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THE
**preacher's
magazine**

MAY—
JUNE '78

**PREACHING
CHRISTIAN
HOLINESS**

inside...

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CHURCH MUSIC?"**
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H. Mark Abbott

THE MULTIPLE STAFF
Alan Rodda



THE preacher's magazine

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MAY—JUNE, 1978

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Re: "Whatever Happened to Church Music?"*



By Dwight L. Uphaus**

THE EDITORIAL, "Whatever Happened to Church Music?" in the August issue cries out for a response from a church musician.

I will not deny that church music as often practiced these days has its problems. In fact, I probably have a lower tolerance level than you. Frustrations with what is—and is not—done are a burden that weighs on me daily.

"Excessive amplification" and "contrived choreography" are not the norm in the churches with which I am acquainted. These are essentially the fare of guest groups and institutional itinerants. "Lack of substance," though, is regrettably one of the afflictions the church has had to endure across the ages. "Climb, Climb Up Sunshine Mountain" and "Deep and Wide" are anything but new.

The responsibility for the state of church music today lies largely with the ministry. Further, the culprit for the situation lies on ministerial preparation programs and institutions.

The *Manual* of our church is very careful to define who is in charge and the responsible leader of local congregations. The dilemma for most pastors is that they aren't quite sure of what they're in charge of or what their responsibility is in matters of music.

A recent study of graduates of American Association of Theological Schools now in the ministry indicates that a large majority of them feel inadequately prepared to cope with matters of sacred music. Because of feelings of inadequacy, music leadership is therefore often nonexistent or misguided because it is based on incomplete or prejudicial information.

*The editorial on church music by the late Editor James McGraw inspired a bevy of positive response. Mr. Uphaus adds a sequel on this interesting subject.

**Instructor in Church Music, Nazarene Theological Seminary

Non-leadership gives the impression that musical expression isn't important anyway, and the result is that often anything goes. Our recent past experiences have shown that misguided or uninformed leadership has resulted in divisive feelings among the Body and has segregated groups from each other because of cultural differences. It has in effect disavowed the Lordship of Jesus Christ over the totality of many lives because it has refused to allow the possibility that sacred expression was permissible in a wide variety of styles and media.

Musicians are generally in agreement that the state and quality of our worship expressions are directly related to what the ministry will tolerate—or what it demands.

The God whom we serve was so interested in hearing music that He constantly reminded us to “sing unto the Lord and bless his name” and that we were to “come before his presence with singing.” It wasn't optional. Musical expression was so important to Him that He established an elaborate musical program in 1 Chronicles 15 and incepted a graded choral program complete with apprentices and children in training under the supervision of appointed teachers in 1 Chronicles 23.

The thing that must happen to remedy our present situation is that the ministry must rediscover the fact that musical expression is worthy and necessary. It is important. Many ministers verbally acknowledge this, but stop short of letting acknowledgement become activity. Among the practical meanings of this statement is that the pastor must energetically enter into public singing. He must stop using that time to chat with the ushers or others on the platform. He must have his sermon preparation completed so that he doesn't have to look over his notes during the hymns and other musical numbers.

The minister must actively pursue the cause of substance in musical texts. New ones of real worth *are* being written. The Spirit is once again moving on poets and lyricists and challenging them to put biblical, theological truths into modern expression. We must remember that once *all* texts, all *tunes* were contemporary.

The minister must challenge his musicians. A bachelor's degree in music or years of piano teaching experience scarcely qualifies one to be called a church musician. (An egg on a plate is not an omelet without additional preparation, though it may be a very good egg!) Challenge their growth in the musical gifts with which they have been endowed.

And know that there is a standard for what we do—and listen to—that can give a measure of guidance for each generation and every congregation despite preparation, background, and understanding. It is the godly standard articulated by Paul in Phil. 4:8: “Whatsoever things are true . . . honest . . . pure . . . lovely . . . if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.”

The fun begins in interpreting that standard. Here theologian, minister, and layman alike must enter into the dialogue. The standard is eternal, but the languages and means of interpreting it are temporal and culture-bound.

“Whatever happened to church music?” It's alive and well—even flourishing. All it needs is some pruning that the right kind of leadership from you ministers can—and must—provide.

In view of our unspeakable atomic potential, what are the preaching responsibilities of the holiness preacher?

Preaching in the Atomic Age

By R. A. Kerby*

RESPONSIBILITY, such as former generations never dreamed of, now presses down with crushing weight upon the present generation of preachers. The Atomic Age, with its far-reaching complexities, has filled the hearts of men with searing questions and terrible misgivings. The uncertainties of the present hour have turned the minds of men toward spiritual things; therefore the man of God now has the responsibility of shaping his ministry to meet this imperious demand.

Needless to say, few preachers have the specialized training necessary to interpret the Atomic Age from the scientific standpoint. Even if he could, this would not minister to the real need of the people. Being primarily spiritual in his nature, man needs spiritual direction and fortification such as only the thoroughly furnished man of God can give.

In the effort to find a path through the mazes of this New Era, it might be profitable to set up three guideposts around which to rally our thoughts. These rallying points are *Power*, *Proximity*, and *Potential*.

The Age of Power began to dawn

upon the world during the life of John Wesley. The burst of inventive genius in eighteenth-century England ushered in the Industrial or Steam Age. It is a matter of deep interest and profit to evaluate the forward-looking of Wesley and his associates toward this scientific advance. Benson's understanding of atomic power, or "electrical fire" as he termed it, is revealed in his comments on 2 Pet. 3:10.

The divine timing manifested in the appearing of the Wesleyan group at the opening of the Age of Power is very apparent. God saw that this scientific advance would tend to breed materialism and therefore gave the world the Wesleyan Revival as a spiritual counterpoise. The most portentous fact of our present time is that revival is waning while scientific advance is waxing indescribably. With the advent of atomics, awesome sources and applications of power, undreamed of in former generations, come into view.

As all "power belongeth unto God," the thinking mind can only conclude that the sole reason such unspeakable forces are now committed to mortal hands is that the God of destiny would have it so. He who through past centuries kept the doors

*Free Methodist minister, retired

of power so securely closed is now allowing them to swing wide. The rise of the atomic scientists, "this strange breed of man," again manifests a divine timing which cannot be overlooked or denied.

Time and space are, in a very large measure, being eliminated. The wide continents and rolling oceans which hindered unregenerate man from destroying his fellows now pose small barriers. Unheard of advances in transportation unfold, with the end not even in sight.

The advance in communications is and will increasingly be the source of great changes in the thought-patterns and study habits of the world. Through these mediums folks are exposed to foreign ideologies of all kinds. Most any good shortwave radio can daily bring in the mouthings of Moscow.

It should sober every holiness preacher to realize that this advance in communications has put him into preaching competition with the keenest minds of every denomination. Gone forever are the days when he could hold a congregation with poorly prepared talks which had their foundation in unsupported assertions. It may not seem fair that a busy pastor is forced into weekly competition with the keenest, most eloquent spokesmen of other groups—but such is the case through radio and TV.

Unless the holiness preacher is prepared to be left utterly behind, he will have to study, meditate, and pray as never before. An uninformed ministry will soon lapse into an unattended ministry. There are now loyal laymen who cannot help but make rather unfavorable comparisons between the standard of ministry they hear through radio and TV and that which they hear in their own local church.

The potential for good or ill stretches out into proportions of

almost infinite magnitude. In attempting to assay the potential of the Atomic Age we are thrown back upon the nature of man itself, under sin and then under grace.

It is significant that most writers and speakers of widely varied groups and professions today are writing and speaking to this point. With some small adjustments of terms, they all diagnose the situation as Paul did in Romans 7. Man's will, as enslaved by his corrupt affections, presses him to do many things which his conscience or intellect clearly condemn. Such themes as "Man's Perennial Predicament," "The Great Dilemma," "The Great Schism," "Physical Giants, Ethical and Moral Infants," form the substance for articles and addresses. One thinker recently said that unless a halt is soon called, we will have a do-it-yourself apocalypse.

There is no fault to be found with the diagnosis submitted by these men. The sad element here is that such men give no reliable prescription. Secular education, reason, better understanding and other proposed aids do not touch the source of the disease. Slight healing will not do in these dangerous days. Because the prescription is ineffectual, the prognosis is dark.

Man's mind has so augmented the smiting power of his fist, and this principle runs from the club which felled Abel to the hydrogen bomb which can level cities, that unless man's affections are radically purified, only doom awaits this sad world. The gift of free will, with atomic power at its command, will, in this century perhaps, give the world either a bright morning of unimaginable plenty or a dark night of unmitigated fury. Man's head, heart, and hand must be brought into harmony, or all talk of global peace is but that much global nonsense.

In view of this unspeakable atomic

potential, what are the preaching responsibilities of the holiness pastor, evangelist, and administrator? The answer is very simple and very plain, and is to be found in the Wesleyan interpretation of New Testament doctrine. Wesley's God-given, Spirit-taught intellect blazed the trail through the fogs of ritualism, the miasma of carnal ecclesiasticism, and the cutting winds of formalism to the sunlit land of perfect love.

God's good Spirit led Wesley to see beyond any peradventure of a doubt that the precious blood of Christ is able to heal the great schism in man's nature, yea, sanctify him wholly and thus give him the ability to love the Lord his God with all his mind, soul, and strength, and his neighbor as himself.

It is allowable and perhaps even needful for the informed holiness preacher to have a working knowledge of Reformation theology, and to have a somewhat cool speaking acquaintance with neoorthodoxy. But, if he is to stand guiltless before his Maker on that Great Day, he must in heart stay at the utmost distance from any and all schemes of NT interpretation which either slyly imply or shamelessly declare that the sloughs of Romans 7 must be the permanent residence of the repentant, consecrated soul.

Let the great savants of Reformation and neoorthodox theology say what they will, the man described in Romans 7 is a man without God. Hear him as he cries out, "For to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not." Compare this wail of despair with the paean of triumph voiced by Paul on behalf of his Philippian converts, "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and do of his good

pleasure." These Philippian converts had had all sin purged from their hearts; therefore their wills, no longer under the sway of corrupt affections, could perform the good pleasure of God. Head, heart, and hand had all been brought into harmony.

It is the spiritual fission in man's nature which now threatens to use nuclear fission to destroy this earth. Any theology, therefore, which does not propose to heal thoroughly this great schism in man's nature, is not arising to the burning need of the present, perplexed hour. It is right at this point that the Wesleyan message shines with inextinguishable light and imperishable glory. The teaching of heart purity which saved England from the bloodbath which pagan France suffered during her revolution is still the answer to this world's sorrows and perils.

During this day of great movements and powerful personalities, the holiness preacher will need to watch and pray lest he become moved from the foundation of clear, holiness teaching. It is sad to know that the teaching of entire sanctification is sadly in eclipse in the land of Wesley. Recently an acute observer in that land wrote, "Except for some places, the evangel of entire sanctification is unknown and unwanted." We in America who are the inheritors of the Wesleyan message will do well to be on guard.

Preaching in this Atomic Age will call forth the final resources of the preacher and will test his faith, grace, patience, vision, and courage to the very limit. Only as he falls on his face before that God to whom power belongs will he be enabled to continue in the things which he has heard and thus be able to "save both [himself] and them that hear [him]."



He Coveted a Continent

By Charles Ludwig*

HE COVETED OUR entire continent with such passion he appeared anxious to lose his life in the work. And, amazingly, in spite of bitter odds, he succeeded more than anyone else in our time in spreading the message of Jesus Christ across the length and breadth of the United States. Yet for two generations his bulging journals were allowed to stay out of print, and no one bothered to collect his letters.

Oh, they talked about him, and they named schools and streets after him. But that was about all. One man was so unconcerned he cut a hole for a stovepipe through a first-class painting of him to use as a heat screen!

Officially, Francis Asbury—father of American Methodism—was as neglected as the sand dunes of the Sahara. Then in 1951 the National Historical Publications Commission of the United States Government made a list of the greats whose works should be gathered, edited, and published. Included among their 66 recommendations were Jefferson, Lincoln, Washington—and Francis Asbury.

The recommendations scooted through Congress and were eagerly accepted by the president. Thus the letters and Journals of Francis Asbury are now available (published by Abingdon Press in three volumes). Unfortunately, few read them. This is a pity, for Francis Asbury did as much to tame the wilderness, establish schools, build churches, and spread knowledge to the most distant hamlet as anyone who ever mounted a horse. With mountains to climb, streams to swim, hostile Indians to face, his life was as colorful as the palette of a Van Gogh.

When Asbury landed in Philadelphia on October 27, 1791, he was almost an unknown. But he had been sent from England by John Wesley, and this was all the recommendation he needed to be accepted in the Methodist Societies. Even so, he was not asked to preach the first night. Instead, he sat with the congregation at St. George's Church and listened to Joseph Pilmoor—one of the two Wesley had sent to America two years before.

Those who noticed Asbury saw a slender young man of 26. He was three inches under six feet, had light hair which just missed his shoulders, and his evenly set blue

*Tucson, Ariz.

eyes, beneath a high forehead, were bright and pleasing.

On the following night, even though he failed to mention it in his journal, he preached his first sermon in America. He was as tense as a wound-up spring. During his voyage from England, he recorded these personal thoughts in his journal:

"Wither am I going? To the new world. What to do? To gain honor? No, if I know my own heart. To get money? No; I am going to live for God, and to bring others so to do. . . . If God does not acknowledge me in America, I will return soon to England. I know my views are upright; may they never be otherwise!"

Philadelphia with its 28,000 people impressed Asbury. He wrote: "The Lord hath helped me by his power, and my soul is in paradise. . . . Whatever I do, wherever I go, may I never sin against God, but always do the things that please him."

After nearly two weeks in the Quaker city, Asbury went to New York City to work with Richard Boardman who had been named "assistant" by Wesley and given power to "station the preachers." Here Asbury found a welcome and a large congregation. But within weeks he was restless. He confided to his journal: "At present I am dissatisfied. I judge we are to be shut up in the cities this winter. My brethren seem unwilling to leave the cities, but I think I will show them the way. . . ."

Without permission from anyone, Asbury borrowed a horse and, together with Richard Sause, rode to Westchester some 20 miles from the city. There he preached in the courthouse. Then alone he continued on to West Farms, New Rochelle, Rye, and other places. Thus a circuit of preaching places was formed.

Nothing delighted Asbury more than forming a circuit, and then

riding it after it was formed. The size of the crowd at each stop did not matter to him. He often preached to only two or three, and on a few occasions to only one. Within a few months after he had laid out this circuit, he caught a severe cold after preaching at Rye. This didn't stop him. Ignoring advice to rest, he galloped off to the next stop. Soon he was burning with fever and was in such pain he could not stand straight. But with an entire continent to conquer, he kept going. And thus he set the pattern he was to follow for the next 45 years.

Francis Asbury was born on August 20, 1745, about four miles from Birmingham, England. Following the loss of an infant daughter, his mother had become intensely religious. She was convinced even before Francis was born that he would become a preacher.

Thus, from his infancy, Francis was exposed to the claims of Christ. Instead of normal lullabies, he was rocked to sleep with the hymns of Isaac Watts. At six, he could read the Bible.

Tormented by a teacher who beat him, Francis loathed school. In desperation his irreligious father sent him to the home of a wealthy family where he served as a page. Here he became "exceedingly vain, but not openly wicked." In the midst of his 13th year, he was apprenticed at the Old Forge where he learned to become a blacksmith. His instructor here was Henry Foxall—a Methodist.

Through Foxall's influence, Francis was persuaded to attend Methodist meetings. Soon he was convicted of sin. Later, while praying with a friend in an old barn, he was converted. He began to "line the hymns" and exhort. At 18, he began to preach and was soon riding horseback on various circuits. Preaching stimulated his mind. Craving knowledge,

he began a lifelong habit of reading one hundred pages a day. The works of John Wesley were always in his saddlebags.

As Asbury's circuits in America expanded, so did his troubles. The Colonies were rebelling, and since Methodism was simply the evangelical arm of the Church of England, Methodist preachers were accused of sympathizing with George III. Many were arrested. And once, to escape arrest, Asbury hid in a swamp for two days.

At the end of the Revolution, American Methodists were in an awkward position. They had always depended on the Church of England to supply them with ordained clergy authorized to service Communion, something the local preachers and circuit riders were not allowed to do. Now, with ties to England severed, American Methodists no longer paid allegiance to the English king—the head of the Church of England. In this dilemma, Wesley had two options. He could either align American Methodists with the Episcopal Church—the American branch of the Church of England—or make them into an independent body.

Against strong opposition—including that of his brother Charles—Wesley opted that American Methodists should become an independent group with their own ordained clergy. Next, he ordained Dr. Francis Coke and sent him to America to ordain Asbury. But since, according to the laws of the Church of England, Wesley was not authorized to ordain anyone, many were shocked.

In order that American Methodists might hear Dr. Coke, Asbury called a special conference. Next, Freeborn Garrettson was sent to round up the circuit riders. His assignment makes the ride of Paul Revere insignificant in comparison, for Garrettson had to ride 1,200 miles in six weeks and

preach along the way.

Breaking with the autocracy of Wesley, Asbury refused to be ordained unless the Methodist preachers at the conference voted to do so. In this decision, Asbury showed the foresight of a statesman. He clearly understood that American Methodists were moving away from their founder—that democracy was the new rule.

That conference which met in Baltimore on December 24, 1784, was a momentous one. It founded the new Methodist Episcopal Church, and it voted to ordain Francis Asbury. But since, according to the *Discipline*, Asbury could not become superintendent all at once, the preachers found a way around this technicality. Thus, on Christmas Day, Asbury was ordained a deacon; the following day he was ordained an elder; and the next day he was ordained superintendent.

With these powers, Asbury worked harder than ever. He specialized in organizing circuits. He ruled with an iron hand. All preachers received their appointments from him. But he did not rule from an ivory tower. He rode where the preachers rode and he received the same salary they received. When the annual salary was \$64.00, he received \$64.00. When it was raised to \$80.00, that is what he received.

Asbury remained a bachelor all his life, and he preferred that his preachers—especially the circuit riders—do the same. Like Wesley, he was dominated by methods. He maintained stated hours for prayer, reading, writing, and relaxation. Like his preachers he “wore a low-crowned, broad-brimmed hat, a frock coat—which was generally buttoned up to the neck—with a straight collar. He wore breeches or small clothes with leggings. Sometimes he wore shoebuckles.”

It is estimated that he rode horseback or by carriage just under 300,000 miles. He was constantly plagued with illness. But he refused to quit. On his seventieth birthday, he preached at Chillicothe, Ohio, then rode through the rain to preach several times at Mechanicsburg. He was failing, and he knew it. Weeks later, at a conference in Tennessee he said, "I will trust him, yea, and I will praise him. He is the strength of my heart and my portion forever. Glory! Glory! Glory!"

As weakness settled over him, he resorted to crutches. He refused to quit. After a rainstorm in Granby, S.C., he wrote the last entry in his journal: "We met a storm and stopped at William Baker's, Granby."

After resting here a few days, Asbury boarded a carriage headed for Baltimore. Having suffered an attack of bronchitis, friends begged him to rest. Instead, he preached three times a day while enroute. Nearly blind, he rode into Richmond, Va., on March 24, 1816. He was unable to walk. Still he insisted on preaching.

Sitting at a table he preached on

the text: "For he will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness: because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth" (Rom. 9:28). It was his last sermon.

He now insisted on going to Fredricksburg to preach again. After four days of travel, he was forced to give up at Spottsylvania—a mere 20 miles from his objective. While resting there, he collapsed. His host wanted to summon a doctor. Asbury refused, even though he was sinking. On Sunday morning he summoned the family to his bedside in order to preach to them. His text was from Revelation 21, but he was too weak to read it. After mumbling a few sentences, he raised his hands above his head. Moments later he stopped breathing. The master of the raw frontier had received his last call—and he was ready.

Burial was in his beloved city of Baltimore. There, beneath a tall, marble shaft, he awaits the resurrection. Though handicapped by the lack of formal education, he did his best—and he did it well. Because of him, millions of Americans learned of Jesus Christ.

The handful of meal

How strange that a widow with only a "handful of meal" should be "commanded" to offer hospitality! It is once again "the impossible" which is set before us. It would have been a dull commonplace to have fed the prophet from the overflowing larder of the rich man's palace. But to work from an almost empty cupboard! That is the surprising way of the Lord. He delights to hang great weights on apparently slender wires, to have great events turn on seeming trifles, and to make poverty the minister of "the indescribable riches of Christ."

The poor widow sacrificed her "handful of meal," and received an unfailing supply.

—John Henry Jowett

Wesleyana



"God Taught Me Better"

By George E. Failing*

JOHN WESLEY was a lifelong student of the ways of God and of men. Though not easily persuaded (he was a man of strong conviction and of firm will), he could be plainly convinced.

In the preface to his first volume of sermons Wesley entreats: "Are you persuaded you see more clearly than me? It is not unlikely you may. Then treat me as you would desire to be treated yourself upon a change of circumstances. Point me out a better way than I have yet known. Show me it is so; by plain proof of Scripture. And if I linger in the path I have been accustomed to tread, and am therefore unwilling to leave it, labor with me a little; take me by the hand, and lead me as I am able to bear (*Works*, V, 5)."

Ceaselessly Wesley prayed, read, wrote, observed, and bore witness to his faith. Never an unbeliever, Wesley at first worked to believe; or rather, worked to be accepted of God. Always a Protestant, he read widely from Catholic and Protestant authors. Theologically grounded in the

Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England, he weighed the emphases of Calvinism and Arminianism and became a convinced Arminian.

Wesley listened carefully to the testimonies of men who professed faith, and once declared that if no person bore witness to the experience of perfect love, both he and his brother Charles should cease to declare it. While it is not wise to separate Wesley's theological view—or his change of views—into orderly sequential periods of his life, it is a mistake not to discern that over the period of many years (from 1738 to 1791), Wesley did change his views—and gave reasons for such changes.

I. Wesley did incline to the view of the absolute unconditional election of some, together with a conditional election of all men for many years. But he abandoned this "twin" thesis because the Bible texts seem to support one or the other, not both, and because such positions supported infallible perseverance. So Wesley came to believe that all men were redeemed by Christ and called to salvation, but that only those who by faith received Christ were the

*Editor, *The Wesleyan Advocate*

elect—and elect only as they continued to trust in Christ alone for salvation (*Works*, XII, 114).

II. Wesley once believed (for six to eight years after Aldersgate) that those perfected in love would not fall from that grace. But in 1761 he wrote: "After the heart is cleansed from pride, anger, and desire, it may suffer them to reenter: therefore I have long thought that some of the expressions in the hymns [his own and Charles's] are abundantly too strong" (*Works*, XII, 236). "Some years since, I was inclined to believe that none who had once enjoyed and then lost the pure love of God must ever look to enjoy it again till they were just stepping into eternity. But experience has taught us better things" (XII, 387).

III. Wesley is often remembered for this observation: "Though I am always in haste, I am never in a hurry; because I never undertake any more work than I can go through with perfect calmness of spirit." In the same letter, dated 1777, Wesley reviewed his former regimen. "When I was at Oxford, and lived almost like a hermit, I saw not how any busy man could be saved. I scarce thought it possible for a man to retain the Christian spirit amidst the noise and bustle of the world." Then Wesley pauses to give thanks. "God taught me better by my own experience. I had ten times more business in America (that is, at intervals) than ever I had in my life. But it was no hindrance to silence of spirit" (XII, 304).

So Wesley learned that God will keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Him, because he trusts in God.

IV. Once Wesley thought that all that were perfected in love would "speak clearly and scripturally of having had such a manifestation of

the several persons in the ever-blessed Trinity." Wesley admitted in 1787: "But I am now clearly convinced that it is not [true]. Only a few . . . are favored with it" (XII, 357). So all the entirely sanctified are not equally perceptive of the deep things of God.

V. Wesley was saved from the conviction of his own infallibility!

"God cannot," Wesley wrote in 1771, "bear witness to a lie. The Gospel therefore which he confirms, must be true in substance. There may be opinions maintained at the same time which are not exactly true; and who can be secure from these? Perhaps I thought myself so once. When I was much younger than I am now, I thought myself almost infallible; but, I bless God, I know myself better now" (XII, 369).

What a great joy to be delivered from the weight of infallibility! How much easier to listen to others, and thus to learn from them.

VI. Wesley once taught that those whose faith is fixed on God will never again doubt that God perfected them in love. Later, he admitted that some doubted, some even denied "all that God has ever done for their souls." For in such an hour of darkness "they cannot believe they ever saw light" (VII, 74).

So Wesley commends St. Augustine's *Confessions* "to express the naked experience of his heart." Wesley would not believe that intellectual self-assurance is necessary to certain trust in God. He urges rather that we open our minds: "frequently while we propose a doubt, it is removed" (XII, 385).

This is the kind of man Wesley was—a man of feeling, doubts, faith, and confidence—all these together. So in Wesley, each of us can find an understanding friend, a partner in the quest for Christlikeness.

Thou Shalt Not Covet Thy Neighbour's Church Nor the Sunday Morning TV Ministry

By Harold Ivan Smith*

MOST OF US have heard the story about the competition in a small town between two churches. The church which immersed decided to honor their pastor by giving him a new baptismal suit. Not to be outdone, the church which sprinkled promptly bought their pastor a new pair of rubber gloves. Today's competition is more complicated—buses, bus ministries, nursery schools, buildings, P.A. systems.

In Exodus, the words of the Lord seem clear: "Thou shalt not covet . . . thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's" (20:17).

In our society, few of us have an ox or an ass or servants. Therefore we feel comfortable with that passage. The tendency is to overlook the last element—"nor any thing that is thy neighbour's." Might there be reason to add "Thy neighbour's church"?

Years ago, the church had an easier time in determining priorities. There wasn't enough money to go around. As we have prospered, the temptation has been to allow positive bank balances to determine policy and program. The addition of staff or program or the acquisition of facilities

should be examined in light of the nature and mission of a local church.

We have not been called to organize churches as if we were creating a chain of fast-food establishments to do battle with another chain. And we have not been called to play a game of ecclesiastical one-upmanship. Our task is to build dynamic churches which reach both within its shadow and far beyond to touch lives.

Recently, I was in a church for a Sunday morning service and noticed the addition of a large P.A. system and matching color-coordinated microphones across the platform. After the service the pastor pointed out the benefits of the system as well as his cordless mike. The system, although expensive, was necessary if the 400 persons present were to hear and respond.

That evening I drove 10 miles down the road to another church and found an almost-identical system and technician for a congregation of about 75. Knowing the churches and their historic spirit of competition, I went away less than impressed.

But the problem is beyond localities. Television has made the den and kitchen on Sunday morning an extension of church sanctuaries a thousand miles away from the bacon and eggs. We feel as if we know Brother So-and-so as well as we know

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our own pastor—especially if we are on the former's mailing list. We can look around our homes and find various expressions of his appreciation for our "prayerful support." After an exposure to a series of TV ministries on Sunday, the average man in the pew is hardly enthused with what he sees in his local church.

One gets the impression that where these services are filmed there is never an "off-Sunday" or a "flat" soloist or a wrong subject-verb relationship in an individual like Brother Jones who is so unpredictable. And the services begin and end on time.

Do we not realize that these are polished productions managed by skilled technicians and highly-paid professionals? Their continuance on the local market is dependent upon the quality of the program, which in turn stimulates the financial support to buy more time. Indeed, one prominent TV ministry borrowed \$16 million to buy time so they could get national exposure. These ministries represent the best of the best, as well as skillful editing. This is essential to their survival.

This is the day of the church entrepreneur and the large multi-staffed independent, with a variety of programs and paid personnel and computer assistance to finance TV time to exhibit their skills. Perhaps God has called them to such a ministry, and if He has, let us wish them well. But because he has called them, we need not imitate them on our local level. The ultimate test for any Christian ministry is the degree to which it points individuals to the Cross and provides assistance in developing Christian maturity.

If the average TV ministry were investing its revenues fully into programs, it could not long exist on TV. How could they pay the bills? Many of our local congregations have as much going for them as the TV min-

istries. The difference is that we do not commit our financial resources to buying TV time to report our work.

Rather, our tradition has been the commitment of the local church to share its income in investments throughout the world. Through budgets, it provides resources to open new churches in America and 60 world areas; to provide for missionaries, hospitals, clinics, schools and colleges, and a publishing enterprise.

So a dollar in a Nazarene plate may eventually find its way halfway across the world into missionary enterprises that are *commitments* and not media events or excursions. Try tracking a dollar sent to Brother "So-and-so."

The real test of the TV ministries and super churches is yet to be seen. Their danger is in the development of a system which cannot bear its weight and/or eventually loses touch with the people it was founded to serve. Simply, the risk in TV ministry is that it becomes big business.

Perhaps "covet" is too strong. "Thou shall not overly admire or imitate thy neighbor's church or the TV ministry." Peter warned of prophets and teachers who through "covetousness would make merchandise of you" (2 Pet. 2:3), and that is what we feel like after reading another computer-directed fund appeal letter. Paul warned of the danger of erring from the faith while in search of money (1 Tim. 6:10).

Each church must examine its mission and ministry. It must do well in what it seeks to define as its mission. Fads and gimmickry and giveaways cannot satisfy the spiritual needs. There is always someone somewhere who can go you one better.

So we who believe in spiritual growth and development have our place. For my money, I'll go with my own denomination.

Gleams of Immortality

By W. B. Walker*

III. Justice Shall Not Forever Sleep

WE WOULD LIKE to offer the answer of justice to Job's question, "If a man die, shall he live again?" Man has an innate desire for justice. An act of injustice brings pain to a normal man, even though injustice does not affect his own temporal interests. Man at his best feels that an unjust act is an outrage on the universe. The world is filled with cruelty and foul play.

There is never a day that dawns and fades but that some heart is crushed under the weight of undeserved and accumulated wrongs. Again and again truth is crushed to the earth. It seems that right is forever on the scaffold, and wrong is forever on the throne. Vice is dressed in satin and rides in a car, while virtue is clad in rags and goes afoot. The poor and the helpless are ground under the feet of might, while there seems to be no deliverer.

Whole generations have gone to the grave groaning, scourged by the iniquity of rulers and robbed by the greed of those who should have been their protectors and friends. The world is filled with wickedness and injustices on every hand. Were it not for the simple belief in the life beyond the grave, we would be driven to madness and despair. If every life ends at the grave, then there are wrongs that shall never be righted, and losses that can never be made good.

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A second world is needed to render the first world endurable. A life beyond death is necessary to retain unshaken faith. We do not believe in a universe that is so well organized that it will erase all moral confusion. If we do not live on after this earthly state has passed, the tragedy of the human race has not been removed; but thank God, the heart is enabled to gaze upon it with fortitude, and hope is furnished with soaring wings.

Men are not dealt with here according to the moral features which they possess. The righteous are often in poverty and difficulties—often persecuted and oppressed. Therefore a future life is necessary to vindicate the rectitude and benevolence of the divine character and government of the equal distribution of rewards and punishments.

Men do not receive their full reward or punishment in this life. Many times the innocent are punished and the guilty go free. Human life is too brief to exemplify divine justice. Yonder is Paul in prison and Nero on the throne. There is a girl who dies a death of shame in the gutter, while her betrayer moves on in society unmolested. Where is the person who can leave out the future life and solve the difficulties in the government of a just and benevolent God?

Who can show that there is rectitude, wisdom, or goodness in the Creator, if it is the whole of this life

to live only amid the unequalities and sufferings of this present world? The anxious mind believes there must be another life if God is just—a life where all that is at present discordant and unequal shall be harmonized and adjusted on the strictest principles of equity.

Of course this life is filled with injustices, especially concerning the distribution and disposal of material things which are often very unequal. Will not the Judge of all the earth judge in righteousness and not after the commandments of men? Has not the Lord promised this earth to the saints? If the soul is not immortal, then the brutes in many things have the advantage of men, for their state and condition in life are in many respects superior to ours.

Abraham, the father of the faithful, was sorely tried. Moses was the meekest man on earth, but he met scoffs and reproaches from his countrymen. He "endured, as seeing him who is invisible" (Heb. 11:27). Job, Daniel, Isaiah, Jeremiah, the apos-

tles, and all martyrs and good men of every age have generally been called to pass through the furnace of affliction.

For their "patience of hope, and labour of love," an ungrateful world has requited them with bonds and imprisonments, tortures, and death. Thank God, justice shall not forever sleep! The wicked will not always escape, nor the righteous go forever unrewarded. Thus a future life is necessary to rectify these disorders, and to exhibit to an intelligent universe that our God is a God of justice.

D. L. Moody, the amazing soul winner of the nineteenth century, wrote his epitaph as follows: "Some-day you will read in the papers that D. L. Moody is dead. Don't believe a word of it! At that moment I shall be more alive than I am now. I shall have gone up higher, that is all. I was born of the flesh in 1837. I was born of the Spirit in 1855. That which is born of the flesh will die. That which is born of the Spirit will live forever."

While the deceased has passed through the "valley of the shadow," the family continues to wander in the valley

Pastoral Care Following the Funeral

By Steven Sorensen*

WHEN ONE who made life meaningful for others has died, what can the pastor do in continuing ministry for the bereaved survivors? The deceased is past suffering, but the bereaved are left with plaguing hurts. Perhaps for many months, those who

are left can pass through bewildering adjustments to life.

The family home will change little. The mail will continue to come. The phone will still ring. But life will have changed. Someone is missing. Someone who is loved very much is gone. While the deceased has passed through the "valley of the shadow,"

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the family continues to wander in the valley. The pastor must meet them in that valley. He must minister to them there. The funeral is but a beginning of his ministry to the ones left in sorrow. For an extended period after the funeral, the pastor must systematically help even the faithful to make new adjustments to their loss.

The pastor will help the bereaved to draw close to God for the divine comfort they need. God's presence can be sensed even though the pastor and the family may sit without speaking. Or they might talk candidly about the death. It was real. It does hurt. The whole world has shifted for those who are left. The one thing that has not changed is that God has not left them alone, and God still has everything in His control. Bible reading and prayer should be more meaningful to the family now than ever before.

The pastor needs to extend to the grieving the reality of Christ's presence even in the loneliest hours. Jesus offers himself as the foundation of the family's strength as the family adjusts to its loss. His great love is able in every hour to reach deeper into their hearts than the overbearing grief they would otherwise feel. Jesus shares the lonely hours.

The pastor helps those who are left behind to refuse self-pity. Self-pity cripples men and women. Self-pity knows nothing of the love which could lead Jesus to Gethsemane or Calvary. It is one thing to hurt; it is another to let that hurt consume us. Mature love calls us to accept our suffering and learn from it.

The pastor will try to lead the bereaved in giving praise to God. This is not praise for the death of the loved one. This is praise offered to an almighty God who reached down to man with redeeming love.

Death is an enemy. But God shall overpower even physical death one day. Praise is also in order because God remains always near. Death is a terror. But it does not have power to keep God from sharing the sorrow of the lonely.

The pastor will want to enlist the help of his laymen in ministering to the grieving. The supportive calls of Christian people will do much to edify them. The pastor will encourage the bereaved to feel free to call on members of the church body when they need someone to talk to. Christian fellowship is an important part of a family's adjustment after a death.

An important part of fellowship is that found in the church services. Though the grieving may shed some tears, it is good for them to quickly take their place in the house of God. It is best for a family not to withdraw from any of the services scheduled in the church.

The pastor needs to help those left behind to renew their ministry toward others. Grief can be overcome by becoming a source of help to others. Almost everyone has people who need him. The bereaved must pray for strength beyond themselves—strength enough to give away. God's strength is made perfect in weakness. When one is feeling most open to destruction, God is able to use him with His greatest might. So the bereaved must not go into seclusion in order to become refreshed, but simply be hidden in God's strength. For even though immersed in the hurt of grief, one can minister to others in faith and love.

The pastor's spiritual ministry in the funeral situation does not end with the committal at the graveside. His ministry deepens with each week. The faithful sharing of his love draws the sorrowing into a deeper relation to Christ and His church.

The words "he needs you" were the life raft that she seized as she was sinking in the ocean of despair

Triumph over Tragedy

By Ross W. Hayslip*

IN PAUL TILlich's book *The Courage to Be*, this passage appears: "When the Roman Stoic experienced catastrophes he took them with the courage of resignation. But the typical American, after he has lost the foundations of his existence, works for new foundations."

Another has said, If you wish to relieve your own grief, go out and find someone with a greater hurt than yours and seek to minister to that one.

There are many catastrophes of life that can be disabling—loss of job, crippling illness, death of a loved one, an agonizing divorce, betrayal by a friend, rejection by someone that we love. All of these are common to the human family.

This we must remember—that this sadness comes not to us alone. Many others are going through experiences similar to ours. Misfortune is no respecter of persons.

To adequately face disaster, we can try to become concerned with the harsh condition of others. It is of the greatest help to us to be involved with the sorrows of those whose losses are greater than ours.

A friend was telling me recently about the tragic impact of the loss of a husband and daughter both within the space of a year. She took

to her bed in a state of nervous collapse and confided to her sister that she had nothing to live for now that she had suffered such irreparable loss.

Her sister pointed to her baby son who was playing on the floor oblivious to the tragedy that was surrounding him. "You still have him, and he needs you," was the sister's reply.

My friend confessed that she was so wrapped up in her own grief that she had completely forgotten this son. The words "he needs you" were the life raft that she seized as she was sinking in the ocean of despair.

As she told me of this incident, she was now looking back on a life of service to God and to her son who is now an outstanding Christian layman. She testified that it was only when she saw the need around her and compared it with her own sorrow that she was able to rise above it.

Job observes that man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward, and Longfellow notes that into each life some rain must fall.

Our challenge in life is not to evade tragedy but rather to triumph over it. We must never forget that while in the depths of the physical agony of crucifixion, Jesus was able to say to a fellow sufferer, "I say unto thee, today shalt thou be with me in paradise."

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Should preaching be work if it
is Spirit-anointed?

Perspiring to Preach

By H. Mark Abbott*

WHEN I WAS IN COLLEGE and working on highway construction, I interacted with another young prospective preacher. "Where are you going to get your messages," he asked one day; "from book larnin' or the anointin' of the Lord?" I suggested a little bit of both sounded good to me. However he was impatient with "book larnin'" and wanted to get his messages straight from the Lord.

Should preaching be work if it is Spirit-anointed? Is sweat somehow secular and inappropriate for the study of a man of God who is preparing to preach?

I submit that the consistent practice of interesting, concrete, unified, expository preaching demands hard work. In my experience, some of the messages I sweated over most have been the ones used most significantly by God.

There are, of course, those times when a word from the Lord seems to fall from heaven, completely jelled, fully outlined, and readily illustrated. But there are also those times when the next passage in an expository series, or the anticipated message for a special day in the church calendar, simply does not satisfy. Those are the times when God blesses

struggle and sweat to bring forth the message characterized by unusual authority.

What does a willingness to perspire in the work of sermon preparation accomplish? In what sermonic problem areas does sweat foster improvement?

1. Procrastination

It makes a preacher less inclined to come up with a "Saturday night special." He learns that Saturday night sweat is usually from frustration or even panic, and not the productive perspiration of real wrestling with the Word.

2. Quality control

He also is less inclined to accept the first draft. The preacher who has a commitment to toil usually will not use a message until he can "get into it." He postpones it or works it over until its unity, concreteness, reality, and life-centeredness convince him it is ready to be used.

3. Unity

He is willing to struggle with the passage and his materials until that one main emphasis which holds the ideas together becomes apparent. Theoretical homiletics have stressed the vital importance of the "proposition" of the message. David Mains of Circle Church in Chicago emphasizes the one-sentence state-

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ment of biblical truth which is the kernel of the message and insures its unity.

4. *Pruning*

The perspiring preacher is willing to go through the sometimes painful process of weeding out interesting ideas, fascinating and even funny anecdotes, and impressive quotations that do not contribute to that central thought. I am convinced that, to gain a hearing today, expository preaching must be unified and simple. Too much material that is not pruned is sometimes worse than too little.

5. *Realism*

The preacher who is willing to perspire grapples during the week with how the ideas he intends to present will strike specific hearers, sometimes those with whom he has interacted during the week. Dr. Sangster used to ask himself, "What would the plumber make of that?" Often after a weekday counseling session which probed the grim realities of human life I have rethought, re-edited, or added to Sunday's message.

6. *Time commitment*

The perspiring preacher is not likely to be able consistently to produce two sweaty sermons, two top quality messages every Sunday—that is,

unless he can somehow free himself from some of the other responsibilities of the average pastor. Over the past year I have found myself preaching less and enjoying it more. The Sunday evening service period has sometimes been used for short-term, small-group Bible studies, briefer messages that invite discussion by the congregation, or a teaching style that did not always require the same carefully honed preparation.

The preacher is handling the Word of Life, and if his preaching is to be credible and authoritative, it must have more than sweet spirituality, a casual "sharing" approach, or thundering bombast. He must grapple with the Word in his own life and work it through his own experience. Then he must settle on a method of communicating it that is attractive to those who spend many hours a week watching TV, to those who may be educated well beyond the preacher, and to those who are experiencing the immense hurts of life and are looking for healing and help. Even if the willingness to perspire to preach did not result in some clearly definable benefits, it would still be appropriate.

All this makes sweat sacred. It makes perspiring to preach, not only appropriate, but a priority.

Perhaps one of the difficulties of discipleship today is due to the fact that we have put church life into the category of leisure time—the weekend. So when it all boils down, discipleship is something quite trivial which competes only with such other trivia as lying in a hammock, or sailing, or watching television—after we've "slipped into something more comfortable." Discipleship is something to do after the important things in life have been cared for—if we have any time left over!

—David V. Yeaworth

The "Sanctifying Level"

By C. J. Kristoffersen*

THE DESIRE of entire sanctification is dying out in the church, because the grade of religion our people have been running upon is below the level where sanctification begins" (Dr. Lovick Pierce, quoted in *Perfect Love*, by J. A. Wood).

Many confused seekers at our altars say they are seeking sanctification when in reality they are living below the level where sanctification is possible. They need to be restored.

From personal experience, and from dealing with seekers at our altars, I am convinced that it takes an obedient Christian with an up-to-date experience of regeneration to be sanctified wholly.

I remember hearing a speaker in my college days tell us that God should manifest himself to us at least every 24 hours. Many saved persons have failed to "maintain" by supping with Him, and feel convicted for their prayerlessness and subsequent lukewarmness. Outwardly they are living clean lives. But there is no victory and no Spirit bearing witness with their spirits that they are children of God. They actually feel under condemnation because of their negligence.

Young people, especially, need to be encouraged to seek God's forgive-

ness if they have failed to obey Christ in their daily walk, before praying for their sanctification. The seeker can be assured that entire sanctification is attainable, and God will lead him into the experience as he walks in obedience.

Many adults have neglected their prayer life, and wrong attitudes have crept in and impaired their relationship with God. These are not candidates for sanctification. Outcroppings of the carnal nature must be forgiven because the seeker feels condemned. As long as he feels this sentence for guilt, he cannot deal with the root of sin.

I was reared in a parsonage and was genuinely converted at the age of six. As a 14-year-old, I went to the altar to be sanctified. The altar workers prayed and tried to encourage my faith. I testified to being entirely sanctified, but in my heart I doubted. For about three years I lived with my doubts. At age 17, a disappointment in life drove me to my knees. Every day after school I would go to the little frame church next to our parsonage and pray as far as I could. I was consecrating and surrendering. After several days the Holy Spirit came—the "well of water springing up" brought a peace and joy I had never known before.

I know now why I was not sancti-

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fied when I was 14—I was living outside the relationship where sanctification is possible. I was prayerless and cold—no candidate for the “second blessing” because the “first” had not been kept alive. I wish the altar workers had helped me locate my real need by asking if I needed God to forgive any negligence and lukewarmness.

Incidentally, if seekers believe they have been sanctified when actually

they have just been restored to a relationship with God, they are then liable to the error that holiness doesn't work.

Help those who are spiritually starved to get sanctified by leading them to restoration first. They can know they are entirely sanctified if they don't try unproductive shortcuts. And they will find a satisfying experience of entire sanctification if counselled properly at our altars.

Practical Points

*that make
a difference*

Is Activity Enough?

Dear Son:

I heard the other day that ministry to those who were adult during and before World War II must be quite different than ministry to those who have matured following World War II. Since I am right at the “junction,” the observation was more than interesting.

The statement could mean that while the gospel is the same, methodology can and must change—and I can abide that. But if it means that the substance of the gospel has changed with the methodology, we are in trouble.

Our church is a “beehive of activity.” We serve coffee and doughnuts at Sunday school. We are involved in lunches all over the place. Every age-group has its own interests, its own activities, and its own quality of music and entertainment. Sunday, instead of

being a day of *rest*, is a day of heightened activity, until we cry for Monday for rest. Committee meetings dot the calendar until we wonder what the church is all about.

Son, I know that our society dictates some of what we are doing. The church has become, and must be the center of a man's life—but what center!

Some churches and pastors are finding that great singing, superlative Bible preaching, and fellowship properly defined is meeting the needs of all ages. It all comes back to the question: What is the church? Until a congregation asks the question and demands an answer, the church is in trouble under the pressure of every whim and interest.

I'll be praying for you early Sunday morning. Make that service an act of worship in which the Holy Spirit can freely speak to your people through every part. Give freedom to the evening service with other interests which will involve all in a mighty act of praise and evangelism. It will pay great dividends.

Love,
Dad

In adopting some goals for my sermon titles, I have discovered a secret . . .

Your Sermon Title Can Make You a Better Preacher

By John A. Payton*

AN ARTICLE in the May, 1977, *Preacher's Magazine*, "How to Entitle a Sermon," by Merrill Williams, called attention to the need for more "tantalizing titles." There does seem to be a need for better attention-getting, "door-buster" sermon titles. A glance at the church page of your local newspaper will reveal very few sermon subjects/titles even published, while most that are publicized would do well to catch the interest of died-in-the-wool saints, let alone the unchurched world.

Last Easter our local paper listed, among other such "gems," these titles in some very expensive ads: "The Resurrection Story," "He Arose," "He Lives" (about four ads carried this title and one ventured an exclamation mark!), and in several ads the public was urged to hear "The Easter Message."

After much wrestling with the temptation to be bizzare (recalling an evangelist who announced his coming sermon to be "A One-Horse Preacher in a Two-by-Four Town," and a title for which I was once proud, "Be ye not Clodhoppers!")—God has forgiven the pride and the title), I have adopted some goals for my sermon titles, and in the process discovered a secret of becoming a

better preacher. Those goals are:

1. The sermon title must *remain true to the message*. It should give some hint to the content and purpose of the sermon. It should not promise more than the sermon can deliver, and it should not be a flashy, catchy slogan tacked on as window dressing.

2. The sermon title should attempt to *offer something of interest to those the message is designed to reach*. Titles such as "God's Cure for Depression" or "Overcoming Fear" will speak to the depressed and anxious, the lonely and afraid. (In the above mentioned Easter newspaper, our church ad announced the Easter sermon title as "God's Guarantee on Your Happiness.")

Most people want to be happy, overcome fear, manage their time and money, better themselves and their families, and God's Word provides the proper "how to" in every case.

3. The sermon title should be *stated in a positive manner*. Why title a sermon in which sin and worldiness is to be bemoaned and denounced, "Why Will Ye Die?" when it could call all to come to hear: "There Is a Way to Enjoy Life!" The preacher can ask again and again in the message, "Why will ye die?" but will no doubt point to the message of deliverance before he is through; and that is what the people

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are looking for, and what we really want them to know.

In the process of developing better titles, one's preaching might be affected. I feel mine was. If the title is to be germane *and* positive, the message will have to ring out with a positive solution in the Blood of Christ. Waving a victory banner over the heads of the people makes preaching come alive to this preacher. The sermon is not just relating Bible stories and spiritual truisms or cold doctrinal statements, it is the offering of solutions to real needs of saints and sinners alike, fresh from the Word of God.

I confess that this is a process that has been developing for the past six years and is far from perfected, but following are a few titles gleaned from our ads and bulletins the past year:

Your Best Days Are Ahead
Mother, You Can Be Filled with Joy
(Mother's Day)
What God Will Do for You
There Is a Way to Be Happy
God's Blueprint for a Great Life
(series on Ephesians)
You Can Enjoy Living Where You are
Now
All Things Come Together in Christ
Let God Turn Your Circumstances
Around
God's Great Secret of Success Made
Known
A Great Life in Spite of Life's Grates
The Key to a Great Life: Gratitude
(Thanksgiving)
God's Wonderful Gift of Joy
(Christmas)
God's Design for a Happy New Year
How to Live Above Defeat
Holy People Are Happy People
It's Possible to Have a Good Life

God's Plan for a Happy Marriage
(Valentines)

God Cares About Kids—and Parents
Too!

I Believe in Miracles

Get All Excited—Jesus Is Coming!

Happy Hearts Make Happy People

Currently I am working on a series of messages from the Pentateuch and enjoying developing about 12 messages under the overall theme: "Power for Your Life from the Pentateuch." If that doesn't help my people, it helps me to remember my goal of relating the Word to everyday living. This Sunday's message will come from Genesis, chapters 1-4. It will not be an apologetic on the pre-existence of God or the theory of creation. These will be mentioned, but the focus will be upon God's power that is available to create a good life for any who through the Blood of Christ come to Him. The subdivisions will speak of: (1) Creative Power, (2) Destructive Power (the sin which has touched us all), (3) Redemptive Power (the "seed of the woman" connecting the poles of life and love on God's power panel releasing a resurgence of God's creative power.)

This kind of preaching is exciting to me, and the work of improving the sermon title has largely made it so. Hopefully you were a bit enticed to read this article because of the promise of becoming "a better preacher," more so than if it had been called "More Thoughts on Sermon Titles," because it was my goal to cause you to pause and look at the wonderful world of exciting, positive sermons that live up to their titles and that have titles that live up to their subjects.

Do not wait until calamity strikes to prepare your soul. The inner fortification which you shall need must be built up in advance. Men do not walk onto a battlefield and win a victory, nor even survive, without preparation.
—Frances J. Roberts



The Telephone Stopped Ringing

Note: This really happened as I've described it. The period since has been anguishing. Nothing can ever change the fact that I failed God, but I have His forgiveness. Yet I suffer under the feelings that my pastor is long on excommunication and short on reconciliation.

Has it been only a few weeks?
A few months?
I only know that it's been an eternity.
It's been lonely.
God, how lonely!

They asked me to leave—
My boss, that is.
Said he was sorry,
So sorry,
But that in his position
He couldn't tolerate a breath of scandal.

Of course I left.
I could see his point.
I never said I was innocent.
But it hurt—
Hurt so terribly much.
And at my age
What could I do?

Luckily I got a job—
A kind of job where
I won't have to be with friends,
Or church folks.
Won't have to explain
Or feel the frost as people pass.

Some things I still can't understand.
I heard that my pastor said
He was sorry,
That I needed support.
But he's never told me.
Never been around to call.

We love the church.
I think we've served it faithfully,
Put lots of money into it.
Always have believed in tithing plus.
Gave lots of time, too.

My wife and I have held
Many offices in the church.
She's resigning from the ones
She holds now.
Don't want her to,
But she says it's best.
Says this way it will save others
From embarrassment.

Embarrassment—
That's a strange word.
I wonder if Jesus was embarrassed
When He talked to the woman
At the well.
All I can remember is that He
Offered her Living Water,
And new hope.

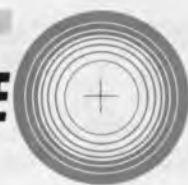
I wonder if our pastor
Knows anything about sin.
I think he must—
He quotes so much scripture.
But I don't think he knows much
About the sinner.
He doesn't seem to know that
The sinner still needs friends,
That he still needs prayer,
That he still hurts.

My wife—ah, it's my wife
Who hurts the most.
I've felt her pillow wet with tears
At night.
It's too quiet at our house.
I did think a few might come.

Of course our children call.
They're loyal and they love us.
But some are so far away.
Nearly everything else is gone—
Our bright hopes for the future,
Those golden, future years.

I guess the future now is what
My wife and I and God make it.
It would be easier if there were
Friends.
But the telephone has stopped ringing . . .
The doorbell, too.

Anonymous



Compiled by the Department of Stewardship

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

● General Superintendent Jenkins



Alone with God

ALL OF US have observed the close connection between the deep prayer life of Jesus and the power of the anointing of God, the Father, which flowed from His life. In the midst of all the hustle and bustle during His earthly life, Jesus often withdrew to be alone with the Father. Mark states, "And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed" (1:35). While alone with God, Jesus seemed to find the strength and courage to do the Father's will during His earthly life.

The life without a solitary place is a life without a quiet center, and therefore becomes easily destructive. Even in our work in the ministry we get caught up in a success-oriented world. It is perfectly normal and necessary to want to experience maximum achievement in building the church and extending God's kingdom. At the same time, we must avoid judging ourselves according to how much we achieve, and thereby run the danger of losing our self-esteem because we fail to produce. Achievement can be fully measured in a lifetime of faithfulness and service.

In the midst of all the pressures we face, we need to spend time daily in the "solitary place" to reassure ourselves that we are God's creation and He loves us, and have His power and presence working in and through us. We do not have to defend or mask our lives by so much good works, but rather enjoy and share with others what we experience in the Lord Jesus Christ.

When we allow ourselves to be refreshed in God's presence, we repeatedly experience His love and power, our worth in His eyes, and the joy of being His anointed person. We can then do our work and His with new vigor, faith, and confidence.

CHURCH GROWTH SEMINARS

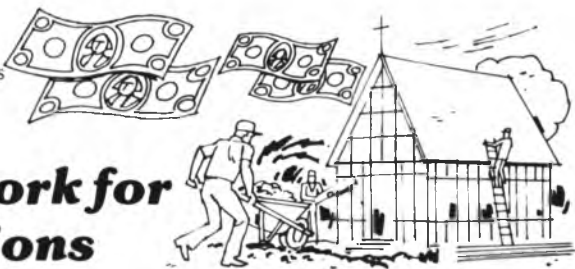
(Partial Schedule)

1978 is a year of intensive study of church growth throughout the Church of the Nazarene. In addition to the denomination-wide study of *Get Ready to Grow*, by Dr. Paul Orjala, a growing number of specialized seminars have been scheduled. A partial list is printed below. Questions should be directed to the Department of Home Missions, 6401 The Paseo, Kansas City, MO 64131.

- June 5-9:** British Isles Church Growth Seminar, Manchester, England.
- June 18-23:** Scholars Church Growth Seminar, Vail, Colo. (Designed to teach scholars from Nazarene colleges how to teach church growth principles.)
- June 24-28:** Mexican Migrant Seminar for Whites/Anglos, Pueblo, Colo. (A specialized seminar for those involved in church planting and evangelism among Mexican migrants.)
- May–Sept.:** Black Church Growth Seminars. (suggested in connection with the regional fellowships)
- Sept. 26-30:** Bi-vocational Pastors' Seminars, Kansas City. (Seminars to honor a cross section of highly sacrificial people who have helped start new churches while earning secular salaries, and who are sponsored for the seminar by their home districts. Includes tour of NPH and Headquarters and one week's training in church planting principles.)
- Oct. 23-28:** Church Planting Seminar, Kansas City.
- Nov. 28–Dec. 3:** Multiracial congregation Seminar, Los Angeles, Calif.

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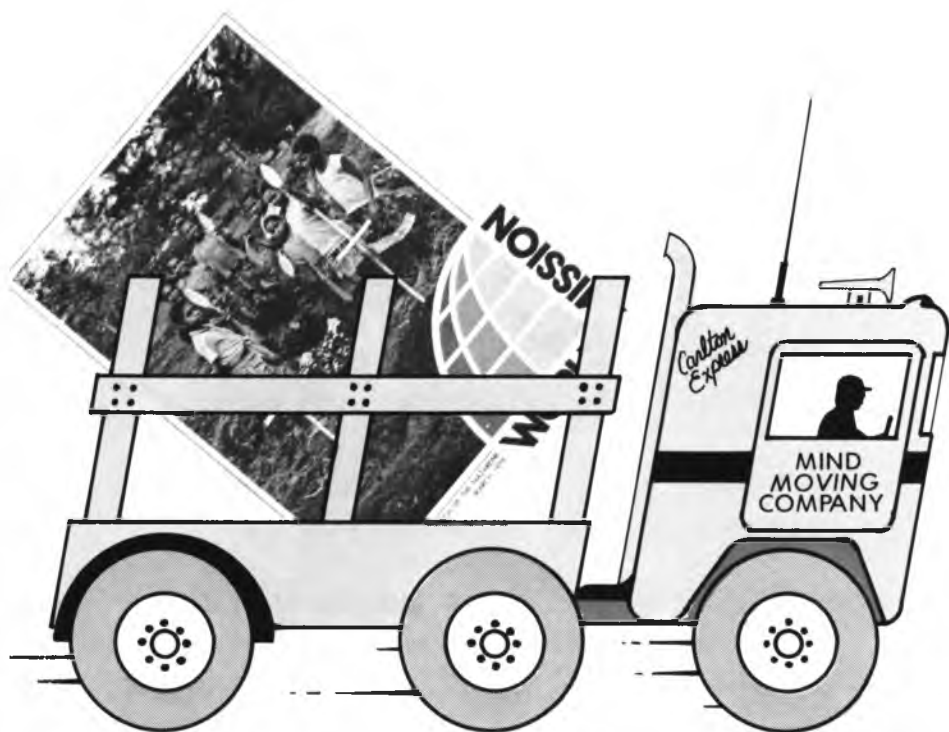
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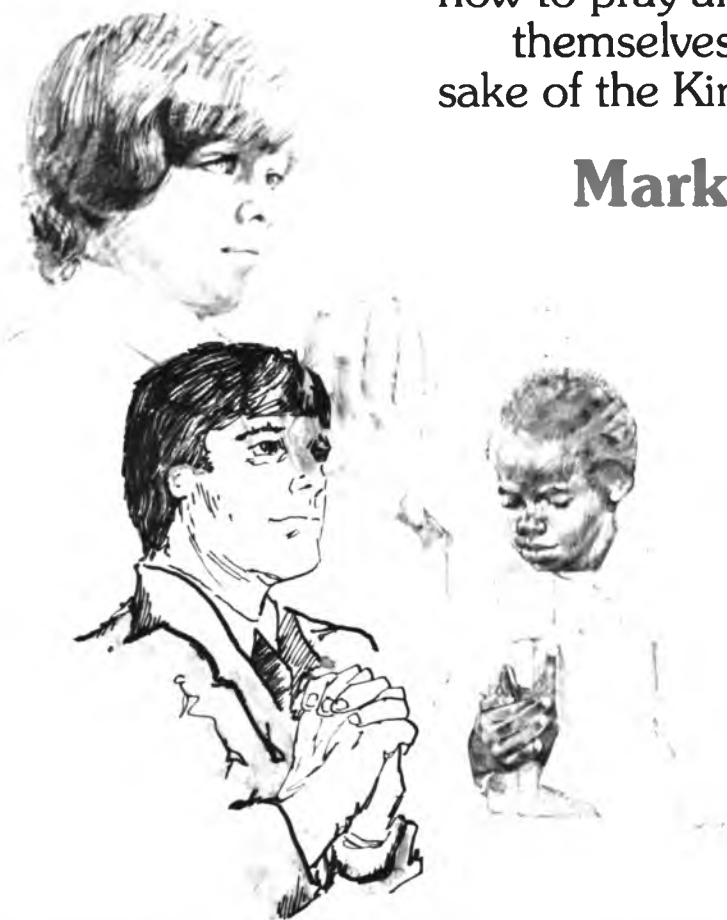
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Mark 9:29



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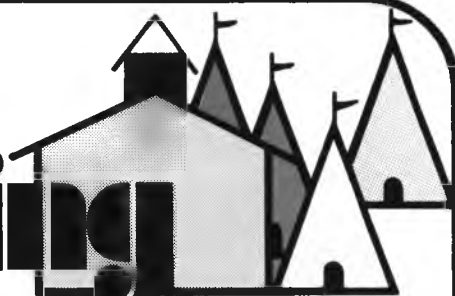
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Dear Pastor:

Enrollment at our 12 institutions is now 11,614, a gain of 3.9 percent over the preceding year. Total assets have increased by \$6,663,517, with an increment in liabilities of only \$372,458. The net worth of our institutions is now \$61,343,684. Total church support of Nazarene higher education has reached an all-time high of \$6,933,325, representing a per capita support of \$14.84. Canadian Nazarene College leads all zones with per capita giving of \$24.78.

Several colleges have made marked progress financially. Current indebtedness amounting to \$2.3 million at Bethany Nazarene College has been eliminated in five years. Eastern Nazarene College has completed liquidation of all indebtedness with the exception of government obligations. As a result of a zone-wide campaign, Trevecca Nazarene College has reduced its "floating indebtedness" by over a quarter of a million dollars. Olivet Nazarene College, Mount Vernon Nazarene College, and Trevecca Nazarene College have each received sizable grants from the federal government under Title III. Point Loma College has been awarded a Title VI grant from the federal government. Mid-America Nazarene College is celebrating its tenth anniversary by the erection of the Curtis Smith Religion building, and Mount Vernon Nazarene College by launching a campaign to construct a large addition to the present student center. British Isles Nazarene College is constructing a chapel in memory of Rev. J. B. MacLagan. As a result of the sale of a portion of their campus, Canadian Nazarene College has already erected an additional dormitory and is planning to build both a new library and a gymnasium. Nazarene Bible College has just completed a new speech and music building. Northwest Nazarene College has adopted a sophisticated long-range plan for future development. Olivet Nazarene College has dedicated a new entrance plaza and has made substantial renovations in the Burke Administration building. Point Loma College has sold its Pasadena campus to William Carey International University. Enrollment at PLC has exceeded 1,900. The increase in enrollment at Nazarene Theological Seminary to approximately 500 has necessitated use of additional space in the Nazarene Headquarters complex. Preliminary discussions have been held for extension work in Canada, Mexico, and the Philippines.

A Conference on Nazarene Higher Education will be held August 14-17, 1978, on the campus of Mid-America Nazarene College. The theme will be Faith and Learning. Featured speakers include Dr. Dennis F. Kinlaw, Dr. William M. Greathouse, Dr. David A. Hubbard, Dr. Timothy L. Smith, Dr. L. Guy Nees, and Dr. Shelburne Brown.

And along with all the reports of substantial numerical and financial progress, it is most gratifying to know that revival fires still burn on Nazarene campuses, and that Nazarene college students by the hundreds volunteer their services for the various programs of summer ministries under the direction of the Department of Youth Ministries.

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THE PREACHER'S WIFE

Parsonage Roots

RECENTLY I said to my pastor-husband, "I wish I had some roots!" His reply has been ringing in my mind ever since, "You do have. You are rooted and grounded in the love of God." What wonderful roots to have!

As a pastor's wife for over 25 years, I have sometimes grumbled about the transiency of parsonage life. I have said good-bye to dearly-loved church family with tears streaming down my face. I have sympathetically listened as our daughter said she was not moving with us but would stay with her friends. Then I have watched as she packed her books, her clothing, and her treasures to come with us to the next parsonage. I have observed our children coming home from their first day in a new school in the middle of the school year, informing me that they were ahead of or behind their classmates in various subjects.

I have seen our furniture broken and scratched by well-known moving companies, and sometimes as we hauled it ourselves. I have heard well-meaning church people say, "Brother So-and-so always did it this way." And I've tried to be kind as I explained that the former pastor had his own methods, but now my husband was their pastor and would like to try his ideas. Or what was even harder—being a good listener when they talked about the former pastor's wife and her many talents.

We have made adjustments to various climates, clothing, and even cultures here in the USA. Some might ask, "Has it been worth it?" To this I would answer a definite, "Yes, it surely has!"

Our children are grown now. And our son is now at Nazarene Theological Seminary studying for the ministry with the mission field as his goal, and our daughter recently moved with her husband to Colorado Springs with the possibility of future full-time Christian service. We have a wealth of church friends throughout the eastern half of the nation. Our present church provides us with a lovelier home than we could afford to buy ourselves, and the movers have refinished the scratches and repaired the breaks in our furniture until it looks better than it did originally. Above all, we have seen



by
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countless souls born into the kingdom of God through our ministry, and have had the privilege of helping believers to become stronger in their faith.

Some of the things we have done to help provide roots for our family are these:

1. We have tried to have a strong family life with family worship daily, family trips, cooperative jobs in the home, sharing times, and a day-by-day fellowship with Jesus Christ.

2. We have been active in community affairs such as Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, and PTA. It was a joyful occasion for all of us when our son became the first Eagle Scout in the history of his troop.

3. We have encouraged our children to take part in school organizations. They played in the band, sang in choral groups, and were active in athletics. We went to see them perform as often as possible.

4. We have tried to plant something permanent on each parsonage lawn. It was thrilling to go past a former parsonage on our way to the General Assembly and see a sapling that we had planted now towering over the house providing much-needed shade.

5. We have tried to be active on each of the districts where we have served, taking part in summer camps and programs until our children felt that they were part of a great district family.

6. We have strived to make church exciting and vital to our children's lives, involving them in the local church life and activities. We have let them be themselves and have not tried to make them feel they were different because they were the minister's children. They had the usual assortment of pets, pals, and problems during their growing-up years.

7. We have thoroughly appreciated our local church people. They were truly "our people" while we lived in their parsonage. We have enjoyed their home-baked bread, their Christmas gifts, their surprise food "poundings," their quarters of beef for our freezer, their concern when we had illness, their warm friendships and open homes to our family, and their daily prayers for us. It's no wonder that our children said to us, "Boy, are we lucky to be preacher's kids!"

We may not have any roots in the ordinary meaning of the word, but we surely are rooted and grounded in the love of God and of His people.

To Mothers and Fathers

Why not make it a practice this year to take more time to enjoy your children? Learn to enjoy the sight of them in their moments of loveliness—in the bathtub, or dressed in their Sunday best, or relaxed in the defenselessness of sleep. And don't miss their less lovely moments—bawling lustily, abnormally dirty, or wildly furious. Cultivate a sense of humor at home if you want to have fun with your children.

Ten or 15 years from now it may not matter so much whether or not you received that promotion, served that fancy dessert, kept your house perfectly dust-free, or attended every single gathering at the church. But *it will matter tremendously* whether or not you made the most of your opportunity, by family good times and whatever other means, to get close and stay close to your children.

Far from being a 20th-century phenomenon, the multiple staff is of New Testament origin

The Multiple Staff

SOME SHOULD BE APOSTLES, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, for the equipment of the saints, for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ" (Eph. 4:11-12, RSV).¹

Why a multiple staff?

My basis for the multiple staff is the New Testament teaching on the nature and ministry of the church. Christians are brought together into an organism—visible as well as invisible—called the Body of Christ. Each member of that Body is gifted and empowered to perform ministries vital to the growth of the Church. God raised up individuals whose jobs are to equip those members spiritually and gift them for ministry.

The New Testament pictures this work being done by a *team* rather than a lone pastor. Our Lord sent His disciples out two by two. Paul's first missionary journey included three evangelists, his second involved four, and the third in-

1. From the *Revised Standard Version of the Bible*, copyrighted 1946 and 1952.



by
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involved a whole army of people traveling and ministering.

Far from being a 20th-century phenomenon, the multiple staff is of New Testament origin. Several take the responsibility for the spiritual life of the Body.

What kind of a staff do I need?

A choice of staff positions will be determined by the church's assessment of what is needed to bring the members to their fullest possible spiritual growth and ministry. My task, as senior minister, is to assess which spiritual fruits, gifts, and ministries are either weak or lacking in the church, and put together a team who can best bring them into fruition.

I am to discover my gifts and spiritual strengths and also areas in which I may be weak. Then I am to "complete what is lacking" in my own leadership by bringing together a team of individuals who can do for the body what I cannot.

It seems to me that the senior pastor should seek a team that will provide balance in at least these four areas: (1) evangelism/outreach, (2) education, (3) body life, (4) worship. Then he should think about strengthening administration and stewardship, and next, specialty areas of ministry—youth, singles, children.

You already see the critical implications of this viewpoint. For one thing, this concept prevents me from believing that I am the only pastor on the team. I am the senior pastor, and as such the leader of the team. But I am not the only

pastor on the team. If I cannot allow the others to be perceived in a pastoral role, I don't truly have a pastoral staff. If I cannot function on such a team without threat, then I have some business to complete with my Lord. Many multiple staffs are not really *staffs* in the New Testament sense because they are being led by a *control-* rather than a *team goal-* minded senior pastor. To truly have a multiple staff ministry requires a disciplined concern for one's weaknesses and an ego crucified in Christ.

Where do I find good staff members?

First, *I look within my own church.* Are there individuals who have leadership potential in the needed areas and have a pastor's heart? I just might "complete what is lacking" right in my home turf.

This applies to the small as well as the large church. For too long we have associated the multiple staff concept with the large, monied church. This is unfortunate, for the creation of multiple staff is not related to the ability to pay professionals. A multiple staff can consist of volunteers with pastors' hearts. Any pastor of any sized church can instill a team concept of leadership and begin to develop lay leadership abilities.

Why not purchase some used desks, inexpensive nameplates and hire key people in your church to serve on your staff at \$1.00 a year! I believe some tremendous leadership potential could be released in your church as these selected individuals see themselves in this new role.

Middle-size and larger churches would do well to heed this counsel too. I believe that even large churches should look *first* to the resources within their body for staff leadership before going outside. My staff—or "leadership team" as I call them—consists of three volunteers recruited from within who fill as vital a role as those who are paid. Don't rush to import hired staff when the Lord may be laying a call to serve upon a gifted member within the ranks.

If you can find no one within to lead in needed areas and have the monetary resources, you may consider someone from outside. Our colleges, seminary,

and Bible college have been traditional resource pools for multiple staffs. It is often difficult, however, for a young student to fit immediately into the kind of leadership role needed. The senior pastor then must be willing to spend a considerable degree of time and patience in training this person.

I have found that the kind of commitment and maturity required is often found in laymen recruited from the fields of business and education. There are many men and women who have developed leadership expertise in these fields, who are looking for a more fulfilling role than they find in their secular vocations. These individuals won't make such a move lightly, but carefully consider the sacrifices and implications involved, and thus tend to stay longer. They usually already have "pastor's hearts." Of the eight individuals currently on my staff, six have come from secular professions.

What qualities should a staff member possess?

How do I accurately assess a person's abilities to function in the area where he is needed on the team? Selecting good leadership is one of the senior minister's most important responsibilities. An ill-chosen ministerial staff member can bring great anguish and frustration to a church staff. On the other hand, a wise selection can bring great joy and productivity and encouragement.

I believe two things contribute most to success in selecting good staff members. One is the clear definition of one's ministry objectives. Take the time to discover what the church must specifically be about. Clearly-set objectives, coupled with an honest self-appraisal, will give the senior pastor the clues to his staff needs.

A second important factor in staff selection is understanding the personal qualities that make for good staff leadership. In my judgment there are four:

1. Spiritual depth and maturity that is able to deal with immature Christians.
2. A biblically-based perspective on life and ministry.
3. The ability to take simple objectives and implement them creatively into

meaningful programs.

4. Proven leadership ability.

One should begin with the most outstanding person he knows for the task. The best choice often is what I call the "comer"—the person who is about to blossom out and do his very best work in ministry. The next thing he does will be the outstanding work of his ministry, and he can do it with you.

Too often senior ministers use the wrong criteria to hire a staff member. For example, they engage in "cronyism," remembering how "fun" their friends used to be. They may have "grown an inch" since then.

How do I orient a staff member?

The senior minister must clearly articulate the meaning of the objectives and goals, clearly communicating an understanding of the job. He must give each staff member a *specific job description*. He must also help him to understand the lines and extent of authority that must be excepted for this team. A well-constructed flow chart does this best. Without all of these basic orientations, the effectiveness of the multiple staff can quickly break down.

How do I instill "team spirit"?

First, *release them to do the job they are called to do!* Remember that the decisions should be made as near as possible to where the work is actually being performed. If I keep looking over each member's shoulder, pulling surprises on them, interfering in their work, I will not hold a competent staff for long. If I grasp too much control, this retards ministry of the team by forcing everything to be channeled through me. I must trust my team members to make as many of the decisions as possible which affect their work.

Each of my staff people do things that I would not necessarily do if I were in their positions—and vice versa. But as long as they operate within the general objective, they have the freedom to develop their ministry where they feel God is leading. I feel it is better to allow a person to make a mistake and learn by it than to go over his head and destroy his faith in his work and himself.

Our minister of evangelism is in charge

of cultivating the gifts of evangelism and outreach and of leading new converts into churchmanship. He is free to fulfill that objective and can implement his ministry without my interference. The same is true of our other ministers. They know that I trust them, and a beautiful result is that they desire for me to know what they are doing without my asking.

Instilling climate also includes conducting *weekly staff meetings* in which each member fully participates. Each helps to initiate the agenda and gets a fair opportunity to give and receive input and support regarding the problems relating to our ministries.

Another important aspect is the *creation of community*. This means not only staff retreats, but also time to regularly get together to pray for one another and simply enjoy each other. It's amazing how easily many decisions and compromises can be made when we love and learn to understand each other and meet one another's emotional needs.

Team spirit also includes getting *adequate financial compensation* for each member and arranging adequate time off during the week and in vacation time.

The senior pastor does his best to befriend and care for the families of staff members. He protects staff members when some irate church member declares war on them. He boosts them and publicly rejoices in jobs well done.

God can do great things through senior pastors who don't care who gets the credit. If Mark builds a good education program, I become more secure because the church will be stronger. If Ray, Dave, Ken, Mary, Orlando, and Chet succeed, we have an unbelievable future. If I do my job, set direction, administrate, and lead in worship well, and set climate, they will be more secure, and we all win! If one gets hurt, the rest will suffer; but if one does his job well, all of us are strengthened.

This view of team spirit does not preclude discipline. In fact, it provides the best climate in which constructive correction can occur. A senior pastor must correct the staff when correction becomes necessary. But he does it in the context of the "team spirit." He corrects prayerfully and *individually* (not publicly).

He corrects by the open question rather than the closed question, inviting the other person to express freely what he feels without making him feel he is boxed in. He corrects in the desire to be constructive and help that staff member to develop in *his* ministry. He corrects in generosity, allowing God to make changes, being willing to change himself

too, if necessary.

Mature team members will respond positively to correction given in such a climate, and the result will be the strengthening of the combined ministries.

These are the most opportune days in which to minister that most of us have seen. But we can't do it alone. We need biblical perspective. We need a team.

Sanctification and the Truth

By James V. Wilbanks*

WHEN I WAS A BOY in Arkansas, the country lads were not wont to "fool around with only one ol' watermelon" when raiding the patch. They went for several melons and ate only the hearts.

City slickers would consider that wanton waste, and it is. But it brings to mind a central truth of the Bible which I would like to discuss: Sanctification is the grand and cardinal theme of the Bible. As Dr. J. B. Chapman has said, "Sanctification is the heart of Christian experience." A study of John 17:17 with special attention being given to the Greek preposition *en* will make this clear. The scripture is: "Sanctify them *on account of* [*en*—Greek] thy truth: thy word is truth."

This scripture has been variously understood, mainly because of the Greek preposition *en* which has a

great variety of meanings, and the most appropriate meaning can be found only by analyzing the context in which it is used. In the usual English translations "*in*" is employed. And perhaps the most widely accepted interpretation is that, on the threshold of His crucifixion, Jesus prayed for the Father to sanctify these disciples "*in very truth*," or to sanctify them in a deeper sense than a ceremonial one.

Granted that Jesus' prayer did certainly intend more than a ceremonial sense, I think that the Master's petition penetrates deeper into the historical context and meaning of the Old Testament, or, more properly, the Old Covenant. Therefore I prefer another meaning of the Greek *en* in this context. I would choose "*on account of*," or "*because of*."¹

1. See Bauer, Arndt, Gingrich Greek Lexicon, III 3a.

*Black Forest, Colo.

This usage may be substantiated by referring to Heb. 10:10, another scripture dealing with this same theme of sanctification in a total sense, i.e., with sanctification as a provision for the Christian Church both now and forever. It says:

“On account of” (*en*) the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

Here the phrase “on account of” (substituting for the KJV’s “By”) is clearly appropriate as interpreting the Greek preposition *en*.

To deal more tangibly with this idea we must understand what the word *truth* (*aletheia*) as found in John 17:17 means. Stripping the word of all its philosophical foliage, we look for its meaning other places in the Bible. The first time the word is used is in Gen. 24:27:

And he said, Blessed be the Lord God of my master Abraham, who hath not left destitute my master of his mercy and his *truth*: I being in the way, the Lord led me to the house of my master’s brethren.

The servant of Abraham, who is doing the speaking, is referring to God’s promise to Abraham to provide a suitable wife for Isaac (whom the servant has just found in the person of Rebekah). Therefore, in this context the word *truth* has reference to faithfulness in the fulfillment of one’s word or promise—in this case God’s. The etymology of the word (*emeth*) in Hebrew bears out this meaning precisely. The LXX has its usual *aletheia*, the same as in John 17:17.

Then what truth, or promise, is Jesus referring to in John 17:17? The answer is not hard to find, and roots directly in the Old Testament. The prophets predicted a day in which the Old Covenant would be superseded by a New—namely, a Covenant of the Spirit. Listen to Ezek. 36:25-27:

Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you.

A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.

And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.

Heb. 8:10, of course, refers directly to the promise of such a New Covenant:

For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people.

Also, on the Day of Pentecost, Peter referred the astounded onlookers to Joel 2:28 (Acts 2:17):

And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God [there’s that promise again], I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy.

Jesus himself had already made several promises regarding the infilling of the Holy Spirit (cf. John 14:16; 15:26; 16:7). And after His resurrection Jesus refers the disciples back to “the promise of the Father,” and commands them to wait for the fulfillment (Acts 1:4).

It seems clear, then, when in John 17:17, Jesus prays, “Sanctify them *on account of* thy truth; thy word is truth,” He means for God to fulfill His Word like He has promised.

It is imperative that we teach and preach sanctification to every believer as the utmost in Christian experience. It was the uppermost thought in Jesus’ mind before both His crucifixion and resurrection, and it should be in ours as we spread the glad tidings.



Exegetical Studies in the Scriptures

Frank G. Carver, Professor, Point Loma College

The Interpretation of Luke 9:23

AND HE SAID TO ALL, "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me" (RSV)¹

I. The Historical Question: Where do we find our text?

What was the life setting of the Third Gospel?

In what historical form? Luke, along with Matthew, Mark, and John, is a Gospel, a new literary creation which emerged with the Christian message. The literary form of Gospel is not biography in the usual sense of being closely related to preaching. Its function is to present the substance of *the gospel*, the Good News of the Church's proclamation. Told is the story of God present to save in the life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth in Galilee. Inherent in the telling is the element of reenactment—the history of Jesus is proclaimed to show that Christ comes out of the past to greet His people in the present.²

*From what historical setting?*³ Luke

1. All scripture from the *Revised Standard Version of the Bible*, copyrighted 1946 and 1952.

2. Ralph P. Martin: *New Testament Foundations: A Guide for Christian Students*. Vol. I, "The Four Gospels" (Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1975), pp. 16-20.

3. A Gospel must be viewed as a literary instrument in its own right, that is, written in a certain historical setting to accomplish a definite purpose and with a distinctive perspective. We must ask how the text functions in its literary setting in the particular Gospel before we can legitimately ask what is meant in the setting of Jesus' life.

the physician and companion of the apostle Paul (Col. 4:14; Philem. 24) is generally considered the writer of both the third Gospel and Acts (1:1-4; Acts 1:1). This gifted writer and possibly Christian prophet⁴ was with Paul in Philippi, perhaps also for a time in Ephesus, and accompanied him to Jerusalem and later to Rome (Acts 16:10 ff.; 21:17; 28:16). He was probably a Gentile, (Col. 4:10 f., 14) although some scholars have argued that he was a Hellenist or a Jew who adopted Greek customs.⁵

Not being an eyewitness of Jesus' ministry (1:2), Luke, with Mark's account in his possession, included a variety of additional material. The writing or publication of his Gospel took place most probably during or shortly after the Jewish rebellion, around A.D. 70.⁶ Encouraged by Theophilus (1:3), he wrote a history with a message to the Gentile and Jewish Christians of his day.

His *purpose* in writing is perhaps best described as pastoral, "to aid the church in his lifetime by proclaiming the kerygma and by offering pastoral counsel and encouragement to his fellow be-

4. E. Earle Ellis, "The Gospel of Luke," *The Century Bible* (Camden, New Jersey: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1966), p. 54; see his discussion on authorship, pp. 40-55).

5. *Ibid.*, p. 52

6. *Ibid.*, p. 58

lievers.”⁷ The dominant theme, the relationship of Judaism and Christianity,⁸ would suit well the situation of the Gentile reader with little Old Testament background. For them the story of Jesus, detailed in word and deed, was set in the context of the age-long purposes of God. Luke proclaims the life of Jesus, now crucified and risen, in fulfillment of the Scriptures as the coming of the God of grace to the lives of ordinary people. How does Luke 9:23 function in the gospel?

After introducing Jesus as coming in fulfillment of the messianic hopes of the Old Testament and inaugurating His mission as Messiah (1:1–4:30), Luke’s presentation divides naturally into three major movements. “The Acts of Messiah” (4:31–9:50) are followed by “the Teaching of Messiah” (9:51–19:14) with “The Consummation of Messiah’s Mission” (19:45–24:53), concluding the Gospel.⁹

The fourth section (9:1-50) of “The Acts of Messiah” presents Jesus’ mission as alternately confirmed and rejected. At its heart following the feeding of the five thousand (9:10-17) and preceding the transfiguration (9:28-36) lies the account of Peter’s confession (9:18-27), which proclaims the nature both of Jesus’ mission and of the calling of those who follow Him. The confession of Jesus as the Christ (vv. 18-20) elicits Jesus’ prediction of His rejection and death (vv. 21-22). Verse 23 defines Jesus’ call to His disciples as one continuous with His own calling: “the suffering Messiah means also a suffering community.”¹⁰

II. The Recreative Question: What did our text mean to its first readers?

How does the writer seek to communicate his message?

7. Martin, p. 249

8. Ellis, p. 59

9. *Ibid.*, pp. 33-37

10. *Ibid.*, p. 139. If the text occurs in any of the other Gospels, it is important to also ask the function question there. It is not without significance that Mark, stressing the theme of revelation, precedes the confession account with the blind man of Bethsaida (8:22-26) rather than the feeding of the five thousand as does Luke. Indicated is a slight shift of emphasis in their respective uses of the story in their presentations of Jesus.

What is the form and structure of the text? The narrative of Peter’s confession is composed of the dialogue surrounding the confession proper (vv. 18-22), followed by a group of sayings (vv. 23-24) which apply the dialectic of Jesus’ confirmation and rejection to discipleship. Verse 23 is the first and programmatic saying. Its structure in the context of the whole account is as follows:

9:18-22 Dialogue

9:18-19 Inquiries

9:20 Confession of the Christ

9:21-22 Prophecy of the Passion

9:23-27 Admonitions

9:23 Saying on discipleship

23a Introduction: “And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, . . .”

23b Call to self-denial: “. . . let him deny himself, . . .”

23c Call to cross-bearing: “. . . and take up his cross daily, . . .”

23d Call to follow Jesus: “. . . and follow me.”

9:24-26 Explanatory sayings

9:27 Prophetic saying¹¹

Our text (v. 23) functions as the key interpretative saying which focuses the preceding revelation of Jesus (vv. 20-22) on the nature of discipleship.

Introduction (23a): “And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, . . .” With “and he said,” Luke follows the saying immediately on the Passion prediction, indicating even more directly than the other Gospels that the significance of v. 22 flows into v. 23. Matthew (16:22-23) and Mark (8:32-33) have the mutual rebuke of Peter and Jesus intervening, which extends but by no means breaks the connection. That the character of discipleship is to find its definition in the character of the Christ becomes clearly evident from Jesus’ conditional phrase, “If any man will come after me.”

Although in Matthew Jesus speaks only to “his disciples” (16:24), and in Mark to “the multitude with his disciples” (8:34), Luke has it simply “to

11. To appreciate some of the unique aspects of Luke’s use of the account, compare this structure with that of Matthew 16:13-28 and Mark 8:27–9:1.

all" (KJV adds "them" in italics). Intended is the meaning of discipleship for all in the church of Luke's day.

Call to self-denial (23b): ". . . let him deny himself, . . ." This is the first of the three mutually defining imperatives with which Jesus elucidates the demand of discipleship. To deny or say "no" to oneself means that one "abandon his allegiance to his natural life, ambitions, and interests, regarding them as irrelevant."¹² That "there is nothing self-indulgent about being a Christian"¹³ is the only consistent deduction from the career of Jesus: "to follow Christ a person must become apostate from his egocentric self."¹⁴

Call to cross-bearing (23c): ". . . and take up his cross daily, . . ." The second imperative reinforces the first by introducing the word "cross" for the first time in Luke. It is used with striking effect as it suggests the "how" of the self-denial demanded by discipleship.

The cross as a means of criminal execution was a familiar sight in Roman-occupied Palestine. When a man "took up a cross and went off with a little band of Roman soldiers, he was on a one-way journey."¹⁵ Initially, Christ's invitation to His disciples was understood as an invitation to die with Him in Jerusalem.

When Luke incorporated this saying of Jesus in his Gospel, Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection were history, and the Holy Spirit as the resurrection life of Jesus was present in the Church. In the context of the Spirit-filled Church, the intent of Jesus' words was becoming more profoundly understood, as the text of Luke subtly betrays. At issue is the faith-identification with the Cross or death of Jesus (Gal. 2:20).¹⁶ The disciple says no to himself as he says yes to Jesus incarnate, crucified, and risen as the total meaning of his life: "For whoever

would save his life will lose it; and whoever loses his life for my sake, he will save it" (v. 24, RSV). The follower of Christ by faith in the Cross "has died to a whole way of life (cf. 14:27)."¹⁷ This death, however, in the light of the Cross, implies a resurrection by the power of God (vv. 25-27). The foundation, center, and substance of life has shifted radically from the self to the Christ by the Spirit-enabled faith-identification with the Cross.

Luke alone among the Synoptists records the adverb "daily" which indicates "that the words of the Lord have an abiding and existential significance."¹⁸ Ellis adds that "one may still go to Jerusalem and there in corporate identification 'be crucified with Christ.' One may still 'fill up his afflictions' in a life of obedience under trial (Rom. 6:3 ff.; Gal. 2:20; Col. 1:24)."¹⁹ The Cross remains at the heart of the Christian's daily walk.

Call to follow Jesus (23d): ". . . and follow me." The third phrase takes the content of the first two and applies them to discipleship. The nature of the verbal action shifts from decisive and qualifying action to continuous and summary action. Discipleship is a life process, "daily" as "take up his cross" is uniquely qualified in Luke. Stressed in "follow me" in the light of the preceding defining imperatives is the whole of Jesus' incarnate experience as determinative of the whole of the Christian's life.

What is the writer attempting to accomplish in the passage?

With the account of the confession of Peter, Luke has brought his reader vividly to the paradox at the heart of Jesus' earthly ministry. He is "the Christ of God," yes, but He is also a suffering, rejected, and crucified Messiah. From this now flows the nature of the life on earth of him who would follow Jesus, a discipleship that is characterized by the self-denial of the cross. But as Jesus' life was thus open to the Resurrection, so is the life of him who would walk in His way. This is the meaning of disciple-

12. Ellis, p. 140

13. Leon Morris, "The Gospel According to St. Luke," *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1974), p. 170.

14. Ellis, p. 140

15. Morris, p. 170

16. See Gal. 5:24; 6:14; Rom. 6:6; John 12:24 ff.; 2 Cor. 5:14-15. Cf. the first study of this series on the latter text.

17. Morris, p. 170

18. Ellis, p. 140

19. *Ibid.* See Phil. 3:10; 2 Cor. 1:3-10; 4:7-15

ship that Luke seeks to clarify to the church of his time.²⁰

III. The Life-Response Question: How does our text apply to contemporary life? What do I hear?²¹

What do I proclaim?—A sermon: On discipleship

Introduction: “And he said to all, ‘If any man would come after me’” (RSV).

1. The call to discipleship is defined by the career of the one who calls: “after me” (cf. vv. 18-22)

20. We have limited our exegesis to Luke's interpretative use of Jesus' words in the context of his presentation of the significance of Jesus. To attempt to understand the saying more concretely in the context of Jesus' own ministry we would first need to interpret the saying in Matthew's and Mark's contexts as we have in Luke's. Then, with our overlapping understandings of the sayings, we could reconstruct its function and force in the setting of Jesus' ministry. Luke has, of course, taken that significance and applied it to the situation of his readers as have the others. The Gospel writers clue us in as to how the deeds and words of Jesus relate to the life of the ongoing church.

21. My personal hearing is omitted for lack of space. See the first study in the series.

2. The call to discipleship is directed “to all” who would be Christian.

Discipleship demands self-denial: “let him deny himself”

1. The disciple has said no to self-sufficiency for the central issues of life.

2. The disciple says no to self-service as central motive for living.

Discipleship centers in the cross: “let him . . . take up his cross daily”

1. The disciple has said yes to the cross of Christ as the foundation of his entire Christian life.

2. The disciple says yes to the cross of Christ as the mode of his daily Christian living.

Discipleship focuses in Jesus: “let him . . . follow me.”

1. The disciple simply follows Jesus as the enabler for life.

2. The disciple continually follows Jesus as the model for living.

Conclusion

The privilege of discipleship is faithful participation in the way of Christ, the cross and resurrection of Jesus, the power and pattern of Christian existence (cf. vv. 24-26).

Ever note how the most of our boys and our girls
And quite often good folk who are older;
Have to come to our altars again and again,
For redemption and holiness over?



Well, my friend, let me tell you the man never lived,
From the least to our Master and Savior,
Who could stand without putting communion with God
In first place in his daily behavior!

Roy E. McCaleb

THE STARTING POINT

Freedom in Three Dimensions

Another look at the prodigal son story (Luke 15:11-32) shows three freedoms—each of them different.

1. The father had *freedom unequalled*. If the father in the story represents Jesus—as many of us would think—and if real freedom is freedom to do as we ought, then the prayer of our Lord in the Garden, “Not as I will, but as you will” (Matt. 26:39, NIV),¹ is an example of freedom unequalled.

2. The prodigal son had *freedom unbalanced*. There was an overload of self, and it kept the real freedom—love—from getting through.

3. The elder son had *freedom unused*. In v. 31, the father says to the elder son, “My son . . . you are always with me, and everything I have is yours.” Paul reminds us in Ephesians of the “unsearchable riches” we have in Christ. And how many of those riches—spiritual freedoms—are unused in our spiritual pilgrimage.

Preparing to Preach

Dr. Paul S. Rees, in his *World Vision* column some months ago, shared this thought from Bishop Stephen Neill: “No man can preach unless he has learned to wrestle on his knees with the Word of

1. The scriptures from Luke are from the *New International Version*, copyright © 1973 by the New York Bible Society International. Used by permission.

the living God and until the great words of Scripture have so fashioned themselves as parts of his being that they become to him the natural vehicle for his prayer and praise” (“Salvation Tomorrow: A Look at a Book,” *World Vision*, May, 1977, p. 23).

Reasons to Love God

Psalm 18 pictures for us the love relationship between God and His followers. The psalm begins with an affirmation of love—“Lord, how I love you” (v. 1, TLB).² Every spiritual adventure begins with a deep and committed love. Nate Saint spoke of his commitment in these terms: “Discipline, devotion, decision.”

1. There are the *reasons* for this love: “You have done such tremendous things for me” (v. 1). “All I need to do is cry to him—oh, praise the Lord—and I am saved from all my enemies!” (v. 3)

2. There are the *resources* of this love spoken of in v. 2: “The Lord is my fort where I can enter and be safe; no one can follow me in and slay me. He is a rugged mountain where I hide; he is my Savior, a rock where none can reach me, and a tower of safety. He is my shield. He is like the strong horn of a mighty fighting bull.” These figures of speech describe the strength and security of love of which the psalmist speaks.

3. There is the *reachability* of this love. In v. 6, “In my distress I screamed to the Lord for his help. And he heard me from heaven; my cry reached his ears.” In v. 16, “He reached down from heaven and took me and drew me out of my great trials. He rescued me from deep waters.” Here is love from man to God, and from God to man.

What Preaching Is All About

Charles L. Allen, in his autobiography *What I Have Lived By*, tells the story of a conductor on a passenger train who was making his last run before retirement. A man asked him how he felt about his last trip as a conductor on a train. He replied, “It seems like I have spent my life trying to help people get home.”

2. Scriptures from Psalms 18 and 25 are from *The Living Bible*, © 1971, Tyndale House Publishers, Wheaton, Ill. Used by permission.



by
C. Neil Strait

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Lansing, Mich.

That's what pastoring and preaching is all about—trying to help people get home.

Design for Living

In Psalm 25 we have a combination of ingredients that is good for the spiritual journey.

The first is the *desire of the Psalmist's heart*: "To you, O Lord, I pray . . . for I am trusting you" (v. 1, TLB).² "Show me the path where I should go, O Lord; point out the right road for me to walk. Lead me; teach me; for you are the God

who gives me salvation" (vv. 4-5). Prayer reveals the true desire of the heart.

Second is the *dividend for the Psalmist's heart*, in terms of God's response. This is seen in three areas: a path "fragrant with his lovingkindness and his truth" (v. 10)—resulting from obedience; "God's circle of blessing" (v. 13); and "friendship with God" (v. 14).

Third is the *design of the Psalmist's heart* so clearly spelled out in v. 15: "My eyes are ever looking to the Lord." When the design for life is clearly known, with the Lord at the center, then one is ready for life.



My full name is "Church Microphone," but you can call me "Mike." Would you take a minute to listen to my problem? Even though I attend every service and quietly stand there drinking in every word, you tend to ignore me, and sometimes even turn me off! I can't help but wonder why. I know I'm not as pretty as the cross or the candles, but I'm so dedicated, you could call me Saint Mike.

Take last Sunday, for instance. You moved away from the pulpit, asked if everyone could hear, and preached your whole sermon without me. It was a good sermon, too! Sure, the young usher at the back could hear, but what about the hard-of-hearing saint in the fourth row? What about the dedicated workers in the nursery? What about the tape recording for the shut-ins?

Believe me, I won't hurt your message. I'll just help you reach more people. Do you think using a microphone is a reflection on your speaking ability? Do you think your message will be better if it is preached three feet to the right of the pulpit? And don't worry, I can be adjusted no matter how loud your speaking voice is. I may cramp your style at first, but the gospel is preached in words, not in fancy footwork. And I am available in an FM wireless variety for the combination preacher and four-minute-miler.

I like you. I take every word you say to heart. If we stand together, we'll do a much better job.

This is my message—according to Saint Mike.

—Gordon W. Nichols, layman, Binghamton, N.Y.

Seeds for Sermons

May 7

THREE IMPORTANT FEATURES OF SANCTIFICATION

TEXT: "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless . . . Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it (1 Thess. 5:23-24).

One of the great themes accented by Paul was sanctification. He brings three features of this important subject into focus in the above passage. These concerns are as follows:

I. THE SOURCE OF SANCTIFICATION—"The very God of peace sanctify you."

This indicates that the God of peace is the Source of this marvelous experience in the heart of the Christian. This level of spiritual excellence is not the product of our striving or achievement. It does not come because we merit it or prove ourselves worthy of it. Instead, it is an experience that is divinely wrought in us by the miraculous power of the God of the universe. He is the only One capable of handling the problem of sin at the deepest level of our lives. He makes this measure of His grace available through

the provision of Christ's atonement. He also makes this grace operational in us by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in His fullness.

II. THE SCOPE OF SANCTIFICATION—"sanctify you *wholly*."

This means that our whole being is brought under the redemptive control of the Holy Spirit. Every part and parcel of our total life is included in this divine invasion of our personality. No segment of life is left untouched by this miracle of grace. Our "whole spirit and soul and body" are cleansed and integrated so we can be a *whole person*. This eliminates a multiplicity of selves that makes us one type of person when we are at home, another type when we are at church, another when we are at work, and still another when we are in recreational activities. At the juncture of becoming a whole person, we are only one type of person—and that person is a Christlike person.

(To be continued)

May 14

THREE IMPORTANT FEATURES OF SANCTIFICATION

(continued)

TEXT: "Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it" (1 Thess. 5:24).

The third important feature, that we will highlight today, is:

III. THE SURETY OF SANCTIFICATION—"Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it."

The God of peace is not only the Source



by
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of our sanctification, but He also guarantees that it will become a reality. He puts this on the basis of a promise. In the same measure that we keep the promises we make to our children so they know our word can be depended upon, the Lord wants to keep faith with us by keeping His promises. He is not slack concerning His promises, but comes through in a magnificent manner every time a promise is involved. He is not only faithful in calling us to this experience, but is also faithful in making it a reality in our lives.

The type of call that He makes to us is described in this fashion: "For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness" (1 Thess 4:7). He is so concerned about our spiritual well-being that He invites and urges us to move into this type of relationship with Him. He has one objective in mind when He calls us to follow Him, and that is that we will go all the way with Him. This gives Him preeminence in our lives, and makes Him Lord of all of our life, holding absolute sway over our lives. Thus He calls us unto holiness and backs up this call by assuring us that if He is faithful in extending this call, He will be faithful in fulfilling it.

The surety of this experience is proclaimed another way in these words: "For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren" (Heb. 2:11). He who is the Source of our sanctification, and we who are the objects of sanctification become one in fellowship, likeness, and purpose. When we are bound together in this close-knit relationship, He is so proud of us that He calls us His brethren. He is ready to claim kin to us, refer to us as His relatives, and treat us with the preferential treatment that belongs to a member of the family. His surety is backed up by His seal of certitude that I am His and He is mine.

May 21

THREE FACETS OF HOLINESS

TEXT: "But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye

have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life" (Rom. 6:22).

Holiness is the experience whereby God's best is imparted unto us, and we are in a position to be at our best for Him. This working relationship is the essence of the divine-human encounter at its highest and most meaningful level. In the light of this fact, there are three facets of holiness which become a reality when we move into this dimension of spiritual living. They are as follows:

I. STRUCTURALLY, HOLINESS IS HEALTH

"Now being made free from sin" is the scriptural basis for this aspect of holiness. Holiness and health are from the same root word. Whatever health is to the body, that is what holiness is to the soul. As long as every organism is functioning the way it was designed to function, the body is in a healthy condition. But when some organism malfunctions, then illness takes over.

In the same measure when every part of the soul is functioning as it was designed to function when God made it, holiness is a reality. However, the soul is thrown into chaos and confusion when something invades it that pollutes and corrupts it. The source of this malfunction is sin. What disease is to the body, sin is to the soul. Sin dwarfs and stunts the soul. When we are free from sin, the soul will have spiritual health. The strong affirmation of this possibility is stated in these words: "Now being made free from sin." Freedom from sin produces spiritual health, stamina, and wholeness.

II. PRACTICALLY, HOLINESS IS HELPFULNESS

"And become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness." God is at work in our world to build a better world. When we are His servants we are dedicated to this global mission. We have a consuming desire to do the greatest amount of good for the greatest number of people. We are so much like Him that the quality of His holiness shows up in us as "fruit unto holiness." The product of this relationship will be helpfulness to other people.

(To be continued)

THREE FACETS OF HOLINESS

(continued)

TEXT: "But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life" (Rom. 6:22).

III. FUNCTIONALLY, HOLINESS IS HAPPINESS

"Have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life." We will have "a song in our hearts after every trial, after every mile" if we see the fruit of our lives reflecting the quality and beauty that is associated with holiness. The fruit that is produced because our hearts are filled with holy love will be attractive, appetizing, and appealing. When people take a sampling of the same, they will raise these questions: "How can I get something in my life that will make me the same all the time? Tell me the secret of happiness and optimism?"

One of your greatest thrills will come when you share the holiness in your life with someone else, and then see them move in the direction that allows the same type of divine experience to happen to them. This type of witnessing will make us supremely happy in this life.

There is another dimension to our happiness—we have all this and heaven too. The consummation of this type of life is that we will receive "everlasting life." The next life is not a leap into the mysterious, not a journey into darkness, nor a plunge over the precipice of despair. Instead, we will be admitted into a world of beauty, brightness, and grandeur. We will feel at home in the presence of a holy God because we have been made free from sin.

Heaven is the home of the holy, the paradise of the pure, the citadel of the sinless, the sanctuary of the sanctified. Only that which is in harmony with the will of God will receive this type of everlasting life. Our happiness will be unbounded when we move into this prepared place for a prepared people.

Holiness brings us indescribable happiness in this life and eternal happiness in the world to come.

REFLECTIONS REGARDING THE EXPERIENCE OF HOLINESS

TEXT: "He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil" (1 John 3:8).

This verse is one of the strongest statements in the Bible that there is a solution to the problem of sin in the heart of man. Sin entered the human heart because Satan tempted the original parents to rebel against the will of God. Thus sin in the heart is the work of Satan. The above verse declares without equivocation that Jesus came into the world for one purpose—namely, to destroy the works of the devil. With this scripture as the backdrop, we should seriously consider the following propositions:

1. If Jesus cannot destroy the sin that Satan planted in the heart, then the Bible is not true, because it declares that He came for that purpose.

2. If Jesus cannot destroy the sin that Satan planted in the heart, then Jesus failed in His mission. He came for that specific reason.

3. If Jesus cannot destroy the sin that Satan planted in the heart, then Satan is more powerful than Jesus. Satan is above Jesus.

4. If Jesus *can* destroy the sin that Satan planted in the heart, but He does not do it because He wants to keep us humble and creaturely, then He is not holy for He can compromise with sin and do a "cover up" job to prove that sin is not as repulsive to Him as we thought it was.

5. If Jesus cannot destroy the sin that Satan planted in the heart, there is a question about His intelligence, because He is not smart enough to figure a way out of the trap of sin—which means that Satan has outwitted Jesus.

6. If Jesus cannot destroy the sin that Satan planted in the heart and we must sin, that means that there is no freedom.

7. If there is no such thing as freedom, then there can be no moral responsibility. For we cannot be responsible for what we cannot avoid.

8. The Bible often gives the command that we are to be sanctified, but if no provision is made for it to be a reality, then God is not just to require it.

9. The Lord is no respecter of persons. If the only reason He disqualifies a person from going to heaven is sin, then He will have to keep everyone out who sins.

10. The Lord lays a total claim to our lives. When we yield to Him what He claims—

He always cleanses what He owns,
He always fills what He cleanses,
He always uses what He fills.

June 11

GIVING AID AND COMFORT TO PUBLIC ENEMY NO. 1

TEXT: "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (Rom. 8:7).

The seriousness of living below our privileges in divine grace is expressed in this verse. We are living below our privileges when we allow the carnal mind to remain in us. The measure of our victory over carnal-mindedness is expressed in these words: "For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace" (v. 6). The contrast between these two ways of life is summarized in this manner: "For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit" (v. 5).

In other words, if we live for the flesh we are under the control of the carnal mind. However, if the carnal mind is removed from our hearts, we live in harmony with the ways of the spiritual kingdom.

In the legal field, the most serious charge that can be brought against one is to be classified at Public Enemy No. 1. This refers to the person who is the most dangerous lawbreaker in our society. He is the source of the greatest harm to the greatest number of people. The moment this Public Enemy No. 1 is brought to justice, every effort is made to get information about anyone who gave

him aid or comfort while he was running from the law. Anyone who was an accomplice is treated with the same measure of guilt as he who committed the actual crimes.

A parallel to this is found in the spiritual world. Public Enemy No. 1 in the spiritual world is the carnal mind, because it is not "subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." All the wrongs done in the world are prompted by the carnal mind. Every unmentionable sin, as well as indescribable horror crime, is motivated by carnal mindedness. Many so-called decent people are shocked by these terrible deeds. However, if they do not have the carnal mind cleansed from their lives, they become guilty of giving aid and comfort to Public Enemy No. 1 against the kingdom of God. This makes them a party to all the things done because of carnal mindedness. That's how serious it is to refuse to go on to entire sanctification after one has been converted.

June 18

THE GREATEST LAW AND THE GREATEST SIN IN THE WORLD

TEXT: "Master, which is the greatest commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. . . . And . . . Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Matt. 22:36-39).

The moment Jesus was asked what the greatest commandment was, He did not hesitate a split second for the answer. His immediate reply was fashioned in the words of the verses under consideration. His comprehensive answer lets us know that we are to love God completely, totally, and wholeheartedly. This quality of love is to be carried over into our attitude toward our fellowman. When we know what the greatest commandment is, usually the next question is: What is the greatest sin?

Normally, you will get a different answer from each person. Each will name some outrageous deed that a heartless

brute inflicts upon an innocent party. This may be murder, rape, intentional injury that brings total disability, unfair dealings that result in bankruptcy, or some other form of drastic mistreatment.

However, if we are completely logical in our reasoning, there is only one answer to this question. The greatest sin is committed when we break the greatest commandment. So if the greatest commandment is to love God and our fellowman without reservation, then the greatest sin is committed if we refuse to love God and our fellowman in this measure. In the final analysis, sin is not something we *do*—it is something we *are*. The moment we withhold our total love from God, or that we harbor resentment against our fellowman, we are guilty of committing the greatest sin.

We cannot be halfhearted in our devotion to God and escape the indictment of committing the greatest sin. We can be decent, respected, and admired, and still be guilty of being involved in the greatest sin—because we refuse to love.

Only as we make an unconditional surrender of our lives to God—loving Him first, foremost, and fervently—can we obey the greatest commandment. If we stop short of this, then we commit the greatest sin.

June 25

THE FATHER, THE SON, AND THE HOLY SPIRIT ARE INVOLVED IN SANCTIFICATION

TEXTS: “This is the will of God, even your sanctification” (1 Thess. 4:3)

“Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate” (Heb. 13:12)

“... because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost” (Rom. 5:5).

Each Member of the Trinity is vitally related to the divine miracle that makes it possible for us to receive the experience of sanctification. This means that the Godhead is anxious for us to enjoy this level of spiritual excellence, and that They are doing everything compatible

with free moral agency to make the life of perfect love a reality at the living level of our lives. This divine involvement can be summarized in the following manner:

I. THE FATHER IS THE FORMAL CAUSE, MAKING PLANS FOR OUR SANCTIFICATION.

His will for us is that we may be sanctified (1 Thess. 4:3). He desires this way of life for us. He is concerned about bringing us to this type of relationship with Him. He is jealous for us to become a fit vessel for Him to inhabit in all His fullness. He plans the way to salvation whereby we may become partakers of the divine nature and be like Him inwardly and outwardly.

II. THE SON IS THE PROVISIONAL CAUSE, PAYING THE PRICE THAT MAKES THE FATHER'S PLANS AVAILABLE.

He suffered without the gate to provide the means for us to be sanctified (Heb. 13:12). The devil enticed man to rebel against the moral law of God. Because of that rebellion, whatever spiritual benefits the Father plans for us must be purchased by a price that satisfies the demands of justice and meets the requirements of the moral law. This involves suffering that is equal to the offense. Thus Jesus had to pay a price to make the Father's plans available.

III. THE HOLY SPIRIT IS THE EFFICIENT CAUSE, PRODUCING THE BENEFITS THAT ARE AVAILABLE.

Divine love is perfected in us by the work of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 5:5). We are restored to holy love and holy fellowship with God through the Person and work of the Holy Spirit. He makes actual the experience that has been provided; He makes experiential the degree of grace that has been made available; He makes personal the type of victory over sin that the Father willed for us to have and that Jesus died to provide.

* * *

A NEW KIND OF LIFE—

One is not a Christian because he changes his way of living. He changes his way of living because he is a Christian.

By
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Gleanings

from the Greek

Matthew 5:3-22

“Blessed” or “Happy” (5:3-11)

In 1755, John Wesley used “happy” in his excellent translation of the New Testament. Many modern versions have followed him in this. Doesn’t this sound better today?

The Greek adjective is *makarios* (in the plural here, *makarioi*). It can be translated either “blessed” or “happy.” The problem is that happiness today is too often thought of as depending on outward circumstances—the “happenings” or “happenstance” of life. Etymologically, “happy” comes from “hap,” which means chance or good luck. Furthermore, the Greeks used *makarios* in connection with the blessing given by their gods. Specifically, Aristotle used it for divine blessedness in contrast to human happiness. We agree with Weymouth when he says, “Blessedness is, of course, an infinitely higher and better thing than mere happiness.”

R. C. H. Lenski has a beautiful observation here. He writes: “‘Blessed!’ intoned again and again, sounds like bells of heaven, ringing down into this unblest world from the cathedral spires of the kingdom inviting all men to enter” (*Interpretation of St. Matthew’s Gospel*, p. 183). For this and similar reasons, “blessed” is retained in both NASB and NIV.

“Savour” (5:13)

“Have lost his savour” is all one word in Greek, *moranthe*. This is the aorist passive of the verb *moraino*, formed from the adjective *moron*, “foolish.” The verb

is used in classical Greek with the sense, “to be foolish.” But elsewhere in the NT (Rom. 1:22; 1 Cor. 1:20) it means “made foolish.” Here it obviously has the idea, “became tasteless.” As such it is foolish, of no value.

“Candle” or “Lamp”? (5:15)

The Greek word *lychnon* means a “lamp.” In the time of Christ the people used little clay lamps, holding only a fraction of a cupful of olive oil, lighted with a small wick. Many of us were brought up using oil lamps in the early years of the 20th century.

But in the 17th century, the King James translators used candles, and they wanted to bring the Bible up to date. So they substituted “candle” for “lamp,” and “candlestick” for “lampstand.” But their words are anachronistic.

“Shine” (5:16)

The Greek verb is *lampo*, from which we get our English word “lamp.” The word for “light” is *phos* (genitive, *photos*), from which we get “photo.” Our word “photograph” literally means “a writing with light.”

“Fulfill” or “Fill full”? (5:17)

Jesus said that He had not come to abolish “the law or the Prophets” (NIV)*—that is, the Old Testament. Rather, He had come to fulfill them.

The Greek verb is *pleroo*, from *pleres*, “full” or “filled.” So the basic meaning of the verb is: “to fill, make full, fill to the full” (Abbott-Smith, p. 365). When used of sayings or prophecies, it means “to bring to pass, fulfill” (p. 366).

But it is highly significant to apply the basic meaning here. Jesus came to fill the commands and typology of the Law (the Pentateuch) with a new and fuller spiritual meaning. He did the same for the Prophets. In His person and mission, the Old Testament prophecies took on full meaning. They come alive when we read them in the light of Christ. In His incarnation He put flesh and blood on the ancient bones.

Is it “fulfill” or “fill full”? We would answer, “Both!” Unfortunately, a trans-

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lation must choose one or the other. But the preacher can develop both ideas with great blessing to his hearers.

“One Jot” or “One Tittle” (5:18)

“Jot” translates *iota*, which was the name of the smallest letter in the Greek alphabet. We still say, “It doesn’t make one iota of difference.” The Greek letter is like our small written “i” minus the dot above.

But the English word “jot” comes from the name of the smallest Hebrew letter of the alphabet, *yodh*, which is like a small apostrophe. Again, it suggests the smallest thing known.

“Tittle” is the translation of *keraiā*, which means “horn.” It refers to the tiny projection on certain letters of the Hebrew alphabet that distinguish them from other letters.

Goodspeed caught the idea when he translated this combination, “Not one dotting of an *i* or crossing of a *t*.” But it is spelled out most accurately in this rendering: “not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen” (NIV).

Was Jesus an Egotist? (5:22)

Verse 20 is generally recognized as the key verse of the Sermon on the Mount. In it Jesus said that we must have a higher righteousness than that of the scribes and Pharisees. Then in six paragraphs (21-26, 27-30, 31-32, 33-37, 38-42, 43-48) He proceeded to illustrate what He meant by this.

Each of these paragraphs begins with “Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time,” or a shorter version of the same. Incidentally, the Greek, which has no preposition here, can mean either “by them” (KJV) or “to those” (NIV).

Then, in all six cases (vv. 22, 28, 32, 34, 39, 44), Jesus comes back with a powerful affirmation: “But I say unto you.” In the Greek this is even more emphatic: “ego de lego hymin.” In the Greek language, as in Latin, the pronoun is included in the verb form. When the pronoun is expressed separately it denotes special emphasis. Furthermore, the place of greatest emphasis in a Greek sentence is the beginning. So, in translating *ego de lego hymin*, the “I” (*ego*) should be emphasized: “But I say to you.”

How are we going to interpret the fact that Jesus made the *ego* so prominent in His teaching here? How dared He set His own authority against the wisdom of all the past?

We are forced to face the only two possible alternatives. Either Jesus was the greatest egotist who ever lived, or He was exactly what He claimed to be—the Son of God. There is no middle ground. Many scholars have said that Jesus was a good man and a great teacher, but not divine. But if Jesus was not the Son of God, as He claimed to be, He was a liar and a false teacher. The foundation doctrine of the Christian faith is the deity of Jesus.



Why Be Sanctified?

TEXT: “Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord” (Heb. 12:14).

Five scriptural reasons why we must be holy:

I. GOD PLANNED AND PREDESTINED that His children should be holy:

It is an integral part of God’s plan of redemption that we, who were made in His image, should be restored to a state of holiness, even though our human nature has suffered irreparable damage from the fall (Eph. 1:1-14).

II. GOD PROMISED us this wonderful blessing and state of holiness:

- A. Luke 1:73-75
- B. OT prophecies: Joel 2:28; Isa. 44:3; and Ezek. 11:19
- C. John the Baptist reiterated the promise: Mark 1:7-8.
- D. Jesus renewed the promise: Luke 24:49; John 14:16-17; Acts 1:4.
- E. It was fulfilled at Pentecost: Acts 2:16-17.

F. The promise is extended to all God's children: Acts 2:38-39.

III. JESUS PROVIDED our sanctification through His atoning sacrifice: Eph. 5:25-27; Heb. 13:12; 10:9-14; John 17:19; Heb. 9:13-14; Titus 2:14.

IV. JESUS PRAYED for our sanctification: John 17, especially vv. 17, 20.

V. GOD PRESCRIBES holiness as a prerequisite to entering into His presence: Heb. 12:14; 1 Pet. 1:15; 1 Thess. 4:3, 7; Rev. 20:6.

CONCLUSION: "Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it" (1 Thess. 5:24).

EVERETT G. LEMERON

How to Implement Your Consecration

SCRIPTURE: 1 Pet. 2:11-25

TEXT: Verse 12

INTRODUCTION: Dr. Albert Schweitzer—an example supreme of one who gave all. After earning three doctorates (philosophy, theology, music), he earned another in medicine to serve as a medical missionary. The other end of the scale are the Demases who turn back, "loving the present world." In between these two extremes most of us move. We follow Peter in *implementation of consecration*.

I. BE A GOOD WARRIOR

A. The war indicated (v. 11). Or Gal. 5:17, and the call is "abstain."

B. Christian opposed in personal efforts to live right; serve God; be a channel of blessing.

C. So set yourself to battle: "Put on the whole armor of God." "Fight the good fight of faith."

II. BE A GOOD CONVERSATIONALIST (Manner of living).

A. Live honest lives (v. 12).

B. Live dedicated lives (v. 12).

C. Live submissive lives—"unto governors" (v. 14); "to masters" (v. 18); "to husbands" (3:1); "younger to elder" (5:5); "one to another" (5:15).

III. BE A GOOD FOLLOWER (vv. 21-24)

A. Follow Christ in sinless deed; guileless speech.

B. Follow Christ in sanctified attitude. "Reviled, reviled not again . . . suffered, threatened not."

C. Follow Christ in bearing the sins of others (v. 24).

CONCLUSION: The call is to self-forgetfulness. The adoption of a program for life that takes on the needs of others. It is never easy. It sometimes seems futile. But you will win occasionally, and the win is worth it all.

J. MELTON THOMAS

Ideas That Work

Family Life Questionnaire

I inserted this questionnaire into a Sunday bulletin for each parishoner. Then I used it as the base for a sermon on the family—touching briefly on each question during the message. I recommend this for use on Mother's or Father's Day.

PARENTS AND CHILDREN:

- Do you hug your child?
- Do you hear your child's bedtime prayer?
- Do you go to church with your children, or do you send them most of the time?
- How long has it been since you played a table game with your child?
- How many hours does your TV "talk" with your child in comparison to *your* talking with him?
- Do you ever take a walk with your child?
- Do you eat breakfast with your child?
- How many minutes a day—on the average—do you spend with your child in chatting?
- Do you know—in detail—how your child is doing in school? Have you

talked to the teacher of your child in the last four months?

- Do you think your child really loves you?
- Do you think your child respects you?
- Did you yourself grow up feeling close to or far from your own parents? How do you transfer these feelings to your child?
- Do you think your child would go on drugs?
- Do you think your child would be tempted to smoke cigarettes or drink?
- Does your child have a tendency to sneak?
- Do you understand what makes some children have homosexual tendencies?
- Have you talked about God's good gift of sex with your child?
- Have you explained the difference between sex and lust?
- Is there discipline in your home?
- Do you consciously strive for that balance between expression of love and discipline?
- Does your child have an understanding of the Bible?
- Does your child know Jesus as Savior?
- Does your child like to attend worship?
- Do you think your child is building into his personality spiritual convictions?
- Have you taught your child how "to stand alone" for what he believes is right?
- Do you have liquor, cigarettes, pornography, or drug misuse in your life-style as a parent?
- Does your child regard you as a phony, or "for real"?
- Do you really believe that you know your child?

J. GRANT SWANK, JR.



A BOY'S MESSAGE TO HIS DAD

His little arms crept 'round my neck,
And then I heard him say
Four simple words I shan't forget—
Four words that made me pray.
They turned a mirror on my soul,
On secrets no one knew.
They startled me—I hear them yet—
He said, "I'll be like you."

GRANDMA'S GLASSES

A little boy said to a playmate: "When I get old, I want to wear glasses just like Grandma wears. She has a special kind, 'cause she can see more than most folks."

"She can see when folks are hungry or tired or feel bad, and she can even see what'll make them feel better. She can see how to fix a lot of things, and she can see what a feller meant to do—even if he didn't do it. She can see when a feller is about to cry, and she can see what to do to make him feel right."

"I asked her how she could see so good, and she said it was the way she learned to look at things through her glasses."

* * *

When we put our cares in His hands,
He puts His peace into our hearts.

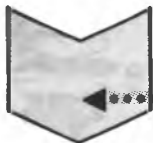
A MAN'S TRUE WORTH

You cannot guess a man's true worth
by what you see him do;
For in the misty background stands
a soul unknown to you.

You cannot see the load he bears
or see his secret aims;
You cannot see the weeping heart
or how the spirit flames.

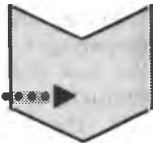
You cannot call him good or bad
by his shadow on the wall;
Only God, who is the Light,
can judge him, great or small.

—May Basey



HERE AND THERE

AMONG BOOKS



Conducted by the Editor

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Conserve the Converts

By Charles (Chic) Shaver (Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1976. 103 pp., paper, \$1.50).

Prof. Shaver of the Nazarene Theological Seminary has written an "easy to read" manual on the importance and methods in following up and conserving the convert.

The book is full of personal experiences which add both interest and value to the study. The appendix is of particular value in giving materials which the pastor and his lay leadership can use in the "growth patterns" of the young convert. Questions for study follow each chapter.

I would certainly recommend the work for every pastor and those who are interested in participating in this important work.

OSCAR F. REED

A Guide to Biblical Preaching

By James W. Cox (Abingdon Press, 1976. 142 pp., paperback, \$6.50).

Here is a book that every pastor and student of preaching ought to have in his library. In fact it is important that occasionally a pastor read a book on preaching to stay current with what is happening in the field.

Dr. Cox, professor of preaching at Southern Baptist Seminary in Louisville,

has written with facility about the task of the biblical preacher in a way that will hold your attention and give you insight into differing ways of approaching an old problem in communication of the gospel.

He begins by asking the question, What is biblical preaching? And then comprehensively attempts to discuss all the differing facets of the problem. He is clear in exposing the different ways that a man can preach biblically in exposing the Scriptures. Not the least part of the book is his suggestion for preaching on a three-year cycle—a Lectionary for the Christian Year.

The discussion on how to motivate and persuade is of particular interest to an evangelical preacher. He also includes "Guiding principles for the Interpretation of the Bible."

OSCAR F. REED

Pastoral Care in the Church

By C. W. Brister (Harper and Row, 1964, 1977. 259 pp., paperback, \$4.95).

Seward Hiltner suggests that this book is "indispensable for every local pastor." It is one of the most competent and comprehensive books in its field. Wayne Oates, Howard Clinebell, and *Christianity Today* speak just as highly. Brister makes the pastoral task the responsibility of the whole congregation. "Theoretical discussions are peppered with case histories."

Among the major areas treated are: preparing for marriage, conversion and the new church member, aging, family conflict, the anxious and disturbed, the sick, the bereaved, the alcoholic, the mentally ill and their families.

OSCAR F. REED

The Preacher: His Purpose and Practice

By Roy Pearson (Westminster Press, 1962, 1977. 223 pp., \$4.50).

The author believes that there is a great and dangerous change going on in the conception of the pastor's function in American Protestantism. This experienced writer, pastor, and educator calls for a return to the New Testament ideal for the pastor with its emphasis on integrity and vocation. "The church must avoid trying to carry on secular activities itself; it must rather produce people who can carry on secular activities in the light of Christian ideals."

OSCAR F. REED

Preachers' Exchange



FOR SALE: *Manuals*, Church of the Nazarene, 1923, 1932. *Helps to Holiness*, Samuel Logan Bringle, 1896. All the following by W. B. Godbey: *Commentary on the New Testament*, 7 vols., © 1896; *Bible Theology*, © 1911; *Translation of the New Testament*; *Glorification*, © 1902; *Mundane Restitution*, © 1917. Dan Hopkins, 243 Brookside Dr., San Anselmo, CA 94960.

WANTED: *The Land and the Book*, W. M. Thompson. Pocono Lake Wesleyan Church, Pocono Lake, PA 18347.

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

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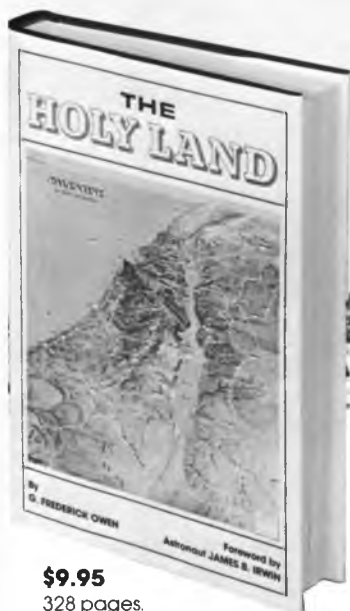
● Make Ministry Your Message

Plan for quality involvement rather than quantity, discipleship rather than membership.

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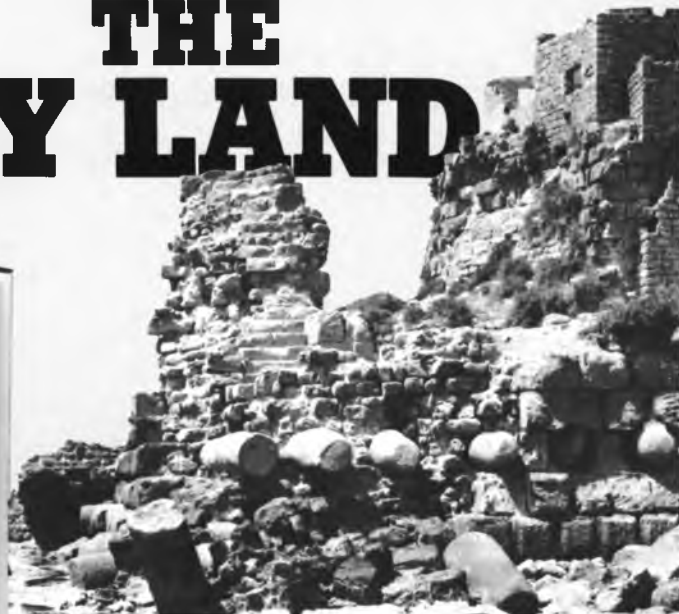
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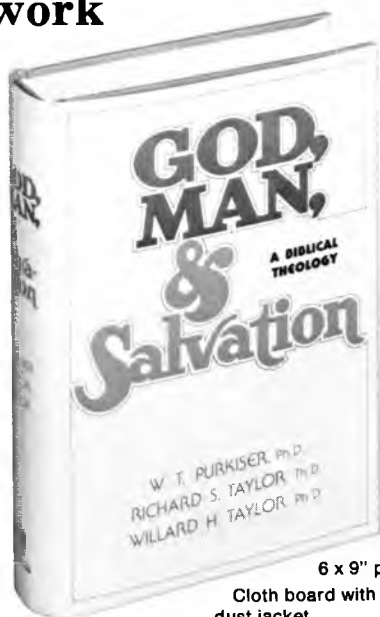
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