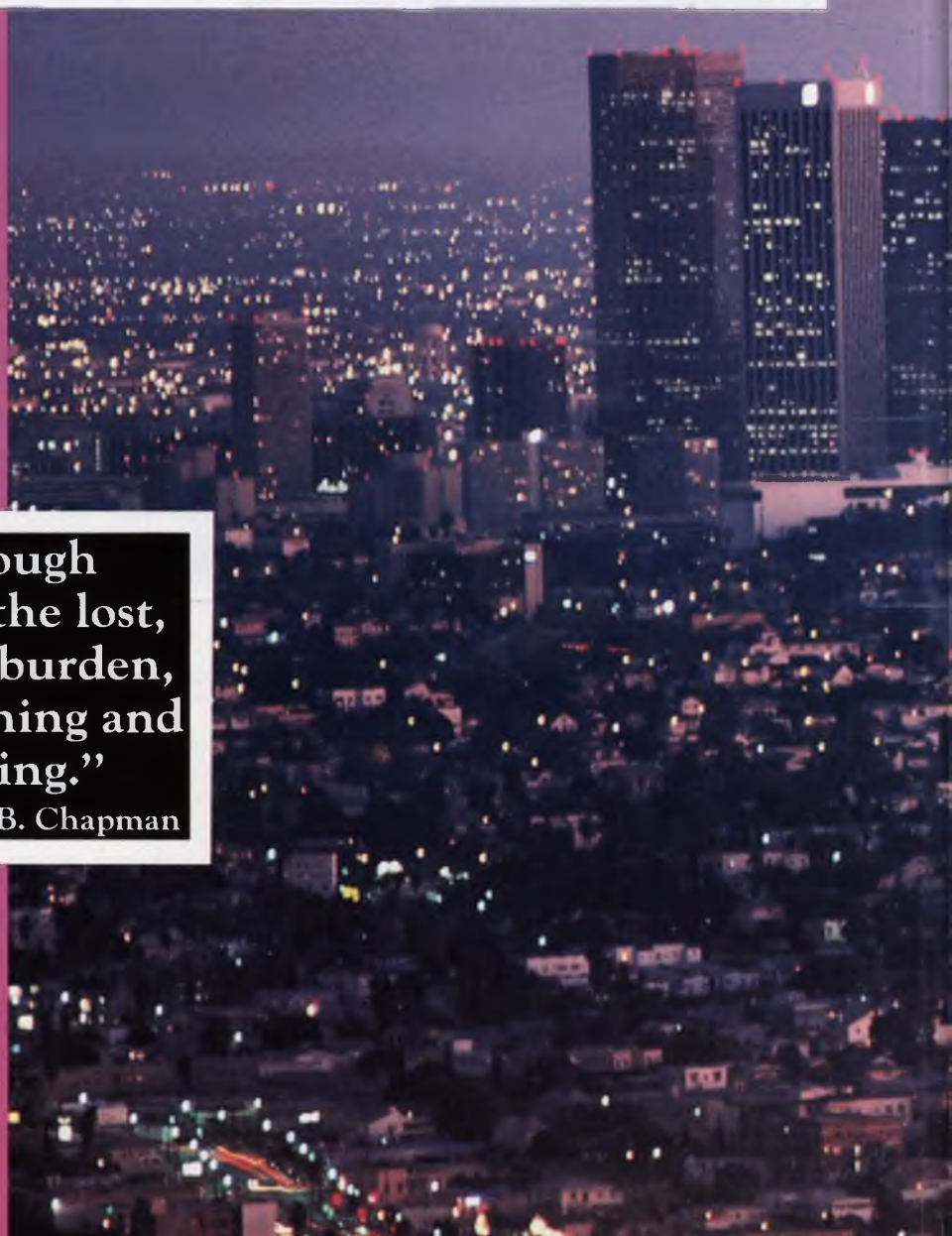
That editorial started me down a path of questions I was forced to ask myself. Does **The Excuse Industry** affect the church? Does it have anything to do with church growth or the lack of it?

Does **The Excuse Industry** say anything about my own Christian character development? Does it show up in the rationalization I make to God, myself, and others about my lack of Christ-likeness in some dimensions of my life?

Does **The Excuse Industry** say anything about our revival results? Our passion for souls? Our assimilation of new members? Our manipulations of others to serve our own purposes —even when the stated intentions sound lofty?

I wonder if *Newsweek* says anything about church growth and evangelism? Does God ever speak through news magazines?

—NEIL B. WISEMAN
Editor, GROW



"There is not enough heartbreak over the lost, not enough soul burden, not enough groaning and weeping and fasting."

—J. B. Chapman