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JUNE / JULY / AUGUST / 1991



THE

# Preacher's

## MAGAZINE

**AN OPEN LOOK AT  
OURSELVES**

**UNDER SEALED ORDERS**

**TRENDS AND  
IMPLICATIONS FOR THE  
CHURCH IN THE 1990S**

**PENTECOST**

**SIX WAYS TO HELP  
YOUR TEENS GAIN  
SELF-ESTEEM**

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*The Lord is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer.*  
—Psalm 18:2

## **My Pastor**

*by Jeanette Larrew*

Thank You, God, for a man full of  
compassion,  
tenderness,  
love.

Thank You for a pastor that  
feeds his sheep,  
studies to show himself approved,  
teaches us the forgiving love of God.

Thank You, Lord, for a friend who  
laughs with me,  
hurts with me,  
understands my human frailties.

Thank You, Lord, for my pastor, who  
is considerate when I forget to be,  
is there for me when I need him.

Lord, help me to be for my pastor  
one he can count on,  
one who holds him up in prayer,  
one who accepts him as he is,  
one who never adds to his burdens.

Lord, make me a blessing by  
encouraging him in his work,  
complimenting him sincerely  
when his message is "just for me,"  
not expecting too much of him.

Lord, help me to be faithful  
in my tithes and offerings,  
in attendance at and participation  
in the services of the church,  
in being Your servant.

Before I judge, especially my pastor,  
help me to put myself in his shoes,  
help me to realize he is human  
and may sometimes err in judgment,  
help me, Lord, to love and want to be loved.

Thank You, Lord, for my pastor—  
a man of God,  
a servant of his flock,  
a fine example.





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# Warmhearted Uplift for Downhearted

by Randal E. Denny

Spokane, Wash.

**T**he complete letter was printed in the *Preacher's Magazine*, December-February 1990-91. Here are some excerpts:

"Dear Editor:

"... It's gotten so that I hate Sundays and dread going to my church. I usually cry before, during, or after the service—or all three.

"You see, my church is dead. ... There's only a handful of members. Most of them are senior citizens. ... And I am the only young mother.

"... Often I'm too tired or discouraged to take [my girls] on Sunday and Wednesday nights, but I feel guilty when we stay home.

"The pastor is very nice, but his sermons are rather shallow. ... Our small church can't pay him much, so he must work at two other jobs.

"I long for deep preaching ... and spiritual fellowship. I have some friends who go to the Baptist church. ...

"... I have considered looking for another church, but that is not feasible, you see. I'm married to the pastor."

The letter came anonymously. Its message broke my heart. I could not sleep that night. The heartache expressed haunted me. I knew she was not alone in her plight. Readers of the *Preacher's Magazine* wrote giving warmhearted uplift for the downhearted lady of the parsonage.

## Love was expressed in their reactions.

David Edwards of Culver, Oreg., said, "Your letter could have been written by me—and I'm the pastor." Bruce Knorpp of Kingwood, W.Va., noted, "I am concerned about pastors' wives because I am married to one. What an awesome responsibility it is to be my wife's pastor." From Osaloosa, Iowa, E. L. Wisheart wrote,

"I would tell this weary traveler that my heart breaks for her."

An anonymous writer suggested, "I feel as if each active pastor has a 'story' that he can tell of extreme frustration concerning unavoidable circumstances of ministry. I remember a visit to the Arlington National Cemetery, where I watched the changing of the guard at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. Perhaps there will someday be a memorial to the 'Unknown Pastor' and 'Unknown Pastor's Wife.'" Daniel Alger of Denair, Calif., remarked, "Obviously this pastor's wife feels that she and her husband are at a dead end and no one knows or cares." To counteract that feeling, Alger added, "Bernie Hertel told of a district superintendent who regularly met his pastors and wives in their homes for a time of encouragement and prayer. Bernie said that he 'always felt 10 feet tall afterward.' [District] administrative responsibilities have increased so much that such pastoral care is [now] impossible, and that leaves large cracks for parsonage families to fall through."

Retired District Superintendent Raymond C. Kratzer suggested, "It would be good if they could take a leave of absence from pastoring, join some alive and caring church, while he works in the secular arena temporarily. His ministry could be continued through activity in the local church."

Some reactions reached with empathy to the lady's pastor-husband. Edwards said, "Your husband probably feels the same way you do. He's tired. He knows his sermons are shallow, but without time to prepare, what else can he do? He must balance work, ministry, and family. He probably doesn't get much visitation done. As a result, his self-esteem is in the pits. ... Your husband is frustrated with complacent saints, the lack of young families and



children, and the tremendous burden of ministry he must place upon you." Johnnie Childress, pastor's wife in Meridian, Miss., empathized, "My heart went out to you as I read your story. But also my heart went out to your pastor-husband."

## Love was expressed in their recommendations.

Knorpp asserted, "When your church doors are open for services, you must be there regardless of the church's condition and regardless of being tired or discouraged. Why? Your husband needs your supportive spirit, and you need to practice a disciplined life." He added, "You need an exceptionally strong personal devotional life. Dig into the Scriptures. Listen to tapes of good sound gospel music and sound preaching. Borrow all the tapes you can." Childress reminded, "God promises to supply all of our need and give us strength. Read Phil. 4:13, 19." Knorpp also suggested visiting the revival meetings of neighboring churches, especially churches with a holiness orientation.

The ministry of intercessory prayer is a powerful resource for spiritual changes. Begin praying that God will open doors so that "your husband won't have to work those two other jobs and be able to have time to study and pray and preach to feed his flock," urged Childress. Intercessory prayer reaps dividends: "Complacent laymen need to be rekindled, a tired and discouraged pas-

tor needs a fresh anointing from God, and a parsonage first lady needs a glorious new touch of fire on her soul. Prayer can change things at your house and at your church," wrote Knorpp.

Wisehart suggested two things. "Find a mentor. What is a mentor? A faithful counselor. Find a Bible study in your area. Ask God to help you locate a mentor—probably a lady older than you, a mature Christian in whom you can confide. . . . You want someone who knows and talks Jesus—someone in whom you can be accountable." His second point is a strong biblical principle: "Find a ministry. Find someone with whom you can build a friendship, someone you could win to Christ. When she knows Jesus, you become her mentor. You disciple her." W. Russell York of Greens Fork, Ind., agreed, "Maybe she should get acquainted with some young mothers her age and try to change her situation." Childress added, "You could start a ladies' ministry, Bible study, craft class, or a fellowship to visit nursing homes or hospitals with some of your elderly people. They would love this."

J. Grant Swank, Jr., of Walpole, Mass., visualized the lonely lady with her little children. What could they do to make a difference? He gave creative recommendations:

1. "Take your children to visit each senior citizen. . . . Have the children crayon pictures for these older friends, giving them as presents."
2. "You yourself give a short three-to-four-minute sermonette twice each month during the Sunday morning worship. Use your children as 'props.' Have a child sing or recite a Scripture verse or poem. Tell a story from family life involving the children. Some senior citizens have not been around households with

children for a long time; they delight in hearing what is going on with your youngsters."

3. "Offer an encouraging prayer for the older folk once a month in the evening worship. Could you share with them a homemade muffin after service tied up pleasantly in a baggie? Do you remember their birthdays with a poem remembrance in worship?"

4. "Plan a monthly Sunday evening service so that your husband will not have to prepare a sermon. You may accent testimonies, prayer around the altar, sharing Scripture promises, inviting an evangelical friend from another church to share music or life stories. Cap it with light refreshments. Keep the evening simple, warm, and friendly."

5. "Ask God for His special graces in dealing with the struggling church. Keep your thoughts faith-filled. Take note of anything positive. . . ."

6. "Become a pen pal with a pastor's wife in another small church. Keep your letters free from com-

## See God standing in the center of your sanctuary.

plaining. Be an encouragement to one another by lifting up Scripture's practical promises that you have seen fulfilled in your life. If such a pastor's wife lives nearby, ask the Lord if you can become her friend. . . ."

7. "Keep in touch with the Baptist church in town. Go to their socials and special weeknight events, and get to know their people. Would that parsonage family become your friends in ministry? . . ."

8. "You long for 'deep preaching.' When you come upon an excellent illustration from magazines or books, clip it for your husband. Point out to him real-life illustrations from your family, newspaper, and community that he could use in sermons. . . . You can aid him in broadening the scope of his sermon contents."

9. "See God standing in the center of your sanctuary. He is indeed there. . . . Instead of scanning empty pews, lift your eyes to Jesus' face. Then He will show you the good in the hearts of people around you—particularly the good in the man behind the pulpit."

## Love was expressed in their responses.

Wisehart commented, "I do not mean to suggest that your situation is simple or easily handled. But I do believe that finding a mentor and a ministry will make a positive difference. P.S. Why do I suggest this to you? Because it has worked—for me."

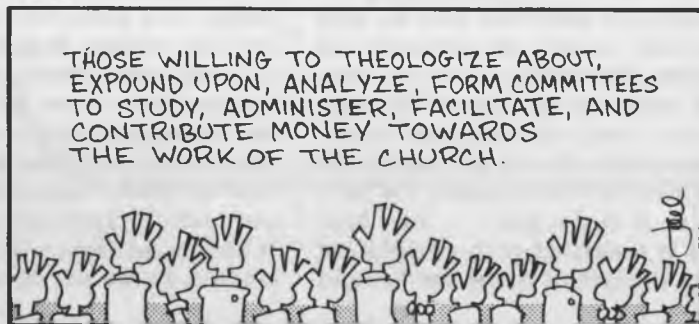
Pastor Knorpp addressed the lady of the manse who is downcast, "I am adding you and your husband to my personal prayer list." Another pastor expressed the same caring response: "Please assure this unknown pastor's wife that she will remain in our prayers."

I have heard people accuse the church of being the only army that shoots its own wounded. The response of readers to this wounded woman's plea has been an uplifting, warmhearted, caring attempt to express love, to give support, and to let her know that she is not alone.

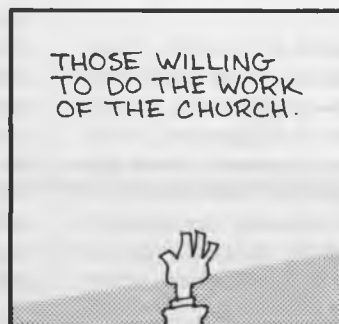
"May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope, encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word" (2 Thess. 2:16-17).



## Pontius' Puddle



THOSE WILLING TO THEOLOGIZE ABOUT, EXPOUND UPON, ANALYZE, FORM COMMITTEES TO STUDY, ADMINISTER, FACILITATE, AND CONTRIBUTE MONEY TOWARDS THE WORK OF THE CHURCH.



THOSE WILLING TO DO THE WORK OF THE CHURCH.



## Learning from the Master

by C. Neil Strait

Grand Rapids, Mich.

**J**ohn Henry Jowett, in one of his devotionals, picks up on Mark's summary of Jesus where he wrote, "He was teaching his disciples" (9:31). Jowett says, "And my Lord will teach me. He will lead me into 'the deep things' of God. There is only one school for this sort of learning, and an old saint called it the Academy of Love, and it meets in Gethsemane and Calvary, and the Lord Himself is the teacher, and there is room in the school for thee and me" (*My Daily Meditation*, July the Ninth).

Life is a learning experience. It never ends—or should not. But the privilege we have, as disciples of Jesus, is that He is our Teacher. That means the One who has called us to ministry will also be the One who will teach us how to minister. It is a thought rich with comfort and strength.

What does this mean for us in ministry?

First, it means that when failures, mistakes, problems, and crises come our way, it is not the end of the road. Jesus, the Master Teacher, waits to take the failures, the mistakes, the problems, and the crises and be Teacher to us in the midst of these. It is the Lord's way of bringing order

out of chaos, beauty for ashes, hope out of despair. This is the history of God—taking the worst, the darkest, the despairing, and writing a new chapter.


So the next failure or crisis you have, remember that such become the raw material for the Lord's work. Take them to the Lord and enroll in His Academy of Love for a course in victory and triumph. He is always ready to lead His children to brighter days and new beginnings.

Second, it means that all of us are in the fashioning stage. I like the children's song that says, "He's still workin' on me!" The secret is to let Him be the Teacher. Too often other voices chart our path, and other teachers seem inviting. For our tasks of ministry we must make sure that the one Voice we are hearing and the one Teacher we are following is Jesus. Where He has my relinquished will and my ready mind, there He can do His work of refinement and disciple making.

Third, it means that as Teacher, Jesus welcomes our questions, our frustrations, our doubts, because only as one reaches out with these expressions will the truth be found. A good teacher welcomes the inquiring mind, the searching heart,

that one in pursuit of answers. So does Jesus! He welcomes our searching, in His Academy of Love, for He is "the way and the truth and the life" (John 14:6).

Jowett closed his devotional thought with this admonition: "They who would be great scholars in this school must become 'as little children.' Through the childlike spirit we attain unto Godlike wisdom" (ibid.).

Pastor, be encouraged! Our Teacher-Shepherd knows the way through the lowlands, and He will lead you and me to the brighter side, where His truth shines through and His love comforts and binds up the wounds. The lessons in Gethsemane and Calvary are sometimes painful, but they equip us for ministry and service. Those very lessons were modeled by Jesus, and He waits to teach them to us. 



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# An Open Look at Ourselves

*An Interview Based on Gallup Survey*

**Jerald D. Johnson** and **Wilbur W. Brannon**  
*General Superintendent* *Pastoral Ministries Director*

*The Gallup Survey of the Church of the Nazarene helps us look at ourselves. Dr. Jerald D. Johnson, general superintendent in the Church of the Nazarene, was recently interviewed in Kansas City by Pastoral Ministries Director Dr. Wilbur W. Brannon, also of the Church of the Nazarene. The issues discussed face every holiness denomination in some way.*

*Dr. Johnson shares his views of Gallup's Survey on the Programs and Services of International Headquarters Church of the Nazarene. The questionnaire of the survey was distributed to district superintendents, pastors, and laymen of the church.*

**Brannon:** What do you see as the most significant findings from Gallup's survey of Nazarene pastors?

**Johnson:** I felt that the overall response from the pastors was positive. Actually, the pastors came through stronger than expected. Their loyalty to the church and their focus on the doctrine of holiness was evident. I think this basic loyalty to the church and the focus on its doctrine shows that pastors want the denomination, as well as their own local church, to succeed. They do not want to be a part of a losing team. Of course you will have the isolated pastor who doesn't have a team concept and who doesn't think in terms of what he does and how that is going to affect the whole, but those have become the exceptions.

**Brannon:** I would assume that all the findings were not positive. What do you see as some of the problem areas that were identified in the survey?



**JERALD D. JOHNSON**  
*General Superintendent*

**Johnson:** I think that there is a gap between the pastors and the district superintendents that could come closer together. Obviously this does not reflect every district. The survey indicates that the confidence level of pastors toward their district superintendent could be stronger than it is. Their confidence level in the general leadership seems to be stronger than in their district leadership.

That makes me wonder if there are some areas where we could improve our district structure. Our district superintendents are very committed men. They try to be loving, loyal leaders, but I am wondering if the new review system isn't going to improve that.

**Brannon:** In relation to district structure, is there anything you have thought about in terms of new structures that could help bring about a solution to this problem?

**Johnson:** I think as a church we are going to have to make some major decisions. We are going to have large districts, so we are going to have to develop a structure to help pastors on a personal level on those large districts. That could come through a type of delegation of responsibilities. On smaller districts you automatically have that closer touch.

**Brannon:** Is there a model that we could follow?

**Johnson:** Instead of suggesting there is a model, I think this subject needs to be thrown into the discussion arena. Personally, I have fluctuated in both directions, but I think it would be a good subject to debate. Meaningful debate would lead to some definite study of assigning responsibilities.

**Brannon:** Let's get back to the matter of loyalty to our distinctive doctrine. The survey indicates the pastor perceives himself to be loyal, but the district superintendent's perception of the pastor

brings that loyalty into question. Could this be due to the filter through which the older generation is looking at a younger generation who is trying to interpret the doctrine in relevant terms for our present day?

**Johnson:** From my own observations, it seems there is more commitment to the experience of entire sanctification as a second work of grace. In the process of trying to get away from a "folk theology," we were a little prone to abandon some terminology and expressions that were very meaningful to us. I find this disturbing. I want to be very positive about it, but I really don't know why that perception is there. Perception is a two-way street, you know.

**Brannon:** Let's move to some of the specific programs that were highlighted in the survey. There were pretty high marks given to PALCON (Preachers And Leaders CONference). How did the pastors evaluate the PALCON program?

**Johnson:** A total of 58 percent said that it was "very important." In fact, all the responses were high. The marks came out so high all the way through that it definitely influenced the Board of General Superintendents in making decisions concerning PALCON. It portrayed PALCON as not just important but maybe even a necessity in meeting specific needs. The survey convinced us that we must continue with the program. I might say that we are feeling the same way toward WILCON (Women In Leadership CONference).

**Brannon:** What was the reaction of the pastors to the *Preacher's Magazine*?

**Johnson:** Only 34 percent said that it was "very important." This bothered me at the time, but there again the second category (somewhat important) places it higher. I am of the opinion that this second category is not negative. It seems to me the *Preacher's Magazine* is a must because everybody you talk to about the *Preacher's Magazine* brags on it.

**Brannon:** The district superinten-

dents rate the magazine pretty high, too, don't they?

**Johnson:** Yes, because it is giving many pastors a lot of help, they feel.

**Brannon:** Recently Pastoral Ministries added a whole new section of worship and preaching helps to the magazine.

**Johnson:** Sometimes I have wondered if it is possible we are offering too much. I would like to think we're not, but I wonder.

I have to apply selective reading in it, even though I want to see what everybody is saying. If we do not expect everybody to read it all the way through, but let them be selective, then it will have nearly something for everybody.

**Brannon:** Let's move on to the CONET (Communicating, Consulting, Continuing Education,

## Pastors want the denomination, as well as their own local church, to succeed (Johnson)

CONfidential COUNSELING NETwork) program. What do the pastors say about the importance of providing confidential counseling to pastors and their families? One-third of the district superintendents felt that it was "very important," and an additional 44 percent felt it was "somewhat important." Some 85 percent of the pastors said it was "important" or "very important."

**Johnson:** I think this is probably one of those areas where again the survey showed something to the Board of General Superintendents that we had questioned. Apparently this service is meeting a need.

**Brannon:** It is interesting to note that our survey work prior to establishing the CONET program was almost identical in percentages reflected in the Gallup survey results.

**Johnson:** You would be interested

in knowing that I discussed our CONET program with a Methodist. They have a service that provides a certain number of counseling sessions per minister. When I told him about our program, he said, "Oh, that program would be much better."

**Brannon:** Do you want to say something about how the district superintendents responded to this kind of a program to pastors and their families?

**Johnson:** A total of 32 percent thought it was "very important," and 44 percent thought it was "important." That is a fairly strong response. They seem to indicate that they are supporting it.

**Brannon:** According to the survey, where are pastors most likely to turn for guidance on personal and family problems?

**Johnson:** It was obvious that the first one to whom they turn is God, then their spouse, and then a friend. I felt very comfortable with their response on that. They put God, spouse, and friend in that sequence.

**Brannon:** What does this say about the sense of isolation that pastors might feel?

**Johnson:** Are you implying that it should be the other way around: friend, spouse, and God?

**Brannon:** No, what I am implying is if they can only receive guidance within their own personal prayer life or their family and spouse, they may not have opportunity of getting objective feedback.

**Johnson:** You are talking about personal and family problems, not church problems, aren't you?

**Brannon:** That's right.

**Johnson:** I think the survey reflects the spiritual commitment of our pastors. They are looking to God and trusting Him to help them. When I think back upon my own life, I was not the kind of person that would go and talk about a lot of my personal problems with even my dearest friends.

**Brannon:** That's my point. I think that's why the value of CONET has been highlighted. It gives pastors the ability to go to someone who

is completely anonymous and find objective guidance.

**Johnson:** CONET is strictly in the crisis realm, isn't it? If I had a spat with my wife, I would not get on the phone to talk to a counselor.

**Brannon:** Oh, no.

**Johnson:** I think we are talking about major situations.

**Brannon:** While I was pastoring, there were times I needed to find counsel during some very crucial points of my life. I found help from my district superintendent and even a general superintendent. But if I hadn't had that kind of counsel, I am not sure I would be a pastor today.

**Johnson:** The point is that your district superintendent and your general superintendent were available to you.

**Brannon:** I realize that, but I took a risk, a heavy risk in doing that.

**Johnson:** Why was it a risk? Was it a risk in your own mind or do you really think it was a risk?

**Brannon:** No, it was a risk. It was a risk as I look back on it.

**Johnson:** Sometimes things we perceive aren't real. We do need structures that can help meet some of these needs, and, therefore, CONET fills the gap. I guess what I am saying is that I am sorry that we have to have CONET.

**Brannon:** I agree, but, thank God, we do have it to meet a desperate need.

**Johnson:** Yes, I understand where you are. I cannot argue with that. Obviously the survey has shown that. I think I would still be inclined to believe that the percentage of pastors on a district that would call CONET would not be a majority.

**Brannon:** I think that's true, but I know a number of pastors who have said, "I've not used CONET, but I'm glad it's there in case I need it."

**Johnson:** I think that, of the 75 percent of pastors that go to God with their family problems, probably 25 percent of those are in crisis. They may need to seek outside help. I do think, however, that maybe one of our biggest problems is the perception that we have at all levels that we can't

go to someone else in leadership and discuss our problems. I can understand when there would be certain situations where a person would be reluctant to talk to their superior about a particular problem. I also know that there have been times when I have sat down and talked to somebody about something personal, and they say, "I had no idea that *you* ever faced anything like that." I don't know how to address this perception or even how to change it.

**Brannon:** It comes back to something very basic in all organizational relationships; that is, we do not go to our boss to talk about personal problems.

**Johnson:** I don't think that is a reflection on the leadership, but I think what you are saying is that CONET is there to take care of that. I also think that it is very healthy that we have 75 percent of our pastors who can go to God with their problems and 65 per-



**WILBER W. BRANNON**  
*Pastoral Ministries Director*

cent who can go to their spouse. I think that is a very healthy response, don't you?

**Brannon:** Yes, and I think that one of the things that CONET reflects is that we are a healthy organization. An unhealthy organization would not permit this kind of program or this kind of service. This was one of the greatest thrusts that brought me here as director of Pastoral Ministries.

Now, I'd like to turn to the critical issues that are facing pastors today. The Gallup survey revealed that lack of finances and pressures of ministry were the most serious personal and family problems pastors are reporting. What do you think can be done to help these problems?

**Johnson:** I am not surprised with these findings. I was reading a book by Schaller the other day in which he said there was a day when a church that ran 50 people could support a pastor. Schaller commented further that, although these churches were limited in resources, it was common for the people to look after their preacher with foodstuffs, tires, and things of that nature. In the final analysis his children could get about the same opportunities and education as another white-collar person in the community. Today a church has to run 100 people or more to do the same thing.

Although much of Schaller's findings dealt with the so-called old-line churches, and the figures could change with the Church of the Nazarene, the trend is still there. Many of our pastors are bivocational, or their spouses work. Along with this has come the terrific problem of high medical costs.

We need to do a couple of things. We have to accept the reality of the bivocational pastor, and we must give him status. At the same time, we must give the small church more status than we do. We have some small churches that do quite well financially, but there is always this frustration of "Well, I am just pastoring this small church." Some of those small churches can take pretty good care of their pastor because of their economic situation. I think we must give time in finding a way to improve the status of the small church.

Most of the frustration that is expressed comes from those small-church pastors. I think we will find while they talk about finances, it may be another way of saying they just want to be recognized that they are there. I find a lot of them are doing something about their finances through their bivocational status.

It seems to me that we might be able to find some handles on how to make it easier for them. I think we sometimes try to make it too complicated. Probably what we need to do is to recognize the priorities and then commit to them.

**Brannon:** I can't let that pass without asking, do they feel good about the programs coming out of Headquarters?

**Johnson:** I have been one of those who has been advocating that we need to streamline. Programs run into a lot of resistance. The problem is that in some of the world mission areas they are not saddled with all this. They have a district budget and a general budget. They give support for their schools and finance their local church, and they build the Kingdom. It isn't that simple anymore for a pastor here in Canada and the United States. We have a complicated society. Consequently our church management gets to be complicated.

**Brannon:** What does that say about the way we train our ministers?

**Johnson:** We've been advocating for a long time that the practical aspects of church management must be a priority. Preaching, of course, is a priority also.

**Brannon:** Should we give a greater emphasis on continuing education for ministers?

**Johnson:** Of course all of our districts are very keenly interested in continuing education. But such programs depend on how many are participating in it. Gene Phillips, who was just elected district superintendent in Iowa, talked with me over the weekend. He wants to get everyone on his district in a seminar with John Maxwell. John Maxwell did a lot for him. He will probably succeed in providing this opportunity for his pastors.

**Brannon:** It does seem that if some opportunity on the district were provided for pastors, they would take advantage of furthering their education.

**Johnson:** There again, though, so many of our pastors are bivoca-

tional. How many could get in on that? It gets complicated, doesn't it? At every assembly we will end up with a handful of pastors who can't be there because they can't get off their jobs. Those are usually the churches whose pastors need to be there too. So we are getting back to the matter of finances, aren't we?

I have said that right across the board I wish we could raise every pastor's salary \$100 a week. I do think that some of our churches could do better than they do. When I was a pastor years ago, I remember when E. E. Zachary raised the level of every pastor's salary on the district. He took a risk and said, "Raise the pastor's salary." They didn't even do that for the district superintendent's salary all the time. I think the whole matter of salaries is something the district superintendent needs to support.

## The confidence level of pastors toward their district superintendent could be stronger (Johnson)

**Brannon:** That relates to the pastor's sense of self-esteem as a pastor, doesn't it?

**Johnson:** I know what it means to a pastor when a superintendent comes to his church and supports his financial needs. There are a few key areas district superintendents ought to focus on, but they are overburdened too. They really are.

**Brannon:** Pastors that are encouraged by their district superintendent could even have a turnaround in their attitude about paying their budgets.

**Johnson:** I have to say that the adjustment in the budgets has been positively responded to. I think our percentage is going to be better this year.

**Brannon:** When pastors were asked in the survey what they saw as the most pressing problems facing the

Church of the Nazarene today, the most frequently mentioned was the lack of commitment on the part of the laity.

**Johnson:** I would like to relate a spiritual answer to the problem because, basically, apathy or lack of commitment is spiritual, isn't it? I was concerned over the evaluation of revivals. A large percentage of the district superintendents considered revivals "not too effective" in bringing in new members to the church. Some 51 percent said that revivals are "somewhat effective," and slightly more than a third said they are "not too effective." The question is this: Is it the revival or is it our perception of what a revival can do? This is an area where we need to express greater concern.

I preached at a revival in Germany last fall. It was strictly a holiness weekend with a good response. We got the response we wanted because the pastor wanted a weekend of holiness revitalization. This young pastor is not saddled with a lot of our recent trends and now has the largest Nazarene church in that area. They set up a tent every year and have a revival. He has a goal of 41 people to be saved this year. I have talked to him

about these tent meetings, and they have had this kind of response every time. They fully expect to see 41 people saved. I said to myself, "I wonder how many pastors have even planned for new people to be saved in a revival. What would happen if we did plan to get people saved?"

I remember while pastoring I always harnessed Sunday School teachers to the revival campaign with their Sunday School classes with the end in view of getting new people saved. I can't report 41 people saved, but I can report 35 new members after a revival campaign.

**Brannon:** Over 90 percent of the pastors said they were "very committed" to the doctrine of entire sanctification. This finding has been very reassuring.

**Johnson:** I think we have clearly



# Married to an Evangelist

by Marge Fisher

Coronado, Calif.

identified ourselves. We are clear in our directions of Wesleyan theology. We must be careful that we do not slip off into a Keswickian theology and underemphasize the crisis experience of sanctification.

**Brannon:** Only 15 percent of the pastors said their members were "very committed" to the doctrine of entire sanctification, while 62 percent of the members said they were "very committed" to the doctrine of entire sanctification. How do you explain this disparity in perception?

**Johnson:** Whatever our people are committed to will reflect what they are taught in Sunday School and what they hear from the pulpit. That places a great responsibility upon the leadership of the local church. Again, the pastor may need to recognize that his perception may not be entirely accurate.

**Brannon:** I would like to ask if there is any final word that you would like to say to our pastors and how they responded to the Gallup survey?

**Johnson:** Yes, I would like to say that the response reflects a quality in our pastoral leadership for which we are very grateful, even proud. I mean that with all sincerity. I was very pleased with the pastors' response to internationalization. They are not threatened by internationalization. I think the pastors see themselves as a part of a world team and that they are a part of a rallying of all nations to win the world for Christ. It was interesting that 94 percent of the pastors and 66 percent of the district superintendents support internationalization. Pastors are not feeling threatened by it. Many pastors are going around the world these days on Work and Witness teams helping to build churches, evangelize, and fill pulpits. I have talked to pastor after pastor who has developed great friends in other parts of the world, and they see themselves as equals. As we approach a new century, I am genuinely optimistic about our church.

### I MARRIED AN EVANGELIST

Yes, I really did! I married an evangelist—and that's been quite a while ago.

For the first 10 years, we traveled as a team all over the world. We played our horns, sang duets, played piano duets, Bill preached, we both led singing. I worked with choirs, youth and children, and led small groups. By canvassing entire communities, we started many new churches across the nation.

During those 10 years, we had son number one, Bill had cancer, we had son number two, and we bought a home. Yes, my life-style changed, out of necessity. Through those changes and many others, I do not remember feeling sorry for myself. I always believed if I am where God wants me to be, He will use me. I believed that then; I believe that now.

### YES, I MARRIED AN EVANGELIST, AND I'M GLAD!

I learned to live alone and be happy. I learned to be independent. I learned to make decisions, but basically I learned to bring my problems to God and depend totally on Him.

During the next years, I taught school. People I worked with thought I had the best of both worlds—married and "living single" part-time. I organized a teen choir in our church—65 youths, traveling and singing at General Assembly and on television. I wrote two books of musical arrangements for teens. I had 125 children in my school choir. I traveled with my evangelist-husband and sons overseas in the summer.

My time with my husband was

special, but sparse. At any given moment, I could not tell you where he was. But we both cared, and we both prayed for each other. And God was using my life—where I was.

### I AM GLAD I MARRIED AN EVANGELIST

Yes, through all these changes, I'm still glad I married an evangelist. My sons are grown and married. I am a grandmother. We moved to San Diego. I've completed six years as head of Lay Ministries on staff at San Diego First Church of the Nazarene. Because of the many changes in my life, I was able to relate to singles and understand their needs. I worked with women in change and crisis, with Sunday School, and with other areas of outreach. From the singles I often heard, "Do you really have a husband, Marge? He's gone so much!" During our married life, Bill and I have lived together half that time.

God is still using Bill as an evangelist. Because I was available, God has used me in a variety of ways. God received double service from Bill and Marge Fisher since we both believe our mission in life is to serve God wherever we are in the ways He wants to use us. That's why we are here!

### YES, I DID MARRY AN EVANGELIST, AND I'M GLAD!





# THE ARK ROCKER

## Safety First

**S**merdley sometimes says more than he knows he is saying. That was true last Saturday at the reception, just after we had jointly officiated at a wedding. Over some nondescript punch and tasteless but expensively decorated cake, he was telling me about the most recent meeting of the Nominating Committee.

The presiding pooh-bah had opened the meeting by sticking to his announced text and giving a rather moving semiexposition of Matt. 16:13-20, Simon Peter's confession at Caesarea Philippi. He had really "scored big," said Smerd, when he got to the phrase "and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (KJV). In fact, Smerd got so choked up on the combination of dry cake, surprise, and relived blessing that I was afraid that I would have to Heimlich him to save his life and to hear the rest of the story. (In that order, I think.)

Well, Smerdley recovered without my aid and now began to get to the point that he really wanted to make. It was about the presiding pooh-bah's other "great speech." This second speech was a perfect case, said Smerd, of the turning of evil to good purpose. And he allowed that while it was given to meet a very specific situation, it applied to every level of ecclesiastical polity. Here's the story.

Art Vander Ploeg, who has just this year been honored by being appointed to the Nominating Committee, though he has been a pastor on the conference for 20-some years, had artlessly nominated Steve Hackney for something or other. "Al-

though," said Smerdley, "anybody who is anybody should be able to figure out that Steve is to be left alone. Steve is a good guy, but he's not a team player. He's the kind of guy who wants to ask questions and propose alternatives in the huddle. After all, you do have to trust the coach and the quarterback, whether we're talking denomination, assembly/conference, or congregation."

I asked, "Aren't you letting a questionable metaphor govern your understanding of the Body of Christ?" But he didn't understand me. So I let him go on.

Smerdley then repeated with awe and reverence that second pooh-bahnical speech, as if he'd rehearsed it or heard it before.

Fourscore and beaucoup years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new movement, conceived in Christian perfection, and dedicated to the proposition that all are created equally subject to the Fall and to full salvation, except for us leaders, who are less equal than others when it comes to the Fall, but more equal when it comes to the practices of full salvation, such as pure motives.

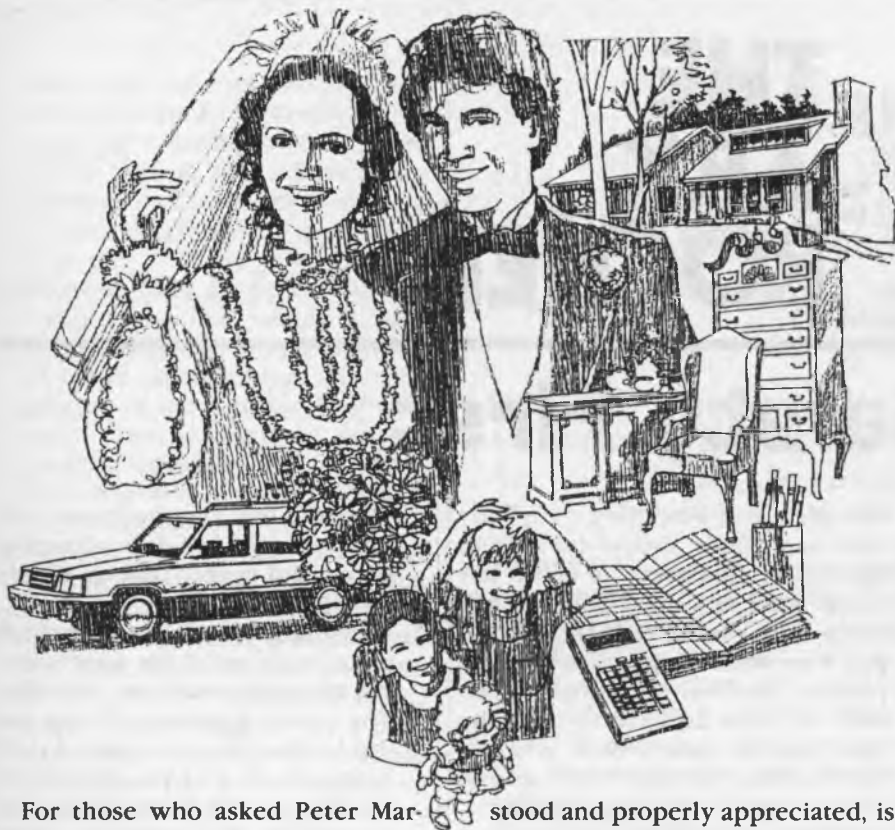
Always we are engaged in a great internal war, testing whether that movement, or any movement so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure if we permit serious and sustained critique. We are met on a great battlefield (as it were) of that war. We now dedicate ourselves to solemnly laying to rest a magnificent but absolutely unworkable idea: the idea that loyal dissent in ecclesiastical systems has any positive value. It

must die that the movement, the system, might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.

In a larger sense, we cannot tolerate, we should not appreciate, we must not swallow, this idea. The trusting masses, living and dead, who have surrendered their judgment to us have already, by electing us and by approving our appointees and programs, mandated its destruction. They have settled the issue, far beyond our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note nor long remember what we say here, but it must not be permitted to forget what we perpetrated here.

It is for us, the living leaders, rather to be dedicated to the unfinished work which they who have already fought over this issue have thus far so nobly advanced—the inculcation of teamwork and the casting of suspicion on the twin tyrannies of thinking and pressing for accountability from us, whose sincerity is so sterling, whose authority is such a "given," whose understanding of the system is so vast as to make such pressing insulting. It is rather for us, the living leaders, to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us—the extirpation of the slightest smell of dissent—that from the honored past we take increased devotion to creating an atmosphere of absolute unanimity and unquestioning followership, that cause for which we have told everyone the past

*(Continued on page 16)*



# Under Sealed Orders

by Peter Marshall

For those who asked Peter Marshall to perform their wedding ceremony, he required—wherever possible—several conferences. As a result, there were a few occasions when he refused to marry a given couple.

Early in his ministry, he had written his own marriage ceremony. This had been typed and pasted in on top of the printed Order for the Solemnization of Marriage in his blue leather Book of Common Worship.

This was never a routine service, quickly dispensed with. Judging by dozens of letters, many a couple regard Dr. Marshall's wedding ceremony as one of the high points of their lives.

One of these brides was the sister of an FBI agent who knew Peter well. Martha's wedding was to be a small one in the Lincoln Chapel, nothing unusual about it. Yet years later, the FBI agent—not usually given to sentimentality—was describing the scene for me:

*Dr. Marshall stood before the flower-banked altar waiting for the wedding party. It was the gladness on his face that I can never forget. There was a twinkle in his eyes, a lilt to his voice. . . .*

*"Dearly beloved . . . the marriage relation when rightly under-*

*stood and properly appreciated, is the most delightful, as well as the most sacred and solemn of human relations. It is the clasping of hands, the blending of lives, and the union of hearts, that two may walk together up the hill of life to meet the dawn—together bearing life's burdens . . . discharging its duties . . . sharing its joys and sorrows."*

*Some of the service he must have written just for Martha and Dick. I was so fascinated by the vibrancy of his voice, the buoyant joy that lifted every sentence to give it a memorable quality I had never before heard in a wedding ceremony.*

"Marriage is much more than moonlight and roses, much more than the singing of love songs and the whispering of vows of undying affection. In our day, it is by many lightly regarded, and by many as lightly discarded. But marriage will ever remain, in the sight of God an eternal union, made possible only by the gift of love which God alone can bestow.

"Therefore we are still entitled to say that true marriages are made in Heaven, because that which, above all things, makes a marriage true and happy comes only from God. . . ."

*I hold dear to my heart the things Dr. Marshall told my sister and my brother-in-law:*

"Remember Martha, that it was Love that gave you this man—and you, Dick, this woman—not this ceremony . . . Your marriage must stand and endure, not by the authority of the marriage licence, nor by the strength of the wedding certificate—for these are only pieces of paper—but by the strength of your love and the endurance of your faith in each other and in Jesus Christ, without which no marriage can be truly happy. . . ."

*Then Dr. Marshall asked that Martha and Dick look at each other, rather than at him, as they spoke their vows. And as I stood there hearing those ancient, lovely words, In plenty and in want, in joy and in sorrow, as long as we both shall live, I knew why that moment would be unforgettable—not because of any particular words that Dr. Marshall had strung together, however fine—but because he had brought with him into the chapel the joyful presence of Him who attended the wedding feast and who blesses all true romance.*

**D**o you believe that true marriages are still made in heaven? That God cares about whom you marry? . . . That somewhere there is a particular person meant for you? Or do you think that such idealism is pious nonsense?

These are pertinent questions. For you cannot believe in God the Father as Jesus revealed Him, and not believe that He cares about you as an individual. And if God is interested in you and in what you do, then would He not be interested in whom you marry?

Perhaps you think that falling in love is enough. But we are so often wrong about love . . . Many of us do not recognize it when it comes. Many of us mistake sexual attraction alone for love. Surely here—with regard to marriage—we need God's help more than in anything else.

Is not the proof of that the dark shadow of divorce that lies across every hearthstone? One marriage in every four now ends in divorce. There is evidence that soon it will be one marriage in every three.

You need God's help in the realm of courtship and marriage because you are disillusioned and lost without Him. Many already have tasted of a society which is debauched. You see a divorce organized as big business. You see a society's daughters and sons taught to drink at an earlier and earlier age. You see mothers who covet popularity for their daughters at whatever price, push them into society like tempting bargains placed in a store window.

Some of you have tasted of the fleshpots. You are prematurely old, not so much in experience as in disappointment. Already you have haunted hearts.

Your defence against these wrongs is often an assumption of indifference. You cultivate a veneer of apathy and nonchalance as a shield against being hurt.

But underneath the veneer there lurks a wistful, poignant quest for some kind of enduring values, an idealism tested by experience. You must have solid ground beneath you, and this is precisely what Jesus Christ offers.

When you refuse to let Him direct

your dating, your courtship, your marriage, you are cheating yourself of one of the greatest gifts of all. How can I dramatize for you what you are missing?

The world loves romance and seeks it everywhere. Nine out of every ten songs are about love. Sex is exploited to sell everything from spark plugs to hair tonic.

Hollywood has worn the subject thin . . . and thinner . . . until there is no substance left, only tawdriness.

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### The world loves romance and seeks it everywhere.

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The romance offered by the world is a ring set with dimestore glass. The romance God offers you is a pure and flashing diamond. Synthetic . . . The real thing. Ephemeral . . . Eternal. Mockery . . . Fulfillment. That is the difference; think well before you choose.

But understand that you may have God's help with your romance only on His terms. First of all, He insists that His children dream big. Because He wants our happiness, He will settle for no cheap compromises, no tawdry substitutes, only the best for any of His.

God demands idealism with regard to sex. Let us frankly face the fact that the keenest of all problems, the sharpest of all temptations is to compromise personal purity and chastity. That is where the battleground is. And so—with no apologies and no equivocation—I challenge you to Christ's ideal for sex.

Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick once confided in a sermon to his congregation at the Riverside Church, New York, how he battled this as a young man. He decided to force himself to face the question of what use he wanted to make sex in his life . . . Did he want a Christian home with its deep fidelities and satisfactions,

or a loose life of sensuality? He was reasonably sure that he could not have both.

He chose! In order to make that choice clear-cut and definite, he sat down and wrote a letter to the girl he was going to marry—even though he had never met her. The letter expressed his confidence that his wife-to-be was waiting for him somewhere, that at the right moment they would meet, that in the meantime, he was going to keep his fidelity to her as true as if she were already his bride.

At the time Dr. Fosdick spoke about this to his congregation, his wedding day was some forty years in the past. In retrospect, looking back over long years, he could say, "That decision cost . . ." Of course it cost! "But how grateful I am for it, that I did not make the other choice and surrender all the deep and sacred satisfaction of these lovely years for a mess of pottage." Of course, those "lovely years" . . . "the deep and sacred satisfaction" . . . would not have been possible had not the girl waiting for Harry Emerson Fosdick shared his idealism.

Perhaps we need to look again at what Christ's concept of womanhood is. The emancipation of women did not begin in the twentieth century. It began with Christianity, for Jesus Christ was the first to usher women into a new place in human relations. Jesus accorded woman a dignity she had never known before and crowned her with glory, so that she might be revered, protected, and loved.

The symbol of purity and chastity has traditionally been a white rose.

I wonder if it would not be more accurate to choose a gardenia . . . because the gardenia with its fragrance and the velvet of its petals cannot endure to be handled . . . treated roughly or bruised at all, for its pure white petals will reveal every tell-tale mark of handling.

Jesus Christ both challenges you and promises to help you, so that when you stand before the altar to whisper wedding vows—both you and your bridegroom will be able to lay upon that altar a gardenia without spot or blemish, for what is desirable in a bride is just as desirable in a bridegroom.



Any temporary sacrifice or renunciation is a small price to pay for the achievement of ideals which will yield, later in your marriage, dividends of peace, of joy, and of happiness.

There was a time when many a bride brought her white offering to the altar but knew that it lay there alone. For there prevailed the iniquitous "double standard." This was the philosophy that permitted, even encouraged a young man to sow his wild oats . . . with the excuse that he was only young once.

So he might step over moral bounds in sexual adventures, but when he settled down, he had a right to choose for a wife a girl who was sweet, pure and chaste. You can be sure that Christ's standard is no double standard. Today's girls are quite right to reject it. But the standards which many of you have substituted are not Christ's either.

Today's women have interpreted emancipation as the freedom to smoke like a man, to drink like a man, to use rough language, to swear, to work like a man, to treat sex as loosely as a man.

Women have copied the vices of men—in the name of progress! But it is never progress to go in a downward direction. It is not progress to lose ideals, to lower morality. No girl ever became more desirable by losing her femininity, or her innocence.

I have never heard a man say that a girl's mouth was prettier with a cigarette hanging out of it, or that her hair smelled divinely of tobacco smoke. I have read no poetry rhapsodizing over a girl's smutty joke.

Will a modern child—grown-up—remember some faint unforgettable fragrance which always seemed to be in his mother's hair? Or will he remember instead the odor of scotch on her breath?

Will he tenderly recall that day he rushed unbidden into her bedroom to find her on her knees beside her favorite chair? Or will he remember her, dressed in slacks, putting off his eager questions while she poured cocktails for her noisy guests? Perhaps today's women will not feel so triumphant about their "emancipation" when they realize that men no longer feel as romantic about girls as did their grandfathers. If

something sweet and mysterious has been lost, this so-called equality is a poor exchange for the privilege of being different, of being a woman.

Is it too late? What of those who have already tasted of this debauched society? Is it too late for Christ's idealism?

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## God wants our happiness. He will settle for no cheap compromises.

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No, it is not. Christ gave us a deeper concept of purity than anyone else has ever conceived. He added a new dimension to it.

He taught us that purity is not just for the untouched, the untried, the untempted. The knight who rides past with shield bright and armor unstained and unspotted may never have been in the fight. The clean shield proves nothing.

That person who has never felt the temptation to do anything ignoble, to lower his ideals, to listen to the honeyed whispers of sensuality . . . that person whose life has been so sheltered that he has never felt blowing on his cheeks the scorching blasts of passion is as a ship that has never been launched.

That ship may be seaworthy—or it may not. The sheltered person may have strength—or he may not. Jesus Christ was too realistic . . . knew human nature too well, not to realize that each of us is tempted. Not one of us remains untainted by impurity of deed or thought.

And so in God's eyes the pure vessel is not only that which remains untouched.

Pure is the vessel also which the Master has cleansed . . . in whom His spirit abides to keep us cleansed. Else He could never have forgiven and accepted Mary of Magdala . . . Zaccheus . . . the woman taken in adultery . . . the Gadarene demoniac . . . Joanna, the wife of Herod's steward, Chuza . . . the woman with the alabaster box of ointment . . . He is

the only One who claims to be able to forgive and to cleanse. Over and over, He provides that glorious new beginning for haunted hearts. Always His word is what it was to that nameless woman long ago: "Go and sin no more. Make a clean break with whatever it is that has dragged you down."

In order to get God's help with your dreams of romance, you will have to live out your faith that He is able to guide you, live it out day by day, episode by episode. It has to be a practical faith. You should talk over with Christ the questions that trouble you—the perplexities of dating, the constant head-on collision between your ideals and your wish to be popular and accepted.

These matters you discuss constantly with your friends, do you not? Then why not with Christ? He has more wisdom to give you about dating than any of your friends could ever have.

Is it possible that society is on the wrong track today with regard to courtship and marriage? Many sociologists, psychologists, and marriage counsellors are rapidly coming to that conclusion.

They point out that our western dating patterns go back no farther than World War I . . . that we romanticists, who scorn the "arranged" Oriental or European marriage, need to take a new, hard look at the tragedies and heartaches which our hit-and-miss courtship, our customs are bringing.

We see society's sons and daughters pairing off at an earlier and earlier age . . . We watch a shocking kind of mutual exploitation: The boy trying to exploit the girl sexually . . . the girl exploiting the boy financially . . . *exploiting* being simply another word for selfishness.

And so the sociologists are convinced that we need a profound and creative revolution, if we are to save the home as an institution. What they have not led us on to see is that the revolution must be in our hearts: No longer what can I *get* from the marriage I seek, but rather what can I *give*?

For you girls this may come down to some difficult questions. For example, many girls today are unwilling to make of their marriage a full-time job.

There is a conflict between hard economic facts and the dreams of a home in the hearts of many young women. But when a girl is unwilling to give up her name, her career, her own selfish ambitions for her husband's sake, she had better stay out of marriage.

Beginning with what is often simply greed for a larger income, greed for *things*, material possessions, household gadgets, for many young women the accepted practice of working after marriage has distorted their concept of what marriage really is. In Christ's eyes, true love must be ever a giving of oneself. In the case of a wife, bearing her husband's name, seeking to please him, creating with her hands a home for him, bearing his children.

The creation of a home where memories abide does not depend on possessions. Gracious living is created by loving hands, by a tranquil mind, a heart in which God dwells, a soul which knows beauty.

Calmness, serenity, faith, contentment, tenderness, manifesting themselves in the way a woman goes quietly about her household tasks.

Such qualities are not furthered by hard, competitive days in the office . . . by the hurried preparation of meals after working hours with no time left for the children.

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## Jesus accorded woman a dignity she had never known before.

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The women I know who are the happiest, whose homes are a joy to enter, are the ones who have made a clear-cut decision. Often at economic sacrifice, they have decided that they cannot create a real home on less than full time.

But this kind of giving is possible only if there is a reciprocal giving on the part of the husband—"Husbands, love your wives"—not in terms of a popular song moaned into a microphone, not with a box of

candy, or a corsage twice a year, not with any of the sentimental slush that is so often a counterfeit for love.

But "love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it" (Eph. 5:25 [KJV]). There is a concept of a husband's love! That means something.

Look at Christ on the cross—there for us husbands is the ideal . . . There is Love giving Himself for His bride . . . self-sacrificing love—knowing no bounds, having no restraint, love even unto death. Such a love can come only from God.

I have found that no marriage ceremony, however beautiful and meaningful, will make two selfish people, governed by self-will, into an unselfish couple. There is nothing magical about the marriage ceremony.

No problem which any married couple can have is beyond solution if they are willing to get down on their knees together and ask God what to do about it. It is not a question of what the husband wants—or what the wife wants—but always, what does God want?

So many children have an imaginary character with whom they live and gravely discuss everything. A certain mother heard her five-year-old son carrying on a conversation under the kitchen table with his imaginary playmate: "Who's the boss in your home, Johnny?" asked the unseen guest. "Your father or your mother?" "Neither," said Johnny. "God's boss in our home." Here was a fortunate little boy who had seen his parents reach out in the most practical way beyond self-will to find God's will.

And that must be the pattern from the beginning of your dating right on into the home you will create, if you are to find the romance that God has planned for you. For human beings vary little from century to century. The manifestations of self-will change, but not the selfishness. Dreams linger in every heart—along with the temptations to compromise those dreams.

But God can change our self-will, so that we can find the love He has planned for us. That is what happened to a woman I shall call Mary.

Her home is in a Southern city. I know it well, for I have been entertained there often. She is a woman of

some means—her heart and her home always open—with a hospitality that ministers both to the tired body and the discouraged soul of many a guest.

I always think of her as the modern counterpart of the "elect lady" of Ephesus to whom John wrote his Second Epistle. "Elect lady . . ." What a charming way to speak to a mother for whom the years have woven the brocade of gentleness she now wears, always with her slow smile of understanding love!

Yet in the modern elect lady's past

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## Pure is the vessel which the Master has cleansed.

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lay a surprising story. I heard it from her own lips . . . Years before, when she was a young mother, a three-year-old son had been drowned. Her grief was compounded by bitterness towards her husband because the boy had been in his care for the day.

With the bitterness, a process of disintegration set in. Mary had been a meticulous housekeeper and a fine cook: now she no longer cared. Dust and disarray took over her home . . . In the garden were weeds and rank growth, like the debris piling up and up in her heart . . .

Nor did she care any longer about how she looked until—until one morning a woman whom she had never seen before knocked on her front door, marched into the living-room, announced that she was in love with Mary's husband, John.

"Somehow I got through that dreadful scene," Mary told me, "and got the woman out of the house. Then I went to the kitchen, poured a cup of strong coffee, sat down for a good cry and a long hard look at myself.

"Suddenly a bit of Scripture came out of dim recesses of memory: 'See to it . . . that no "root of bitterness" spring up and cause trouble, and by it the many become defiled' [Heb. 12:15, RSV]. I saw it all then . . . I had let the roots of bitterness about

Johnny's death grow up and fill my heart until there was no room left for love. My bitterness had defiled our marriage and our home.

"Then I thought of the other woman, and I got mad. How could I forgive that? I cried some more . . . threw a cup across the kitchen where it went crashing against the wall . . . beat my fists on the table . . . screamed, 'I won't . . . I won't.'"

"But all the time a quiet voice inside me was saying, 'You must. You must forgive. There is no other way.'"

"Then I walked over to that large mirror there in the dining-room to take a good look at myself. I was horrified at what I saw. . . . Once I had been considered the belle of our town. And now—here was a woman with disillusioned eyes . . . hard lines around her mouth . . . hair stringy and unkempt . . . No wonder my husband had been attracted to another woman."

My hostess sighed . . . and smiled her slow smile, remembering. "Everything came out all right. Christ came again into our home. John and I had twelve years together before he died—near-perfect years, the happiest of all. I had a second baby boy—always a joy to us. He is now a physician in Kansas City."

I looked about me at the shining mahogany, the freshly starched curtains fluttering in the night breeze, the roses in the silver vase, grown in the garden outside, the portrait of John . . . The artist had captured on canvas the face of a happy husband.

And in imagination I saw behind Mary's shoulder so many elect ladies who are called by God to create

homes in which love dwells . . . A cottage in Georgia with wisteria trailing over the porch . . . a trailer home with a very young mother . . . a tiny apartment . . . a split-level in suburbia . . . a square white house under an arch of elms in a New England village . . . a ranch house overlooking the ocean on the Monterey Peninsula.

I thought of the mothers who preside over these homes, modern women, not at all like Whistler's mother. They know all about germs and sanitation, vitamins and food values, formulas and schedules.

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## The nation cries out for couples who will build true homes.

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They are tireless in providing for the physical needs of their children—these modern mothers—ambitious for their future intellectual life—eager for their proper social development. They will chauffeur their children anywhere, to dancing classes . . . Scout meetings . . . the dentist . . . the movies. They will attend PTA meetings and forums endlessly. But as for spiritual nourishment for their children, many of them have never given it a thought.

How could they—when they

themselves do not know God in a real and personal way? They read the best-sellers, child psychology books—but the Bible scarcely ever. Perhaps it never occurs to them that God has wisdom and guidance to give them about their marriage and their children. Yet how our tired old world needs parents who are willing to add to their knowledge of economics and sociology and psychology a knowledge of God.

We need young women who would rather be called "elect ladies" than "the smartest young matron in town." The nation cries out for couples who will build true homes—whether they live in two rooms or ten . . . whether starched white organdie curtains or silk damask draperies hang at the windows. You can have a home like that, if you will recognize that God is the greatest asset to the romance there is. He thought it up in the first place! Reach for His idealism, so that your home may be built on spiritual foundations, with your family life oiled by the grace of God.

"Where there is faith, there is peace;

Where there is peace, there is love;

Where there is love, there is God;  
Where there is God, there is no need."

Only in such homes can we build the better world of which we dream.



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## Safety First

(Continued from page 11)

gave its last full measure of devotion; that we here highly resolve that these forebears shall not have surrendered intellect and common sense and will in vain; that this movement and system, under our leadership, shall have a new burst of fiefdom; and that ecclesiastical government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the

earth but shall ever be remembered—as an ever-unreachable, dangerous ideal that we were wise enough to bury. Yea, team!"

Smerdley was right. The second speech was moving. At least I wanted to get out of there. But before I went, I did have to raise a question: That semiexposition of the text about the building of the Church on confessing disciples, Simon Peter being

the case at hand, and the promise that the gates of hell should not prevail against it, and now this second speech about the building of the church on teamwork and unanimity—was Smerdley sure that the same person had delivered both messages? Churchman that I am, I haven't done much thinking for myself lately, but it does seem that the two might not square with each other.



# Some Thoughts on Biblical Preaching from a “Purist” Professor of Bible

by Frank G. Carver

San Diego

**M**y life has been given to the study and teaching of the Scriptures. Occasionally I am privileged to stand behind a pulpit and attempt to preach. Most of the time I sit in front of the pulpit listening for a word from God for my own soul. What I believe I need, what I know I want, is not just to hear the Bible quoted and used, but biblical preaching. But what is that? The following thoughts are reflections on my own question.

### I

What does it mean to preach biblically? *Christian preaching is biblical preaching.* Paul insists that “we . . . preach . . . Christ Jesus as Lord” (2 Cor. 4:5, NASB). In light of the witness of the Christian canon of Scripture, any preaching that does not focus ultimately on what God has done, and is doing, in His Son Jesus Christ cannot be called Chris-

tian. Jesus Christ is Lord of Christian pulpit proclamation!

The primary witness to Jesus Christ is the Old and New Testaments. We can get no closer to Jesus historically and humanly than we do in the sacred literary record. The Scriptures are first; they are our Norm when it comes to Jesus. We worship the Christ of the Gospels, who is only fully understood in the context of the entire Christian canon. The Bible is our immediate and most accurate access to the Christ of God. So, to preach Jesus Christ in any credible and authoritative way inherently demands biblical preaching.

What do we mean when we say the word *biblical*? We do not mean that the form of every sermon has to be expository or even textual in order to be biblical. Rather, we mean that a fully biblical sermon takes seriously the content of the scriptural text and flows from the “faith” intention of the text. This gives the two elements of the word *biblical* their due: First, the essence of the sermon is informed by a thorough study of the text in its literary and historical context, and, second, the witness of the sermon to contemporary faith is in theological continuity with that of the text. Leander E. Keck concludes that preaching is

biblical when it imparts a Bible-shaped word in a Bible-like way.<sup>1</sup>

The second of these two elements is probably the more neglected of the two in preaching. Often even when we take the time and make the effort to work through the content of our biblical text, we can fail to listen to the literary and theological use made of the text by the Scripture itself. We take the deceptively easier path of employing the content of Scripture for our own current program, be it ecclesiastically or personally motivated. The intention becomes ours rather than that of the biblical text. We need to risk enough confidence in the priority of the Word of God to put a passage to its scripturally intended use, rather than making it the servant of our own agendas.

We illustrate with an example, Isa. 6:1-13, the prophet's vision of a holy God. This fascinatingly powerful chapter is a vision report. To me its function and theological intention in the context of the Book of Isaiah makes legitimate God's irrevocable judgment on the sin of Israel. It is, first of all, a judgment chapter emphasizing that in the presence of a holy God, sin will be judged; there is no escape! The key is verse 9:

And He said, “Go, and tell this people: ‘Keep on listening, but do





not perceive; keep on looking, but do not understand" (NASB). So, in preaching, to make the cleansing aspect of the first eight verses the central thrust of the message is to ignore the witness of the text itself in its larger context.

I was flying to a distant city immediately following a student-initiated discussion questioning the relevance of what we were doing in a New Testament Greek exegesis class. As I was reflecting on my inability to communicate what I felt, I sketched the following outline of my understanding of the process required to preach biblically:

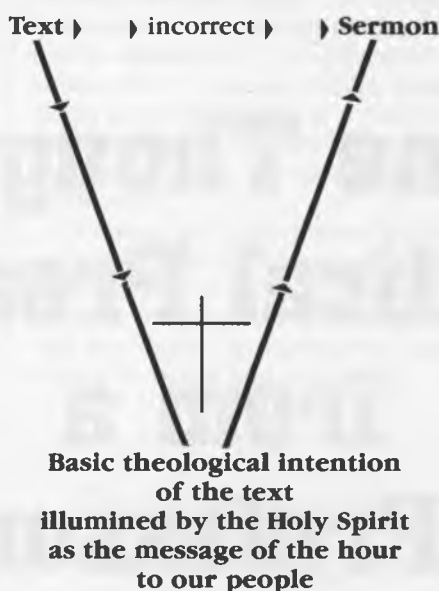
1. With the tools<sup>2</sup> and time available, we *study* the text (a) in its historical and literary context, and (b) in terms of its linguistic and theological content, with the goal (c) of understanding *what* the text is doing, its canonical intention, and *how* the text goes about what it is doing, especially theologically. One seeks to understand the text at its deepest level in terms of the nature of its witness to biblical faith.

2. Through the understanding of the text gained from the above process, we *bear* a transforming word from the Spirit of Christ for our own spiritual quest, for the quality of our relation to God in Christ, and for our witness response of an ethic of love in the world.

## The Bible is our most accurate access to Christ.

3. We *bear witness* to our transforming insights back through the content and theological intention of the text in contemporary sermon form to our hearers in relation to the personal and social issues of 20th-century life. Although the first-person dimension should not be too explicit or overdone in the message, it must certainly be implicit throughout if the message is to be authentic in its witness, human words that the divine Word is pleased to touch with His holy presence. Biblical preaching partakes of the nature of confession. The one who proclaims must stand along with his listeners under the searching judgment of the divine Word.

I sometimes diagram the process as follows:



Ideally one works through the content of the text to its intention and only then proceeds to formulate a fully contemporary message. The top arrows indicate a total abandonment of the process that makes biblical preaching possible. More normal failures are to fall short in our study to get all the way to the intention of the text, or to not always return to fully contemporary thought patterns in our sermonizing. The goal is to succeed in both tasks, but success in either is always approximate. I judge my own failure to be more on the right side of the diagram.

Two questions test the true biblical character of our messages. First, does the way in which we have presented the truth motivate our hearers to leave the sanctuary thinking about the biblical text and struggling with its implications for their life situations? Or, do they depart with only our explanations, declarations, and exhortations in their fleeting memories? These are not mutually exclusive consequences, but the first is certainly primary.

The second question probes even more deeply the biblical character of our preaching. Does the primary insight that energizes the sermon and provides its essential thrust come from the biblical text, which is then explained, illustrated, and applied? Or does the driving force

of the message come from something we have read, heard about, experienced, or come up with in our own minds, and which we illustrate from Scripture or connect in some way to the biblical text?

This second question helps us understand how preaching can be biblical regardless of its type—expository, textual, topical, or textual-topical. Even a topical message can be launched and fired by the explosion of biblical truth in the preacher's heart and mind regardless of the source of initial motivation or inspiration.

## II

**Biblical preaching is prophetic preaching.** It is preaching that brings the future of God to bear in judgment and hope on the present. It is more than a convincing presentation of what our hearers ought to believe and how they ought to behave, although both are normally present. Prophetic preaching is penetrated by the eschatological, for all is seen in the light of a present and yet future transcendent reality, the kingdom of God, the end-of-the ages presence of God! Biblical preaching is prophetic as the Bible itself is prophetic<sup>3</sup> in character.

The Bible is essentially a prophetic book. The Old Testament is not so much a record of the history of Israel as it is the prophetic correction of that history. In the light of promise, of the future of God for His people, the Old Testament proclaims the will of God to the Israelite people packaged in judgment and hope. Jesus' ministry can be understood as a rediscovery of the prophetic heart of the Old Testament, which is fulfilled in His own life, death, and resurrection. Jesus the Christ, who was in His person the Son of God, was a prophetic figure. The promised future of God was effectively present in Him who rose from the dead and said to His perplexed disciples, "Receive the Holy Spirit" (John 20:22, NASB). To this eschatological reality, the New Testament gives testimony as it announces the presence of the future of God in our present time. The New Testament is supremely a prophetic witness, a prophetic book in the primary biblical sense of the word.

Walter Brueggemann applies this

prophetic perspective to contemporary ministry in his fascinating and powerful little book *The Prophetic Imagination*. He writes:

It is the task of prophetic ministry to bring the claims of the tradition and the situation of enculturation into effective confrontation. . . . The prophet is called to be a child of the tradition, one who has taken it seriously in the shaping of his or her own field of per-

der God's judgment, under the criticism of the values of His kingdom. At the same time it brings to us a word of grace—forgiving, cleansing, healing, and therefore creating an energizing hope. We are invited and enabled "to live in fervent anticipation of the newness that God . . . will surely give."<sup>7</sup>

Christian preaching as biblical preaching is prophetic; Christian preaching as prophetic preaching is biblical. A minister friend, pastor of an unusually effective black church in the inner city, speaking to senior religion major students, impressed on them that three things are necessary for effective ministry in the inner city: (1) biblical preaching, (2) a sound teaching ministry, and (3) a credible response to human needs and suffering. Perhaps such a ministry would be effective in the suburbs as well!<sup>8</sup>

### III

**Prophetic preaching is "Presence" preaching.** Here we are helped by some fascinating insights from Samuel Terrien in a work titled *The Elusive Presence: Toward a New Biblical Theology*. We find his basic agenda in the following collection of quotations:

The reality of the presence of God stands at the center of biblical faith.<sup>9</sup> . . . It is the distinctiveness of the Hebraic theology of the presence . . . which provides a key to understanding the Bible.<sup>10</sup> . . . The ancient mode of Hebraic presence was radically transformed by the experience of the resurrection.<sup>11</sup> . . . It was the Hebraic theology of the presence which dominated all the interpretations of the person of Jesus, from Mark to Revelation.<sup>12</sup>

Terrien finds two theologies of Presence in Scripture, one of the ear, the other of the eye; one of disclosure of the name, the other of the sacred place; one of prophetic proclamation of the revealing word, the other of ritual participation in a sanctuary Presence; in modern terms one that emphasizes a central

pulpit—preaching, and one which is focused on a central altar—celebration of the Eucharist. These two theologies exist in tension in the Bible and in the history of the church.

Church is worship. Worship demands a sense of the presence of God. There is no worship without ecstasy, without experiencing an awareness of the transcendent dimension of our lives. If we insist on the central pulpit and abhor placing it on one side of the platform balanced by a lectern on the other side with an altar table between them, then our preaching must partake of the Presence; it must be prophetic. It dare not be merely moralistic and doctrinaire. As spiritual beings, we cry out for both kinds of worship, to experience the Presence in terms of both eye and ear, in both word and place—a holy sanctuary! We only differ from one another in balance and in emphasis. As leaders of worship, we lead our people into God's presence through both proclamation and adoration. Terrien introduces his study by suggesting that

it might remind the conservative wings of the Eastern Orthodox, Roman Catholic, and Anglican communions that, without the radical risk of an insecure and yet secure faith [ear-word presence], the church is dead; and it should at the same time warn idealistic, moralistic, sentimentalist, subjectivist, and activist Protestants that faith cannot live or be maintained from generation to generation without the act of sacramental adoration.<sup>13</sup>

The kind of preaching I want to hear will confront me with the holy Presence for my life today. In the illuminating, transforming light of the Presence, my life will be judged afresh, and hope will be renewed within me. I will have been touched by divine grace. A prophetic word will have penetrated my enculturated consciousness. The impact on me of another week, lived out in a fallen world in a like human nature, will be placed in the perspective of the holy. Through the spoken word, the written Word will become a hot wire from God to my hungry heart. I will have worshiped, for I will have been under the power of truly Christian preaching!

(Continued on page 21)

## Biblical preaching brings the future of God to bear in judgment and hope on the present.

ception and field of language, who is so at home in that memory that the points of contact and incongruity with the situation of the church in culture can be discerned and articulated with the proper urgency.<sup>4</sup>

Brueggemann is concerned that the preacher develop an alternative consciousness. By this he means the perspective of the reality and values of the reign and will of God displayed in Jesus as seen within the total biblical context. The tradition is the inspired memory of the people of God enshrined in the biblical record, a "prophetic" tradition!

Brueggemann states his basic hypothesis as follows:

The task of prophetic ministry is to nourish, nurture and evoke a consciousness and perceptive alternative to the consciousness and perception of the dominant culture around us.<sup>5</sup>

This prophetic task has two functions:

The alternative consciousness to be nurtured . . . serves to *criticize* in dismantling the dominant consciousness. . . . On the other hand, that alternative consciousness to be nurtured serves to *energize* persons and communities by its promise of another time and situation toward which the community of faith may move.<sup>6</sup>

Biblical preaching as prophetic brings our secular consciousness un-



# Expand Your Christmas Outreach This Summer

by Roger Wayne Hicks

Mobile, Ala.

**D**oes your church present a Christmas concert by the adult choir? My guess would be that it probably does. Almost every church, no matter its size, finds the Christmas season to be a prime opportunity to reach out to the community through the music of the season. After all, there has been more music written in celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ than any other single event. There seems to be among the unchurched population a much stronger willingness, even a desire, to attend a church service during the Christmas season, especially when it contains a good amount of the music of Christmas.

When does your church begin its preparation for the Christmas concert? If you do not already do so, I would encourage you to begin serious preparation for your church's annual Christmas event at least six months in advance. Plans formulated in July or earlier will reap maximum results in December in a more effective community outreach.

A very important ingredient in effective community outreach through music is the concept of maximum impact through maximum involvement.

This past year we experienced a little over 50 percent increase in the size of our Christmas musical celebration choir, primarily as a result of

a very important event conducted in July. "Sing We Now of Christmas" was conducted on a hot, humid Alabama Tuesday evening from seven until nine o'clock. We purposely did not call the special evening "Christmas in July," since in our area this theme has been overdone, if not worn out, by a myriad of organizations, including department stores.

"Sing We Now of Christmas" was a preview of the upcoming Christmas musical. Invitations to attend this special evening had been given to current and prospective choir members by means of announcements in the church newsletter, the special summer music brochure, fliers distributed at choir rehearsals in June, and personal letters to the prospective singers. In the promotional materials, which are of utmost importance to the success of such a project, people were encouraged to attend the preview and then decide if they would like to participate in the Christmas concert.

The two-hour presentation was held in the church's fellowship hall replete with Christmas decorations and the spicy scent of potpourri leaves boiling on the kitchen stove. The total concept of the Christmas musical was presented in its chronological sequence of events—narration, dramatic presentations, Scripture readings, and musical se-

lections. Each choral selection was sung through once by those attending the preview.

A very important part of the Christmas musical, emphasizing the idea that "maximum impact is obtained through maximum involvement," concerned children and youth. Although this concert would feature the church's adult music groups, since the children and youth would have their own concert a week earlier, we wanted to make certain that family units would be encouraged to attend this concert. We were eager that the boys and girls would feel they had an important part in the musical celebration. So, in the preview we also included the idea of how the children would be involved. As each child arrived at the concert, he would be greeted by a costumed "Christmas character" who would escort the child to a seat at the front of the sanctuary. During the first portion of the concert—



about 20 minutes—the music conductor would direct his comments to the children, regarding such things as a description of the handbells and orchestral instruments being played. There would be opportunity for the children to participate, as well as to ring sleigh bells during one of the choral selections. Following this impromptu time with children, they would be dismissed to attend their very own “Happy Birthday, Jesus” party under the guidance of our children’s director.

Sharing the concept and singing through the music at the preview evening lasted 90 minutes, followed by a refreshment break of Christmas cookies and punch. With cookies and punch in hand, we fielded questions and comments about the musical’s concepts, including the goals of memorized music and formal dress. A group of committed Christmas singers left the fellowship hall that mid-July night.

Of course, such an evening’s preview of the actual Christmas concert happens only after a great deal of advance preparation. Much thought had been given to the selection of the music. Over the past several years we have chosen several choral selections and weaved a theme and narration around them, rather than selecting one major published can-


tata or musical. The review, selection, and ordering of the music had been accomplished in May. When the music arrived from the publishers, it was stamped with the church name, hole-punched for later use in the three-ring choir notebooks, and placed into packets for distribution to each person attending the preview event, “Sing We Now of Christmas.” A printed schedule of the Christmas music rehearsals from September through December was given to each person attending the preview. Of great importance that evening was the “sign in” sheet, which was presented in an “upbeat” design with the heading, “I Attended *Sing We Now of Christmas!*” This “sign in” sheet contained the name and phone number of all who attended, giving us a list for follow-up purposes.

Estimating the number of people who will attend this event is a challenging part of the process. We took into account the number of people who had sung in the previous year’s Christmas concert, 50, and set a goal of increasing that number by 10 for the upcoming year’s musical. Realizing that the preview would be conducted during the height of vacation season, we hoped to have 50 people show up for the preview, which would include several new

people. Sixty people showed up! The exact number of packets we had prepared.

The result of all our creative planning and conducting of the summer preview was a choir of 76 people, a 50 percent increase over the previous year. We involved 185 children (age four through grade five), as compared to a minimal number the previous year. And we had a packed sanctuary for two evenings of Christmas celebration and outreach.


Of great importance to the success of our Christmas outreach through music has been the cooperation of the total church staff in a team effort. The children’s involvement was accomplished under the leadership of our children’s director. The total concept of our musical outreach, “Where Is Christmas?” developed largely because of the creative freedom encouraged and supported by our senior pastor.

Christmas provides a prime opportunity for community outreach as well as for celebration. That which takes place in December will largely be the result of creative planning that takes place during the summer. Let your own Christmas musical preview serve to expand your church’s Christmas outreach this summer. 

## Some Thoughts on Biblical Preaching from a “Purist” Professor of Bible

(Continued from page 19)

How is this possible? Thomas Merton gives us one clue:

If we said only what we really meant, we would say very little. Yet we have to preach God too. Exactly. Preaching the word of God implies silence. If preaching is not born of silence, it is a waste of time.<sup>14</sup> 

1. Leander E. Keck, *The Bible in the Pulpit: The Renewal of Biblical Preaching* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1978), 106. See pages 105-24.

2. Indispensable for biblical preaching are two or three proven and thorough commentaries on the book in question, one of which should be fairly recent. Ask the advice of those whose vocation it is to keep up in the biblical field. But know how to use the commentaries, and keep them the servant of the biblical text! Other tools as available could include

introductions, histories and atlases, biblical theologies, lexicons and wordbooks, grammars (if Greek and Hebrew can be used), and illuminating monographs and special studies as they are known and available.

3. We use the word *prophetic* in a broad, qualitative sense to denote that which is characterized by a saving message, the proclamation of the will of God for the present, a message of judgment and grace that gets its content both from the past, the covenant of God with His people, and from the future, the new thing, the final consummation of the purposes of God for His people.

4. Walter Brueggemann, *The Prophetic Imagination* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978), 12.

5. *Ibid.*

6. *Ibid.*, 13.

7. *Ibid.*

8. Bishop George McKinney, pastor of the St. Stephen Church of God in Christ in San Diego.

9. Samuel Terrien, *The Elusive Presence: Toward a New Biblical Theology* (New York: Harper and Row, 1978), xxvii.

10. *Ibid.*, xxviii.

11. *Ibid.*, 5.

12. *Ibid.*, 30.

13. *Ibid.*, 8.

14. Thomas Merton, *Sign of Jonas*, 166. With this quotation relating silence to the preaching task, the allusion is to the meaning of silence as developed in ancient Eastern Orthodox Christianity, especially in what has become known as hesychastic spirituality (from the Greek *hesychia*, quietness, rest, silence). On this tradition see George A. Maloney, *Prayer of the Heart* (Notre Dame, Ind.: Ave Maria Press, 1981), 18-59 ff. Helpful on the contemporary role of silence in the spiritual life is Henri J. M. Nouwen, *The Way of the Heart: Desert Spirituality and Contemporary Ministry* (Minneapolis: Seabury Press, 1981), 41-68. See also N. W. Goodacre, “Silence,” in *The Westminster Dictionary of Christian Spirituality*, edited by Gordon S. Wakefield (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1983), 354 f., who begins with the scriptural precedents. Thomas Merton’s understanding of the role of silence is rooted also in the work of St. John of the Cross as evidenced in his *Ascent to Truth* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1951, 1981).



## Trends and Implications for the Church in the 1990s

by Daniel R. Copp  
San Diego

### INTRODUCTION

It is always thrilling to celebrate the accomplishments of the past. Now that we have entered the 1990s, we pause to reflect on the 1980s and the wonderful way God has blessed the Church. As the hymn writer Fanny Crosby says, "To God be the glory—great things He hath done"

With the assurance of God's eternal faithfulness, we turn our interest toward a new decade. As Charles Kettering expressed it, "My interest is in the future because I am going to spend the rest of my life there." The next 10 years of our lives will be spent in the 1990s. What does that mean for the Church?

Two terms are predominant in the avalanche of descriptions concerning the church and the decade of the '90s: *change* and *opportunity*. It is said that we will experience at least as much change in the next 10 years as we have in the past three decades. Considering recent dramatic changes around the world, this estimate is already being considered conservative. Fueling fires of change are rapid advances in technology and global communication. As we attempt to anticipate for the 1990s, it will be difficult to exaggerate when it comes to the climate of change in which we expect to minister.

Closely related to the pace of change is the increased sense of opportunity for the church. Many observers are talking about the 1990s

as a decade of evangelism, anticipating a moving of the Holy Spirit and an openness to the gospel of Jesus Christ beyond what the world has known since Pentecost and the first-century Church.

Survey information presents the profile of American people as keen-

### Two words characterize the coming decade: *change* and *opportunity*.

ly interested in religion (George Gallup's *1988 Survey of the Unchurched American . . . 10 Years Later*; George Gallup's *The People's Religion: American Faith in the 90s*; George Barna Research Group's *National Research Studies*). Many unreached Americans already profess high levels of belief in God, heaven and hell, the divinity of Jesus Christ, and the Second Coming. As George Barna concludes, "Never before have there been so many who are suddenly open to the notion of attending church on a regular basis." "The harvest is plentiful" (Matt. 9:37), and the next decade offers tremendous opportunity for the evangelical church.

Facing the changes and opportunities, what will this mean for the church in the 1990s? While we do not have a crystal ball, nor do we wish to presume upon the providence of God, it would be wise to attempt to identify trends likely to impact the way the church ministers in our world in the next decade.

In light of accelerated change and unparalleled opportunity before us, let's address some of the trends and implications for the church in the 1990s.

### TRENDS

The following trends are not meant to be a prophetic or an exhaustive list. Rather, they represent general areas of change already established and expected to accelerate in the next 10 years. Each trend offers exciting opportunities for ministry for the church, as well as unique challenges.

#### 1. AN OLDER CONSTITUENCY

Ken Dychtwald, in his book *Age Wave*, sketches the changing demographic landscape as we continue to see senior adults living longer and baby boomers growing older. In 1990 it is estimated that there are over 31 million people 65 years of age or older in America. At the same time, there are over 60 million baby boomer adults born between 1946 and 1964. It is easy to understand projections for a consis-

tently older population in the future, with 20 percent of the population of America—over 50 million—65 years of age or older by the year 2020.

There are tremendous opportunities for ministry if we recognize and respond to the aging of America. Senior adults are generally very responsive to churches that know how to respond to their unique needs. The challenge for the church will be to understand the needs of the elderly and minister to them.

The 60 million baby boomers are quickly becoming some of the most responsive people to the ministry of the church. They are reaching the age in which they are burning out on a popular culture with its empty materialism and shallow successes. They are seeking to attach their families to deeper values, resulting in a renewed interest in religion. In order to effectively minister to this segment of our population, the church will need to respond to the needs of the secular family that is seeking to no longer be squeezed into the world's mold. The church will need to minister to the children while helping parents work through the issues of conflicting kingdoms seeking for lordship of their lives.

## **2. A MORE RACIALLY DIVERSE CONSTITUENCY**

Not only is American society graying, but also it is becoming much more pluralistic racially. Immigration is the dominant source of population growth, with Asians and Hispanics leading the way. Presently, the Los Angeles School District offers classroom instruction in 80 different languages. Projections conclude that by the year 2000 the white population in California will be in the minority.

Ethnic groups, particularly Asians and Hispanics, are responsive to the gospel. However, the church must affectively address the contextual issues of culture, language, and imported religious traditions. The church will also need to continue to stretch its sanctified creativity in responding to expanding needs for facilities and leadership for ethnic ministries.

## **3. A MORE SOCIOPOLITICALLY ACTIVE CONSTITUENCY**

Family and Compassionate Minis-

try issues have become political hot buttons for the Christian community. There is a trend toward greater active political participation regarding issues such as abortion, sex education, pornography, child abuse, child care, alcohol and drug abuse, prayer and religious concepts in public schools, homosexuality, AIDS, the homeless, etc.

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## **The current generation is seeking to attach its families to deeper values.**

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Concern for moral issues and the sanctity of the family will continue to produce active response by the church. The family staggers against the onslaught of pressures that would seek to break it apart. September 1988 issue of *Good Housekeeping Magazine* reported that 23 percent of all homes are now single parent. This is readily believable when we consider the rate of divorce and rampant sexual promiscuity. According to studies by U.S. Centers for Disease Control, about 29 percent of the 15-year-old girls polled in 1988 reported having had sex, up from 18 percent in 1982—15-year-old girls! This is not an issue that concerns only the young, or the unmarried, or the unchurched. Christian college campuses, church families, and parsonage families are not immune. According to a study conducted by the Center for the Study of Health, Faith, and Ethics (Park Ridge, Ill.), 1 in 10 ministers have had affairs with members of their congregations, and 1 in 4 have had some kind of sexual contact with a parishioner.

The Christian community will continue to become more active in social and political issues that respond to the needs of the family and seek to stem the tide of the "sexual revolution" and the erosion of the American family.

At the same time, there is almost a dispensational work of the Holy Spirit in the moving of the Christian community to respond to the various social needs described as Compassionate Ministries. The Lord seems to be issuing a wonderful call to service that is directing individuals not only to the preaching ministry but also to specific ministry among the homeless, among others living in the inner city, and among victims of AIDS who find themselves inhabitants of a hospice.

In the 1990s, the church will need continued insight concerning the specific issues we face, as well as how to address those issues as God's people in the sociopolitical arena in which we find ourselves.

## **4. A LESS DENOMINATION-ORIENTED CONSTITUENCY**

All available data consistently shows that denominational affiliation has little bearing on how attractive a church is to a person seeking a church home. The data confirms what we already know: There is a dramatically decreasing relationship between somebody attending the church and the fact that it is a certain denominational church. For example, many erstwhile Nazarenes are attending churches other than Nazarene churches. Likewise, our Nazarene churches are full of people who attend for reasons other than the fact of its being a Church of the Nazarene.

Surveys clearly demonstrate that the number one reason a person chooses to stay in a church is the friendliness of the congregation and the relationships they develop. When choosing a church, people are not attracted primarily by denominational affiliation, preaching, music, or program. People are most influenced by their need for meaningful friendships and community, relationships not easily found in this age of advancing technology that essentially isolates people from each other.

In order to participate in the evangelistic opportunities of the 1990s, the church will need to understand and effectively respond to people's needs for community and belonging. If the Christian church is not prepared to meet these needs in the

name of Jesus Christ, the rising tide of the New Age movement and other non-Christian religions and cults are prepared to offer their heretical response to the spiritual vacuum.

## IMPLICATIONS

The trends that have been identified will likely impact the ministry of the church. The following are possible areas of implications that would relate to these trends.

### 1. FINANCIAL SUPPORT

It is difficult to measure the implications for financial support for the church. However, some possible events and perceived behavioral patterns could relate directly to financial support:

#### A. Demographic Changes

The generation ahead of the baby boomers has been the financial backbone of the church. They continue to move quickly into the senior adult portion of their lives, which finds them on the decreasing side of their financial strength. Baby boomers coming up behind them have yet to demonstrate the same sense of financial stewardship.

Likewise, studies of emerging ethnic groups show that they do not generally give liberally to the local church.

#### B. A Sociopolitical Backlash

Heightened participation of the church-at-large in social and political affairs will likely produce a backlash that will bring increased involvement of the government in religious affairs. In the United States we continue to see an increased interest on the part of the courts, legislatures, and the Internal Revenue Service in monitoring and regulating the work of the church. In October of 1987, the U.S. Congress sponsored a series of hearings pertaining to tax filings and reporting practices of the church. Leading IRS officials sought to move ahead with changes. Congress continues to move cautiously, but further investigations are currently in progress concerning the government and church finances. Any major changes in tax status or

benefits could have significant financial impact on the church.

#### C. Economic Events

The costs of ministry for the local church continue to escalate. The price of land, buildings, personnel, and essential programming presently outstrip the resources of the local church. And economists agree that we are likely on the verge of some degree of economic downturn, tightening the financial screws on the local church even more.

### 2. EVANGELISM

Trends indicate that opportunity for evangelism is great! We do not want to overlook this most exciting opportunity for the '90s. It is time for the church to seek a deepening work of God's Holy Spirit in us. It is time for churches to join together in intercessory prayer for the harvest. It is time for the church to reaffirm its commitment to the Great Commission and to seek ways to strategically work together and resource one another to lead people in a dynamic personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

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**The number one  
reason a person  
chooses a church  
is the friendliness  
of its people.**

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It may mean that we begin by helping each other see the opportunity more clearly. We may start by recognizing that within the church is tremendous opportunity for evangelism among church members and "non-church members." With decreased denominational ties, it is likely we will have more and more "non-Nazarenes" or "non-Wesleyans," etc., attending our churches. They may call themselves by any denominational name, but they are a


searching people, making themselves available to the ministry of a holiness church. We must continue to be deeply committed to ministering to the people that call us "home," and, at the same time, respond to the real opportunity to minister in the evangelical and Wesleyan tradition to the "nonholiness" people who come our way.

An awareness of the tremendous opportunity for holiness evangelism in the 1990s needs to permeate our churches, serving as the foundation for our vision and planning.

### 3. CONSECRATED LEADERSHIP

Participation in the exciting opportunities of the next decade requires effective response to numerous challenges. To do so will take consecrated leadership, both clergy and laity. One of the greatest needs in the 1990s will be in the area of leadership development. We need to be continually developing people whom God can use to direct His Church as it faces volatile issues and valuable opportunities. Resources will need to be committed to better prepare us for facing the socio-political issues, to offer continued leadership development opportunities for our clergy and laity, and to produce individuals committed to service and available to God's call to ministry—whether preaching, teaching, or specific compassionate ministries. We need men and women who are surrendered to God and committed to leading the way in Kingdom ministries and who are keeping in step with the Holy Spirit. Consecrated leadership will make the difference for the church in the 1990s!


### CONCLUSION

With the change and opportunity the church faces in the 1990s, it is certain that these trends and implications can, at best, serve as only an introduction. The good news continues to be, "The one who calls you is faithful and he will do it" (1 Thess. 5:24). And our prayer continues to be, "Let us keep in step with the Spirit" (Gal. 5:25). 

# Hang-up of Pessimistic Doldrums

by Raymond C. Kratzer

Yakima, Wash.



**G**od's work, by its very nature is involved in an atmosphere of resistance. We servants of the Lord must be aware of an unfriendly world that is determined to negate every effort for good. The Bible says that Satan is still going about as a roaring lion, disguised as an angel of light, and busy in his sovereignty as the prince of the power of the air. Consequently, if we pray through, we must blast a hole in the satanic pollutants and fight every other form of resistance in order to accomplish our task in building the Kingdom.

An evangelist was staying in the pastor's home while conducting revival services. During family prayer one morning, the pastor's small son

prayed, "Dear Lord, help our evangelist to do his thing." Every minister needs God's help to do "his thing." Often it must be done in spite of untoward circumstances.

One of the deadliest states of mind into which preachers may be lured by the god of this world is the doldrums of pessimism. Satan does not have much luck in getting them to commit sin, but he often succeeds in hindering their success by getting them hung up with an attitude of pessimism.

Pessimism is such a subtle thing that it penetrates your subconscious mind almost imperceptibly, often in the guise of a spiritual impulse. When you observe the lack of consecration on the part of church mem-

bers, and with the world's conditions about us, it seems so logical to concentrate on problems. They loom so large on the horizon that your assets are obliterated from view. The truth of the matter is that your assets are always greater than your liabilities.

Of course problems should not be overlooked. But if they become all-consuming, a deadly pall of pessimism will pervade the atmosphere. Progress will slow to a snail's pace. This attitude can so easily become dominant until every joy will be diminished and every bright spot will be dulled.

I recall a certain lady with many fine attributes, but she was infected by the doldrums of pessimism. No matter how good a thing appeared, she found something wrong with it. One time I remarked what a beautiful day it was with the sky so blue and the sun so radiant. She paused a moment as she scanned the sky, and finally said forlornly: "Yes, it is a nice day, but see the dark cloud on the horizon." About 99 $\frac{4}{100}$  percent of the sky was blue, but she zeroed in on the small cloud.

Many of the teachings of the New Testament emphasize the need for optimism. Jesus says, "Be of good cheer" (Matt. 9:2, KJV). Paul says, "Rejoice evermore" (1 Thess. 5:16, KJV). Peter says, "Rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy" (1 Pet. 4:13, KJV). John quotes Jesus in his Gospel, "That your joy might be full" (15:11, KJV).



Many good preachers have found themselves stymied in the doldrums of pessimism through an over-concentration on negatives. Some evangelists have constricted their usefulness because they cry the blues continually. Their ministry in a church often casts a pall of gloom that hangs over a congregation long after they are gone. Their negativism expresses itself in their offerings, in the alleged unspiritual churches and visionless pastors, and in highlighting all of the ills of the day. Then they wonder why their calls are less than normal. Instead of being wise and taking some vitamins of victory, they allow the drip, drip, drip of gloom to circulate in their spiritual bloodstream to infect their whole outlook.

The apostle John at 90 years of age was rich in the things of God, and his outlook was bright and uplifting. He said at this age: "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is" (1 John 3:2, KJV). Does this sound like a dull outlook? Think of the discouraging circumstances John was in most of the time. But life to him was the thrill of coming adventure, for he served the Lord! What a privilege! What a challenge! Instead of his outlook being bathed in indigo, it was sprinkled with "joy unspeakable and full of glory" (1 Pet. 1:8, KJV).

If your relationship with God is current, and His love pervades your inmost self, life should possess an overriding joy with a brighter tomorrow always in view.

Optimism begets optimism. Pessimism begets pessimism. Paul states that the best way to keep out of the doldrums of pessimism is to think positively. While in prison—not too cheerful an environment—he wrote: "Whatsoever things are true, . . . whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good re-

port; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things" (Phil. 4:8, KJV). The wise man of old said: "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he" (Prov. 23:7, KJV).

A young pastor went to a small church in an isolated area as the only spot a "generous district superintendent" had for him. He didn't tell the young man that it was a "burned-over field" and that one of the leading members of the church had been captioned as a "timber wolf." This young pastor and his wife saw only a challenge there. If the area appeared to some as "burned-over," it looked to them like fertile soil in which a potential harvest lay. The "timber wolf" turned out to be a diamond in the rough who loved God and became a shining gem of rare beauty under the concerned care of the godly couple. The church prospered and became a thing of beauty because that pastor refused to be hung up on negatives and discouragements.

Isaac Watts says:

*Sure I must fight, if I would reign.*

*Increase my courage, Lord.*

*I'll bear the toil, endure the pain,*

*Supported by Thy Word.*

Temptations toward pessimism always lurk in the vestibule of success. Only a forthright effort, coupled with the power of the Holy Spirit, can keep them from achieving the ascendancy. Ministers must refuse to give audience to these destructive forces. If negative attitudes are countenanced at all, they are liable to infect a whole congregation. For example, let a pastor sigh to his church board over increased budgets, and the infection of gloom will spread like a cancer. Or let him hint that his church has reached the saturation point in that community, and soon vision will diminish, psychological barriers will be erected, and the progress of that church may be inhibited for years to come.

May God help us always to look at the work of the Lord through the eyes of Jesus who says, "All things are possible to him that believeth" (Mark 9:23, KJV). "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith!" (1 John 5:4, KJV, emphases added).

## BEYOND BELIEF



ROLLAND REFUSES TO BELIEVE ANY PART OF THE BIBLE HE HASN'T SEEN IN FLANNELGRAPH.



## Workers' Compensation Laws and the Local Church

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

Kansas City

**W**orkers' Compensation laws now exist in all states and Canada. They are designed so that benefits (both medical and disability income) for work-related accident, injury, or illness can be paid promptly without the need for expensive legal fees to determine fault. Medical benefits have no dollar or time limits, and cash benefits are paid for lost wages due to impairment or disability. In severe cases, medical and vocational rehabilitation benefits may be provided.

A few states exempt churches from Workers' Compensation coverage, and several exempt all non-profit employers. A few others exempt any employer, including churches, having fewer than two or three employees. However, **the majority of states have compulsive participation laws** that do not exempt churches!

### WHAT IF THE CHURCH DOES NOT HAVE INSURANCE?

Unless specifically exempted by law, church employees are subject to Workers' Compensation laws. Unfortunately, some churches assume they are exempt and so do not secure the insurance. However, such an assumption will not protect a church from full liability in the event of a claim for benefits.

Work-related injuries or illnesses among church employees are not as rare as some think! In fact, in one state, Workers' Compensation coverage was extended to include volunteers working under the supervision of a church employee. In this specific situation, a volunteer was donating labor during a building project and was injured. Expenses for medical treatment and lost wages made it necessary for the individual to seek help through a Workers' Compensation claim. The church's general liability coverage limits were exceeded, and the church was held liable for the balance of the benefits.

In some cases, general liability

coverage may prevent the need for the injured or their family to bring court action. However, too often it is not reviewed and updated to adequate levels.

### CHURCHES AND THE VIEW OF THE COURTS

The prevailing view of the courts can be seen in one court's ruling: "The fact that [a religious organization] is a purely charitable enterprise does not of itself release it from the obligations of our Workers' Compensation Act, which unlike the acts of some states, does not exempt charitable or religious institutions, as such, from its operation, nor exclude their employees from its benefits. Where the relationship of employer and employee actually exists between a charitable institution and an injured workman, the latter is entitled to the benefits of our act, otherwise not" (Schneider v. Salvation Army, 14 N.W. 2d 467, 468 [Minn. 1944]).

### SHOULD THE CHURCH PURCHASE WORKERS' COMPENSATION INSURANCE?

The answer must be the result of careful research into the applicable state laws. If legal exemption does not exist, compliance with the law may require insurance that is purchased, or it may allow self-insurance. Under the latter option, professional assistance is a must to determine the appropriateness and the risks of self-insuring Workers' Compensation coverage.

If legal exemption does exist, the church should still determine what would happen if an employee were to be injured on the job. It should decide if the limits under general liability coverage are high enough to cover large losses or if the church should voluntarily purchase Workers' Compensation coverage. Furthermore, it should be noted that some states impose certain "legal

disabilities" upon employers that choose not to be covered by Workers' Compensation insurance.

These concerns should not be ignored. Unfortunately, too often they are asked in an emotional setting after an injury has occurred.

Some churches have discovered too late that it is more expensive to pay the continuing salary of a "recovering" employee than it would have been to pay for adequate insurance.

The following is a true example of what can happen. It is an excerpt from a letter responding to some of these very issues.

We are going through some very turbulent waters in the very matters of which you speak. The church hired a janitorial service in 1978. The persons owning the service were members of the church, and it was agreed that they would do the cleaning services.

The wife of the manager of the cleaning service fell, and since that time, we have been in constant turmoil in trying to sort out the details of the hiring and services to be rendered.

Board minutes and other important documents were not filed properly, and so the investigation goes on without any real direction because the basis on which they were hired was not recorded.

I say all of this to stress the point that we must be diligent both in preaching and administrative leadership. It is not enough any more to operate with verbal agreements and unwritten contracts. Our church has suffered much through this experience, and it has been a tremendous burden on my heart and ministry. I have pastored for 36 years and never faced this kind of storm before. I sure hope pastors will take heed and know where they are going.

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



# Pentecost

by J. Grant Swank, Jr.

Walpole, Mass.

## A Sermon for Pentecost Sunday

Acts 2:1-13

**D**oes Pentecost Sunday mean anything to you personally? It should. Samuel Chadwick wrote:

At Pentecost, the Holy Spirit came as He had never come before. Jesus said, "It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you." The inference is that the presence of the Spirit is better than the bodily presence of Jesus. The Holy Spirit is Christ without the limitations of the flesh and the material world.

To give witness to this Pentecostal presence is to tell the world that we have been overcome with a new power. Jesus told His disciples that they would "receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you" (Acts 1:8).

What is the thrust of this spiritual dynamo? It is to have power over sin's domination, to live victoriously over the devil, to experience freedom from self-centered drives. It is the enabling by the Holy Spirit to live the holy life.

Prior to Pentecost, Peter was weak-kneed, an embarrassment to the cause of Christ. Up and down, he rode a spiritual seesaw within his spirit. After Pentecost, Peter stood strong in the Lord. He was strong enough to stand up and preach in the streets and alleyways of Jerusalem during the festival, a risky act that could have incited his death by the Temple guards.

When living in the Spirit, we have an awesome respect for God, a hatred against evil, and a hunger for daily cleansing from all that robs us

of a close companionship with our Savior.

The Pentecostal presence gives us a new *proclamation*. Empowering Peter from cowardice to courage, he spoke forthrightly, impulsively, daringly. But this time, Peter's lips uttered neither foolishness nor betrayal as before. Instead, he proclaimed with conviction concerning the Spirit of Jesus, who indwelt the followers fresh from a second-story flat where they had spent 10 days in prayer meetings.

This fisherman-turned-evangelist proclaimed a hallowed Jesus, a Carpenter who was more than human. Peter, along with John, preached to the lame man about a healing Jesus—a Savior of body and soul. This same twosome pronounced to Jewish priests a heavenly Jesus, our ascended Mediator seated at the right hand of the Father in glory.

When *we* are filled with the Pentecostal presence, we proclaim not ourselves, nor our group, nor our religious idiosyncrasies, but Jesus. We lift *Him* up for all the world to see, something desperately needed in our climate of spiritual confusion and egocentricity.

We can survive without religious celebrities and money appeals for their large organizations. "Holy hoopla" advances the cause of self more than the Savior. But we cannot do without our High Priest, the One who offers His Spirit to indwell our hearts as the flaming fire indwelt the Temple in Old Testament days. Our proclamation remains a Person rather than a program.

The Spirit's presence brings a new

*perseverance* in the believer's life. Willy-nilly Christian living is gone. Hot and cold flashes give way to a consistent fire for God. Moodiness and protection of self are anathema. Seeking out the comfort zone on the periphery of Christ's kingdom is not tolerated. Instead, Spirit-filled Christians dash headlong into the heart of God.

Consider the examples of perseverance in the early disciples. They gave all even in death. Andrew was scourged and crucified at Patras; Philip was hung on a hook; Bartholomew was beaten in Armenia; Matthew was stabbed in Ethiopia; and Thomas was speared in India. Thaddeus was slaughtered for refusing to worship the sun and moon, James and Simon were crucified in Egypt, and Peter was stretched on a cross during the Neronian persecutions.

How can we dare complain in this age of luxury and creaturely comforts? Can we even think of desertion when there is so much going for us: books, pamphlets, research journals, worship opportunities, fellowships, retreats, and communication methods to relay the old story? Or do these resources pamper us into an apathy that could destroy us?

(Continued on page 40)



# What Am I Supposed to Do?

by Betsy Humphreys

Morgantown, W.Va.

"Donna, will you work on the mission program?"

"Well, I guess so."

"Good. It's all settled then."

That's a conversation almost guaranteed to lead to disaster—unmet expectations, missed deadlines, overspent budgets, and angry, disappointed, or burned-out workers.

Consider the questions not addressed:

What does *work on* mean? Chair a committee? Serve on a committee? Do all the work?

What does *mission program* include? A particular project now under way? A conference? The total mission effort for the church?

When is this program to be done? On a continuing basis? For a year? By next Thursday?

How much time will I need to put into the program in order to be effective? Will the fact I can attend only evening meetings be a problem?

To whom will I be responsible? The minister? The board? The Sunday School superintendent?

Are there volunteers lined up? Is there a budget to work within?

Do I need special skills or information that I don't have yet? Where can I get those?

When these questions aren't asked and answered, we start to hear, "I thought you were doing that," "You needed it today?" or "I didn't know I was supposed to check with you."

### Why don't we ask?

Many of us active in churches, however, have some hang-ups about asking these questions or pinning down the details.

If I'm doing the asking, I may not

want to carry on the conversation so long that Donna has time to change her mind after she says yes! Or I may need to hurry to make other calls on my list.

If I'm being recruited, especially if I've been trained to accommodate others, it takes a monumental effort not to say yes immediately to a request for help.

That's where job descriptions come in.

A few years ago, to shore up our volunteers and programs, our church applied a standard business practice. We developed job descriptions for our standing committees and certain individual tasks.

Not everyone was immediately enthusiastic about writing up job descriptions for church work. After all, it is time-consuming and, to some people, too cut-and-dried for church activities.

But we have learned that good procedures, drawn up and understood by the people involved, make for smoother operations and more energetic volunteers. As our chairman reported after the first job descriptions were written, "People want to know what's expected of them. When they understand a job, they are more willing to say yes."

The descriptions also go on helping long after people have been recruited. Recently, while chairing a Steering Committee budget session, I realized that I did not know—and neither did anyone else on the committee—whether the Steering Committee was simply to collect the individual committees' budget requests or to edit those requests and submit a total recommended budget to the session. We wandered aimlessly dur-

ing the meeting, all feeling at sea.

The next day I checked the Steering Committee's job description and discovered our responsibility is to develop a total budget. Having something in writing settled the question.

Another benefit: If two committees are stepping on each other's toes, job descriptions can settle the dispute without offending individuals. As one member of our Volunteerism Committee noted, "Job descriptions are a subtle way of controlling overlap."

### Introducing the idea

How do you present the idea of job descriptions to others in your church?

The vocational makeup of the congregation might have an effect on acceptance. My church has a large percentage of university administrators and school personnel in its leadership. On the positive side, many of these people are accustomed to operating with job descriptions. On the other hand, some want their church volunteer time to be free of paperwork; these people have more than enough bureaucracy at their workplace. So they made sure (often by complaints!) that the job descriptions never became top priority.

Regardless of the church's makeup, however, it's important to have the backing of the minister and, if possible, the ruling lay body.

Our church got started by sending several members to a workshop on mobilizing volunteers. I recommend sending a cadre of delegates. Frequently one delegate attends a meeting, has a great experience, comes



back, and gives a three-minute report. Everyone says, in effect, "Sounds fine; thank you," and moves on to other business. But because we'd sent several delegates, we had a whole group ready to improve volunteerism in our church, and developing job descriptions was one method.

Another way to introduce job descriptions would be to develop one with a new committee starting a project. If the person in charge leads the committee through the writing of a job description and keeps referring to it when people ask, "Who does that?" and "When should I have this ready?" the group can serve as a model.

### Writing the descriptions

We learned early that it's not enough to say to committee chairpersons, "Write a job description for your work." A few may oblige, but most tend to put that assignment at the bottom of their agendas. If I have a choice between planning a mission fair that's two weeks away and writing how to set one up, unless I'm a highly structured person who always makes lists first, I will opt for action, not procedural exercises.

So we scheduled a meeting in which the only item of business was explaining the purpose of job descriptions and writing them. In that gathering we first gave the rationale: "We will be better able to match people with particular jobs because we will know what each job entails," and "It will be easier for you to find volunteers."

Second, we reminded people of the problems that occur when one person retires from a volunteer role and another takes over. Often the outgoing person is so accustomed to the procedures that he forgets to tell the new person many basic details. That argument hit home, because almost everyone in the group had been in the situation of trying to do a new job without adequate orientation.

Third, we showed that a person does not have to be a personnel specialist to write a job description. We passed out a standard form, on which committees filled in the needed information.

As an old English major, I suggest you make verbs precise: "prepare," "enlist," and "provide," for example.

A clear statement of who is responsible for preparing the budget and handling the expenditures encourages up-to-date financial information. It also discourages individuals from paying for supplies that are provided for in the budget.

For an individual's job description, state the time needed to perform the work. The most misleading words in all the world may well be, "It won't take any time at all." People often accept a volunteer job and then become resentful as well as tired from the unexpected commitment of time.

A deadline for one-time jobs helps a chairman keep people on target. I once asked an artist friend to make our church's main entrance more inviting. She jumped at the opportunity. We met to measure the area to be repainted and decorated. I listened to her ideas. I gave her names of people who might help. I checked with her regularly on progress. I included her oral report to me in my monthly written report to the committee. I thought I was being a great chairman.

But the project never materialized. Why not? I didn't set a deadline. This person was busy, and other projects with specific deadlines kept taking precedence. I thought because there was no absolute deadline, I shouldn't set an artificial one. I was wrong.

List what interests and skills are needed. An Usher Committee chair needs to have a sense of organization, willingness to recruit, and persistence (because the commitment lasts through December). A one-Sunday-only usher, however, needs only get his shoes on in time to show up 20 minutes before the service—with a smile. The virtues here are dependability and friendliness.

For a committee's description, state the extent of the committee's authority—what decisions the group can and cannot make. For example, if one women's circle decides to put on a program for the entire women's association without checking with the association board, it may set up a conflict of dates and personalities. If everyone

in the association knows that the board sets the calendar, this problem should not occur.

A committee's job description should include resources available to the committee members: the minister, a person in the community who works in the field, other committees, facilities, or books.


### "Annual report ramrod"

The completed job descriptions were assembled into an officer's handbook, which was given to all committees and officers. This book also contains staff job descriptions and a statement of our church's overall goals. In the two years since the material was distributed, it has been referred to repeatedly, especially when the question, "Who is responsible?" comes up.

Each year, committees are asked to revise their own job descriptions, because the jobs change and also because people gradually improve their job-describing skills. The notebook is in loose-leaf form, so new pages can be added easily. The Communications Committee makes sure new officers receive a handbook and that each committee carries out the annual review.

An example of the usefulness of job descriptions came to me unexpectedly. Our annual report to the congregation, a 50-page collection of committee and staff reports, is a major undertaking that has at times thrown the office schedule off balance and even has arrived at congregational homes *after* the annual meeting.

So our new Communications Committee, after hearing staff and member comments, established a volunteer position: "Annual Report Ramrod."

The following fall, when I needed a volunteer to fill that position, I simply pulled out the job description and used it to explain the task. The description included items I had completely forgotten since our January decision. And the result of the ramrod following the job description was that no one on staff worked overtime to put the report together, committee reports came in closer to the deadline than before (not a perfect score, but definitely better than before), and we set a standard for future years. 



# The Third Half in Ministry

by Kenneth Vogt  
Abbotsford, B.C.

**I**n large segments of the church world, ministry can be divided into two halves. The more youthful half reaches to about age 40 or 45, and the more mature half to about age 62 to 65. J. Grant Swank, Jr., in *Ministry Magazine*, wrote significantly about the second half of ministry. He pointed out that motivations and resources may change and often do. Those who capitalize on these changes will have their most significant ministries while others simply fade away.

His article brought to mind the "third half of ministry." That is where I am and thousands like me. I served 20 years as a pastor, then 20 years as a church administrator. Now I face the prospect of 15 to 20 more years of challenging, significant, and fulfilling ministry. Hallelujah!

But there are some realities that the ordained-for-life, retired minis-

ter needs to face openly and without regret, recrimination, or self-pity.

**REALITY No. 1: We, the retired, are no longer in the organizational structure.** We retain our ministerial orders. We will still be labeled with titles of respect. We may be called on to fill interim niches in the organization, but the mainstream passes us by. Accept that. Praise God for it! This leaves one free to respond more easily to promptings of the Spirit for a person-to-person ministry.

**REALITY No. 2: The pace of change is vastly accelerated.** Right at the time when one thinks of settling down, changes fly at us. Some of these are occasioned by health conditions. Right at the time when I was moving into my third career—church growth consulting—my wife got that terrifying disease called Alzheimer's. For three years, I cared 24 hours a day for my defenseless, diminished wife, my commitment was called to the test. By God's grace, I found out that real love gives totally without asking anything back. That brings me to the third reality.

**REALITY No. 3: There is always an open door.** My open door was the privilege of learning to pray as I had never prayed before. Now that my beloved has gone on her "safe journey," this has resulted in "Golden Hour Schools of Prayer" conducted in fellowships of many

denominations. Through these schools of prayer, prayer behavior is improved and becomes more powerful.

**REALITY No. 4: In fact there are many open doors.** A group of us, transdenominationally, meet every week to pray for our civic leaders, pastors, police officers, missionary endeavors, and people with special needs. Others lead support groups like Alzheimer's, Hospice, Grief Recovery, etc. Some retired ministers are doing serious writing.

**REALITY No. 5: We do not fit easily into the local church or district organization.** In my communion, retired pastors are no longer members of the district assembly unless we are specifically assigned. A master's thesis was written on the role or nonrole of the retired elder. Accept it. We do not fit in easily. Be sensitive, supportive, prayerful, and optimistic.

There is a French term, *noblesse oblige*. It accords respect to the wisdom that should come with advancing years, but it also calls for obligation on those who are older to accommodatingly fit in and be productive. We have a dream to be gathered to our fathers with our eye not dimmed nor our strength abated (see Deut. 34:7, KJV). Jesus explained to Peter that in his death he would glorify God (John 21:19). In the end it may be otherwise, but this kind of dream will keep us alive while we live.

# Unfinished Business Is His Business

Helping Adults Resolve Their Painful Pasts

by Bob Moeller  
Deerfield, Ill.



Sally hid under her bed, fearing the footsteps in the hallway would stop outside her door. Jim dreaded the holidays and the turmoil they brought to his home. Bill learned to keep friends away from the house after school so that his mother's secret would not be discovered.

## No Haven at Home

What do these people have in common? Their parents drank too much, or fought too much, or violated sexual taboos. As a result, their children were emotionally devastated. The kids grew up believing that everything was their fault. Not knowing how to respond to the emotional upheaval in their roller coaster homelives, they did the only thing they could do. They quit feeling, quit talking, and quit trusting.

These are the adult children of dysfunctional homes. They are known as ACOAs—an acronym for Adult Children Of Alcoholics, though the term is applied to a wide variety of dysfunctional home settings.

Charles "Chick" Sell, professor of Christian education at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, is author of a new book, *Unfinished Business: Helping Adult Children Resolve Their Past*. He is also the founder of a support group on the Trinity campus for students and other adults from the community who had traumatic childhoods like his own. Chick Sell's father was an alcoholic

for most of Chick's growing-up years, though later he did seek help and treatment.

## Lasting Damage

Chick discovered that the scars of those early emotional traumas did not disappear with adulthood. Paul and Dave, two students at Trinity, can also testify to that fact. Though both are intelligent, well-mannered, and spiritually committed adults, they carry with them the pain of growing up in homes where the rules were all wrong.

Their emotional responses to trauma in the home followed a pattern similar to that of most ACOAs when confronted with a domestic situation out of control. They decided to take personal responsibility for maintaining order and equilibrium in the home. Dave took it upon himself to care for everyone's needs, even trying to play the role of his missing father.

"I tried to become a dad to my little brother," he remembers. "I also became a comedian, to keep the family laughing."

## Making Maladjustments

It is not uncommon for children to assume different roles in the family to compensate for severe problems, according to Chick. "It is not adjustments that are made, but maladjustments," he observes. Some children choose to become the hero of the family in a desperate attempt to salvage the pride and dignity the

parent has lost through his behavior. Others deal with the family problem by becoming the family problem themselves, engaging in irresponsible acts.

Regardless of the reaction, the stress of living in an unstable, unpredictable, and chronically painful home situation teaches children three rules: Don't talk about the problems, don't allow yourself to feel the hurt, and don't trust anyone again. Unfortunately these rules are carried into adulthood, and they create tremendous interpersonal struggles for adult children. The primary result of their upbringing seems to be an inability to be intimate with anyone.

Paul puts it this way: "A big issue in my family was conditional acceptance based on performance, based on role playing, as opposed to having the freedom to be myself and express my feelings. That freedom didn't exist for me as a child."

## Unconditional Acceptance

It was at this point the Trinity support group began to help him recover from the sorrows of his childhood. "To be able to walk into a group of people and be accepted without conditions, to have the freedom to express my emotions—the anger, the hurt, the fears, all those things associated with growing up in an alcoholic family—was very healing for me. Acceptance and understanding by others of the struggles I face is very important."

Both Dave and Paul admit maintaining close friendships has been a difficult task. Trusting people is a fearful risk for an ACOA. They tend to carry their problems alone, a pattern they learned early when there was no one with whom to discuss the ugly family secret. "I think one of the difficulties we have is building significant relationships with other people," Dave says. "Just this last week we were discussing this issue in our group. One of the people in the group asked, 'Is this a place where I could find the type of friendships I have been missing?'" Indeed, learning to trust is one of the goals of Chick Sell's group.

### Breaking the Code of Silence

ACOA's tend to grow up with low self-esteem. "My feelings and emotions and thoughts were never accepted as being of value, so I became wary of communicating anything intimate about myself for fear of rejection," Paul remembers. Rather than sharing honestly, ACOA's learn to tell others what they think they want to hear. Pleasing others becomes their first priority. "You become so externally oriented you lose a sense of your own integrity," Sell adds.

The code of silence is a common trait of dysfunctional homes. The unspoken rule is that no one should mention the awful behavior of one or both parents. Chick Sell recalls never discussing his father's drinking problem with anyone in his family.

Only when his dad was seriously ill in a hospital years later did the topic of his father's alcoholism come up. Though he expressed remorse over his drinking, it proved to be an awkward moment. Says Chick, "I was unable to say anything more than, 'That's all right.'"

Just last year Chick learned from a brother that they both reacted as children to their father's drinking bouts in a similar fashion. When their mother retreated to the attic, often to cry, Chick would follow her up the steps to offer comfort. His brother had done exactly the same thing. Now, after many years, the code of silence was breaking down.

Ultimately the question must be asked: How can ACOA's get better? How can they reconstruct their lives

to be normal, healthy, and emotionally and spiritually satisfying?

### No Quick and Easy Answers

That is the aim of Chick Sell's Trinity support group ministry. He is committed to helping men and women find wholeness in Jesus Christ. Unlike therapy groups in our society that vaguely refer members to a "higher power," or some other fuzzy spiritual concept, Sell believes that Jesus Christ is the final solution to the pain and heartache of their pasts.

Healing and recovery from the damaging impact of growing up in a dysfunctional family takes time. There are no quick and easy shortcuts. The patterns of emotional response learned as a child are still playing, like a tape recording that repeats the same message over and over.

As children ACOA's needed a defense system to block the pain of their homelives. Turning off feelings and refusing to trust people helped them survive the nightmarish struggles of their childhoods. But now those patterns are no longer appropriate. They hinder the joy, freedom, and intimacy adults should enjoy with their spouses, children, and friends.

Chick believes the truth of Christ's love for us is a tremendous aid in the healing process. In the mind of a child from a dysfunctional home, there is often disparity between how God sees them and how their parents taught them to see themselves. The truth of Scripture challenges the wrong messages ACOA's sadly came to believe. ACOA's feel they must earn the acceptance and forgiveness of God, but the Bible teaches it comes by grace through faith.

Chick stresses the need to forgive the offending parents. ACOA's can only be free of their pasts as they release their bitterness and anger. The power of the gospel of Jesus Christ offers this hope.

The Trinity support group is seeing results. For Paul, healing has come through reversing the process that was set in motion early in his life. "As a boy I had learned not to trust my father. The next step was not to talk to him. Since I could not

trust him with my feelings, soon I began not to feel them. They just stayed repressed."

Paul remained in that difficult emotional bind for several years until he came to Trinity. "I began to go back and look at what happened. I began to get in touch with my feelings of anger and hurt. I began to talk about them in my support group. I'm still in the process of learning to trust others with things about myself, but that's coming along as well."

Dave has also experienced the unconditional love of the Heavenly Father through other believers. "The biblical truth that we are OK and acceptable as individuals created by God was mediated to me through the group experience of understanding and acceptance. I really feel it for the first time in my life."

Dave sees several benefits in his own life as a result of this ministry. "You have to build trust in the group. You are sharing things that require a high confidence level. It gives you the freedom to talk and to feel and to trust. You are growing in all the areas you had previously shut down."

### Learning to Trust Again

Even for ACOA's who profess Christ as Savior, a sense of intimacy with God is often missing until they receive help. According to Paul, "I became a Christian in 1970, but I did not have a good, consistent relationship with God for many of those years. Looking back, I think I can say it had its roots in not being able to trust in general. That became evident in my relationship with God." That too is changing. "During my last three years here I have had a better relationship with God than in all the rest of my entire life. I feel more able to trust Him."

Chick Sell feels called to develop a ministry to those who carry great hurt from their pasts. He has taken seriously the injunction of Scripture to bind up the wounded and heal the brokenhearted. Through God's Word, intercessory prayer, and the caring fellowship of believers, many ACOA's are finding new spiritual and emotional health. As members of the group resolve their painful pasts, their unfinished business can be finished at last.





# Living Predestination

by Steven R. Kooistra

Kansas City

**I** was born into a Dutch family that traces all of its genealogies back into the Netherlands. My grandparents still speak the Dutch language. Subsequently I was raised in the Americanized traditions of the denomination in which James Arminius held his ordination and provided the forum that shaped his theology.

As an adult, however, I have chosen to work out my salvation in the holiness denominations that follow the Arminian theological traditions, as assimilated by John Wesley and those who followed.

In so doing, I have had to resolve some of the tensions between the Calvinistic and Arminian positions. A major concern was predestination. Predestination pulls into its realm of discussion the sovereignty of an all-powerful God and His effect on the destiny of man, while also raising questions about the freedom of man to make his own choices.

The differences have been graphically portrayed to me. A man in one of my pastorates told me that he firmly believed that if a man served the Lord his whole life, was saved and entirely sanctified, and lived a sinless life, that person could still lose heaven if he gave in to one temptation and died in the act of sin without a chance to repent. For my parishioner, the doctrine of predestination offered no hope because his own free will determined his eternal destiny.

On the other side, during my freshman year of college, I had a friendship with a very fine Christian man who chose to serve the Lord. But he was convinced he would spend eternity in hell, for he was not one of the predestined. Later I heard he was being treated in a psychiatric hospital.

In the same vein, I was witnessing to a teenager who grew up in the Calvinist traditions. She said to me: "I am a covenant child. I do not need to be saved." Covenant theology entails much more than predestination, but a major tenet is the fact that God has chosen His people.

To come to a full understanding of the doctrine of predestination, I needed to resolve two issues and learn two truths.

The first truth I needed to learn is that predestination cannot be explained by logic alone. Predestination enters the mysterious realm of interaction between two beings—in this case between God and man. Theology, the rational study of God, too often separates God and man into different static and objective categories that do not allow for interaction, evolution, or change. Logic limits the discussion to two arguments. In one category it must be argued, "If God is . . . then man must be . . ." In the other category it must be argued, "If man is . . . then God must do . . ." Logic narrows the images of predestination to parallel railroad tracks merging in a distant

sunset. Both Arminians and Calvinists agree that God's sovereignty and man's free will must somehow connect. Logically, they seem to remain mutually exclusive. Although logic is necessary to understand predestination, at some point logic must be suspended. Faith must bind us to the truth.

The second truth I needed to learn is that predestination is neither a privileged status achieved by birth or baptism, nor a status achieved by fiat decree. The Bible clearly shows that predestination is a relationship.

The first of two issues that I had to resolve involved the sovereignty of God. Many people object to the doctrine of predestination because it seems unfair and capricious on God's part to pick and choose some people for heaven. I was one such person. I resented His sovereignty, and it figured in my decision to align with the holiness traditions.

This issue was resolved for me when I saw that God has given all men over to darkened minds, depraved actions, and hardened hearts.



(Thus Calvinists and Arminians can agree on the total depravity of man.) For me, this knowledge exonerates the sovereignty of God. He no longer sits in heaven, looking down on puny men, picking and choosing as He wills, plucking some men from the fire, and gleefully watching the others burn in hell. This image is not true because Romans 1 shows a God actively involved in the life of men, seeking both their redemption and, when necessary, their destruction.

## REVERSE PREDESTINATION

In Romans 1 Paul said: "Therefore God gave them over in the sinful de-

# Predestination raises questions about man's freedom.

sires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another" (v. 24). "God gave them over to shameful lusts" (v. 26). "Furthermore, since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, he gave them over to a depraved mind" (v. 28).

I call this giving over "reverse predestination," only because it has the opposite destination of that implied by predestination. "Reverse predestination" we don't hear about too often. We think of God choosing man for heaven but not for hell. Besides eternal consequences, the result of "reverse predestination" has earthly consequences as well.

They [mankind] have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; they are senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless (vv. 29-31).

We are arrogant if we charge God

with being unfair or unjust in His "reverse predestination," for Romans 1 spells out the reason for it:

For although they *knew* God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him . . . Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles. . . . They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator . . . Although they *know* God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them (vv. 21-23, 25, 32, *italics mine*).

God's "reverse predestination" was not a fiat decree of an uninvolved master, nor was it forced on men because of birth; but rather it is the result of man in his free will abandoning his relationship with God.

It must be stated, however, that man in his free will did not make his choice to abandon God in a godless vacuum. Three times in Romans 1 the word *know* is used. Earlier Paul writes: "What may be *known* about God is plain to them, because *God has made it plain to them* [mankind]. For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse" (vv. 19-20, *italics mine*).

The point is a clear and undeniable relationship between, and interdependence on, God's sovereignty and man's free will.

If this is true for "reverse predestination," does it hold true for predestination? The evidence provides an unequivocal yes. It is not a matter of proper theology, but a matter of proper relationship. Man's free will does not cause God's decree, and God's decree does not cause man's predestined fate. Sovereignty and free will play off each other. They are interdependent. The issues cannot be disentangled and neatly dissected by logic alone. Predestination involves the interfacing facets of a relationship between Creator and

creature, God and man. This truth is substantiated by the language of Rom. 8:28-29.

We know that in everything God works for good with those who love him, who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son (RSV).

By this scripture we see God's relational work in us, in the context of predestination, foreknowledge, and calling, within the elements of time and experience, so that our relationship to Him conforms to Jesus' relationship to the Father.

This same concept of predestination is also found in Ephesians 1. In the context of predestination blessings are given, graces bestowed, redemption offered, forgiveness applied, graces lavished, adoption granted, and wisdom and insight imparted into God's will, into a plan for the fullness of time, and into a uniting of all things in heaven and earth. Predestination is less of a status and more of a living relationship to God in Christ Jesus.

Admittedly Paul in Romans 9 mentions God's hardening Pharaoh's heart and His choosing Jacob over Esau. That raises some questions.

# Predestination cannot be explained by logic alone.

But the emphasis of Romans 9—God's sovereignty—ignores for sake of argument the fact that Esau chose not to participate solely and purely in the religion of his fathers. He casually sold his birthright, which included the priestly office of patriarch. He married foreign women. All of this after being taught by Abraham and Isaac the correct way of serving the Lord (Esau was 15 years old before Abraham died; see Gen. 18:19). Remember that Esau the hunter lived in God's creation—the same creation that Romans 1 says re-

veals His nature. And still Esau rejected Him.

For sake of the argument being developed, Romans 9 also ignores the free-willed choice of Pharaoh, who considered himself to be a god. He felt he had the ability, in the context of his religion and social structure, to defy any other god. Esau and Pharaoh, like all men, could not separate themselves from God's active or passive intervention in their lives in time and in experience.

After all, we are God's creatures living in His creation. We cannot separate ourselves from Him because we are made in His image. Our free will is to some extent His free will. God's knowledge of good and evil has, by Adam's sin, become our knowledge. And because we know as He knows, we choose, like Pharaoh, to make of ourselves gods, giving us the false impression that we may defy God.

God had to "reverse" predestine us into evil so that He could free us enough from himself in order to redeem us. We need to know that we are evil—too evil to be a god, much less have a proper relationship to God. Yet by His grace, through faith, we can have that proper relationship.

From Adam to the present, it was, is, and has been the persons who are in right relationship to God who are predestined. Abel is accepted by God over Cain. Noah is chosen by God to be saved. Abraham was the friend of God, and his free-willed faith was counted to him as righteousness. David is a man after God's own heart. Only those Israelites who kept the true relationship, symbolized and worked out in the Temple sacrifices and traditions, entered God's peace.

Then came Jesus, whose claim to life was that He and the Father were One and that He had come solely to do the will of the Father. He was predestined to be the Lord and the Christ (see Acts 2:36). For mankind He lifted the "reverse predestination" and reinstated the predestined relationship.

Today, the predestined are admonished to be holy as God is holy, to be transformed and renewed in mind, to be sexually and bodily pure, to be loving, kind, good, and haters even of the appearance of evil.

We are new creatures in Christ,

being conformed to the image of Jesus. Being in Him demands relationship. As "reverse predestination" involves the desires of man's heart, the actions of his body, and the thoughts of his mind, the new relationship to God is witnessed in the new desires of our hearts, the new actions of our bodies, and the transformation of our minds. Predestination involves the "lived out" life, as well as the final destination. The result of predestination shows up in the life we live, as do the results of "reverse predestination" show up in the life of the wicked.

Predestination is not an issue of who is choosing whom, but an issue of relationship remaining intact between God and man. Predestination cannot be pinned down to a specific time or a specific event. Those who have a relationship to God in Christ Jesus by the indwelling Holy Spirit are living out predestination. Those

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## Predestination involves the "lived out" life, as well as final destination.

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who do not have such a relationship are living out "reverse predestination."

The predestination of the saints is fair in that it takes place in the relationship between God and man as reestablished in Christ and stays in effect as long as the relationship is maintained through the intervention of the Holy Spirit. The "reverse predestination" of all others to hell is fair, for it is a decision borne in the relationship between a reconciling God and a rebellious creature. "Reverse predestination" stays in effect as long as man rejects God's offer of salvation made known to man by creation, His Word, other Christian people, and the inner witness of the Holy Spirit to that part of us that bears God's image.

The last issue I needed to resolve is the idea that God's "choice" of men is based in eternity, and people

were predestined before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1:4-5). It is a fact that God is eternal. It is a fact that He has a definite agenda for His world and our individual lives. It is a fact He can foreknow all things. It is a fact He has brought redemption into the world. And it is a fact that redemption existed *before* creation as it does *in* creation and as it will *in* eternity. God's Lamb was slain before the foundation of the world. Yet Jesus died at a definite time, in a definite place, and at a definite moment in history. Moreover, the Book of Hebrews indicates that it is possible to crucify Jesus all over again (6:6).

The definition of eternity suggests that there is no time. This is the reason one day can be a thousand years and a thousand years as one day (Ps. 90:4; 2 Pet. 3:8). If there is no time, there is no past and there is no future. Everything is present. Therefore the "choice" of predestination is not based on God's foreknowledge or His overriding will. The relationship of God to His creatures is a present reality. So, whether our relationship to God is that of predestination or "reverse predestination," it is a present reality. We are saved or we are not. The "choice" made in the halls of eternity is based on the relationship we hold with God today, in this time, in each of our places and experiences, even as we read these words. The "choice" of predestination is made in eternity, but it is also made in time. For time does not exclude the eternal.

Predestination grows out of the flux of God's sovereignty and man's free will as they interact in time and in eternity, in a realm that is almost intangible to the finite mind of man. We must accept predestination by faith as the Bible tells us: "For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: 'The righteous will live by faith'" (Rom. 1:17).

Holiness traditions more fully appropriate the truth of predestination, for by faith in the saving and sanctifying work of God by His Son and His Holy Spirit, the predestined relationship is maintained. We can live in peace that neither God's decree nor our free will shall keep us from heaven. We live out our predestination.

# The Boy in the Field

by Lois Hoadley Dick

Newton, N.J.

**H**arvest in the country is the scene of deep, hazy days against a background of sloping hills and dappled colors. Droning tractors and bumbling farm trucks labor across the fields.

Mornings feel just cool enough for a coat, while afternoons are ardent, and evenings are nippy, forecasting frost.

Sunday School had ended, and the teacher, after taking some of the neighborhood children home, drove slowly along the dirt road, admiring the trees. There stood a boy in the field 12 to 14 years old.

The teacher hesitated, then decided to be late for church. She nosed her car up to the farmhouse. A man worked by the barn, pitching hay.

"I'm from the church in town. Does your boy go to Sunday School anywhere?"

The man was friendly and explained that the rest of his family went out of town to another church.

"And the boy?"

"He won't go anywhere."

"Could I invite him to our church?"

"You'd better speak to his mother." It didn't seem likely that his mother would approve of this split arrangement, but the teacher returned the following week to ask.

"I'd rather have him go to your church than nowhere," came the decision. The boy himself was not interested but came once or twice. Then he wasn't seen for months, despite continued visiting.

Just one of those things, the teacher thought as she wrote it off her list. But one Sunday the entire family except the boy's father showed up in Sunday School and stayed for church.

"It's really closer for us to come here," the mother explained, "and we like it."

The next week they missed church. And the next. And the next. More visiting revealed strong opposition from a relative who did not want them to come back to church. Months went by without them attending, but the mother of the family began reading some Christian books. God began to speak to her through them. Before long she had been converted. Doubts and problems from years past began to be resolved.

One day she came to tell the teacher, "We haven't been going to any church regularly. I'm determined to start all my children in Sunday School. We're all coming next week. Pray that there will be no opposition."

But in the unexplainable way trouble has of following on the heels of spiritual victory, tragedy struck.

That week the teenage boy fell from the haymow and lay alone in the deep snow until he was found. Since it was winter, exposure complicated his other injuries.

Specialists were called in. It was weeks before the parents were even told the extent of his injuries. Then continued weeks of exhaustion as the mother struggled to hold down a

full-time job and make daily trips to the hospital many miles away.

Family routine was turned upside down. The father worked nights. A younger child developed a severe emotional ailment due to the unavoidable tension. In all this, the mother found comfort in her Bible and claimed God's promises.

The church stood by them, sending cards and little gifts, visiting, and, above all, praying.

More time passed. Evangelistic services were being conducted. The mother planned to come and bring the relative who had given opposition. But in the afternoon unexpected company arrived, making it impossible for them to attend.

During the week the mother called on the teacher. They discussed the Scriptures and shared how to witness to her husband. Arriving home, the mother found that an accident had occurred requiring a doctor's help, but she came to church that week.

Nothing permeates the Bible from cover to cover like the certainty of answered prayer. Sunday morning dawned fresh and bright. The boy from the field, still on crutches, sat happily in church with four others from his family, accompanied by a friend from a cult.

A family had been won to Jesus Christ!

Look around! Somewhere stands a boy or girl in a field—or on a street corner or in a playground. They're only waiting to be asked.

Will *you* ask?



# Under the Spell of Samuel Chadwick



by J. Ray Shadowens

Spring, Tex.

**J**ohn C. Oster described a visiting preacher in almost reverential terms:

Many years ago a tall, skinny man, with flowing steel-gray hair and a rumpled gray suit that hung softly from his stooped shoulders, spoke in our little chapel in rural Nebraska. He towered over the pulpit and held his Bible high as

der the influence of one of Methodism's most illustrious sons would surely agree that this venerable introduction could, with equal appropriateness, be applied to this former evangelist, educator, and editor. Few ministers of the gospel have enjoyed greater admiration by his contemporaries than did Samuel Chadwick. His lengthened shadow, reflecting

to cultivate a gratifying relationship with his Redeemer Lord.

At the age of 21, having already answered a call to the ministry of the Word, he witnesses "to an experience of sanctification." An acknowledged "need of cleansing and of enduement of power" enlightened him to the utter necessity of the fullness of the blessing in his own heart.

For fellow lovers of the Holy Scriptures, his confession is more than a little reassuring. "My Bible had led me in search for a fuller salvation."<sup>2</sup> His glorious discovery resulted from a diligent study and application of "the speaking Bible." We are reminded once again that all the doctrines we espouse are genuine only if they rest upon the Supreme Authority for all cardinal beliefs. If they cannot stand up to the scrutiny of clear and accurate interpretation of the Divine Revelation, they are to be dismissed as spurious.

His biography, *The Story of Samuel Chadwick*, by Norman G. Dunning, chronicles the astounding manner in which this Spirit-anointed herald of truth attracted and powerfully influenced thousands of spiritually needy from every stratum of society. Any attempted explanation for his personal winsomeness and magnetism that does not take into account the overshadowing of divine destiny ends in futility. G. Campbell Morgan, an out-

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## This modern-day prophet made the Scriptures come alive.

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his hands caressed its pages with easy grace. He was there for only one service. The adults of our church said that we were fortunate that he came our way, for he was an outstanding speaker.

I remember him, and can describe him after the passing of so many years, because of the way that he was introduced: "*This man knows the Holy Ghost better than any other man alive in the world today*"<sup>1</sup> (italics mine).

That could have been a good description of Samuel Chadwick, the influential British clergyman and author.

Some people who have come un-

der his enduring high esteem, lingers with many who were on the same spiritual wavelength.

Chadwick's entrance into the human stream of history was anything but auspicious. As a child of eight, a job in a textile mill that employed his father was his introduction into the labor force of his day. He never forgot the lowly circumstances of his childhood, adolescence, and young adulthood. He preserved a lifelong empathy with the disadvantaged.

This man of God related, with extraordinary detail, his conversion to Christianity at an early age. Even as a preadolescent, he sought diligently

standing pulpiteer in his own right, is reported to have said that Samuel Chadwick was the greatest preacher in the world of his day. This laudatory testimonial by one of his respected peers is indicative of the regard that many, on both sides of the Atlantic, held this native son of Brunley.

College. He seemed literally to have burned his flame of holy light to the point of its being extinguished.

No consideration of this divinely empowered human dynamo would be complete that omitted his own unique testimony to the meaning that the Scriptures held for him:

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## The secret for the effectiveness of Chadwick's ministry points to his phenomenal experience with the Holy Spirit.

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It would be an erroneous impression to conclude that such excellent moral, intellectual, and spiritual qualities were infused into his totally passive personality, empowering him for unusual accomplishments. On the contrary, he would probably be the first to admit that only as he brought all of his faculties under the Lordship of Christ could he even hope to attain his Master's coveted commendation: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant" (Matt. 25:21, KJV). His was no easy road to enduring effectiveness.

He disciplined himself with rigour, rising at six in the morning and having a cold bath, summer and winter. He accustomed himself to do with little sleep. His study-light was seldom extinguished before two-o'clock in the morning. In the weakness of his later years, it was pathetic to see him compelling his tired body and mind to attempt tasks beyond their strength. The rigour was but the outward expression of a life of inner discipline.<sup>3</sup>

When less-disciplined persons would have been judiciously conserving their diminishing stamina and physical vitality, Chadwick was still devoting his energies to the editing of the *Joyful News* and, apparently, giving very limited oversight to the continued operation of Cliff

I have worked at the Bible, prayed over the Bible, lived by the Bible for more than sixty years, and I can tell you there is no book like the Bible. It is a miracle of literature, a perennial spring of wisdom, a wonder-book of surprises, a revelation of mystery, an infallible guide of conduct, an unspeakable source of comfort. Give no heed to people that discredit, for they speak without knowledge. It is the Word of God in the inspired speech of humanity. Read

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## Chadwick blends extraordinary insight with intensely practical perception.

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it for yourself. Read it through. Study it according to its own directions. Live by its principles. Believe its message. Follow its precepts. No man is uneducated who knows the Bible, and no man is wise who is ignorant of its teaching. Every day is begun at its open page. It lies close at hand in all my

work. I never go anywhere without it and in it is my chief joy.<sup>4</sup>

Is there any wonder that this modern-day prophet of the whole counsel of God could make the Scriptures come alive so vividly and impressively to the multitudes that held on to his every word, whether from pulpit or from pen?

In all due respect to some very capable teachers of Christian theology, in whose classes this writer sat, none ever excited a greater appreciation of the person and work of the Holy Spirit. Still vivid in my mind were the hours spent with the small volume *The Way of Pentecost* in my first pastoral assignment following graduation from seminary.

If it could be said of Samuel Logan Brengle that he was the epitome of "sane sanctity and sanctified sanity," Samuel Chadwick represents a superb pattern of the Spirit-filled life.

He touches a sensitive area of corporate Christian faith when he warns: "The Church still has a theology of the Holy Ghost but it has no consciousness of His person and power."<sup>5</sup> What an alarming indictment of contemporary evangelicalism!

Chadwick clearly envisions that the role of the Paraclete was and is in relation to our ascended Christ: "The Holy Spirit is the active Agent of the glorified Son."<sup>6</sup> The self-effacements properly ascribed to the Spirit of Truth find meaning in this

Wesleyan-Arminian scholar's characteristic summary: "The Scriptures are reticent about the Spirit, which means that the Spirit is reticent about Himself, but they do make it clear that the Spirit is the crowning gift of redemption through Jesus Christ, and the Spirit was through it all."<sup>7</sup>

In the chapter titled "The Pentecostal Life," Chadwick joyfully acknowledges his unpayable debt to this second spiritual crisis in his life:

I owe everything to the gift of Pentecost. It came to me when I was not seeking it. I was about my Heavenly Father's business, seeking means whereby I could do the work to which He had called and sent me and in my search I came across a prophet, heard a testimony, and set out to seek I knew not what. I knew it was a bigger thing than I had known. It came along the line of duty, in a crisis of obedience. When it came I could not explain what had happened but I was aware of things unspeakable and full of glory.<sup>8</sup>

The secret for the effectiveness of his dedicated ministry points to this phenomenal experience as the only satisfactory explanation.

Chadwick's quote from an excerpt from Auguste Sabatier sheds helpful insight by making clear the subtle distinction, as seen in Christ's promise in the Upper Room Discourse:

It is not enough to represent the Spirit of God as coming as a help of man's spirit, supplying strength which he lacks, an associate or juxtaposed force, a supernatural auxiliary. . . . There is no simple addition of divine power and human power in the Christian life. The Spirit of God identifies Himself with the human ME into which it enters and whose life it becomes. If we may so speak it is individualized in the new moral personality it creates.<sup>9</sup>

A. W. Tozer and other like-minded saints would find kinship with this Christian mysticism. One places proper safeguards when he says: "The Spirit does not overwhelm us, but rather, He overspreads us."


This 19th-century-born proclaimer of inspired truth, in treating "The Gifts of the Spirit," cautions:

The safeguards against abuse are in the loyalties of faith. The first is loyalty to the Lordship of Christ. That is the first law of discipleship and the continual standard of Christian life and service. The second line of defense is loyalty to the Word of God. The Word and the Spirit are never at variance, and the Word attests the Spirit of Truth and the Spirit cor-

roborates, verifies and confirms the Word. There is laid down a plain practical rule in loyalty to the fellowship of the body of Christ.<sup>10</sup>

A remarkable blend of extraordinary insight with intensely practical perception weaves its way through everything the Methodist stalwart has spoken or written. Whether the subject is prayer, *The Path of Prayer*, or the Atonement, *The Gospel of the Cross*, or the person and work of the Spirit of Christ, *The Way to Pentecost*, he reflects exceptional incisiveness in all that comes from his pen.

This sublime heritage through our Wesleyan tradition should contribute incalculably to our corporate Christian holiness witness well into the 21st century and beyond. The fledgling minister, especially the clergyman in his prime, and the mature minister of the glorious gospel of free, full, and final salvation all

stand to benefit greatly by saturating themselves in inspired wisdom available in the works of persons of Chadwick's caliber. A wholesome balance between the published volumes of some highly acclaimed current evangelicals, many of whom are non-Wesleyan, and the scripturally sound, enduring genius of this spiritual stalwart and others of his stature could provide spiritual depth and breadth so essential to continued growth and personal enrichment. 

1. *Come Ye Apart*, 46, no. 1 (December—February 1985-86): 68.

2. Norman G. Dunning, *The Story of Samuel Chadwick* (Salem, Ohio: Convention Book Store, 1971), 51.

3. *Ibid.*, 15-16.

4. *Ibid.*, 18.

5. Samuel Chadwick, *The Way of Pentecost* (Fort Washington, Pa.: Christian Literature Crusade, 1972), 12.

6. *Ibid.*, 15.

7. *Ibid.*, 27.

8. *Ibid.*, 35.

9. *Ibid.*, 45.

10. *Ibid.*, 108.

## Pentecost


(Continued from page 28)

The benchmark of the Pentecostal presence is *purity*. The Holy Spirit is pure. His indwelling presence is evidenced in holiness of heart and life. No wonder believers of any age stand out from this world. The world remains fallen in sin; Christians are scaling the summits to breathe only the clean air of God's Spirit. Society reveals the difference. Culture feels the influence of God's people. The difference between the two worlds has its impact.

The more the difference is pronounced, the more sparks will fly. Take note of today's fires over the abortion debate. Holy ones uphold the sanctity of life. They naturally collide with an opposing view. Collision occurs in the fight against pornography. Holy ones call a relativistic world back to biblical morality only to run head-on into combat with the forces of darkness. Holy ones seek to pronounce scriptural convictions in the marketplace only to be put down by secularists who claim that pluralism has legitimately replaced our biblical heritage in the western hemisphere.

Yet Pentecostal purity is not monastic. It does not call for isolation. Instead, it takes its pattern from Jesus, who longed to be where the masses congregated. Consequently, biblical holiness is first in the heart and then pervades society. It is indwelling in order to become outgoing. Not content with a reclusive religion, Christianity empowered by the Holy Spirit is a radiating phenomenon, piercing the world with holy light from the very throne of God.

Within the nominal church, however, compromise is tolerated if not endorsed. In many quarters, we hear that the Christian can be content with sinning. As this message is repeated from some pulpits, it begins to sound acceptable. Nevertheless, the Bible says something quite different. The Word of God calls the believer to be cleansed from all sin, to a purging of the spirit, and a dying to wrongdoing. God's Word calls us to a new resurrection life in the power of the Holy Spirit.

The church desperately needs that Pentecostal presence, beginning with each disciple of Jesus. 

## Sanctification—Surrender

by Karen Lewis

**S**anctification is not wearing a certain type of clothing. It is not getting rid of worldly music or television or temper. It is not attending church more often or giving loud praises to God. It is not spending more time reading the Bible or praying.

My first outing after birth was to a holiness camp meeting of my childhood denomination, the most conservative of its kind. Reared in this church, I early asked Christ to come into my heart. But as I grew old enough to be aware of the need to be sanctified, I became disheartened, for try as I might, I could not get the experience in a definite way.

Holiness and sanctification were preached frequently. I knew the terms, such as eradication and crucifixion, but my understanding somehow focused on those things I mentioned as being what sanctification is not.

For many years I frequented the altar, pleading for my tempter to be removed. This was the only thing in my life that was inconsistent with sanctification as I interpreted it. Disappointment, defeat, and fear overwhelmed me when I felt angry or irritable again. In discussing my struggles with another teenage friend, I discovered others were as anguished as I. Very distraught, she

confided to me that she was unable to get sanctified because she feared she would have to wear her hair pulled tightly back. Her hair was long and neatly and modestly styled, but she felt this might not be sufficient.

As I approached young adulthood, Rev. Rodney Hurles became pastor of our church. His ministry focused much on sanctification. He dealt with it in a way I had not previously understood, and his explanations seemed so reasonable, easy to comprehend, and biblical.

He made it clear that the experience of sanctification was received of the Holy Spirit as a result of our consecration to God, a total and absolute surrender of our lives and wills to Him.

During his leadership of our church I was sanctified, this time to last. From that point I began to make some discoveries. Having consecrated myself in totality to God, I truly did find the temper problem gone. In fact, all carnal traits were gone—no longer suppressed, gone!

When one is truly dedicated completely to God, He gets victory over the carnal nature. Carnal anger, jealousy, pride, gossip, worldly desires, selfishness and self-centeredness, lack of true love and compassion, competitiveness, criticism, revenge,

and wrong attitudes and motivations are gone (Gal. 5:22-26).

Some inbred personality traits may be so habituated that we still find our behavior is flawed. The difference sanctification makes is that the Holy Spirit will immediately check us and we *will* make corrections with the help He so liberally administers. This is consistent with John Wesley's statement that sanctification is both instantaneous and gradual.

At the time we make our total commitment, we cannot possibly know every future situation that will require additional surrender. Some may be difficult but the truly sanctified individual will make each one. And with each surrender we are blessed with more of a Christlike nature.

Even after I was sanctified, a deeply imbedded trait remained. By some small but obvious change in my behavior I would let people know they had hurt me. I became convicted of this but at times had a difficult time overriding it.

When my young husband developed a life-threatening illness, I pled desperately with God to spare his life, since we had three children who needed a father. But God showed me that I must surrender

*(Continued on page 49)*



# Six Ways to Help Your Teens Gain Self-esteem

by Margaret Houk

Appleton, Wis.

**T**here's nothing teens need more than self-esteem. They want it. God wants them to have it. But it is very hard to come by during those trying years of gawky legs and social awkwardness.

You can't give a person self-esteem. It is something people have to give themselves—a true do-it-yourself job. However, there are ways by which those who live and work with teens can help them along the road. Here's how:

## 1. Listen to them.

Nothing convinces a human being that he is important and valued as much as getting the undivided time and attention of another human being, even if it is only for a brief, two-minute conversation.

Good listening requires that we listen nonjudgmentally and that we appreciate the messages we hear, no matter how hard they might be to accept. Vivacious, free-souled Sarah blurted out in eighth-grade confirmation class one day, "How do we know there is a God? How do we know that isn't just a story our parents are telling us?"

Teen messages are sometimes far-out. One of my imaginative young friends once said, "I think God is an alien. He is from outer space, isn't He?"

Sometimes the messages can be disheartening. Fourteen-year-old pensive Steve muttered one night, "I don't believe in God anymore. I've decided to become an atheist." His parents had just separated.

The honesty and searching that teens get into is not so much threatening as it is an opportunity to build a strong foundation of their own with the Lord. Noted Christian au-

thor Catherine Marshall once said that we must all throw off the faith of our fathers in order to take on our very own. The above kinds of situations can be door openers, helping the teens think through who and what God is and what the teens should do about that. In other words, they become a colorful and interesting road to spiritual maturity.

## 2. Affirm them.

Everybody needs praise, but no one more so than a teenager. With bodies growing fast, interests that suddenly shift gears, and emotions that run rampant, they are bound to goof up. But they also have moments of glorious sunlight. Like when Renée stopped to help one of the little Sunday School children who had fallen in the parking lot and skinned a knee. Or when Jon took time to visit for a moment with 89-year-old hunchbacked Agnes after church one Sunday.

All teens have clearly visible gifts from God—personality traits that hopefully they will use throughout life in the service of the Lord. One might have strong leadership skills, another be a reverent follower. Some teens are aggressive, others quiet and retiring. Because society reserves its rewards for leaders, we need to emphasize to teens that *all* traits are equally important to God and are needed by Him to fulfill His purposes in each person's life.

To affirm my students, I identify an outstanding characteristic in each one of them and mention it one-on-one as often as opportunity allows. I point out things that happen during class to "prove" the affirmation: "Bob, you have such a good

sense of humor. You certainly cheered up the class after Vicky told us about her terrible day at school."

## 3. Help them to affirm themselves.

Teens wanting to feel good about themselves are fighting a gigantic battle. They are extremely and often excessively self-critical. But they fight many external sources of put-me-down messages as well.

We live in a self-deprecating society. So many of us, when receiving a compliment, say, "Oh, it was nothing!" We are also bombarded with subtle media messages that tell us we are either too young or too old, too skinny or too fat, or not quite "cool."

To help your teens rise above this, teach them to screen what they are seeing and hearing and to replace negative messages with positive ones. Here's what I would tell a teen distressed about being a bit shorter and heavier than average:

"The world is full of different kinds of people—tall, short, thin, hefty. That's what makes the world interesting. It would be a very dull, boring world if we all looked alike.

"Try telling yourself: 'This is the way I am, and what I am is nice. It's nice because I am created by God—a unique, important special human being loved by Him and by other people such as my friends, my family, my pastor, and my youth leaders. God has a purpose for my life, a job for me to do. Whatever I am is right for the job.'"

What do you say to the teen so obese that his health is endangered?

"God loves you just as you are. But He wants all of us to take good care of our bodies because we can serve Him best that way. See what your

doctor says, and work with him toward the best healthy state you can have."

Once is not enough. With self-image assault coming at them steadily from all directions, teens need to affirm themselves frequently and regularly.

#### **4. Give them responsibility.**

When my third daughter left home, barely 18, to move into her own apartment, she was terrified. A high school course had led her to believe it would take \$4,000 a year more than she was making to support herself. Her big fear was, "I can't make it on my own!" She went on a strict budget and did well.

This is a very common reaction among teens going independent. In a complex social and economic structure such as ours, the fear has some validity. They need elaborate independent living skills—care of self, home, car, monies, and time planning. Add to this the decisions they must make frequently about their responsibilities toward others and God. Anything teens can do to prepare themselves for the big day—care of their possessions, household chores, youth group duties—not only sets a firm foundation but also raises their confidence.

Teens often talk as though they don't want responsibility. "Aw, do I *have* to empty the wastebaskets?" And they sometimes act as though they don't want responsibility. Tom may not get around to emptying the wastebaskets. But they do feel good about themselves after doing it, if done well.

Doing what we don't really want to do builds character. It requires self-discipline. People hesitate out of rebellion or laziness. However, a certain amount of healthy pride and honor comes with taking hold of an unpleasant or uncomfortable task. Brother Lawrence, in *The Practice of the Presence of God*, tells how he turned his dislike for kitchen tasks into an enjoyable gift of love for Jesus.

#### **5. Let them fail.**

Parents and adult leaders often take on responsibilities that teens could handle because teens sometimes forget, goof up the job, or don't get things done fast enough. Letting teens do things themselves

takes more adult time, involves aggravation, and subjects situations to failure. But teens need the experience of slipping and falling once in a while.

The day is coming fast when no one will be there to pick up after them. The road to adulthood is easier if we allow them the painful consequences of irresponsibility. The more often they have to take hold lest they let somebody down, the faster they are able to face the world with grace.

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## **The honest searching of teens provides opportunity to build a strong foundation of their own with God.**

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When they flub up, let them correct the situation themselves, if at all possible. This, too, is education for independent living. But don't let them get so down on themselves that they lose heart. Be firm, but keep it light: "I'm sorry you forgot to call your list about the hayride, Sally. That happens sometimes at your age. Why don't you call your friends and apologize? I think you'll feel better about it. And I'm sure they'll understand. They forget things, too, once in a while."

After a failure, encourage your teens to forgive themselves and forget about the situation. Teens often hang on to their mistakes in bouts of rehashed guilt, self-pity, and self-condemnation. God wants us to sincerely regret our mistakes, ask forgiveness from those we offended, make amends as best we can, and then accept His forgiveness, put the situation behind us, and get on with our lives. We need to do that so that we can have more emotional energy for helping others.

To help your teens across this bridge, point out that after they put goofs behind them, they are more fun to be around, and their friends enjoy them more.

#### **6. Encourage them to treasure their relationships.**

Joy is sweeter and sorrow diminished when two share the burden of one. Our relationships with others—parents, friends, siblings, neighbors—bring our greatest joys and deepest sorrows. Essential to self-esteem, then, is building and maintaining satisfying relationships.

Encourage your teens to communicate in healthy ways. Twisted messages—those based on what a teen thinks others want to hear rather than sharing genuine ideas and feelings—foul up relationships. So do messages that pressure or manipulate others. Honest, straightforward communication not only clears the air but also works and feels better.

Communication is a skilled art, one never perfectly learned. No matter how hard people try, sooner or later they run into conflict. Urge your teens to resolve conflicts quickly in a spirit of loving-kindness. Point out that the aim is to heal a treasured, damaged relationship—not to prove who is right or wrong.

There are many ways of settling differences, but teens in conflict usually see only two: "my way" and "your way." Suggest compromise, trying to find a middle ground or trading off as alternatives. Finding a middle ground is to find a solution that both parties like. Trading off is following one person's choice one time and the other person's the next time.

Psychologists say that we must love ourselves if we are to love other people God's way—unselfishly. To accomplish this, we need self-esteem. By listening to your teens, affirming them, helping them plant seeds of self-affirmation, expecting responsible behavior, letting them fail, and showing them how to get along better with others, you can and will help them on their way. 🐾

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Margaret Houk is a widely published religious and general interest writer. Her book, *That Very Special Person—Me!* on self-esteem for early and middle teens was released by Herald Press in March 1990.

# Pastors, Stay in Your Own Yard

by Kenneth S. Calhoun

Hooks, Tex.

**I**n spite of the fact that we are trained as theologians, preachers, teachers, and church administrators and *not* as clinical psychological counselors, we all continue to ply our trade as healers of the mind. We talk very professionally about our experiences in "pastoral counseling" and share our supposed diagnoses and therapies with one another as if we really knew what we were doing.

In reality, unless we have had extensive training outside our seminaries and our annual "ministers' week workshops," we are not competent to properly diagnose severe or chronic mental disorders, let alone provide adequate therapeutic treatment. Fortunately, most of the seriously ill persons who come to us either manage to find their way to either competent clinical counselors before their problems become irreversible, or they and their friends and family learn to cope with their problems in some manageable (but not necessarily healthy) way that leaves us feeling that we have "healed" them.

Still, every so often a tragedy or a lawsuit comes back to remind us of just how dangerously incompetent we are when outside our field of expertise.

### WE LACK TRAINING

Why do we go on counseling when we know that we are not adequately trained or experienced? Probably because we have not clearly distinguished between serving a Savior and being one ourselves. All too often we feel obligated to

heal every malady that shows up outside our office door. Our love for humanity causes us to feel that need to heal all of humanity's hurts and to take dangerous risks in the process—and the risks are more often with their lives than with our own.

Ministers, as some in other professions, seem unable to admit to fallibility and inadequacy. We are less able to say to someone, "Your problem is beyond my ability to offer healing. I am just not qualified to deal with this problem, but I know those who are. May I recommend someone?"

Perhaps the more often asked question is not "Why?" but "Why not?" If we are sincere in our care for the counselees and our desire to help them, then why not at least give it a try? The answer to that is twofold.

First, we cause the counselee to avoid trained, experienced, clinical therapists who could provide beneficial treatment. It is much like our anger at the many medical quacks who practice psychosurgery, claim faith healing, prescribe cancer cures with megavitamins and exercise, and offer "magic cures" for incurable diseases. We are not nearly so concerned with the physical damage that they do to the patients as we are with the competent and often necessary medical treatment that their patients refuse to undergo because they are being "treated" by the quacks. How many persons who desperately needed psychiatric treatment have avoided it because the local minister was either more convenient or, most often, "cheaper"? Don't

we owe it to these people to admit to them that we can't help them and to refer them to the more expensive, trained, mental health care professionals?

Second, unlike the seemingly harmless medical quack, not only do we cause persons to avoid needed mental health care, but also we can easily do even greater damage to them than has already been done. As ministers, we represent to the public in general and to the mentally disturbed in particular, whether accurate or not, a certain high level of piety and purity. There are so many emotional attitudes held about members of the clergy that the persons we attempt to counsel cannot react to us in the way that they would react to a trained professional therapist when using the very same words, gestures, and techniques. In short, we keep them from seeking proper professional help, and we may damage them further in the meantime.

### WE MUST ACCEPT OUR LIMITS

So what are we to do? First, we must accept our limitations and be overly willing to share them with the public. There was a time, generations ago, when the local pastor/priest was as competent as anyone to deal with mental and emotional illnesses; but such is not the case anymore, and we ought to go public with that fact. Second, we should acquaint ourselves with all the local mental health care facilities and professionals in our area as soon as possible after arriving in a new commu-

nity, probably even before we begin our community visitation programs. Third, we should have in mind, at all times, some clearly defined parameters of what we can (and will) and cannot (and will not) attempt with regard to counseling.

For myself, I have adopted a two-fold approach to my counseling, limiting both the type and duration to which I will commit myself. If I have any sense that the problems being brought to me cannot be adjusted in three weekly meetings, then I try not to have the second meeting. I prefer instead to refer the counselee to the appropriate health care facility during the first meeting. More than just referring them, I offer to go with them for an initial visit, offering them transportation to and from counseling sessions (with no in-transit counseling), and if necessary helping them secure adequate financial assistance to make the treatment possible.

I also limit my counseling to four types: premarital counseling, where the persons involved are reasonably rational; normal grief counseling, where the grief process is not abnormally severe or protracted; minor behavioral counseling, such as helping families with adolescent children to cope with the stresses that are normal or where minor and acceptable behavioral changes from both parties can significantly alleviate the stress; and crisis counseling. I list crisis counseling only because we usually have no choice in the matter, not because I feel that my seminary or other training makes me a competent crisis counselor. With regard to crisis counseling, I still feel that it is vitally important for the health and well-being of the patient that the minister refer them to competent clinical therapists as soon as the immediate crisis is past.

It may seem as if I am uncaring about the plight of the mentally and emotionally ill. Nothing could be further from the truth. My reasons for feeling as I do are precisely because I have seen so many of them hurt by well-meaning but untrained and incompetent ministers who try to play in someone else's backyard. The human mind, like the human body, is a terribly complex thing. It takes more than goodwill to heal one that has become sick.

# Trust Me!

by Carl G. Conner  
Durham, N.C.



**R**ecently I listened to a cassette recording of a funeral service. I must admit that hearing a recording of a funeral service is *not* the most exciting thing I have ever done.

But this was no ordinary funeral. It was the memorial service for a minister's wife. That alone did not make it strange—ministers' wives die all the time. But one thing about this service made it different.

The dying request of the wife was that her husband—the minister—conduct her funeral. They had been a faithful, loyal husband-wife team for more than 35 years. Separation was not easy.

Some months prior to her death, the wife had received the shocking news that she was suffering from terminal cancer. She had taken the news in stride at the time.

Over a period of weeks, she and her minister-husband sat and talked many times about the separation that would come if the Lord did not intervene.

As the wife grew weaker, the husband found that facing the loss was increasingly painful. Then the day came when his wife was unable to communicate as she had done over the period of months. Obviously she was slipping away.

One day the doctors took the minister aside and said, "It is only a matter of hours!" Only then did the full impact of her loss hit him.

Leaving his wife's room, the minister made his way to the private hospital chapel. There he fell on his face and began to talk to God about the separation that was coming.

It was not as if he was questioning God, but more as if he was asking God to some way extend the years they had shared. Over and over he reminded God of the empty house that would result from his wife's homegoing.

Then he waited quietly before God. Out of the stillness of the hour of sadness, God seemed to speak to him: "Trust Me!"

Tears coursed down the minister's face, but again he heard within the voice of the Lord: "Trust Me!" Over and over it rang out: "Trust Me! Trust Me! Trust Me!"

Trusting the Lord in the time of success is easy. Trusting at the peak of one's ministry is simple. But to trust in the time of tragedy is not easy.

Little wonder the apostle Paul heard the voice of God saying to him, "My grace is sufficient for thee" (2 Cor. 12:9, KJV). Grace is never as tested, never as strengthening, never as meaningful as in the time of tragedy.

Anyone can trust when the going is good, when the news is tops, when all is well. But it takes a real man or woman of God to trust God in the time of deep personal loss!





# Involving Children in the Wedding Ceremony

by Charles E. Taylor

Flint, Mich.

**T**he issue of remarriage and the uniting of two families has long been a concern for many people. Happiness and harmony certainly are not assured simply because a man and woman say, "I do." Statistics underline the consistent failure to weld two family units together.

It is, therefore, apparently needful and logical to consider involving children in the process of premarital counseling for remarriage. Not only does that open up feelings and dialogue, but also it lays a foundation for strengthening those commitments and relationships within the family during the wedding ceremony.

Following is an excerpt from an actual wedding ceremony in which intention and commitments of relationships are stated and underlined:

*CHRISTOPHER* and *MELONIE*, you have a very special privilege of taking part in this wedding ceremony today. And I have some questions I want to ask you.

Will you accept *MARK* [their future stepfather] into your home, your heart, and your life? Will you love him and obey him as the spiritual leader in your home? If so, answer: "WE WILL."

*MARK*, will you accept *CHRISTOPHER* and *MELONIE* as your own? Will you love them and encourage them, lead them and train them up according to the Scriptures and in the spirit of Jesus? If so, answer: "I WILL."

*DEBBIE* [their mother], do you give *MARK* the authority to be the leader in the home? Will you accept his guidance and counsel and do you entrust *CHRISTOPHER* and *MELONIE* into his care for spiritual leadership, encouragement, and correction? If so, answer: "I WILL."

*KATRINA* [their future stepsister], you also have a very special privilege of taking part of this wedding ceremony today. And I have some questions I want to ask you.

Will you accept *DEBBIE* into your home, your heart, and your life? Will you love her, obey her as a spiritual counselor, encourager, and helper in your home? If so, answer: "I WILL."

*MARK*, will you give *DEBBIE* the authority and support she needs to be a spiritual counselor, guide, encourager, and helper to your children? If so, answer: "I WILL."

*KATRINA*, *CHRISTOPHER*, and *MELONIE*, at the end of this service *MARK* and *DEBBIE* will be husband and wife. Your two families will be joined together into one family. You will be sharing your parents with each other.

And so I want to pray for you.

### PRAYER FOR CHILDREN

Heavenly Father, in these moments, we take time to pray for *Katrina*, *Christopher*, and *Melonie*. Their lives again are going to be profoundly affected by the decision of their parents. I pray that you would fill their hearts with love, acceptance, and a deep sense of security.

There will be adjustments to a new parent, to new influences, and to one another. I pray that in these moments you would unite them in spirit and heart. Give to them the ability to laugh and enjoy each other. Enable them to bear with the shortcomings of each other without resentment and bitterness. Teach them respect and cooperation with one another. Bring to them a forgiving spirit and a strong desire to live in peace and harmony. In Jesus' name we pray! Amen.

## Communique to the Pastor


by Betty B. Robertson

St. Louis

Sometimes the pastor is the last to know about special needs and prayer requests within the congregation. To eliminate this, we initiated the idea of a "Communique to the Pastor."

Each Sunday morning the Sunday School department secretary places a "Communique to the Pastor" sheet in the Sunday School rolls. There is a place to write the class name and the date.

The sheet, titled "Communique to the Pastor," contains instructions: "The following names of persons in our class need special prayer or have voiced a need." There is room to write the name and request. At the bottom of the sheet, it says, "Please place this sheet back in your Sunday School class roll folder."

These prayer requests are assimilated and given to the pastor to use during the pastoral prayer each Sunday morning. The requests are also typed up and made available to the congregation for specific prayer. 

## Name Tag Sunday


by Betty B. Robertson

St. Louis

Once a quarter, we have Name Tag Sunday. This helps the congregation get better acquainted with one another.

On this Sunday a note on all doors to the church reads, "NAME TAG SUNDAY! Today we have the opportunity to get to know each other better. Longtime attenders and newcomers, please fill out a name tag in the hallway and wear it this morning."

Name tags and felt-tip pens are made available at tables just inside all entrances. Someone on hand helps elderly individuals or anyone needing assistance.

People respond by saying, "I have attended this church for years, but I just can't remember names. Seeing the names with the faces helps so much." Or, "I see new people coming to church, but I have not had an opportunity to learn their names. Now I can tactfully associate the face with the name and become better acquainted." 



"AH...HA! ... STOOPING TO ANOTHER  
CANNED SERMON, HUH PASTOR?"

# Today's Books for Today's Preachers

## **MARRIED WITHOUT MASKS**

by Nancy Groom

NavPress (Colorado Springs, 1989)  
PA089-109-3702 \$8.95

The title of this book sets the precedence and tone for what the reader can expect. Groom argues that one of the greatest problems marriages face is that spouses are not letting each other know what they are really thinking or feeling. In order to keep the marriage going, many spouses put on different types of masks.

The book follows a logical order of, first, recognizing the masks, then understanding them, learning how to drop them, and ends with the freedom that comes with discarding masks altogether.

This book on marriage is more specific in its detail and focus than most. Groom writes a lot on the two issues of submission and authority, as well as male and female roles.

Having a book with a narrow focus is not bad. As a matter of fact, the reader will find it very refreshing to have a writer not talk in generalities. The reader will find himself relating the situations Groom writes about to those he has encountered.

The drawback with this book is that, at times, Groom is a bit repetitious, talking about in one chapter what she had said earlier, yet in different terms. However, the book needs to be read in its entirety. It is not a reference type manual. The flow of thought and her conclusions are biblical, practical, and important for any person who works with marriages. Its well worth the journey to the end.

Be ready, however, for Groom may also have some challenges for the reader. Everyone wears more masks than he realizes. This applies not only to marriages but to any relationship. The focus of marriages and the church body needs to be centered on unity and openness. This will not occur until each person makes himself open and vulnerable, which is one of Groom's challenges.

Groom is a conservative writer with a refreshing approach much needed in today's counseling. The female is released from her prison of

past expectations, demands, and societal roles, yet also reminded of the freedom of living with biblical guidelines and responsibilities. The same is true for the men who feel trapped in burdensome role playing. Freedom to be who God created one to be is heavily emphasized.

Groom has written an excellent book. She writes with compassion and an honest desire to help marriages and not from a desktop view only. She, too, wore her mask of submission for years and paid the price. Therefore, her words are practical and written with much work and tears.

This is a much-needed book in the area of marriage and relationships. It is different and refreshing and will add a great deal of color and perspective in one's own marriage as well as in dealing with other couples. Your time and money will be well spent in its reading. Happy "mask dropping."

—by Scott E. Delbridge

## **LIVING BEYOND OUR FEARS**

by Bruce Larson

Harper and Row, 1990  
150 pages, hardcover  
PA006-252-0253 \$13.95

Fear is one of our oldest and deadliest enemies. Bruce Larson, a co-pastor of the Crystal Cathedral in Garden Grove, Calif., graphically describes the damage it can wreak in our lives.

Fear causes illness. It kills. It stifles creativity. It prevents love, disrupts families, and causes addiction to alcohol, drugs, work, hobbies, and food. Fear of life and of other people can lead to mental illness. Extreme fear of the future prompts suicide.

Researchers tell us that the worst possible way to deal with fear is to choose a life of safety. We suffer from too much caution in our lives, Larson warns, which results in too little action. Instead of worrying about failure, we should worry about the chances we miss when we don't try.

Another common fear is that of rejection. People cope with this fear in four ways: (1) become withdrawn—they seek safety in going unnoticed; (2) become a people-pleaser

—the reverse of shyness; (3) resort to outrageous behavior; or, (4) find flaws in everything. This is a protective device: "Before you reject me, I will reject you."

The fear of rejection, Larson says, is rooted primarily in self-centeredness, no self-esteem. This can be the result of actual guilt ("My mind is a computer chip storing everything I have ever done or experienced, good or bad") or guilt feelings—not living up to the expectations of others.

We also have a fear of the future. We worry that we will (1) die before we reach our goals; (2) outlive the successful fulfillment of our dreams, such as being moved to the sidelines, watching others take center stage; (3) die unfulfilled—to fail to see in our lifetime what God has promised us.

There are only two basic emotions, Larson summarizes: love and fear. A life without fear may not be possible, but if God is love, and we appropriate that love, then a life beyond fear is within our grasp.

When we stop running and face our fear head-on with faith, we find God. It is His presence and power that move us *beyond our fears*—past, present, and future.

—Donna Clark Goodrich

## **THE BOOK OF GENESIS, Chapters 1—17**

*The New International Commentary  
on the Old Testament*

by Victor P. Hamilton

November 1990, hardcover  
PA080-282-3084 \$29.95

Amid the profusion of commentaries on Genesis, Victor Hamilton's work, the newest addition to the NICOT Series, contributes a solid, thorough, and up-to-date evangelical explication of the wealth and depth of material imbedded in the Scriptures' first book.

Whereas many recent commentaries have divided Genesis into multiple layers of tradition, Hamilton observes that the scholarly arguments in favor of the literary and theological unity of the Genesis text are growing and impressive. The main theme running throughout

most of Genesis is God's gracious promise of blessing and reconciliation in the face of sin and evil.

Hamilton's introduction to Genesis includes sections on the book's title, structure, composition, theology, problems in interpretation, canonicity, and Hebrew text; an outline of the whole book and a select bibliography are also included in the introduction.

The commentary proper, based on Hamilton's own translation from the Hebrew, evidences his extensive knowledge of the ancient Near East and of contemporary scholarship, including literary, form, and text criticism. Indexes of subjects, authors, scriptures, and Hebrew words conclude the volume.

A unique feature of the book is Hamilton's emphasis on the reading of Genesis by the New Testament community. Following his commentary on each chapter or unit of Genesis, Hamilton discusses where and how the New Testament appropriated material from that section and incorporated it into the message of the new covenant.

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**Victor P. Hamilton** is professor of religion at Asbury College, Wilmore, Ky. He is the author of *Handbook on the Pentateuch*, and he has contributed to such works as the *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* and *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*.

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### **A MATTER OF LIFE AND DEATH**

*(Bioethics and the Christian)*

by Al Truesdale, Jr.

Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press  
of Kansas City, paperback

PA083-411-3287 \$5.95

Are you looking for assistance in solving dilemmas stimulated by a high-tech society? Have you recently faced moral and ethical decisions relating to the right to die with dignity or the issue of euthanasia? Dr. Al Truesdale has written a book that speaks directly to the issues facing Christians today.

Dr. Al Truesdale, dean of Nazarene Theological Seminary, has given ministers and laypersons a tool for looking deeply into the problems that caring persons are forced to face. Medical and scientific research have opened the door for more options for Christians involved in life-and-

death situations. Pastoral experiences and understanding theological and ethical possibilities make Truesdale a pacesetter in this field. He presents a strong Christian foundation for ethics, using biblical principles. His discussions use the terms of theology, ethics, and technology. He confronts the challenges facing persons in caring ministries and opens the door for fruitful debate. Truesdale is honest and open in his approach. He covers the timely topics of abortion, euthanasia, human experimentation, genetics, medical technology, and reproduc-

tive technologies. He provides a four-page bibliography of bioethical materials. The illustrations, studies, and data are carefully researched.

I have found the book easy to read, interesting, and insightful. It is a very helpful tool for me as I grapple with many of the issues confronted and discussed. A Christian counselor, teacher, minister, or layperson needing material that gives a Christian perspective on "Bioethics and the Christian" should obtain a copy of this excellently written book.

—Montford L. Neal

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## **Sanctification —Surrender**

*(Continued from page 41)*

even my spouse to Him. One day as I sat with Bob in his hospital room, watching him grow worse by the hour, I finally sincerely prayed, "Lord, I don't know how I'm going to raise two boys without a father, but if it's Your will to take Bob, I'm surrendered."

As I began this short prayer, it was only words I knew God expected of me; but as I neared the end of it, God took hold and I truly meant it. Such peace flooded my entire being!


Although I could not correlate surrendering Bob to God with victory over my behavior toward those who hurt me, I realized almost immediately that trait no longer existed. I was aware it had something to do with God's giving deeper victory with each deeper surrender. Soon a situation presented itself that was the ultimate test of this new experience, and I found it natural to ignore an intended hurt, showing a genuine spirit of kindness and friendship to the injuring one.

Bob didn't die. He recovered, gaining better health than ever before. I still have him on the altar, and I still have my experience that God bestowed upon me that day. I don't

want to treat anyone differently for any reason. With each situation we surrender to God, our relationship with Him deepens, and undesirable traits disappear.

In reference to my friend who felt she would have to wear her hair pulled tightly back, I doubt that God would have required that unless her hair was a source of pride. The key is the willingness to be obedient to Him regardless of the issue.

Let me return to the first paragraph. Was I saying the sanctified individual does not do these things? Did I mean they are insignificant? Again, it is a matter of obedience. If we have resigned our will to be totally His, we will *want* to please Him completely in every area of our lives.

When this is the condition of the heart, these things will be taken care of according to biblical standards and God-given convictions. But those standards and convictions without a heart-cleansing, soul-surrendering, total-dedication-and-consecration experience will not sanctify us. 

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*The Wesleyan Advocate*, May 1990. Used by permission.



## All I Really Needed to Know I Learned in My First Pastorate

by Dennis A. Brenner

Lansing, Mich.



**I**n his recent book, *All I Really Needed to Know I Learned in Kindergarten*, Robert Fulghum assures us that kindergarten taught us all we need to know to make it through life. The simple wisdom of his book is refreshing and reminds us of what is most important.

In the years since I finished semi-

nary, a number of experiences have caused me to struggle with everything from my self-concept to my theology to my relationships with my family and friends. In pastoral ministry this list includes:

- Trying to find the right church
- Marriage
- Church board stress
- Graduate school
- Birth of children
- Illness
- Moving
- Tension in relationships
- Therapy
- Good friends
- Trying to make ends meet
- Ministry
- Understanding



Let me share some of the more important things that I have learned in my first pastorate.

1. Surround yourself with significant, supportive people. It's not wise to try to go through experiences alone. You'll find it very difficult going through life all alone, especially in pastoral ministry. While you're wiping the brow of one person, you've stepped on someone else's toes accidentally—and that toe has a corn! Reaching your hand out to help one parishioner, you've accidentally boxed the ears of another. At times you will wonder about your own self-worth. You'll need those significant, supportive people.

A retired minister lived close by me during my first pastorate. He was a quaint individual, even a bit eccentric, but a saint nonetheless. His wisdom has proved to be priceless. He had been over the road, having led some large churches and some smaller ones. He had weathered the storms of life—and a few board meetings as well—and still maintained his sense of humor. Because of his stature, age, and wisdom, he had gained the respect of his community and the denomination. I recall going out to see him. He would invite me in, set me down in his big easy chair, and lift my spirits to heaven.

I wondered, "What does a young pastor do when the necessary funds are not available?" "How do you handle it when the chairman of the trustees calls you *Kid*?" "What do you say at your first yearly conference or district assembly?" Or, "How do you respond when you have proposed your best idea to your church board and, with great enthusiasm, the vote defeats your idea 7 to 0?"

To all of the above questions my supportive significant mentor gave an answer I've never forgotten:

"Jesus didn't bat a thousand. While you are raising up an Andrew or Matthew, you will also raise up a Judas who will sell you out."

He was right. No man's ministry survives unless he can raise adequate funds. You can't defend your own character. It stands or falls on its own merit. Always report the positive; there's enough negative in the world already. Yes, he was even right in reminding me that a good idea won't go away. And if it does go away, it most likely should have died.

2. Relax. Dr. V. H. Lewis once told me, "Dennis, take time to have fun!"

At the time I thought, You've got to be kidding. But I've discovered that tension can get to you. One of the lessons I've learned in pastoral ministry is to laugh at myself. Don't laugh at others, or you'll get in serious trouble! Stay relaxed and have some fun. It will make your experiences much more manageable and meaningful.

For instance, my second funeral came during my first pastorate. I was still a bit more than nervous—to put it mildly. I had determined to refer to the deceased by name during the memorial message.

I still blush when I remember that I referred to the deceased sister by the wrong name throughout the entire message and committal. Afterward, her grandson came up to me and said, "I bet Grandma is still laughing."

Taken back, I questioned, "Why?"

He responded, "You never did use her name."

Relax? After she was buried and the services were over, what was left to do? Cut your head off? No, you go to your office, have a good belly laugh to get it out of your system, and you'll never forget that lesson again. By the way, the family of that dear sister were some of my best supporters during my ministry there. Every so often we still have a good laugh together.

3. It's normal to panic. No matter how competent, you'll panic. Everyone has a panic button. You may say or do things you later regret or experience things you wished you hadn't. But those who understand will support you.

For example, I've learned to work with the church board now! I had

just finished seminary and knew exactly how everything ought to be done. I knew that every Kansas farmer was eagerly waiting to be taught the latest managerial techniques. After all, everyone knows that "Robert's" is the man with the rules. No one can talk about an idea until it has been cast into a motion and seconded. Then, of course, there is the matter of alternating between those who support the motion and those who oppose. Simple? Well, not so simple for the folk who have been conducting church business for a decade or two before you came. They are quite certain that the superintendent or bishop has chosen them to knock the rough edges off this new, naive pastor.

I panicked! They didn't run these meetings right. Yes, there in that first pastorate I learned not to assume that the people don't know how to do business. It was done in the coffee shop, anyway, instead of during these board meetings. Don't assume that they need to know the latest edition of *Robert's Rules of Order*. They have developed their own set of rules. You had better learn them before you attempt to add to or change the method of doing business. They do know how they run business. It's you, not they, who needs to be enlightened. I learned that—after I panicked!

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## Stay relaxed and have some fun.

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4. Expect misunderstanding. The most painful moment in my spiritual pilgrimage came early in my first pastorate. I had shared one of those great gems of wisdom and watched as my people trampled it aside as costume jewelry. That experience left my soul wounded at first. But when I healed, I was stronger and better for it. Because of my pain, I learned to appreciate the value of

other people's ideas. I learned that they, too, hurt when I don't recognize their gems of wisdom.

Misunderstandings develop. I recall discussing with the church board the need for a workday at the church to make it look "spic and span." It became obvious right away that some of them failed to see the need. The floors needed waxing, closets needed cleaning, windows needed washing, and walls needed painting. Anyone could see what needed to be done—that is, anyone not accustomed to things as they were.

I got my way. The church board gave in. I can still remember the feeling of victory as I went home that evening. I was hesitant to mention it to my wife, though. I had given in to having the workday on our eighth wedding anniversary, but surely she would understand. She had agreed with me about the need for such a cleanup project.


I had gotten my way. At last the church would be cleaned "spic and span." My wife and I arrived early that day and threw ourselves into the task with vigor. She kept asking me, "Where is everyone?"

I assured her that they would be arriving shortly. By noon only one person had stopped by to see how "everyone"—my wife and I—was doing!

I learned a valuable lesson. The church has to be unified before anything will be accomplished! You cannot lead where people are not willing to go.

5. Trust the process. Pastoral ministry and pastoral leadership are a process. You never really quite master it.

Take courage in the fact that you are experiencing one of God's greatest blessings. Whatever you are going through at the moment will not last forever. Tomorrow will bring a new challenge and a new crisis. There will be special moments when you wonder why they treated you so well. So, learn to trust the process of pastoral ministry.

These are all lessons I learned in my first pastorate. I've taken them with me into later situations. My first pastorate was perhaps the greatest learning place. Pastoral ministry may be difficult at times, but it is rewarding and worthwhile. 

# Stories Preachers Tell Each Other

by David L. Roper  
Cleburne, Tex.

I'm sure you've heard what some folks call "preachers' stories," sad stories or stirring stories preachers use to make a point. But you may not have heard the kind of stories preachers tell each other.

Get several preachers together and they'll start swapping stories, things that happened to them or to someone they know. They'll tell stories about preaching, visiting, eating, performing weddings, baptisms—anything to do with their work. They'll even tell stories about funerals.

"Speaking of funerals," Don said, "we had a woman in Amarillo—a big woman—who owned a florist shop and who always ran late. Five to 10 minutes before a funeral, you could hear her clicking down the hall in her high-heel shoes. Then she'd burst through the chapel door, her arms overflowing with flowers. She'd quickly place them with the other flowers and away she'd go, click, click, click.

"On this particular day, we had the funeral in the church building instead of at a funeral home. It was a few minutes until time for the service. I was sitting on the front pew, ready to go to the front as soon as the family was ushered in. Then I heard a faint click, click, click. The woman had apparently come in the side door of the building. In just a moment, I heard her clicking up the stairs, the unlighted stairs behind the pulpit area, heading for the baptistery. She had evidently gone through the wrong door.

"I sat there, unable to move, listening to that rapid click, click, click, and watching the baptistery opening that was high above the pulpit. The woman suddenly burst into sight as she charged off the steps and plunged into the water with all her flowers. Water splashed everywhere. She resurfaced in the

midst of her floating flowers, water running down her face, splashing and screaming.

"We rescued her and the funeral started more or less on time, but every little bit someone would giggle and it would spread through the audience. We'd all have to compose ourselves and start again. It was the hardest funeral I've ever done!"

George, one of the old veterans, spoke up. "At least your funeral had a humorous side. I had a sad experience I haven't lived down yet.

"I was called at the last minute to do a funeral for an elderly man, so I grabbed my standard 'godly Christian man, husband, and father' sermon as I rushed out the door. All the way through the service I kept referring to the man as 'a wonderful father.' After it was over, one of the deacons pulled me aside and said, 'Uh, I hate to tell you this, Brother George, but the deceased wasn't married!'"

After the laughter died down, Johnny, a younger preacher, smiled ruefully and said, "I had a similar experience, but my shock came before the service.

"I was new to town and I got a phone call that one of our members had died, an older man. I visited the family and they seemed like nice folks. So, as you said, I got my 'godly Christian man' sermon ready.

"Before the service, I was waiting in a back room with the singers. Just as it was time for me to go out, one of the men said, 'Say, you do know how this brother died, don't you?'"

"No," I replied.

"He was caught shoplifting in a local store," the man said, "and had a heart attack as they were interrogating him."

"Just then they signaled for me to walk out," Johnny shook his head. "It did take the edge off my lesson!"

Lee, a balding giant of a man, cleared his throat. "I don't know how we got started on sad stories, but let me tell you a really sad one. It happened to me over in eastern Oklahoma when I was a young preacher, before I learned to write everything down.

"I had gotten close to two sweet elderly ladies who lived a block or so from the church building. Both were former school teachers who had never married, and they helped me with some writing.


"One of them died and the other called me to ask me to be one of the pallbearers. She told me the time of the funeral and that it would be at a certain Methodist church. I made a mental note of the details.

"On the day of the funeral, I drove to the big Methodist church nearby and went in. The closed casket was already in place at the front of the auditorium. I found the funeral director and told him I was one of the pallbearers. He checked his list and said I wasn't on it. That surprised me, but I wasn't worried about it. I went into the auditorium and sat down at the back. I kept looking around for people I knew, but didn't see anyone. Something didn't seem right. After the service started, I was more and more uncomfortable, but couldn't figure out what was wrong. Finally it dawned on me that I was at the wrong funeral.

"I found a phone and checked with the big Methodist church across town. Yes, they were doing the funeral where I was suppose to be. I jumped into my car and raced across town. When I got to the building, I rushed inside. 'They've already left,' I was told. 'Where's the burial?' I asked. I sped to the cemetery. When I got there, they were already filling in the grave. The family was already gone."

Lee shook his bald head. "I chased that funeral all day," he said, "and never did catch up with it."

Roger had been quiet all this time. "Well," he drawled, "I don't know if funny or sad is worse when it comes to funerals. Let me tell you 'bout the time I was preaching a funeral and a lady sneezed her upper plate out onto the center aisle—"

It was at this point that I left. I knew I'd never top that one. 



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# WORSHIP

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# & PREACHING

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# HELPS

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Gavin Raath

## June/July/August 1991

Prepared by Gavin Raath

### INTRODUCTION

In planning the following 13 sermons, my "obsession" has been to come up with something useful and communicable. With this goal in mind, I did two things: First, I sought input from preacher friends and asked for the things they would consider helpful.

Second, I invoked some of the communication theory taught to me years ago in my speech classes. I learned that there is a difference in the writing styles between communication to be publicly spoken and communication for private reading. The style of a manuscript written to be read orally from a lectern is much simpler than the style written for personal absorption. The goal of the former is to communicate and persuade. The latter is often designed to impress. The sermons I offer here are not designed to impress. They are simply from sermons I have preached, therefore the style is simple. It is printed oral communication.

My assignment includes four sermons based on the Book of Philipians and eight on the Book of Joshua, including a Communion message. Should you use the Joshua series on the dates attached to them, you will have to plan a Communion service on July 28.

If you use these sermons, it is my sincere hope that you will receive the blessing I received in preparing them.

Finally, I want to take this opportunity to pay tribute to my mentor, Ponder Gilliland, who has taught me most about sermonizing and ministry.

# GREETINGS, CHRISTIAN CHURCH!

by Gavin Raath

Phil. 1:1-11

June 2, 1991

## INTRO

When Paul wrote a letter to a church, at that church's next meeting, often in a home, members would gather around the letter reader and listen with eagerness as each word was read.

The church at Philippi was a model church, clearly one of Paul's favorite congregations. His introductory remarks at the beginning of his letter constitutes a typical Pauline greeting. This message focuses exclusively on Paul's introductory remarks. Paul could just as well be writing to us as a local church.

## I. Paul Opens with an Introduction (vv. 1-2)

### A. First, let's look at the writers:

1. He starts his letter by saying, "Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus" (v. 1).

**ILLUS.** On some of the South Sea Islands people have a unique way of greeting each other, which is similar to Paul's greetings. My name is Gavin. If I were in that culture, wanting to greet someone called Koko, I wouldn't say, "Hi, Koko!" Rather I would say, "Hi, Gavin!" I would use my name! Thus right at the outset of the conversation I would identify myself. This was the custom in Paul's day for opening letters.

2. Paul includes Timothy as a writer. Why does he say, "Paul and Timothy"? Apparently Timothy was Paul's amanuensis, a secretary to whom Paul dictated his letters.

3. Paul identifies himself as a "servant of Christ Jesus." A better translation is the word "bondslave." He saw himself as one who had given himself to Christ as a love slave—no longer a slave to sin, but now a slave to Jesus Christ.

### B. Let's look at the readers:

Paul addresses his letter "to all the saints in Christ Jesus at Philippi." Here he gives a two-fold address—geographical and spiritual:

1. Their geographical address is "Philippi." Usually Paul chose strategic cities in which to plant churches. Philippi was such a city.

**ILLUS.** A range of hills divided Europe from Asia. There was a dip in the range through which people had to travel to get from West to East. On this spot lay Philippi. This Greek city had become quite romanized by this time. In this setting the wonderful Philippian church thrived.

2. Their spiritual address is identified in the words "the saints in Christ Jesus at Philippi." This amounts to a twofold address: "saints" and "in Christ."

a. *Philippian Christians were identified as "in Christ."* We find that phrase repeated 164 times in the New Testament. Every single human being has a spiritual address. They are located either "in Adam" (1 Cor. 15:22) or "in Christ."

b. *The Philippian Christians were identified as "saints."* Many people read the word "saint" and say, "Those early Christians were perfect! They were saints!" Sainthood was not and is not related to absolute perfection. Christians of Paul's day were ordinary people as we are.

**ILLUS.** The Roman Catholic church has aided us in equating sainthood with the notion of absolute perfection. They tended to revere certain dead Christians, to elevate their good qualities, and to canonize them. We have "St. Christopher" and many more "sainted" people. Someone has said, "A saint is nothing but a sinner revised and edited!"

c. *Every person "in Christ" is a "saint,"* even though we may not act very "saintly" at times. "Saint" has to do with our position. "Sainthood" has to do with our practice. Positionally we are saints.

### C. Paul blesses his readers:

This rich blessing is commonly found in his letters: "Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ" (v. 2).

1. Paul was overwhelmed by "grace."

**ILLUS.** The father of the returned prodigal son demonstrated grace so well: The law said, "Smite him!" Grace said, "Embrace him!" The law said, "Stone him!" Grace said, "Kiss him!" The law said, "You're crooked!" Grace said, "I'm going to make you straight!"

God's grace is His unmerited favor!

2. Paul also says, "Peace to you," a common Hebrew greeting with beautiful meaning.

**ILLUS.** I led a group on a tour of Israel. One of our tour ladies broke her leg. I took her to the hospital in Tiberias and waited in the emergency room. I observed a young doctor working there and noticed that whenever the telephone rang, he picked up the receiver and said, "Shalom." When he concluded his conversation, he repeated the greeting. He did the same thing when people entered and left the room.

My curiosity got the better of me. I said to him, "I notice you begin your conversations by saying, 'Shalom,' and you also conclude with a 'Shalom.'"

He grinned and replied, "Haven't you heard? We Jews don't know whether we're coming or going!"

## II. Next, Paul Looks Back with Thanksgiving (vv. 3-8)

A. *Paul refers to the Philippians as partners in the gospel (v. 5).*

The fact that we, as a church, are partners in the gospel is often missed. This means that I am a partner in the gospel! We see this on two levels:

1. We are all in partnership as a local church. The local church is composed of people, not bricks and mor-

tar. If you want to know what our church is like, look in the mirror! What do you see? Do you get it? You are the church!

**ILLUS.** Something that drives me to despair as a pastor are statements directed to the church like, "What is this church doing for me?" Or, "They don't do things right!" Well, who are "they"? The "they" is you, for you are the church! Therefore, if you think that something in the church needs to be done, do it!

We are *all* partners in the gospel!

2. But our partnership is broader than the local church. It is worldwide! Do you realize that we are partners around the world?

### III. Therefore, Paul Looks Forward with Confidence (vv. 9-11)

A. *Paul talks about Christian love (v. 9).*

1. Paul talks about his prayer with a single petition—that their "love may abound." Paul has not seen these Christians for 10 years. Shouldn't he rather be saying, "I'm praying that you will hold true to the faith," or, "I'm praying about your budget"? Rather he says, I'm praying "that your love may abound more and more."

2. Paul uses the imagery of a wooden bucket placed under a crack in the rock where it catches steadily dripping water. Once the bucket is filled, it continues to overflow. He's talking about a superfluous love.

3. Paul promises to pray that their love will enable them to "discern what is best." Moffatt translates, "have a sense of what is vital." A church where people don't love each other is a church without the "sense of what is vital." That is a church that majors on minors.

**ILLUS.** A poetic person put it this way:

*To dwell above with saints we love,*

*Oh, that will be glory!*

*But to live below with saints we know,*

*Well, that's another story!"*

Francis Schaeffer aptly points out that the world cares nothing about doctrine and will not judge us on the basis of doctrine. The world does not believe in accurate truth as much as they believe in love.

When the world sees our holy loving kind of oneness, then they will ask about our doctrine that God has given us. God says to the world, "You have a right to determine whether Christianity is valid or not depending on their oneness as believers." And the world will see this because of the fruit we will be exhibiting.

4. Paul concludes his introductory remarks by telling the church that he prays that they will be "filled with the fruit of righteousness."

### CONCLUSION

Paul could very well have written these words to our church: "Greetings, saints! Isn't it amazing? We have God's grace and peace! I often think of you and remember you with thankfulness. And I think of you with joy because we are partners in the gospel! And finally, dear church, I pray for you, and this is my single prayer: That your love may abound more and more."

#### SUGGESTED WORSHIP ORDER

WE GATHER IN ANTICIPATION	Reflect on Phil. 1:1-11
CALL TO WORSHIP	"We Have Come into This House"
HYMN	"How Great Thou Art"
WELCOME	Pastor
CHOIR	"Amazing Grace"
PRAYER CHORUS	"What a Friend We Have in Jesus"
DIRECTED PRAYER	
OFFERING	
SPECIAL MUSIC	"It Took a Miracle"
SERMON	"GREETINGS, CHRISTIAN CHURCH!"
CLOSING HYMN	"Blest Be the Tie That Binds"

#### Creative Worship Ideas

##### *Directed Prayer*

1. The Hebrew writer tells us to praise God continually and give Him thanks. Let's do that!

2. Something good has happened in your life in recent days. You would like to thank God for it.

3. Is there some spiritual failure between you and God that you need to confess? Talk to Him about that now.

4. Is there a heavy load on your heart, bearing down on your mind and spirit, and you need relief from it? Would you show it to the Lord? Take it in your hands now and show it to Him.

5. Now turn your hands over and lay it at His feet.

6. Let's pray for the sick among us.

7. With heads bowed, let's sing the chorus "Lord, I Need You."

8. Family members and friends seated together, would you join hands now and pray for each other?

9. "We thank You, our loving Father, for listening to us today. We love You and we worship You. We continue to worship by bringing Your tithe to which we have added our love offerings. In Jesus' name we pray."

# CREATIVE SUFFERING: HOW TO TURN YOUR PAIN INTO GAIN

by Gavin Raath

Phil. 1:12-21

June 9, 1991

## INTRO

I want to make two profound statements as a preface to my message. One comes from the Westminster Confession: "The chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever." That's one aspect of my message today. The second statement is really deep: "When life hands you a lemon, make lemonade!" I also want to talk about "How to turn your pain into gain" and "How to turn your tears into triumphs." This we can do, with a certain supreme purpose in life:

### I. Paul Tells of His Supreme Purpose in Life

The apostle Paul lived a very basic life. His goals were clear. He gives to us His supreme purpose in life: "Now as always," he said, I want "Christ [to be] *exalted* in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me, to live is Christ" (vv. 20-21, italics mine). The original word for "exalt" is *megalunei*, which means "magnify." In effect Paul is saying, "As a Christian my supreme purpose in life is to magnify and glorify Christ!"

### II. We Can Have This Supreme Purpose in Life

The question arises, "How in the world can I have this supreme purpose? How can I magnify Christ? I'm nothing, an infinitesimal speck of dust in the universe! How can I magnify Christ, the Son of God?"

The answer is, "I can magnify Jesus just as a telescope magnifies the stars." The stars are greater, more glorious than a telescope could ever be. But a telescope has the ability to do two things: It brings distant objects closer and fills our vision with them. In the same way, my life can function as a telescope, bringing God closer to people, and filling their vision with Him. I can make Christ conspicuous in my life! I can be a display cabinet for Him!

We have varying dispositions, but in our own way, each one of us can magnify Him.

**ILLUS.** Some years ago I was visiting my sister abroad. On that occasion she made a statement about our late father that I'll never forget. She said, "You know, to me Dad is the closest thing to God that I've ever known."

I thought to myself, Wow! What a commentary on a parent! Cherryll's father functioned as a telescope to her. Every time she looked at him, she saw a whole lot of God!

### III. Now for a Test to See if You Have This Supreme Purpose in Your Life

**A. It's quiz time!** See if you can honestly fill in the blanks. Paul says my purpose is to magnify Christ. Therefore, "For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain" (v. 21). Let's put two blanks in the statement and then fill them: For to me, to live is \_\_\_\_\_ (blank) and to die is \_\_\_\_\_ (blank). I'm going to pause to allow you to fill the two blanks.

1. If some of you were really honest, you said, "For to me, to live is to make money." That's fine; just complete the sentence: "To die is \_\_\_\_\_"—what? To lose it all, obviously!

2. If some of you were really honest, you said, "For me to live is power." That's fine; just complete the sentence: "To die is \_\_\_\_\_"—what? To lose it all!

**B. The point is this:** I need to have not only a supreme purpose in life that is worthy of the investment of my life, but one that will carry me through eternity. I need a purpose that is not susceptible to circumstances. If my supreme purpose is to magnify Jesus Christ, then circumstances cannot thwart or derail my purpose!

### IV. Three Circumstances Could Have Defeated Paul

Paul mentions three adverse conditions that could have caused him to swerve from his supreme purpose in life (vv. 12-26):

#### **A. Paul is in chains.**

In fact, he had been a prisoner for four and a half years by this time. He was attached to a Roman guard 24 hours a day, with guards changing shifts every 6 hours. He had every reason to pity himself. But Paul had a supreme purpose in life, not for his own convenience, but to magnify Christ. Therefore, his goal was to accomplish his purpose, even using adverse circumstances to do it! How did he do that in prison?

1. In the Philippian prison, Paul sang and praised God, an earthquake struck, and a prison jailer was converted!

2. Imprisoned in Rome, what does Paul do? Each time he was chained to a new guard, he turned to him and said something like this: "Hi, Claudius! Have you heard of the Four Spiritual Laws?" Six hours later he turned to another guard and said, "Hi, Sutionius! Have you heard of Jesus Christ who came into our world?" And so it went. Paul was chained to the Roman guards, but the guards were chained to Paul! He had a captive audience! How would you like to be chained to a man who constantly sings, talks, and preaches Jesus? Those poor guards must have gone out after their shift and said, "Watch out! There's a fanatic in there!"

**ILLUS.** Do you know what a fanatic is? Winston Churchill said, "A fanatic is someone who won't change his mind and can't change the subject!"

That's Paul! His attitude declared, "Look, I've found the reason for living. It's Jesus! In jail or out of jail, in chains or out of chains, I'm going to use these chains to magnify Him!" Paul was smart enough to realize that God uses the ax that the devil sharpens!



3. We see the result of Paul's prison ministry in Rome (see Phil. 4:21-22). He mentions the "saints" of "Caesar's household," who were converted praetorian guards who had been chained to Paul.

4. What chains do you have in your life today? Could you possibly see that adverse circumstance as something that is setting you free to magnify Jesus? Joni Earekson Tada refers to this as "creative suffering."

#### *B. Paul also faced critics.*

Paul talks about Christians who "preach Christ out of selfish ambition . . . supposing that they can stir up trouble for me while I am in chains" (v. 17). Imagine it! Here is a man on trial for his life, and there are Christians trying to rub salt in his wounds!

When people slight us and malign us, our initial inclination is to give it right back in kind. But not so with Paul. He says, "But what does it matter? The important thing is that in every way . . . Christ is preached" (v. 18). He had a supreme purpose in life!

The only time that Nebuchadnezzar saw Christ with the three Hebrew children was when they were thrown into the fiery furnace. And it's often when we are in the furnaces of life that the world sees what we are made of! And when people wrong us, there is only one response we can give that will magnify Christ: to refuse to retaliate and be crushed.

#### *C. Paul had a third crisis in his life.*

He begins to talk about the possibility of receiving the death sentence, yet he clings to his supreme purpose. He says, "I . . . hope that I will . . . have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain" (vv. 20-21).

**ILLUS.** A minister friend had a godly mother-in-law who for years prayed for her lost family. Finally, she said, "Lord, if it means my life, I pray that my family will come to You!" Unbeknown to her, when she uttered that prayer, her body was already riddled with cancer. Later, when the end was near, her family gathered about her bed. There they were able to see, not in words now, but in the reality of the situation itself, here was a woman facing death; yet there was a joy, and a serenity, and an anticipation that was indescribable! That witness caused her loved ones to drop to their knees one after another and receive Christ. That woman magnified Christ not only in life but also in death!

## CONCLUSION:

Paul has been saying, "I have a supreme purpose in life. And it's not to be healthy and wealthy and free of suffering. My one goal is to magnify Christ. When I'm preaching, I'll use my words to do it! If I'm in chains, I'll use those chains to accomplish it! If I'm being criticized, I use that criticism to do it! If I'm facing a life-and-death issue, from my deathbed I'll magnify Christ! In all things, I want my life to be a telescope to the world!" What a magnificent obsession!

When we find ourselves in the furnaces of life, we, too, can use the ax that the devil has sharpened. Take those tears, and turn them into triumphs! Take that pain, and turn it into gain. Magnify Jesus Christ.

### SUGGESTED WORSHIP ORDER

WE GATHER IN ANTICIPATION	Reflect on Phil. 1:12-21
CALL TO WORSHIP	"We Have Come into This House"
HYMN	"How Firm a Foundation"
WELCOME	Pastor
CHOIR	"My Faith Looks Up to Thee"
PRAYER CHORUS	"Open Our Eyes, Lord"
DIRECTED PRAYER	
OFFERING	
SPECIAL MUSIC	"I'd Rather Have Jesus"
SERMON	"CREATIVE SUFFERING: HOW TO TURN YOUR PAIN INTO GAIN"
CLOSING HYMN	"Let All the People Praise Thee"

### Creative Worship Ideas

#### *Directed Prayer*

1. God is here this morning. Ask Him to fall afresh on you now.
2. Do you need to confess something to Him first so that you can experience that fresh touch? God says that if we harbor unforgiveness in our heart, He will not hear us when we pray. Do you need to forgive someone for something?
3. Has there been some other spiritual failure in your life that you need to confess to Him?
4. What is burning on your heart today? Do you have a financial need? A physical need? A healing of emotions? Perhaps something related to your family? A problem at work? A decision to make? Talk to Him about that special need; He is listening.

# FOUR KEYS TO SUCCESS

by Gavin Raath

Phil. 3:12-14

June 16, 1991

## INTRO

We all want to be successful. This is why we love to read the biographies of successful people. The biography that has affected me most was one written by a Jewish rabbi. This man was rather successful, and his writings have been translated into most of the languages of the world. The rabbi's name is Paul. He gives us a four-point success formula (Phil. 3:12-14). Paul gives us four success principles:

### I. First, Concentrate on One Main Goal

#### A. What was Paul's main goal?

Paul says, "One thing I do" (v. 13). What do you do, Paul? "I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me" (v. 12).

**ILLUS.** If you are going to spend your life and energy achieving something, please make sure that it is something worth your while. Few things are more pitiful than to see someone come to the end of his life and hear him say, "That wasn't worth it! I spent my life climbing the ladder, only to discover when I reached the top, that the ladder had been leaning against the wrong wall!"

#### B. Is Paul's goal sensible?

Some would say, "I'm not going to pour a lot of energy into one thing! I want to be broad and fish in many ponds!"

**ILLUS.** It is the rivers that are narrow, with steep banks, that run the deepest, and with the most power. You take away the steep, narrow banks, and you will end up with a marshy, stagnant swamp. Likewise, if you take away the focus of your life, you will become marshy and stagnant in your Christian experience.

Do you want to be successful? Concentrate on reaching one main, worthwhile goal!

### II. Second, Concentrate on Constant Improvement

A. Recognize that you are not where you are going to be.

1. Paul says, "Not that I have already obtained all this" (v. 12). Then he adds, "I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it" (v. 13), so "I press on" (v. 14). It's all right, yet not all right.

Many people who are not of our Wesleyan persuasion tend to think that we believe that when we are sanctified, we have reached an ultimate goal that requires no further growth. Nothing could be further from the truth. The Christian's life always requires dynamic, spiritual growth.

Paul is saying, "I might be all right for the stage of maturity at which I am now, but I don't even begin to think that I am where God finally wants me to be!"

#### B. Complacency leads to death.

The day that we cease to grow, cease to mature, is the day we begin to die!

**ILLUS.** Much has been written about the trade war America has with Japan. We've been hearing that the main problem lies in the quality differential between Japanese and American products. Some time ago I read an article titled "The Battle for Equality Begins." The author writes: "America's leadership in quality has been almost imperceptibly eroding for years. More and more executives have awakened to the fact that they are caught in a fateful struggle, for the Japanese have advanced by leaps."

The article goes on to explain that American technology that gave quality was developed before and during World War II. After the war the Japanese flooded the market with cheap, shoddy goods—imitations. But the Japanese became determined to improve. They went so far as to import American experts. For the next 30 years they strained and strove for quality and efficiency. Do you know what America did during that 30-year period? She got comfortable with the lead and dozed! And today America is playing catch-up with the Japanese!

Be careful never to doze! Constantly strive to improve and mature in spiritual matters.

### III. Third, Forget the Past

#### A. Is it possible to forget the past?

Paul says, "But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind [me]" (v. 13). Yet Paul often talked about the past. He talked about how he had blasphemed and persecuted the Church. Did he forget? Yes! To forget does not mean to block something from your memory. The dictionary defines forgetting: "To stop noticing. To conscientiously ignore something." In other words, you treat something as though it never happened, even though you still have the memory of it.

#### B. What should I forget?

Let me suggest three things to forget in order to press on as Christians:

1. Forget your past success.

**ILLUS.** The football team was about to begin a tough game. Their coach gave them a pep talk in the locker room: "Throw away your old press clippings, fellows," he said. "The other team hasn't read them yet, and this is a new game!"

In our spiritual lives, Satan would love to neutralize us by talking us into taking an early retirement from God's work. He'll allow us a victory or two, then convince us that we've done God and the world a great service. He tries to get us to build a trophy case and put those trophies in there and languish in the past. We can't improve and grow, languishing in the past!

2. We also need to forget our past mistakes. Be careful never to play the game of life saying, "If only I had . . . !" Right now, that's beside the point.

**ILLUS.** Do you know who struck out the most in professional baseball? Babe Ruth. Who hit the most home runs (until 1974)? Babe Ruth!

Who struck out second most often? Hank Aaron. He's the fellow who broke Babe Ruth's record!

Here's an important principle: An essential part of success is failure! Your track record has a string of failures? So what? Let failure be a part of your success to come. There is no gain without pain! There are no stars without scars!

3. We have to forget and put behind us guilt! Few things plague a Christian more than guilt feelings, and Satan knows that. We have to take God at His word in Ps. 103:12 and 1 John 1:9 and believe that if we have confessed and forsaken sin, we are forgiven, and we bear no more guilt! We need to be able to distinguish between feelings of real guilt, and false guilt that comes from Satan. Satan only wants to drive us to despair.

#### IV. Fourth, Focus on the Future

Paul says, I am "straining toward what is ahead" (v. 13). He adds, "I press on toward the goal" (v. 14).

##### A. Paul's figure of speech is from athletics.

He's referring to a race at the games. He pictures a runner with a forward focus, pressing toward the goal. He knew that a runner could not win looking over his shoulder.

**ILLUS.** A Sunday School teacher was telling her young pupils about Lot's wife who looked back and turned into a pillar of salt. "Oh, that's nothing," said little Johnny. "Last week my mother was driving, and she looked back and turned into a telephone pole!"

We can't go successfully in the forward direction if we're looking in other directions!

##### B. The athlete has tremendous determination.

Paul uses words like "press" and "straining." There is disciplined determination in the athlete pressing toward his goal.

**ILLUS.** Of all the great classical Greek orators, Demosthenes is my favorite. When he started out, he had several serious problems. He stuttered and stammered. Then when he spoke, he displayed awful facial contortions. Add to that a weak, raspy voice. To cap it all off, he had a nervous tic in his shoulder. The first time he spoke in public, he was laughed off the stage.

Undeterred, Demosthenes went home and shaved off half of his hair! He did that so that he would look so ridiculous that he would be forced to stay home and work at being an orator.

He worked on his elocution and diction by practicing

with his mouth filled with round pebbles. To overcome his facial contortions, he practiced speaking for hours in front of a mirror. Then he went down to the Aegean Sea where the waves pounded on the rocks, and there he practiced shouting so that he could be heard above the roar of the ocean. What about the tic in his shoulder? With a rope he suspended a sharp sword from one of the rafters in his home until the tip was just a quarter inch above his shoulder. Thereafter, every time his shoulder jerked, he received a painful reminder. What do you do with a fellow like that!

The day came for his next, and most famous, speech. Two were to speak on that occasion—first Aristotle, then Demosthenes. When Aristotle finished, the people "marveled at the wonderful oration!" Then Demosthenes took his place on the platform, and he began to speak with incredible eloquence, and fervor, and power! Before he finished, the crowd stood to its feet, and roared, "Let's take up the sword and fight Philip!"

Why? Because here was a man convinced of one thing. He forgot all of the past insults and failures, and channeled all of his energy into becoming what he was determined to be!

If in the spiritual realm you find a Christian with that kind of determination, you will have found someone who will move heaven and earth for God!

#### SUGGESTED WORSHIP ORDER

WE GATHER IN ANTICIPATION	Reflect on Phil. 3:12-14
CALL TO WORSHIP	"We Have Come into This House"
HYMN	"Great Is Thy Faithfulness"
WELCOME	Pastor
CHOIR	"There Is a Redeemer"
PRAYER CHORUS	"Learning to Lean"
DIRECTED PRAYER	
OFFERING	
SPECIAL MUSIC	"I Believe in Miracles"
SERMON	"FOUR KEYS TO SUCCESS"
CLOSING HYMN	"Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah"

#### Creative Worship Ideas

##### Directed Prayer

There are definite steps in prayer. Step No. 1 is to realize that you are in God's presence. He is here. Meditate on that for a moment. Step No. 2 is to come clean before Him. There may be something in your life that stands between you and God—some unconfessed spiritual failure. The Psalmist said, "If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened" (66:18). He says, "Search me, O God, and know my heart" (139:23). The Bible says, "Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything" (Phil. 4:6, TLB). Tell God about your needs.

# THE BIBLICAL FORMULA FOR PEACE

by Gavin Raath

Phil. 4:4-9  
June 23, 1991

## INTRO

We're living in a world starved for peace. During the past 3,500 years of human history, there has not been a single year without war. The Center for Defense Information tells us that of the world's 212 nations, 45 are now engaged in military conflict. We may not reach world peace, but we certainly can know personal peace. Paul outlines a fourfold prescription for peace:

### I. Find Your Joy in the Lord (v. 4)

#### A. People look in the wrong places for joy.

1. Some people rely on circumstances for their joy. The only problem is that circumstances change! If your joy is based upon your football team's winning, then where will you be if you lose?

2. Some rely on things for their joy. If your joy is wrapped up in your brand-new Corvette, and you wreck it on your way home, the source of your joy is ruined!

3. Others rely on people for their joy: a boyfriend, husband, child, etc. What happens when we lose that person?

We dare not look to these kinds of things for our primary joy, for they are all susceptible to circumstance. We find joy in an ongoing relationship with Jesus Christ!

### II. Avoid Anxiety (v. 6)

#### A. Worry is stupid.

1. Worry is pointless.

Worry is like a rocking chair—it gives you something to do but moves you no closer to the solution of a problem.

**ILLUS.** A study has been conducted on worry. It was discovered that 92 percent of the things we worry about never come to pass.

2. Worry imperils our physical and mental well-being.

**ILLUS.** In his study of "self-actualizing" persons, Abraham Maslow, the psychologist, found that one thing these people have in common is a "tolerance for uncertainty." They seem to know how to live without feeling threatened or frightened—free of anxiety. It is a harmful thing to be weighed down oppressively by anxiety.

3. Worry is a burden that God never meant for us to bear. Paul says, "Do not be anxious about anything" (v. 6). Jesus said, "Do not worry [about anything]" (Matt. 6:31). Jesus tells us not to worry as "the pagans," for our "heavenly Father knows" what we need (v. 32, cf. vv. 33-34). Could it be possible that it is an insult to God for one of His children to be a chronic worrier?

**ILLUS.** Two birds had a conversation one day:

*Said the robin to the sparrow:*

*"I should really like to know  
Why these anxious human beings  
Rush about and worry so."*

*Said the sparrow to the robin,  
"Friend, I think that it must be  
That they have no heavenly Father,  
Such as cares for you and me."*

—ELIZABETH CHENEY

#### B. Instead of worry, pray!

1. Paul says, "Don't worry about anything, but in everything . . . pray" (v. 6, Beck).

2. Peace is the fruit of taking a concern to your Heavenly Father and leaving it with Him. There is no peace for the worrier!

### III. Develop a Thankful Spirit (v. 6)

Paul instructs us not to worry, but pray, and "with thanksgiving, present your requests to God" (v. 6).

#### A. For what do we have to be thankful?

1. "Count your many blessings, name them ton by ton!" Be thankful for your salvation, your eyesight, your family, the gift of love!

2. The key is to develop a spirit of thanksgiving. Sure, there are some bad things in our lives. But on balance there are far more good things for which we can be thankful. Let that be your focus. Let this focus be a life-style, and then the peace of God will be your portion.

### IV. Guard Your Thought Life (vv. 7-8)

Why? Because our thinking has a powerful influence over us. There is a negative and positive aspect to this:

*A. On the negative side we need to guard our thoughts.*

1. Our thinking influences our character. Our character takes on the complexion and hue of our inward thinking: "As [a man] thinketh in his heart, so is he" (Prov. 23:7, KJV).

2. Our thinking leads to actions.

**ILLUS.** In Canada they conducted a subliminal advertising experiment on television. This is where the message is beamed so fast that the conscious mind is not even aware of the fact that it's receiving the message. At the speed of 600 times per minute they beamed the message: "Eat Popcorn." The next day the sale of popcorn in Canada soared 85 percent!

Why? Because the idea of eating popcorn was woven into the fabric of their thinking. It proves that what enters the mind influences actions.

3. If we want to experience God's peace, we need to stand guard at the castle gate of our mind. What do you think about while driving your car? Do you expose yourself to unhealthy conversations or literature? What do you allow to enter your mind?

*B. On the positive side we need to guard our thoughts:*

Paul says, "Whatever is true . . . noble . . . right . . . pure . . . lovely . . . admirable . . . excellent or praise-



worthy—think about such things” (v. 8). Practice right thinking. Discipline your mind, says Paul, then “the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts” (v. 7).

**ILLUS.** Once there was an art contest where artists competed against each other in painting portraits. The one category was called “Peace.” The idea was to see who could produce a painting that would best depict peace. Two artists competed in this category.

The one painted a picture of a quiet lake in the mountains. It was a tranquil scene—not a breeze, not a bird, not a ripple in the water—a silent picture depicting a scene of peace.

The second artist painted a picture of a roaring waterfall. On one of the overhanging tree branches stretching over the waterfall, within reach of the rising spray, he painted a tiny bird, sitting calm and collected on its nest. In the midst of the mighty roar and danger, the bird had not a care in the world. This picture won the prize!

The winning picture depicts the peace of which the Bible speaks, a peace that is good even during the storm. We can personally know God’s peace in a stormy, strife-stricken world!

## CONCLUSION

As a child of God, you may have His peace for the receiving if you will but live by this four-part formula:

1. Find your joy in the Lord.
2. Avoid anxiety by prayer.
3. Develop a thankful spirit.
4. Guard your thought life.

“And the peace of God, which transcends all [human] understanding,” will be your portion!

### SUGGESTED WORSHIP ORDER

WE GATHER IN ANTICIPATION	Reflect on Phil. 4:4-9
CALL TO WORSHIP	“We Have Come into This House”
HYMN	“To God Be the Glory”
WELCOME	Pastor
CHOIR	“The Love of God”
PRAYER CHORUS	“My Jesus, I Love Thee”
DIRECTED PRAYER	
OFFERING	
SPECIAL MUSIC	“Only One Life”
SERMON	“THE BIBLICAL FORMULA FOR PEACE”
CLOSING HYMN	“The Peace That Jesus Gives”

### Creative Worship Ideas

#### *Directed Prayer*

“We thank You, our Father, for our opportunity to come to You in prayer, and that You never weary of us coming to You.”

1. As you come to Him this morning, perhaps you are not feeling good. Talk to Him about how you are feeling—your depression, your fatigue, your emotions.

2. Now think of areas in your life in which you feel most fortunate. For some it is good health; perhaps you have a beautiful home, a wonderful family. Thank Him for that.

3. Now sort through those burdens you carry. Take that pressing one—the one that robs you of the most joy—and share it with Him.

4. Now say to Him, “Father, You are the One who moves mountains; You quench the fiery darts; You are my Father; therefore, I trust You. I release this burden to You.”

5. He wants us to be concerned about not only ourselves but others too. Pray for someone with a need.

# FREEDOM

by Gavin Raath

John 8:31-36  
June 30, 1991

## INTRO

The word *freedom* is a popular word and has been used more than ever since the decision to dismantle the Berlin Wall. The United States is often referred to as "the champion of freedom." Since the waning of the cold war, it could be said that there is truth to the statement. Certainly, Americans believe this to be true as each year, around July 4, they wave flags, plan cookouts, and quote George Washington and Patrick Henry.

Psychologists tell us that one of the vital ingredients of mental normalcy is an innate sense of freedom. Man has a built-in yearning to be free. Since we love the word *freedom* and have a need for freedom, what is it? Allow me to present three views of freedom.

### I. There Is Libertarian Freedom

#### A. "I can do anything that I please."

One sense of the word *libertarian* can be characterized by this expression, which speaks of boundless freedom.

1. In the name of freedom, people are saying: "I can have an abortion." "I can indulge in any sexual practice that I please; therefore, I can practice homosexuality." "I can enjoy pornography—even child pornography. Furthermore, I should be allowed to see it on television!" "I can simply get a divorce if I grow tired of my spouse." "I can take drugs." "I can burn my country's flag." To these people, freedom means license.

2. In Scripture we have a classic example of an individual who demanded liberty to live without restraint—the prodigal son. By the world's standards, this young man had it all—plenty of money and no more rules by which to live. He left home and lived licentiously. That so-called freedom only led to bondage and a pigpen.

This is always the end of licentious freedom. The freedom to use drugs leads to terrible bondage. Free sex leads to pain and bondage. Pornography has proven to be one of the most enslaving devices in the world. "Everyone who sins," says Jesus, "is a slave to sin" (John 8:34).

The prodigal son could have said, "This is my life; therefore, I'll do as I please! What I do is my business. My sin doesn't hurt anyone but me!" Not so! He was breaking his father's heart! Not only does freedom to sin hurt me, but also others usually get hurt. It breaks the heart of God. We do not sin in isolation; therefore, we are not free to sin.

### II. There Is Political Freedom

#### A. We have it in democracies.

Today many interpret the freedom that our Founding Fathers gave us as a licentious freedom. But that is not our heritage! The Pilgrims came to North America in order to have the freedom to worship according to the dictates of their conscience, free from governmental op-

pression. Later millions came from Europe for political freedom and the chance to make a living. They came to escape Nazi oppression. Then they came from Communist countries to gain political and economic freedom. The inscription on the Statue of Liberty says, "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses, yearning to breathe free."

#### B. We're seeing it in Eastern Europe.

With elation we watched the Berlin Wall coming down as the winds of change swept through Communist Europe. Now we're seeing the domino theory in reverse! Freedom has been making significant inroads even in the Soviet Union. What an opportunity the church has to extend our influence to world areas that have been closed to the gospel. Political freedom has always been good for the church.

But mankind yearns for a greater freedom than political freedom.

### III. There Is Spiritual Freedom

A. *Created a spiritual being, man possesses an innate need for spiritual freedom.* People can never find complete satisfaction and fulfillment until this need for spiritual freedom has been satisfied. We can live without political freedom. Many have. But we cannot live without spiritual freedom. The Bible tells us, "If the Son sets [us] free, [we] will be free indeed" (John 8:36). We cannot be "free indeed" apart from spiritual freedom.

Christians testify with statements like: "I'm so glad that I am saved; Christ has set me free." Free from what? What is spiritual freedom?

#### B. Spiritual freedom means two things.

1. First, there is freedom from spiritual ignorance (John 8:31).

Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free" (vv. 31-32). Conversely, if you are ignorant concerning His teaching and truth, then you are in bondage.

ILLUS. Suppose a generous person said to me, "I want to give you a very special gift." Then he blindfolded me and took me to the airport. And upon arriving there, he took the blindfold off. To my amazement, I saw before me a brand-new Lear jet. The person said, "The jet is yours! Go on; try it out!"

This would be wonderful but for a tiny little problem. I don't know the first thing about flying! The best I could do is sit in the pilot's seat. Beyond that, I would be lost. All of the instruments and dials would make no sense to me. I would be in bondage because of my ignorance. My ignorance would keep me earthbound.

ILLUS. Suppose I respond to an advertisement seeking a computer programmer, and I go for an interview and say, "This job offers the pay that I need, so here I am."

The interviewer asks the basic questions, "What experience have you had? What do you know about computers?"

I say, "I don't know anything about computers, but I do know a lot about vacuum cleaners!"

It is highly doubtful that I would get that job. Why? Because my ignorance concerning computers would hamper and bind me from getting the job.

What is true on the natural level is also true on the spiritual level. The person who does not know spiritual things is bound. You may be a mathematical genius, yet be bound by ignorance of spiritual things. The solution is to be set free from ignorance. That comes through knowing the truth, and the truth will set you free.

When man rejects truth, he thereby becomes willfully bound. That's the situation in John 8. The Jews were rejecting the truth. In fact, they denied that they were in bondage or that they had ever been in bondage because they were "Abraham's descendants" (v. 33). They were wrong, of course, on two counts: They were in spiritual bondage, and they had been in political bondage—under Egyptians, Babylonians, and Romans. These people were not very wise. They had neither political freedom nor spiritual freedom.

Spiritual freedom means freedom from spiritual ignorance.

## 2. There is freedom from sin (v. 34).

Jesus said, "I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin" (v. 34). A sinner is enslaved. Deep down he senses this and yearns to be free. There is something about human nature and the convicting power of the Holy Spirit that makes a sinner realize that he is not free. He tries to get over it, under it, or around it, but he cannot, because he is bound.

One of Satan's biggest lies is the notion that freedom means "I can do anything that I please." That leads to moral anarchy, which, in turn, leads to terrible pain and bondage. Even Socrates, a pagan philosopher, asked, "How can you call a man free when his pleasures rule over him?"

(Conclude by reading 2 Pet. 2:18-19 and then Rom. 6:17-23.)

## CONCLUSION:

Freedom is something that man yearns for. Freedom does not mean that I can do anything that I please. That's moral anarchy. It leads to the opposite of freedom—bondage.

I thank God for the political freedom we enjoy in our country, but a far, far more important freedom is spiritual freedom. That only comes through knowing the truth that is in Christ Jesus.

If we had to, we could live without political freedom, as many have, but we cannot live without spiritual freedom.

### SUGGESTED WORSHIP ORDER

WE GATHER IN ANTICIPATION	Reflect on John 8:31-36
CALL TO WORSHIP	"We Have Come into This House"
HYMN	"Fairest Lord Jesus"
WELCOME	Pastor
CHOIR	"Trust in the Lord"
PRAYER CHORUS	"I Love Him"
DIRECTED PRAYER	
OFFERING	
SPECIAL MUSIC	"God of Our Fathers"
SERMON	"FREEDOM"
CLOSING HYMN	"I Will Sing of My Redeemer"

### Creative Worship Ideas

#### Directed Prayer

1. Let's begin by praising the One who is worthy of our praise. Praise Him and thank Him for who He is and that He is your God.
2. Is there a need for healing in your life? A physical touch from our Lord? A healing of the mind? A healing of the emotions? A healing of relationships? Some frustration? Now take the heaviest load, or the biggest question that you have at this moment, and lay it at His feet.
3. Is yours a load of spiritual failure? In some way you have failed God in your walk with Him, and you feel the guilt and need His forgiveness?
4. Thank Him for your country and for the freedom we have to worship and serve God.
5. Pray for our national leaders.

# POSSESSING GOD'S PROMISE (Part 1)

by Gavin Raath

Josh. 1:1-9

July 7, 1991

## INTRO

This is the first of a series of messages based on the Old Testament Book of Joshua. As a preface to this book, let me point out that the Old Testament speaks to us in pictures and shadows. It is full of typology. The Old Testament speaks in pictures and the New Testament in principles. "The New is in the Old concealed; the Old is in the New revealed."

The Book of Joshua revolves around the Promised Land—the battle for the land and the occupying of it. But if you think that Joshua is simply about cities and people and real estate, you will miss its message. Paul says, "These things happened to them [the Israelites] as examples . . . as warnings for us." (Read that scripture: 1 Cor. 10:1-11.) With this in mind, let's look at Joshua.

## I. Moses Dies

God makes the announcement: "Moses my servant is dead" (v. 2). Imagine the impact of the announcement of Moses' death.

**ILLUS.** During the 20th anniversary of the assassination of President Kennedy, a reporter was interviewed. He said, "When the word came, our whole newsroom fell into stunned silence, and then people began to weep." Everyone interviewed remembered exactly where they were and what they were doing when they received the news of the tragedy.

The news of Moses' death must have hit Joshua and the Israelites like a thunderbolt!

## II. Joshua Takes Over

"Moses my servant is dead. Now then, you and all these people, get ready," says God (v. 2). There is one important lesson in this:

### A. God's workmen die, but God's work continues.

1. Sometimes it's difficult for us to realize that nothing of God dies when God's leaders die.

**ILLUS.** Inscribed on John Wesley's tomb are the words: "God buries the workman but continues the work."

### 2. God's work continues when His workmen fall!

**ILLUS.** The best advice I received as a young man preparing for the ministry was this: "Never look at man, because man will let you down. Look to Christ; He is the Constant!" Men rise and fall. Television evangelists rise and fall. Don't look at them. Christ is the Constant!

Men will come and go, and men will rise and fall, but God's work will always continue. God's purpose for the children of Israel did not depend on Moses. When he died, God's purpose continued, and leadership was given to Joshua.

## III. God Makes Four Promises to Joshua

### A. God promised His presence.

1. God says, "As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you" (v. 5). What a promise! He repeats the promise, "Be strong and courageous. . . for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go" (v. 9).

2. In Exod. 24:13 we read about an earlier time when God allowed Moses to take Joshua up the mountain with him. There Joshua witnessed God speaking to Moses. (Read Exod. 24:13-18.) Joshua knew that God was with Moses. So it meant something to him to be told by God, "As I was with Moses, so I will be with you."

**ILLUS.** Do you ever get to thinking sometimes that God is a million miles away? That God is somewhere far up there, and I'm down here, and because I can't see Him, He's not with me? Don't ever think that. Just as Joshua claimed God's promise that He would be with him, so we, too, must claim the similar promise that He has made to us!

### B. God promised His power.

1. "No one will be able to stand up against you," God promises Joshua (v. 5). Joshua and the Israelites certainly needed God's power for the great task of taking the Promised Land.

2. Something was required of the Israelites in order for them to receive the benefit of God's power. His all-mighty strength didn't work for them while they sat at home doing nothing. There was something that they had to possess.

### C. God promised a possession.

1. However, they had to possess the promise. God said, "I will give you what I have promised, but you must take what I promised." There is God's side, and there is the human side. The promise of God is one thing; possessing the promise is another. The one has to do with what God does, the other with what man does. God promised a land, but man had to take the land.

2. As Christians, we, too, have something from God to possess. God brought the Israelites to the border of the Promised Land and said, "This is what I want you to have; take it." So He has good things for us and is saying, "This is what I have for you; take it!" God is not going to force upon us what we will not take!

"Praise be to the God . . . who has blessed us [past tense] . . . with every spiritual blessing in Christ" (Eph. 1:3). That is your heritage as a child of God. It's already there—your spiritual blessing in Christ! The question is, "Am I experiencing it?" If not, then you have not availed yourself of what God has for you!



**ILLUS.** If you saw someone in the foyer kneeling before the drinking fountain, saying, "Oh, water, how I want you! Oh, please, fountain, give me some drink!" you would think that the person is odd! You would probably tap the person on the shoulder and say, "Friend, just go ahead and drink!"

God supplies the water of life, but we must drink it! God will spread the banquet table before us, but we have to eat from it!

*D. God promised them as much as they desired to possess.*

1. God promised the Land to them, but they had to possess it. He said, "I will give you every place where you set your foot" (v. 3). There was no limit to what God would allow them to have. He said to the Israelites, "Every bit of the Promised Land that your foot touches is yours. How much do you want? Take it!"

2. Do you realize that we can have just as much of God as we want to have? When it comes to your walk with God, you can be as spiritual as you decide to be. I must possess what He has for me. Doing that, I can have as much as I want! I set the level of my spirituality. This means that if I am no more spiritual today than I was five years ago, it's because I don't want to be more spiritual!

3. How do I possess what God has promised me? We get some guidance from Joshua:

*a. Face the future courageously, with confidence because God has promised to be with us* (vv. 6-7, 9, 18).

*b. Obeying God's Word.* God says, "Be careful to obey all the law . . . do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go" (v. 7). Do you realize that right now the children of Israel are in the exact spot where they had been 40 years earlier? Back then they had also been on the threshold of the Promised Land. God gave the word for them to take the land, but they disobeyed. God said, "Fine! Back to the desert for 40 years." Now, 40 years later, God says, "Do you want to walk with Me?"

"Yes, Sir."

"Fine! Go back to the place where you left off in disobedience 40 years ago, and start again!" We cannot make spiritual progress beyond the point of our disobedience.

*c. I possess what God has for me one step at a time.* Exod. 23:30 tells us that "step by step . . . they took possession of the land." As we live in obedience to God's Word, He takes us along our spiritual journey step by step. This is how we possess all that God has for us.

#### **SUGGESTED WORSHIP ORDER**

WE GATHER IN ANTICIPATION	Reflect on Josh. 1:1-9
CALL TO WORSHIP	"We Have Come into This House"
HYMN	"This Is My Father's World"
WELCOME	Pastor
CHOIR	"O Love That Will Not Let Me Go"
PRAYER CHORUS	"Near to the Heart of God"
DIRECTED PRAYER	
OFFERING	
SPECIAL MUSIC	"God's Great Grace"
SERMON	"POSSESSING GOD'S PROMISE" (Part 1)
CLOSING HYMN	"Higher Ground"

#### **Creative Worship Ideas**

##### *Directed Prayer*

"Call unto me, and I will answer thee" (Jer. 33:3, KJV), says God.

1. That's what we are going to do. As a prelude to prayer, let's praise and worship Him. To worship means "to dwell on God." Now dwell upon His attributes—what He is and who He is. He is eternal; He is omnipotent; and this same God loves you passionately. Think upon Him for a moment.

2. Thank Him for loving you.

3. Not only does He love you, but He wants to have a personal relationship with you. Are you experiencing that? You can if you will confess your spiritual failure to Him and invite Him into your life.

4. Not only does He want to have a personal relationship with you, but also He is interested in your personal problems. He wants to help. Is there a particular need you would like to bring to Him?

# POSSESSING GOD'S PROMISE (Part 2)

by Gavin Raath

Josh. 1:10—2:24

July 14, 1991

## INTRO

Last week we examined God's choice of Joshua and His commands to him as new leader of Israel. Now we're going to look at the mobilization of Israel.

### I. Joshua Prepared to Enter the Promised Land

"Joshua ordered the officers of the people: 'Go through the camp and tell the people, "Get your supplies ready"' (1:10-11). That Hebrew word for "supplies" has to do with provision and usually refers to food.

Why did they have to get their food ready to invade the land? They were no longer wandering in the desert, living on manna. Three days later, "the manna [had] stopped," and "they ate this food from the land" (Josh. 5:10-12).

*A. Manna was a white waferlike substance that God gave for 40 years.* They would pick it up, saying, "Oh, manna?" meaning, "What is it?" (Exod. 16:15, 31, margin).

**ILLUS.** So often when you mothers serve a new dish, your child pokes the food suspiciously with his fork and, with a distasteful look, says, "What's that?"

*B. Manna was God's bors d'oeuvres.*

But—for 40 years? That's a long time to eat the same food, no matter how good it is!

It was not supposed to be for 40 years. It would take about two and a half weeks to walk to Canaan, plus the time of encampment while Moses received the commandments: approximately 30 days. Manna was supposed to be for a month.

The Israelites grumbled over the desert, manna, everything! (See Num. 11:4-6.)

**ILLUS.** Someone who lived through the depression said, "Those were rough days, but at least we had three meals a day: for breakfast we had oatmeal, for lunch we had cornmeal, and for dinner we had no meal!"

"Hey, Mom! What's for breakfast?"

"Manna!"

"What's for lunch?"

"Manna!"

"What's for supper?"

"Manna!"

But now those days were over. Their diet was about to change.

### II. There Were Those Who Chose Not to Possess the Land

Two and one-half tribes decided to stay in the area east of the Jordan River (see 1:11-15; Num. 32:1-5).

*A. "Do not make us cross the Jordan," they said (Num. 32:5).* "Don't make us go all the way into God's Promised Land! We'd rather stay here."

*B. Many people are like that.* "God, I'll follow You, but please, not all the way! I've got habits and friends I don't want to leave!"

**ILLUS.** The publisher of a well-known pornographic magazine was supposed to have become a Christian. He made the bold announcement, "I'm born again!"

Some people rejoiced, and others took the "wait and see" attitude. Before long this man revealed where he stood. He made the following statement: "Born again? Yes, I'm born again! I now follow the spirit of Buddha, Muhammad, and Jesus Christ!"

"Of course I'm a Christian! But please don't make me go all the way!" That's an invitation to spiritual disaster. This man's life has proven to be a disaster.

*C. God consented to their desire not to go all of the way into the Promised Land.* Ultimately it cost dearly. First Chron. 5:26 tells about the invading Assyrians. The first to fall were these two and one-half tribes: Reuben, Gad, and half of Manasseh.

They were in the most dangerous place. When people hold back, they will be the first to fall.

**ILLUS.** Someone has written: "There is a land of victory over giants and despair. A land where walls of resistance fall. Where rivers of trouble dry up at your feet. A land where the fruit of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, patience, gentleness, and self-control—grow on the trees. Will you cross over . . . will you possess that land?"<sup>1</sup>

The children of Israel decided to go over and possess the land.

### III. Two Spies Were the First to Enter the Land

They were the two CIA agents sent ahead to "look over the land, . . . especially Jericho" (2:1).

*A. "Why in the world are you sending in spies again, Joshua?* Because of the spies 40 years ago the Israelites never went into the land!" The scenario is different this time. Forty years ago they doubted God's promise. The spies bolstered unbelief. This time they believed God's promise, talking about "when the Lord gives us the land" (2:14), not "if we get the land."

*B. Upon entering the land and reaching Jericho, they "entered the house of a prostitute named Rahab and stayed there" (v. 1).*

1. Why did God choose her inn? One reason could be that a brothel was a busy place with men coming and going. What better place is there for these two men to avoid attention? But God does have a pattern of seeking lost people—Rahab, the Samaritan woman, Cornelius, the Ethiopian eunuch, Zacchaeus—lost people with a heart ready for Him!

I wonder how many lost people are in our spheres of influence, tender and ripe for God, waiting to be reached.

2. The spies conversed with Rahab (vv. 8-11). Rahab tells them that for 40 years Jericho lived in fear of the Israelites—while God's people lived in defeat in the desert! When God calls us to spiritual warfare, He's calling us to a battle that has already been won. We fight *in* victory!

**ILLUS.** When the Japanese surrendered in World War II, some American soldiers on an isolated Pacific island never received the good news because communication had been severed. For three days they continued as usual as if there were still a victory to be won. The victory had been won; they didn't know it and consequently did not live in it. (Read vv. 12-16.)

3. Rahab was adopted by the nation of Israel. She became one of them. Robert Frost wrote, "Home is the place where people take you in." Rahab was totally taken in.

Not only was she adopted, but she was elevated and became part of the lineage of David! In Matthew's genealogy we read, "Salmon [was] the father of Boaz, whose mother was Rahab, Boaz the father of Obed, whose mother was Ruth, Obed the father of Jesse, and Jesse the father of King David" (1:5). Rahab went "from a house of ill repute to God's hall of fame!"

Jewish tradition has an interesting story. Salmon, in the genealogy, was one of the spies, whom Rahab ended up marrying. While she hid them, a chemistry was at work between her and special agent Salmon. At first he liked her cooking, then their eyes met, and, as she lowered him by rope, he said, "I'm single and you're single, so stick around, Rahab! I'm coming back for you!" And he did. Rahab ended up in the lineage of David.

#### IV. There Were Those Who Missed the Promised Land

A great tragedy is the lot of those who never possessed the Promised Land. A generation died off in the desert for two reasons: unbelief and disobedience.

##### A. *There is the tragedy of unbelief.*

1. Forty years earlier God told the Israelites to possess the land, but they said, "No way!"

The 10 spies said, "It's impossible! The walls are great; the people are giants! It can't be done." (See Num. 13:28, 32-33.) They refused to claim God's wonderful promise and missed what God wanted to give them.

2. Many people today make the same mistake. God wants to do a lot more than we're allowing Him to do.

a. *The prodigal son's older brother became jealous and angry.* He said to his father, "All of these years I served you, yet you never gave me what you're giving to my brother!"

His father replied, "Son, everything I have is yours" (see Luke 15:29-31).

b. *Some Christians testify: "For 30 years I've been in the church. I've heard people talk about answered prayer, yet I've never experienced it!"* Or, "For 20 years I've heard people talk about the conscious presence of Christ, but I've never felt Him!"

Our Father says, "It's always been here. You didn't possess it!"

God will not give what you won't take. God says, "I have placed before you an open door that no one can shut" (Rev. 3:8), but you can refuse to walk through it! God set before the Israelites a Promised Land, but for 40 years they refused to claim it.

##### B. *There is the tragedy of disobedience.*

1. Disobedience by His children upsets God. Parents of young children understand this!

2. Standing on the threshold of the Promised Land again, God calls to obedience: "Be careful to obey all the law . . . do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful" (1:7).

We will never progress with God beyond the point of our disobedience.

#### CONCLUSION:

The Promised Land experience is ours to receive. In our walk with God, believe, obey, and possess!

1. Ian Machen, *Living in Victory* (Johannesburg, S.A.: Logos Press), p. 6.

#### SUGGESTED WORSHIP ORDER

##### WE GATHER IN ANTICIPATION

Reflect on Josh. 1:10—2:24

CALL TO WORSHIP "We Have Come into This House"

HYMN "Jesus Shall Reign"

WELCOME Pastor

CHOIR "The Haven of Rest"

PRAYER CHORUS "Jesus Is the Sweetest Name I Know"

##### DIRECTED PRAYER

OFFERING

SPECIAL MUSIC "There's a New Song in My Heart"

SERMON "POSSESSING GOD'S PROMISE" (Part 2)

CLOSING HYMN "Trust and Obey"

#### Creative Worship Ideas

##### Directed Prayer

We are gathered in the presence of the great God of the universe, the One who spoke into existence this world. Think about His greatness and power. This same God knows you and loves you.

1. Thank Him for loving you.

2. As a child boldly speaks to a loving father, so you can boldly speak to your Heavenly Father. First of all, speak to Him about that special concern you have on your heart.

3. Can you trust Him enough to say, "Father, I'm placing this problem or concern in Your hands. I'm going to leave it there"?

4. Let's remember others and pray for the sick. (Continue prayer.)

# WHEN GOD DOES AMAZING THINGS

by Gavin Raath

Josh. 3:1-17

July 21, 1991

## INTRO

"Consecrate yourselves, for tomorrow the Lord will do amazing things among you" (v. 5), Joshua says to the Israelites about to cross over into the Promised Land.

These people had spent 40 years in defeat, running laps in the desert. It had been a wilderness experience, but things were about to change. "I'm going to do amazing things for you," says God. Perhaps you've had a desert experience, a wilderness experience, and you could do with something "amazing" from God.

How does that happen? How can you get the miracle-working power of God to intersect at the point of your need? What is God's general pattern in dispensing miracles? Joshua 3 focuses on three points:

### I. God's Power Flows in Accordance with God's Purpose

It is difficult for some to understand that God's miracles are His tools to accomplish His will in our lives.

When we find ourselves in a tight spot, we are inclined to say, "O God! Get me out of this mess!" It's as though God's power is a fire extinguisher in a glass box. When we're in trouble, we break the glass labeled "Emergency" and say, "Emergency, God! Get me out of this mess!"

As a rule, God's power flows according to His purpose.

#### A. What is God's purpose?

1. Recognize that God has a purpose for His Church, of which we are all a part. Read Matt. 28:18-20. There is the Church's task. Jesus says, "Surely I am with you always," as you carry out My purpose.

2. God has a purpose for your life. What is it? How do you know the will of God?

a. *The Israelites determined God's will by changing the position of the ark of the covenant in their midst. The ark is a picture of Jesus Christ.* The word *ark* is mentioned 9 times in Joshua 3. It was with them—they carried it, set it down, camped around it. The ark held a prominent place in their midst. Up to this point, the ark had always followed them, but now God instructed them to position it about a thousand yards ahead so that they could be led by it. The Israelites had been walking in circles, frustrated, but their fortunes changed when they put the ark out front and followed it! Then they began to witness the power of God!

Not until we change the position of Christ, the Ark of our lives, will we experience His miraculous power! Is He ahead guiding, in the driver's seat, or is He merely a hitchhiker whom we have picked up along life's way?

#### b. What does it mean to have the Ark out front?

(1) It means that we declare our total dependency on Jesus.

(2) We must obey what we already know to be

God's will. I would dare to assert that 95 percent of God's will for our lives has already been revealed to us in His Word. Jesus expects us to follow that. If we are not obeying God's revealed will, why should we expect Him to give us more light?

Do you want God's power to flow in your life? Do God's will! His power flows to accomplish His will and purpose.

### II. God's Power Flows According to God's Timetable

"God's will, done in God's when, shall bring God's wonders!" Notice the emphasis on time in Joshua 3: "After **three days** the officers went throughout the camp" (v. 2). Joshua says, "**Tomorrow** the Lord will do amazing things among you" (v. 5). "The Lord said to Joshua, '**Today** I will begin to exalt you'" (v. 7). There is such a thing as "God's timing," "God's schedule."

#### A. Christians often miss God's purpose.

1. Some Christians have said, "I've discovered God's will for my life. I've prayed about it. I've read the Word. I've spoken to people, and they have agreed with me. Therefore, I ought to go ahead and do it. Right?" "Wrong!" There is the element of timing with respect to God's will. His kingdom is strewn with the wrecks of believers who tried to do God's will out of God's time.

2. This also means that we should not assume God's delays are God's denials.

#### B. God's people in the Bible have missed God's purpose.

1. Moses was chosen by God to lead the Israelites out of Egyptian bondage. Miraculously God spared him and reared him. By the age of 40, his heart was pulsated with the knowledge that God had appointed him to lead the Israelites out. And he was eager to do it.

One day Moses witnessed an Egyptian abusing a Hebrew. He ran out and karate-chopped him to death and buried him. Then God said, "Moses! What have you done?"

"I took out an Egyptian!"

"Why, Moses?"

"Because it's my job," said Moses. "You appointed me to be the official Egyptian 'taker-outer!'"

"How do you propose to do it, Moses?"

"One at a time, Sir! Let them come! I'm ready!"

And God said, "Into the penalty box!" And there Moses had to sit for 40 years cooling his heels.

Later, when God was ready, the miracle was accomplished without any human effort.

2. God told Abraham that he would have a son. In excitement Abraham ran down to the store and bought a bassinet, a crate of Pampers, a crate of baby food, some books and toys, and paint to decorate the nursery. Then he sat down and waited.



Months ticked by, then years. Cobwebs covered the bassinet. The baby food turned moldy. Mice ate the Pampers—no baby yet.

Finally, Sarah said, "Husband, if you want a child, you're going to have to have it through my concubine" (which was not God's will). And all the trouble we're having in the Middle East is the result of that child, Ishmael. Abraham's first son, born through a concubine, became the father of the Arab nations.

God has a will for your life and mine. It needs to be carried out according to His sovereign timetable.

### III. We See an Example of God's Power

*A. God's power was at work in the miraculous crossing at the Jordan River.*

The poor priests who carried the ark had the toughest job of all. They needed faith.

Joshua instructed the priests (see vv. 12-17).

"All right, men, pick up the ark!"

"Right, Joshua. We've got it!"

"Stand on the brink of the river!"

"Right, Joshua. We're on the edge!"

"Now, forward march!"

"Did you say, 'About-face,' Josh?"

"No, forward march!"

And in faith they obeyed. As they took that first step into the river, the water banked up, creating a dry bed for them to walk over. Amazing!

The poor priests stood in the middle of the riverbed, holding the ark, while 3 million people passed through! They didn't do it in slow motion, either! If you think that I would go for a leisurely Sunday stroll through churning, barreling walls of water being held up, you'd better think again! I would grab my family and shout, "Here we go, full speed ahead!" Imagine the rush and the noise, and the hee-hawing of donkeys and bleating of sheep, and the bellowing camels. And those priests with the ark had to stand there, in the middle of it all, until the last little child waddled through!

Have you ever been in the middle of a dangerous mess and cried out, "O God! Hold the water! I'm not yet through the river!" Often I've found myself in that situation. The walls of water from every direction have

threatened to close in on me and crush me. But do you know what? As long as we have the Ark of the Covenant there with us, it will never happen! The promise is in Isa. 43:1-2: "Fear not . . . When you pass through the waters, I will be with you . . . When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned."

### CONCLUSION:

God's will, done in God's when, will bring God's wonders. Amazing wonders!

#### SUGGESTED WORSHIP ORDER

WE GATHER IN ANTICIPATION	Reflect on Josh. 3:1-17
CALL TO WORSHIP	"We Have Come into This House"
HYMN	"O Worship the King"
WELCOME	Pastor
CHOIR	"Under His Wings"
PRAYER CHORUS	"In the Garden"
DIRECTED PRAYER	
OFFERING	
SPECIAL MUSIC	"I Touched the Heart of God in Prayer"
SERMON	"WHEN GOD DOES AMAZING THINGS"
CLOSING HYMN	"Victory in Jesus"

#### Creative Worship Ideas

##### Directed Prayer

"'Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name' (Luke 11:2, KJV). We thank You for being just that—our Father. We are Your children. As Your children, we are obeying You in bringing our praises, our thanksgiving, and our anxieties and burdens. We have come to You in confidence, knowing that there is nothing about us that You do not know. There is nothing about us that does not enter Your loving concern."

1. Right now let's thank Him for something He has already done for us.
2. Thank Him for eternal life.
3. Thank Him for being your Father.
4. Now thank Him for some good thing that has happened in your life recently.
5. Tell Him about your immediate concern—a struggle, a defeat, a decision, a hurt. Bring it to Him.

# REMEMBER TO NOT FORGET

by Gavin Raath

Joshua 4

A Communion Message

July 28, 1991

## I. Israel Built a Memorial

To commemorate the miraculous crossing of the Jordan River, God instructed the Israelites to take 12 stones from the dry riverbed and erect a monument to the amazing event. Why?

*A. Man has a built-in ability to forget.*  
Our ability to forget is both good and bad.

1. It is good that God gave us the capacity to forget, because some things in our lives are best forgotten.

I believe that it's our ability to forget that makes people talk about "the good ol' days." Frankly, for the most part those old days were not that good. We have a way of blocking out the hard times and bad experiences.

**ILLUS.** For example, women experience severe pain in giving birth to children. They tell me that each time a woman goes through the excruciating experience, she vows to herself, "Never again!" Fortunately, women have a way of forgetting what it was like; otherwise, our planet would have been depopulated a long time ago! Some things need to be forgotten.

2. But forgetting is not all good! Forgetting can get us into trouble.

**ILLUS.** That's what happened to the man who wrote to a woman: "Dear Alice, I'm getting so forgetful, that while I remember proposing to you last night, I forgot whether you said yes or no."

She wrote back: "Dear Bob, so glad to hear from you. I knew I said no to someone last night, but I had forgotten who it was."

**ILLUS.** By the way, husbands, should you ever forget your wife's birthday, here is a good line to use: "Honey, how do you expect me to remember your birthday when you never look any older!"

*B. God wants us to remember some things.*

God knows that our built-in "forgetter" works too efficiently and that sometimes we need reminders from time to time. So He instructed the children of Israel to place 12 stones inside the Promised Land to facilitate their remembrance of what He had done the day they crossed over Jordan. "To serve as a sign among you," God said (v. 6).

## II. The Memorial Was for Whom?

There are three target audiences.

*A. God wants to communicate to the world.*

Joshua says, "In the future," when many will ask, "'What do these stones mean?' tell them . . . The Lord your God did to the Jordan just what he had done to the Red Sea when he dried it up . . . so that all the peoples

of the earth might know that the hand of the Lord is powerful" (vv. 21-24).

*B. God wants to communicate to individuals.*

"And Joshua set up . . . the twelve stones . . . so that all . . . might know that the hand of the Lord is powerful and so that *you* might always fear the Lord your God" (vv. 20, 24, italics added). He wants individuals to respect the great and powerful God—not to be terrified of Him, but to appreciate Him for what He is.

*C. God wants to communicate to future generations.*

"In the future when your descendants ask their fathers, 'What do these stones mean?' tell them" (vv. 21-22). In other words, build a memorial that will provoke questions from your children and your children's children.

**ILLUS.** We have a question-provoking memorial in the form of a huge family photo album that contains many old pictures, some going back to my younger days in South Africa, where our children have never lived. Our children love to bring out the old album from time to time. Those old pictures never fail to provoke questions concerning our past roots.

**ILLUS.** This is the reason for our monuments in Washington, D.C. They are reminders to us, and future generations, concerning the people and events that constitute American history.

**ILLUS.** During World War II a handful of exhausted British pilots saved England by holding off the great and mighty German Luftwaffe in what became known as the Battle of Britain. The clearly grateful and moved British prime minister, Winston Churchill, made his famous speech: "Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few." Those words are inscribed on a monument so that future generations will remember Britain's "finest hour."

"Children of Israel, remember! Don't forget! Build a monument—a memorial to facilitate your remembrance."

## III. What Is Our Greatest Memorial?

The most important memorial was instituted by Christ. Its purpose is to facilitate our remembrance of what Jesus did for us on the Cross. In Luke 22 Jesus celebrated Passover with His disciples: "After taking the cup, he gave thanks . . . And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, 'This is my body given for you; [notice] do this in **remembrance** of me'" (vv. 17, 19).

### **SUGGESTED WORSHIP ORDER**

WE GATHER IN ANTICIPATION	Joshua 4; Luke 22:17-20
CALL TO WORSHIP	"We Have Come into This House"
HYMN	"O God, Our Help in Ages Past"
WELCOME	Pastor
CHOIR	"Lead On, O King Eternal"
PRAYER CHORUS	"Come, Holy Spirit"
DIRECTED PRAYER	
OFFERING	
SPECIAL MUSIC	"The Touch of God"
SERMON	"REMEMBER TO NOT FORGET"
HYMN	"Lest I Forget Gethsemane"
COMMUNION	The Lord's Table
BENEDICTION	

### **Creative Worship Ideas**

#### *Directed Prayer*

The Hebrew writer tells us to praise God continually and give thanks to His name. Let's do that! We must bring to Him not only our praises but also our confessions. Confession needs to take place before we have the right to expect Him to hear our petitions.

1. Has there been some failure in your life recently—especially spiritual failure—that you need to talk to Him about?

2. What is that load that you are carrying today? Would you allow Him to take that load and help you carry it? Talk to Him honestly about it for a moment, and then bring yourself to give it to Him.

# PREPARATION FOR VICTORY

by Gavin Raath

Joshua 5 and 6

August 4, 1991

## INTRO

The children of Israel have crossed over Jordan. Finally they are in the Promised Land—a land where the inhabitants had heard of the miracle of the parting of the river. These people were quaking in fear, for they now knew about the existence of the powerful God of the Israelites: "Their hearts melted and they no longer had the courage to face the Israelites" (v. 1).

In all likelihood the generals said, "Joshua, they're terrified and on the run. This is a good time to crush them." But this tactic was not in God's plan. Canaan was "a prepared place for a prepared people." Certain preparations were necessary. First things first! In order to succeed in their conquest,

## I. Israel Had to Make Spiritual Preparation

### A. *The men were circumcised.*

They had to get their obedience up-to-date through circumcision, for this was an uncircumcised generation born in the desert (5:2-8).

1. Circumcision was a sign of God's covenant with Abraham (Read Gen. 17:1-14).

God desired for these Israelites to be involved in a reaffirmation and confirmation of the covenant He had entered into with their father, Abraham.

2. Circumcision was more than something physical. Moses preached about heart circumcision. The prophets would speak of lips and ears being circumcised. The Sanhedrin were referred to as "stiff-necked people, with uncircumcised hearts and ears!" (Acts 7:51). In other words, circumcision was an outward operation, but it required a corresponding inward work.

3. The operation of circumcision in the camp physically incapacitated Joshua's army for a few days, putting them at risk so close to an enemy city. Genesis 34 demonstrates the point. But circumcision had to take place. First things first!

### B. *They worshiped God.*

They celebrated Passover (see 5:10).

**ILLUS.** Can't you hear the generals sitting around the campfire talking to Joshua? "Sir, we're all circumcised and healed; what next?"

"Well, now we are going to celebrate Passover," replies Joshua.

Can you see the generals glancing at each other and saying with their eyes, "Has Joshua lost it? There the terrified enemy lies, ready for the picking, and what does Joshua do? He says, 'We're going to have surgery!' And now we're all healed up, and he says that we're going to have a feast!"

**ILLUS.** Can't you imagine what this must have looked like to the people of Jericho? From the top of city walls, the spies observed the camp through their binoculars

and exclaimed, "Sir, you won't believe this! Do you know what they are doing now? They're having a picnic! A couple of million people eating lamb and corn!"

Of course, in feasting they were remembering what God had done for them in Egypt. It is never inappropriate or foolish to worship God. Jesus had to teach this lesson to Martha when she objected to Mary worshipping at His feet. The Israelites prepared themselves by worshipping God.

## II. Israel Had to Make Battle Preparation

### A. *Man's approach would gain what men can do.*

1. Undoubtedly Joshua and his generals spent a great deal of time coming up with battle strategies.

"Men, get out the war manual we brought from Egypt. Let's talk about the three-point attack strategy in chapter 4. Let's have the special mole forces tunnel under the side wall and slip a few of them in the night before. Then the next day we'll hit them from the front with several battering rams. While the enemy is focused on the front, we'll have 200 men sneak up behind and scale the wall with ladders."

Military strategists must have engaged in considerable discussion concerning how to approach the city of Jericho. However,

### B. *God's approach would gain what God can do.*

1. Joshua went for a walk to think. Suddenly a man appeared before him with a drawn sword. "Who goes there? Are you one of ours, or an enemy?" said Joshua. The stranger replied, "Neither, but as commander of the army of the Lord I have now come" (vv. 13-14).

In excitement Joshua could have unrolled his blueprints in the sand and explained his three-point plan of attack. But God made it clear that He had a different plan and approach. God's plan involved marching around the city walls for seven days and seven times on the seventh day. Upon blowing trumpets and shouting, the walls were to come down (6:2-5). Joshua surrendered to God's plan and received it in awe and reverence.

This is a beautiful picture. The man who appeared before Joshua came as one equipped to meet his need, as a warrior with sword in hand. Joshua's need was for a military victory. When we have a need, God comes to us to show himself uniquely able to meet our need.

## III. Israel Had to Make Victory Preparation

### A. *Notice the reaction of Jericho.*

A spy comes running into Jericho's Pentagon and breathlessly reports, "General, I've just been in the camp of Israel. I got close enough to the tent of their high command to hear their talk! You are not going to believe this, sir, but they have the craziest war plan! They are going to march around our walls for a week, carrying a

box. Then they are going to shout. They actually believe that the resulting vibration will collapse our 10-foot-thick walls! I couldn't believe my ears!"

*B. Notice the faith of the Israelites.*

1. Joshua gives the order: "Take up the ark of the covenant of the Lord and have seven priests carry trumpets in front of it. . . . Advance! March around the city" (6:6-7). The Israelites obeyed. In all likelihood they felt odd about silently marching around Jericho day after day, but they acted in harmony with God's plan.

2. God's people obey Him in faith:

*a. "Joshua had commanded the people, 'Do not give a war cry, do not raise your voices, do not say a word until the day I tell you to shout. Then shout!' (v. 10). When did they shout? Before or after the walls came down? Before! My natural inclination would have been to shout after the walls came tumbling down!*

*b. Earlier when these people stepped into the Jordan River to cross over, did they take that step before or after the water parted? Before! It was an obedient step taken in faith.*

*c. When God promised century-old Abraham a son, long after Sarah's menopause, did he believe God that it would happen before or after the birth of that child? Before!*

**ILLUS.** Robert Moffat had been a missionary in Africa for a number of years without seeing a single convert when a friend left the field to visit England. Before his departure, Moffat asked him to return with a Communion set. "A Communion set?" replied Moffat's friend. "What need do you have of it without converts?"

Moffat replied, "There will be converts by the time the Communion set arrives!" And there were!

God's people are a people of active faith. They see God's command as God's enablement!

3. We can obey God in faith, for He is faithful to His word.

*a. Just as God said, when the trumpets sounded*

*and the Israelites shouted, the great walls of Jericho collapsed (v. 20).*

*b. The promise made to Rahab was kept.* When Jericho was destroyed, she, along with her family, was spared (vv. 22-25).

*c. God's promise to be with Joshua, made when he replaced Moses, was also kept.* Chapter 6 ends with these words: "So the Lord was **with Joshua**, and his fame spread throughout the land" (v. 27).

**CONCLUSION**

The God of Joshua and the children of Israel is also our God—a great and faithful God. And we, too, can enter into a covenant relationship with Him!

**SUGGESTED WORSHIP ORDER**

WE GATHER IN ANTICIPATION

Reflect on Joshua 5 and 6

CALL TO WORSHIP "We Have Come into This House"

HYMN "Day by Day"

WELCOME Pastor

CHOIR "A Mighty Fortress"

PRAYER CHORUS "Lord, We Praise You"

DIRECTED PRAYER

OFFERING

SPECIAL MUSIC "Above All Else"

SERMON "PREPARATION FOR VICTORY"

CLOSING HYMN "He Leadeth Me"

**Creative Worship Ideas**

*Directed Prayer*

Do you believe that God can do the impossible? He will do it for you if you will allow Him in His own way. Is there a river in your life that you can't seem to cross? A mountain that seems insurmountable?

1. Talk to the One who specializes in things thought impossible. He's listening to you.

2. Thank Him for listening to you with loving concern.

3. Now pray for someone with a need.



# THE THRILL OF VICTORY AND THE AGONY OF DEFEAT

by Gavin Raath

Joshua 7 and 8  
August 11, 1991

## INTRO

The children of Israel experienced an amazing victory over Jericho. God collapsed the great walls of that city. Usually conquerors raid a destroyed city and benefit from the spoils. But this was not allowed at Jericho. God commanded that they "put the silver and gold and the articles of bronze and iron into the treasury of the Lord's house" (6:24). One man in the camp sinned against God by disobeying God's command. This failure led to Israel's first defeat in the land. In the wake of Jericho, they went from "the thrill of victory" to "the agony of defeat."

## I. What Was the Cause of the Failure?

### A. God's order was clear.

God prohibited the Israelites from taking the spoils. He warned of the consequences of disobedience: "But keep away from the devoted things, so that you will not bring about your own destruction by taking any of them" (6:18).

### B. God's order was disobeyed.

The battle is over. The city is in ruin. Darkness has set in; the only light is coming from a smoldering fire here and there. Israel's camp is quiet, sleeping from exhausting events of the day.

However, Achan lies on his back, eyes staring at the ceiling of his tent. His heart is racing as he strains to hear any possible sound in the camp.

Carefully he rises and folds back the flap of his tent, sticks out his head, and looks for some movement in the camp. Stealthily he makes his way toward the camp exit. Quickening his pace, he heads toward the remains of Jericho.

Achan makes his way to a section of the city where he had been fighting earlier. He recognizes a small pile of stones. He removes the stones and uncovers a leather pouch—200 pieces of silver and a wedge of gold. He touches an expensive coat labeled "Babylonian." He smiles as he contemplates the great life that awaits him in the new land.

Achan hurries back to his tent, digs a hole in the floor, and carefully buries the booty. He sinned against God—a willful failure to obey His command.

## II. What Was the Result of the Failure?

Achan's sin resulted in defeat at a tiny town called Ai. This event was followed by a victory.

### A. They had a stunning defeat (7:1-5).

1. At the village of Ai bitter tears fall from 36 widows and 100 saddened children left fatherless. Feel their crushed dream and fear. Feel the thrill of victory over Jericho but now the agony of defeat!

2. Joshua tore his clothes and fell facedown (7:6-9). But that is not the end.

### B. Defeat was followed by a wonderful victory.

1. Achan's sin is resolved (7:19-21, 25-26).

2. God promises victory over Ai (8:1).

3. There is a distinct change in battle strategy (8:2-8). At Jericho they marched around the walls; at Ai they were to ambush the city. At Jericho they were not allowed to take the plunder; now God gives them permission. God's methods change from situation to situation. We need to allow God to be God.

**ILLUS.** Jesus healed three blind men, using a different method in each case. He placed spittle on the eyes of one, applied mud to another, and simply touched the third.

Those three men got together for a conference on divine healing. The first man said, "This is how God cures blindness: He takes spittle—!"

The second man said, "That's the worst heresy I've ever heard! He applies a mud pack to be washed off!"

The third man jumped up and said, "You're both wrong! All He does is touch; then eyes are opened!"

The divided conference sparked three new denominations: the Spittites, the Muddites, and the Touchites!

God's methods vary. He heals people in different ways. His character never changes, but His methods often do.

## III. There Are Three Lessons About Failure

We learn about success and failure as we examine Israel's experiences in Joshua 7 and 8:

### A. Failure is never final.

I can allow failure to be either my undertaker or my teacher.

**ILLUS.** Did you know that:

a. George Washington fought nine battles and lost six, yet won the Revolutionary War.

b. Sir Walter Scott was rated a moron in school.

c. Sir Isaac Newton, at age 15, showed such poor promise that his parents took him out of school to work on the farm.

d. When Thomas Edison was in grade school, his teacher advised his parents to disenroll him.

e. Young Napoleon Bonaparte graduated 42nd in a class of 43 at the Military Academy in Paris.

f. He dropped out of grade school and later ran a country store, then declared bankruptcy. He had a miserable marriage. He entered politics, ran for the House of Representatives, and lost twice. He lost two races for the Senate of the United States. He made a speech that fell flat, but later the script became famous. He was attacked daily in the press. People jeered at his "apelike appearance." However, this man pressed on until Abraham Lincoln became president of the United States!

g. Jacob turned his back on God and became a liar and a cheat, but God gave him another chance and changed his name to Israel.

b. Peter took an oath that he had never seen Jesus. Yet Jesus restored him to ministry.

i. John Mark was the first missionary dropout. Yet he ended up writing the second Gospel.

j. Samson turned his back on God and lost his strength. Praying for another chance, God strengthened him.

k. Jonah ran from God, yet God did not give up on him.

l. The Israelites were defeated by Ai, but then they went on to be victorious over them.

God is the God of a second chance; failure is never final. "Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged," the Lord said to Joshua (8:1).

**B. The success of the ungodly is never final (8:3-8).**

1. Imagine the elation of the people of Ai. Their fear turned to arrogance. They had defeated the people whom Egypt could not contain and whom the Amalekites could not handle! They had humiliated the people who had crushed Jericho! "Where is your mighty God now?" they must have jeered.

When Israel came to Ai for a second time, and pretended to flee, Ai's army chased them. Imagine how they felt! "Why don't you attack us every day so that we can have fun chasing you! Fantastic aerobics!"

2. The ungodly do not serve God or His Church, yet they seem to be better off than we! Why? Joshua asked this question when Ai defeated them.

Habakkuk, too, was perplexed: "Justice never prevails" (1:4). "Why are you silent while the wicked swallow up those more righteous than themselves?" (v. 13).

The picture is not complete. Israel was finally victorious over Ai.

God tells Habakkuk that there is an appointed time when justice prevails.

Paul says to the unrepentant, "You are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed" (Rom. 2:5). The Psalmist said, "I saw the prosperity of the wicked. They have no struggles . . . Surely in vain have I kept my heart pure." But "then I understood their final destiny. Surely you [God] place them on slippery ground; you cast them down to ruin" (73:3-4, 13, 17-18).

The success of the ungodly is never final. Judgment comes eventually. The success of Ai was short-lived, and the Israelites finally prevailed. The final lesson is this:

**C. Your decision determines your destiny (8:30-35).**

Joshua marches the children of Israel 20 miles to the valley between Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal. The valley served as an amphitheater. Joshua split the people in half. One group stood at the base of Gerizim and the other at the base of Ebal. Then he reread the law to them—"the blessings and the curses" (v. 34).

**CONCLUSION:**

Remember, it lies within your power to serve or not to serve God. Your destiny lies in your decisions. Decide for God and His ways today! This is the best way to avoid spiritual failure!

**SUGGESTED WORSHIP ORDER**

WE GATHER IN ANTICIPATION	Joshua 7 and 8
CALL TO WORSHIP	"We Have Come into This House"
HYMN	"Jesus Will Walk with Me"
WELCOME	Pastor
CHOIR	"Holy, Holy, Holy"
PRAYER CHORUS	"Holy, Holy"
DIRECTED PRAYER	
OFFERING	
SPECIAL MUSIC	"It Is Well with My Soul"
SERMON	"THE THRILL OF VICTORY AND THE AGONY OF DEFEAT"
CLOSING HYMN	"I Am Resolved"

**Creative Worship Ideas**

*Directed Prayer*

As we prepare ourselves for prayer, open your heart and mentally open yourself to God. The extent to which we open ourselves to Him will determine what we receive from Him.

1. Be still and know that He is God.
2. Thank Him for His love, and let Him know that you love Him too.
3. How is your spiritual life? Are you satisfied with where you are on your spiritual journey? Talk to Him about that.
4. Ask Him to speak to you during this hour.
5. Pray for a loved one or a friend in need of the Savior.
6. Let's remember those among us who are sick.

# DEALING WITH SIN

by Gavin Raath

Joshua 7

August 18, 1991

## INTRO

We have studied the sin of Achan and the resulting defeat of Israel at the hand of Ai and their subsequent victory over Ai. Today we are going to go back to Joshua 7 and examine Achan's sin.

### I. The Sin of Achan Was Hidden from Human View

"The Israelites acted unfaithfully in regard to the devoted things" (Josh. 7:1). What were "the devoted things"? Spoils from Jericho that God wanted for His house (6:24). Achan, however, stole from God by seizing gold, silver, and clothing from Jericho. Because of this sin, "the Lord's anger burned against Israel" (7:1).

God held the whole camp of Israel responsible for Achan's actions. As a result, He caused their defeat in battle against Ai. (Read 7:16-25.)

### II. The Despair of Joshua Was Caused by Hidden Sin

#### A. Joshua and the elders display grief (v. 6).

1. They tore their clothing, symbolic of the fact that their hearts were torn.

2. They sprinkled dust on their heads to symbolize their humility.

3. They lay prostrate before the ark, which symbolized their repentance.

#### B. Joshua blames God (v. 7).

"Ah, Sovereign Lord, why did you ever bring this people across the Jordan to deliver us into the hands of the Amorites to destroy us?" (v. 7).

When we're tired and defeated, backed into a corner, we have the uncanny habit of saying things we should not say. We're quick to lay blame. If it moves, blame it! If it doesn't move, still blame it! Joshua was feeling so low that he dared to lash out at God. Thank God, He is understanding and long-suffering!

#### C. Joshua engages in self-pity (v. 7b).

"If only we had been content to stay on the other side of the Jordan!"

"Joshua, are you actually saying that you enjoyed life better before you crossed into the Promised Land? Have you forgotten the desert hardship?"

How short our spiritual memories can be! How quickly we forget what life was like before we received Christ.

#### D. Joshua talks of God's reputation (vv. 8-9).

Concerned about their defeat, Joshua says to God, "The Canaanites and the other people of the country will hear about this and they will surround us and wipe out **our name** from the earth. What then will you do for **your own great name**?"

In the Old and New Testaments God entrusts His name to His people, which means we have a solemn responsibility!

For example, "Israel" means "prince with God." New Testament believers are called "Christians," which means "Christ ones."

We are linked to God to such a degree that His reputation rests on our shoulders. When I live in the fullness of His Spirit, in triumph, love, and joy, then God's name is glorified. But if I live without love, in misery, then God is not being glorified. The apostle Paul's hope was that "Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death" (Phil. 1:20).

### III. The Result of Sin Affects Others

#### A. Achan's sin affected Israel.

"The Lord said to Joshua, 'Stand up! . . . Israel has sinned; they have violated my covenant, which I commanded them to keep'" (vv. 10-11). Question: Who stole the booty from Jericho? Achan did! Yet God said, "Israel has sinned," and "they have violated my covenant."

None of us lives in a spiritual vacuum. No man is an island, cut off and insulated from everyone. We live as a family in a connected relationship. Very often when one sins, others are affected. The children of Israel were one family. Somehow Achan's sin had the effect of making the whole camp responsible.

God may hold us responsible for some sins—like the sins of our nation, for example. Why? Because there are enough of us to make a difference. We need to bond together and call the movie and television industry to accountability. God expects us to be involved in the political process. Evil men will rule when good men do nothing! We have a responsibility to oppose the proliferation of sin.

Somehow, when Achan sinned, God held the whole family of Israel responsible.

#### B. Our sin affects us (v. 12).

1. We will have no fellowship with God. He says, "I will not be with you anymore unless you destroy whatever among you is devoted to destruction" (v. 12). As long as there is sin in my life, I am separated from the holy God who absolutely cannot tolerate sin.

2. We will be powerless. Sin "is why the Israelites cannot stand against their enemies" (v. 12). Where there is sin, there is no fellowship with God. Where there is no fellowship with God, there is no power.

3. Sin leads to destruction. God said of the Israelites, "They have been made liable to destruction" (v. 12). God makes it very clear that "the wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23). Sin may start in a small way in our lives, but if left unchecked, it has frighteningly enormous results—it leads to eternal lostness!

**ILLUS.** One day in Colorado a great tree fell down. That tree had been a sapling when Christopher Columbus came to America. It had been struck by lightning 14

times, survived thousands of storms, and defied earthquakes, floods, and droughts; but in the end, it was killed by tiny beetles. These beetles bore under the tree's bark, ate away at its mighty fibers, and eventually it was destroyed!

So it is with sin. It usually begins with one little sin, but finally it wreaks total destruction.

We must get rid of sin, otherwise we are "liable to destruction," says God. That is exactly what Joshua and the Israelites did (vv. 16-26).

#### IV. The Steps in Sin Lead to Failure

In Achan's experience we see an interesting progression down the slippery slope that leads to sin in the lives of several Bible characters. There are basically four steps in the typical sin equation: looking, coveting, taking, and hiding.

##### A. We see this progression in Achan's sin.

Achan says, "When I **saw** in the plunder [step 1] . . . I **coveted** them [step 2] and **took** them [step 3]. They are **hidden** . . . inside my tent" (step 4) (v. 21). There you have the four-step progression.

##### B. We see this progression in the first sin.

In Genesis 3 we read about Eve falling into sin: "When the woman **saw** that the fruit [step 1] . . . was . . . **pleasing** . . . and also **desirable** [step 2] . . . she **took** some" (step 3) (v. 6). Then Adam and Eve "made **coverings**," and then "they **hid** from the Lord God" (step 4) (vv. 7, 8).

We cannot help the first step—seeing. We are going to go through life seeing many attractive things. If these attractive things appeal to us, there is nothing wrong with that. Up to this point, we are within the realm of temptation; temptation is not sin. We run into trouble when we take the next step—from seeing and appreciating to coveting. I have seen it, it has appealed to me, but now I begin to embrace it with my heart, mind, and emotions. Now I have an inordinate desire to possess it. The best example of this principle:

##### C. We see this progression in the words of Jesus.

Matthew 5:28 has caused a great deal of misunderstanding. Jesus said, "I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart."

By normal mingling in our society, it is impossible for men to not look at women. Often a man will become sexually stimulated by what he sees. Is it wrong to feel aroused in this manner? No, the arousal is a God-given response. There is no morality attached to the arousal.

When does sin enter the picture? When has adultery been committed in the heart? It happens when we take the next step—from seeing and then being aroused, to **coveting** or wanting—when I desire to possess her. When I have the attitude that says, "I would if I could,"

at that point I have "already committed adultery with her in [my] heart." The same principle applies when the roles are reversed.

##### D. We see this progression in David (2 Samuel 11).

David stood on the roof of his palace one day. From that vantage point he "**saw**" Bathsheba nude (step 1). She was "**very beautiful**" to David, and obviously he became aroused. (So far so good. No sin.) But then David "sent someone to find out about her," which amounted to **coveting** (step 2). "Then David sent messengers to get her," which means he **took** her (step 3). Now David has already committed adultery in his heart before even touching Bathsheba. She became pregnant. David tried to **hide** it by getting her husband, Uriah, to sleep with her. Finally he had Uriah killed (step 4). Looking, coveting, taking, and hiding is a common progression in sin. Achan went down that slippery slope!

#### CONCLUSION

Your sin will be revealed. Beware, if you take step No. 4 and hide your sin, for you will be found out. The Bible says, "He who conceals his sins does not prosper" (Prov. 28:13).

Achan thought he had gotten away with his sin by hiding it underground. Later, when it became known that a sin had been committed, and they drew lots, Achan must have thought, Out of more than 2 million people, they will never narrow it down to me! The problem is this: God sees everything!

Every sin will be confessed. Confession, you see, is not optional. It is not a matter of whether or not to confess. It's simply a matter of when. God's Word tells us that every knee will bow and every tongue will confess (Phil. 2:10-11). When it comes to my sin, confession is not optional, but **when** is an option. Either I can confess to God now and be saved, or I can confess at the judgment and be destroyed, as was Achan.

Remarkably, when "we confess our sins, [God] is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).

#### SUGGESTED WORSHIP ORDER

WE GATHER IN ANTICIPATION	Reflect on Joshua 7
CALL TO WORSHIP	"We Have Come into This House"
HYMN	"Come, Thou Almighty King"
WELCOME	Pastor
CHOIR	"I Belong to the King"
PRAYER CHORUS	"I Will Serve Thee"
PASTORAL PRAYER	
OFFERING	
SPECIAL MUSIC	"A Child of the King"
SERMON	"DEALING WITH SIN"
CLOSING HYMN	"Grace Greater than Our Sin"

# A MAN WHO WOULD NOT QUIT

by Gavin Raath

Josh. 14:6-14

August 25, 1991

## INTRO

Have you ever had a dream for a long time and finally went after that dream? Happily, then the dream became a reality. An eminent psychiatrist notes: "Observing the lives of people who have dreamed and achieved . . . mastered adversity, I have repeatedly noticed that they have established goals, and irrespective of obstacles, sought with all their efforts to achieve them. From the moment they fixed on an object in their mind, and sought to concentrate their energies on a specific goal, they began to surmount the most incredible odds."<sup>1</sup>

Let's look at a senior citizen, named Caleb, who did just that. The children of Israel are in the land. The allotments are being carried out. Caleb had a dream—to develop and live on a certain piece of land in the high country. He asks for this land in Josh. 14:6-12.

What do we learn from Caleb's experience about being successful in realizing dreams and achieving goals? Five things stand out.

## I. I Must Have a Vision

*A. I must see something on the screen of my mind.*

**ILLUS.** Three young bricklayers were asked what they were doing. The first replied, "I'm laying brick."

The second man said, "I'm making \$9.00 an hour."

The third man answered, "I'm building the world's greatest cathedral!"

If you were asked to predict the bricklayer most likely to be successful in life, which one would you choose? Undoubtedly the one with vision!

Caleb had a vision. Forty-five years earlier he was one of the spies sent into the Promised Land. While there, Mount Hebron caught his eye. He thought to himself, That's where I'm going to live! For the next 45 years Caleb dreamed of his fields and the home he would build with a large porch overlooking the valley. Every evening he went over the plans. Ten thousand times in his mind he laid those bricks. He had it all worked out and imprinted on the screen of his mind. He had 45 years in which to plan it. No wonder he was so eager to get to it.

**ILLUS.** In the America Hall at Disney World are statues of early pioneers of the United States. A plaque says: "Throughout the centuries there were men who took steps down new roads, armed with nothing but their vision."

*B. I must have a forward focus.*

Caleb's dream kept him looking ahead. Paul said, "I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: . . . I press on toward the goal" (Phil. 3:13-14).

**ILLUS.** David Livingstone stood in England pleading for missionaries to help him reach the continent of Af-

rica. His one arm hung limply at his side, paralyzed from a lion attack. Someone asked, "Where do you go next?"

The aged missionary replied, "Next? Anywhere, as long as it's forward!"

Not only must I have a vision, but also

## II. I Must Have Determination

*A. In determination Paul said, "I can do all things in him who strengthens me" (Phil. 4:13, RSV).*

*B. In determination Caleb said, "Now then, just as the Lord promised, he has kept me alive . . . So here I am today, eighty-five years old! I am still as strong today as the day Moses sent me out . . . Now give me this hill country that the Lord promised me that day. . . the Anakites were there and their cities were large and fortified, but, the Lord helping me, I will drive them out" (vv. 10-12)!*

**ILLUS.** Alexander the Great lay dying, surrounded by his generals. One of them timidly asked him, "Sir, you are dying. To which one of us generals are you going to leave your kingdom?"

Alexander raised himself on his elbow and said, "Who gets the kingdom? It is for the man who will seize it!"

## III. I Must Not Be Deterred by Setbacks

*A. Caleb was set back 45 years.*

Because of Israel's refusal to enter the Promised Land over 40 years earlier, they had to spend all of that time in the desert, including Caleb! How unfair!

That whole generation died in the desert, an average of 140 deaths a day. Caleb, in self-pity, could have wondered when his turn would come: "I'm never going to see the Promised Land again!"

Instead, Caleb sat in front of his tent each day, going over the blueprints, designing and redesigning the house he planned to build on Hebron.

*B. Caleb was 85 years old!*

But he did not consider his age a liability.

**ILLUS.** The National Council on Aging hired the Harris Poll to interview 1,500 individuals under 65 and another 2,500 over that age. The younger ones thought that older people sleep and sit around a lot, that loneliness and poor health are their most serious problems, and they have trouble keeping busy. The response of the other group indicated, however, that these conditions are limited to the minority. Only 31 percent of those over 65 were inactive. Only 12 percent complain of loneliness. While 56 percent of the younger group thought that the elderly were disturbed by "not feeling needed," this was true of only 7 percent of the senior citizens. Most had plenty to do and were still functioning well.

Have you ever heard older people in the church saying: "Don't ask me to do anything in the church! I used



to do a lot, but I've served my time!" What if God said that to us!

Caleb would find that kind of talk disgusting.

#### IV. I Must Recognize Opportunity

A. *"Opportunity knocked at my door, and I said, 'Go away! I'm expecting opportunity.' And opportunity went away."*

ILLUS. At the turn of the century, a man who owned and operated Asa Chandler's Drugstore in Atlanta missed a tremendous opportunity. His drugstore had a special nerve tonic mix that doubled as a cough syrup. They used to dilute the strength of the mixture by adding water. One day Asa unwittingly mixed the syrup with carbonated water. To his surprise, it tasted good! Sugar was added. Coca-Cola was born.

He began to sell this drink at the soda fountain in his drugstore. A businessman by the name of B. N. Thomas tried to persuade him to have the drink bottled and distributed to a larger market. "Oh, no," said Asa, "people won't buy it. I'll just sell it at my soda fountain. But if you want to waste your money bottling it and trying to sell it, have at it!"

This man missed his Coca-Cola mountain and settled for a soda fountain molehill.

B. *Caleb was quick to recognize opportunity.* In spite of his age, Caleb seized it!

#### V. I Must Be Willing to Pay a Price

A. *Caleb was willing to pay a price.*

1. Most people at Caleb's stage of life would say, "Joshua, I'm 85 now and on Medicare. So forget the mountain! All I need is a molehill, a pension, and a cottage by the sea. Just something small and simple on the flat-land in territory that has already been conquered."

Not Caleb, though! He said, "I want a mountain in the unconquered territory. Don't you worry. I'll drive the Anakites out myself!"

2. For two reasons Caleb knew that he was wanting the most difficult piece of territory to capture.

a. *The Anakites lived there.* They were a race of giants 7 feet tall (Josh. 14:12)!

b. *The Anakites had the advantage of high ground.* Military strategists tell us that in battle the thing to do is gain the high ground. It gives your army a tremendous advantage.

Caleb had no illusions about any kind of an easy victory in taking the high country with giants. He was willing to pay the price for his territory.

B. *Many people do not want to pay a price for success.*

1. Some people want to coast through life. Invariably these people do not taste success. These people avoid challenges at work and, consequently, never advance in their careers. In the church these people tend to be mediocre Christians. They avoid the challenge of accomplishing something for God and His kingdom. "Forget the mountain and the giants! Give me a molehill in the flat country."

2. If I'm doing something for God only because it's easy and convenient, I doubt that the Lord is particularly impressed with my service. David said he would not give to the Lord that which cost him nothing (2 Sam. 24:24). Worthwhile things cost! Caleb said, "I'm going to pay the price! Forty years old or 85, I'm willing to travel uphill and take on the giants and get my mountain!"

#### CONCLUSION:

Do you have a dream? Do you have a goal you want to reach? If so, (1) It begins with a vision. See it on the screen of your mind. (2) Be determined. (3) Recognize opportunities. (4) Don't allow setbacks or failures to deter you. (5) Be willing to pay the price.

1. Quoted from Ari Kiev at Cornell Medical Center. Used with permission.

#### SUGGESTED WORSHIP ORDER

WE GATHER IN ANTICIPATION Reflect on Josh. 14:6-14	
CALL TO WORSHIP	"We Have Come into This House"
HYMN	"Come, Thou Fount"
WELCOME	Pastor
CHOIR	"Beneath the Cross of Jesus"
PRAYER CHORUS	"My Jesus, I Love Thee"
DIRECTED PRAYER	
OFFERING	
SPECIAL MUSIC	"God Did a Wonderful Thing for Me"
SERMON	"A MAN WHO WOULD NOT QUIT"
CLOSING HYMN	"Victory All the Time"

#### Creative Worship Ideas

##### Directed Prayer

God is here this morning. He promises that where people gather in Christ's name, He is there.

1. Thank Him for being here, ready to hear you and touch you.

2. God finds it harder to hear our petitions if there is unconfessed spiritual failure in our lives. That tends to sever the line of communication between us and Him. If you are really needing to get through to Him today, confess that spiritual failure to Him. He's been waiting to hear from you.

3. What is on the front burner of your life that you need to talk to Him about most?

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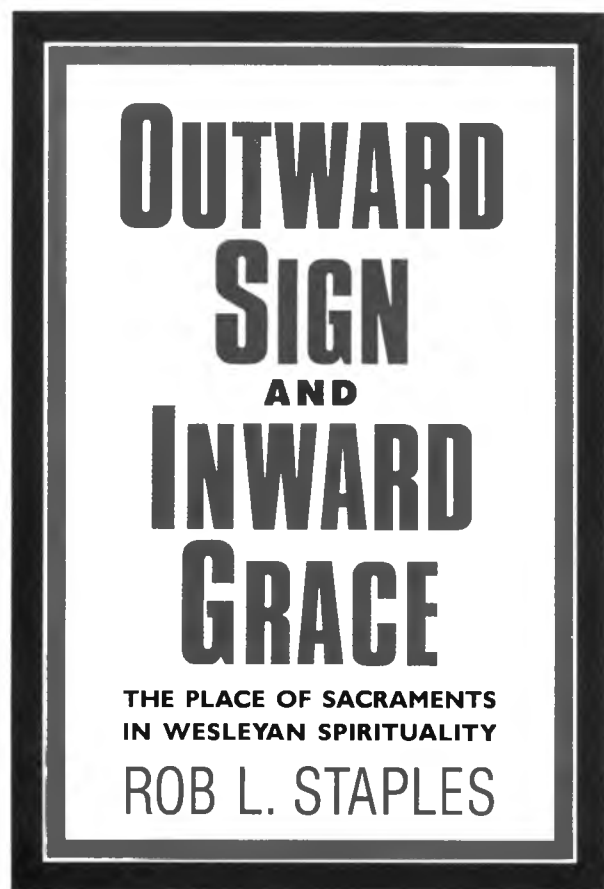
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# GROW

*A Journal of Church Growth, Evangelism and Discipleship*





## SOMETHING GREAT FOR GOD

**A** friend of mine ends all his letters with, "Let's do something great for God."

That's the trumpet sound of the Church Growth Division. Let's move out in obedience to our Lord's command and do those "greater works" that He said His followers would do.

The more than half a million Nazarenes in America represent an enormous evangelistic resource. Multiplied millions of unsaved Americans are a great evangelistic responsibility.

Even if every Christian church and agency in America became active in evangelism, it still would not be sufficient to respond to the evangelistic task facing us in this once-Christian nation.

If every Nazarene would reach out to a relative, friend or associate, it would begin a new era of evangelism in our connection. Tens of thousands of people would be saved. There would, of course, be rejoicing in heaven. It would indeed be "something great for God."

Not in our strength, or on our own initiative, but in obedience to our Lord, "Let's do it!"

*Bill M. Sullivan*

### Mission of Church Growth Division

To contribute to the advancement of God's kingdom by fostering growth in the Church of the Nazarene.

To promote aggressive evangelism in all its many forms throughout the denomination.

To create an awareness throughout the church regarding the necessity for planting new churches, including the mission potential among cultural minorities.

To increase participation and effectiveness in a reproductive ministry that is engaged in Christian mission.



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For the past six years *U.S. News & World Report* has published the results of a survey titled "America's Best Colleges." This year in the Regional Liberal Arts category, West Region, Northwest Nazarene College ranked sixth!

*U.S. News & World Report* stated, "These small schools, low in cost and close to home, offer some of the best bargains for students who want to study the arts and sciences."

NNC President Gordon Wetmore, while elated at his college's recognition, stated that this is truly a tribute to all of our schools.

As our young people point their lives toward study in their Nazarene college, keep in mind the words of Dean Bertha Munro, "There is no conflict between the best in education and the best in the Christian faith!"

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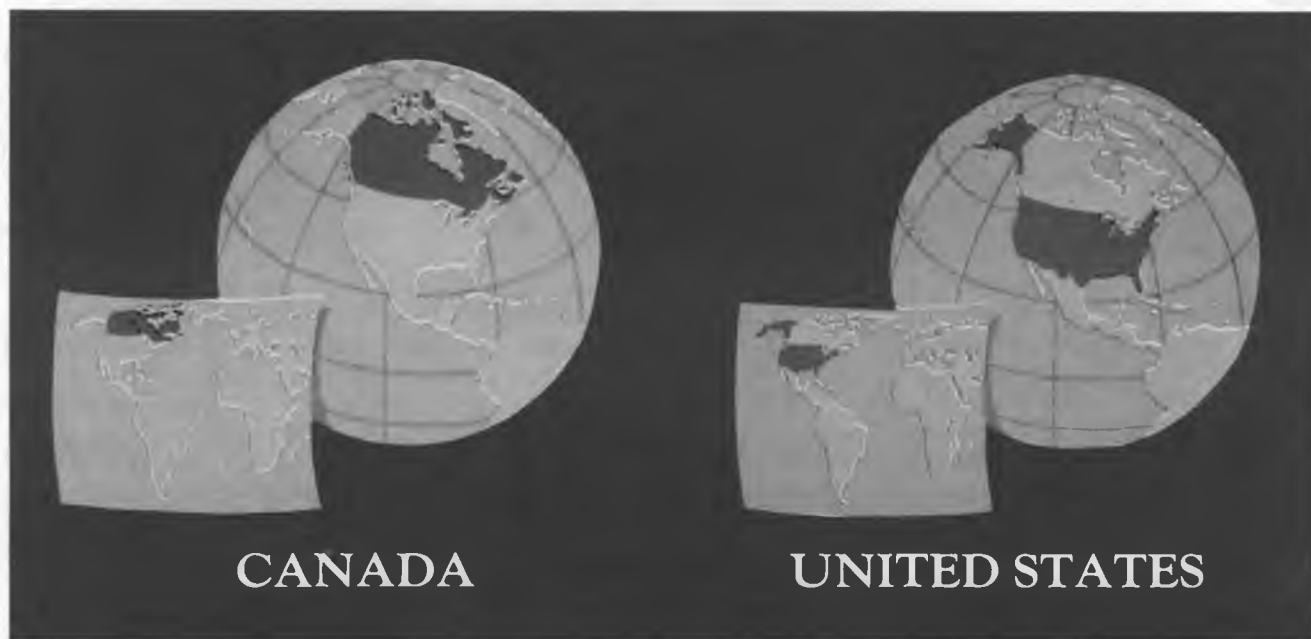
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# Bright Spots of Denominational Growth 1991



Let me give you some good news. It's about our ministry  
and work in the Church of the Nazarene.  
Furthermore, it's about the progress of our denomination  
in Canada and the USA.

**1. IT IS GROWING.** A review of the *Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches* shows that only a handful of denominations with a membership in excess of 500,000 are growing, and we are one of those growing denominations. We wish we were growing faster, but we are grateful for the growth we are experiencing.

**2. OUR GROWTH HAS BEEN CONSISTENT.** We have never had a year of net loss. We have not had large fluctuations. Our statistics are some of the most reliable in the church world — not 100% accurate by any means, but better than average.

**3. OUR GROWTH IS DISPERSED.** True, we generally grew best in the Sunbelt, although in 1990 there were notable exceptions, specifically: Minnesota, New England, New York, Upper Michigan, Washington, and Washington Pacific. These all grew 3% or more.

Sixty-three (63) of our districts showed a gain, including the Rust Belt, the Frost Belt, the Dust Belt, and all the other seemingly hopeless places in North America.

**4. SOME OF OUR GROWTH IS REMARKABLE.** While Ray Bakke and Roger Greenway spoke

and wrote about urban evangelism during the decade of the eighties, a Nazarene district superintendent by the name of Dal Mucci moved into one of the toughest cities in the world and started growing the church — and our membership in New York City more than doubled in a decade.

Ten years later, the urbanologists were admitting that they hadn't made a dent, and the Southern Baptists were amazed at the progress the Nazarenes had made in the cities.

Not only Dal Mucci, but also Paul Benefiel, Bob Spear, and others have gone to their cities in the power of the Spirit and have turned in an amazing record.

# Bright Spots . . .

Today, I can tell you that in all twelve of the nation's metros of two-and-a-half million or more, we now have more members than we had ten years ago. In half of those cities our gains exceeded a thousand in each city.

In 15 of the 18 metros of one million or more, we now have more fully organized churches than we did a decade ago.

Our growth in the cities of North America has been beyond anything anyone could have expected.

**5. DISTRICT GROWTH.** Percentage growth is always easier for smaller districts, and the two big gainers this decade demonstrate this: Canada Quebec and Florida Space Coast both more than doubled in membership and attendance this decade. Southwest Latin American also doubled in membership and had good gains in attendance, too.



Larger districts showed substantial growth, also. Arizona, New York, and Southern Florida all showed strong gains in every category during the decade and in the past assembly year.

**6. INDIVIDUAL CHURCHES** have turned in great growth records. You know, it's pretty difficult to grow 50% in 10 years. I looked at some churches that were organized in 1980 that grew 50% during the decade and, furthermore, grew 10% last year. Wouldn't you say that's good, consistent growth?

**Richmond Hill** is an Anglo congregation in New York City. Pastor Anthony Abbazio has seen attendance almost quadruple during the decade, with a consistent growth from 25 to 90. Income has increased in similar fashion.

**Welch**, in Southern West Virginia, has grown even though the county has steadily lost population. Worship at-

tendance was only 21 in 1981. In 1990 it was 80, with the growth consistent in all areas.

**Altadena** is a black church in suburban Los Angeles. Though most of its growth has been in the last few years, its attendance has doubled in the decade.

**Famington**, in Southeast Missouri, serves a small midwestern town and now runs nearly 200 in membership and attendance. It has more than doubled in the last seven years.

**Muskegon Eastwood** serves a small non-growing metro in Michigan. Pastor William McElroy has seen worship attendance double in the decade, from 75 to 152.

**New Jerusalem** is a Haitian congregation in New York. Pastor Luc Pierre serves a church that has increased from 14 members in 1981 to over 200 today.

**Oro Valley**, in Tucson, had a morning worship attendance of 183 at the beginning of the decade. Today, attendance is well over 300 and giving has more than doubled.

And what shall I more say, for time would fail me to tell of **Kokomo**, **Kalispell**, **Kissimmee**, and yes, even **Kansas City**! The impressive truth is that right here in the good old US of A, a considerable majority of our churches grew during the decade. In fact, a sizeable number of our churches grew at a rate equal to the goal established by our general superintendents — and that wasn't just one year of growth, it was for the entire decade. As Paul Orjala said to me one day, "There's a lot of life left in the old girl yet!"

In fact, let me tell you what's happening in the large churches.

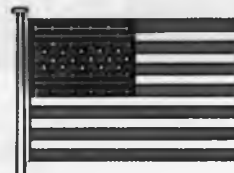
**7. NEW K-CHURCHES.** In 1980, only nine Nazarene churches had over 1,000 members or attenders. During the decade, four more churches achieved that status: **Portland First**, **Kansas City First**, **Wichita First**, and **New Life First** in Western Los Angeles District.

In addition to these, over 50 pastors of churches already above 250 are seriously involved in the K-

Church Project, which has a goal of 50 churches of 1,000 or more by the year 2000. Several of these churches are already experiencing good growth. Some of them are up over 100 in the past couple of years. I am firmly convinced that we will achieve this goal.

**8. NEW CHURCHES.** Our rate of starting new churches is increasing. For years, we reported a new church per district every other year, on average. Special emphases, such as Pioneer Areas, Thrust to the Cities, and starting ethnic churches, have increased the rate of church planting. In the decade, Pioneer Areas have produced 57 new churches, Thrust to the Cities has started 64, and ethnic targeting has resulted in 230 new churches.

Two special church-planting projects are growing rapidly and in sizeable proportions. **Metroplex Chapel** in DFW has grown from 11 to 582 members in eight years. **New Hope Community** in Phoenix has grown to 500 in just two years. I have visited both of these churches and thank God for the work He is doing through them.



**9. OUR ETHNIC WORK HAS GROWN.** We now have 634 Active Works among various cultural groups in Canada/US. This compares to 270 a decade ago.

The Ethnic Strategy Committees are preparing us for a great new campaign to reach ethnics.

The Church of the Nazarene is on the cutting edge in extension training. Nazarene Bible College now has 22 Extension Centers all across America.

**10. NEW NAZARENES.** Twenty-seven thousand, nine hundred sixty-five New Nazarenes, Canada/US, in 1990. That is over 5 new Nazarenes per church. While we wish it were higher, we are glad for a good, positive number.

—Bill M. Sullivan, Director  
Church Growth Division

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SEPTEMBER 8, 1991

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ripe for harvest."

*John 4:35b, NIV*



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THE YEAR OF THE HARVEST

This is a campaign to concentrate our energies in evangelism for one full year. These are the accepted goals: US/Canada—39,610; World Regions—54,452.

# The Heartbreak That Is New York

**B**efore we get to the murder and mayhem of New York City and the current debate over whether the city will survive (or simply become the world's largest Detroit), consider a few statistics.

The city has 830,000 people on welfare, a total bigger than the population of all but 10 American cities. It has an army of derelicts and increasingly dangerous street people. Every day 366 cars are stolen and 200,000 people jump the turnstiles to get into the subway free. There are more than 2 million warrants out for defendants and others who were supposed to show up in the nonfunctioning criminal-justice system but didn't. The nonfunctioning public-school system employs more educational bureaucrats than all of Western Europe. The city has 500,000 drug abusers, almost the population of Boston. In some neighborhoods, one-fourth of all residents are intravenous-drug addicts. Use of dirty needles for IV drugs, plus the large gay population, makes New York the AIDS capital of America. The city has a persistent and largely disordered underclass, and the illegitimacy rate in central Harlem is 80 percent and still rising. Each year 10,000 infants are "born toxic," most of them crack babies who will cost \$220,000 each in remedial attention before kindergarten. No one has any idea how the city will pay the enormous tab for crack babies and AIDS patients. Even if the economy were healthy, one of the city's movers and shakers says privately the AIDS bill alone would be enough to break the city.

**Now, the bad news.** Then there is the violence, which is now conducted at a level that would have been unimaginable a generation ago. In 1952, the city had 8,757 robberies. Last year it had 93,387 — a stickup every six minutes. (The rate could be much higher, since many New Yorkers don't bother to report robberies and muggings anymore.) Twenty-one cabbies were murdered this year, girls were raped and then thrown off rooftops, a boy was tied up and set afire, and four small children were shot to death in drug wars within three weeks. With the murder rate headed toward six per day, Mayor David Dinkins was moved to say that we are statistically safer in New York than the residents of Dodge City were in the 1800s — not much comfort.

With all the numbing violence, the city still soldiers on. The greatest strength of New Yorkers, I think, is also their greatest weakness: The willingness to put up with

almost any outrage. For the past two years, for instance, I have walked my daughter to school across four of the safest and most staid blocks in Manhattan, and almost every morning the gutters of those frequently cleaned streets are a continuous trail of glass fragments from broken car windows. This means that the cars on these blocks are broken into all the time, and the owners have learned to live with it. In any other city, this would quickly produce a posse of concerned car owners with baseball bats. But in New York, it's accepted as part of everyday life. Perhaps these drivers have charge accounts with their local auto-glass dealers and earn discounts for volume buying — but it's a crazy kind of tolerance.

The news from the front is that this tolerance is breaking down, in large part because the violence has finally reached the well-off and the comfortable. The mother of journalist Pete Hamill has been mugged three times. So has the wife of Felix Rohatyn, the prominent financier. Viveca Lindfors, the actress, was slashed in the face in our neighborhood. A year ago, we had a fairly mild wilding incident on the block — a mob of 60 or 70 feral children burst out of the subway and flooded the street, bludgeoning pedestrians and yanking at necklaces and purses. A few weeks ago, a man was shot to

death at a pay phone near his home in Greenwich Village for no apparent reason, allegedly by a drunken derelict. Not all murders are equal in the psychic life of New York. This was a heavily publicized case with a moral: Random, pointless violence is now everywhere and no one is safe.

Since the spring, polls have shown that 60 percent of New Yorkers don't expect to be living here in five years. Newspapers are now full of reportage and conjecture that the middle class has had enough and is ready to bolt the city. The bolters include my friends Eric and Ann, who are leaving to live somewhere in Massachusetts. Eric says that he has managed to reach the age of 50 in Manhattan without the violence reaching his family or anyone he cares about, but staying here now means defying the odds of getting hit. With a computer and a fax machine, he says, he can live anywhere. One couple does not make a trend, but Eric's comment catches the current mood pretty well.

**There's a feeling** among hard-core New Yorkers who love the city that something resembling a total breakdown of the social order may be under way and that New York may not make it. ■

—by John Leo ©September 24, 1990, *U.S. News & World Report*



# GROW

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# Church Growth Flourishes in the Big Apple

## **Gospel Confronts Glamor, Gloom, Despair, and Filth**

**B**ashing New York City — often called the Big Apple — appears often on TV and in newspapers, and the facts support the negative reports. One columnist called New York “a city beyond the verge of a nervous breakdown.” Made up of 12 million souls, New York is dirty, cramped, worried, bankrupt, and blighted by the homeless; it is infected with AIDS, drugs, and violence. Tourists come to visit the Statue of Liberty, the United Nations, and Times Square and take home tales of terror and muggings.

One long-time resident recently observed, “It has always been bad, but now everything seems worse than ever.” Though New York City may not be dead, the trouble is deep and evil abounds.


Even moderately informed Christians could give many reasons not to expand ministry to New York City. Arguments against such an effort might include cost, safety, or even wasted efforts.

But a remnant minority who believe Christ loves the city are at work there to make a difference.

These Spirit-empowered Nazarenes from many cultures and races — immigrants from almost everywhere, veteran city dwellers, and yuppies — confront New York with the power of the gospel. They have learned that a minority energized by God is much stronger than any majority ever thought of being. Against hardships and overwhelming odds, church growth goes on with souls being saved, believers being sanctified, saints finding new satisfaction in Christian service, churches being planted, and desperate human needs being met.

To know these servants of Christ is to rejoice in what the gospel does through committed believers in every setting. Salt, leaven, and light — three things Jesus called disciples to be — are at work through churches, innovative ministries, and personal witness of Nazarenes in and around New York. In one month last year they organized four churches: Emmanuel Jersey City Haitian; Summit, New Jersey Latin; First Korean in High Mount Church (the eighth Korean church in New York); and an Indo-Pak church at Edison, New Jersey.

This work is a miraculous contemporary fulfillment of Christ's Great Commission.



*District Superintendent Dallas Mucci considers the outreach challenge of New York.*



# Pastor David Mall Organizes Three Churches

**P**astor David Mall, a 1985 Nazarene Theological Seminary graduate, pastors the Indo-Pakistani Church at Flushing, New York. Organized in 1987 as part of the Thrust to the Cities effort, the church has 35 members with an average attendance of 65. Urdu is the language used for worship. Like several other churches for this culture/language group, the Flushing congregation is an outgrowth of Bible studies led by Mall. This spiritually vigorous body of believers meets in Parker Hall — a facility owned by the Flushing Church of the Nazarene.

Mall has been the major influence in founding two other Indo-Pak churches: Manhattan and Bronx. He has additional Bible studies going among his people in Brooklyn and Staten Island. Soon, new congregations will begin in those two locations.

Pastor Mall and his family have an interesting pilgrimage of faith that has taken them from Libya to Kansas City, and now to the great mission fields in and around New York City. Mall's wife is a nurse, their oldest daughter is a university student, and two sons are still at home. The family lives in an apartment in Parker Hall.

As a result of Mall's aggressive work in evangelism, he has taken more than 65 persons into church membership by profession of faith in these several works.



**Flushing Indo-Pak congregation worships in Parker Hall at Flushing Church of the Nazarene.**



# Brooklyn Beulah Sunday School Increases 171

## Beulah Burns Mortgage in Tenth Year



**B**rooklyn Beulah — the largest church on the New York District — increased Sunday school attendance by 171 in two years to an average attendance of 586; the increase was 118 last year and 53 this year. At the 1991 district assembly, Pastor Stanley Moore reported a church membership of 450 and a morning worship attendance average of 560.

Recently, Beulah Church burned its mortgage; the church building was purchased ten years ago for \$87,000 and required about \$1 million for remodeling. Pastor Moore rejoices with his people. "We do not owe anybody anything, and we will pay for the remaining remodeling on a cash basis as we go."

The Beulah Church, organized in 1924, has a beautiful modern facility that is a remodeled supermarket.

GROW salutes Brooklyn Beulah for its outstanding Sunday school increases. In a city that many have given up on and deserted, Beulah serves as a powerful gospel beacon pointing needy persons to the Savior.





## Mission Achievement in New York and Beyond



Worship team asks for God's anointing on the revival.

### MUMBO JUMBO

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**WESTCHESTER CHAPEL** Meets on Sundays, 10:30 a.m., White Plains YMCA, 250 Mamaroneck Ave. 2nd Floor, 693-8575



## Westchester Chapel Grows at the White Plains YMCA

**T**he YMCA in White Plains, New York — a city near the top of all upscale economic communities in the United States — houses a growing new Church of the Nazarene. Organized with 18 members in 1989, the church recently reported a monthly average of 58.

Westchester Chapel is led by Jim and Linda Warren, who, before they came to Christ, were decent baby boomer secularists who appeared to have it all — Jim as a commercial art designer for a New York MTV producer, and Linda as a market executive for Time-Life Publishing Company.

But because they sensed something was missing at the center of their lives, they began listening to the radio ministry of Pastor Charles Rizzo of Maranatha Church of the Nazarene at Paramus, New Jersey. After several months, they visited Maranatha, gave their future to Christ, and Jim later served for a year on the church's staff as the first step in starting his ministry. The story of how Linda supports this ministry as a New York publishing executive can be found elsewhere in this issue of *GROW*.

An impressive brochure, designed by Pastor Jim, spells out the basic assumptions of the Westchester Chapel ministry: "We are not a church that focuses on money; we're concerned with people's lives, not their wallets. We are not a church that looks at the outward things in people; our concern is your relationship with God, not whether you're wearing jeans or a tie. We are not fake; what you see is what you get. We are not interested in acting out our Christianity; we're interested in living it out. God created each of us as individuals, and we're not concerned with fitting people into our mold. We have a singular focus: to let Westchester County know about the life-changing love of Jesus."

Westchester Chapel continues to grow through its ministry of worship, home Bible studies, and care groups. This church trusts God for a miracle to help them find a permanent church home in an area where real estate is unbelievably expensive.

## Our Church

**J**ust what kind of church is Westchester Chapel? Our desire is to be known as a church that takes the Bible seriously.

We want to be in step with God's spirit today, never being content to rest upon yesterday's word. We want today's worship service to be more than "nice," we want it to be transforming. We want each person to leave our church with new insight into their lives and a new excitement for Who God really is!

Because we have these desires, we do things a little differently here at Westchester Chapel. Our worship services deliberately encourage a great deal of congregational involvement. In other words, worship was never meant to be a "spectator sport." We want our worship to be ordered, lively and fun. We're here to celebrate!

The bottom line is this: Our focus is not religion, it's relationship. Our desire is to avoid the trap of meaningless Sunday services and concentrate on a meaningful relationship with our Lord!





Mission Achievement in New York and Beyond

# Another Church Grows in Brooklyn

**Church Moving From Day-Care Center to Storefront**



**O**n a hot summer Sunday night, the basement of a rented Brooklyn day-care center is not the most comfortable place for a church to meet. But in spite of heat, low ceilings, and crowded conditions, the small room was packed; the singing was anointed; the love of the people for each other was evident; and the leadership of the pastor was a joy to behold.

Brooklyn Macedonia Church of the Nazarene, organized in 1989, is a Thrust to the Cities project. Funds have been raised by all Brooklyn churches over a three- or four-year period to help start this church plant as an expression of their desire to increase holiness outreach to their city.

Pastor Elsie Cadogan is the founding pastor and her husband, Manton, is her best church member. This new congregation now runs 70 in attendance and plans to move soon to a storefront with two apartments that can be rented to help with building costs.

Everyone who contributed to the general budget had a small part in this endeavor through the Thrust to the Cities effort.



# A Second Church Grows at the Lamb's

## Pastor Finds Fullness of the Spirit at Campmeeting

**P**astor Kumar Uz-Zaman Bhatti came to visit the United States from his native Pakistan, where he pastored a church of another denomination. His friend, David Mall, who now pastors Flushing Indo-Pak Church, invited Bhatti to attend the New York Nazarene Campmeeting. While attending the services, Bhatti came into the fullness of heart holiness. With this new-found spiritual deepening, he decided to stay in the United States and plant a Church of the Nazarene in Manhattan.

Under Mall's encouragement, Bhatti started this new church in December of 1988. The Manhattan Indo-Pak Church meets in the lower level of the Lamb's Church of the Nazarene just a few doors off Times Square. Though Bhatti is a bivocational pastor, his church attendance now averages 75.

During the first year, the church received 22 persons by profession of faith.

Their worship pattern is lively and joyous; the music accompaniment includes a small electronic keyboard, a drum, and a tambourine. The congregation consists of a wonderful profile of people of all ages, including children, teens, young couples, and more mature people.

Though this congregation uses the Urdu language for worship, the children sing and study God's Word in English. Their stated goal is to win more people for God's glory.







# Tent Houses Summer Revival in Brooklyn

**E**ach summer, Miller Memorial Church sponsors a tent meeting as part of its outreach strategy to reach Brooklyn for Christ. Last summer, Eustace McDonald, founder of the newly organized Brooklyn East Church and former pastor in Guyana, was the evangelist for the tent meeting held across the street from the Miller Memorial Church.

The enthusiastic singing, spirited preaching, humid temperature, and happy crowd seem like the pioneer days of Nazarene history. This gospel work goes forward in the midst of every conceivable problem urban dwellers face in New York, including pessimism, fear, poverty, racial prejudice, and brokenness.

Pastor Clarence Jacobs has served the Miller Memorial Church for thirty-four years; the church, one of the oldest in the denomination, was organized in 1914 — only six years after the merging general assembly at Pilot Point, Texas. Their sturdy, spacious, historic place of worship once housed a Dutch Reform Church and is now an impressive witness in Brooklyn for the Church of the Nazarene. The Miller Memorial Church has 390 members, with an average attendance of 325.



# Korean Church Shares Facilities With Flushing Church

## Pastor Moves From Korea to Lead Church

**O**rganized on March 8, 1987, the Great Light Korean Church of the Nazarene shares worship facilities with the Flushing Church of the Nazarene. The Korean congregation meets for worship at 1:30 p.m. on Sundays after the English-speaking congregation concludes its service about noon.

The church has a membership of 73, not counting the children. This congregation started in the homes of church members and moved from place to place until February 1989. About the same time, Pastor Kun-Chi Kim moved from Korea to pastor this newly formed congregation. Before coming to the United States, Kim pastored Nazarene churches for twenty years in Korea and taught at the Nazarene Theological Training College.

The church is composed of strong Korean families; in some cases, extended families of two generations. Many own their own businesses.

When a group of lay persons were asked to define their church's priorities, they said: 1) to acquire their own building, 2) to reach out to their extended families and lead others to Christ, and 3) to assist theological students in the college in Korea.

Pastor Kim's passion for outreach shows in the fact that he is presently conducting Bible studies with some Japanese contacts he has made. He is fluent in Japanese as his second language.

The Great Light Korean Church at Flushing is a viable church with a bright future.





# WILCON III

- |                             |                               |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| ◆ June 1-June 4, 1992       | Olivet Nazarene University    |
| ◆ June 8-June 11, 1992      | MidAmerica Nazarene College   |
| ◆ June 15-June 18, 1992     | Mount Vernon Nazarene College |
| ◆ June 29-July 2, 1992      | Eastern Nazarene College      |
| ◆ July 13-July 16, 1992     | Trevecca Nazarene College     |
| ◆ July 20-July 23, 1992     | Southern Nazarene University  |
| ◆ August 3-August 6, 1992   | Northwest Nazarene College    |
| ◆ August 10-August 13, 1992 | Point Loma Nazarene College   |

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Joseph C. Aldrich

**J**esus reserved some of His harshest words for religious leaders of His day who lorded themselves over others and delighted in their power.

Anthony Campolo

**T**eaching that impacts is not head to head, but heart to heart.

Howard G. Hendricks



**I** have never seen an in-depth revival in any church I served as pastor until first something happened to me. It has been only after revival has become very deep and personal in my own experience that I have seen it happen in the church.

Ponder W. Gilliland

**I**n the early days of the Church of the Nazarene, the major task of evangelism was to move into a center of population and hold a revival that would culminate in the formation of a new church. At this stage, home missions were synonymous with evangelism.

Mendell Taylor

**P**arents know that a baby must be fed, nurtured, protected, given a good environment, loved, cooed over, and surrounded by mature sufficiency in his or her helplessness. Frequently, we ignore that same need among new Christians in the church.

Bartlett L. Hess



**T**he question is not whether a small church should grow large or whether a large church should grow larger; it is rather that any church of any size must continue to work at the task of total world evangelization.

David A. Womack

**T**o adopt a program that succeeds in the world but one that God never gave to His church is a straight pathway to failure. Only God's program will finally succeed.

Roy J. Fish and J. E. Conant

**R**iches are not a problem for God. God loves all people. The "whosoever" of John 3:16 includes the rich as well as the poor. Riches cause a problem for the person who has them. Rather than satisfy, riches produce greed and carnal ambition.

C. Peter Wagner

**A** seeker does not come to the altar to talk to people but to talk to God. And many well-meaning people have diluted or destroyed this crucial sense of crisis by talking to a seeker too soon.

C. William Fisher



***Here at Last!***

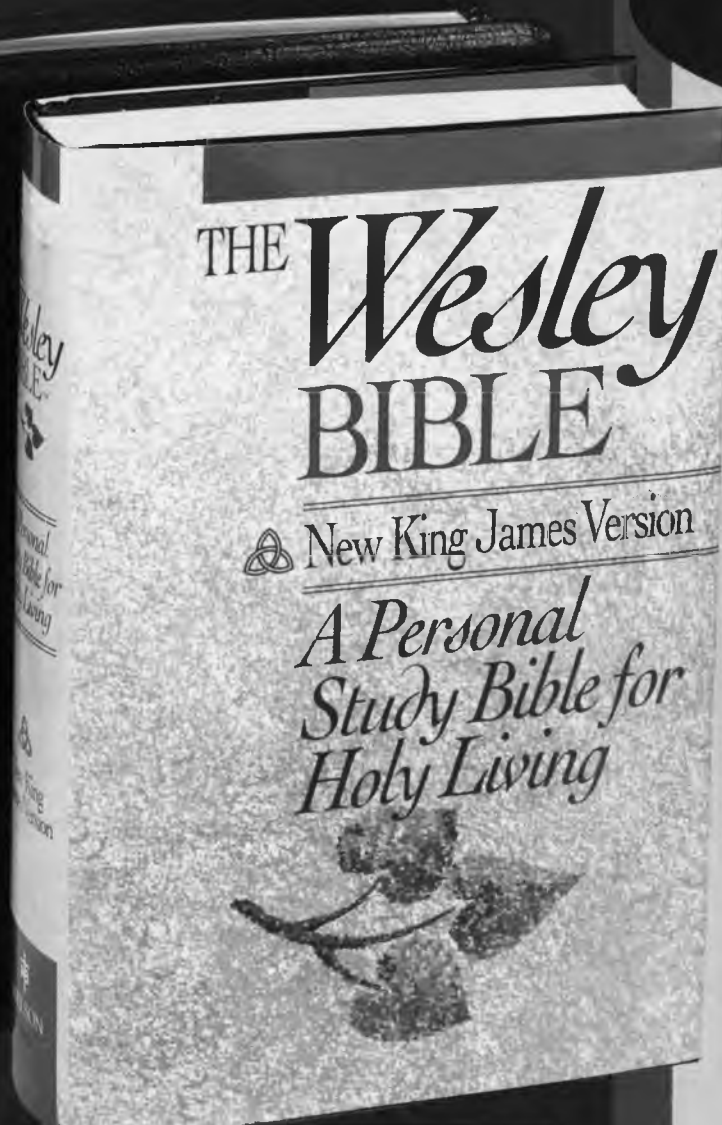
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*Messengers from John the Baptist*  
(Matt. 11:2-19)

18 <sup>m</sup>Then the disciples of John reported to him concerning all these things. 19 And John, calling two of his disciples to *him*, sent *them* to <sup>3</sup>Jesus,

<sup>p</sup>Is. 35:5  
<sup>q</sup>John 9:7  
<sup>r</sup>Matt. 15:31  
<sup>s</sup>Luke 17:12-14  
<sup>t</sup>Mark 7:37  
<sup>u</sup>[Is. 61:1-3;  
Luke 4:18]

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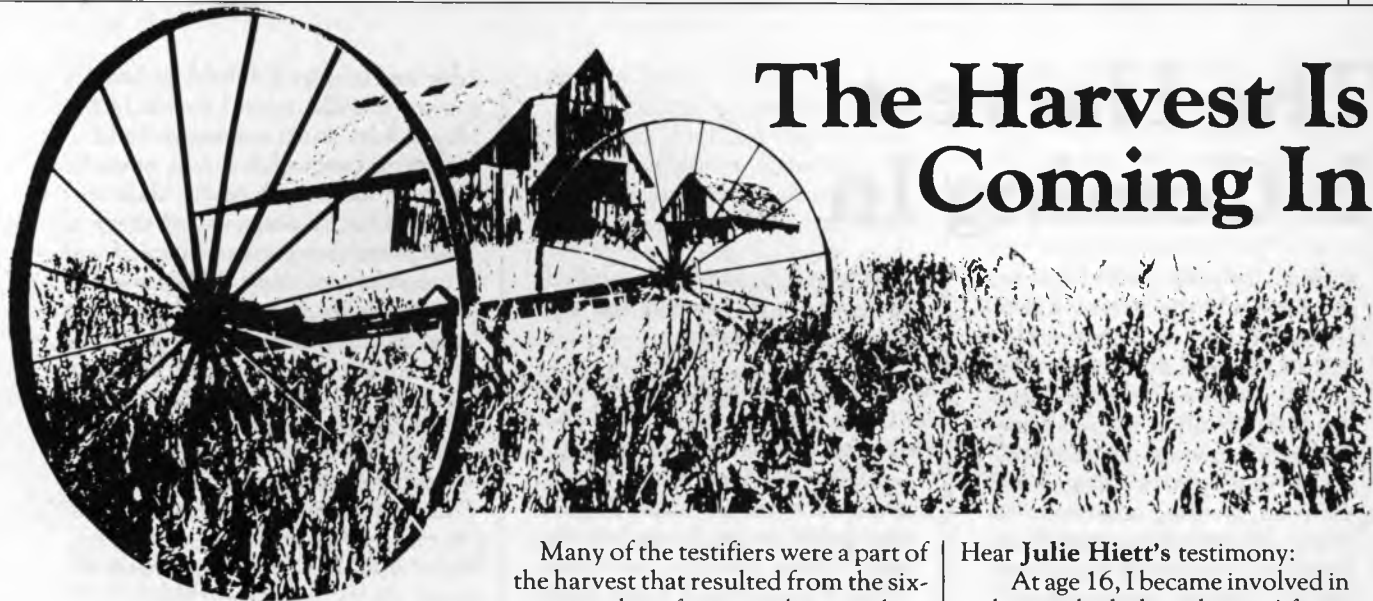
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# The Harvest Is Coming In

**T**he miracles of grace are marvelous. A couple with a crumbling marriage, a former drug addict, one who had tried suicide, and a Harvard Ph.D. college professor all expressed a common faith on Thursday night, August 30, last year. Each came to know Jesus Christ and was part of a group of seventeen who gave testimony to their faith that night. The occasion was the 29th biannual banquet sponsored by Nazarene Theological Seminary and Nazarene churches of greater Kansas City. Two hundred thirty-three people attended from eighteen different churches.

Opening challenges were given by Seminary President Jack Sanders, General Superintendent Eugene Stowe, and Kansas City District Superintendent Keith Wright. The prime rib banquet was prepared by Master Chef Dan Durick, who had met Christ afresh, been sanctified by the Holy Spirit, and joined the Church of the Nazarene all within the last year.

The theme of the banquet was "Harvest." Participants were reminded of Jesus' words of John 4:35: "Open your eyes and look on the fields! They are ripe for harvest," and Matthew 9:37-38, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field."

Many of the testifiers were a part of the harvest that resulted from the sixteen weeks of personal evangelism training and calling the previous spring. The statistical results are amazing: 190 calls made, the gospel presented 56 times for salvation, the gospel presented 23 times for assurance, 26 people made professions of faith, and 51 of those called on joined the church.

Beverly Burgess of Evangelism Ministries, Nazarene Headquarters, who assists me in the personal evangelism classes in Kansas City, reported on training held in the West Indies over the last four years, with over 715 people praying to receive Christ through personal evangelism calls. The harvest is coming in.

Just as planting, weeding, and preparing for physical harvest is hard work, so is preparation for spiritual harvest. The sixteen weeks of class require homework, Scripture memorization, and actual calling on people with the goal of presenting Christ. The classes are sponsored by Nazarene Theological Seminary and are taken by pastors, students, and laity of local churches.

The calls are sometimes difficult. Some people are not responsive, but others are. It is good to see the harvest coming in. The twice-a-year banquet enables us to see the human harvest.

The harvest that produces saved souls also produces changed lives and solves deep personal problems.

Hear **Julie Hiett's** testimony:

At age 16, I became involved in drugs, alcohol, and sex. After a few years of that lifestyle, I went through a divorce. I have two children from that marriage and a third from another relationship.

By my third pregnancy, my life was a complete tragedy. I was a bad influence on my children and a very unlovable person. An acquaintance reached out to me with the message of Jesus Christ. Since then, my life has totally changed.

After my third daughter was born, I found myself homeless, living in an abusive situation. I went to the Hillcrest ministries for homeless people, where I met Tom Gates, at that time a seminary student. He invited me to the Liberty Church of the Nazarene and the people there became my family.

God has done so much for me! I respect myself now because of Jesus Christ. I'm able to relate to people and to love them the way He loves me. I've seen my mom come to the Lord. I've seen my children change. God has done a lot for us.

Or consider the change in **Tracy Pressler**:

When I was born, my parents decided to give me up. I was moved from one foster home to

# The Harvest Is Coming In

another. I finally got fed up and ran away. On the streets, full of hurt and bitterness, I became violent and angry. I didn't care what I did. I got into all sorts of legal troubles. Finally, I tried to commit suicide, but was unsuccessful.

One day I was walking down the road, wanting somebody to reach out and tell me that I am somebody, that I am loved, and that I was born for a reason. I don't understand why, but I walked into the First Church of the Nazarene in Topeka, Kansas. On October 11, 1989, I received Christ into my life. I know that I was given this life that I may work for God, and I have a lot of work to do.

**Mark Lockard** is the owner of Crescent Cleaners in Belton and Harrisonville, Missouri. He tells how personal soul-winners Tom Decker and Sylvia Potter impacted his life:

I attended church for 32 years because it was the right thing to do. Good people go to church. Unfortunately, the gospel was never really shared with me. I believed that I wasn't worthy of the Lord's love and that I could never be good enough to get into heaven. On October 22 of last year, however, Tom Decker shared the gospel with me and told me that I am somebody because God loves me. By the grace of Jesus Christ, I was saved.

My whole life has changed. I have a confidence and assurance that has changed my relationships. I have a peace that I've never had before, and I'm so grateful for that.

Another exciting thing has happened since I accepted Christ. A

dear friend, Sylvia Potter, shared the gospel with my wife and she also received Christ.

When Elisha Verge and friends called on **Greg Martin**, they talked about basketball. Elisha also asked Greg,

"Why do you think you're going to heaven?" I said, I'm a nice guy. I do nice things. I do the right things in life." He said, "That's good, but it's not good enough."

**Greg** said: This made me think. He told me how Christ died for my sins and asked if I would like to invite Him into my heart. I said, "Yes." He said, "That's what we're here for." I prayed with the team to receive Christ as my personal Savior.

From then on, I found time in the mornings and evenings for prayer to gain strength and trust in the Lord. Now that I have accepted Christ, I feel like a new person; I'm stronger. I feel God's presence every day when I wake up. My goal is sanctification with the Lord.

Laymen Bill Bass and Randy Willbanks witnessed to employee **Wes Martin**. Wes had been searching and reading the Bible. Wes testified,

At this point, I had been invited to come to that church five or six times. Finally, I thought that maybe if I went to church once, the people would leave me alone. So I went to church and found what I had been reading about in the Bible. I had been attending for two weeks when Bill gave me a copy of the four spiritual laws to read. I stuck it in my pocket without even looking at it. When I got home, I remembered it and

decided to read it. It told me how to receive Christ, so I decided to try it. I sat down and prayed and found a peace that I had never known before. I really didn't know what I'd done, except that I had given Jesus control of my life. I can safely say that I've had more fun in the last eight months than I ever did any other way. I've joined the church, and I went on a work-and-witness trip to Guatemala with the teenagers.

The harvest is coming in!

Sometimes simple friendship evangelism, an invitation to church — or, better yet, several invitations to church get the job done.

Consider the influence of Gertrude Phillips on **Tom Battershell**:

About six years ago, I was working for a company doing promotional seminars. One evening, a little, old, white-haired lady came to my table and, seeing my name badge, said, "Mr. Battershell, I'm not interested in solar energy, but I was told that if I'd listen to your program, you'd give me a ceiling fan. Why don't you just give me the ceiling fan and I'll go home." When I told her she would have to listen to my whole program, she politely said, "Mr. Battershell, do you go to church anywhere?" I told her I didn't, so she invited me to her church. I thanked her and told her to give me a call.

Mrs. Phillips didn't take that lightly. Saturday afternoon she called to say she looked forward to seeing me in church the next day. I told her I planned to be there. Sunday morning she called to remind me and, as a result, I became a part-time churchgoer. When my wife and I went to church, Mrs. Phillips was always there to say, "Tom, I'm praying for you. The Lord has some good things to share with you, if you will just give Him a chance."

On September 18, 1988, Chuck Millhuff held the last Sunday morning service of a revival at our church.

At the end of the service he said, "Whether it's your children or your mother or your wife or husband or whoever it is, I'd like for you to just turn to the person next to you and say, 'Will I see you in heaven?' " I knew that no one was going to see me in heaven, so I made my way down to the altar and gave everything to the Lord. He took it all, and He changed my life.

Darrell Melton and Tom Decker are laymen who are part of the personal evangelism program at Kansas City First Church.

What an impact they made on **Clif** and **Johnnie Moss!**

**Clif** testified:

Darrell Melton, who worked at Superior Hyundai where I used to work, invited me to church all the time, but I didn't want to go. Johnnie and I were having some problems, so she started bugging me about going to church. I finally decided that if I went to church for a couple of weeks, everyone would stop bothering me.

But it didn't work like that. We went to Kansas City First Church and everybody was smiling and happy to see us. When I got home, I asked my wife, "Are these people crazy or what?" We decided to continue visiting First Church.

However, going to church was still a farce for me. I was going just to get Johnnie off my back. The more I attended, the more those people pulled me in, but I still wasn't ready to change my lifestyle.

Tom Decker called one day and wanted to come over. I thought, "Okay. I can handle Johnnie, and I can handle you too." My idea of people who went calling was that kind of person who would put me down for all the things I had done. As it turned out, Tom had been through a lot of the same things I had been through. He made me feel at ease.

**Johnnie** said:

Tom talked to us about the Lord, and the Lord really used him. He became a real friend, getting to know Clif in a short time. About a month after Tom started visiting, we accepted Christ.

Now I sense a peace in my life. I used to become angry with Clif when he let me down, but now I know I'm not alone, and I know God is in control of my life.

**Clif** continued:

God made me and Johnnie friends. Before we knew Him, we only tolerated one another, but now I've got peace, and I care about other people. I've come a long way with Christ.



**Roy Baker** is a Harvard Ph.D. and a professor of accounting. A personal evangelism call changed his life. He reports:

I'm a product of a broken home. I never really knew my mother and lived with my grandparents. Over the years, I got involved with the wrong crowds, and by the time I was sixteen, I had a police record as long as my arm. I ended up joining the Navy. I knew about sailors' reputations and tried to live up to them. It was as if I went through a list of sins every morning to choose one for the day.

Over the years, I mellowed. I considered myself a friendly agnostic. Several things happened that could have turned my attention to the Lord. For instance, in 1954 I had cancer, but in spite of the emotional upheaval, I didn't turn to God. In 1972 I had a heart

attack, and in 1973 I was divorced, but I still didn't turn to God. I decided to give up drinking alcohol and then smoking tobacco. But again, I had not accepted the Lord. Nobody had ever shared the gospel with me.

About four years ago, Arleta Andre, a member of Kansas City First Church of the Nazarene, invited my wife and me to the spring handbell concert. Everybody was so friendly that we decided to go back for a morning service and have been attending ever since.

However, being a pseudo-intellectual, I was hesitant to accept Christ. I talked to Pastor Shaver at church and he offered to come over and explain Nazarene theology to me. He and two other people came to our house one evening and, after visiting a while, Pastor Shaver asked, "Roy, if you died tonight, would you go to heaven?" That got my attention. I really didn't know. Pastor Shaver presented the gospel to us and everything became clear — Jesus died for me.

He's done marvelous things since I received him into my life.

Recently I've had the opportunity to counsel my students about problems, and the Lord has given me wisdom, although I'm not trained in psychology. I have a reputation around the campus now: "If you've got a problem, go to Dr. Baker. It stops at his door." As of Labor Day, I will be teaching part-time not only at the University of Missouri-Kansas City, but also at Mid-America Nazarene College. I believe this is the road to which the Lord has been leading me.

Because of pastors, lay people, and seminary students committed to prepare themselves to share the gospel through personal evangelism, these miracle stories are possible.

Oh, yes — the harvest is coming in.  
—by Dr. Charles "Chic" Shaver

Professor of Evangelism  
Nazarene Theological Seminary



# An Update on the Lamb

**"Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these"**

An Interview with Pastor David Best by Neil B. Wiseman, GROW Editor



**WISEMAN:** How many people live in your parish? Do you consider Manhattan island to be your parish?

**BEST:** Yes. The whole island of Manhattan has almost 2 million people. Another 1.5 million commute in every day; a half-million pass through Times Square every day just because this is a transportation hub and a crossroad.

But, we are basically looking at Manhattan alone; the only English-speaking Nazarene Church in Manhattan; we are looking at 1.8 million. Plenty to do. I want the church to reflect that incredible mosaic of the community. Outside the front door, turn left, go ten minutes, you are in Hell's Kitchen. Turn right, ten minutes you are in Rockefeller Center, corporate America.





# 's Club in Manhattan

**my brethren, ye have done it unto me"** (Matthew 25:40, KJV).

**WISEMAN:** Where do you see this ministry in five years?

**BEST:** New York City is facing a major crisis. They tell me 60,000 manufacturing jobs were lost to New York City in the past decade. A lot of people don't understand; that is a big reason for the social problems we are seeing. Those jobs are gone forever. In the meantime, we have people who can't support themselves with the skills that they have for jobs that don't exist anymore. There is a real need for the church to stand in that gap and do the job training, job readiness, and help new businesses become viable in the city.

I hope within five years to create more economic and income generating ministries like our counseling services; possibly some retail businesses; possibly a restaurant that would generate profits and also be a job training site for people who could be trained in food service preparation; possibly some framing business — we have a lot of ideas that all revolve around economic development and employment training.

**WISEMAN:** Has the Lamb's ministry focus changed?

**BEST:** There have been changes. What hasn't changed is that the Lamb's has always been committed to do creative ministry to reach city people that would not otherwise be reached. What had been primary is an outreach to upper mobile young singles and young professionals through the arts and through other creative means. That part of the mission is still ongoing.

What has changed began slowly when the church moved from the upper east side to Times Square in 1975. What the church encountered when they moved to Times Square were the needs of the Times Square community — the homeless, the street kids, the runaways, the prostitutes. One staff person saw some homeless and hungry persons and invited them down into the dining room for the staff and the community. That was the beginning of our meal program. We now feed 1,000 people a week.

Seven years ago, a nurse practitioner in the church saw that not only were some of the homeless hungry but also had some health needs. So she found a little space that hadn't been used for anything else here in the Lamb's. She started providing some health care for these people and now we have a full-time doctor and a full-time nurse and about 400 patients a month. The neighborhood shocked us with problems—great new opportunities for ministry.

**WISEMAN:** Why don't you click off a checklist of what the ministry is right now.

**BEST:** Through the Lamb's Center:

- We feed 1,000 men, women, children a week.
- In social services, we see 300 people each week for applicacy, titlements, job search, alcohol abuse problems — getting people into referrals and residence programs.

- We distribute clothing.
- We provide health services. We are the only alternative for the poor to the emergency room at Bellview Height Hospital. If they don't have private insurance or money, they sit in the emergency room for 8-10-12 hours and wait to get served. We are the only alternative that we are aware of in midtown for that adult population. We even get referrals from 20 Christian and secular agencies.

**WISEMAN:** Tell me about the profile of your present worship activities.

**BEST:** Sunday morning at 11 it is a very diverse group — the rich and the poor, black and white. We have seven different nationality groups represented on a Sunday morning. We really feel that is how it should be. We have successful businessmen, people in the arts community, in the investment world, and we will have others who are homeless and jobless. They are all together. That is a realvision I have for us in this place — to be a multi-economic and multi-racial congregation. We have an average of 110 on Sundays right now — small congregation, but very exciting.



**WISEMAN:** What kind of worship style do you have?

**BEST:** Our goal is to have worship that reflects evangelical warmth and spontaneity with a reverence for the historical liturgy of the church. By that I mean not so much a particular form or structure but a service of the Word and a service of the table. The sacraments and the Word are very important. Usually we have at least two or three Scripture readings in a morning worship. We celebrate the Lord's Supper twice a month.

But within that framework we try to use a variety of styles of music and other expressions like drama. Our music covers a wide range of traditions from the classical to the black gospel.



# Lamb's Club in Manhattan

We try to become all things to all people so that by all means we might win some. I would say to a new person, you can't come to the Lamb's one Sunday and get a sense of our total worship life. You would have to come more than once; after a period of weeks, you will begin to see how we incorporate all parts of our community into the worship.

**WISEMAN: What kind of staff do you have?**

**BEST:** We have about 20 on the payroll, part or full time; that includes the 8 part-time counseling service staff.

**WISEMAN: How would you describe your ministry?**

**BEST:** My focus falls into three big areas. Sunday worship experience, including preaching; setting the vision with the staff and keeping that vision in front of them; and raising the necessary funds for the ministry to continue.



**WISEMAN: How is this work funded?**

**BEST:** The church budget is raised just like any Nazarene church budget is raised: tithes and offerings and people stretching; missionary offerings, Thanksgiving and Easter; trying to be obedient to the Lord in what He asks us to do. That is a challenge because we have a lot of people who are poor and they are faithful givers, but they don't have many material resources from which to give.

Our Lamb's Center budget operates all our social services and non-traditional ministries. That budget is raised through a variety of means, primarily individual donors, friends of the Lamb's all across the country who give to us month by month; private foundations for public corporations; churches, the district church, the general church, a lot of other local Nazarene churches participate. We have 3 or 4 major church benefactors who write us into their mission budgets — congregations of other denominations. We couldn't make it without that ecumenical support. They are away and close in. We have a church here in Manhattan over on 5th Avenue that has been very faithful

to us in the last five years. A Presbyterian church in the suburbs of New Jersey is a very mission-minded church. We have some farther away in the Midwest. We do get some federal funds for our meal programs and some for our health services, such as Medicaid reimbursement.

**WISEMAN: Is fund-raising outside your pastoral role difficult?**

**BEST:** It isn't a hard thing for me to do. It is a joy. I believe that I am doing people a favor when I ask them to give a gift to the Lambs because I know what we are doing. It is of high quality. We use the dollars well. We stretch them. We feed 1,000 people a week with one full-time staff person basically, and the rest volunteers. We make dollars go a long way. And the work is critical for the needs of this city and in getting the gospel out to people. So I don't have any problem with the mission and asking the people, and I know that giving is a blessing. You are not talking about money, you are asking people to join us in this ministry.

**WISEMAN: Tell me about the notion that the young professional finds a spiritual home here and then moves on. I have an idea that a lot of that has happened. Do you have 100 people around the country who are still faithful to Christ and the work of His Kingdom?**

**BEST:** I would guess 500 to 600. I really think it is that high. We elected a church board recently and six months after that church board was elected, half of them had been reassigned because they were from financial corporations — young, good people.

I'm a Southern California native. I'm used to transients and transient-type ministry, but I have never had 50% of my spiritual and financial leadership roll over that rapidly. That is a challenge here.

One of the things that I believe is critical for the success of the Lamb's or any other urban ministry is that we need to have a modern-day tentmaker movement. I need accountants, lawyers, doctors to come and open their practices in Manhattan and make their commitment to be a member of the Lamb's Church, pay their tithes, lead Bible studies, teach Sunday school classes, fellowship in small groups and be salt in the city. We need that desperately. It is the only way our urban churches will succeed in the long run to the glory of God.

**WISEMAN: Isn't New York City frightening?**

**BEST:** Certainly the city provides a challenge to a lot of people in terms of the living environment. But we've painted the city so dark and so dismal that people don't want to live here. I go across the country and people ask me all the time, "Do you ride the subways?" I say, "Every day, along with millions of New Yorkers." People outside

of Manhattan think that people are shot on the subway every day in every car, but it is not true. They think every jogger who jogs in Central Park is brutally attacked. It is not true. It is really difficult to challenge people to get over that initial fear or that image they have of the city, because the city really has many positive, wonderful things to celebrate.

But it definitely needs mature believers who are on fire and vitally alive in the Spirit and we need their resources, spiritually and financially. I'm just on a real binge to challenge people to consider asking for a transfer into New York City. What if you went to your supervisor and said, "I would like to transfer to Manhattan." What would he think if you asked for that instead of Phoenix or Colorado Springs or San Diego? Why not, though?

**WISEMAN: Why David Best and the Lamb's Club? Why are you here?**

**BEST:** I was riding a taxi not too long after I came to New York and I told the person I just moved from Santa Barbara, around Los Angeles, California. The man almost drove into the side of the street. He slammed on the brakes and said, "You what?" I've had a few reactions like that since I've been here.



I am here; I say it very humbly, because I believe the Lord has prepared me over the years.

I look back on the things the Lord has allowed me to do in the field of music, in my earlier days of ministry. That gave me a sensitivity to Christians in the arts. My years as an editor and writer gave me some skills and sensitivity which I need for communication and fund-raising. And the fact that as I grew up in a metropolitan area the Lord has given me a heart for the city.

But for me personally, I have to go back to my senior year of high school. Nine days before I graduated, I was listening to KFWB radio in Los Angeles one night around midnight, listening to the returns on the Democratic presidential primary in the state of California in 1968. As I listened to Kennedy give his acceptance speech in what was an upset victory; photographers and press followed him off the podium, down to the back doors of the Ambassador Hotel. I listened as he was shot on public radio. That was the third major political figure that had been assassinated during my teenager years.

I went to college that fall, Pasadena College, with a lot of questions. Not so much about my faith, but about the church and its responsiveness to the turmoil that our society was going through at that time. I didn't know all of this then, but when you asked me, "Why David Best? Why at the Lamb's?" I think it is in some part way back then.

I began to really try to search and see if our faith was viable for the day in which we lived. Did it make any sense? Did it have anything to say? Not just for our salvation sometime by and by, but right now, in the here and now. I struggled a lot, again not with my faith in Christ, but the vitality of that faith making a difference in our world.

Thankfully, I started reading Bresee and Wesley; sometimes we quote them a lot, but we don't always read them. I said, "Those men served their generation and made a difference. That is what I want. That is the kind of faith I want."

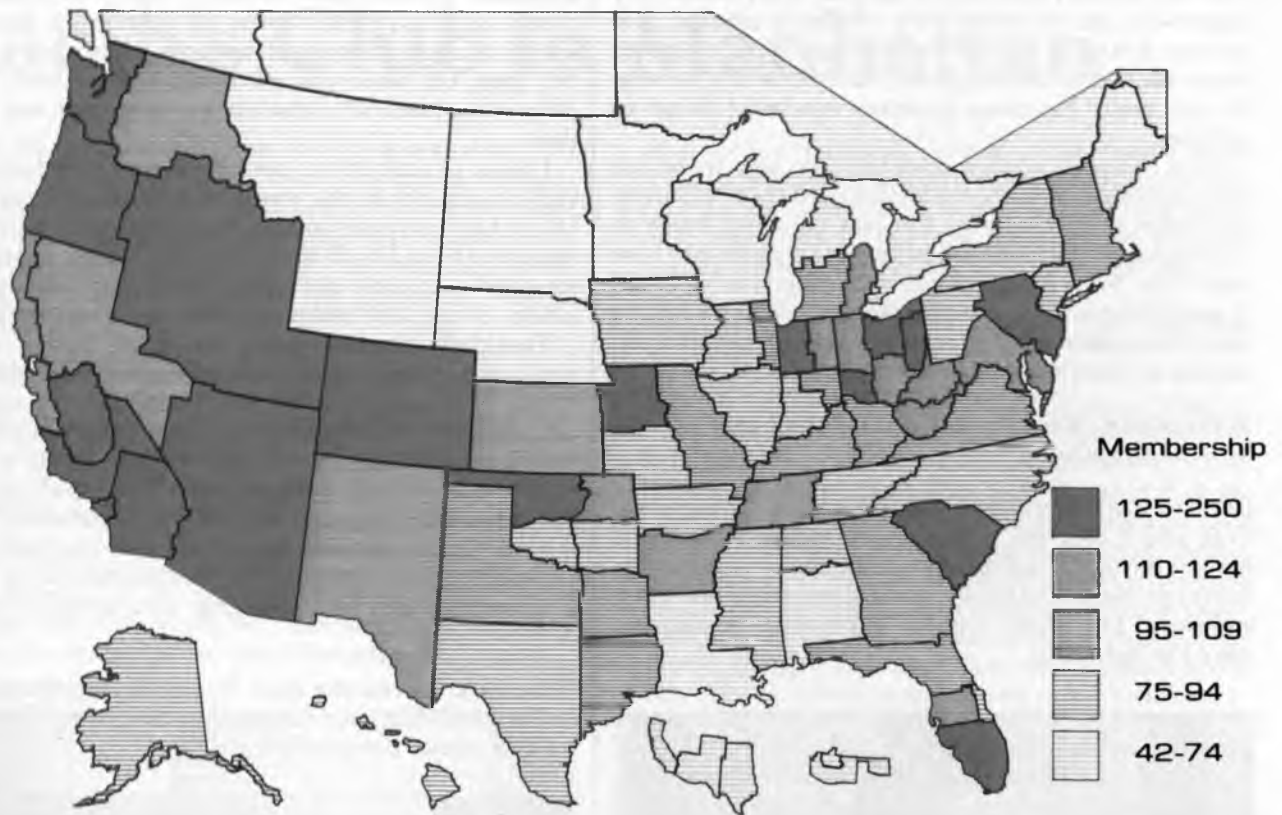
I had to be in a place where I could serve the Lord and not only declare His good news, but demonstrate it. That is something I often talk about here with our staff. The Lamb's is about declaring and demonstration. In fact, someone has said, "All preaching is explanation of that demonstration."

**Wiseman: So you are here by divine appointment. I'm grateful for your taking the time to tell GROW readers about the Lamb's.**



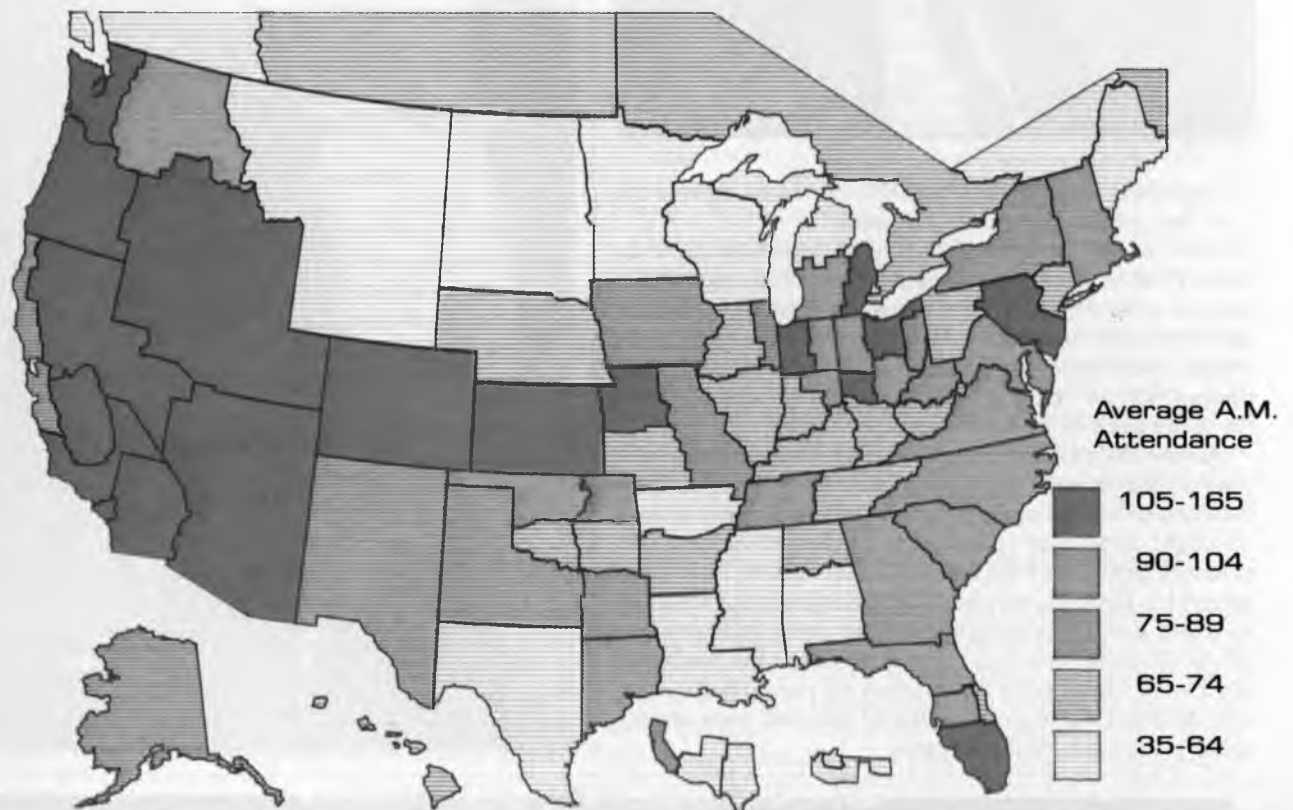
# AVERAGE CHURCH MEMBERSHIP SIZE

Nazarene Districts in Canada and the United States



# AVERAGE WORSHIP ATTENDANCE SIZE

Nazarene Districts in Canada and the United States



# RESEARCH AND TRENDS



**Provided by Church Growth Research Center**  
**Dale E. Jones, Manager**

## **Nazarene District Total Populations**

First 1990 census results are in . . . New York, New England, and Philadelphia are still the top Nazarene districts in total population . . . over 9 million people in each. Los Angeles now has more people to reach than Chicago Central or Washington (DC) . . . Northern California is seventh largest, with the Southeast Atlantic districts of North Carolina, Georgia, and Virginia rounding out the top 10. Upstate New York dropped from seventh to eleventh during the decade . . . but still has over 6 million people to minister to.

Every regular district now has at least half a million people for ministry opportunities. Florida Space Coast had barely 350,000 people in 1980 (while it was still part of Central Florida) but grew nearly 50% in ten years. California, Texas, and other Florida districts also grew well . . . as did Alaska and Arizona.

## **Population Penetration**

Several districts lost total population during the decade . . . especially Appalachian areas and the northern plains. West Virginia South lost over 10% of its population during the 1980s . . . but grew over 10% in membership. Net result is 25% increase in "population penetration" . . . measure of Nazarene presence in general population.

Top district in population penetration is Northwest Oklahoma . . . over 2% of the district population are full members of the Church of the Nazarene. Northeastern Indiana and West Virginia South are next best, followed by West Virginia North and Southwest Indiana . . . nearly 1% of the population are Nazarenes in these areas.

During 1980s, Nazarenes increased population penetration in Northeast districts . . . from Boston to Washington . . . also in Appalachian areas . . . in Central US from Northern Michigan to Dallas.

## **Ethnic Growth**

Publication deadlines come before detailed ethnic data is available . . . but Asian population has grown the most, followed by those of Spanish background. Nazarene church growth has shown the same trends . . . many gains in Asian Nazarenes during the 1980s . . . also in Spanish-speaking congregations.

## **Correction**

In the "Harvest Reports" published in the last issue of *GROW*, three churches were mistakenly left off the list. We regret the error but rejoice in the growth. Apologies to Kansas City First, 59, Keith Wright former pastor, Jesse C. Middendorf present pastor; Fort Collins (Colorado) Cornerstone, 60, Herbert Ketterling; and Tulsa Central, 78, B. Edwin McDonald former pastor, Tim Stearman present pastor.

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# Ministry at the Front of Operation Desert Storm

## In the Supreme Commander's Service

Twenty-four Nazarene military chaplains serve the troops in the Persian Gulf. Though news, because of advanced deadlines, will not be current when this article actually reaches our readers, the passion for souls and the cry for peace from the hearts of these pastors who minister to the military are abundantly clear.

**LCDR Chris E. Fosback, CHC, USN:** "My specific prayer requests include (1) strength and health to enable me to minister to the Marines and sailors assigned to me; (2) God's protection while I travel so many miles each week in the desert; (3) that God will open hearts of Marines and sailors to His voice; (4) that the gospel will take root in the hearts of the men so they will find forgiveness and cleansing; and (5) the provision of Christian tracts and literature to distribute to our military personnel."

**Chaplain (CPT) James P. Roberts, USAR:** "Since the war has started, we have had SCUD attacks almost every night. They come right over us and when the Patriot missiles intercept, the whole sky lights up. It's a fireworks exhibition that I would just as soon miss. We are thankful that we have a system that counters the SCUD. . . . Many young soldiers are no older than my son, so when someone needs a hug, they get it from me. I love each as if they were my own. . . . I don't know what the future holds, but I do know Who holds the future. Christ is working greatly in our camp."

**Chaplain (CPT) Steven W. Holley, ANG,** writes on his fortieth birthday after being called up as a reservist: "I serve at a group headquarters with three other chaplains. I'm preaching three times on Sundays. I really miss my church — Burlington, NC First Church. My unit has been activated for 37 days now — hopefully for only six months. I have an assistant pastor who is acting as senior pastor back home. Please pray that the church survives and even grows during this separation. People here are very open to the word of comfort, inspiration, and direction."

# In the Supreme Commander's Service

**Chaplain (CPT) John W. Gwinn, USAR:** "I literally have hundreds of letters and cards from Nazarenes all over the USA. I hold a consolidated Protestant service on Sunday. Right now, we average 90 soldiers per Sunday. I feel the great responsibility to prepare them for possible death. Prayerfully, more will come to salvation."

**Chaplain (CPT) David A. Tish, USAR:** "I will distribute the **Herald of Holiness** and let you know how they are received. In the meantime, I could use some Bible study materials, such as the new series that goes through books of the Bible. May 1991 find a truly new peace for us all."

**Chaplain (CPT) David M. Brown, USAR:** "It has been encouraging to have soldiers during our prayer times voice prayers for Iraqi soldiers and their families, the hostages left in Kuwait, and even Saddam Hussein."

**LT. Thomas E. Cook, CHC, USNR:** "I am aboard the USS New Orleans. Received your letters and the letter from the General Superintendents. Good encouragement. Bible studies are popping up everywhere as we get closer to the Gulf. Pray for us."

**Chaplain (MAJ) Robert D. Branson, USAR:** "Our ministry consists of service on Sunday and counseling during the week. This week we started a Bible study. We are presently waiting for the ground war to begin. With it will come increased suffering and death. Pray that Christ will make us equal to our opportunity to minister."

**Chaplain (CPT) David W. Frazer, USAR:** "I have been leading a Bible study and worship services every day. We are seeing the Christians strengthened. Some have accepted God's call on their lives to full-time Christian service. It is hard to be here among the dirt every day. The hearts of the soldiers long to be back home. We keep praying for a miracle."



CH Lowell Moore conducting worship in Saudi Arabia.

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## PERSONAL GROWTH HELPS FOR LEADERS

### WEEK ONE

#### A SONG IN THE NIGHT

*"... God my maker, who gives songs in the night" (Job 35:10)*

It is not only upon the mountain top but in the valley of the shadow of death that we encounter God's glory. Such it was for Nien Cheng as she languished at the point of death December, 1966, in a Peking women's prison. Her background of privilege and her Christian faith made her a ready target of the Red Guards during China's spasm of national self-destruction called The Cultural Revolution. When she refused to confess that any of this made her an enemy of the state, she was placed in solitary confinement for long periods of time, broken only by prolonged sessions of interrogation, torture, and public humiliation.

It was Christmas Eve. She was remembering Christmas Eves past. She was sure she would never know them again as she shivered on her wooden bed with a thin blanket drawn about her, tormented by Siberian winds gusting through a cell window that she could not close. Adding to her desolation was not having heard a

word from any friends, not even her only daughter. It would be many years before she learned that her daughter, during interrogation by Red Guards, had been thrown out of a third story window to her death. Cut off from all human contact, she felt utterly alone, abandoned even by God.

At the midnight hour, she heard a clear young soprano voice singing, at first tentatively but then boldly, "Silent Night, Holy Night." Nien Cheng was enraptured. A warm glow filled her frozen cell. The courageous soloist sang all of the verses before the guards were able to silence her. There was just enough light, however, in that midnight Christmas carol to let her know that she had not been abandoned by God. She was not alone. And it gave her the courage to endure six more brutal years. She survived her ordeal, was released, and is now living in Washington, D.C. (*Life and Death in Shanghai*)

### WEEK TWO

#### LASER LIGHT GRACE

*"My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is perfected in weakness" (II Corinthians 12:9)*

Though Jane Forseth, mother of five, began to mysteriously lose coordination, she was not diagnosed as having ALS (Lou Gehrig's disease)

until two more children were born. She lost the use of her muscles and was soon confined to a wheelchair. She even lost the ability to talk. Yet she possessed an indomitable spirit that was centered in Jesus. She determined that she was not going to vegetate, nor did she let her handicap stop her from assuming her share of the responsibility for raising her children. She insisted on being taken everywhere her family went: church, shopping, ball games, neighborhood strolls. She radiated the love of Jesus. Her great joy, in later years, was to be equipped with a laser light on her forehead that she could move just enough to activate a computer keyboard and thus communicate once again. To her, it was a beautiful token of God's grace and faithfulness.

Jane passed away recently, having lived twenty-three full and vibrant years after contracting the disease (95% of ALS patients do not survive five years). She left behind marvelous trophies of grace. Her seven children caught the Christ-spirit. Two sons distinguished themselves in college athletics with one earning All-American honors. Two of her children have become public school teachers, another an accountant, another a specialist in micro-biology, another a registered nurse, another a linguist and lay-missionary to China, and another a college professor with an earned Ph.D. Eric is one of my colleagues at



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Northwest Nazarene College. And so the "laser light grace" of Jane Forseth keeps on shining until, as she loved to testify, "in a twinkling of an eye . . . the dead will be raised **imperishable**, we shall be changed" (I Corinthians 15:52).

### WEEK THREE

#### A HEALING LIGHT

**"Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may dwell in me"** (II Corinthians 12:9)

The date was November 17, 1987. The place: Boise, Idaho. As I deplaned, I noticed television reporters, with their video cameras set up, and small groups of people huddled about them. Wondering what celebrity they might be expecting, I asked someone what was going on. I was told that Continental Flight 1713, headed for Boise, had crashed on takeoff from the Denver airport. Twenty-six passengers died.

Among the survivors was Dr. Ken Watson, academic dean at our college, Northwest Nazarene. He was in a coma and on the critical list for weeks. The entire campus community rallied with fervent prayer support. It was doubtful at first if he would survive and, if he did, the doctors warned that he would be severely crippled. The good news is that he has enjoyed an almost total recovery and is back at the college with full-time responsibilities.

It was not known until some time later that a significant ingredient in his healing were the weekly visits of Jane Forseth (see above devotional), who, although totally incapacitated because of ALS, had herself wheeled into his hospital room. Even though she could not talk, her children had learned how to interpret her mumbling, groans, and facial and eye movements to where they could communicate what she was trying to say. In this way, Jane brought comfort, encouragement, and the blessing of Christ to Dr. Watson. And he attributes his healing today, in a large measure, to the indomitable

spirit of a courageous woman who would not let even a handicap like total paralysis stop her from sharing Christ's love with others. **"For when I am weak, then I am strong"** (II Corinthians 12:10).

### WEEK FOUR

#### AN INCOGNITO PRESENCE

**"He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him"** (John 1:10)

Dr. Richard Selzer, professor of surgery at Yale Medical School, tells about Adele Cleary, a recovery room nurse. For thirty-five years, she received dozens of postoperative patients daily, each of whom shared various shades of unconsciousness. Adele was a hunchback. She never married. She lived alone. She was self-conscious and awkward at social gatherings, yet in the recovery room she was, in her ministrations and loving care, a study of grace and compassion. Some of her patients flailed about, driven by a drug-induced violence, doing damage to themselves or to her. She wore her bruises and black eyes as trophies. When they choked on their vomit or suffered cardiac arrest, she would put her mouth on theirs or pound their chests. Throughout her endless thumping, wiping, rubbing, and braiding of tubes and wires about pale, sick faces, she enveloped them in encouraging words: "You're going to be all right." "Pretty soon, you'll be back in your own bed."

Yet, because of postoperative amnesia, not a single patient remembered Adele. Sometimes she would forget herself and greet former patients on the street. They would stare at this bent little woman a moment and, without a flicker of recognition registering on their faces, would turn away. Few noted Adele's retirement, fewer still, her death.

In life and death, Adele Cleary is a type of the "incognito" Christ, Who "was in the world, and the world was made through Him, **and the world**

**did not know Him."** She is also symbolic of that vast multitude of humble, quiet servants who, in a thousand ways, sustain, nourish, and enhance our lives — and of whom we are totally unaware.

### WEEK FIVE

#### POWER IN MIDNIGHT PRAISE

**"But about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns of praise to God . . . and suddenly there came a great earthquake"** (Acts 16:25, 26)

Everything that could go wrong for Paul did. First his dream of continuing to evangelize Asia was blocked. Then there was a vision in the night in which he saw a man from Macedonia saying, "Come over and help us." But he never did meet or find the man once he crossed over to Philippi. There was not even a synagogue in the city where he could preach and launch his mission. All he found were a few women, and only one of these, Lydia, opened her heart to the Lord. Added to that was the annoyance of a possessed slave girl who pestered them for days until, in exasperation, Paul turned and cast out the demon that was torturing her. The thanks he got was to be hauled before the magistrates, flogged, and jailed.

Robert Hughes, in his history of Australia, *The Fatal Shores*, describes in gory detail what it means to be flogged. In 1835 alone, there were 332,810 lashes laid on the backs of 27,340 convict-settlers. He reports, "Even 25 lashes was a draconic torture, able to skin a man's back and leave it a tangled web of criss-cross knotted scars. The psychological damage inflicted by the lash was worse than the physical" (p. 428). As if this were not enough, Paul and Silas — backs lacerated and bodies bruised — were locked in stocks and left immobilized to shiver through the night in the desolation of a cold, damp prison cell.

Yet, in their physical, spiritual, and emotional midnight hour, they began "singing hymns of praise to God" (16:25). There was so much power in their praise that the earth trembled, the foundations shook, chains fell off, and prison doors opened. And before the sun rose on a new day, the church at Philippi was born.

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### WEEK SIX

#### A LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS

*"And when they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy" (Matthew 2:10)*

Shortly before being expelled from the Soviet Union, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn wrote an open letter to the Patriarch of All Russia in which he confessed: "Your pastoral letter said that parents should inculcate in their children . . . a love for their native land, a love for the church. As I heard this, there rose up before me my own childhood, the many church services I attended, and the impression they made on me, **singular in freshness and purity**, which no personal suffering and no intellectual theories were able later to erase. . . . We are robbing our children when we deprive them of something they can never experience again—the **pure angelic perception of worship** (The Christian Reader, Vol. 12, No. 4, 1974, p. 34).

Enough light emanated from those childhood encounters with God's glory in worship to completely disenchant Solzhenitsyn with Marxist philosophy in adulthood. He became Russian Socialism's most eloquent dissident. Though his writings were banned throughout the Communist world, his scathing critique in *Gulag Archipelago* was laboriously copied on typewriters and distributed widely through the Soviet underground. Russians were shocked to learn what was going on behind Communism's propaganda facade.

There is no question about the fact that the stunning collapse of walls and the fall of East European Communist governments, which we are witnessing today, can be traced to the piercing light of the glory of God which Solzhenitsyn experienced as a child in Christian worship. Neither Herod the Great nor any of the tyrants of this world have been able to extinguish the

quiet light of that star which shone so brightly in the eastern sky two thousand years ago.

### WEEK SEVEN

#### A HEALING EMBRACE

*"Bear one another's burdens, and thus fulfill the law of Christ" (Galatians 6:2)*

Dr. Lloyd Ogilvie, pastor of Hollywood Presbyterian Church, tells about the darkest experience of his life. His wife's physician had just shown him X-rays of an inoperable tumor in her lungs. The prognosis was not good. Even though he had cleared his calendar in order to stay with his wife, she insisted that he keep his afternoon appointment with his covenant group of four fellow ministers with whom he met every month.

Knowing that his colleagues had enough problems of their own with which to deal, he determined that he was not going to load them down with the crisis that was breaking his heart. When he walked into the room, they asked how he was doing. He forced out, "Fine." They sensed that he was not fine at all, and so they pressed him. Finally, he burst into tears and shared with them that his wife had just been diagnosed as having terminal cancer.

Immediately they gathered around him, while he was still standing. They wrapped their arms about him, pressing their bodies in on him like a blanket, and then they prayed, "Father, let his grief pass into us and become ours." At that very moment, he felt the deep pain going out of him and into his friends. They began to weep. They had acted like a human poultice, drawing out the hurt into themselves. They then prayed for Jo's healing. Later, Pastor Ogilvie discovered that, at that very hour, his wife felt a definite touch of God on her body in her hospital room. The tumor began to slowly but perceptibly shrink. Several weeks later, no sign of it, nor

cancer cells, could be found, and there has been no recurrence of it since then.

Bearing one another's burdens releases tremendous healing forces!

### WEEK EIGHT

#### A HEALING TOUCH

*"And moved with compassion, Jesus stretched out His hand and touched him, and said to him, 'I am willing; be cleansed' " (Mark 1:41)*

The date was March 30, 1981. Television stations interrupted their programs to flash: "President Reagan has been shot!" The nation stopped in its tracks to follow the shocking news. Fortunately, the wound was not fatal. John Hinckley, Jr., was taken into custody and the President soon healed.

In his recently published memoirs, *An American Life*, the President tells about that day. As he was about to enter a Washington hotel to deliver a speech, there was a **pop, pop, pop** sound. Secret Service Agent Jerry Parr pushed the President back into the car and threw himself over him as a human shield. At that moment, the President felt a searing pain in his back and upper chest. He assumed that Jerry had broken his ribs. It was not until they got to the hospital that they discovered the damage had been by a bullet that entered under the President's armpit and stopped one inch short of his heart.

He writes, "I was lying on the gurney half-conscious when I realized that someone was holding my hand. It was a soft, feminine hand. I felt it touch mine and then hold on tight to it. It must have been the hand of a nurse kneeling very close to the gurney, but I couldn't see her. . . . Although I tried afterward to learn who the nurse was, I was never able to find her. I wanted to tell her how much the touch of her hand had meant to me, but I was never able to do that."

I believe that Jesus was in Jerry's body covering the President that day, and Jesus was in the comforting touch of that anonymous nurse's hand. The

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President concludes by testifying, "Someone was looking out for me that day" (*Time*, Nov. 5, 1990, p. 70). Amen!

### WEEK NINE

#### VALLEY OF THE SHADOW OF DEATH

*"Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil; for Thou art with me" (Psalm 23:4)*

At the height of his popularity as London's most renowned preacher, Charles Haddon Spurgeon slid into a deep depression. Upon the urging of his physician, he took a three-month rest in the country. On the Sunday night before he left, he preached on the text: "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" (Matthew 27:46). He felt fully qualified to preach on such a subject because he himself had descended into the dark valley of God-forsakenness.

After the service, a man, eyes wild with torment, intercepted him and asked to talk to him. He showed Spurgeon a revolver in his pocket. Then he told him that he was on his way to the Thames River to end it all when he chanced to pass by the church and hear, through the open door, the text for the sermon being read. He slipped into the back. As he listened, he thought to himself, "There is a man who truly feels what I feel." Spurgeon prayed with the man. He received Christ into his life. The burden lifted and joy came into his soul.

Many years later, the same man accosted Spurgeon. He reminded him of that fateful night and testified that he had lived in the sunshine and the fullness of the blessing of Christ since that time. Furthermore, he was now devoting his life to the ministry of preaching the gospel. When Spurgeon noted the dramatic transformation in this former suicidal brother, he con-

fessed, "I would gladly go into the valley of the shadow of death a thousand times if, thereby, I could help some other poor soul in their hour of extremity."

### WEEK TEN

#### SONGS IN THE NIGHT

*"I will remember my song in the night . . ." (Psalm 77:6)*

The car was beginning to climb up the Blue Ridge Mountains grade. We were returning to Nampa from Portland where I had preached both services. During the sacrament of the Lord's Supper observed during the evening service, the choir sang a hauntingly beautiful new piece titled "Communion Song." The refrain repeated the words of Jesus over and over again, "Remember me, remember me."

As we were reliving the excitement of the day, my wife remarked, "I wish we had a tape of that new communion song." Just then, I remembered someone slipping something into my suit pocket as I hurried out the door after the service, eager to get going for the all-night drive home. Sure enough, it was a recording of that service. I put it in my tape deck. After listening to "Communion Song," Marge said, "Play it again." So I did, over and over again. With its gentle harmonies in the background, we began to recall some of the communion services we had known, not only in our churches, but as a family. We relived the many communion services we had enjoyed around the Christmas tree before exchanging gifts. We reveled in the happy memories of communion celebrated while on vacation: on mountain lake beaches, beside rushing streams, and seated among wild flowers in high, Alpine meadows. And then, all of a sudden, with a full moon bathing the landscape in a silvery light, the glory of God came into our car, washing over our spirits, releasing floodgates of

emotion. I had difficulty seeing the road. We were both deeply touched. For a long season we said nothing, holding hands and enjoying the glow of the glory of God as the miles rolled under us. We often recall the "song in the night" with a sense of profound wonder and joy. "O Holy Night."

### WEEK ELEVEN

#### FROM DEATH TO ETERNAL LIFE

*"God sent me before you . . . to keep you alive by a great deliverance" (Genesis 45:7)*

Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn tells how he recovered his faith in God. He was lying at the point of death in one of Stalin's Siberian slave labor camps. While passing in and out of a delirium, Dr. Boris Kornfeld — who had taken a cancerous tumor out of his stomach — sat beside his cot, fervently telling him the story of his conversion from Judaism to Christianity. "I was astonished at the conviction of the new convert, at the ardor of his words," Solzhenitsyn recalls.

Early the next morning, Dr. Kornfeld was beaten to death by some fellow prisoners. During the sleepless nights that followed, as he pondered Kornfeld's words, Solzhenitsyn underwent a profound spiritual conversion. He writes, "And so it happened that Kornfeld's prophetic words were his last words on earth. And, directed to me, they lay upon me as an inheritance. You cannot brush off that kind of inheritance by shrugging your shoulders."

He wrote a poem about that experience that includes these lines:

When was it that I completely  
Scattered the good seeds, one and  
all?

For after all I spent my boyhood  
In the bright singing of Thy temples.

Blood seethed — and every swirl  
Gleamed iridescently before me,  
Without a rumble the building of  
my faith  
Quietly crumbled within my heart.

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But passing here between being and nothingness,  
Stumbling and clutching at the edge . . .

And now with measuring cup returned to me,

Scooping up the living water,

**God of the Universe! I believe again!**

Though I renounced You, You were with me!

(Gulag Archipelago, Two, pp. 613-616)

### WEEK TWELVE

#### A STILL, SMALL VOICE

**"And after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire a sound of a gentle . . . voice" (I Kings 19:12-13)**

All hell suddenly broke loose over the head of this gentle, young black preacher who wanted nothing else except to preach and write in the quiet of a small, urban church in Montgomery, Alabama. He had been drawn, almost against his will, however, into the vortex of a movement destined to tear the South apart: the crusade for Civil Rights. It had begun rather innocuously by the black community organizing a boycott of the city bus system for its segregation of passengers. Martin Luther King, Jr., was arrested. For the first time in his life, he felt the horror of iron prison doors clang shut behind him. Even though he was soon bailed out, the experience traumatized him deeply.

Late the next night, exhausted by the day's frenetic stream of well-wishers, anxious friends, and hate phone calls, he buried his face in his hands at the kitchen table. He prayed as he had never prayed before, concluding with this confession: "I've come to the point where I can't face it alone."

As he uttered those words, the fears began to melt away. He heard an "inner voice" telling him that he was on the right track and assuring him

that God would be with him. "It was for King," Taylor Branch observes, "the first transcendent religious experience of his life" (*Parting the Waters*, p. 162). It gave him the singleness of purpose and the strength of resolve to lead the most significant peace-time social revolution in the history of our country. Like King David, he, too, stumbled. Yet, like his Master, he gave his all to "preach good news to the poor, proclaim release to the captives . . . to set free those who are downtrodden" (Luke 4:18). And our nation will never be the same.

### WEEK THIRTEEN

#### THE TRIUMPH OF LOVE

**"And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory . . ." (John 1:14)**

In removing a tumor from a young woman's cheek, Dr. Richard Selzer could not avoid severing a facial nerve, the one to the muscles of her mouth. Consequently, her mouth would be permanently twisted, one side of her face unable to lift itself when she smiled.

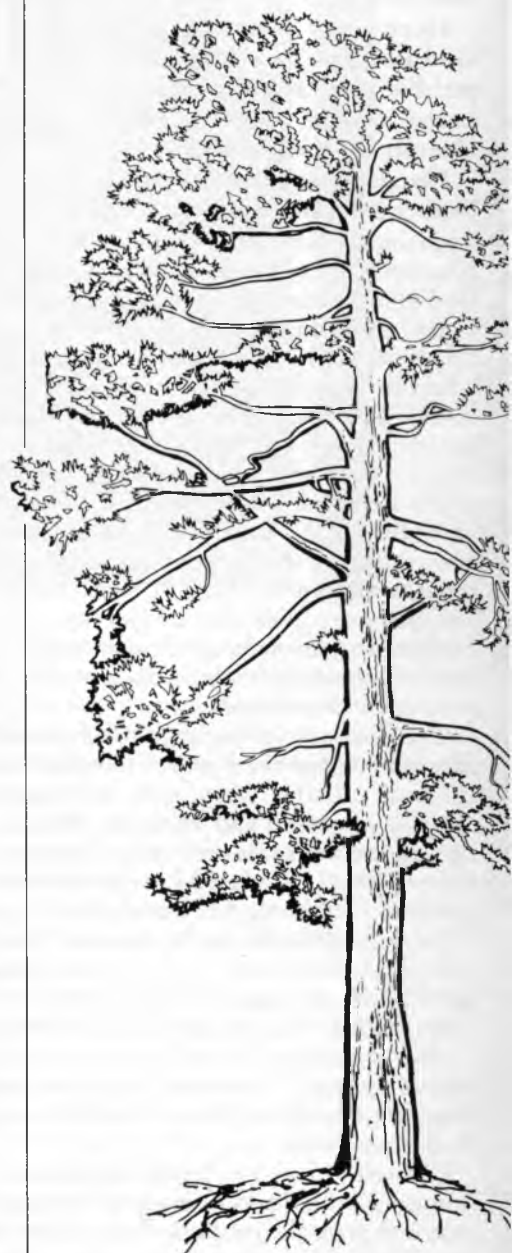
She was weeping when her young husband came into the room, with the bed sheet pulled up over her mouth. She did not want him to see her face. He moved over to her bedside and took her hand in his. With ever so gentle a tug, he pulled the sheet down. He studied the disfigurement for a moment with quizzical expression, then he broke out in a huge smile.

"I like it," he said; "it's kind of cute."

Unmindful of the doctor's gaze, he bent to kiss her crooked mouth. The doctor was so close that he could not help seeing how he twisted his own lips to accommodate to hers to show that their kiss still worked. Selzer comments on that moment: "I remember that the gods appeared in ancient Greece as mortals, and I hold my

breath and let the wonder in."

I do not know about the gods of ancient Greece, but I do know about the God Who became flesh in Jesus of Nazareth, and how He lowered Himself to our level, twisted Himself to the shape of our sins, embraced us with His strong arms unto death, even death on a cross, all to show us that His love for us still works. And when I contemplate so great a love, I too "hold my breath and let the wonder in." (Richard Selzer, *Mortal Lessons*, pp. 45-46)





## **A Witness in Corporate America Helps Plant a Church**

# **PUBLISHING EXECUTIVE FINDS CHRIST**

## **and Follows Her Husband Into the Ministry**

The new idea of being married to a pastor was hard for me to accept and understand. I knew nothing about it. And my first experience at being a pastor's wife involved a church plant, which made it even worse.

Here's my story of how God uses me as a Time-Life publishing executive and a pastor's wife to get a new church off the ground.

I am not proud of my past. Before I became a Christian,

I worshiped like a believer, but I lived like an atheist; I am surprised the Lord ever saved me. I knew just enough about God to make me satisfied but not enough to save me.

My husband and I started really believing in Jesus in 1983. I had met my husband, Jim, at the University of Michigan where he was studying graphic design and I majored in economics. We both graduated in 1979 and headed to New York City. Jim immediately landed a job with an advertising agency, and I was offered an entry level position in publishing. Even though things appeared to be going well, I found myself worrying about my life. No matter what career path I took, a hundred years down the road, I wound up dead. Needless to say, this thought frightened me and I decided to "get into religion." I attended every Bible study and service at my church, gave ten percent of my income and, for some reason, decided to join the handbell choir. I felt a little closer to God, but I knew I was missing out on something.

One Sunday, I was flipping through the radio stations, trying to find a program about Jesus. I found a call-in program where the host, Charley Rizzo, answered questions about God. Charley was smart and funny, so I was pretty surprised to find out he was a minister. After listening to the show for a few months, I convinced Jim that we should drive to New Jersey to visit the church where Charley pastored.

Driving on the George Washington Bridge, I began to get nervous. I said to Jim, "I feel like after tonight our lives will never be the same again. It's kind of sad."

Jim replied, "Do you want to go back home?"

"No," I answered, "I feel like one door is closing but another door is opening." That night, our lives changed forever. The Lord saved us. Jim and I both realized that night — we needed God in our lives.

God went to a lot of trouble to save me. Looking back, I realize that I could have easily gotten off track in my search, but God had great patience and love for me. He also arranged events and circumstances to get me into His kingdom.

Therefore, I must have great worth to Him. It is easy to lose sight of this when you plant a new church. It is hard to remember you are valuable to God because of who you are, not how big your church is or how well you perform your ministry.

It is also important as a pastor's wife to know who you are. After my husband entered the ministry and we had moved from the church where we were saved, I had to come to grips with being myself. Jim thought he knew what I should be, I thought I knew who I should

be, and other Christians told me who I should be. None of us grasped what God wanted me to be.

I remember visiting a church and being introduced to a young couple, "This is Reverend Warren and his wife." I added, "I'm Linda." It seemed odd to me that after having my own name for thirty years, I was now addressed only in relation to my husband. I pictured the next forty years as the nameless minister's wife. That night I said to Jim, "I just can't do it. God called you to be a minister but He didn't call me to be a pastor's wife."

Then, too, I could not see myself fulfilling the traditional roles. I thought I did not have the talent or spiritual gifts that would make it work. I also knew that when you planted a church, you had to wear many different hats. It was hard for me to have people over to our house; the way I cook, it's hard to tell if the meat is food or burnt offering. And while most pastor's wives are compassionate listeners, I have trouble listening to people's problems. My advice, "Read the Bible and do what it says," or "When God says, 'Jump,' you ask how high." My husband even thought I would have to make some dramatic changes to be a pastor's wife, and I was ready to just give up.

One day, I stopped trying to be my ideal stereotype of a pastor's wife and started being who I was as a Christian. Since my spiritual gifts are teaching, preaching, and wisdom, why was I trying to spend my time on counseling, compassion, and hospitality? Efforts in those areas produced no results. But when I started teaching the adult Bible study, the attendance jumped. I would preach occasionally, and people would be moved. The Holy Spirit even gave me insights about the church and its future. Now I was really helping my husband jumpstart the new plant because I was a vital part of the church, the person God intended me to be.

Finally, the minister's wife must be open to the surprising ways God wants to use her for building His kingdom. My story is unique. In addition to being a pastor's wife, I am also a





publishing executive at *Sports Illustrated*.

My job title is Consumer Marketing Director, which means I am responsible for all market efforts for *Sports Illustrated* — yes, even the football phones and 170 million dollars in revenues. The job comes complete with a corner office, travel around the world, tickets to the Super Bowl, and lots of pressure. I put in long hours; I leave for work at 7:30 a.m. and I'm not home until 7:30 p.m. My work environment is fast-paced and highly competitive. Also, the methods of the world are not the ways of the Christian, so I sometimes find myself swimming against the tide of popular opinion. Although there are times that I find myself wishing I were in full-time ministry, I know God orchestrated my rise up the corporate ladder for His glory.

In 1988, Bill and Carol Wiesman, Jim, and I started Westchester Chapel Church of the Nazarene in White Plains, New York. The Yorktown Church had saved money for years to help finance a church plant in lower Westchester. In Westchester, the residents are culturally diverse, unchurched, and difficult to reach with the gospel. It was expensive to try to target people who would respond to the message of the gospel.

It is also very expensive to support a pastor and maintain a church since Westchester's cost of living is among the highest

in the country. A large home goes for half a million dollars and office space and buildings are frightfully expensive. So, our church plant could only afford to rent a room in the Y.M.C.A. for services. Bill and Carol wound up moving in December of 1988 because they worked four jobs between them and still could not make ends meet.

Because of my job, Jim can spend all his time on the new church. I was able to pay for Jim's education for the ministry and support both our family and the church in its infancy. There are many new Christians and fully dedicated Christians at Westchester Chapel; I'm sure there would not be as many if I did not work full time.

Why do I do this? Because God is my passion. A man who works with me stopped by my office recently. He said, "Linda, there are three kinds of people who work at this company. First, there are people who work because work is everything to them. Then there are people who work here because they have bills to pay. Finally, there are people who work here to finance what they really love — that's you."

I replied, "You're right, Hank. I work for what I love." I think I really intended to say, "I work for Whom I love."

—by Linda D. Warren

## When You or Your Church Board Have Questions. . . .



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# OUTREACH NEWS

CHURCH MINISTRY.

**Toms River (New Jersey) Church** recently had a 50% gain in Sunday school due to a renewed commitment to reach children with the good news about Christ. **Pastor Clinton E. Jones Sr.** reports that Mary Meddles drives the bus to nearby Beckerville. This new ministry to children started during a revival with **Evangelist David Canfield** who preached that children's outreach can revive a church. The Sunday school now averages over 80. They have three Junior Bible Quiz teams and 20 teenagers attend.

**Valparaiso (Indiana) First Church** took personal invitations to 4,000 homes in preparation for its revival with **Evangelist Gary Haines**. An invitation packet, according to **Pastor Gerald Woods**, included information about the church and its staff; a notice about spiritual enrichment classes covering Bible study, marriage, parenting, divorce recovery, and church membership; and a Gary Haines' musical cassette. Fifty percent of those who attended were visitors. **Associate Pastor George Frieling** says family relationships were strengthened, emotional and physical hurts healed, and 300 contacts were made for future personal evangelism contacts.

**Burlington (North Carolina) First Church** recently received a first-hand description of living conditions for America's troops in the Saudi desert . . . and it came directly by phone from the church's pastor during a Sunday morning service. **Pastor Steve Holley**, 40, a member of the National Guard unit from Durham, North Carolina, is also known as Captain Holley, an Army 30th Support Group chaplain. Sarah Holley, the minister's wife and mother of their five children, said her husband used the phone call to tell the congregation about his experiences of leading several soldiers to the Lord in the war zone.

**Southside Church at Richmond, Virginia**, has grown from 700 to nearly 900 during the past year. During the calendar year 1990, 201 persons were led to Christ

through personal and public evangelism. **Pastor Jerome Hancock** offers a strongly affirmative response to the K-Church Project sponsored by the Church Growth Division: "This exposure to the large churches and the principles of large-church growth through these conferences have caused me to break out of a box of limitation, which allows me to believe that our church can not only grow through the 1,000 barrier, but grow to at least 3,000 by the year 2000. I praise the Lord and thank Dr. Sullivan, the many workers, and the Church of the Nazarene for the outstanding benefit these Schools of Large Church Management provide for me."

**Circleville (Ohio) First Church** reports seven people testified to a call to the ministry in their recent revival with **Evangelist Morris Chalfant**. The list includes Roby and Jane Kazee, Ted Hart, Melissa Leist, Burt Miller, Dan Largent, and Tim Tener. The revival theme "Yes, Lord, Yes" was implemented through revival-oriented preaching by the pastor, nearly 2,000 hours of prayer by members and friends, and a commitment by the congregation to read the Bible through in the month before the special services started. **Pastor Calvin Alexander Jr.** reports: "Revival broke out. Backsliders were reclaimed, new folks born again, believers sanctified, youth called to ministry, families reunited, and people genuinely healed physically and emotionally. This was real revival."

**Eau Gallie (Florida) Church** doubled its revival attendance from fall 1990 to spring 1991. **Pastor Richard Wagner** reports: "We spent 40 days in prayer before the revival services started. Attendance reached 110 on Sunday evening. It was the best revival I have seen in years."

**Trinidad Nazarenes** recently participated in a personal evangelism school. **Beverly Burgess**, personal evangelism coordinator in the Church Growth Division, and **Ruth Delong**, personal evangelist, rejoiced in the news that a 1987

personal evangelism convert, Caluette Alleyne, was now among those who wanted to be trained to be a personal evangelist. The work of the gospel keeps expanding — win a person and he wins another.

**Sturgis (Michigan) Church** enjoyed a special visitation of God through the combined ministry of **Evangelists James Crabtree and Nelson Perdue**. The report from **Pastor John L. Shoup** encourages faith for revival in other places: "In nearly 23 years of pastoring, I have experienced few revivals like this meeting. Both evangelists were faithful to the Word and preached from night to night with anointing. The altars were lined service after service, and many people received clear victory." One woman testified that while she didn't know very much about holiness, she sought it from the Lord and He did not disappoint her. At the close of the meeting, the pastor asked all to stand who had sought God to save, sanctify, or help them make a definite spiritual decision that week. Half of the 200 persons present stood immediately as a testimony that revivals pay in spiritual results.



**Ms. Caluette Alleyne, Rev. Anthony Quimby, Mrs. Beverly Burgess.** In the picture, Caluette shows Beverly Burgess the Spiritual Birth Certificate that was presented to her when she accepted Christ in 1987. A team presented the gospel to Caluette on a personal evangelism call when a School of Evangelism was held in 1987 in Trinidad. She prayed and invited Christ into her heart. Another School of Evangelism was held in Trinidad February 4-11, and Caluette took the training, wanting to learn how to win her friends and relatives to Christ.



# Church Plant Grows to 162 Members in Three Years

## Congregation Moves From Home to Gym to Upper Room

**R**apid New Testament-type growth forced Living Word Community Church at Dumont, New Jersey, to move three times since organization on April 1, 1988. Now only three years old — at the end of the 1991 church year — Living Word Church has 162 members and a worship attendance of 130. That is an impressive record for a church that started with six in a home prayer meeting.

Pastor Frank Bolella, age 32, found Christ through personal Scripture reading and through the witness of three weightlifters who together topped the scale at 1,000 pounds. Of his conversion, Bolella said, "I was a weightlifter, and then I began to feel very empty; weightlifting was not fulfilling. I started searching. I researched a number of religions. It wasn't until I started reading Scripture that I began to understand that Jesus is not what the world thinks He is. Scripture helped me see that Jesus is Lord, God, and Savior. I committed my life to Him January 15, 1984."

He started ministry by serving in the Maranatha Church under the pastoral ministry of Pastor Charley Rizzo. At the beginning, he mopped floors and cleaned restrooms to be near the work of the church.

Bolella owned a health club when he came to Christ; that made it easy for him to supplement his income for two years as a business consultant to health clubs after starting the Dumont church. The fact that he ministers

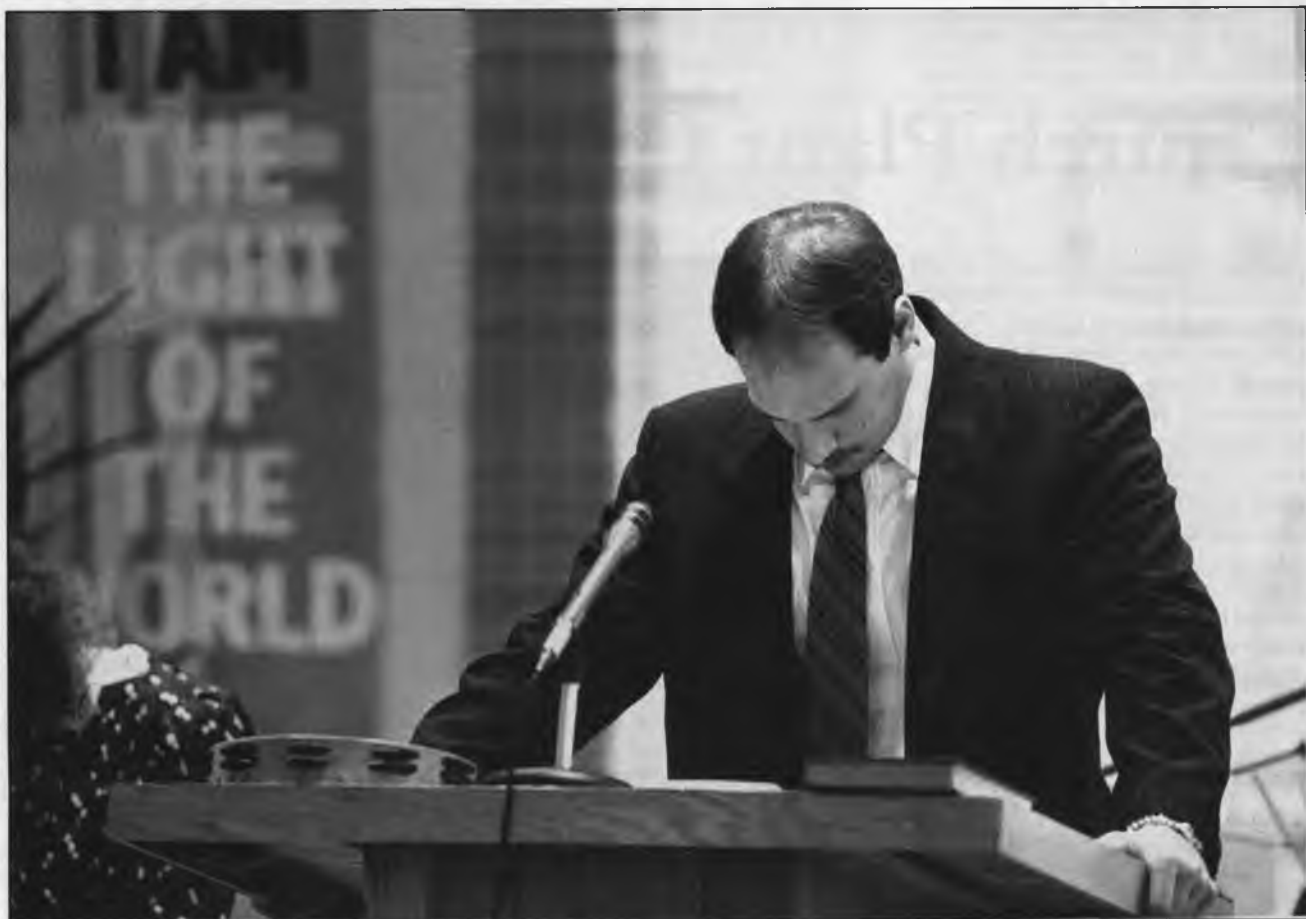
near his home area provides tremendous advantages; he has known many businesspeople, and he understands the cultural groups of his area very well.

Bolella also has long-standing contacts with media businesspeople; he uses this network and applies his promotional skills to develop bulk mailings, a weekly column in the newspaper, radio, and cablevision.

Now the church meets in an upper room over a store building. Joyful music, life application preaching, freedom in worship, and caring relationships are a part of every service. Praise banners decorate the walls of the worship center, pointing people to the living Lord.

The most impressive part of the public services is saturation with the Word of God. The Bible is heard fre-





quently in the prayers, praise choruses, and even in the ritual of church membership—and it is life-transforming and inspiring. The Sunday the GROW editor attended, the usher even included Scripture in his prayer for the offering.

That same Sunday, eight persons joined the church by profession of faith.

When asked about the driving force of his ministry, Bolella answered, "My love for Jesus. He is the major motivating factor for all I do. The Lord pulled me out of a life of garbage and gave me a life of gold. My great desire is to please Him — that drives me every day. That is why I often invest eighty hours per week in the work of God."

Though baby boomers are the focus of ministry at Living Word Church, the congregation welcomes every one without regard to color, nationality, or background. Recently, Beverly Burgess, personal evangelism resource leader from the Church Growth







# Church Plant Grows . . .

Division, trained 15 people in personal evangelism — 30 persons committed their lives to Christ.

When asked about the cause of growth, Pastor Bolella offered three reasons: 1) training strong leaders; 2) inspiring worship, especially in music and preaching; and 3) follow-up of visitors and regular attenders. The church ministers to its members through 20 Tender Loving Care Groups and is adding four support groups to help abused and co-dependency victims.

Living Word Community Church of the Nazarene needs to move again to larger quarters. The congregation requests the prayers of *GROW* readers to meet this urgent need.



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*An adequate budget for evangelism at the beginning of each church year is imperative for each congregation.*

*A revival savings account is useful in building toward adequate support for the evangelist.*

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# Over the Road With Evangelist Larry Leckrone



Evangelist Larry Leckrone at home with his family between revivals.

## MIDLAND, MICHIGAN

The landscape and farmland seemed prettier than I remembered as I drove northward toward Midland. This revival was scheduled to begin on Saturday and close on Wednesday. My daughter, Myndi, was Bible quizzing in Flint that day, so I decided to route my course so that I could stop in and surprise her. I travel alone during the school year so I cannot often be involved in her activities, but this seemed like a good opportunity. She

was excited to see me walk in, and I really enjoyed the quiz.

What a privilege it was to go back to my "childhood home church" in ministry. I talked to Pastor Barry Whetstone and the church was eager for revival. I told him that I felt an unusual anticipation for the meeting, and he concurred. Midland Community Church of the Nazarene was at a "crossroad" where real revival was imperative. The parking lot was full of cars and vans, and the whole facility was a bustle of activity when I arrived, although it was only 2 p.m. I

wondered what was going on and, with slight apprehension, I curiously looked again at my watch. Every evangelist fears showing up late. I breathed easier as I discovered it was their district quizzing day, also held at that location.

From the start of the first service, there was an unusual presence of God that permeated everything that was done. There was an easy freedom in preaching, and the choir sang with anointing. The Holy Spirit was faithful and the altar was graced with kneeling seekers in every service. Dick

# Over the Road . . .

and Jan Taylor sat down front every night, and although they had not attended long, they got really involved in the meeting. Randy and Tanya Hill settled some issues, although they were already active in leadership roles. Testimonies of praise closed each gathering. Board members, like Vernon Wolfgang, testified to new light, and one urged other young leadership to take new initiative as some of the "old guard" passed the baton to the next generation. Bob and Mildred Sirrine, along with other faithful prayer warriors like retired missionary Lois Drake, carried the burden for many years to see real revival come to the church.

Having only casually known Pastor Barry and his wife, Axa, previously, I did not know exactly what to expect. I am sure he felt the same way. It did not take us long to feel a kindred spirit. We not only shared the same burden for the church at large, but we also seemed to have many common interests. God had prepared us individually for the time at hand, and all through the week we felt a fresh confirmation that God was doing a greater work than either of us knew. He repeatedly commented that he thought I had been looking at his preaching notes for the past few weeks. After I left, I listened to a tape of one of the previous week's services and discovered that he was right. God had directed both of us in the same area to prepare the way and bring the light. After Sunday night, with many victories and answers to prayer, the next three days seemed to bring about an urgent carefulness to find and follow God's agenda more than ever. Deep works of grace were accomplished through the Holy Spirit and lives were truly changed. The pastor, laymen, and evangelist all hated to see this revival come to a close.

Even though I left, the revival did not end. The scene went on in Midland and also with me as I commuted to a weekend meeting in Hillsdale, Michigan, and then proceeded to Anderson, Indiana, the following week on the Tuesday-over-Sunday format.

## ANDERSON, INDIANA

This proved to be an experimental and unusual week. Originally, I had consented to my friend, Rev. Larry Wright, pastor of the Goodwin Memorial Church of the Nazarene, to come and conduct the music and prayer ministry with a fellow evangelist who was previously scheduled. I welcomed the opportunity, but little did I realize that in the overall picture, God was about to teach us all a new level of dependence on Him. Due to scheduling problems, the other evangelist needed to change the date a few months prior to the meeting. I tried to work out a shift in my schedule to the previous week, but could not facilitate the change and maintain integrity to my commitments, so I released the Goodwin Memorial Church from the date. Over the next two weeks, I continually felt the strange compulsion to call Larry back, but did not yield.



Finally, after receiving a letter from a pastor requesting a longer meeting, such as Sunday over Sunday, I brought the situation of the Goodwin Memorial Church to God in prayer one more time. I could not escape the strong urge to call and see how their plans were progressing. In talking with Pastor Wright, we both sensed God's leading and the church decided to have a two-week meeting. Unprecedented as it may seem in a day when we are shortening everything in light of the "instant" variety, we found out that some things take a while to "cook." In this case, the first week would be held Wednesday over Sunday with one evangelist, and the sec-

ond would resume Tuesday with me after brief Monday intermission.

I sent the pre-revival material, including the plan for "Designated Prayers." Pastor Wright worked with retired minister and former evangelist Richard Dickson in recruiting and mobilizing the "forces." Involvement was high, including many in the prayer band, orchestra, and choir, all meeting 30 minutes before each service. As the services progressed from night to night, God continued to build on the holiness truth that was laid as a foundation during the previous week. Accumulative enthusiasm and conviction seemed to terrace with "truth upon truth and precept upon precept." There was excitement in the air and everybody that came in the doors felt it. Third generation Nazarenes like Rick Gooding or Cathy Cole are both shining examples of the need to be "re-vived" even after you have been "vived." Both testified to new zeal and optimism for the future ministries God was preparing them to do. Dorcas Banks, along with countless others, attained a new "yes level" and vibrantly testified to new victory for which she had sincerely hungered for quite some time.

The Sunday morning service brought spontaneous altar prayer, one "movement" after the choir special and another after a shortened message from the Word. Wave after wave of victory was witnessed as some finished praying and then others came. It continued in the closing service, which started at 6 p.m. Both the 7 and 8 o'clock hours came and went as people sought God. I will never forget the look in Lisa Moore's eyes as she turned to her husband after they had both prayed at the altar and said, "Stacy, we're never going to make it without God. We need Him in our lives and in our marriage." Both had drifted away but now had come home. The testimonies were still flowing with electricity at 8:45 p.m. and yet no one seemed eager to leave. It really is amazing what praising can do! Revival fires still have the ability to bring about a new fervor to the church, and in this case, God honored a people that were willing to set aside *two weeks of prime time* to wait on Him.

Pastor Larry Wright called me the following week with excitement after

having witnessed another "cave-in" kind of Sunday. On Monday night in the monthly board meeting, leaders concurred that paying the price in prayer had made a difference in the breakthrough they had been seeking so long. They are continuing the plan of "designated people" praying for "designated focus points" at a "designated time" on a continued basis. The revival goes on, and so did I as I made my way over to Middletown, Indiana, for my next assignment.

## MIDDLETOWN, INDIANA

This was an exciting rural church, pastored by Philip Rogers and his wife Sherry. His warm spirit has undoubtedly contributed to his longevity (12 years) and to a growingly contagious church. Their beautiful facility is a tribute to God and an asset to their image in the community. It did not take me very long to figure out that the church was hungry and ready for revival. There was a spontaneous spirit of "yes" by the people to the leadings of the Holy Spirit. Sabrina Morin was reclaimed and became established in continued obedience throughout the week. Couples knelt and parents prayed with their children seeking salvation. Pastor Phil was excited to tell me of some further fruit the following week. Jill Trem-pala had come to the turning point in the revival where she realized that she needed to give her life to God but did not yield. The following Wednesday she accepted the Lord. The Holy Spirit was faithful to nurture the seed and the message continued to speak.

There was a refreshing excitement all week. The Sunday morning service again was restructured on the spot by spontaneous obedience. Prayer at the altar resulted in victories for a mother and daughter, a married backslidden daughter, and numerous other individuals. God intervened, and when He does, His message is always more important than my sermon.

## GREEN ROCK, ILLINOIS

Two days later, I arrived in Green Rock, Illinois. Pastor Lawrence Gill shared his burden as we met at the altar each morning at 7 a.m. In the

services, it became a "balm of Gilead" for some and a "mourner's bench" for others. Seekers of all ages found help. Some sought deliverance from habits; some forgiveness from sin. Some, including the mayor of the city, found new levels of victory as they sought a new dependence on God for consistency, wisdom, and discernment. One of the long-time members, Burton Lang, testified in the last service as to that week having been the culmination of answers to previous prayer for many years and expressed new optimism for the days that lie ahead. To God be the glory, great things HE has done!

As I drove off into the night, I again pondered the scene that I had just witnessed. I could still see the faces. I could still hear the voices. It seemed my ministerial charge was to let go of the "hot end" of one meeting and grab onto the "cold end" of another one week after week. I could not create what happened there, nor anywhere else, for that matter. I felt privileged to be a part of it, yet burdened to see it happen everywhere. Already my mind began to turn toward Brunswick, Georgia. What did God want to do there in a specific way? How would I fit in as the catalyst? I was soon to find out that His work had preceded me.

## BRUNSWICK, GEORGIA

It was great to be back again with precious friends, Pastor Jack and Tillie Dell, at Brunswick First Church of the Nazarene. He is an unusual shepherd, having ministered there previously and built the present church facility. Now to be back in his "second pastorate" there and see how the people love and respond to his ministry is wonderful.

I had been there two times previously in revival — 1982 and 1984. Having been six years since the last time, I was not sure how many people I would recognize. Instantly, faces looked familiar and names quickly began to come back. I was pleased to see Johnny Mae Welch there with her sister in the first service, but I did not realize until later that she had been away from God for about the last five years. After she came to the altar in the second service and later testified

to the reclaiming grace of God, I understood the significance of my being there at that exact time. Through a long series of events in her life, God had brought her to the realization of her immense need of Him. When she found out "that evangelist" was coming back, she decided to come. I felt strangely compelled to change the message and music before the second service, and although I did not understand why, God was molding the service for Johnny, unbeknown to me. In testimony, she said, "Everything spoke to me personally. I've come home and I'm here to stay."

Many others got issues settled during the week, like Ricky Joiner, who came to God in submission and determined to reprioritize his life. Donna Mullet came to the altar in the last service and prayed through to glorious victory. When all had finished praying and testimonies were being shared, she stood up and asked the pastor's wife, Tillie, to stand with her. She told how Tillie had invited and brought her to Sunday school when she was a little girl. She told how much that meant and how later she got away from the Lord in her wayward teen years. Her tearful eyes looked into Tillie's and she thanked her for not giving up on her. She expressed gratitude for the visit that very day to encourage her to attend the last service of the revival. Again, God had used a faithful servant through a simple invitation to bring a lost child home. A few weeks later, she was baptized and remains excited about growing in the Lord. The handbills, bulletin inserts, TV broadcast, and noonday services all contributed to the overall impact, but it was really the prayer and faithfulness of God's own people to keep on loving, caring, and inviting that turned the tide in these lives and others like them.

It was again hard to leave. Sharing in each other's lives during an intense week of involvement always makes it hard to say goodbye. I have learned that "so long" is really less painful and probably more appropriate in the Christian life. Yet, somehow, the release always comes, and the new burden of the next place is always realized. What a privilege it is to see God's hand at work in various ways in the church today. Revivals are alive and well!

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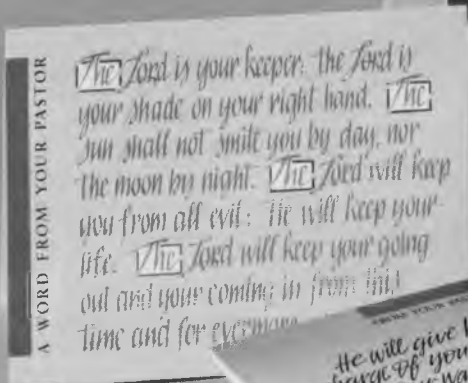
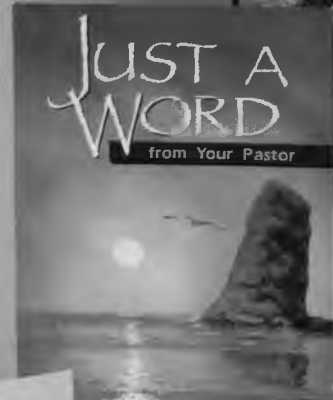
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# Three Nazarene Congregations Meet in Same Building

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The Spanish church, starting with 28 members, averaged 55 for the church year and once had an attendance of 81. A high spiritual tone forms the foundation for the new work — in less than one year since organization, they have had three revivals and four half-nights of prayer.

A newly formed Haitian congregation, as yet not officially organized, also uses the Jersey City church for Sunday services.

Pastor Santiago is a bivocational church planter who works as general manager of maintenance for Applied Housing, a corporation that rents more than 2,000 apartments. Several visitors at Immanuel's organizational meeting were associates and co-workers from his secular work place.

God's work prospers at Jersey City.

**W**hoever heard of organizing a new church on a hot August Saturday night?

Twenty-eight charter members joined the church in that organizational service attended by nearly two hundred people. Blessing, enthusiasm, and anticipation characterized the meeting. Songs of victory, readings from the *Nazarene Manual*, exhortations by the pastor, and the preaching of the Word by Dr. Mucci all contributed to the holy atmosphere.

Pastor Ferdinand Santiago was installed as the pastor.

However, long before that August evening, God burdened Pastor Santiago with a vision for Jersey City. He felt the Father had assigned him the task of planting a Spanish-speaking church in this geographic area where thousands of persons with Latin American cultural and family roots live.

As Santiago questioned the Lord about a building for the new church, God broadened his vision to include his pastoring the English-speaking Jersey church that had declined to a small Sunday attendance.

Prior to this time, Santiago had been appointed to pastor the English-speaking church, which he did for fourteen months before organizing the Spanish church, starting on December 2, 1989. With devotion, passion, and acceptance, Pastor Santiago continues to serve both congregations to this day. The Anglo attendance in this rapidly changing neighborhood now runs between 20 and 25.



## CHAPLAINCY MINISTRIES



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# A Day in the Life of the Lamb's Center Through the Eyes of the Homeless

It is 5:30 Tuesday morning and I make my way over to a place where I can get a free, hot breakfast. I met another homeless man on the subway yesterday and he told me about this place. He said he has gotten a lot of help there.

After waiting outside with other homeless people, I see a woman named Peggy step outside. She hands out tickets for the morning breakfast and tells us to return at 7:15. Some of the people waiting aren't able to get tickets. Peggy says those who didn't get tickets can come back then for a bag lunch.

With ticket in hand, I find a corner to sleep in Grand Central until 7:15. I hope no one steals my possessions while I sleep, and that I am able to wake up in an hour.

Luckily, a passerby was screaming at someone and woke me up at 7:00. I get up and walk back over to the Lamb's.

When we all get seated for breakfast, a man tells us of God's love and forgiveness. He reminds us that we are all sinners who can receive the grace of Christ. I think everyone in the room felt that he was right on about that. He continues by reading Scripture and praying for us and for the meal. Then people come out with trays full of plates heaped with hot food. With smiles on their faces and pleasant words, the meal is quite enjoyable. Why would they bother to get up so early to serve the homeless? I am so full from all that food, I have

trouble staying awake.

The people around me are talking about seeing the doctor. Others are asking where they can get clean clothes. The people volunteering suggest we talk to the person behind the desk in the reception room.

When I finish eating, I wander into the reception room and get in line to talk to the receptionist, Don. He speaks to everyone coming into the room, takes down their names, and assures them that they will get the needed services.



While waiting in the chairs circled around the reception room, a man calls out my name and talks to me about the clothing I will receive: what type, color, and size. Then he leaves the room to get my clothes. While I am waiting for him to return, I listen to what is going on at Don's desk. He gets a call from the Crown Hotel, a welfare hotel whose social worker asks Don to prepare a food package for one of his hotel residents that just suffered from a fire at her apartment. He gets similar calls and is able to help in each situation.

Sitting there, I begin chatting with Don. I tell him about my public assistance situation, or lack thereof. He then signs me up to see the social worker, Janelle. While he is taking down my information, the person who ran to get my clothing returns. I continue talking to Don, new clothes in hand. He lets me know that I can see the doctor now and return to the reception room to wait for the social worker.

Straight down the hall and to the right is the health clinic. Marge, the nurse, greets me as I come in. She interviews me and prepares me for the doctor's examination. I notice that there is also a doctor working on men's feet. The homeless have many foot problems. Some from not having the proper size shoes, some from not bathing for a while, some from not having the ability to remove their shoes to let their feet breathe, and some from being on their feet all the time. I think I will try to get in to see the foot doctor.

# The Lamb's Center . . .



Mark, the doctor, introduces himself. He asks me what he can do for me. I tell him that I have felt weak and think that I may have a temperature. After spending some time with me, Mark tells me that I have pneumonia and that he feels I should have an H.I.V. test. I have always known that I might be susceptible to AIDS since I have lived a street life, which included sex and drugs, but I never thought I would ever really get the virus. Knowing what some of my friends with AIDS have gone through doesn't make this situation a whole lot easier. Mark is very understanding and gives me some encouraging words. He explains how the AIDS virus is transmitted and how the antibody test works. Then he draws my blood and gives me a copy of the Gospel of John to read. Mark also tells me about the effects of cocaine and that there is a Cocaine Anonymous group that meets at the Lamb's every Friday evening. When I leave Mark's office, he asks me to come back next week for my test results.

Next, I make my way into the foot doctor's room. He gives me a basin with hot water and soap to soak my feet in. I haven't had this kind of treatment in years! After soaking my feet for about ten minutes, the doctor looks at my feet and tends to the cracks, sores, and disease; then he

gives me a pair of clean socks.

I go back into the reception room where Don is still busy at the desk. Shortly, Janelle calls my name and invites me into her office. She starts talking to me about my present living situation. She asks about my unemployment situation and where I sleep, etc. I tell her about an accident that happened on the job some fifteen years ago. That accident left me disabled and I was not able to get any financial compensation from the incident. It wasn't long after I was disabled that I started using drugs. And it wasn't long after I started using drugs that I became an addict. Drugs consumed my life, and still do.

After listening to me, Janelle writes the necessary letters to open a public assistance case for me. She says I will need to do some follow-up on this, so I should come and see her next week.

I finally decide it is time for me to leave the warmth and care of The Lamb's and go to the streets. Stepping outside the door, I encounter a long line of women and children. They are waiting in line for a ticket to the noon meal. I hope they will receive the same care and concern for their needs as I did. It won't be too long before I come to The Lamb's for a second visit.

—Reprinted from *The Lamb's Newsletter*



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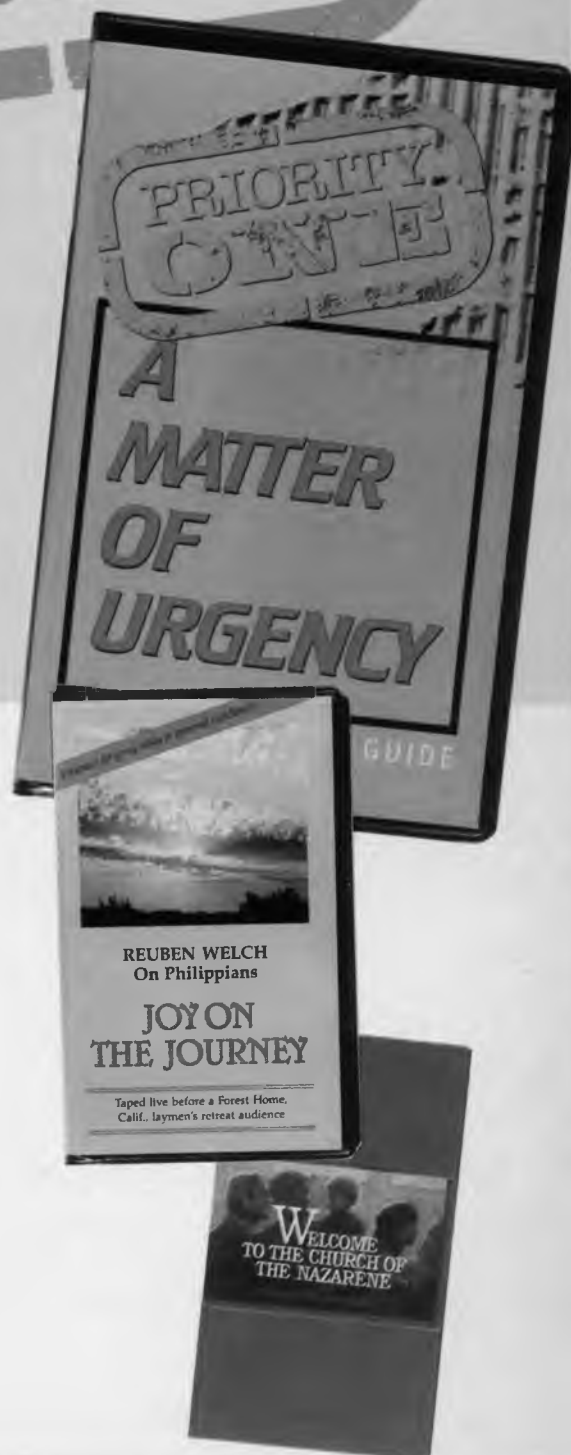
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3. Reasons for your desire to relocate.
4. Salary expectations or requirements.

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can make an  
evangelistic church.

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in my name welcomes me."**

**—Jesus**

## **GROW — A JOURNAL OF CHURCH GROWTH, EVANGELISM AND DISCIPLESHIP**

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# PHILIP — SUPERB MODEL FOR EVANGELISM

**W**hen persecution scattered the early church, Philip, the second lay leader elected to the first church board, was quickly promoted by the Holy Spirit from serving tables to starting revival meetings. The situation was desperate. Stephen's witness and resulting martyrdom severely complicated matters for the struggling group of believers as Saul started imprisoning Christians and destroying the church. The apostles, thoroughly confused by these threatening events, went into hiding at Jerusalem.

Philip's response is utterly amazing. Though inexperienced and probably frightened, he boldly witnessed for Christ in a strange place among unlikely prospects. So much in his circumstances could have caused an ordinary believer to keep quiet. To play it safe. To do what was expected. To refuse to be a pioneer for the gospel. Or he might even have decided to keep his place as a faithful layman who had been assigned the task of waiting tables. The natural tendency would have been to leave the hard work of evangelizing the Samaritans to the big guns headquartered at Jerusalem.

But the Bible records several startling surprises. Philip, without official assignment or certified training, shared Christ in Samaria. His vital faith found effective expression, like faith always does. So the crowd listened. People believed. The Holy Spirit provided miraculous results. And there was great joy in the city.

In Samaria, the work of God was so convincing that Peter and John, representing the church's officialdom, checked out the results, were impressed by what they saw, preached the possibilities of the fullness, and the Samaritan believers received the Holy Spirit. Then, right in the midst of this red-hot revival, God assigned Philip to go to a desert place to share his faith with one person — the Ethiopian eunuch.

Philip's evangelistic ministry teaches several important lessons for present-day outreach.

● **God begins evangelistic achievement with a passion for the lost in one believer's heart.** There is a good possibility that Samaria was not on the church plant opportunities list at the home office of the early church. It was not an ideal place where people had been begging for the gospel. The lesson: Regardless of the circumstances and environment — friendly or alien, crowded or sparse, urban or rural, sophisticated or illiterate, upscale or poverty — people need Christ, and some will respond when given an opportunity to really know Who Jesus is. That means that the Christ follower who lives in close contact with the Lord simply cannot

keep quiet about personal faith. The word of witness always gets out, and when it does, someone finds Jesus.

● **God is already at work in every human life.** Before Philip even thought about leaving Jerusalem, God was already at work in the Samaritan population. And in even more dramatic ways, the Holy Spirit was preparing the Ethiopian so Philip could "tell him the good news about Jesus." This is an assuring fact for every evangelistic effort: Before we say the first word, the Lord Jesus has already been at work in the life experiences of those to whom He sends us.

● **God gives amazing results for evangelism.** He gave Philip a whole new nationality in the Samaritans, and He opened the African race and the African continent with His witness to the Ethiopian. The same message attracted both. Though these conversions represent great differences in race, culture, and formative religious roots, they illustrate the heartbeat of God that all people everywhere should hear the good news. And with these conversions, new open doors fulfilled the commission of Acts 1:8, "You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in

all Judea and in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." Hearts all around us on every hand are already being prepared by Jesus.

● **God honors many methods.** Philip's ministry to the Samaritans is an example of public mass evangelism, while his ministry to the Ethiopian is an obvious example of personal evangelism. Could it be that the church's present-day evangelistic efforts are hindered by our highly individual preference for one evangelistic method? What could happen if every believer

saw the possibilities of his own ministry of soul winning to be at the heart of his relationship with his Lord?

Then the issue is not method but passion, which shows in an eagerness to share the good news we have received. Then the method would be used to fit the circumstance rather than a mere preference of technique by the individual messenger. Then we simply share, like all good news, the fact that Christ has invaded our lives with quality, mobility, meaning, and peace. To reach everyone, both public proclamation and private testimony are needed and useful. Though the message is always the same, the method can be altered so it makes sense to the person we seek to introduce to the Savior.

God gives us the privilege of being change-makers in people's lives. We share the good news of Christ. They believe and the gospel revolutionizes their lives. And the miracle of joy takes place again and again even as it did in Samaria and in the desert.

Somebody is ready to hear your witness now.

—NEIL B. WISEMAN  
Editor, GROW





