

DECEMBER, JANUARY, FEBRUARY 1986-87

# PREACHER'S MAGAZINE

Olivet Nazarene University  
KANKAKEE, ILLINOIS



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## PERFECT LOVE

"Perfect love is a kind of self-derelection, a wandering out of ourselves; it is a kind of voluntary death, wherein the lover dies to himself and all his own interest, not thinking of them nor caring for them any more, and minding nothing but how he may please and gratify the party whom he loves."

—Henry Scougal

# We Get Letters

## APPRECIATED "TABLE TALK"

I have just completed Nina Beegle's article titled "Table Talk at the Bledsaws" (*Preacher's Magazine*, JJA '86). This article is very well done and conveys the feeling of this family so well. My congratulations to her for the concept of the article and the way she put it together.

When I was coordinator of urban ministries, one of the first families I met was the Bledsaw family. I was so impressed with them at that time that Jim and I became quite good friends as we struggled to get the attention of the denomination. It is gratifying to see all of this publicity out of Chicago, and particularly on this fine family.

—R. Franklin Cook, editor  
World Mission magazine

## PARTNERS IN MINISTRY

I appreciate your work in providing contributions to my ministry through the *Preacher's Magazine*.

It seems that the subject of the pastoral vote and recall has attracted much attention across our denomination. I have been on both sides of the fence, having been voted out in my first pastorate. What I thought was pretty successful was acclaimed failure by a few. Now in my second church, I look back and thank the Lord for a district superintendent who still believed that I could make it in the ministry.

I am also thankful for a work of grace that helped me stay sweet and portray a Christlike attitude when it would have been easy to be bitter. Had my Christian parents not prayed for me, I might not have survived those days before moving. And I'm thankful for printing the articles on this touchy subject. I found comfort to know of others who have been through this experience and to know that the Lord helps them, too. I am most thankful for a good recall this year. I just hope that the good votes continue so that I may continue to do His bidding.

—Claude Crisp

## MOTIVE COMMENDABLE, BUT . . .

As a reader who didn't hear you preach those sermons that you now deplore (editorial, JJA '86 *Preacher's Magazine*), I have no way of judging how far you failed, and therefore how appropriate your apology. Your spirit, of course, is right. If we have missed the mark through ignorance, and then discover the failure, apologies are one of the fruits of holiness.

My nagging question is: Will the article be interpreted as your judgment that the failure is a common one today? If so, will it likely result in less holiness preaching, or more? I know that your motive is to improve our preaching of the truth, not to lessen it. But in today's climate, I wonder if this approach serves as a purifier or a dampener on our preaching. I don't know the answer, but obviously, I have an opinion.

As I hear reports and read the signs, more of our pastors have problems with failing to proclaim the message rather than proclaiming it unwisely. If that be true, it seems our tasks, in order, are: (1) to experience God's sanctifying grace, (2) to preach it clearly, and (3) to preach it well.

My concern for you, and for all men and women in influential positions in the church, especially in teaching roles, is that God will keep us strong proponents in addition to being wise critics. I think I see a subtle danger that grows out of the nature of our analytical task in teaching. It is our assignment to help clarify and correct errors in the church—in doctrine, practice, and organization. In carrying out this task, I think we can sometimes emphasize so strongly the points that we seek to correct that our students and readers get the impression that there is more wrong than right with the doctrine.

During my years of teaching and administration, I tried to hold several revivals each year—for the sake of my own balance. After trying to preach the message and lead persons into a deeper experience, I always found myself more sympathetic with the efforts of those who sought to proclaim the truth, and less critical of their errors.

I especially appreciated the sixth paragraph, in which you emphasized leading rather than driving. And I concurred wholeheartedly with the last section of counsels selected from Wesley. I look forward to your next editorial on the right emphasis.

—Albert F. Harper

## THE SPIRIT WAS GOOD, BUT . . .

Your humility is commendable, but your apologies are questionable. Your editorial in the JJA '86 issue of the *Preacher's Magazine* is typical of much of the preaching, teaching, and writing in our holiness circles today. The urgency of sanctification is lost.

My pastors (I have followed their examples) told believers to press over the Jordan into the promised Canaan. I'm afraid articles like yours might leave many believers standing on the bank, only to turn back into the wilderness and be lost in indecision.

I know about John Wesley's admonition to "Seek . . . calmly and quietly wait." A much greater than I said that. Carefully examined, it's sort of like saying, "Seek earnestly to be married, but calmly and quietly wait." There will never be a marriage that way. At some time there will have to be some deciding and some action. I've always believed it was God doing the waiting. He's more than willing to sanctify.

Your idea about being denied was interesting, as well. I have sung that song many times, and I believe it to be a valid scriptural declaration. God would never deny us anything He has promised us. But the devil will! He even tries to convince

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# THE PREACHER'S MAGAZINE

Proclaiming Christian Holiness

Volume 62 Number 2

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A Guest Editorial by Wayne E. Caldwell  
General Editor, The Wesleyan Church

# A SINNER ONCE, BUT NOW ADOPTED

**N**o one is born "born again." Nothing is more clear than that in some way Adam's first sin has been passed to the whole human family (Rom. 5:19). Nearly every Christian credo acknowledges this biblical teaching. In fact, any group that does not address Adam's sin as being transmissible is called into question.

A newborn baby is certainly innocent and without moral or ethical responsibility for any act. A growing child of just a few years of age may not be accountable for sinful acts. Who knows? Who can rightly judge? When does a child reach that "magic" age of accountability?

I certainly don't know. I am quite certain it is different in different people's lives for a variety of reasons—genetic inheritances, environmental factors, training in ethical understanding, even intellectual acumen. But sooner or later, every person with normal faculties of mind and spirit will pass the age of "innocence" (Rom. 3:23).

Thus, every person becomes their own sinful self by choice. Guilt and condemnation, responsibility and accountability for willful, voluntary acts of transgressing the known laws of God become a reality.

Sin separates every person from the Creator, until and unless the provision of Christ is known, understood, and received by repentance and faith. By right of creation every person of the human family should belong to God. The very air that we breathe, the life that we have now is given and sustained by God.

But sin and Satan are usurpers. Sin has deceived each person in turn (Rom. 6:16), so that every thought and intent of man's heart is only evil continually (Gen. 6:5). With the redemptive provision of Christ, each one has the privilege and right to claim citizenship in His kingdom and membership in His family. It is to this end and purpose that the gospel invitation is extended to every person.

One of the glorious teachings of God's Word that may be neglected as much as any other is the fact and mean-

ing of our adoption into the family of God. I remember many sermons in my growing-up years on the new birth. Equally as much emphasis was placed on justification, regeneration, and entire sanctification.

But I cannot recall a single sermon on the teaching of adoption. There may have been some; there probably were. But they made no impression on me. Maybe I was asleep. But even since being an adult Christian, however, I have not heard the adoption declared or explained clearly. I have not been asleep. What little I have heard in the past 30 or 40 years about the adoption has left me unimpressed.

It may be taken as egotistical, but every time I present the beautiful biblical teaching of being adopted into the family of God, my hearers catch a new glimpse of God's glory. I have a reason, too, for underscoring this doctrine. I was an adopted son into the home and family of a godly Christian man who married my mother when I was seven years old.

I don't ever remember my real dad. I don't remember ever sitting on his lap and calling him "Daddy." I don't remember him calling me "Son" or telling me that he loved me. When I was a wee, small baby, he walked off one day. He deserted my mother and his three children. He just walked off one day and never came back. No one knew where he went or why. He just disappeared.

After seven years, according to state laws then, he was assumed deceased, and my mother was released from the marriage to marry the man who became my stepfather.

It was not until after three years in the U.S. Air Force during World War II, and while I was in undergraduate studies that Prof. Edward D. Angell suggested in systematic theology class that the adoption into the family of God implies sonship. It gives new privileges. It also entails responsibility. It involves nurture, discipline, growth, development, progress, maturation.

From those concepts I easily and quickly drew the

analogies between my earthly adoption and that which Christ died to obtain for every person of the human family. **WARNING:** When an adoption occurs in the human family, it must be joyful, meaningful, and beneficent to be analogous with God's plan for our adoption into His family. Mine was and has been greatly blessed and enjoyable, both in the earthly and heavenly realms.

### THE ADOPTION DENOTES OUR POSITION

Where He is, we are. Paul states that even here in this life we are "in heavenly places in Christ" (Eph. 1:3). We are part of "the household of God" (2:19). Once we were outcasts, children of wrath, aliens, strangers, children of disobedience, dead in sin, afar off, foreigners (chap. 3, *passim*).

For the first seven years of my life, no man ever called me "Son." No man ever showed me love and affection. But that all changed suddenly and dramatically. On the day of their marriage, my mother and my new daddy emptied all the belongings we had in a little three-room house and moved it into his big white farmhouse 12 miles away.

My brother had a room all to himself. My sister had a separate room. My parents had their room. And I had a room all to myself. There were rooms left over in that "heavenly place." Where he, my new daddy, was I was. I had visited that farm. I knew the animals he had, with barns and fields so big I could easily get lost. No longer a poor kid from the edge of town who had no dad, I was now beginning to be *somebody*! My first morning on that big farm taught me something else about adoption.

### THE ADOPTION DEFINES OUR PRIVILEGES

What He does, we do! Our new relationship carried wonderful privileges. If anyone is "in Christ," he is a new, different person. The old has gone, and everything is new (2 Cor. 5:17).

The change in my life in both adoptions was dramatic and of profound significance. My new daddy rose early in the morning. He did not know what it was to sleep in—any day, until on his deathbed at age 93. For all my years after my adoption, he was up before the sun. "Early to bed, early to rise" was his style.

My very first day was a long one. I heard him when he first stepped out of bed. I crept out of my bed, dressed quickly, and just as he started out the door to do chores, he heard my steps. Turning, he saw me in the dim light of the lantern he carried. Speaking softly, he said, "Good morning, Son!" It was long before dawn. I knew he wasn't talking about the eastern sun. It was my new name. It was the first time any man had ever said that to me.

That new name spoke of my relationship to this man. So we did the chores. We fed the pigs. We watered the chickens. We milked the cows, my new daddy and I.

After an hour or more, chores were done. It was time for us to "break the fast." That's what he always called it. I was as excited as I was hungry. My new home. My new daddy. My new name. My new fun things to do. All these things combined in my seven-year-old life to make it seem like heaven on earth begun. But I learned something else that first day about adoption.

### THE ADOPTION DETERMINES OUR PRACTICE

When we become believers and enter into a new relationship with Jesus Christ, what He says, we obey. Where He leads, we follow. Sometimes it may be with discipline stern and direct (Heb. 12:6-11). At other times He may lead us with gentle forbearance or mild rebuke.

My new daddy was born in a dugout on the same farm where he lived his whole life. He had learned that hard work called for a huge breakfast. He wanted everything for that first meal of the day. My mother knew this, and breakfast was ready when we had finished the chores. There on the table were bacon and eggs, pancakes, potatoes and gravy, milk, cereal with real cream, and hot biscuits!

We sat down to the table, and as I reached for a pancake, a big hand came down on my arm, ever so gently guiding it into my lap. My new daddy said, "Wait a minute, Son, we are going to say grace." I did not know anyone by the name of Grace. No one in the family had that name. How were we going to say "Grace"? Was it to be altogether? Would we go around the table and say the name one by one?

Then I watched as my new daddy bowed his head and began to talk. He prayed to God and thanked Him for the food. So that was grace? It happened every meal. Grace was there! I soon had the pancake I had reached for, along with most of everything else. My stomach was soon packed and bulging. I excused myself, pushed my chair back to the table, and was halfway out the door, when my new daddy said, "Wait a minute, Son. No one leaves until all are finished. Then we are going to have family altar."

Well, of all things we were going to have! My daddy did want everything for breakfast. When all were finished, I saw my new daddy take a big black book with the letters B-I-B-L-E on the cover. Under my breath, I pronounced, BIB-le. Then he opened the book and read. Well, it was a story about a boy and fish and loaves of bread. That's not bad, I thought, to give away all he had and see it increase like that! Then the BIB-le was closed.

The strangest thing happened after that. My new daddy got on his knees and began to look through the back of his chair. He had lost something. I looked at my mother, and she pointed, "Down, boy."

Down on my knees with my mother, my brother, and my sister, I heard my new daddy ask for God's help through the day. He prayed for my mother by name. She was not a Christian at that time. He prayed for my brother by name. Then he prayed for my sister. By that time I had concluded that he would go all the way. He did! He mentioned my name in prayer and said, "Help this boy to give his heart to Jesus and live all his life in service to You."

Every day it was the same. Not a day passed that all of us were not named in prayer. We did not go to school, to the field, to town, anywhere, but that our names were mentioned to God. One by one over the years that followed, we joined in prayer as we came to know in person the Person to whom our daddy prayed. Then one day I learned another thing about my adoption.

### THE ADOPTION DESCRIBES MY POSSESSIONS

I had never hurt so much in my life. I hurt all over and could not tell where I hurt most. I was a freshman in high

(Continued on page 16)

# REFLECTIONS ON PREACHING CHRISTIAN HOLINESS

by Oscar F. Reed

*Professor Emeritus, Nazarene Theological Seminary*

**S**he was sharp, affluent, attractive. With mischievous eyes, she said to me, "Why are you a Nazarene?"

Why was she asking the question? She was a member of the church, though obviously not integrated into the doctrinal and ethical traditions the fellowship represented.

I replied rather slowly, trying to assess her motives.

"I was born into the church. I know no other. My grandparents were asked to leave a mainline church in New York City for their convictions in 1892."

"That is not enough," she replied. "Why are *you* a member?"

"I am convinced in my own mind and heart," I responded, "that the church I have given myself to is on the right road scripturally, theologically, and ethically. The doctrine and life of Christian holiness has meant more to me than I can ever express. The church reflects the truth of the Scriptures, and its distinguishing doctrine is deeply satisfying."

With that same twinkle of the eye she replied, "Those are only labels."

I did not suspect or charge her with lack of commitment. She did represent, however, a segment of our newer people who are not interested in theological shibboleths from the pulpit. They *will* respond, however, to a preacher who is willing to take the Bible and carefully move from exegesis to exposition to application with confidence and sensitivity.

There is also another group: those who have been in the church for many years and miss the traditional vocabulary they were raised with.

Perhaps Fred Craddock in *Overhearing the Gospel* has raised the central issue in doctrinal preaching: "How do you preach to people who have heard the gospel for 30 years?" May I add a second question: How do you preach to people who have come out of secular humanism and know very little about the gospel?

As preachers, we are faced with an authority crisis (institutional, prophetic, and priestly). Our people no longer feel obligated to accept the preacher's word just because he said it, or because the church believes it.

My mind goes back 20 years to a little stone church in the wintry wastes of the Oklahoma panhandle. That night I preached to 15 people from John 16 on the nature and function of the Holy Spirit. After the service an elderly rancher in

boots and leather jacket crushed my hand and hugged me, saying, "Young man, if I had heard that message 40 years ago, I would be a different man today."

I recently closed a holiness convention in the East in which Christ met the needs of a number of scientists and government men. One witnessed to the congregation, "I thought I had given all that I had to the Lord, but now I give Him my mind."

What guidelines can the preacher follow to speak to the affluent matron, the rancher, and the computer scientist? We may face them all in the same preaching moment. There are three observations that will prepare us for those guidelines.

(1) While we must discover our roots in the Word, it is helpful to be conversant with the tradition of Wesley that teaches, corrects, and guides our interpretation of the Word. While we preach Christ, not Wesley, his rich understanding will help us proclaim the message in our day.

(2) Christian holiness preaching has become ambiguous and cloudy to some. I am convinced that the problem does not lie totally in worldliness and lack of commitment, but in a deficiency of understanding, which places the issue at the feet of every preacher.

If we do not allow the Holy Spirit to speak through us with clarity and truth, how can we communicate to our people? How can we expect obedience of faith in the face of preaching that does not pay the price of disciplined biblical insight?

Now I know I must modify the preceding sentence to allow



Oscar F. Reed



the Lord to use any instrument at His disposal, such as a holy example and a godly spirit. However, I am addressing my remarks to the pastor and evangelist who, week after week, speak to a congregation that longs for direction and inspiration under the motivation of holy love.

(3) Every semester at the seminary I took 20 students to share in "Homiletical Studies of Holiness." The course involved exegesis, theology, exposition, application, and proclamation. I began by asking the students for their observations on "holiness preaching." At first they were reluctant to answer, but they finally began to share their feelings. The following are representative.

a. "The sermons I have heard are more experientially than biblically oriented."

b. "Some preachers have not done their homework, either seeing holiness around every corner, or not seeing the holiness emphasis in the great motifs of the Scriptures."

c. "The vocabulary used by some is more theological than scriptural, more definitive than descriptive."

d. "Some preachers sound like they were trying to prove something rather than allowing the truth to flow through the authority of the Word."

e. "A few are preaching theology and not the truth from which theology comes. They do not recognize that while scriptural revelation does not change, the language of theology does change."

How good it was to hear several say: "My pastor knows the Word. He takes the responsibility to do his exegetical work. He is convincing in his proclamation, and I thank God for his direction. I'm here because of my pastor."

What is holiness preaching? It is the proclamation of the gospel of Christ, with emphasis given to the cleansing from all sin in entire sanctification, resulting in a life made perfect in love under the Lordship of the Master. Or to put it more simply, holiness preaching is the proclamation of holy love calling for a response of total obedience to Christ's will.

Mildred Wynkoop states the issue succinctly: "One major concern motivates those who stand responsibly within the Wesleyan tradition, namely a consuming desire to know and to do the will of God and to help others into a like relationship. There is a growing sensitivity to the leading of the Spirit. The Scriptures are read less to defend a position theologically than to discover deeper spiritual truths that will challenge and vitalize a living relationship with God. The relatedness of God's grace to the entire man is the unique insight of Wesleyan theology, and every effort is to deepen and strengthen that bond of fellowship between God and man in all of his life's relationships."

How does one go about effecting these concerns in preaching holiness?

**1. The first and most important guideline is that the holiness message must find its center in Jesus Christ.**

The disciples, newly filled with the Holy Spirit, were holiness preachers. Peter's message on the Day of Pentecost should say something about the content of his proclamation. He explained the meaning of what they were witnessing (Acts 2:15-21), he encouraged their faith (vv. 22-35), and he pressed the moral claims of Christ upon them. He told them, "God hath made . . . Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ" (v. 36, cf. vv. 38-39).

That Jesus was both Lord (*kurios*) and Christ (*Christos*) was revolutionary. The emperor was both Lord and Savior. To accept Christ as Lord cut through the very center of the Christian's deepest loyalties.

In Acts it was Christ who is preached. "He is central. *History* points to him. *He saves*. Men have killed the *prince of life*. He is the stone set at naught by the builders; but now is the 'head of the corner.'"<sup>1</sup> It is Christ who makes the most throughgoing moral demands that result in a radical change of life's patterns. One is amazed at the centrality of Christ in Acts.

Preaching Christ brought conviction for personal sin. It is not sanctification that is stressed in Acts, but Christ and the need to be filled with His Spirit. Perhaps this very emphasis is what sanctification really means.

Preaching Christ is central to holiness preaching. If sanctification is the work of the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit's work is to confront men with Christ, then "it must have deep affinity with Christ whose central purpose is to sanctify men and women."<sup>2</sup>

As sinners, we pray for the mercy of God in the name of Christ. As believers, we pray that Christ through His Spirit will make us a place fit for His indwelling. "This simply observes that the human appropriation of that which theological terms stand for is by way of specific and understandable adjustments to the will of God."<sup>3</sup> It also relates to the manner in which the truth of sanctification is most clearly communicated. If biblical preaching is preaching Christ, holiness preaching, in so far as it is biblical, is also preaching Christ.

Christ is central in the three great Thessalonian passages on holiness. Paul's moving prayer in 1 Thess. 3:10-13 is for an increase in love for one another and for all men in order that they might be *established* in holiness for one purpose—the coming of the Lord. It is Christ who enables them to abound in love. It is Christ who is the Source of their establishment. It is Christ who makes their hearts blameless in holiness. It is Christ who prepares them for the Second Coming, the blessed *parousia*.

In 4:3-7, the noun form *hagiasmos* (sanctification) indicates a call to moral purity under the Lordship of Christ.

In 5:23-24, the verb form *hagiazō*, is a call to total cleansing in order that the whole man be kept blameless at the coming of the Lord—with the great promise in verse 24, "Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it."

In every great New Testament holiness passage, Christ is at the center. When we ask, "What is the heart and core of the Spirit's work today?" we must answer that the central activity of His work of empowering, enabling, and purifying reveals the risen, reigning Savior, the Jesus of history, who is the Christ of faith. It is through the Spirit that Christ may be known, loved, trusted, honored, and praised.

It is through the work of the Spirit that we enjoy personal fellowship with Jesus in order that we can choose the path of sacrificial response to His love and to His call.

It is through the work of the Spirit that personal transformation of character into Jesus' likeness starts to take place. We move from our natural selfishness into the Christ-like path of righteousness, service, and conquest of evil.

It is through the work of the Spirit that we are given the assurance of being loved, redeemed, and adopted through Christ so as to be "heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ" (Rom. 8:17, NASB). And it is the work of the Spirit that brings the fulness of joy in Christ (John 16:24).

J. I. Packer has expressed the relationship between the Spirit and Jesus Christ explicitly:

The Spirit's message to us is never, "Look at me; listen to me; come to me; get to know me," but always, "Look at *him*, and see his glory; listen to *him*, and hear his word; go

to him, and have life; get to know him, and taste the gift of joy and peace." The Spirit, we might say, is the matchmaker, the celestial marriage broker, whose role is to bring us and Christ together and ensure that we stay together. As the second Paraclete, the Spirit leads us constantly to the original Paraclete, who himself draws near . . . through the second Paraclete's coming to us (John 14:18). Thus by enabling us to discern the first Paraclete, and by moving us to stretch out our hands to him as he comes from his throne to meet us, the Holy Spirit glorifies Christ, according to Christ's own word.<sup>4</sup>

In every great New Testament holiness passage, Christ is at the center. Those who reject the gospel of holiness are resentful of the way it is portrayed rather than the truth it represents. If love is the motive of the preacher's proclamation, and its deliverance is dependent on the Holy Spirit, judgment and conviction will follow. The results will come, not because of the preacher's coercing, but because of the Spirit's wooing.

## **2. Holiness preaching must be scripturally oriented, finding its authority in the Word of God.**

What more can be said? If we believe that authority for faith and practice in the Christian community is found in the Word, the Bible becomes our recourse for proclamation. That means that the preacher must be a student of the Word. While it is better that he be conversant with the biblical languages, there are many qualified helps available so that he can be reasonably assured of the accuracy of his interpretation. There is no substitute for thorough examination of the Word in planning to communicate the message of holiness.

A number of years ago I was asked to share my understanding of Christian holiness with a group of young adults from a large evangelical church. After an hour of exegesis and exposition, I expected a lively discussion. The leader arose, however, and said, "Thank you for your study and fellowship. I see no difference in our understanding apart from the use of certain theological expressions for which we have other words." I have usually found that devout minds discover a common ground in the Word.

## **3. Holiness preaching must emphasize grace.**

The relation of God's grace to the whole man is the unique insight of Wesleyan theology and must be at the heart of the proclamation of holiness. Grace is exercised on man's entire being as unmerited favor. Entire sanctification, just as justification by faith, is a work of God's grace, purifying from all sin and perfecting in divine love.

It is very easy for the preacher to slip into a "works-righteousness" motif in which he inadvertently talks about what people ought to *do* in meeting the conditions of commitment. Perhaps the best corrective exhortation is given in 1 Thess. 3:12-13: "And may the Lord cause you to increase and abound in love for one another, and for all men, just as we also do for you; so that He may establish your hearts unblamable in holiness" (NASB). That *establishment* is of grace, His gift a result of our love relations with God and with others. When we love, God is in a position to sanctify, and we are in a position to respond wholeheartedly.

A missionary candidate knelt at the seminary altar. He looked up at me and said, "Dr. Reed, I've been to the altar a number of times, and I am planning to stay here until God sanctifies me."

I thought for a moment and replied, "Are you trying to tell God something? He has your telephone number and will dial it in His good time." He looked at me for a moment and said, "I'll take God's Word as a promise," and walked from the sanctuary.

Two days later I saw him coming down the hall with a radiant face.

"You know, Professor, God did dial my number, and I responded with a great Amen. I know He has sanctified me." I remembered, then, the words of Paul in 2 Cor. 1:18-20: "For all the promises of God find their Yes in him. That is why we utter the Amen through him, to the glory of God" (RSV).

Something happens to our people when they realize that what they are and what they do is all of grace.

## **4. Holiness preaching should be expositional rather than exegetical, descriptive rather than definitive.**

It is one thing to discover meanings through exegesis, it is quite another to use exegesis as a ground for exposition. Exegesis is for the study, exposition for the pulpit. Exposition expresses what exegesis indicates.

Doctrinal preaching is expressed descriptively more effectively rather than definitively. One can define "depravity" in theological language without communicating its meaning to a congregation, but he can describe the truth through biblical illustration and figures of speech until the term comes alive for the people.

The new emphasis on *narration* in biblical preaching is a challenging alternative to the usual style of exposition. Through it, the preacher can "catch" his congregation in the beginnings and use story form to enliven his sermon.

Argument in doctrinal preaching has become a straitjacket that hinders the preacher's expression in delivery. Many preachers speak more from a grid than a flow, more from dry discourse than eventfulness. Their sermons have little drama and imagery to catch the imagination and enliven communication. Students of language have lost confidence in the capacity of argument to harness the will to their intentions.

And while argument strives with semantic precision to eliminate ambiguity, descriptive language risks ambiguity through metaphor, image, parable, and simile to bring the listener to creative definition.

Today, much of the practice of homiletics is centering around inductive rather than deductive approaches to preaching. Outstanding authors and preachers are creating sermon forms that will challenge, interest, and move the will to action.

Narration in preaching is not storytelling; it is preaching in story form to an image-saturated congregation who find it difficult to think in purely conceptual terms. It is not easy to develop doctrinal sermons in this form, but it is fruitful.

Can you, for example, take your exegesis of Romans 6 and translate it into narrative style? The historical and exegetical context will contribute to the process—the end, an exciting sermon on Paul's movement from death in sin to "fruit unto holiness." Examine the metaphors and similes in the passage and see what biblical-theological truth you can communicate in story form.

## **5. In moral behavior holiness preaching must point to the actualization of the Christian ethic.**

Holy living begins the moment we accept Christ as Savior—it become incisive and rich in "full salvation." The call to holy living begins in "the obedience of faith" (Rom. 1:5, RSV) whereby the name of Jesus is enhanced "among all nations."

It is rather unfortunate that we have used the term "holiness ethic" in much of our literature. Its use tends to encourage two levels of Christian behavior. I have often heard someone suggest that he will change his ways when he is sanctified! Actually, he is probably confessing his lack of conversion. Wouldn't

it be better to use the term "the life-style of holiness," which, after all, is at the heart of the "Christian ethic"?

The proclamation of holiness, then, must call for a holy life from the beginning of the Christian pilgrimage, deepening the believer's understanding of the call to obedience. After all, *obedience* is the key word in holy living; obedience to the will of the Father through faith in the love of Christ and the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Because of this, we must help our people understand that the way of holiness is the only life that is natural and fulfilling. The sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit, which begins in the new birth, moves the believer through the corrective disciplines of the Heavenly Father to the experience of perfect love, opening the Christian life to new insights in obedience. This is what I mean by "actualizing the Christian ethic."

Certainly, the first concern of the Holy Spirit is to lead God's people through faith in Christ as Savior and Lord into practical, personal holiness of life.

It is therefore imperative to help our people see that the first priority is to be a holy people, moving toward a quality of life that will make that commitment possible (1 Thess. 3:10-13). The Scripture is full of calls of that nature:

Peter writes, "But as he who called you is holy, be holy yourselves in all your conduct; since it is written, 'You shall be holy, for I am holy'" (1 Pet. 1:15-16, RSV, quoting Lev. 11:44-45; cf. 1 Thess. 4:3, 7; 5:23; Eph. 1:4; 5:25-27; 2:10; Rom. 12:1).

Certainly, the call of Paul in 2 Cor. 7:1 is clear and concise: "Let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, and make holiness perfect in the fear of God" (RSV).

The way of holiness, or the "life-style of holiness," is a quality of life that is descriptive of the Christian's separation to God and the outworking of his inward renewal by God's grace. This led John Owen, the Puritan, to define sanctification as "the work of the Christian's God transforming him, and holiness as the [life-style] of the person being thus transformed."<sup>5</sup>

#### **6. The preacher of Christian holiness must be skillful in the use of religious terminology.**

A faith that cannot be communicated by speech faces an early death. Today there is a confusion of language in theology and related subjects that has hardly been surpassed in any time in history. Can any theological language be communicated literally, or is there a richer dimension of understanding?

When a preacher uses a metaphor, he is speaking symbolically rather than literally. He is trusting that the symbol will participate in the reality that it symbolizes. And when he speaks to a congregation of 200, each individually interpreting his message, his prayer is that they will read the meanings he intends to proclaim into the terminology. This is difficult at best, and particularly difficult in doctrinal preaching when biblical, theological language is in use.

The preacher, then, must communicate through symbols, both verbal and nonverbal, the thought and the burden of his heart. From this perspective, preaching seems impossible. But somehow, it is amazingly possible.

If God has communicated to us through the incarnation of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, certainly He intended that the gospel be communicated with understanding. Can Pauline language be spoken contextually in the 20th century? I believe that it can!

How can terms such as "old man," "new man," "flesh," and

"the perfecting of the saints," as well as *entire sanctification* and *Christian perfection*, be made relevant to our congregations? The careful understanding of context is one method, with the use of descriptive language bringing the biblical story to our day.

There is, however, another thought. If religious language is primarily symbolic, there is an *ultimacy* about it that is beyond cognitive inference. How many times have you quoted 1 John 1:7, "And the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin"? The metaphor, the person, and the dynamic action of the sentence is beyond our knowledge but, thank God, not beyond our spiritual understanding. There is an ultimate dimension, a spiritual inference in which the symbolism speaks to our hearts and we answer with a great Amen (2 Cor. 1:20).

Holiness vocabulary tends to be symbolic. In fact, all theological language is symbolic in that it points to a *greater*. Every pastor and evangelist ought to give deliberate attention to both biblical hermeneutics and language that will declare our holiness heritage as clearly as possible.

A few years ago I listened to a holiness sermon filled with doctrinal shibboleths and careless interpretations. Following the service, I heard a guest say to his wife, "I wonder what he was preaching about?" I doubt they ever returned.

#### **7. We are not particularly interested in number but in depth.**

A numerical shibboleth will obscure the real meaning of cleansing. While we believe and teach the *second blessing*, surely it is not secondness that we are concerned about, but the deep, purging work of the baptism of the Holy Spirit in the lives of believers. A second trip to the altar can only bring confusion if it is not accompanied by a deep need for the fullness of God, through His Holy Spirit, to purge every part of our beings from sin.

"Pastor," John said, "I got everything God had for me when I was converted." Standing beside him, his wife observed, "He is the best man I have ever met."

"John, I believe you," I replied, "but only walk in obedience as Christ, through His Spirit, gives direction."

"I will," he replied.

Several months later he knelt at the altar, praying for sanctification. The issue was not secondness but depth. It always is. The Holy Spirit used my openness in the first instance to bring about the result in the second. Reflecting on the integrity of a witness will only close the door to greater spiritual commitment. Secondness is a means, not an end—an open door to the fullness of God's Spirit.

#### **8. The preacher of holiness must proclaim that cleansing is "love expelling evil."**

In *entire sanctification* the entire personality, Mildred Wynkoop suggests, "is united in total love to God, where the divided heart is made one under the lordship of Christ and double motives are cleansed."<sup>6</sup> It is through conviction of the believer that "the Spirit uncovers hidden areas of self-will and pride and duplicity [and] drives the Christian to the place of moral decision regarding himself and Christ."<sup>7</sup> The resulting freedom from sin cancels out any alienation from God, making possible the pervasiveness of love. The heart is cleansed because love is there, and there is no place for sin where love completely controls the personality.

Substantive metaphors of the 19th century find no place in a biblical understanding of cleansing. The preaching emphasis should not be on what is "taken out," but on the infilling of the Holy Spirit that cleanses the disease of sin and brings the

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# Proclaiming Holiness to a New Generation

by John Hay, Jr.  
*Pastor, Church of the Nazarene, Owasso, Okla.*

**F**or four months we had explored holiness sermons from John Wesley to Phoebe Palmer to current expositors. As a group of young holiness ministers, we were intent on finding out all we could of the varied sermonic expressions in our tradition's history.

Our group facilitator, Dr. Wesley Tracy, had turned us loose on the sermons of a wide range of preachers representing every era of the Wesleyan revival and the holiness movement. We knew the oratorical devices and readability grade level of each sermon, as well as the biography of each woman and man.

We had scrutinized the theology, hermeneutics, and homiletical style of each sermon. We had sparred with the authors and with each other over doctrine, the analogies they used to illustrate the experience of entire sanctification, and the current applications of past formulation.

Against the backdrop of such a cloud of witnesses and exhaustive research, we, too, had tried to formulate distinctively holiness sermons. And we had come to a new appreciation for our Wesleyan, holiness movement heritage. I was convinced that if I couldn't preach *holiness*, I couldn't preach at all.

Toward the end of our sessions,

our facilitator challenged us to "carry the baton" of the holiness message to the next generation. There was an urgent but tender tone of concern in his appeal for us to faithfully, reverently proclaim holiness in another era.

While he spoke, I began to think about the historical expressions of holiness and the current issues of our theological teaching. I thought about the burden of communicating the power and necessity of holiness of heart and life to my generation.

Clichés aside, how do I describe holiness to my contemporaries? How can I communicate its distinc-

tive claims to them? How can I proclaim it, yet maintain a sensitivity to the struggles of a secular, urban generation approaching the 21st century?

I jotted down a few seed thoughts that seemed to grow out of this reflection on both the rich tradition of the past and concerns for the future. They recur every time I am confronted with these questions. Though still in formation, my response to the challenge of proclaiming holiness to a new generation includes these considerations:

## **In what context do we formulate our theology?**

We don't come to our contemporaries with an empty slate. We need to consider what part of the "baggage" we bring hinders or helps them understand the message.

Part of Wesley's genius seems to have been his ability to contextualize the claims and possibilities of grace. For instance, the optimism of holiness and Christian perfection took hold primarily among dehumanized miners and factory workers. A century later, Phoebe Palmer would respond to spiritual languishing, vigorously adapting Wesley's message in a way that challenged people in her day. The Wesleyan and holiness



John Hay, Jr.



movement has always been sensitive to the needs of its time. So must we be sensitive to the needs of a new generation of youth and converts in the Church.

How shall we contextualize holiness so as to capture the imagination of the young? What social changes of the past few decades call for carefully considered methods of proclamation? How can the message of holiness speak to an aging society, Baby Boomers now in their 40s, and the "lost" generation that silently grew up in the '70s? The answers to these questions may very well determine our effectiveness in the future.

### **The holistic dimensions of holiness must be recovered.**

Today many preach and practice a highly privatized sanctification, minutely manicuring their souls while at the same time disregarding social injustice. Somehow, pietism has become divorced from activism in current holiness formulation.

This separation of heart from life is not the holiness presented in the Bible. Nor is it found in the best of Wesleyan and holiness movement expressions. One need not inquire far into Wesley's theology or that of the 19th-century holiness advocates to find a vital connection between the Spirit that warms the heart and the Spirit that challenges injustice.

We need to reconnect holiness of heart with holiness of life in a way that does more than throw pitiful pails of water at a conflagration. Our agenda must not mimic the agendas of popular fundamentalist-American concerns, but address evil at its systematic roots in a proclamation of the kingdom of God. I'm convinced that the holistic dimension of holiness speaks to our generation. Without it, we propagate schizophrenic Christianity.

### **We need faithful hermeneutics.**

Like never before, the integrity of the whole gospel calls for faithfulness to the Word of God—to the Scriptures and to the Person proclaimed therein. This integrity is hindered and discredited by text stretching.

A single text cannot bear the

whole weight of our theology. I need to remember that whenever I attempt an exposition of a traditionally holiness passage. There is no need to strain at the gnat in a single text when holiness is scrawled across both the Old and New Testaments. Arguing for cherished proof texts for secondness, instantaneousness, and so on, is trite compared to the

**Turning holiness over to a new generation of ministers can be like buying a new car and letting your 16-year-old drive it to school.**

grand scale of the Bible's witness of God's call to and provision for holiness of heart and life.

### **There is a need for open-endedness.**

We need to have a wider tolerance for noncategorized experiences and expressions of holiness.

I have felt straitjacketed too often by proclamations that claim there is only one way to receive fullness of the Spirit. Such exclusive definitions leave out many would-be holiness seekers who find it difficult to reconcile their experiences to our predefined categories and signs. On the other hand, an invitation to seek God in His fullness, to follow the way of holiness in its infinite variety of expressions, may inspire people to encounter God in ways they never before thought possible.

Alone with deliverance from our fear of variety, we need to be liberated from the possessiveness of our own packaging of the doctrine of holiness. I recently heard a man who stands tall in the holiness tradition proudly declare that his church is "God's franchise for dispensing holiness in the 20th century." This statement makes good oratory, but it belies a myopic vision that excludes what is currently taking place outside the walls of his own denomination.


For the sake of preservation, the

doctrine of holiness has been defined and delineated. But without the spirit of outgoing entrepreneurialism that characterized the Wesleys and the Bresees, words like "institutionalized grace," "sectarianism," and "stagnation" can hit close to home. This is not a time to cautiously defend and preserve our sacred postulates. I'm convinced that we must lay them out in confidence and trust for all to see, scrutinize, and discover.

### **There is a need for positive expression.**

The doctrine of entire sanctification is positive and optimistic. It pronounces that God loves humanity so much that He comes to us and fully identifies with us in our human struggle. It announces that God wants to affirm created humanity good by redeeming us through Jesus Christ and dwelling in us by the Holy Spirit. It recognizes that sin is not the norm in life. The norm is the optimism of grace, continually transforming the submitted disciple into the likeness of Jesus Christ. It calls for a life-style of radical discipleship uninhibited by the seduction of culture, the stagnation of self-concern, or the fear of sin.

Holiness comes alive when it finds positive expression. John Wesley knew this as he summarized the life of holiness in one word—love. The New Testament is overflowing with powerful words like "cleanse," "fill," "empower," and "grow." This is not at all to deny the necessity of a certain "death" process, but to affirm that that is not where the story ends. We are true to the biblical record only when we speak the truth in a love that draws, not drives.

"Turning the holiness message over to a new generation of ministers," said our facilitator, "is like buying an expensive car and letting your 16-year-old drive it to school." Perhaps. But the confident trust, which has been a mark of the church in the past, must be exercised. Those who have passed the baton have run their course. They have been faithful to the message and to their generation. There is little indication that those who will carry it into a new era will do otherwise. 

Here is a "new generation" holiness sermon.

# JESUS CHRIST HUMANIZES HOLINESS

by John Hay, Jr.

**J**ust as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: 'Be holy, because I am holy' (1 Pet. 1:15-16, NIV).\*

**Proposition:** The call to holiness and the quest for meaningful human existence converge in Jesus Christ, who, as the true Human and God's Atonement, humanizes holiness.

## **Introduction**

"Christian holiness is ridiculous," my friend said as we chatted casually over coffee and pastries. Doug wasn't a seminary student or a student of theology. He punched a time clock. He had been a longtime member of the church I attended. Doug had based his conclusion on the evidence of the preaching and testimonies he had heard over the years. Somehow, in spite of intense and powerful preaching, in spite of the witness of faithful believers, in spite of all the evidence to the contrary, Doug had reached the conclusion that "Christian holiness is ridiculous."

Though I can only hope Doug's conclusion is not final, he expressed a real frustration, one frequently expressed by members of his generation.

My generation hears something unreal from those of us most concerned with holiness theology and practice. What they hear goes

something like this: The life of holiness, as we have come to perceive it, is rather foreign to our daily struggles and spiritual aspirations. The mandate and call to "holiness of heart and life" is a lofty, but unrealistic, ideal. Many know the lingo forward and backward and have tried to fit into the appropriately described categories of experience—justification and sanctification; "one, two." But they have been frustrated. They, like Doug, conclude that holiness is not for them; that it is restrictive, stifling, dehumanizing. And they're either walking away from it or silently enduring the discrepancy.

Of course, this problem isn't new. Many sincere Christians have struggled with relating holiness to their own humanness in the past. What really troubles me is the perception of holiness as being intrinsically unrelated and unrelatable to humanness.

By trying to simplify and categorize the terms of Christian holiness, maybe we are obscuring its very humanizing purpose. To preach holiness apart from humanity is to lose sight of its objective. And to talk about humanity without reference to holiness is to trivialize life. Let's explore these two aspects—holiness and humanness. Maybe we can discover a connection between them.

## **I. Holiness: God's Vision for Humanity**

Let's first talk about holiness, since most of us are pretty familiar with its "ins" and "outs."

Peter wrote a letter in the first century, encouraging some Christians in their faith. In this letter, he exhorts his sisters and brothers in Christ, "Be holy." He puts it this way: "Just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: 'Be holy, because I am holy'" (1 Pet. 1:15-16).

The great expositors and preachers of the 18th and 19th centuries were quick to point out that, if for no other reason, God's own holiness would be sufficient rationale for believers to be holy. "Be holy, because I am holy," they reasoned, meant that the call for Christians to be holy begins with the holiness of God himself.

This idea was reflected in the religions of the ancient Near East, where the character of a people's god was expressed in worship and in life. For instance, the Canaanites perceived the sun god Baal to be a god of destruction—his fierce heat destroyed vegetation. Consequently, the Canaanites acted destructively, too, burning living human sacrifices in order to appease Baal's anger.

In contrast, Yahweh required high

moral and ethical behavior of His people because His very character is moral and ethical. His character was to be reflected in all the activities and in the life-style of Israel. They were to be loyal, set apart, and undefiled. They were to be sanctified in the sense of being totally consecrated to Yahweh, echoing His holiness, His underived purity.

The call to be holy, based on God's own holiness, comes through in the New Testament in terms of inward as well as outward consecration and purity. Henry Drummond, a preacher and writer of the late 19th century, describes the holiness of the New Testament as "an internal purification of the heart from all uncleanness, enduing it with the holy mind of Christ." It means not only a separation but also a visitation. Drummond describes it as "the coming in of God's Spirit from above with a principle of holiness that works an inward likeness to the character of God."

We in the holiness movement have tried to make Paul's prayer for the Christians at Thessalonica sum up the meaning of holiness:

"May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thess. 5:23).

But on a broader scale, it is possible to observe God's unmistakable calling for a holy humanity. It can be seen in the entire creative/redemptive activity of God. History is the story of redemption in sweeping cosmological proportions; from the creative activity of God and His desire to restore fellowship after the Fall, through His patient dealings with Israel, to the Church through Jesus Christ, the constant theme is God seeking holy humanity.

Let the vision unfold before you as Isaiah paints such a panorama of restoration, justice, and holiness:

"Then will the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped.

Then will the lame leap like a deer, and the mute tongue shout for joy.

Water will gush forth in the wilderness . . .

The burning sand will become a pool . . .

In the haunts where jackals once lay, grass and reeds and papyrus will grow.

And a highway will be there; it will be called the Way of Holiness.

The unclean will not journey on it;

it will be for those who walk in that Way; wicked fools will not go about on it. . . .

But only the redeemed will walk there, and the ransomed of the Lord will return.

They will enter Zion with singing; everlasting joy will crown their heads. Gladness and joy will overtake them, and sorrow and sighing will flee away" (Isa. 35:5-10).

John's apocalyptic vision of the heavenly throne, the new heaven and new earth, and the holy worship of all creation is a breathtaking spectacle of God's reconciling activity and call for a holy humanity. His vision culminates in a reordering of the universe, and John graphically pens his observations:

"Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth . . . I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away. . . . I am making everything new!' (Rev. 21:1-5).

These graphic descriptions help us see the depth and breadth of God's desire for a holy humanity. In the broadest sense, and in the most intimate, personal sense, God's will for us is holiness.

## **II. *Humanity: The Quest for Becoming Fully Human***

That's a beautiful vision. But let's get back to reality as we experience it in the here and now. Let's talk about us—about our visions, our dreams, our aspirations, and our struggles. Let's talk about humanness.

When we get right down to it, most of our daydreams, discussions, and activities reflect something of a quest for purpose and fulfillment. What we really want to know, and what everyone outside our theological circles wants to know, is "What does it mean to be human—fully human? And how can humanness be achieved? How can I really love and forgive, be sensitive and aware, empathetic and whole?"

Let's look at two examples of how

women and men in the modern world have attempted to answer the question of what it means to be fully human. The first response has been loosely dubbed "positivism." It takes an overly optimistic view of human potential. The 18th-century Enlightenment, in reaction to a corrupt church and state, has produced a vision of humanity in terms of rationality and natural law. He recognized no need for divine intervention. Embracing human potential, it encourages people to find the resources to produce an unending era of harmony, peace, and goodwill within themselves. We can discover the way of fulfillment for ourselves and within ourselves. "Every day in every way we are getting better and better."

But the 20th century's unending procession of war, exploitation of peoples, and isolationist nationalism dims such an outlook. It doesn't take much for the most positive among us to consider Reinhold Niebuhr's question, "Can we escape man's inhumanity to man?"

The second response states that life is ultimately meaningless. We can never free ourselves from despair. Rather than hoping for the future of humanity, we can only attempt to achieve authenticity by intense personal experience and awareness. On the one hand is a positivism that affirms unlimited human potential; on the other hand are existentialisms that point out human helplessness and lostness in the universe. Of course, these are not the only two responses, nor are they the sole expressions of themselves. But they are representative of modern quests for identity and fulfillment.

The Judeo-Christian response runs somewhat differently than these. At the core of our belief is the uniqueness of humanity—that we are created in the image of God. The Genesis account asserts that "the Lord God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being" (2:7). God created humanity in His own image, with an inherent dignity, grandeur, and creativity we ought never deny. As the Psalmist states, we are fearfully and wonderfully made as relational, social beings intended for communion with God and with one another. Far from autonomous beings, we derive our very life from God.

But the Fall is also at the core of our belief. Through sin, humanity

has ruptured fellowship with our Creator, greatly distorting His image in us. Choosing freely, humanity has turned away from God. That broken relationship is refracted like a shock wave into all relationships with ourselves, our neighbors, and our world. Whatever can be said of original sin, it assures us that the sad state of affairs in our lives and in our world falls grossly short of God's design and humanity's potential.

So we are a paradox. We have the highest possibilities of all living things, yet we live fallen lives. Instead of fulfilling a creative and holy calling, we have become God's heartache. We are, in the words of Pascal, both the "glory and scandal of the universe."

So where does all this bring us in our consideration of holiness and humanness? Holding the vision of holiness before us on the one hand, and grasping the human dilemma on the other, let's ask a rather obvious question. How shall humanity ever be holy?

### III. *Jesus Christ Humanizes Holiness*

Enter Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ of God. Enter the true Human. Let me suggest that Jesus Christ humanizes holiness.

In Jesus we see what true humanness and true holiness is. In this unique Galilean who traveled through the villages of Palestine, we see One who is human in the most radical sense—infinately loving, graciously forgiving, painfully sensitive, intensely empathetic, fully aware. The Gospels chart the life and teachings of One who is fully human.

In Jesus we also see what true holiness is. The writer to the Hebrews described Jesus as "the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being" (1:3). He was tempted but was flawless in moral character. His fiercest ene-

mies failed to find a flaw for accusation against Him. As to obedience He said to His Father, "Nevertheless not my will, but thine" (Luke 22:42, KJV). Again in Hebrews, He is declared to be "holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens" (7:26). Surely Jesus of Nazareth is the holy Human.

In Easter faith, His followers early on began to express who He was in terms of the New Adam, "the first-born over all creation" (Col. 1:15). And we begin to realize that God, in His grace, has committed himself to the humanization of fallen creation in the most complete and radical way imaginable. God has come to us in the person of His own Son, Jesus Christ.

But the corollary to the Incarnation is the Atonement. Jesus has come to redeem us and make us a holy people. In His suffering, death, and resurrection, Jesus made new life available to everyone. "God made him who had no sin to be [a sin offering, margin] for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God" (2 Cor. 5:21). He "gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good" (Titus 2:14). Paul affirms that Jesus has become "our righteousness, holiness and redemption" (1 Cor. 1:30).

God's purpose in Jesus Christ is to create a holy humanity; not only to declare us righteous through justification, but to make us righteous—to transform the character of human life through the inner working of the Holy Spirit. It is nothing less than the reshaping of our disordered lives after His own image. True humanity can only be realized in Him; only in Him are we liberated and experience the process of becoming fully human. Jesus Christ makes us more human—not less. Holiness is

all about actualizing His life in us by the Holy Spirit. We "have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator" (Col. 3:10).

### *Conclusion*

The point of this is that holiness, properly understood and proclaimed, is far from being some unrealistic ideal imposed on us like an ill-fitted mold. A relative holiness, expressed in terms of life lived in union with Jesus Christ, involving both crisis and process, is entirely humanizing. In light of Jesus Christ, holiness becomes the measure of humanity, the most humanizing aspect of Christian experience. It is the standard of being and becoming radically alive.

This is good news for my friend Doug and a skeptical generation. The life of holiness cannot be reduced to the terms of "an experience." However you define it, entire sanctification is not the terminus; it is not the apex of discipleship. Perfection in love and the ever deeper works of God's grace in our lives only opens the door to the humanity envisioned in the incarnation and atonement of Jesus Christ.

I don't know where you are on your spiritual pilgrimage—where you have come from or to what point you have been brought by God's grace. I don't know what intellectual, doctrinal, or personal barriers stifle your call to holiness. But I would suggest that Jesus Christ humanizes holiness; that by faith in Him as Savior and Lord, you can begin to live the life He died and rose again to give you.

Your encounter with God will be different from anyone else's. But the call is the same: "Be holy, because I am holy."

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# LET'S HEAR IT AGAIN

by David B. McEwan

*Pastor, Church of the Nazarene, Melbourne, Australia*

When the holiness people in America were putting their doctrine-and-practice raft together, an interesting dialogue occurred between two of our spiritual ancestors. It did not occur as a formal debate or even an eye-to-eye discussion. Rather it took place in print.

The participants were Phoebe Palmer and Henry Cowles. Mrs. Palmer's contentions were expressed in such influential books as *The Way of Holiness* and *The Promise of the Father*. Henry Cowles was the editor of the *Oberlin Journal* (Oberlin was Charles G. Finney's school). In 1862, in three separate *Oberlin Journal* articles, Cowles engaged Mrs. Palmer and her ideas, which had popularized the "shorter way to sanctification" trend among the holiness people.

Phoebe Palmer (a Methodist laywoman) permanently modified American Methodist teaching on entire sanctification through her contacts with key Methodist leaders (primarily through the Tuesday Meeting for the Promotion of Holiness), as well as influencing much of the rest of the American holiness movement through her writing. She developed a "system" that she titled the "shorter way to holiness." Palmer was concerned that so few Methodists of her time were able to testify to the experience of entire sanctification. Many sought the experience, but few testified to receiving it. Just to be "still seeking" sanctifying grace pleased too many, she thought. The emphasis appeared to her to have drifted to gradual growth in grace, rather than a definite crisis experience to which a clear testimony could be given.

She believed that the biblical command to be holy admitted of no delay, and this implied a clear crisis experience. When a believer became aware of God's demand, immediate action had to follow; the Christian had to have "naked faith" in a "naked promise" that God would sanctify one who met all the conditions listed in the Bible. Working with Matt. 23:19 as a base (especially in the phrase "the altar sanctifies the gift"), she taught that Christ was the Christian's Altar; and when one is entirely consecrated to Christ ("putting our all on the altar"), then Christ sanctifies the "gift" that is consecrated. This is "guaranteed" by the words of Scripture. The Christian can testify to the experience of entire sanctification simply on the basis of believing the words of the promise. Indeed, the Christian must so testify in order to demonstrate the reality of his faith, for no other witness was necessary.

Cowles's critique of Palmer's syllogistic approach to entire sanctification appeared in three articles, published November 5, 19, and December 3, 1862. Cowles dealt specifically with the "altar system" advocated by Palmer and others. He understood that "the distinctive

feature of this system is, that by one act of faith and consecration, the soul may be completely cleansed, and may come into a state of perfect love." Cowles maintained that they called this a "second conversion." It is an experience that can be lost. Further, it is most important to make a public profession of the experience as a condition both of obtaining it and maintaining it. Cowles believed that Palmer and Company saw public profession as the main condition of standing and abiding in Christ's love.

Cowles begins his critique by commenting on the good points of the system:

Meeting the Christian, burdened with a sense of remaining sinfulness, it invites him to these promises and provisions of sanctifying grace as to an available power, of which he may take hold at once for his sufficient help. It inspires a living faith for the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

This shows that it is possible to be saved from sinning; such a possibility "justly gives chief prominence to prayer, to faith, and to the promised grace of Christ through the Holy Spirit." The article of December 3, 1862, begins by continuing to note the strengths of the system, particularly the fact that it strongly enforces the immediate duty and privilege of taking hold of this great blessing. Cowles then turns his attention to some of the "liabilities . . . and . . . dangers" in the system:

1. **One danger is of Christians thinking themselves perfect in love when they are not.** This will lessen watchfulness, foster passivity, and lead to the danger of ignoring the evidence of sin in their lives. His evident concern was that the Christian would mechanically follow the "system" and claim the experience on



David B. McEwan

the basis of "mechanics" rather than faith. Having then testified to the experience, the Christian would be tempted to ignore clear evidence of sin in his life or to make excuses for it ("human frailty"). To rush the crisis experience was, in his view, just as dangerous as neglecting it.

2. **Having too low an estimate of all those who do not make the profession of perfect love may give rise to spiritual pride.** Cowles was well aware that such Pharisaism would be an inversion of Christian holiness.

3. **Cowles believed that the Palmer system might foster the notion that the sanctified Christian has "assurance against future sinning."** He might then cease to be watchful or active in the pursuit of further grace. Palmer and the others expressly denied teaching that the sanctified lost the capacity to sin. But Cowles maintained that overconfidence in the "system" was possible and could result in a failure to remain sensitive to the voice of the Spirit.

4. **Cowles also saw dangers attached to prominent public professions of entire sanctification.** One danger was crowding people who ought not to make this profession. But being thusly committed, they will be under great temptation to shut their eyes against their mistake. Cowles also feared that making so much of this as a means to obtaining and retaining the experience may subtly tempt one to put it in the place of Christ himself. He opposed the insistence on prominent public profession, saying he saw no evidence for it in the Bible.


5. **Cowles also feared that Palmer and others would so standardize sanctifying grace in a "one size fits all" formula as to limit the Spirit in His personal and unique demands on the individual.** God is God and may not deal with everyone in the same way. Of course, if we can codify everything and standardize everything—even the work of the Holy Spirit—we can

manage it more comfortably, package it more neatly, and market it more efficiently.

There is always the danger of thinking that because it worked for us in a certain way, Cowles believed, it must work for everyone that way. We are then in danger of applying psychological pressure by relying on our effective salesmanship rather than allowing the Spirit to gently draw the believer into a deeper relationship with Christ. Having then pressured the seeker into testifying to the experience on the basis of a mechanical repetition of the formula, it makes it very hard for a later confession of failure if the experience of entire sanctification does not prove to be authentic.

6. **Cowles also criticized the terminology of "second conversion."** "The tendency of this use of language must be either to sink the meaning of the first conversion far below its scriptural sense; or to exalt the second altogether above the facts of the case. In either direction, mischief is done."

Whether Cowles is correct in saying Palmer and other holiness people called this experience a "second conversion" is debatable. However, the testimonies from this period very often seem to imply the truth of Cowles's statement. Today we speak of a "second work of grace," which is more theologically accurate. But the danger highlighted by Cowles still remains—making too little of the first work of grace (regeneration) in order to exalt the second work.

Now, some 120 years later, it may serve us well to give the Cowles-Palmer dialogue another hearing. Of these two holiness ancestors of ours, Phoebe Palmer has had more influence on our doctrine and practice. But the pitfalls prophesied by Cowles have materialized in our experience again and again. Perhaps hearing about them once more can help us proclaim Christian holiness more effectively in our generation. 

## A SINNER ONCE

(Continued from page 5)

school. I could not eat my lunch. I could hardly hold my head up in class.

Finally, the day was over and the school bus bumped and jolted so hard I was sure I could not make it home. Rolling and tossing on the sofa at home, I could not eat any supper for the pain. Seldom was a doctor consulted in our home, but about 10 o'clock, it was obvious I was not getting any better on home remedies. The doctor was called from six miles away. It took him nearly two hours to arrive.


When the doctor stepped in the door, he sat at the table and began to tell jokes. The whole family roared in laughter, while I suffered in mortal pain. What I did not know was that he was watching to see if I was entering into the fun. When he saw that I was not, he immediately came to the sofa and began his exam. His diagnosis was soon made. "This boy has acute appendicitis. We must get him to the hospital right away. His appendix may even be ruptured."

So off to the hospital we went. At one or two in the morning, the cart was just about to be pushed through

the big double doors with me on board. My daddy stood by the cart, patted me on the head, and said to the doctor, "Doc, I want you to do whatever you need to do to get that boy well. That whole farm out there will stand behind that boy. Don't spare one thing that is needed."

Those were the last words I heard before going off to surgery. It had never occurred to me before that what was his I shared. The apostle Peter said it best when he wrote that Jesus gives us hope by His resurrection for "an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (1 Pet. 1:3-5).

How can I ever be worthy of such adoption wonders and blessings? I learned through my earthly adoption that it was the means of my opportunities Godward. I did not deserve to be adopted. There was nothing that commended me to my new daddy. It was only by his love and grace and mercy that he took me in with the rest of my family.

On a greater scale than I can ever understand, Jesus did that for me in a spiritual way. How can I ever love Him enough for what He has done? I can only sing with rapture the song of the redeemed and adopted ones, "I'm a child of the King!" 

# How to Lead Believers into Sanctifying Grace

## A Look at Paul's Model for Leading Believers into Holiness in 1 Thessalonians

by Wesley Tracy

I am not going to spin my wheels and waste your time by trying to prove that this Epistle was written to believers. Anyone with third grade reading skills and a room temperature IQ can tell that. After all, Paul wrote to the *church* at Thessalonica. Of course they were believers. It would be a different kettle of fish if the letter had been addressed to the VFW club or the executive committee of C.O.Y.O.T.E. In that case even vigorous exegesis could not bring out the true doctrine about sanctification here taught.

Paul salutes the Christians of Thessalonica, cites their faith, hope, love, discipleship, persecution, exemplary life, and witness (1:2-10). Then he proceeds to speak to these his dear children in the faith about sanctification. He speaks about "what is lacking in" their faith (3:10, RSV\*), about them becoming established "unblamable in holiness" (v. 13), about God's call (4:7), His "will" (v. 3) to "sanctify you wholly" (5:23).

Here we see one of history's most effective ministers, Paul, with a bunch of believers on his hands who need to be sanctified wholly. Let us observe Paul's model of what to do to bring believers into sanctifying grace.

Paul, as far as we know, only met these folks twice in his life, A.D. 51 and again in 56. He did not have the advantage of regular pastoral contact. This makes this pastoral letter about sanctification a significant part of his leading them into sanctifying grace.

Just how fruitful Paul's efforts were we cannot know for sure. But we do know of three who appear to have been called to the ministry (Aristarchus, Secundus, Gaius) and one called to suffer for Christ (Jason). We get glimpses of them in Acts.

Let's step back and get a long range view of Paul trying to lead believers on to perfection.

We notice first that he

### Loved Them with Unabashed Affection

Listen to Paul's pastoral love poured out without reserve: "We long to see you" (3:6); "being affectionately desirous of you," or, as the NEB reads, "With such

yearning love" we gave ourselves to you; "we were ready to share with you not only the gospel," Paul continued, "but also our own selves, because you had become very dear to us" (2:8).

Paul doesn't seem to be concerned about image or power here; he is overcome by love for his people. Twice he told them he could bear their absence no longer (3:1, 5). "We live," he said, "if you stand fast" (v. 8). "You are our glory and joy" (2:20). This deep current of love prescribed the manner of pastoral practice Paul used when he did get an opportunity to see them. "Like a father with his children, we exhorted . . . encouraged . . . charged you" (v. 11). And, "We were gentle among you, like a nurse taking care of her children" (v. 7). What a wonderful place to start leading believers into holiness: Love them with all your heart.

Paul's affection was unabashed and quickly expressed. John Wesley's correspondence, especially to promising young converts, is also conspicuous with poured-out affection. To Ann Bolton (a woman 40 years younger than himself) he closed a letter, "I cannot tell you how unspeakably near you are to, my dear Nancy, Yours most affectionately." Ann (Nancy) lived in a small village that Wesley visited seldom, but Wesley wrote her several letters per year. He was a long-distance spiritual guide to her, counseling her on inbred sin, pride, Christian service, prayer, and consecration—always leading her "on unto perfection" (Heb. 6:1; KJV). Finally he was able to write, "It gives me great pleasure to hear . . . God has . . . established your heart in His pure love and given you the abiding witness to it." To Kitty Warren he wrote, "I do not desire there should be any ceremony between us; but as much love as you please. The more I converse with you, the more near you are to . . . [me]." To Duncan Wright he wrote, "Surely you and I may speak freely . . . for we love one another." To both men and women both Paul and Wesley seemed quick to express pastoral love; and they were both, I hear, quite good at leading believers on to sanctifying grace.

But not only did Paul love the believers pastorally, he

### Prayed for Them Persistently

One of the first things Paul tells the community of faith at Thessalonica is that he has been praying without ceasing for them. "Constantly mentioning you in our prayers" is the way he put it (1:2). He continued that they were remembering them "before our God" (v. 3). In chapter 3 he tells them he is thanking God for them, "praying earnestly night and day that we may see you face to face and supply what is lacking in your faith" (vv. 9-10).

Paul is so overcome with a spirit of prayer for their sanctification that he stops twice in this letter to pray.

"May the Lord make you increase and abound in love to one another and to all men, as we do to you, so that he may establish your hearts unblamable in holiness" (3:11-13).

Again, Paul prays a benediction for the sanctification of his beloved believers in chapter 5:

"May the God of peace himself sanctify you wholly; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful, and he will do it" (vv. 23-24).

Now I know that the grammar and logic here is not the language of privatized, "just You and me, Jesus" religion. It is a corporate prayer, or a prayer for the whole church.

But whether it is a prayer that the members be sanctified from head to toe, or left to right, or A to Z throughout the membership roll, it seems clear that Pastor Paul prays that each one of them will be sanctified through and through.

Why would Paul write out his prayers and mail them? Could it be that prayers for our people's sanctification are more effective when we let them know exactly how we are praying for them? I cannot help but notice that John Wesley practiced the same kind of intercession, but I can and will resist another excursion into Wesleyana at this point.

In addition, Paul

### Celebrated with Them Joyfully

This Epistle is loaded with happy words. "Rejoice," "glory," and "joy" keep coming up again and again. Paul is celebrating both what God *has done* and will *yet do* for the Thessalonians.

Paul rejoices that they "received the word . . . with joy inspired by the Holy Spirit" (1:6). He rejoices that they "turned to God from idols" (v. 9). He celebrates by thanking "God constantly . . . that . . . you received the word" (2:13). "You are our glory and joy" (v. 20), he declares and further exults in "the joy which we feel for your sake" (3:9). And in the last chapter he instructs them to "rejoice always" (v. 16).

Wait a minute—these folks are unsanctified! They still have inbred sin; they are not yet made perfect in love; the seed of the serpent is still in their soul. Something is yet lacking in their faith. They are not yet sanctified through and through. True, but Paul does not make the mistake of minimizing the new birth just to make entire sanctification seem more important. And that may just be a big reason why he was more effective in leading

folks into holiness than some modern preachers. Some of today's preachers with a bunch of believers on their hands would only see what was yet lacking in their faith. They would forget to celebrate the marvelous work of God in regeneration. John Wesley said that one of the principal devices of Satan is to denigrate the first work of grace by glorifying the second. (I wrote a lot about this in a recent issue, so I will not say all that again. Read the editorial "God Is Love and Christ Has Died," JJA 1986).

Further, Paul

### Instructed Them Optimistically

Paul did not speak of sanctification in hazy, general, vague words. He did not say that God may, might, could, or would consider full salvation for their future. Listen to Paul:

God . . . has *chosen* you" (1:4). "God . . . *calls* you into his own kingdom and glory" (2:12). Then even more to the point: "This is the *will* of God, your sanctification" (4:3).

Further, "God hath . . . called us . . . unto holiness" (4:7, KJV). And even more strongly: "God has . . . *destined* us . . . to obtain salvation" (5:9, all italics added).

The God who *chooses, calls, wills, and destines* us for full salvation "is faithful, and he will do it" (5:24).

My friends, this is optimistic believing ground. The greatest Force in the Universe, our Creator, Father, Savior, and Lord, has chosen, called, willed, and destined our sanctification! What basis for hope, for prayer, for faith! This is no whimsy, no Jeane Dixon prediction, no astrologer's double-talk, no Wall Street guru's babbling. No wonder John Wesley taught his converts to expect the blessing any moment.

What God has chosen, called, willed, and destined deserves some "certain trumpets" in today's pulpit. Some believe that the plague of modern holiness preaching is preachers tooting uncertain trumpets (cf. 1 Cor. 14:8, KJV). What more assurance does one need to preach this truth clearly than appears here concerning God's call, will, and plan? To one despairing seeker John Wesley wrote, "How far are you from holiness? Nay, rather think how near you are to it. You are no farther from it than you are from faith, than you are from Christ. And how far is He from you? . . . Is He not just now knocking at the door of your heart? Woman, be of good cheer."

In light of all this, Paul

### Challenges the Believers to Accountability

Paul plainly tells them he wants to help them with what is still lacking in their faith. This is followed by a prayer for holiness and the exhortation to sexual purity (4:1-8). Paul cites sexual impurity as the opposite of holiness. This is more than a crafty writer needing a good "darkness and light" metaphor. He is saying to the Thessalonian Christians that the biggest threat, in their situation as he understood it, to their sanctification was the incredibly loose sexual morals of the society in which they lived. Much more could be said of this in terms of then and now. But the point I wish to make is that Paul talked openly, honestly, lovingly, with them about the threats to the full salvation that had been willed and destined for them. Again, this is a remarkable aspect of



John Wesley's correspondence with his people. To one he wrote she lacked simplicity, to another that she spent too much time in acts of piety to the neglect of acts of mercy, to another he said that she would never be a true Christian unless she conquered pride. A loving, honest call to accountability is usually helpful—and needed.

What God has chosen, called, willed, and destined for us is worthy of accountability. "Therefore whoever disregards this," writes Paul, "disregards not man but God" (4:8).

Finally, Paul told them to wait for full salvation by

**Serving Christ Actively**

They were to "pray constantly, give thanks in all circumstances," heed the Spirit, "abstain from every form of evil" (5:17-22). Further, they were to respect their coworkers and leaders, esteeming them in love; to be at peace among themselves (vv. 12-13); and to love each other and others more and more (3:12; 4:9-10). To these acts of piety, as Wesley called them, were to be added works of mercy: "Admonish the idlers, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak," return good for evil, and teach others to do the same (5:14-15).

I heard a preacher this week say that mere born-again Christians who have not yet been baptized with the Spirit should not try any kind of Christian service. Well,

both Paul and John Wesley disagreed with that. They taught that the believer needed to be ever busy with acts of piety and mercy if they hoped to be sanctified. How much easier it must be to lead an eager, serving Christian into sanctifying grace than one who is waiting for utter perfection before lifting a finger to help with the Christian mission.

How practical is Paul's model of leading believers into sanctifying grace. And how Pauline (biblical) our Wesleyan model is. I think that the pastors today who are following Paul's example of loving pastorally, praying persistently, celebrating joyfully, instructing optimistically, authoritatively challenging to accountability, and keeping the converted actively serving as they seek the fullness of the blessing—these are probably seeing believers enter the second definite experience of grace faster than they can paste theological labels on its various phases.

One final observation—notice that Paul, after explaining the "more excellent way" to these unsanctified believers (1 Cor. 12:31), honored their state of grace by asking them to pray for him (5:25). Now what kind of leadership style is that?

\*Unless otherwise noted, scripture quotations in this article are from the Revised Standard Version of the Bible.



"It has come to our attention, Brother Hooper, that you may not be happy with your vow of silence."



Paul Bassett

# DIVORCE:

## *Unacceptable, but . . .*

by Paul Merritt Bassett

*Professor of the History of Christianity  
Nazarene Theological Seminary, Kansas City*

**S**ome time ago, a denominational editor asked Harold Ivan Smith and me to debate in print the proposition that divorce is "an acceptable option for the Christian." He assigned the "con" side to me. Had I a choice, I would have taken that side anyway. And I would have qualified the "con," as I did.

Practically speaking, Harold Ivan and I came out at much the same place, but our ways of getting there were as different as cows and cardboard. Neither of us set out to "win." We did accomplish our aim—which was the airing of a critical issue.

So you need not take what follows here as a continuation of that "debate," though those familiar with it will see that what I have done here is to expand and deepen points made there. And as that editor's original resolve made a good road into the matter, I'm using it to keep what I write here on one track.

So, as in the debate, we look first at the Bible and then at our term "acceptable." Then we can respond directly to our issue.

Genesis gives two accounts of the creation of man and woman and of God's joining them as husband and wife. The first account, 1:26-31, says that God created them and united them in order that they might fulfill a divine command: "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over . . . every living thing that moves on the earth" (v. 28, NASB).<sup>\*</sup> The second account tells of the relationship between the man and the woman themselves. God gives the

woman as "helper" to the man. And the mode is most intimate; they are to be "one flesh" (2:18-25).

So the first account speaks of the order among living beings for which the God-created and God-united pair are responsible. The second account repeats that theme in telling how God commands Adam to name the creatures, but it underlines the matter of human partnership, partnership so intimate that two very different human beings live as one. These two accounts express God's perfect law, His original plan for creation, for human beings, for us.

But then comes the Fall. The man and the woman, God-joined as "one flesh," act independently of each other. Then each blames his own predicament on the other, and both come to be ashamed of the most profound symbol and means of expressing their unity. They had been naked and unashamed. Now they tried to hide themselves from each other; to disrupt, or at least to control for themselves, the unity that God had created between them.

Now God himself, who had made male and female so that they "were naked and were not ashamed" and had set them to becoming "one flesh," "made garments of skin for Adam and his wife, and clothed them" (3:21).

So the pair who were created innocent even of the difference between right and wrong now knew that difference. Unashamed nakedness had symbolized their innocence. Now the fig leaves, they thought, would symbolize their knowledge. As created, absolute openness had marked

**Divorce is allowed in order to keep us from doing our worst to each other, but it is not to be seen as making anything necessarily better. And it makes nothing *good*.**

their relationship. Now, fallen, they would mistrust, veil, conceal, and manipulate appearances.

But finally, God himself clothes them. And He does it not as a way of accepting things as they are, but in gracious concession to the mess made by the pair. He does not encourage their attempts to hide from one another, but He does show that they need protection from each other in the moral chaos that they have created. In their sinfulness, they must be concealed from one another in very important ways. In His grace, God shields them from the hellishness of being able to read each sinful other, and from being read, as well. Their fig leaves ultimately would have failed their purpose. Only God himself could create the appropriate concealment.

There is grace here, but not divine approval. In clothing Adam and Eve himself, God says that life here would be utterly unbearable, worse than we can suspect, so far has it fallen from His original intention. He graciously protects from the full fury of the effects of their folly. Their "fig leaves," their own attempt to remedy the situation, would prove to be disastrously inept, partly because they could not plumb the depths of their own problem. They wouldn't know what to cover, as it were.

What we learn here is that God really does adapt himself to the conditions that we create by our abuses of freedom. He is not a tyrant, creating us and the regulations by which we are to live as simply an exercise in egotism. God spends no time or effort protecting himself. Since the Fall, what He has done on our planet He has done in order to win us back to himself and so to renew heaven and earth.

So He does not abandon us. He pursues us, even at the risk of being misunderstood and maltreated. And in this pursuit, He adapts to our fallenness, He makes concessions to the wickedness of the human predicament, the depths of which He alone knows. In fact, much of what we usually call God's law expresses His adaptation and concession. But we must remember, it does not express His original intention, His perfect will, for a perfect world. It is not a matter of eternal adaptation or eternal concession. He does not adapt and concede from weakness. He remains the Lord of history, the Lord of life.

This is why Paul speaks of God's law as having been "added" (Gal. 3:19), and as having come in (Rom. 5:20). And it's why our Lord undercuts any attempt to make the law a savior or even a means of salvation. Both Paul and our Lord insist that God gave us the law because of sin and to restrain sin. And both insist that while the law is not to be ignored, salvation does not lie in merely keeping it. Both tell us that the law is a divine concession or adaptation, that it shows us where sin really lies, and that it is aimed at protecting us from sin's full effects.

Paul's way of putting it is best seen in Romans 7. He says that the law was given to bring us to know that we are sinful and then to so frustrate us by our inability to keep it that we will run to Christ and trust Him alone for salvation. Then, in

Romans 8, he talks of the perfect will of God, of the life that moves beyond the law, of life in the Spirit.

So the law is an expression of the divine will, to be sure. But it is an adaptation, a gracious concession, to our fallen condition. That's why it is so specific. It always takes aim at some definite target in the character and behavior of very real human beings. It is never abstract.

This is the perspective, then, from which we can understand Jesus' response to the Pharisees' question about divorce (Matt. 19:3-9; Mark 10:2-12).

The Pharisees had noted that Moses, clearly under divine guidance and inspiration, had permitted divorce (Deut. 24:1-4). Jesus agrees that Moses had indeed allowed for divorce, and He does not back away from the implication that Moses did it under divine influence. But, He insists, this was a concession, not an expression of the original intention of God's will. It is an adaptation to human "hardness of heart."

Mark presents this teaching of Jesus in the context of our Lord's preaching on the theme of obedience to the kingdom of heaven. This obedience is to be so radical that where there is danger of falling into temptation, one should go to extremes of avoidance rather than transgress. Better to live maimed and pure than whole and impure (Mark 9:38-50).

The Pharisees then attack Jesus for what seems to them to be His idealism. In their legalism, they earnestly believe that there should be no divorce. But they know that the law of Moses, divinely given, permits it. So they throw this case into their ongoing quarrel with Jesus as a way of insisting that He has no right to exceed the boundaries set by the law; that He, too, must recognize the need to temper spiritual standards. They insist that He see that divine law itself is adapted to the human condition.

Jesus responds by agreeing that the divine law is indeed a concession to a sinful world, that it is realistic. But He then reminds them that they err in believing that concession means approval or positive acceptance. It is not approval but adaptation, not acceptance but admissiveness. It is a matter of allowing the bad in order to avoid the worse. The clear will of God is still to be proclaimed: "From the beginning of creation, God made them male and female. For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother, and the two shall become one flesh; consequently they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate" (Mark 10:6-9). Anything less is concession to hardness of heart.

Jesus makes it clear that keeping the law and doing the perfect will of God may not be the same thing. This was a distinction that the Pharisees did not make, though they saw clearly that the law was created for a sinful world. They could reckon with a real world, as they accounted reality. They could allow the world to be the world. But in their anxiety to save themselves, they could not allow God to be God. They could not reckon with God who has already taken into account the hideousness created by human sinfulness

**At worst, we will exercise the concession and then argue for its goodness as if it were the very will of God.**

and who has protected us all from its full blast. They could not reckon with such a God because it meant yielding obedience to a will lying beyond their control, and it meant yielding that obedience in this fallen world. They were willing to settle for "doing all that we can do under the circumstances." They invented their own spiritual "fig leaves." They ~~did~~ not reckon with the God who was doing all that He could do under the same circumstances.

According to our Lord, then, divorce is indeed permitted. It is a divine concession to human hardness of heart. But this is to say that it is not really approved.

In fact, in Matthew's account of the discussion, this point is clear enough to press the disciples to serious thinking: "If the relationship of the man with his wife is like this [i.e., meant to be so intimate that divorce and remarriage raise the specter of adultery], it is better not to marry" (19:10). And Jesus' response is that if they cannot think in terms of the permanence of wedlock and cannot believe that divorce is but a concession, they do not understand the kingdom of heaven and had best exercise the grace to remain single.

"From the beginning it has not been this way"—these words of Jesus recorded by Matthew (19:8) point unmistakably to the Father's intention that marriage be indissoluble. And now Jesus, affirming the ethic of the kingdom of heaven even in a sinful world, calls His disciples to live above the concessions allowed for hardness of heart. Instead of living in the kingdom of concessions, they are to exercise the Father's own perfection (5:48).

So, is divorce an "acceptable option" for the Christian? The answer is no. But we do need to qualify it.

First, it must be remembered that we are not working here with the question of remarriage. That is another, and much more serious, issue.

Second, we are considering here the question of divorce for the *Christian*. We're not thinking here about the pagan, nor even the nominal Christian. We're directing our attention to the person who accepts Jesus Christ as personal Savior and Lord, who accepts the Bible as the Spirit's unique instrument in guiding us to ultimate salvation in Christ. We're thinking here of the person who is Christian in this sense before the question of divorce arises as a personal matter. And we're thinking here of the Christian who really does have a choice in the matter.

Third, we're considering acceptability. The idea of acceptability points to something worth accepting, something satisfactory, or, at least, something adequate. These are the elements in the definition of "acceptable." For the Christian, value is tied to active love but not just to any active love. Value comes from and is measured by the love of God in Christ—the love that gives itself as atonement for sin. When Christians are genuinely *Christian*, this will be their attitude and practice. They will stoutly reject any other source or means of ethical evaluation.

Fourth, we're only considering the acceptability of divorce for the believer. We are not considering the matter of forgiveness, though we will have to say something about it a bit later. It would be a crass presumption on the grace of God to sin in order that grace might abound; and it is a pure and simple con game to *demand* forgiveness of God or human beings. For then it is not forgiveness that is sought, but some sort of approval. The acceptability we're considering here, then, is acceptability in terms of the righteousness of God. We're not considering how the Church or other individuals should respond to a Christian who has divorced.

Now we're ready to give an extended response to the resolution that divorce is an acceptable option for the Christian. As you already know, our response is negative.

Consider the matter of acceptability. Divorce is certainly not *worth* acceptance for the Christian—not in and of itself. Given the Christian's way of judging value, there is nothing genuinely good about it. It may be *less bad* than any other alternative in a given circumstance. But we have no warrant in our Book, nor in the experience of the Church, nor in terms of the love of Christ for saying that divorce is *good*. It is permitted because of the Fall and because of our continuing hardness of heart. But this very reason should raise a very serious obstacle for the Christian contemplating divorce. (Remember, we're thinking here of the Christian who really has a choice in the matter.) Divorce is nowhere advised or encouraged in the Bible. In the experience of the Church, it is nowhere encouraged but is sometimes advised out of a bag of mixed motives. At best, its value is only relatively positive, not absolutely positive. It may, on occasion, be the best that can be made of a bad situation. But we have no warrant for believing that it is worth anything in itself or worth accepting in itself.

Nor is divorce satisfactory if we give a Christian definition to satisfactory. (Remember, being satisfactory is another facet of being acceptable.) Even where a divorce simply testifies that an authentic unity never existed, that divorce does not make the relationship between the couple *satisfactory*. It may make it more bearable. It certainly brings the legal status into better line with the social one. But there is no way to undo the damage done by a pairing that should never have taken place to begin with. In such cases, divorce itself is unsatisfactory because the whole business was blemished from the start.

Nor is divorce a satisfactory remedy for a marriage gone sour. Again, it may be the least dreadful among essentially unsatisfactory remedies. But the Christian will not say that it is satisfactory in any positive or absolute sense. This is because "satisfactory," for the Christian, refers to the reconciling love of God in Christ when one thinks of human relationships. Such passages as Matt. 5:43-48 are taken by the Christian to describe what is satisfactory in the life of the Kingdom.



So, again, divorce may be *admissible*, but it cannot be acceptable insofar as acceptability involves genuine spiritual satisfaction. Yet again, it is understood that divorce is *permitted*, but the hardness of heart that gives rise to the permission is hardly satisfactory. That hardness of heart is one of those things that the Son was sent to remedy. So, while hardness of heart makes a good explanation for the divine concession of divorce, it makes no excuse at all for divorce itself.

Divorce is allowed in order to keep us from doing our worst to each other, but it is not to be seen as making anything necessarily better. And it makes nothing *good*.

Nor can it be said that divorce is adequate. (You will remember that adequacy was another aspect of acceptability.) For the Christian, the only *adequate* mode of human relationship is love and reconciliation, the kind of relationship made possible and modeled by our Lord. Any other sort is less than adequate. Again, less-than-adequate relationships may be *permitted*, but as a concession to hardness of heart, not as acceptable expressions of the will of God. It could even be argued that so deep was the hardness of heart that divorce was necessary in order to avert something worse. But it is one thing to say that a course of action is necessary in our fallen world, and quite another to say that it is Christianly adequate and therefore acceptable. In fact, to have to *argue* that divorce is, in some given case, necessary, is to admit, at least tacitly, that it is somehow inadequate, unacceptable.

And then there is a very serious question as to whether a Christian can resort to arguing in favor of his own divorce on the grounds of hardness of heart. Certainly it should not be a case of his own hardness of heart. And the Christian is to be very slow about pronouncing others to be beyond the grace of God.

There is only one will of God regarding our marital relationship, and that is that we are to "cleave" to one another and "become one flesh" (Gen. 2:24). This was God's purpose in putting us together, male and female, in our original creation. And our Lord affirms that this purpose still stands,

even under the conditions created by the Fall and our own hardness of heart.

In fact, in the New Testament, we are called to an even higher sort of relationship, morally and ethically speaking. Adam and Eve are not our sole models. Paul says we are to relate to each other as Christ and the Church relate (Eph. 5:22-33). This expresses the will of God. We understand anything less as concession.

So we understand that divorce may be *permitted* or *admissible* or even *necessary*. But this is not to say that it is acceptable for the Christian. We will not confuse God's concession with His intention, His will. His concession is granted to protect us from the full fury of the effects of sin. It may even help us to understand the depths of human sinfulness. At best, in our exercise of that concession we will be led to understand His will and to yearn for grace to do it. At worst, we will exercise the concession and then argue for its goodness as if it were the very will of God.

Even under the most understandable of circumstances, then, divorce is never an *acceptable* option for the Christian. It forever requires the forgiveness of God and of His people because it is not in God's original intention, nor in His continuing intention, for us. It is a concession to our predicament, a gracious allowance on God's part, aimed at protecting us from the hideousness of our own messes and at luring us into obeying His perfect will. We err tragically if we refuse the graciousness of the concession by defending our exercise of it as if it were an absolute good. We are on our way to health if, having been compelled to exercise it, we seek and accept His forgiveness and commit ourselves, by the grace of Christ in the presence of the Holy Spirit, to obeying His "good and acceptable and perfect . . . will" (Rom. 12:2). Humble ourselves we must; grovel we need not. Presume upon His grace we dare not; appropriate it we shall.

So, divorce is unacceptable for the Christian, but . . . 

\*Unless otherwise noted, scripture quotations in this article are from the *New American Standard Bible*.



# *And How Can They Hear?*

by Michael E. Williams

*Director of Preaching Ministries in the Section on Worship of the  
General Board of Discipleship of the United Methodist Church*

*How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? (Rom. 10:14, NIV).*

Preaching is a spoken event. It should go without saying. Yet the oral nature of preaching is so critical to our understanding of the sermon that it must be stated. We've found ourselves in an era of sermons that range from rambling through whatever the pastor has on his mind that day to skillfully crafted essays read aloud in lecture form. An understanding of preaching as an oral event may guide us between these two extremes.

D. T. Niles acknowledged the power of the oral dimension of language when he told a conference, "One person speaking to another involves far more than certain sounds being created and transmitted and heard . . . Spoken words are units of energy. They go out to do things and make a difference in the realities they touch."<sup>1</sup> The preacher's words touch the realities of the lives of those who hear him proclaim the Word week after week.

Clyde Fant employs the term *dynamic form* to describe the preacher's words that "go out to do things" and "make a difference." He writes:

*The dynamic form of the sermon requires the oral medium. Nothing so facilitates the dynamic nature of preaching as the oral medium . . . Unless the oral medium is taken seriously, the most innovative sermon forms with the*

most profound sermon content will be static. And, as such, they violate the essential nature of preaching itself as personal encounter.<sup>2</sup>

If preaching is a form of personal encounter, as Fant suggests, then it is more akin to the told story than the written essay. The sermon understood as an oral event calls us to explore what sort of personal encounter preaching is.

Paul asserts that faith is the result of hearing (Rom. 10:17). His outline of the persons and processes involved in hearing and coming to faith suggest a means of examining the sermon as an oral event. From this outline three questions arise: Who hears? From whom do they hear? and, Of whom do they hear?

## **Who Hears?**

The sermon is not addressed to some anonymous audience as books so often are. The sermon is spoken in the presence of persons who gather to worship God. These people are the same ones with whom that pastor has gathered at birth and death, through marriage and divorce, honor or dishonor. This congregation is the community in which the pastor lives his life.

The sermon is a lively, vivid word spoken within the gathered community of faith and intended for that specific community. This is the reason a truly oral sermon is never preached twice. Even though the words may be the same, the situation and needs of the people are different. This makes it a different event.

One of the preacher's primary du-

ties is to listen compassionately to the life stories of those who will hear. The stories we tell each other reveal, often unwittingly, our fears, joys, peeves, loves, and values. The preacher must learn to listen for these stories in the settings in which they emerge.

A word of caution: The preacher does not listen to others' personal stories in order to reveal them. Breaking confidences will quickly erode the integrity of preaching and ministry in general. Rather, careful listening will teach the preacher the language of words, images, and stories with which to speak to his congregation.

Thus, preaching in an oral mode is a relationship of trust. The preacher seeks to speak of the good news of Jesus Christ in language appropriate to those who hear. In a very real sense, the preacher is one who hears as well. For as the spoken Word fills the space around the children of God gathered into commu-



Michael E. Williams

nity by a Voice behind that human voice, preacher and congregation together listen to hear a word from the Lord.

### From Whom Do They Hear?

Preaching is always a personal matter in that it is spoken by a person. Just as it is difficult to separate the song from the singer and the tale from the teller, we cannot separate the preached Word from the one preaching it. Taking the spoken word as the dynamic form of the sermon means that the Word is carried in the voice and presence of a singular personality, to borrow a term from Phillips Brooks.

Over years of preparing sermons, a preacher discovers a "voice" just as surely as a poet does. Sermons emerge from the pastor's life experiences, especially those that are formed by an ongoing encounter with Scripture. This is why it is neither honest nor sufficient to "borrow" a sermon from a book, even if the "sermon help" was provided for that purpose. Since the sermon does not reflect that preacher's personal listening for the gospel, it is an inauthentic expression of faith. How can we express someone else's faith?

The oral dimension of preaching requires that the "voice" (the words, images, ideas, and feelings) be congruent with the one who speaks them. A congregation senses when there is an inconsistency between what the preacher says and who he is. Can we preach an authentic gospel in a less than authentic manner?

The preacher who takes the spoken word seriously will speak from personal experience informed by study. To simply stand and say what one has experienced is not enough. Speaking personally must always be within the context of diligent and imaginative Bible study, involving the finest scholarship available. Scholarship does not tell the preacher what to preach, but prepares the preacher to preach with discernment and understanding.

From whom do the people hear? They hear from God. They hear the Word, spoken by the preacher in words, images, stories, and ideas formed by personal experience and informed by study. When the preaching and the preacher "fit," the listeners hear a word from the Lord

uttered in words that bespeak authenticity.

### Of Whom Will They Hear?

I grew up in a family of storytellers. My mother's aunt told me stories about my great-grandfather, leaving me with the feeling that I knew him—though he had died long before I was born. My father's cousin told me about her father, Uncle Harp, who preached in Tennessee and Texas, and of my great-great-grandfather, a Methodist circuit rider whom she had never known except through stories.

My childhood was filled with a "great cloud of witnesses," most of whom I had never met personally. Yet I do know them. They and their stories live inside me. Alongside them are the characters from the Bible—Adam and Eve, Balaam and his donkey, Saul and David, Esther, Isaiah, Joseph and Mary, Jesus and the people who followed Him, and many others. Though I know them and their world only through stories, they are very much alive and influential in my life.

Of whom do we speak? Of whom will the people hear? Jesus, certainly, and the early believers are central to preaching. But so are those characters from the Hebrew tradition whose lives and stories shaped Jesus' spiritual life. All these persons and the worlds they inhabited influence our sermons.

Preaching that takes the spoken word seriously will be concerned with evoking the listeners' imaginations. It is more important that the hearers encounter the characters from the Bible as living, breathing beings than it is for them to hear a lecture on some technical theological point. The descriptions of these persons will be vivid, and their worlds will be real enough to remain in the memories of those who hear.

In addition, faithful witnesses from the history of the faith offer stories to shape Christians' lives today. Preaching that claims its oral roots will insure that the stories of faith will continue to be told in the community of faith.

How, then, can we describe preaching that is orally based? *First, preaching grounded in oral language will be strongly biblical.* In part, that is a result of the oral character of the

Bible. To introduce his commentary on *Genesis*, Walter Brueggemann speaks of the importance of hearing these biblical stories in the context of "the listening community."<sup>3</sup> If these narratives originally took on significance in relationship to a community of hearers, the same is as true for the Bible as a whole today as it was in the ancient world. We preach *in* and *for* the community.

Amos Wilder emphasizes that Jesus' teaching was expressed entirely in oral forms.<sup>4</sup> Biblical preaching means more than sprinkling quotes here and there in a sermon. It involves teaching Bible stories the way the Bible taught them. It is as much a matter of form as it is a matter of content.

Biblical preaching is meant to be spoken eye to eye in the community of faith. It is intended to be heard in a way that transforms the hearer. Biblical preaching is an oral event because the witness of the Bible is rooted in oral language. Biblical preaching will be oral preaching because it is faithful to both the form and content of the gospel it proclaims.

*Second, preaching that values the spoken word will engage the imagination of its hearers.* Preaching of this sort will be rife with images, metaphors, and stories. In this, it follows after Jesus' own preaching example. Stories will come from the biblical, historical, personal, family, and community experiences. The images and metaphors will usher the hearers into similar worlds to those in which the biblical faith first grew.

Stories are not told solely to illustrate points, as a sweet coating for the bitter pill of truth. Rather, oral preaching evokes experiences similar to those of life. Image, metaphor, and story will resonate within the listener, holding together both the meaning and the mystery of faith as they are carried through the voice of the preacher.

A tree in the midst of a garden; a rebellious son hanging by his hair; a Moabite woman following her mother-in-law home; a wild-eyed man preaching and baptizing by a river; a teacher stopping to talk to an outcast woman by a well; disciples who recognize their Master when He blesses and breaks bread—all


these and many more images, metaphors, and stories will take form in speech and enrich the imagination.

*Third, orally based preaching will be prepared and delivered in ways that are consistent with the spoken word.* The voice must be involved from the very first reading of the scripture passage. Storytellers (not writers, but *tellers*) do not write stories into being. They tell them into being. They tell them over and over through revisions and variations until the tale is ready to be told publicly. It will continue to change as it is told to various audiences, since the audience shapes the story with the teller.

Sermons that take seriously their origins in speech are spoken into being. Their deliveries are not based on word-for-word memorization of manuscripts. They grow out of the structure of the images, metaphors, and stories that compose the sermons. Within that structure there is space for improvisation relating each sermon to the concerns of the moment.

Of course, oral preparation takes more time and discipline, because we are not usually taught this method in seminary. It is not, by any means, an excuse for lack of study or sloppy preparation. The precision of the word spoken into being in the community of faith is as important to the preacher as finding the appropriate word is to the writer.

Faith comes through hearing, says Paul. And how will the people hear without a preacher who takes the spoken character of the Word seriously? They won't! Wilder finds a model of such preaching in Jesus, of whom he says, "Jesus brought both the will of God and the promises of God into the present with inexorable sharpness and actuality. Only the living voice can serve such an occasion."<sup>5</sup>

Only the living voice, indeed, can serve such an occasion as preaching. 

#### NOTES

1. Quoted in John R. Claypool, *The Preaching Event* (Waco, Tex.: Word Books, 1980), 29.

2. Clyde E. Fant, *Preaching for Today* (New York: Harper and Row, 1975), 111.

3. Walter Brueggemann, *Genesis in Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1982), 4.

4. Amos Wilder, *Early Christian Rhetoric: The Language of the Gospel*, reprint (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971), 13.

5. *Ibid.*, 14.

# My Day in the Pew


by Douglas Samples

*Pastor, Trinity Church of the Nazarene, Fresno, Calif.*

**W**hen we preachers go on vacation it is really hard for us to find a good place to worship. We are accustomed to being the one who is in control of the service (from a human standpoint, at least). It becomes a challenge to put ourselves into the position of worshiper rather than worship leader. It is difficult to resist the temptation to make clerical comparisons and render pompous evaluations.

I remember one Sunday when I was on vacation. My efforts at worship were not at all profitable! A constant cacophony of thoughts interrupted, causing me considerable grief throughout the service. The only worth in the experience is that I am now able to offer you a list of 11 distracting temptations to overcome the next time you are listener rather than preacher.

1. See how many cobwebs you can count without turning your head more than 75 degrees in either direction.
2. Be annoyed by the pastor's high voice. Thank the Lord that you are a bass.
3. After missing the introduction and the first point because your son was learning to count to 100, don't even consider trying to "jump in and catch up"!
4. Try to remember some gossip that you may have heard about the pastor through the grapevine.
5. Nudge your wife and inform her that the pastor has completely misunderstood the point of the text.
6. Keep an index card handy—just in case he uses an illustration that you can steal for next Sunday's sermon.
7. While thinking about next Sunday's sermon, make a list of things to do as soon as you get home.
8. Swallow the temptation to raise your hand and correct the pastor by pointing out that most scholars feel that Paul did *not* write Hebrews.
9. Try not to laugh when the person behind you says "Amen" at all the wrong places.
10. After saying "Shhh" to your son for the 100th time, give thanks to God that someone, somewhere, came up with the idea of children's church. Drop a note in the suggestion box that they start one before you visit again.
11. Think about your own church and wonder how many people found out that you were going to be gone and took off themselves.

The good news is, if you can fight your way through all these obstructions, then you may be able not only to enjoy your Sunday off, but partake of some spiritual nourishment that has been prepared by someone else's hands as well. Happy vacationing! 

# CENTENNIAL OF THE BIRTH OF KARL BARTH

by J. Kenneth Grider

*Professor of Theology, Nazarene Theological Seminary*

**K**arl Barth, perhaps the most influential theologian since John Calvin, was born 100 years ago, in 1886.

Barth's lifelong interest was to offer the gospel to the "most lost" of people. For decades, he traveled by public transportation (he didn't own a car; the garage in his home was filled with books) to preach to inmates of the jail in Basel, Switzerland.

On Barth's only visit to America, to lecture at the University of Chicago, certain prominent pulpits were opened to him. He elected to preach only in the Cook County jail.

Shortly after his retirement from the University of Basel, I asked Barth's son Marcus (then teaching New Testament in the Chicago area) how things were with his father. Marcus said, "My father has, of course, retired from the university, but he still preaches in the jail, still traveling by public transportation."

Arthur Cochrane told the Karl Barth Society of North America something that indicates Barth's interest in the "most lost." A couple of years before Barth's death, Cochrane traveled to Switzerland to interview him. Arriving in Basel, Cochrane phoned the Barth home, and Mrs. Barth answered. She evidently knew that any prisoner could see the professor at almost any time. When Cochrane asked if he could come to the home, Mrs. Barth asked, "Are you from the jail?"

In 1962, I met and visited with Barth, then 75, when he lectured for five days in Rockefeller Chapel. I sat each day in a pew, perhaps the closest of anyone to him. I have attended meetings of the Karl Barth Society of North America and have heard papers and discussions on him by the American Theological Society.

To discuss Barth, one must understand him from the standpoint of theological influences and from the standpoint of his theology itself.

## INFLUENCES ON BARTH

Barth's early theological influence came from his father. Fritz Barth was a professor of New Testament and church history at Bern, Switzerland. Karl began divinity studies under him.

The person who Barth says influenced him the most was Wilhelm Herrmann, professor of systematic theology at Marburg, Germany. Barth read his works while studying in Berlin. About Herrmann, Barth says, "The day . . . when I first read his *Ethik* I remember as if it

were today. . . . On that day I believe my own deep interest in theology began" (*Theology and Church*, p. 23).

Herrmann was basically Ritschlian. Following the example of Albrecht Ritschl, he studied theology from the standpoint of its objective, historical character. This was in opposition to Friedrich Ernst Daniel Schleiermacher, who developed his theology from the subjective states of the mind. But Herrmann improved upon Ritschl. To Ritschl's objective, historical interests, Barth added a Schleiermachian dimension of adoration and excitement toward the mystery of the God of the Reformers and toward the New Testament. This is what Barth liked in Herrmann. This profound, living faith was more existential than confessional.

This had a bit of Schleiermacher's "experiential" faith in it. But Schleiermacher was pantheistic, seeing God within his own soul. Herrmann was profoundly similar to Søren Kierkegaard, who stood amazed before the Lord above. And this attitude is the most important aspect of what Barth imbibed from Herrmann. In Herrmann's lectures at Marburg, Barth heard him say, "The religious knowledge of the Christian begins with the group of objective facts establishing religion's power to affect conscience, but it ends with the confession that the Lord, whose innermost nature has become revealed to us as love, still remains for us a God enthroned in unapproachable light" (*Theology and Church*, pp. 253 f).

Another significant influence on Barth was Søren Kierkegaard (1813-55). Kierkegaard was not interested in simply obtaining a knowledge of what happened a long time ago, in the cold, objective fashion of a disaffected historian. He urged Christians to involve themselves existentially in the Christian faith, as Abraham did. Abraham had no divine guarantee that he would be spared the sacrifice of Isaac.

Kierkegaard was anything but pantheistic. He viewed God as infinitely different from what we are like, qualitatively. Barth picked up on this and then tempered his understanding of Kierkegaard's concept by the time he wrote *The Humanity of God* in 1952.

Fyodor Dostoyevski also had an influence on Barth. His novels depicted great sinners as well as the elegant folk of high society. He illustrated what Barth came to understand: that publicans and harlots, through Christ's forgiveness, will enter the kingdom of heaven before elegant, well-heeled people, who feel that they have no



need for repentance. The most despicable character in *Crime and Punishment* says, "I ought to be crucified, crucified on a cross, not pitied! . . . He will pity us who had pity on all men."

Kierkegaard and Dostoyevski turned Barth to the Bible—and young Thurneysen, eight miles away, pastor at Leutwil, Barth being a pastor at Safenwii. The result was Barth's *Commentary on Romans*. Turned down by three publishers, 1,000 copies were issued in 1919 by a small Bern company—after one individual financially backed the venture. This book, with its later editions, dealt blows against theological modernism, and may be the single most significant theological book of our century. Its publication catapulted Barth to prominence, and he was appointed professor of Reformed theology at the University of Göttingen, Germany.

Important also as an influence on Barth was Anselm of Canterbury (1033-1109), on whom Barth lectured. Anselm's method, whereby faith precedes understanding, was of special influence upon Barth. Barth used all three of his reasons for our seeking to understand our faith: (1) to silence unbelievers and heretics; (2) to convince Christians who are wavering in their faith; and, most importantly (for both), (3) to have joy in understanding one's faith.

Influenced by Anselm, Barth concluded that the theologian is to "after-think" Scripture and the confessions. They constitute a "given," and the theologian, in faith, reflects upon what has been given. He does this in prayer, in faith, and with a pure heart, so that his understanding becomes a gift from God.

So the theologian seeks understanding as one who is in faith and therefore accepts the Christian creed and the Scriptures. And if understanding comes to him, it is not simply knowledge *about* God, but knowledge *of* God.

By grace and in faith, theology penetrates creed and Scripture and thinks about their meaning. Meaning is given because the prayerful theologian, whose heart is pure, experiences God as a gift of grace.

### BARTH'S THEOLOGY

Barth began his pastoral work in Switzerland as a true son of German liberalism. But under the influences of his theological mentors, he found his way to evangelical certainty, somewhere between orthodoxy and liberalism.

Barth did not describe his views as neoorthodoxy; just prior to his death, he called himself a liberal of a type. He was indeed orthodox in much of his teaching; for example, Christ's virgin birth and His physical resurrection. Barth's theology is especially unique in his views of Scripture being not so much inspired as it is inspiring, containing a written, though not necessarily inerrant, revelation. He did not believe in the historicity of the account of Adam and Eve; and he may have leaned toward a kind of universalism—not a metaphysically dictated one as Origen was, nor an Abelardian in which God loves everyone into heaven. But he believed that Christ extracts from everyone the judgment that God has against them, and says a "yes" to them, admitting them into the Kingdom.

In Barth's Chicago lectures, he defined what evangel-

ical theology is. It is the theology "first expressed in the New Testament and newly expressed in the Reformation. . . . Evangelical theology refers primarily and decisively to the Bible. . . . It is that theology which seeks to apprehend and to speak the gospel." He went on to say that it is "interested in the history of God's deeds," and that "it speaks of a God [who is] just as lowly as He is exalted." Still in this vein, he said, "The God of Schleiermacher cannot show mercy; the God of the gospel does."

At a time when modernists had made Pelagians of many and had exalted the authority of man's reason, Barth stressed revelation as written, in Scripture; as living, in Christ; as spoken, in preaching. At a time when many people seriously questioned, "Does God exist?" "Did God really call Abraham?" "Did Jesus die for our sins?" "Did He really rise from the dead?" Of all such Barth said, "Fools ask such questions as these."

Barth was an announcer, a herald. While Tillich tried to find out what questions people were asking, Barth hurled God's answers to them. He felt that God has a need to disclose our need, our sin to us, or we will fail to ask the right questions. He said God makes a double disclosure: what we, in our sin, are like; and what God is like.

Barth gave a number of special theological insights in his lectures at the Chicago University, the hotbed of modernism in America.

Of the Church and its evangelistic task he said, "The Church is the confederation of believers who may and must speak the Word of God."

On the importance of deeds prior to words he said, "Since only God can do what He does, only He can say what He says."

On prevenient grace and the Holy Spirit's role in administering it he said, "The Spirit arouses and begets the expression, 'Jesus Christ is Lord.' . . . Before men can respond, they must be summoned. . . . The Spirit calls into existence every living, loving, and hoping witness to the Word of God."

A little girl was drawing, and her mother asked what the picture was going to be. "I'm drawing God," the little girl responded.

"But no one knows what God looks like," her mother cautioned.

"They will when I'm finished," the girl said.

Importantly, Barth's theology tells us about God. When the theologian had written all his books, including the 12 volumes of *Church Dogmatics* (not doing a 13th and last volume simply because he was tired out, and not caring because theology is not supposed to be finished anyway), he had drawn for us an important picture of what God is like. For Barth, God is One who seeks us, One for whom we search by philosophy in vain. God is the Philanthropic One who, through Christ and the Holy Spirit's summoning, begets in us faith, love, and hope.

Karl Barth has meant much to me. I wept when he died on December 10, 1968. Still weeping, I lectured that morning in my systematic theology class at Nazarene Seminary on his significance to the theological world. The gospel from his view excites me to the depths and has set me weeping for the sheer joy of being helped to understand my own faith.

# TOWARD A THEOLOGY OF MINISTRY

by Clyde W. Loew

*Pastor, Church of the Nazarene, Reading, Mich.*

**T**here is a continuing need to revitalize the church. This is true whether one is thinking of a particular denomination or of a specific local church. One excellent way to start the revitalization process is to form a theology of ministry.

Before carrying out any major activity, it is important to understand the basic game plan. Thus, a written and understood theology of ministry is vital.

The context for a theology of ministry is God's self-revelation in Jesus Christ. God's effective call to salvation that elicits a willingness on our part to allow the Holy Spirit to make us His empowered servants in this world is foundational. Here are some basic elements that can be included in a philosophy of ministry.

## I. THE NATURE OF MINISTRY

Christian ministry must be related to the nature of God as it has been demonstrated in Jesus Christ. Those who hear the message of salvation, respond positively, and express their faith by obedience to Christ are ministered to by Him. Part of receiving Jesus' redemptive ministry is to accept His call to become a partner with Him in the redemptive call to others. By this approach to the divine revelation in the Word of God we come to understand the nature of ministry.

### *Ministry as Revelation and Reconciliation*

It is in the unique and continuing ministry of God in Jesus Christ that all other ministry is rooted. All redemptive ministry is carried out through Christ's ministry as the Head of the Church, in the power of the Holy Spirit.

God acted through the priests, prophets, and kings of the Old Testament to point all mankind back to himself as the Source, Essence, and Consummation of life in its eternal dimension. Now God is acting through Christ as our eternal Priest, Prophet, and King for our eternal reconciliation to God. He is not only the God who was and is for man, in terms of revelation and reconciliation, He is also the Man who was for God, in terms of submission and obedience. The submission of Jesus to the will of the Father was the key to the power of God in Christ's resurrection.

The central issue of Jesus' life was the glory of God. Thus, on the Cross we see a "human" God revealing His defeat at the hands of angry, rebellious men. But the

resurrection of the Son of Man shows us that the divine failure of the Cross was necessary for the triumph of Easter. It is in the revelation of the humanity of Jesus that our humanity is explained in all of its divine potential. It is in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ that the nature of ministry as revelation and reconciliation has been accomplished and made known to us.

### *Ministry as Grace and Judgment*

The nature of ministry is expanded through God's self-revelation as God of grace and judgment. God created man with the power of choice, knowing there was the possibility for man to rebel against Him. Even before Eve and Adam sinned, God determined to meet man's rebellion with His grace, offering His Son as a sacrifice for our salvation (Hebrews 1; 3; 4:3).

Grace is God's remedy for the sinner's impotence. According to Rom. 5:20-21, grace is God's operative in conviction, repentance, regeneration, illumination, sanctification, discipline, and ultimately our glorification. As God in Jesus Christ has ministered to others in Jesus' name show great grace in words and actions.

The other side of God's grace is His judgment on man's willful rebellion—rebellion that results in planned disobedience and deliberate rejection of God's atoning sacrifice in Jesus Christ. God's justice demands judgment on the thoughts, purposes, and motives, as well as the works of all men. A part of Christ's ministry has to do with our judgment, both here as discipline and in the hereafter as final reward. This also is a part of the ministry for all those who carry Christ's name in this world (1 Cor. 2:15; 5:3; 6:2-3).

### *Ministry as Possibility and Actuality*

The nature of ministry can be further understood as the possibility that is made available to mankind through the atoning sacrifice or actualizing ministry of Christ. Through Him, God has extended to us the possibility of redemption from sin. Because of the ministry of Christ, this divinely ordained *possibility* can indeed become the *actuality* of new life in the Spirit.

In Jesus Christ, the Word of God has become a physical event in space and time. Through the Holy Spirit, the Word of God is even now active and vital in making the grace of God available for each individual. As God minis-

ters through the Holy Spirit, each individual has the inherent possibility or capability to respond in faith to God's actualizing Word in Jesus Christ.

All the possibilities that God has stored up for the salvation of mankind are to be realized while living in the here and now by a dynamic faith in Jesus' death and resurrection. In Christ, the faithfulness of God is actualized in our hearts and lives in terms of "the obedience of faith" (Rom. 16:26, KJV). The assent of our minds to the claims of Christ and the commitment of our wills to His activity in the Incarnation are to be evidenced in the obedience that expresses a living faith here and now. Thus the command to show our love for God and all others by Christlike acts of service becomes the norm for a life of faith.

These possibilities of divine grace result from the gift of God to us through Jesus Christ, by means of the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit's ministry to change grace from possibility to actuality in our lives. And it is the privilege of each of Christ's ministering servants to assist in this ministry through their obedience to His divine will.

## II. AN INCARNATIONAL MINISTRY

More specifically, the theological considerations of ministry relate to the centrality of Jesus Christ to any Christian as a minister of the gospel. The mission of God in Jesus Christ for my salvation must give substance and form to my ministry in His name in this world. As God is known by His self-revelation to me in Jesus Christ, so I must come to understand my ministry in His name to others. Thus, I must willingly obligate myself to the Church in the world *and* to the world, for the sake of being a redemptive influence toward its reconciliation to God in Jesus Christ.

### *In Christ*

Ministry finds its best expression in Jesus Christ. God's grace and kingdom are present in the world, through the Church, on the basis of God's self-revelation in Jesus Christ.

Because God became man in Jesus Christ, He has adopted fallen man as redeemable. Through Christ, man has been reconciled to God. In the incarnational ministry of Jesus Christ the whole reality of salvation has been completed. As we accept the call of God to grace, salvation, mission, and ministry, we enter into Christ's ministry to others. They must become partners with God in Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit to call others to salvation.

The nature of Christ's incarnational ministry was sacrificial love. Through divine *agape* love, Jesus Christ demonstrated the presence and revealed the nature of God to mankind. This redemptive (sacrificial) love was and is at the heart of Christ's incarnation ministry. Thus, Christian ministry at its best is an extension of Christ's incarnation.

### *In the Church*

The Church of Jesus Christ is in the world to represent the love of God for man, and the redemption of all who would hear and believe. The Church is made up of the people of God who participate in the saving mission of Christ. The Church is also the organism through which the Calvary and Easter events are made continuous.

Jesus Christ truly dwells in His Church through the Spirit of Christ. According to Jesus' high priestly prayer in John 17, Christ and His Church are to be one—in identity, in reality, and in ministry. To this end, the actions and attitudes of the Church are really incarnational acts of Jesus Christ.

### *In the World*

Both Christ and the Church are obligated to the world for reconciliation. The Church, as the continuation of the incarnation of Jesus Christ, must be present in the world as a redemptive, liberating force, acting as God's agent for righteousness (Church of the Nazarene *Manual*, 1985, p. 32).

Through the life of the Incarnate Logos, God has entered into "solidarity" with all humanity. This incomprehensible solidarity with the destiny of mankind caused Christ's own disciples to protest His complete identity with the human race. But Jesus rebuked them, saying, "You do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men" (Matt. 16:23, NIV).

Jesus' solidarity with humanity was effected by His becoming flesh and blood. This means that God has entered into a redemptive relationship with the world in a form that it can comprehend. The humanity of Jesus Christ has become the horizon of divine self-revelation, and at the same time He has become the horizon of human personhood through redemption. Because of this, the Christian in ministry is incomplete without the world that God loves through Jesus Christ (John 3:16).

The Christian ministers incarnationally to others for God, with Jesus Christ as both the Center and the Boundary of his existence. Christ is the central Focus of one's faith and spiritual life; *Christlikeness* is at the farthest boundary of Christian growth and maturity. The kenotic nature of the Church places all humanity within the scope of Christ's redemptive love. This is the meaning and scope of an incarnational ministry.

## III. A KERYGMATIC MINISTRY

The ministry that Jesus Christ has modeled for us must find continued expression in the world to meet the spiritual needs of humanity. The focus of Christ's ministry to the world must find expression through the words and ideas of the Church.

### *The Proclamation of Jesus Christ*

Jesus Christ is the central Focus of the kerygmatic ministry of the Church. The major points of proclamation regarding Christ are: (1) God's promises to His people, as foretold by the prophets of Israel, are now being fulfilled in the Messiah; (2) The Promised One was the crucified Jesus of Nazareth; (3) Christ's resurrection from the dead is God's demonstrated power over the forces of evil and unbelief; (4) This risen Savior now shares the sovereignty of God as Lord of the Church; (5) This exalted Redeemer has given the gift of the Holy Spirit to sanctify His Church; (6) At the close of the Church Age, this same Jesus Christ will come as the Judge of men and nations; (7) Therefore, repent, be converted and sanctified, so that your sins may be blotted out by His shed blood, and that you may receive the promised Holy Spirit of God for power in love and service.

The proclamation of Jesus Christ as "*the personalized and historicized Word of God*" (*God, Man, and Salvation*, by W. T. Purkiser, Richard S. Taylor, and Willard H. Taylor, 1977, p. 205) is the foundation for the world's reconciliation to God. As God's representative, the Church is saying that salvation is available and realizable to mankind only through the cross and the blood of Christ. And as the Church proclaims Jesus Christ, He speaks through them to the lost world.

#### *The Task of Proclamation*

The function of the Church is the proclamation of the gospel. This is essential for its own perpetuation. The Church lives and sustains itself by its own proclamation of Christ. "D. T. Niles calls the Church 'a Messenger, which the gospel brings into being, and the Body within which the gospel is continuously experienced'" (*God, Man, and Salvation*, p. 585). This means that at the same time that the Church is ministering to those outside her existence for evangelistic purposes, she is also living by her own proclamation.

In the task of proclamation, God is the original Questioner. When a member of Christ's Church on earth proclaims the gospel, he reopens the basic question for which faith in Jesus Christ for salvation is the only acceptable answer. A negative response is rebellion against God, but a positive response is obedience to the implicit moral demands of the gospel and a living trust in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.

#### *The Promise of Christian Preaching*

The proclaimer of the Word tells the story of God's saving grace throughout history. These acts of salvation need to be told and retold so that mankind may come to understand salvation as God's plan for them. This proclamation needs to be done in such a way that the hearer(s) can understand: how things were/are between God and man; how things are now possible between God and man through Jesus Christ; and how God will bring salvation history to its consummation in Jesus Christ at the close of the ages.

To proclaim the gospel story redemptively means to tell it in such a way that Christ is the Source, Center, and End of all things. Every life and each human endeavor must be related redemptively to Him. In this way, God's love is not only the center of all Christian preaching but the reality of the Christian faith—the answer to the original Questioner.

No one can hear the questioning of God or ask God's questions to others without being compelled to respond to God's answer in Jesus Christ. The Bible makes no proofs for God; it only witnesses to His self-revelation in Jesus Christ. To this end, the kerygmatic ministry of God in Jesus Christ through the Church seeks those to whom it can communicate God's questions. This must be done in such a manner that they will accept God's redemptive answer to their salvation in Jesus Christ.

### **IV. A DIAKONAL MINISTRY**

The minister must proclaim—but he must also serve. If the words of kerygmatic ministry, as the expression of an incarnational ministry, are to be perceived as valid, then actual loving and caring ministry must be performed.

#### *The Nature of Service*

It is in Jesus Christ that we learn what service is really all about. In Jesus Christ the love of God took the practical expression of service to mankind, not only in a spiritual sense, but also in a mental and a material/physical manifestation. In Jesus Christ the loving service of mercy became expressed in acts of compassion and healing of the mind as well as the healing of the body.

In Jesus Christ the Lord God Almighty has demonstrated for us the nature of service by His taking up the ministry of a servant. In so doing He has incorporated in himself our servant existence in relationship to God. Thus, Jesus Christ was the example par excellence of the nature of service that the Church of Jesus Christ is to render in this world.

#### *Service in Jesus' Name*

Diakonal ministry has its only source of power in the name of Jesus Christ. Jesus carried out His ministry on earth as a humble servant of His Heavenly Father. The Church of Christ must continue to carry out her Lord's instructions and commands as the humble servant of Jesus Christ. The power to do this is not her own but is made available to the Church through the linkup of intercessory prayer in the name of Jesus, for the glory of God.

It is through the humble service of the Church, clothed with Christ's gospel, that the Church finds its full place in the world. This means that the power of God through the kerygmatic ministry is redemptively effective only within the context of a valid diakonal ministry, and vice versa. The two are mutually interdependent, according to the ministry example of Jesus Christ.

#### *The Whole Church Is Service*

When the ministry of Jesus Christ is remembered in its essence, it can only be remembered as a ministry of love: the love of God for mankind and Christ's great commandments for us to love God with all that there is within us and to love all others as ourselves. Thus, the fundamental characteristic of all Christian service is the giving of ourselves to God in the tasks of caring for others in any kind of need. This diakonal ministry by the Christian is not something that is accidental to the Christian faith. It is the essential nature of all ministry done in the name of Jesus and for the sake of God's kingdom.

Because of the divine nature of love, all Christian ministry must always have the character and intention of diakonal ministry. This diakonal ministry, patterned after the example of the Suffering Servant, is the mode of the Christian's freedom in the kingdom of love. The particular form of the service is motivated by the power of divine love toward others. Thus, all Christians are of necessity united with Jesus Christ in God's great diakonal ministry in redemptive history.

### **CONCLUSION**

It is important to have a theology of ministry as a foundation for one's work in the church of one's choice. It is even more important to formulate a theological foundation for one's understanding of and place in the Church of Jesus Christ. It is of utmost importance to pattern one's theology of ministry after the ultimate redemptive ministry of our Savior and Lord, Jesus Christ, in its incarnational, kerygmatic, and diakonal forms.

# CONFESSIONS OF A COMPASSIONATE COWARD

by Steve Weber

*Compassionate Ministries Coordinator, Church of the Nazarene*

**I**f I see or hear one more thing on 'Compassionate Ministries,' I think I am going to . . ." These words from an exasperated pastor were reported to me not long ago. He was trying to figure out what all the noise and commotion is all about. On the other hand, our office receives urgent requests almost daily to help people learn more about what our church is doing in the area of compassionate ministries.

Perhaps we, as a church, are at a crossroads, or maybe God simply wants us all to take a look at how we are ministering to those in need. I am certainly not the person to write an unbiased discussion of the relationship between compassionate ministries and evangelism. My personal feelings were forged during my years in Haiti where words about God's love meant little if they weren't coupled with the "doing of theology" and clearly showing God's love through compassionate actions.

During my time in Haiti, I learned at least four lessons concerning the relationship of evangelism and what we are now calling Compassionate Ministries.

**F**irst, there are two definite mandates in Scripture. One calls for preaching, the persuasive presentation of the gospel. We must build the Kingdom through the development of disciples for our Lord. The second mandate involves social transformation. It takes into account corporate as well as individual sinfulness. Wesley strongly believed that holiness could completely change a heart. He also believed that if sufficient hearts were transformed, society itself would be radically altered, and God's coming reign upon the earth could be more clearly seen by everyone. We cannot separate these two mandates. They are linked together like a pair of scissors. Both scissor parts are indispensable in the cutting of paper, just as both mandates are necessary to cut away the bonds of sin that snare a hurting world.

**S**Second, Compassionate Ministries should be a consequence of evangelism. This implies the logical priority of evangelism. Christian social action isn't possible until there are Christians. The simple fact is that we must do compassionate ministry because Jesus told us to. The Old Testament is full of clear statements concerning the responsibilities of God's people for the poor. Christian people, and especially holiness people, cannot afford to "domesticate their holiness." We minister because it is the right thing for Christians to be doing.

**T**Third, Compassionate Ministries can be a bridge to evangelism. Here we run into the old "rice Christian" argument. This argument implies that many impoverished people convert to Christianity solely for the "rice"—the help they can get from us. These people know the church won't let its own starve, so they be-



Steve Weber



Nazarene

# Update

UPDATE EDITOR, MARK D. MARVIN, PASTORAL MINISTRIES

## A CALL TO WORSHIP

As a pastor I felt it to be my first responsibility as a public servant of Christ to lead my people in the worship of God. Of course, as I entered the service the sermon I hoped would become God's message to my people was trembling within me for delivery. But instinctively I knew that the primary objective of the entire service was to bring people into the presence and adoration of God and to a willing submission to His loving will. If the service failed here, it failed.

As pastor I knew it my duty to plan the entire service, not simply the sermon. This also involved preparing my own heart so that from the moment I called my people to worship, to the final benediction, I was leading the people in worship.

"We evangelicals do not know much about worship," Dr. John R. W. Stott suggests. "Evangelism is our specialty, not worship. We have little sense of the greatness of Almighty God. We tend to be cocky, flippant, and proud, and our worship services are often ill-prepared, slovenly, mechanical, perfunctory, and dull. . . . Much of the public wor-

ship is ritual without reality, form without power, religion without God." We would do well to ponder these serious words as we consider our pastoral role as worship leaders.

Dr. James B. Chapman used to say that many of our Nazarene services have more of the atmosphere of "an old-fashioned mountain corn-shucking" than of a service of divine worship. In our secular age worship tends to be chatty and man-centered. We breeze into church, visit noisily with our friends, absent-mindedly join in the singing of some carelessly selected gospel songs—and call it worship! We desperately need to recover a sense of the holiness of God and the meaning of worship.

Worship is God-centered. It is an activity in which we ascribe worth and praise to God. It should be characterized by both dignity and freedom. In worship there is a sense of awe and reverence in the presence of the One who is the Wholly Other. Worship is at heart *celebration*, not simply coming together for another meeting. "Our worship each week is meant to be a time of grand celebration—celebration of the living, dying, and rising again of Jesus for our salvation and for the salvation of the world," says Robert E. Webber.

As you consider these things, permit me to submit to you William Temple's comprehensive definition of public worship: "Worship is the submission of all our nature to God. It is the quickening of conscience by His holiness; the nourishment of mind with His truth; the purifying of imagination by His beauty; the opening of the heart to His love; the surrender of will to His purpose—and all of this gathered up in adoration, the most selfless emotion of which our nature is capable and therefore the chief remedy for that self-centeredness which is our original sin and the source of all actual sin."

"O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness."



By General Superintendent  
William M. Greathouse

**WHO  
HELPS  
BUILD  
A  
LIFE?**



Photo Credit: Mark C.

In a child's early years, parents begin, block by block, to lay a foundation of strength upon which their child can continue to build in later years.

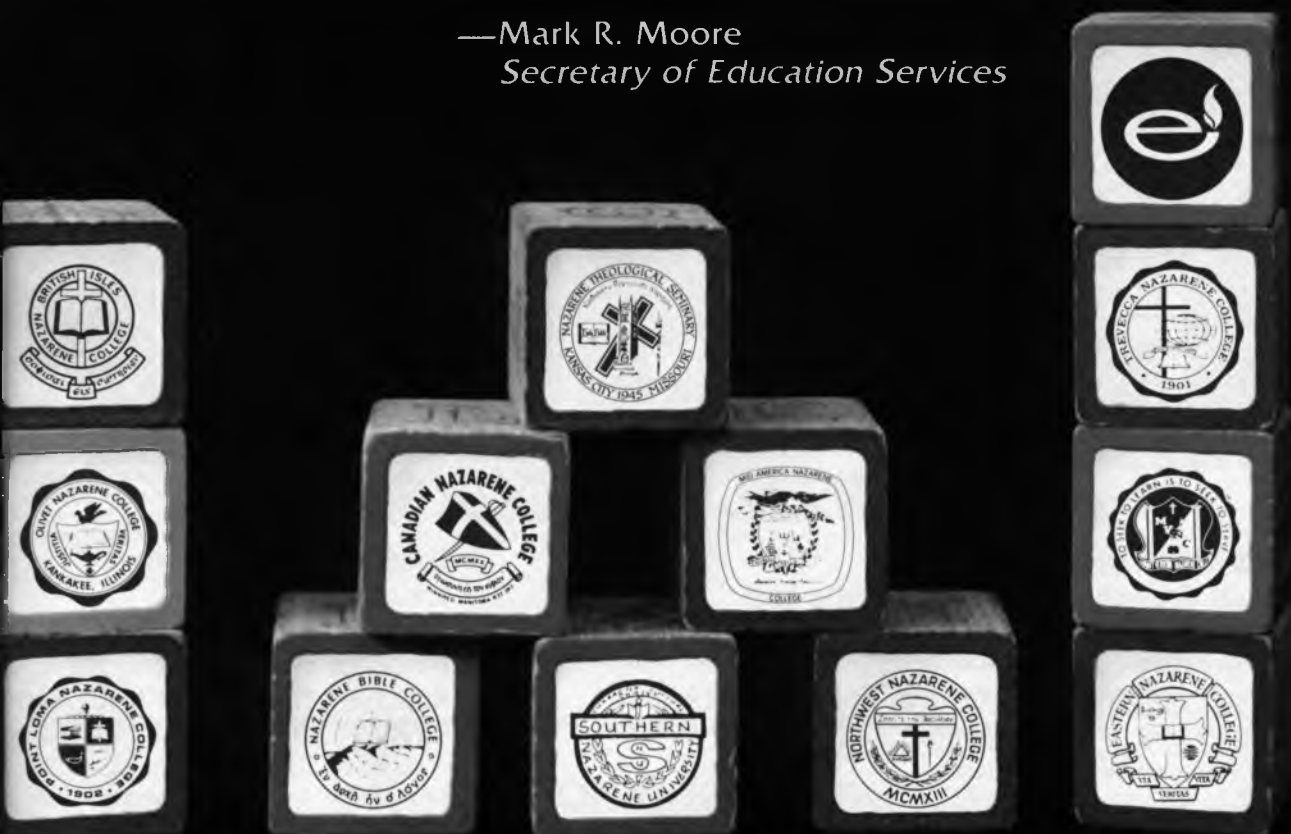
Soon the church places the building blocks of life's values and truths.

The various educational systems have a great responsibility to add the building blocks of knowledge and skills.

Hopefully, the colleges—NAZARENE COLLEGES—will have an opportunity to reinforce life's values by contributing a number of building blocks.

We are ALL involved in building a life.

—Mark R. Moore  
*Secretary of Education Services*



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(Monthly slates published in the first issue of the "Herald of Holiness" each month)

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▽CREWS, H. F. Box 18302, Dallas, TX 75218

## D

▽DANIELS, M. HAROLD. P.O. Box 470, Littleton, CO 80160-0470  
▽DARNELL, H. E. P.O. Box 929, Vivian, LA 71082  
◆DELL, JIMMY. (C) 4802 E. Mitchell Dr., Phoenix, AZ 85018  
◆DENNIS, DARRELL & FAMILY. (C) 1009 S. Sheffield Ave., Indianapolis, IN 46221  
◆DENNISON, MARVIN E. (R) 1208 S.E. Green Rd., Tecumseh, KS 66542  
▽DISHON, MELVIN. 911 Edgefield Way, Bowling Green, KY 42101  
◆DODDS, LARRY W. (R) Rte. 5, Box 385, Flint Valley Estates, Burlington, IA 52601  
◆DOOLITTLE, KEVIN. (R) Rte. 1, Box 54, Newton, NJ 07860  
DRISKELL, TIM. (R) 8303 Elm, Raytown, MO 64138  
◆DUNMIRE, RALPH & JOANN. (C) 202 Garwood Dr., Nashville, TN 37210  
DUNN, DON. (C) P.O. Box 132, Bartlett, OH 45713  
DUTTON, BARRY AND TAVIA. (R) P.O. Box 119, Clarksburg, MD 20871

## E

▽ECKLEY, LYLE. P.O. Box 153, Laguna Park, TX 76634  
◆ESSELBURN, BUD (THE KING'S MESSENGERS). (C) S.R. 60 N., Rte. 1, Warsaw, OH 43844

## F

◆FADER, WES & MARY. (R) 7093 Colorado Springs Dr., Springfield, VA 22153  
▽FISHER, C. WILLIAM. No. 1, Antigua Ct., Coronado, CA 92118  
FORTNER, ROBERT E. (C) Box 322, Carmi, IL 62821  
FOSTER, A. D. (R) 1017 N. 20th St., St. Joseph, MO 64501  
FRANK, RICHARD A. (C) c/o Evangelism\*  
FREELAND, RON E. (R) Rte. 1, Taylor Villa Apt. No. 35, Salem, IN 47167  
◆FREY, DONALD. (R) The Frey Family, 509 Dean Dr., Owosso, MI 48867

## G

▽GADBOW, C. D. 1207 S. Second St., Marshalltown, IA 50158  
GARDNER, JOHN M. (C) 4102 Carlisle Rd., Lakeland, FL 33803  
GAWTHORP, WAYLAND. (C) Box 115, Mount Erie, IL 62446  
◆GINTER, TIM. (R) R.R. 1, Box 306, Uhrichsville, OH 44683  
◆GORMANS, THE SINGING (CHARLES & ANN). (R) 12104 Linkwood Ct., Louisville, KY 40229  
▽GRAY, C. PAUL. 4016 Riverside Dr., Bethany, OK 73008  
◆GREEN, JAMES & ROSEMARY. (C) Box 385, Canton, IL 61520  
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(C) Commissioned (R) Registered ◆Preacher & Song Evangelist •Song Evangelist ▽Retired Elders  
\*Evangelism Ministries, 6401 The Paseo, Kansas City, MO 64131

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.



## H

HAIL, D. F. (R) 4488 Stonecastle Dr., Apt. 518, Dayton, OH 45440  
 ♦HAINES, GARY. (C) c/o Evangelism\*  
 ▼HANCOCK, BOYD C. P.O. Box 968, Rogers, AR 72756  
 HAYES, ALVIN B. (R) 15812 W. 129th St., Olathe, KS 66062  
 HAYNES, CHARLES & MYRT. (C) P.O. Box 3563, Cleveland, TN 37311  
 HEATON, K. D. (C) 800 Martinsburg Rd., Mount Vernon, OH 43050  
 HECKATHORN, JIM. (R) 713 Lake Lowell Ave., Nampa, ID 83651  
 ♦HELMS, MIKE & GLORIA. (R) c/o Evangelism\*  
 ▼HENDERSON, LATTIE. 3006 Liberty Rd., Greensboro, NC 27406  
 ♦HIGGINS, CHARLES E. (C) 2344 Tulare, Visalia, CA 93278  
 ▼HILDIE, D. W. 3323 Belaire Ave., Cheyenne, WY 82001  
 HILL, BEN E. (C) Bible Expositor, Box 528, Colona, IL 61241  
 HOOTS, BOB. (C) 309 Adair St., Columbia, KY 42728  
 HOWARD, DICK. (C) 7901 N.W. 28th Terr., Bethany, OK 73008  
 HOWARD, MICHAEL. (R) Rte. 3, Box 6A, Robeline, LA 71469  
 HUBARTT, LEONARD. (R) 6309 Salisbury Dr., Fort Wayne, IN 46816  
 HUBBARD, JEFFIE. (R) 3213 W. Ave. T, Temple, TX 76501  
 HUGHES, MRS. JOYCE. (C) Rte. 7, Box 114, Clarksville, TN 37043

## J

♦JACKSON, PAUL & TRISH. (C) Box 739, Meade, KS 67864  
 ▼JAMES, R. ODIS. 323 Winter Dr., St. James, MO 65559  
 JAYMES, RICHARD W. (R) 617 W. Gambier, Mount Vernon, OH 43050  
 ♦JEFFRIES, JEFF & JAN. (R) 3140 Tess Ave. N.E., No. 220, Salem, OR 97301  
 JOHNSON, BOB E. (R) 5620 168th St. S.W., No. 2, Lynnwood, WA 98037  
 ♦JOHNSON, RON. (C) 3208 Eighth St. E., Lewiston, ID 83501  
 ♦JONES, ROBERT A. (R) 225 Byron Dr., Apt. 2, Colorado Springs, CO 80910  
 ♦JONES, TERRY. (C) 2002 Judy Ln., Pasadena, TX 77502  
 ♦JUSTICE, MEL & DONNA. (C) 1618 Chapel St., Dayton, OH 45404

## K

KEENA, EARL. (C) 2160 D St., Oroville, CA 95965  
 ▼KNIGHT, JOHN L. 4000 N. Thompson, Bethany, OK 73008  
 KOHR, CHARLES A. (C) Rte. 2, Box 360, Brookville, PA 15825

## L

LAWSON, WAYNE. (C) c/o Evangelism\*  
 ♦LAXSON, WALLY & GINGER. (C) Rte. 3, Box 118, Athens, AL 35611  
 ♦LECKRONE, LARRY. (C) 403 E. Main, Morenci, MI 49256  
 ♦LEPETER, DOUGLAS & SAMUELLA. (C) P.O. Box 7204, Akron, OH 44306  
 LESTER, FRED R. (C) 7404 Ed Rice, Mesa, AZ 85208  
 LIDDELL, P. L. (C) 3530 W. Allen Rd., Howell, MI 48843

LISTON, CLARENCE. (R) P.O. Box 23576, Tucson, AZ 85734  
 LITTLE, HAROLD. (R) 9907 White Oak, No. 114, Northridge, CA 91325  
 ♦LOETSCHER, O'NEAL & LINDA. (C) c/o Evangelism\*  
 LOHR, DONALD. (R) P.O. Box 7056, Charleston, WV 25356  
 ▼LOWN, ALBERT J. 23 Elmview, Airedale Park, Seeton, Keighley, Yorkshire, England  
 LYBARGER, EVERETT. (C) P.O. Box 1534, Conway, AR 72032

## M

MANER, ROBERT E. (C) P.O. Box 675, Fitzgerald, GA 31750  
 MANLEY, STEPHEN. (C) Box 522, Upland, IN 46989  
 ▼MARTIN, LEON. Rte. 3, Box 243A, Bonham, TX 75418  
 MATTER, DAN & ANN. (R) 2617 Caraw St., Fort Wayne, IN 46805  
 MAYO, CLIFFORD. (C) Star Rte. 1, Dumont, TX 79232  
 McELFRESH, RONALD. (R) Rte. 1, Box 62, Palco, KS 67657  
 ♦McFERRIN, RICK & LANETTE. (R) Rte. 8, Box 300, Lot 13, Muncie, IN 47302  
 ♦McKINNON, JUANITA. (C) Box 126, Institute, WV 25112  
 MEADOWS, NAOMI. (R) 2626 Washington Ave., Lot 65, Vincennes, IN 47591  
 MEENACH, CHRIS. (R) Rte. 2, Franklin Furnace, OH 45629  
 MELVIN, DOLORES. (C) HC 60, Box 224, Greenup, KY 41144  
 ♦MEREDITH, DWIGHT & NORMA JEAN. (C) c/o Evangelism\*  
 ♦MICKEY BOB. (C) 504 N. Sixth, Lamar, CO 81052  
 MILBURN, GARY. (R) P.O. Box 475, Braddock Heights, MD 21714  
 ♦MILLER, HENRY & RUTH. (C) 111 W. 46th St., Reading, PA 19606  
 ▼MILLER, NETTIE. 1313 14th St., Apt. 801, Columbus, GA 31994  
 ♦MILLER, WALLY & CARROLL. (C) 20110 Finnigan Hill Rd., Hillsboro, OR 97123  
 MILLHUFF, CHUCK. (C) Box 160, Olathe, KS 66062  
 MILLS, CARLTON A. (C) 10415 N. Florida Ave., Suite 186, Tampa, FL 33612  
 MOORE, NORMAN. (C) P.O. Box 1510, Vista, CA 92083  
 MORLEY, FRANK. (C) 22732 Cypress St., Torrance, CA 90501  
 MOSS, UDELL & DORIS. (C) 1980 S. Florissant, Florissant, MO 63031  
 ♦MOYER, BRANCE. (R) 7206 Glen Tr., San Antonio, TX 78239  
 ♦MUNCIE, ROBERT & JANE. (C) Rte. 1, Box 17, Cory, IN 47846  
 ♦MYERS, HAROLD & MRS. (C) 575 Ferris N.W., Grand Rapids, MI 49504

## N

NAJARIAN, BERGE & DORIS. (R) c/o David Najarian, 6427 Woodland, Kansas City, MO 64131  
 ▼NASH, FORREST. 725 W. Cedar, Olathe, KS 66061  
 ♦NEFF, LARRY & PAT. (C) 625 N. Water St., Owosso, MI 48867  
 NEWTON, DANIEL. (C) P.O. Box 323, Fairland, IN 46126

## O

▼OLIVER, L. S. 5115 N. Carefree Cir., Colorado Springs, CO 80917  
 OVERTON, BILL & DOT. (C) Family Evangelists & Chalk Artist, c/o Evangelism\*  
 ♦OYLER, CALVIN & VIRGINIA. (C) P.O. Box 727, Wellsville, KS 66092

## P

PAGE, MARK. (R) P.O. Box 910, Circleville, OH 43113  
 ♦PARR, PAUL G. (R) Rte. 2, Box 168, Whitestown, IN 46075  
 ♦PASSMORE EVANGELISTIC PARTY, THE A. A. (C) c/o Evangelism\*  
 ♦PEAL, DONALD. (R) Rte. 1, Box 887, Converse, LA 71419  
 ♦PENDLETON, JOHN. (C) 1116 S.W. 72nd, Oklahoma City, OK 73139  
 PERDUE, NELSON. (C) 3732 E. Rte. 245, Cable, OH 43009  
 ♦PFEIFER EVANGELISTIC TEAM. (C) 661 St. Rte. 220, Piketon, OH 45661  
 ▼PIERCE, BOYCE & CATHERINE. 1427 Meitzler St., Danville, IL 61832  
 ♦PRINTUP, JUANITA. (R) 540 Royalton Dr., New Haven, IN 46774  
 PUGH, CHARLES. (R) 302 Swihart, Columbia City, IN 46725

## Q

QUALLS, PAUL. (R) 5441 Lake Jessamine Dr., Orlando, FL 32809

## R

▼READER, GEORGE H. D. P.O. Box 396, Chrisman, IL 61924  
 ♦RICHARDS, LARRY & PHYLLIS (COULTER). (C) 2479 Madison Ave., Indianapolis, IN 46225  
 RICHARDSON, KEN. (R) 1621 31st St., A, Moline, IL 61265  
 RICEY, HOWARD. (R) 1572 Maumee Dr., Xenia, OH 45385  
 ROBERTSON, JAMES H. (C) 2014 Green Apple Ln., Arlington, TX 76014  
 ROBINSON, TED L. (C) 119 Ames St., P.O. Box 625, Mount Vernon, OH 43050  
 ROTH, RON. (C) 2645 E. Cozy, Springfield, MO 65804  
 ▼RUSHFORD, GILBERT & VERA. 3483 Broadmoor Blvd., San Bernardino, CA 92404

## S

♦SEMRAH, KIM & CINDY. (R) 126 Cranbrook Blvd., Monroe, MI 48161  
 SMITH, CHARLES HASTINGS. (C) Box 937, Bethany, OK 73008  
 ♦SMITH, DUANE. (C) c/o Evangelism\*  
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 SMITH, OTTIS E., JR., & MARGUERITE. (C) 60 Grant St., Tidioute, PA 16351  
 SPINDEL, RAYMOND. (R) Rte. 3, Box 363, East Moline, IL 61244  
 STANFORTH, KENNETH. (C) 17408 Delia Ave., Torrance, CA 90504  
 ♦STANTON, TED & DONNA. (R) P.O. Box 722, Sarasota, FL 33578  
 STARK, EDDIE. (R) P.O. Box 7041, Springfield, MO 65801  
 STEVENSON, GEORGE. (C) 4021 Pebble Dr. S.E., Roanoke, VA 24014  
 STREET, DAVID. (C) Rte. 1, Ramsey, IN 47166  
 STRICKLAND, DICK. (C) 4520 Mahar Rd., South Vienna, OH 45369  
 STROUD, GLENDON. (R) 815 Highland Ave., Williamstown, WV 26187  
 SWANSON, ROBERT L. (C) 1102 Glenwood Dr., Yukon, OK 73099

## T

TAYLOR EVANGELISTIC TEAM, BOBBY L. (R) Rte. 1, 477-B32, South Shore, KY 41175  
 TAYLOR, CLIFF. (C) E. 619 32nd Ave., Spokane, WA 99203  
 TAYLOR, MENDELL. 1716 N. Glade, Bethany, OK 73008  
 TAYLOR, ROBERT W. (C) Learn to Live International, Box 669, Wright Brothers Branch, Dayton, OH 45409  
 TAYLOR, RON. (C) Rte. 1, Box 265, Johnson Rd., Chickamauga, GA 30707  
 TINSLEY, MARVIN & DENISE. (R) Rte. 1, Box 57B, Morristown, IN 46161  
 TOOLEY, JIM. (C) Box 56, University Park, IA 52595  
 TRIPP, HOWARD. (C) 3623 Fountain Ave., No. 66, Chattanooga, TN 37412  
 TRISSEL, PAUL & MARY. R.R. 3, Box 359-L, Wildwood, FL 32785  
 TUCKER, RALPH. (R) Rte. 1, Box 55, Woodbine, IA 51579  
 TURNER, BEVERLY. (R) 709 Holbrook, Lebanon, OH 45036

## U

ULMET, ALECK. 63 Hope Dr., Bella Vista, AR 72712

## V

VARCE, PAUL. (R) 621 Second Ave. N.W., Waverly, IA 50677

## W

WADE, E. BRUCE. (R) 3029 Sharpview Ln., Dallas, TX 75228  
 WALKER, BRIAN & DEBI. (R) 11022 320th Ave. N.E., Carnation, WA 98014  
 WATERMAN, GEORGE. (C) 31 Wisconsin Rd., Tewksbury, MA 01876  
 WATKINS, FRANK. P.O. Box 715, Banning, CA 92220

WELCH, MRS. DARLENE. (R) 1209 Larue Ave., Louisville, KY 40213  
 WATSON, LOY. 2018 Country Club, Enid, OK 73703  
 WELDON, CYNTHIA L. (R) 5522 23rd St. W., Bradenton, FL 33507  
 WELLS, LINARD. (C) P.O. Box 1527, Grand Prairie, TX 75051  
 WHITWORTH, ARTIE H. (C) Box 38, Albany, OK 74721  
 WHITWORTH, MARCUS & DONNA. (R) 7938 Sandusky, Kansas City, KS 66112  
 WILLIAMS, E. VERBAL. (C) 43 Briar Path, Brampton, Ont. L6T 2A3  
 WILLIAMS, LAWRENCE. (C) 6715 N.W. 30th Terr., Bethany, OK 73008  
 WILSON, J. BARRY. (R) 804 Plum, Marshall, IL 62441  
 WISEHART, LENNY & JOY. (C) 12017 E. Mexico, Aurora, CO 80011  
 WOODWARD, S. OREN. (C) c/o Evangelism\*  
 WOOLMAN, J. L. P.O. Box 876, Tuttle, OK 73089  
 WOOTEN, D. J. (C) P.O. Box 262, Cambridge, MD 21613  
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# Pastor,

- DO YOU KNOW WHAT TO SAY to young parents whose newborn (or older) child is severely handicapped?
- DO YOU KNOW WHAT TO DO if your Sunday School teachers refuse a class because it contains one or more hyperactive or emotionally disturbed children?
- DO YOU KNOW HOW TO HELP a family that doesn't attend your church because they have one or more handicapped persons and don't feel free to bring them?
- DO YOU KNOW WHAT THE FAMILIES OF HANDICAPPED PERSONS NEED from you and from the church?
- DO YOU WORRY about a drop in your attendance if people with mental handicaps attend?
- DOES YOUR CHURCH'S MINISTRY include those who cannot return anything to the church?

IF YOU WOULD LIKE ANSWERS OR HELP IN ANY OF THESE AREAS, MANY ITEMS ARE AVAILABLE FREE OF CHARGE TO HELP YOU MINISTER TO ALL PEOPLE!

For more information, contact  
 SPECIAL EDUCATION MINISTRIES, 6401 The Paseo, Kansas City, MO 64131.





## THIS COULD BE THE START OF SOMETHING BIG

Some of the most exciting things happening in the Church of the Nazarene today are in the area of home mission. How can your church get in on the excitement?

### SHOW A FILM

Begin by motivating your congregation toward church planting with one of these films:

*Planned Parenthood for Churches*  
*A Church Is Born*  
*A Church for Tomorrow*  
*Love Makes It Happen*

### SELECT A MISSION ACTION COMMITTEE

Pick up on your congregation's enthusiasm by prayerfully selecting a Mission Action Committee. Provide them with a *Mission Action Sourcebook* to guide them in research, planning, and implementation.

### TRAIN YOUR CONGREGATION IN PERSONAL EVANGELISM

Nothing will excite Christians more than leading others to Christ as Savior. The new Personal Evangelism Training books, available from Nazarene Publishing House, will take the fear out of presenting the gospel and give your people the confidence to knock on doors in their neighborhoods.

### SPONSOR A NEW WORK

Start something appropriate to your community, but **START SOMETHING:**

- a home Bible study
- an extension VBS
- an extension revival
- an outreach compassionate ministry
- an ethnic or other-language work
- a Sunday School

For more information, contact  
Michael R. Estep, Church Extension Ministries, 6401 The Paseo, Kansas City, MO 64131.

# HOME MISSION SUNDAY

## MARCH 8, 1987

# SOME NOT SO TRIVIAL QUESTIONS . . .

*Ingenious*

## WHAT OFFICE AT NAZARENE HEADQUARTERS:

- A** Maintains service records for all ministers in the Church of the Nazarene?
- B** Files the annual report with the IRS, which qualifies churches in the U.S. for certain tax benefits?
- C** Is responsible for recording and preserving the proceedings of the General Assembly and for maintaining all general statistics of the Church of the Nazarene?
- D** Audits all statistical charts from district assemblies?
- E** Is the location of Nazarene Archives and is responsible for collecting available historic material relating to the rise and development of the Church of the Nazarene?
- F** Is responsible for providing current denominational news to church leaders and the *Herald of Holiness*, as well as providing information to those who call the Nazarene Telenews Service [(816) 333-8270] day or night?

**ANSWER:**

**THE GENERAL SECRETARY'S OFFICE**

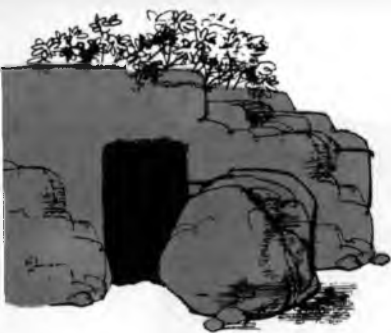
As a Nazarene minister, the General Secretary's Office can help you most if you notify us in writing promptly whenever you move and change address. In return, we would ask that you help your laypeople preserve the historical records of their local church. Can you help your parishioners to develop an "Attic awareness" to prevent Nazarene historical records from being trashed but instead sent to Nazarene Archives? And when news of interest happens in your local church or among Nazarenes in your community, would you please think of Nazarene News? By sharing it with us, we can share it with others throughout our denomination.

We are here to serve you. Just call: THE GENERAL SECRETARY, (816) 333-7000; or write: 6401 THE PASEO, KANSAS CITY, MO 64131.



**Dr. B. Edgar Johnson**  
**GENERAL SECRETARY**





# Check These Out for Easter • APRIL 19

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PERTINENT INFORMATION FOR CHOIR SELECTION COMMITTEE provides fabric selector, a full-color catalog on styles, colors, sizes, prices, and instructions for ordering. Available upon request for examination at NO CHARGE.

### IMMEDIATE ACTION!

As 3 weeks is required (after order is received) to process READY MADE and 4 to 5 weeks on CUSTOM-MADE, *immediate action* is necessary to assure delivery for the Lenten/Easter season.



## WORSHIP IN SONG Nazarene HYMNAL

- Dress up your sanctuary with new hymnals
- Add to your present supply

Available in 3 beautiful bindings:

- PAMB-280** Apple Red—gold imprint  
**PAMB-281** Saddle Brown—gold imprint  
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 Each, \$6.95

## COMMUNION WARE

Finest quality craftsmanship and design. Fingerprint-resistant anodized finish needs no polishing, will not tarnish. Trays hold 40 glasses.

	SILVER-TONE	BRASS-TONE	
Communion Tray	PAE-500A	PAE-500AB	\$25.50
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Bread Plate (Stacking)	PAE-504A	PAE-504AB	\$24.50
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\*Covers supplied with crosses unless knobs specified.

**GLASSES**—clear, rounded inside, heavy bottoms

<b>PAE-44</b>	1¼ inches high	12 for \$7.60
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**PAE-164** 1¼ inches high (disposable) 1,000 for \$16.00

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**PAU-165** Box \$3.75

**FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION** on the above items as well as other related supplies, such as offering plates, Communion linens, and Communion cup fillers, consult our latest Supplies and Equipment catalog sent to all pastors or free upon request.

Add 4% for postage and handling

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*Truster...*

## WE'RE MAKING IT EASIER TO GET OUR MONEY

We've modified the qualifications for obtaining a General Church Loan.

If your church meets two of the following criteria, you may be eligible:



Fewer than 100 members



Less than 5 years old



Less than \$65,000 total raised annually for all purposes

*For more information, write to:*

**GENERAL CHURCH LOAN FUND—U.S.A.**

**CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE**

6401 The Paseo

Kansas City, Missouri 64131



## GCLF DEPOSIT FORM

Yes, I want to help build new churches to reach the lost while at the same time exercising sound stewardship by investing in the General Church Loan Fund—U.S.A.

I understand that you will send me an official General Board Note, which I will keep with my valuable papers to "cash in" for the return of my principal plus interest.

NAME OF DEPOSITOR

ADDRESS (Street or P.O. Box)

(City)

(State)

(Zip Code)

SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER

DISTRICT

CHURCH

I am enclosing a check for \$

SIGNATURE



THERE ARE  
THREE SIMPLE STEPS  
TO MAKING AN  
INVESTMENT IN THE  
GENERAL CHURCH  
LOAN FUND—U.S.A.

1

Write a check to Norman O. Miller, treasurer of the General Board of the Church of the Nazarene, for the amount you wish to invest.

2

Fill in completely the blanks on the GCLF deposit form provided at the left.

3

Mail the check and the form to the General Church Loan Fund, 6401 The Paseo, Kansas City, MO 64131.

In return, you will receive an official General Board Note to file with your valuable papers and to surrender when it is time to withdraw your investment.

### INTEREST PAID ON NOTES

6%

on \$100 or more on  
one-year notes\*

one-year notes withdrawn before  
maturity will be adjusted to 5%

\*Based on 1986 interest rates. Yearly rates are subject to change without previous notice.

THE MOST IMPORTANT PEOPLE  
AT  
NAZARENE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY



YOUR STUDENTS . . . INVEST IN THEM.  
GIVE IN THE ANNUAL OFFERING

*January 25, 1987*



# AN INVITATION

A magnificent opportunity is now available for making a worldwide impact upon the military community as a chaplain.

The Army and Navy have lifted their denominational quotas and are taking the best-qualified candidates from all denominations. What does this mean for the Church of the Nazarene? If you, as a pastor, feel God's leading to become a chaplain in the Army or Navy, you may now apply for ecclesiastical endorsement through Chaplaincy Ministries.

You will be interviewed at the church's expense during the next Chaplaincy Advisory Council meeting\* by the committee and a general superintendent. The Army or Navy will then call you in to interview you at your own expense. (The Air Force is still working strictly on the quota system. There are no openings presently in the United States Air Force since our church is over quota.)

Requirements for entry into active duty military chaplaincy are:

1. Is qualified spiritually, morally, intellectually, emotionally to serve as a chaplain of the military services.
2. Possesses a baccalaureate degree of not less than 120 semester hours from a college that is listed in the educational directory, colleges, and universities.
3. Has completed 3 resident years of graduate professional study in theology or related subjects (normally validated by the master of divinity or equivalent degree of 90 semester hours). The degree must be from an accredited school listed in the directory of ATS.
4. Is physically fit and able to pass the physical fitness test and weight standards.

For the Army Chaplain Corps, one must be appointed prior to the 40th birthday (preferably 35 or under). Maximum age limitations may be increased for former officers and warrant officers by an amount not more than the length of previous service in grade that appointment is authorized (previous service includes active duty or active reserve service in any component of the armed forces).

Navy Chaplain Corps must be appointed by age 35 (waivers are considered on grounds related to the needs of the Navy).

\*Contact Chaplaincy Ministries for the date of the next council meeting.





# N T O S E R V E



If you feel God's call to serve as a military chaplain, but don't qualify because you're over 40 years old, I may have good news for you. Numerous states need state Military Reserve chaplains.

Chaplain Crouch, a retired active duty Nazarene military chaplain, is presently serving as chaplain with the California State Military Reserve. There is no age restriction in California to serve as a chaplain, except that one can't serve beyond 70 years of age. This may be true of other states as well.

The role of the State Military Reserve (SMR) is to support the National Guard in state activities and assist in the event of federal mobilization. If the National Guard is federalized, the SMR will assume the state functions of the Guard. It was activated during World War II and during the Korean Conflict. All SMR chaplains are required to attend one Saturday unit meeting each month, and usually serve without pay. SMR members wear the Army green and BDU (battle dress uniform) with distinctive insignia and are expected to meet grooming standards approved for U.S. Reserve forces.

Anyone residing in California wishing further information may contact: Recruiting and Retention Branch, California State Military Reserve, 2829 Watt Ave., Sacramento, CA 95821; telephone, 916-920-6596.

If you reside in another state, you may contact your National Guard unit, or consult your telephone directory to see if a comparable military reserve exists to serve your state.

Photo credit: Photo provided by the United States Army





# THE SHEPHERD'S LIFE

Coming to you each quarter from Pastoral Ministries, Wilbur Brannon, Director

LEADERSHIP • INSPIRATION • FULFILLMENT • ENRICHMENT

## "LET MY PEOPLE GO!"

The sounds of an approaching revolution I once heard about is finally reaching my ears. It is the muffled march of advancing laity moving to make a difference in their world and in their church.

We have talked much about "equipping the saints for ministry" as our primary task (Eph. 4:12). But talk has been substituted for the task. Pastors are frustrated by congregational indifference.

Could it be that our people's apathy comes from the conflicting messages they pick up from us? How does our weekly calendar harmonize with our sermons and training sessions on lay ministry? Are our members really convinced that we trust them to do the work of ministry? Do they feel our support for their concerns? Do they perceive their ministry to be our top priority?

Increasing numbers of laypersons are restless, wanting to make a difference in their communities and in the lives of people. World issues are screaming in their ears, requiring a Christian response. They want to do something, but the church seems paralyzed. Some of these laymen sit on church boards, frustrated by boring agendas that never seem to address our main business.



**Wilbur Brannon**  
*Pastoral Ministries Director*

God is clearly saying to us, as He did to Pharaoh, "Let my people go!" Dare we risk deadly plagues by disobediently denying God's people the freedom to do some new thing? We know God finds a way to accomplish His will with or without us. He will do His "new thing" (Isa. 43:19) even if He is forced outside the institutional church!

But what would happen if God were invited to head His movement *within* the church? What if we ministers were to crucify ourselves and give God the chance? This pent-up lay power contains the energy of renewal. It is the energy of a powerful movement. We cannot afford to stifle such a potential revival. We desperately need this spiritual force. But to release it will take great courage.

Let us cultivate an environment in which we release a lay movement to thrust us to unprecedented levels of Christian witnessing and church extension.

The critical issue is leadership. We need "lay pastors"—Christians who are professionals in fields other than religion, yet who are challenged to reach out in the name of Christ and His Church. Lay ministers will become involved if we open the doors and give them opportunities.

What would it mean to truly release these laypersons? It would mean radical commitment to new ministries; new people being redeemed through Christ; new structures for "new works." All this offers the hope of a new day for the Church of the Nazarene.

These days of rapid and radical change call for new challenges. We must prepare for a revival like we have not seen before. It is on the way. It will invade the church by taking seriously not only Christ's mandate to "Go!" but also God's command to "Let my people go!" ☐

## PALCON III IN '88

Plans are being made for PALCON III to be held during the summer of 1988. The steering committee met in May to outline the program and will be meeting again in February to finalize the plans. The committee members are: Rev. Howard Chambers, Fairview Village, Pa.; Dr. J. V. Morsch, Orlando, Fla.; Rev. Bruce Petersen, Springfield, Ohio; Dr. Bill E. Burch, Phoenix, Ariz.; Rev. Joe Knight, Seattle, Wash.; Dr. Mel McCullough, Bethany, Okla.; Dr. R. J. Cerrato, Wichita, Kans.; Rev. Jim Mellish, Warren, Mich.; Rev. Don Dunnington, Antioch, Tenn.; Rev. Thomas Schofield, Bolton, England; Dr. Rudolph Petersen, Calgary, Alta., Canada.

Rev. Daniel Vanderpool, president of the Nazarene Multiple Staff Association, was used as a resource person to represent the associate ministers. Evangelists Stephen Manley and Lenny Wisheart also gave valuable input from their perspectives.

If you have some specific suggestions that might be incorporated into the program, write Pastoral Ministries, 6401 The Paseo, Kansas City, MO 64131. ☐

## COURSE OF STUDY UPDATE

*A Joyful Sound*, the textbook for course 425 (Deacon-Music Ministries) is out of print. Contact Pastoral Ministries for information on its replacement. ☐



## CONTRIBUTES TO MINISTERIAL SUPPORT

It's toll free. It's safe. It's private. It's confidential. It's for Nazarene clergy and their families.

As an extension of the district superintendents' pastoral care for their ministers and families, the CoNET "Heartline" is being supported by nearly every district in the U.S.A. Even if you have never used it, let your district superintendent know you appreciate this expression of his concern for you.

CoNET is not only for use in emergencies and crises. Many pastors are finding the "Heartline" useful in handling their own counseling situations. Dan Croy, a dedicated Nazarene layman, is the "Heartline" coordinator at Christian Counseling Services in Nashville. He and the CCS staff of highly qualified Christian professionals are there to support you.

It would be good just to call for no other reason than to learn about what they do (1-800-874-2021; Tennessee, 1-800-233-3607). For a card to keep this number in your billfold, write Pastoral Ministries, 6401 The Paseo, Kansas City, MO 64131. ☐



## RECOGNIZING LOCAL MINISTERS

It used to be called the "Local Preacher's License." But since the person who receives it may not feel specifically called to preach, and many elect to be ordained as a deacon, the church now issues a "Local Minister's License."

It is a big day when a young person gets his first minister's license. Too often, we have failed to make it a special occasion. Now that suggested guidelines and procedures may be used by the pastor and church board in an interview process, new significance is given to the license.

Greater importance is given to the individual when Pastoral Ministries asks for the licensee's name to accompany the request for the license. In this way, we can better know how the person is progressing toward the fulfillment of his (or her) call.

A public service may be the occasion to give the local minister proper recognition when the license is presented. This gives the opportunity for church members to become aware of their roles in the support and development of this new minister. More often than not it will be a young person needing special encouragement during the first attempts at ministry.

Public presentation of the license also provides a time to state the expectations placed on a minister of the gospel. The uninformed begin to see that the responsibilities are not confined to a few hours on Sunday.

Finally, special recognition of such an event helps bring a sense of accountability to the new minister. This is an expression of confidence by the church body. It is not a casual matter. The church affirms the minister's gifts and graces for ministry. However, it is also placing expectations on the individual to faithfully perform his duties as a minister of Jesus Christ.

Let's make the granting of the local minister's license as significant in the life of the church as it is in the life of the candidate. ☐

## CERTIFYING LAY MINISTERS

Pastors are beginning to see the significance of the "Certificate of Lay Ministry" referred to in *Manual* 418.1.

Upon recommendation of the Course of Study Advisory Committee (*Manual* 434.5), Pastoral Ministries has developed Level I of the ministerial course of study as a suggested curriculum for the "lay minister." This course work should be examined

LAY MINISTRY CERTIFICATE	
...to signify the action for the work of the ministry. (Manual 418.1)	
This is to certify that _____	
has completed <i>Manual</i> requirements for Lay Minister and is certified for one year; provided that _____	
spirit and practice are such as become the Gospel of Christ, and that _____	
teachings correspond with the established doctrines of the Holy Scriptures as held by said Church.	
By order of the Church Board of the _____	
Church of the Nazarene.	
Dated at _____	Day of _____ 19____
Signature of the Church Board	Signature of the Church Board

by the District Ministerial Studies Board. Then, should the lay minister feel the call to lifetime service and desire to be ordained, he or she would have already fulfilled part of the requirements for ordination.

There is a distinction to be made between the certifying of lay ministers and the certifying of laypersons who serve in various capacities in the local church. The Christian Life and Sunday School Division provides a catalog of study and training courses through Continuing Lay Training for persons not specifically desiring to be certified as "ministers."

According to the *Handbook on Ministerial Studies* (HMS 438.1-38.2) the lay minister may take a course of study different from the suggested Level I of the ministerial course of study. The procedure being followed at present is for the pastor to use Level I as the model, and submit a program of study to Pastoral Ministries. Upon receipt of the agreed upon course of study, we will send the certificate to the pastor to be presented at a time when appropriate recognition can be made.

Satisfactory progress in the course of study should be one of the important criteria for recommending the renewal of such a certificate of ministry. Other guidelines may be developed to help the pastor and the local board in qualifying laypersons for certified ministry. The "Certificate of Lay Ministry" is not a terminal credential. Rather, it is renewable annually. ☐

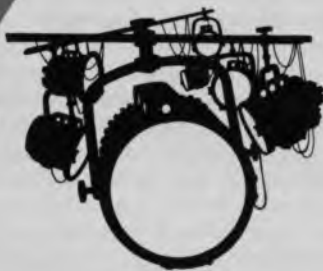
## PASTORS—HELP IS HERE!

Do you feel like you're running around with your head cut off, just trying to get some leads? Well, slow down, pull yourself together, and come to the people who can give you some direction.

The PLACEMENT SERVICE can provide current names and profiles of associates looking for a position. You can contact the associates of your choice for more information or for an interview. Contact PASTORAL MINISTRIES, 6401 The Paseo, Kansas City, MO 64131. ☐



# VIDEO UPDATE



## MANAGING YOUR MINISTRY

This is a video-based continuing education course for clergy who want to increase ministerial effectiveness.

Dr. Ponder Gilliland, president of Southern Nazarene University, is warm and casual in his approach. Although having recently entered educational administration, Dr. Gilliland has given over 35 years to the church as a career pastor. His experience qualifies him to speak with authority and credibility to pastors on managing their ministries.

Four topics are addressed in this tape:

- Managing Yourself
- Managing Your Time
- Managing Your Preaching
- Managing Church Finance

The tape (PAVT-165) may be purchased from Nazarene Publishing House for only \$34.95. A study guide is available for \$10.00 from Pastoral Ministries for continuing education credit (one CEU in church administration). Order your tape and study guide today! ☐

—A Part of the Approved Workman Program from Pastoral Ministries.

## VIDEO HELP FOR COURSE OF STUDY

Whether you are a student in the Directed Course of Study, or a district secretary for the Ministerial Studies Board, you're liable to need some help now and then. Now, that help is available on videotape!

Available tapes include:

- **MANUAL TAPE**  
An interactive videotape on the course over the 1985 *Manual* \$10.00
- **MINISTERIAL STUDIES BOARD TRAINING TAPE**  
A training tape developed by David J. Felter, this tape answers most of the questions that have been raised since the latest revisions in the course of study. \$10.00
- **EXPLORING CHRISTIAN EDUCATION**  
A 15-hour series with Dr. Wesley Tracy \$125
- **GOD, MAN, AND SALVATION**  
A 15-hour series with Dr. H. Ray Dunning. \$125

To order any of these tapes, or for more information, contact Pastoral Ministries. ☐



## MINISTRY TODAY SPECIAL OFFER!

Pastoral Ministries and Nazarene Media Services have produced VIDEO-NET/Ministry Today for three years. Now, because of budget restrictions, this project is being put on hold. To help you take advantage of the next four programs, we are offering September, October, November, and December tapes as a package for \$35.00:

### September: "... And Some Evangelists"

A look at evangelists, revivals, creative evangelism, role of the spouse, personal evangelism, and resources available.

### October: "Where Does the Money Go?"

A flesh-and-blood look at District, Education, Pension, and General Budgets plus some ideas for stewardship at the local church level.

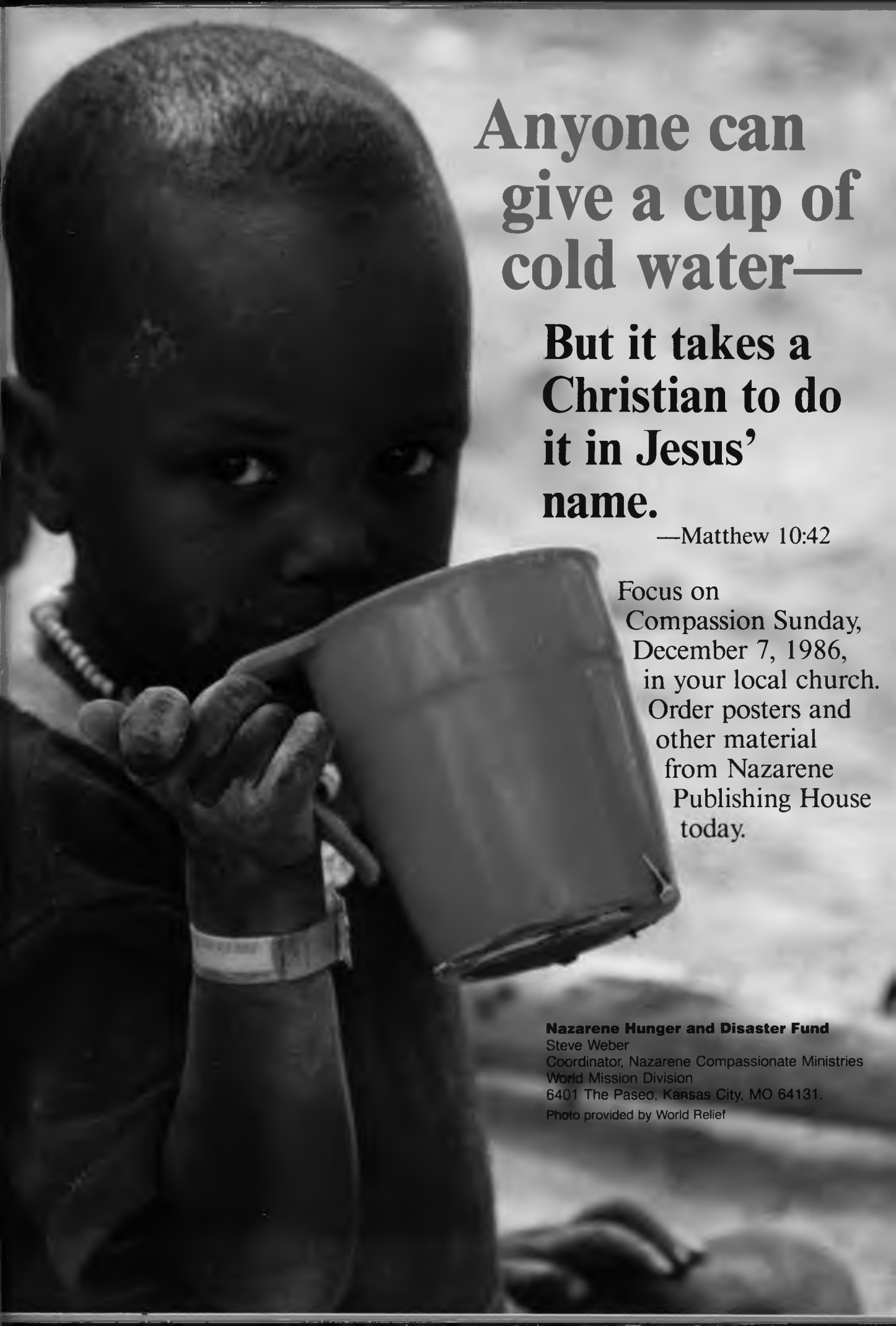
### November: "Crisis Counseling"

Death, divorce, teen pregnancy, homosexuality, and abortion; counseling issues and resources.

### December: "Pastoral Authority"

A continuing education seminar with Dr. Millard Reed.

If you are interested in taking advantage of this special offer, contact Nazarene Publishing House, P.O. Box 419527, Kansas City, MO 64141. ☐



**Anyone can  
give a cup of  
cold water—**

**But it takes a  
Christian to do  
it in Jesus'  
name.**

—Matthew 10:42

Focus on  
Compassion Sunday,  
December 7, 1986,  
in your local church.  
Order posters and  
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Steve Weber  
Coordinator, Nazarene Compassionate Ministries  
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Photo provided by World Relief



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# Is There Hidden Giving Power in Your Church?

Seated in **YOUR** congregation on any Sunday morning may be "hidden giving power," people whose giveable assets are unknown even to them . . . because they think only in terms of cash gifts. But they actually can give more, can give through plans which provide them with additional income, plans which help them make use of government-approved tax benefits, plans that can solve their money management worries, and plans that can bring lifetime satisfaction as they have a greater part in helping fulfill the Great Commission. It can all happen through the **HORIZONS** Planned Giving Programs, helping congregations discover their own giving power.

## Hidden Planned Givers may be . . .

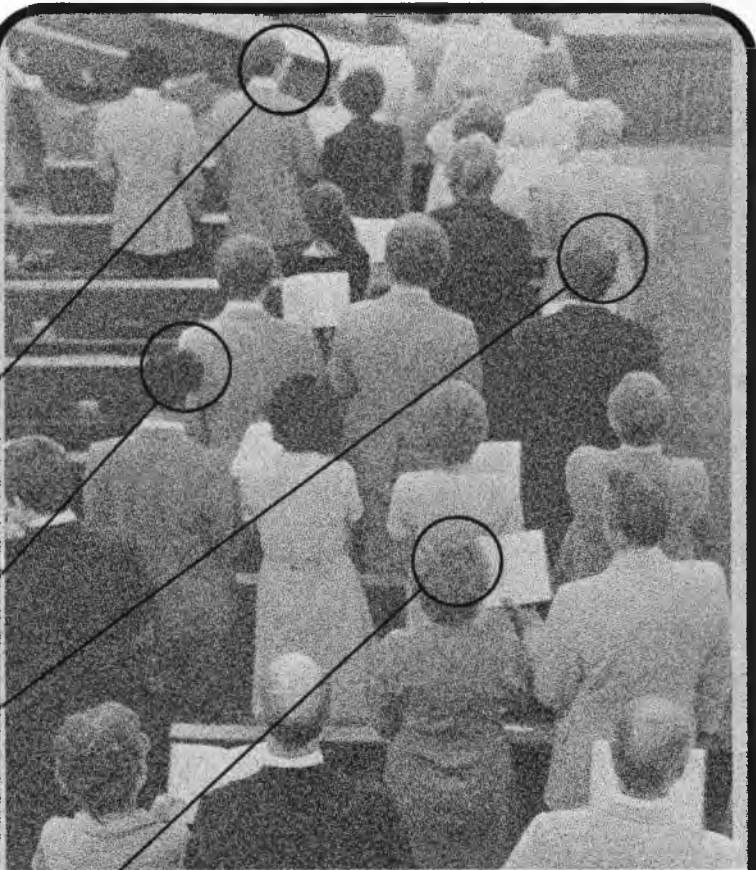
dedicated people who have never written a will and who would cherish the opportunity to plan a bequest for the church while also providing for their heirs ●

stockholders who could turn unproductive investments into additional annual income ●

members who hold real estate which they never plan to use ●

people who have few if any heirs, who need to know God can use their resources to enlarge their heavenly family ●

## Your church can begin here:



FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT HORIZONS, WRITE:

Life Income Gifts Services  
**Church of the Nazarene**  
 6401 The Paseo  
 Kansas City, MO 64131  
 Attn: Robert D. Hempel

IN CANADA:  
**Church of the Nazarene**  
 Executive Board  
 P.O. Box 30080, Station "B"  
 Calgary, Alberta  
 T2M 4N7



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☐ Brochure "How to Make a Will That Works."

☐ Brochure: "Answers to All the Questions You Have Wanted to Ask About Life Income Gifts Services"

☐ Brochure: "27 Things the Pastor Can Do to Encourage Requests"

Please send me information about how my church can benefit from the **HORIZONS** Planned Giving Program. I am especially interested in the items checked at left.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

POSITION \_\_\_\_\_

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ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_

STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

# THE PIONEER STILL

## WEST CENTRAL

ESTABLISHED:  
Fall 1985

SPONSORING DISTRICT:  
WASHINGTON PACIFIC  
Hugh L. Smith, D.S.

PIONEER AREA LEADER:  
Rev. Dennis Johnson

## NORTHERN AREA

ESTABLISHED:  
Summer 1985

SPONSORING DISTRICT:  
CANADA PACIFIC  
Charles Muxworthy, D.S.

PIONEER AREA LEADER:  
Rev. Eugene Morrell

## WESTERN CALIFORNIA

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Fall 1985

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LOS ANGELES  
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PIONEER AREA LEADER:  
Rev. Forrest Stone

## 12 PIONEERS ARE BLAZING A TRAIL IN UNEVANGELIZED AREAS

Pioneer areas are a bold approach to evangelizing the many unreached areas in America.

There are now 12 pioneer areas in 10 districts, with 210 churches and 22,576 members. They are there to reach the many unevangelized people in the area.

For more information about pioneer areas, contact the Church Growth Division, 6401 The Paseo, Kansas City, MO 64131.

## WESTERN TENNESSEE

ESTABLISHED:  
Summer 1984

SPONSORING DISTRICT:  
TENNESSEE  
Talmadge Johnson, D.S.

PIONEER AREA LEADER:  
Rev. Bob Mitchell

# PRAY FOR THE

# PIRIT ES

## UPPER MICHIGAN

ESTABLISHED:  
Summer 1983

SPONSORING DISTRICT:  
MICHIGAN  
C. Neil Strait, D.S.

PIONEER AREA LEADER:  
Rev. Milton Hoose

## CONNECTICUT

ESTABLISHED:  
Spring 1985

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NEW ENGLAND  
Neale O. McLain, D.S.

PIONEER AREA LEADER:  
Rev. Alexander Cubie

## LONG ISLAND

ESTABLISHED:  
Spring 1985

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NEW YORK  
Dallas Mucci, D.S.

PIONEER AREA LEADER:  
Rev. Arthur Alexander

## CENTRAL PENNSYLVANIA

ESTABLISHED:  
Fall 1985

SPONSORING DISTRICT:  
PITTSBURGH  
Roy Fuller, D.S.

PIONEER AREA LEADER:  
Rev. Tom Cahill

## SOUTHEAST VIRGINIA

ESTABLISHED:  
Fall 1985

SPONSORING DISTRICT:  
VIRGINIA  
Reeford Chaney, D.S.

PIONEER AREA LEADER:  
Rev. Ernie Lewis

## SPACE COAST

ESTABLISHED:  
Spring 1985

SPONSORING DISTRICT:  
CENTRAL FLORIDA  
J. V. Morsch, D.S.

PIONEER AREA LEADER:  
Rev. Tom Pound

## SUN COAST

ESTABLISHED:  
Summer 1986

SPONSORING DISTRICT:  
CENTRAL FLORIDA  
J. V. Morsch, D.S.

PIONEER AREA LEADER:  
Rev. Tom Pound

## HAITIAN

ESTABLISHED:  
Spring 1985

SPONSORING DISTRICT:  
CENTRAL FLORIDA  
J. V. Morsch, D.S.

PIONEER AREA LEADER:  
Rev. Nathan Price

# PIONEER AREAS



**CARLOS GONZZATTI, Pastor**  
**El Paso Opengate Church of the Nazarene**  
**El Paso, Tex.**

"I had to make a decision whether to drop out of Mid-America Nazarene College or go more deeply into debt. I decided I would have to drop out. Then I was offered the Ethnic Ministerial Loan/Scholarship, which allowed me to stay and finish my education."

Rev. Gonzzatti pastors the Spanish congregation at El Paso Opengate church on the New Mexico District and is social pastor of the English congregation.

**LARRY LOTT, Pastor**  
**Blue Hills Church of the Nazarene**  
**Kansas City, Mo.**

"The incentive for me to continue my education came through the Ethnic Ministerial Loan/Scholarship Fund. I was working for the Jackson County Juvenile Court and attending MANC. I had a wife and three children to support. It was an uphill battle."

Rev. Lott has pastored Blue Hills church for the past nine years and has brought the membership from 17 to 315. He is now in his last year at Nazarene Theological Seminary.

"There is no way to estimate the value of education or the difference it makes in one's life and ministry," Lott says.



# 10%

## SPECIAL

**GIVE TO THE ETHNIC  
 MINISTERIAL LOAN/  
 SCHOLARSHIP FUND.**

**HELP US PREPARE  
 GOD-CALLED MEN  
 AND WOMEN  
 TO MINISTER  
 IN THEIR OWN  
 LANGUAGE.**

***"How shall they hear  
 without a preacher?"***  
**(Romans 10:14)**



**SYLVESTER BALLARD, Pastor**  
**Gary Universal Church of the Nazarene**  
**Gary, Ind.**

Rev. Ballard, following graduation from Trevecca Nazarene College, was the first Black man to be graduated from Nazarene Theological Seminary. He has since pastored in Topeka, Kans., and Gary, Ind.

"We never know how important higher education is until we are there. I would not have had the advantage of seminary without the Ethnic Ministerial Loan/Scholarship."

**ROY A. WELCH, SR., Pastor**  
**Westside Church of the Nazarene**  
**Charlotte, W.Va.**

"I doubt that I would be pastoring now if it hadn't been for the Ethnic Ministerial Loan/Scholarship that I received through Church Extension Ministries."

Rev. Welch is thankful for one thing of value, which he will always have—the education he received at Mid-America Nazarene College.



# Begin 1987 with Two of the Most Usable **Annuals** a Minister Could Want

## THE MINISTERS MANUAL

Doran's 1987 Edition  
*Edited by James W. Cox*



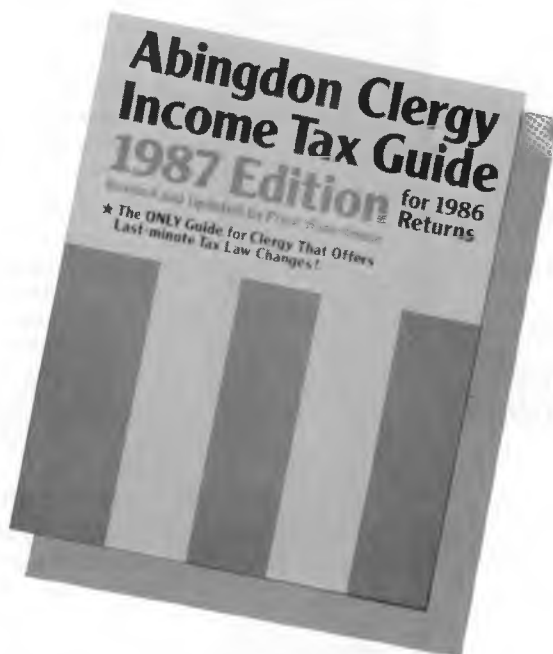
This entire year of resources, stimulating to the minister's imagination, includes sermon outlines, worship aids, and illustrations for every Sunday . . . services for special occasions . . . children's stories and sermons . . . resources for funeral, communion, missions, evangelism, Christmas, and Easter season . . . prayers. Drawn from some 350 contributors.

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*By Price Waterhouse and Company*



Professional and money-saving advice for the pastor and evangelist preparing 1986 returns.

In nontechnical language this handy book offers such practical information as housing exemption, self-employment, gifts and donations, the working wife, retirement, and *more*. Based on the latest tax laws available through October 1986. Illustrates sample tax form. Index. 8½" x 11" format. 88 pages. Paper.

PA068-700-3601 . . . . . \$5.95

NOTE: Available December 15, 1986

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# Self-evaluation Profile for the

## Leadership



### Pastor

- ☐ Motivates and equips majority of congregation to be involved in missions in some way.
- ☐ Consistently stimulates some members to missions service.
- ☐ Teaches with solid knowledge; reads mission books and attends missions seminars yearly.
- ☐ Preaches three to six sermons on missions per year; maintains close contact with NWMS.
- ☐ Makes mention of missions from the pulpit.

☐ Recognizes local church's role in missions and pastor's leadership responsibility.

☐ Has concern for missions.

☐ Has little interest in missions.



### NWMS

- ☐ At least one-half of council is specially trained through missions seminars, etc.
- ☐ Council meets monthly to direct all missions programs.
- ☐ NWMS Council members have written job descriptions; new members receive orientation.
- ☐ NWMS Council members are encouraged to serve for more than one year.
- ☐ NWMS is established and functions on a regular basis.

☐ Church recognizes the importance of a permanent NWMS.

☐ The pastor or selected individuals handle missions business as needed.

☐ There is no active NWMS; missions business is handled sporadically.

## Strategy



### Policy/Plan

- ☐ Missions ministry is guided by a well-planned, comprehensive, workable policy/plan.
- ☐ Policy/plan is reviewed annually and utilized for basic decisions.
- ☐ Policy/plan is written and given to staff and congregation.
- ☐ Complete written missions policy/plan is under development.
- ☐ Some policy/plan has been written for key issues.

☐ There is an awareness of the need for written missions policy/plan.

☐ Church operates on basis of unwritten missions policy/plan.

☐ Church feels there is no need for missions policy/plan.



### Goals

- ☐ Key goals are being met.
- ☐ Long-range planning and goal-setting are instituted.
- ☐ Goals are faithfully and evaluated yearly.
- ☐ Achievable measurable goal set in all areas of missions ministry.
- ☐ Some specific goals are set in planning, prayer, finances, recruitment, etc.
- ☐ Church recognizes need for specific missions goals.
- ☐ A few general missions goals are set.

☐ Church sees need for missions goals.

Doing great!

Coming along

Threshold level

Let's get started

Local Church's Mission Ministry

## 1 Start with a good definition.

While there are many ways to define the word *missions*, the Church of the Nazarene sets forth this definition: "The endeavor to advance God's kingdom by the proclamation and propagation of Christian holiness through-

out the world in accordance with the Great Commission."

This definition has been chosen as the foundation for this profile. Use it to help determine what "missions" is for your church.

## 2 Measure your progress.

Above, you will find vertical scales that represent 10 vital aspects of the missions ministry of a mission-minded local church. To evaluate your church's ministry, shade in the one point on each scale that best indicates your church's present missions involvement. The "0" point on each scale is

# Local Church's Missions Ministry

## Stimulation



### Vision/ Prayer

☐ Vision for the world is evidenced by fervent prayer, increased giving, active recruiting.

☐ Church shares personnel and financial resources on basis of global vision and strategy.

☐ Congregation is aware of need to reach "hidden" peoples outside an effective witness.

☐ Church's vision for unreached peoples is continually expanded by information and prayer.

☐ Church's vision for missions ministries reaches beyond local situation.

☐ Congregation recognizes its responsibility to help fulfill the Great Commission.

☐ Congregation has some awareness of the Great Commission and the unfinished task.

☐ Congregation has little awareness of the unfinished task of world evangelization.

## Sending



### Recruiting/ Shepherding

☐ Church identifies, encourages, and supports missionaries.

☐ Church maintains good working relationships with general church.

☐ Church has ongoing program of encouragement and discipleship toward missionary service.

☐ Missions leadership identifies those with cross-cultural spiritual gifts.

☐ Congregation provides opportunities for short-term or other missions service.

☐ Members understand their role in recruiting, shepherding, and sending.

☐ Missions service is encouraged but no steps are taken to recruit, shepherd, send.

☐ No actual encouragement is given toward missions service.



### Missionary Care

☐ Missionaries are regularly prayed for in church services.

☐ Missionaries are encouraged by pastor and NWMS Council.

☐ NWMS mobilizes congregation to care for missionaries during terms and furloughs.

☐ NWMS actively cares for missionaries.

☐ Congregation as a whole has occasional communication with missionaries.

☐ Congregation knows the missionaries; recognizes their responsibility to care for them.

☐ Congregation has some knowledge of who the missionaries are.

☐ Congregation is not associated with missionaries on a personal basis.

## Support



### Individual Giving

☐ \$300 yearly average is given to missions per church member.

☐ \$200 yearly average

☐ \$150 yearly average

☐ \$100 yearly average

☐ \$60.00 yearly average

☐ \$20.00 yearly average

☐ \$10.00 yearly average

☐ \$2.00 yearly average is given to missions per church member.



### BUDGET

☐ 50% of overall church budget is devoted to missions.

☐ 45% of budget

☐ 40% of budget

☐ 30% of budget

☐ 20% of budget

☐ 10% of budget

☐ 5% of budget

☐ 2% of overall church budget is devoted to missions.

## 3

## Decide where to go from here.

Don't be discouraged if your results are below expectations! Each congregation's ministry is at a different development stage. In fact, this profile's purpose is to help you to evaluate where you are now and to point out areas with potential for *growth*. You will need to pray and do careful, step-

by-step planning to help your church deepen its commitment to missions.

As you evaluate your missions program, keep in mind that the missions-mindedness of a church depends, in actuality, on the depth of involvement among its individual members.

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Northwestern Ohio  
Rocky Mountain  
Sacramento  
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Southern California  
Southern Florida  
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Alabama South  
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Kentucky  
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A complimentary copy of this resource will be sent during mid-December 1986 to each district in the United States.

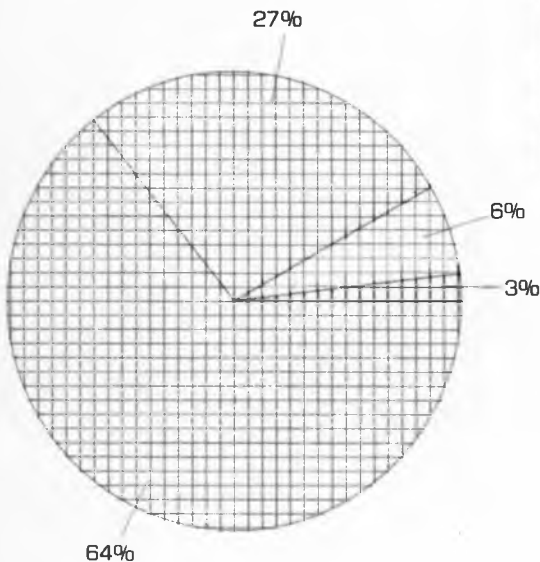
Every pastor, evangelist, and church board should schedule a review. This program could well provide the most effective means of saving time and money this tax season and throughout the year.

**Note:** Contact your district office for viewing time.

Photo: Tom Plaster

“I ALWAYS KNEW YOU COULD PROVE ANYTHING WITH STATISTICS!”

Nazarene Churches by Size  
Worldwide  
1985



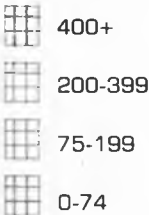
Total Churches: 8,399

**The Church of the Nazarene—  
a Denomination of Small Churches**

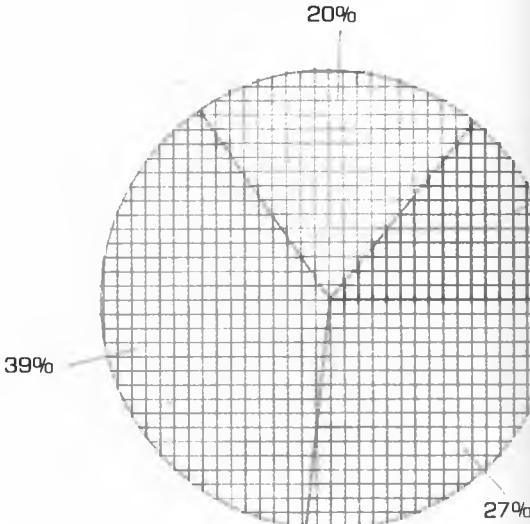
Nearly two-thirds of our congregations worldwide have fewer than 75 members and less than one-tenth have 200 or more members. When planning resources for local churches, we must keep in mind that our churches are small.

The chart above shows the percentage of our churches in each size category.

MEMBERSHIP  
SIZE



Nazarene Members by Church Size  
Worldwide  
1985



Total Members: 699,248

**The Church of the Nazarene—  
a Denomination of Large Churches**

More than one-third of our membership worldwide is in churches with at least 200 members, and nearly three-fourths are in churches of 75 or more. When planning resources for Nazarenes, we must remember that most of them are in good-sized churches. The chart above shows the percentage of our members in each church size category.

This is a good example of how the same data can yield arguments on both sides of an issue. It is also a good example of how different perspectives can help us understand one issue better.

When you talk to pastors about churches, it is obvious that most are talking about smaller churches. They are understandably concerned about resourcing a church with fewer resources, whether the resources are human or financial.

However, talk to a group of laymen from across the district, and chances are good that most are from churches with over 100 members. They expect programs designed for churches with good human resources and better-than-average financial strength.

Rather than using statistics to prove a point, the Church Growth Research Center is trying to help us Nazarenes understand ourselves better. By looking at both sides of an issue, we can see the other person's view. Together, we can move forward to build God's kingdom.

Whether the issue is programs for various church sizes or which communities are likely to respond to the holiness message, the Church Growth Research Center is ready to analyze the data.

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# THE TITHE ... IS THE LORD'S

Leviticus 27:30

Will a man rob God?  
Malachi 3:8

STEWARDSHIP SERVICES



Photo Credit: Mark D. Marvin

## **Rice Christian discussions have no place in a world where 40,320 people starve to death every day of the year.**

come a part of it. When the "rice" runs out, so does their Christianity.

Somehow, I never thought about that issue when we were beginning feeding programs in Haiti, Ethiopia, Sudan, and India. God knows our motives; the recipients know whether or not we really love them. Rice Christian discussions are armchair discussions. They have no place in a real world where 40,320 people starve to death every day of the year. If they see Jesus in us, if they have an opportunity to know Him as a result of some compassionate ministry, can we argue?

I have seen the other side. I have seen Nazarenes die when others refused them food because of who they were. I have also seen Nazarenes refuse assistance to those "outside the family." I doubt if God would approve of such callousness that would minister only to "selective target groups." Compassionate Ministries can be a bridge between a lost and hurting world and the God who loves them. But it cannot be a carrot to dangle in front of a starving person so that this "stomachless soul" can be saved. God help any of us who would reduce our holiness to that level of unloving "soul winning"!

**F**ourth, Compassionate Ministries as a partner in evangelism. Yes, this makes sense as well: Christians ministering to those in need. Why did we set up feeding programs and disaster response in Ethiopia, Bangladesh, Fiji, and other such places? We have no Churches of the Nazarene in these countries. We don't realistically have much hope of seeing our banner planted in the soil of some of these nations. Why do we feed, clothe, and house the poor of the United States? Why do we do things that don't feed directly into "church growth"? We do these things because we are Christians, and these are the partnership activities, alongside of aggressive evangelism, which Christians have been mandated to do (remember the scissors!).

Why have I entitled this article "Confessions of a Compassionate Coward"? Partly because in the early years I felt alone and out of tune with those who failed to see social ministry as part of the primary task of building the church. I did these ministries first as a pastor in Los Angeles. Taking Matthew 25 as my guide, I did what I could. I did all right until the church was "burned" a time or two. It probably has never happened to you, but I actually had some needy people take advantage of me, my church, and our good intentions. That's when I began to realize that I wasn't in this thing for humanitarian rewards. No, I did them because they were Christian. They were right. Being spat upon for my trouble didn't even matter.

When I arrived in Haiti I began to realize what the real issues were. Starvation not because of food shortage, but because of injustice, because of the incredible sinful state of our world and the resulting cruel oppression. It

would be much easier to simply do good things for people. But we must ultimately come to grips with the injustices causing the starvation and poverty and needs that surround us.

To do compassionate ministry requires understanding of why these people are needy. We must understand sin—both individual and corporate sin. We must realize that our ministry is not only to spiritual needs or not only to physical needs. We may feed the "stomachless soul," but we also take into account the "soulless stomach." Ultimately we arrive at a biblical understanding of man as a creation of God, with various dimensions of existence and need.

But again, why "Confessions of a Compassionate Coward"? In the beginning, I was afraid to state strongly how I felt. I no longer have that fear. In fact, I see God raising up holiness people who are not afraid to do their theology in the marketplaces of life.

In November 1985, in my typically "cowardly" fashion, I helped to organize a Compassionate Ministries Conference at Nazarene Theological Seminary. We hoped for at least 100 participants; 540 showed up!

This conference clearly demonstrated to me that I—not unlike Elijah—wasn't alone at all. Quite the contrary, God has a vast host of holiness people who aren't afraid to become involved. I confessed my cowardice and asked God to give me a boldness to continue with His plan for Nazarene Compassionate Ministries.

November 1985 was a new beginning of sorts. But I have some concerns that I would like to leave with you.

If compassionate ministry remains the interest of a few, this entire area of ministry could become divisive and competitive. I struggle daily with Nazarene Compassionate Ministries becoming a program. I don't want to be the head of a program. Compassionate Ministries is a process, not a program. It is a life-style. It is asking tough questions concerning responsible consumption patterns, such as: "How much can I spend on myself and my family when 570 million people in our world literally don't have enough food to eat?"

My concern is that we don't make compassionate ministry a neat section in our local church programming. No, the shape of our church will be determined by its mission. Compassionate Ministries must be a logical extension of our holiness theology. This type of life-style runs into direct confrontation with our upwardly mobile middle-class, western Christianity with its materialistic and "divided man" theology (divided into stomachless souls and soulless stomachs).

Another concern is that we may have the cart before the horse in much of these activities. Good Christian people are doing many good deeds. But why? As Tom Nees has said: "Our theological reflexes should be the driving force of the compassionate ministry practices." But our theology doesn't seem to be sufficiently inter-

# RICHARD CASEY

Whenever Richard Casey went downtown,  
We Christians all pretended not to see.  
He was a sight to make a preacher frown  
And furnish matter for his homily.  
And he was lonely, friendless as a skunk.  
When he approached, unsteady on his feet,  
From long experience we knew he stunk,  
And so our business lay across the street.  
We saw him getting thinner day by day  
And dared not face the lostness in his eye.  
In short, he was the type that made us say,  
"Ah, there but for the grace of God go I!"  
Amazing grace! We hugged it to us tight.  
We were the kind of people it was for.  
And Richard Casey one cold winter night  
Lay down and froze to death outside my door.

—Lois Blanchard Eades  
Dickson, Tenn.

nalized. We must know why we do these things. We must have additional directions from our theologians.

**F**inally, we must soon move beyond dealing with the effects, and get to the heart of the issue. Justice, or rather the lack of it, is at the root of many problems we face in compassionate ministry. The ultimate sin question moves the practitioner from a naive do-goodism into an arena of social transformation. In this arena, compassionate ministries vs. evangelism arguments are irrelevant. Sin is sin. It destroys individuals, lives, and families, and also the ability of entire continents to grow food. I am concerned that our church grow into maturity of understanding in these issues to the point where we can effectively mount a battle against the causes of injustice that so effect our troubled world.

We are in the midst of a mighty movement of the Holy Spirit. God is doing some incredible things. For example:


(1) A total of \$1.2 million was given to the Nazarene Hunger and Disaster Fund in 1985. These dollars are above and beyond budgets, building payments, and all the rest—\$1.2 million unsolicited. Why? Because a sufficient number of our church members understands, at least intuitively, that they must become involved.

(2) Over 50 NIVS (Nazarenes In Volunteer Service) were assigned to 3- to 12-month cross-cultural minis-

tries (in 1985). These volunteers are self-funded and highly motivated.

(3) Last year 3,600 people went on two-week Work and Witness teams. This year (1986) will see an even greater number.

(4) In 1985 over 500 people attended the first Nazarene Compassionate Ministries conference in Kansas City. The true significance of this will take time to clearly understand. But we do know that hundreds, if not thousands, of "social transformationists" (i.e., Compassionate Ministries practitioners) are on the move. It would be impossible to list the scope of their ministries.

Where is all of this taking us? I would hope that you become part of the answer to this question. Have you considered what part you have to play in Compassionate Ministries? Is your life-style consistent with holiness and the resulting responsible consumption patterns that allow you the ability to minister? I would invite you to review the judgment passage of Matthew 25. We are saved by God's grace and not by good works. But God's redeemed have a responsibility to a hurting world. May we not be cowardly in our compassion. Let us be aggressive, seeking to minister to those in need who know so little about the God who loved them enough to send His only Son to die so that they might live. 

# Distinctive Ministry to Your Community

by Greg Mason

*Pastor, First Church of the Nazarene, Baraboo, Wis.*

**A**s pastors, we are constantly evaluating the ministry and direction of our church. If we are not looking at the total picture, we are looking at a particular area of ministry—the choir, children's work, outreach, or some other program.

Three years ago, when I assumed the pastorate of my second church, I began to identify the church needs in terms of programming I deemed necessary. In that first year I came to realize that I was evaluating our church's needs according to the programs being used in the larger churches of my denomination. I was watching how churches in Denver, Los Angeles, and Kansas City were meeting needs, and assumed the needs were the same in my community of 9,000 people.

Finally, I realized that I needed to stop measuring my church by others in my denomination and start evaluating my community and its other churches' ministries. I began looking at the other 21 churches in town and asking myself, "What area of ministry are these churches either not meeting or not meeting adequately? Which church growth principles are not being used by the other churches?"

I realized that if my church was to grow, we would have to become distinctive in our ministry—try things that weren't being done, move in ar-

eas where others were not involved. Since then, we have tried to identify needs and visualize and dream solutions or ministries to meet those needs.

Our first two projects were simultaneous, and each was a reply to one of the particular questions previously stated.

Our community had only one agency to deal with the hungry, so we started a food pantry in our church. I made several stops at civic organizations, ministerial associations, and city council meetings, presenting our proposal for a food pantry. We sought to make it a community-sponsored program, administered by us. After several months of promoting the project, we sent letters to area businesses, civic groups, and churches requesting donations and input as well as names of those who needed help. In our first year of ministry we fed 200 families, as well as handing out government surplus commodities each month to hundreds of additional needy families. The food pantry has brought us visibility and the community's goodwill.

The other project was a church planting effort in a nearby city. This was a church growth principle that none of the other churches were trying.

By using a few families who were

driving to our church from our target city, we began a new congregation. We saw immediate growth in the mother church. The theory of "divide and multiply" was certainly effective here.

The new church has given our congregation a sense that they are involved in mission, even if that involvement for some only includes financial and prayer support.

Another avenue of distinctive ministry has encompassed a new children's project. Led by a dynamic couple in our church, we have begun a midweek fellowship and activity night just for children. "Kid's Kollege," as it's called, is consistently promoted in the community as an activity-oriented program for children, which has included swimming, bowling, skating, Bible studies, game nights, and so on. Again this program has brought high visibility and produced new prospects for our church.

The growth produced by these methods of distinctiveness in our community is nearly 30 percent. The programs have been evangelistic, met needs, and produced good community relations, while the church has had to expend lots of effort but little money.

So, whatever else an evaluation of your ministry concludes, seek to become distinctive in your community.





# Tide Pool People

by Mark A. Holmes

*Pastor, The Wesleyan Church, Rimersburg, Pa.*

**A**nyone who has spent time along a rocky seacoast at low tide knows the joy of exploring tide pools. Tide pools are the small puddles of water trapped within the rocky shore when the rest of the ocean recedes. They are microcosms of the ocean itself, containing all manner of sea life. They afford us the privilege of seeing, in miniature, what life was like in the ocean at high tide.

As much of a curiosity as tide pools might be for the observer, we would find a different perspective if we were able to enter those small aquatic worlds and communicate with their inhabitants. Tide pools are not curiosities to those who live in them. They are prisons, confining free movement and expression. They are evidences of abandonment by the sea. The powerful waves that bore the creatures to this spot have now deserted them to an uncertain fate. Tide pools are reservoirs of uncertainty, confusion, and frustration.

Tide pools speak to our churches today, for a similar phenomenon is experienced within our congregations. Like the tide, the church moves in an ebb-and-flow fashion. New ideas and programs propel it in

a particular direction. After the momentum dissipates, the movement recedes—only to be caught up in a surge moving in a different direction. Yet not all the participants of these ecclesiastical tides are able to return to the main flow. They find themselves inhabitants of isolated pools, separated from the rest of the church.

Many tides have rolled through the church. Legalism, revivalism, literalism, and others all left behind pockets of people as evidence of their nature and of their passing. As a result, there are as many different tide pools as there have been movements to create them. The difficulty lies with the pastor's ability to return their struggling inhabitants back to the main flow of the church as healthy, vibrant, and productive Christians. It is a task that often ends in the inadequate handling of fragile human life, resulting in scarred lives and churches.

Church pools are quite different from those along the ocean, in that people have voices to express opinions. The protests unheard on the seashore are proclaimed in our congregations. Pool members frequently express their feelings of abandonment and their concern for

the health, welfare, and direction of the church. They are convinced that an atrocity has been committed; a compromise, a surrender of values and/or doctrine. They call for the wayward tide to return to where it left them.

To the pastor and church, their protests become a frustrating experience. And they are often treated the way we treat similar irritations. We ignore them! We keep our distance, resulting in the inadvertent exclusion of these people from the fellowship of the church. Our solution becomes spiritual starvation, depriving them of the spiritual sustenance they need. Since this sustenance cannot be found for long within their limited pools, they must either make their way back to the main flow or find a larger pool that can provide their basic needs.

Finding a larger pool is usually accomplished when the people leave one congregation for the comfort of another (usually a group still experiencing the tide the individual is seeking). When this happens, we interpret it as a cleansing of the church, an excision of a cancer that was sapping the vital life forces of the local Body of Christ. Sadly, it is often mistakenly viewed with relief and

thankfulness that the church has finally succeeded in getting rid of the troublemakers. In actuality, the church has failed. Attempts to deny this are usually efforts to soothe a threatened conscience and rationalize the truth.

On the other hand, if the people choose to return to the main flow of the church, it is seen as a victory. The cancer is cured. The Lord is meeting the spiritual needs of the people. It becomes a no-lose interpretation for the church. If they leave, it is a victory over evil. If they stay, it is a spiritual blessing. In actuality, the movements made by the tide pool people are acts of survival in the face of certain spiritual starvation.

There must be a better way of ministering to these people. Maybe it can be found by considering two frequently overlooked issues that play a major role in the dynamics of this situation.

The first issue is the attitude taken by the pastor and congregation when the tide begins to subside. It is important to recognize that corporate changes can be made quicker than individuals may be willing to. The difference is, one is a corporate expression, the other a personal experience. Changes in the activity of the church can be, and often are, interpreted by the individual as a qualitative disruption of the faith. Changes on the congregational level take time to trickle down to the individual's experience. The pastor and church board, ready to redirect the church's energies, must be willing to take time to move the congregation gradually, not in an abrupt redefinition in the expression of the faith. This may not be easy in light of our normal desire to "forge ahead for God's glory."

We are not in want for conferences that are full of new ideas and directions to lead the church. Nor are we free from peer pressure that tends to measure one's abilities by his willingness to incorporate new programs. As a result of these various influences and our desire to serve God, we set about incorporating these new ideas as quickly as possible. In doing so, however, we must remember the more rapidly the sea recedes, the more marine life it leaves behind. The more abrupt our

changes, the more people we will leave stranded. We must be careful not to allow our zeal for the new to overtake our responsibility to shepherd.

The second issue deals with ethics and pragmatics. We live in an extremely practical age. Our dictum could easily be, "If it works, do it."

### **Are tide pool people monstrous, cancerous wrongdoers?**

Yet effectiveness does not mandate propriety. Euthanasia is an effective means to prevent old age, but it is hardly proper. The mistake is made in our churches when individuals believe those trends and programs that work effectively are right, and those ineffective or antiquated movements are wrong. It is a classic error in the attempt to mix two unrelated issues. Practicalities are not equal to ethics. Their determinations must be made separate from each other, using different criteria. A program can be practical and yet be unethical. In the same way, a program can be impractical even though it's ethical. Pragmatism is determined by the efficiency of the program, and whether or not it succeeds in producing the desired result. Ethical considerations are determined by the rightness of the means, the ends, and the influences these actions have on other issues.

Therefore, if a group moves to a more practical approach to ministry, those who fail to move with them cannot, by this criteria, be labeled as "wrong." We might consider them impractical, and therefore out of step with the times, but the ethical decision must be based on different criteria.

Many of the tides we have experienced in our churches were developed as a result of pragmatism. Over a period of time, the effectiveness of those changes became interpreted as gospel. Tide pool people often find it difficult to distinguish between a once-practical program and a true tenet of the faith.

(For example, consider the controversy between the King James and the newer versions of the Bible.) Thus, while the progressive faction in the church tends to accuse the tide pool people of error because of their impracticalities, the tide pool people accuse the progressives of error because of their practicalities. What is needed is the redefining of these categories so the conflict can be met head-on. Much of the conflict in the church is not over what is faith and heresy, right or wrong, but in what is practical and what is not.

The rightness and wrongness of a tide in the church takes a longer period of time to determine than its pragmatics. Immediate success today could actually be fuel for greater problems tomorrow. Many of our popular movements in the church have not stood the test of time. In this respect, tide pool people perform a service, in that they act as brakes to slow down our momentum, reminding us there is more to the life of the church than efficiency.

Our efforts in the church must not only be effective, they must be ethical and constructive. To learn to view our tide pool people other than as threats or cancerous wrongdoers will open avenues of communication and coexistence. We must remember that there are no demands in Scripture that mandate pragmatism, but there are those mandates for being ethical and moral in all we do.

We cannot deny the church moves in waves, nor can we restrict it. The church must move and interact within the society it finds itself. Yet we cannot so emphasize this aspect of the church as to harm its present inhabitants. No movement of the church is acceptable at the cost of its people. We need to recognize that our corporate changes must be done slowly enough to allow individual acceptance. At the same time, we must maintain that distinction between pragmatism and ethics. After all, the tide we are enjoying today will be creating the tide pools of tomorrow. No tide lasts forever, no matter how well it works. Our efforts to include all of the church's inhabitants now might ensure our own inclusion in the church sometime in the future, when we find ourselves hesitating as the tide pulls away.

# ISSUES OF THE HEART: WHO RAISES THEM?

by David F. Nixon

*Pastor, First Church of the Nazarene, Pekin, Ill.*

A parishioner inquired about a lady I had recently visited in the hospital. I said that she had gone home, and that I did not know the results of her tests. Then, in front of several people in the foyer, she asked, "Is she saved?"

I had to confess, "I don't know."

"I've been praying for her," my parishioner replied, "but I don't think she's saved."

Her question evoked guilt. In the course of several visits, I had never inquired about the patient's spiritual condition. I had agonized with her in pain, listened as she expressed bewilderment about her condition, and prayed for her on each visit. Not once, however, had I asked, "Are you saved?"

She had never attended my church since I had become the pastor. We had shared many cordialities and concerns, but never an inquiry about her soul. What's wrong with you? my conscience screamed, as I made my way to the platform to begin the service. Are you ashamed of the gospel of Christ?

Of course not! I protested. I just didn't want to take advantage of a captive audience!

Besides, clinical education had taught me to respond with sensitivity to the patient's agenda. No verbatim of our conversations could ever accuse me of imposing on her! But, Who cares for her soul, if not you? And what about Christ's agenda to win the lost? The thoughts preyed on my mind throughout the song service. The patient left the hospital, knowing that the doctors and nurses cared about her physical condition. Does she know I care about her spiritual condition?

I am not one who approaches

hospital visitation with a Bible in one hand, and a neat, compact spiritual repertoire in the other. I have listened to the complaints of many patients who received hurried Bible reading, the sacrament, and prayer, but not the hospitality of true pastoral care.

Is it mine or the patient's responsibility to raise issues of the heart? And what if they don't, and the conversation centers on other concerns or the trivial? The Great Commission gives us the green light, but there are times when we cannot ignore the yellow or red lights of inopportunities. Should the patient sense his own need and raise spiritual issues, or should the pastor?

At times, there is no question. A young man hovered near death in a university hospital where there was no chaplain. He had asked for a minister, fully aware of impending death. I rushed to the bedside of a young man who was dying in the morning of his life. His family willingly interrupted their vigil at his bedside so that we could talk privately.

Behind the drawn curtain he openly bared his unsaved soul and his uncertainty about its eternal destiny. I shared the gospel and led him in a simple prayer of repentance. A serene, settled peace replaced his anguished countenance. After giving him assurances from God's Word, I asked, "Where is Jesus now?" He patted his chest and drifted off into unconsciousness. He died two hours later.

At other times evangelism is impossible. One patient had asked for a priest. Her friend, a member of my church, called me. "Sharon is scheduled for surgery tomorrow. She's very afraid. If you have time, will you go pray with her?" I assured her that

I would. Leaving the house, I muttered, "Let's go, Father Nixon!"

When I arrived at her room, an unusually loud conversation could be heard through the closed door. I hesitated before knocking, but when the noisy voices subsided, I knocked, entered, and introduced myself. "Your friend asked me to come see you" momentarily eased the tension of an otherwise awkward meeting of strangers. I had obviously interrupted her visit with her boyfriend, who occupied the only available chair.

While I stood at her bedside, she had just begun to explain her surgery when the telephone rang. From what I could piece together of the conversation, her mother had called to report that not only did her children miss their mother, one of them had missed the school bus. So many things vied for her attention, "Are you saved?" seemed out of place.


My attempts at conversation seemed intrusive. Her smiles contradicted the concern she had expressed to her friend about surgery. So I prepared to leave after asking permission to pray. A *Four Spiritual Laws* booklet seemed inappropriate, so we exchange good-byes. But as soon as I reached the elevator I was already wondering, What if she dies during surgery? Would her soul be on my hands? My spirit descended with the elevator. The lingering question, Had I done enough? stayed with me.

Ministers would not give such questions a second thought were not a soul's destiny so important. Every person we meet must address this issue. But it cannot be pressed in every situation without

regard to the circumstances. A semiprivate room, heavy traffic in and out, interruptions, and interpersonal dynamics are often inconducive to a gospel presentation to a stranger. Nonetheless, we must watch for providential openings. When they occur, we must be ready to respond. At times I fail miserably. But thankfully, God gives other opportunities to lead, not push, people to Jesus.

I am convinced that my people consider me a professional evangelist whom they can send to convert their friends. It must make them feel better to send the preacher than it does to witness themselves. But sometimes something gets lost in the transition. I always respond, but maybe the layperson missed the moment of truth.

Pastors do have a ministry of presence. We are living reminders of

God, Christ, the gospel, and the church. Our presence points to the reality of God's grace and love even at those times when words aren't appropriate. Perhaps the twinge of conscience that comes when issues of the heart are undressed keeps us attentive to the deeper longings of the soul that lie beneath the superficialities of our visits. And hopefully, it will keep us ready to harvest when the time is right. 

## PREACHING HOLINESS

(Continued from page 9)

believer to perfect obedience under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

In this respect, love becomes the *condition* (1 Thess. 3:10-13) as well as the *result* of cleansing (Matt. 22:37; Deut. 30:6). Or to put it another way, the *increase* in love makes *yieldedness* possible, cleansing the result (2 Cor. 7:1), and a life of love amazingly possible.

No wonder Paul stated in Eph. 3:14-19: "For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with might through his Spirit in the inner man, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have power to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fulness of God" (RSV).

**9. The preacher of holiness must press persuasively the claims of the truth upon the hearts of believers, not through compulsion but by a beckoning of love.**

Whether we like it or not, our culture is not of a disposition to be pushed around. They will, however, respond to a love permeated with integrity. If the preacher is sincere and credible, he has formed the ground for a legitimate persuasiveness. It is as though he were saying, "I have tasted of the good things of God's love, and I want you to taste them with me."

The narrative method of preaching combined with a spirit of love is superlative in drawing people to a point of yieldedness. The theologian can define the aorist imperative as suggestive of crisis, but it is the preacher who has lived the crisis and described the moment who draws his people to the fullness of the blessing.

As I have grown older, my confidence has increased in the work of the Holy Spirit.

**10. Theology is the servant of the Word in proclamation.**

Theology develops in every age to descriptively understand what the Word is saying. Theology is always a means to an end, never an end in itself! A creative theology speaks to us where we live.

Timothy Smith tells us that at Oberlin College, during the holiness revivals of the 1850s, the leaders saw holiness in the Scriptures. They experienced it. But when they tried to put in on paper, they found it difficult.

Evangelical perfection is always like that. Its paradoxical

language, its depth of feeling, its extent of commitment make definition nearly impossible, but description and experience wonderfully possible.

It is said that Eck and Luther sang "Veni Creator Spiritus" on their knees before George of Saxony, knowing they would debate before the ruler.


Come, Holy Ghost, Creator, come,  
And visit all the souls of thine;  
Thou hast inspired our hearts with life,  
Inspire them now with life divine.

Thou art the Comforter, the Gift  
Of God most high, the Fire of love,  
The everlasting spring of joy,  
And holy unction from above.<sup>8</sup>

Those same words were echoed in the words of Mark Hewitt, a Nazarene college student, in the chapel at Brisbane, Australia:

Confessing my total unworthiness to be filled  
With all the fulness of God,  
And my unworthiness to be an instrument of  
His power and for His glory,  
As a sinner saved by God's grace,  
I make a total surrender of my all to God.

My present and my future,  
My whole being with all its ransomed powers,  
My time, my talents, and my possessions,  
My family and my friends,  
My plans and ambitions.  
For time and eternity, Lord,  
I surrender all to You and for Your glory.

By faith I accept all Your cleansing  
And empowering fulness.  
Thank You, Lord, for the fulness of Your Spirit,  
Your cleansing, and Your power.  
In Jesus' name, Amen. 

## NOTES

1. Mildred Wynkoop, unpublished notes.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. J. I. Packer, *Keep in Step with the Spirit* (Old Tappan, N.J.: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1984), 66.
5. Ibid., 97.
6. Mildred Wynkoop, *A Theology of Love* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1972), 351.
7. Ibid.
8. John Wesley, *Works*, "Minutes of Some Late Conversations," Wed., June 17, 1747 (8:293-96), from Burtner and Chiles, *A Compend of Wesley's Theology* (New York: Abingdon), 185.

A retiring elder delivers his last annual report to the district assembly.

# THE LAST REPORT

by Paul Buchanan  
*retired pastor, Mansfield, Mo.*

**D**r. Strickland, Dr. Hester, members and friends of this assembly, I bring you today my 33rd and final report from the Mansfield church.

I came to pastor this new church, nestled deep in the Ozark hills, in the summer of 1953. I was 32 years old, just called of God to preach the gospel. I was a bona fide hillbilly right off the farm, saved and sanctified by God's grace, with no educational background for the ministry. In fact, the only degree I had was an honorary degree in common sense. It was conferred by Brushy Knob University after I had completed my undergraduate work at Castro, Peavine, Hogeys, and Rockhouse schools, along with Slim Purple, Bully Briggs, Pankey Burris, Coot Kunzie, Guy Gettys, and Julia Mae Rhoades.

I am still a hillbilly, though for many years an alumnus of the Church of the Nazarene's Home Study Course for Ministers. As well as I know myself, I am sure I shall remain a hillbilly right on through eternity, for I'd rather be a hillbilly than an angel. I am sure heaven will have its hill country.

After pastoring Mansfield for a while, my district superintendent suggested that I move to a larger, more affluent church in the city. I talked to God about it, and He said, "Just remember, Buchanan, you are a hillbilly. Hillbillies belong in the hills. Pavement, bricks, glass, and asphalt are not your cup of tea. And though the feet of those who preach the gospel are beautiful, your feet will probably be more beautiful in cowboy boots kicking rocks, wading crystal-clear streams, traveling cow paths and hog trails, walking ridges, and exploring beautiful verdant valleys of the Ozark hill country." He went on to say, "Go, if that is what you desire. However, if you are willing to stay here in Mansfield and work hard, I will help you. Together with these good people we will build a larger, more affluent church here in this little town."

Then I talked to self. Self reminded me that we only received 40¢ in salary last week. That was all there was left after the church's bills were paid. Yes, I knew that the *Manual* said the pastor's salary has first claim on all monies received, but Johnny Carnall at the utilities office, Mark Shipp at the lumberyard, and Russell Wyatt at the Lebanon Savings and Loan office had never read the *Manual*. They wanted their money first.

Then Satan chimed in and said, "See, I told you you were a fool to leave the farm. You don't have an edu-

cation, you can't preach, and with my help, they will starve you to death." But I had read in my Bible some instructions on how to deal with the devil. I just told him to take his position at the rear. I'd rather be God's fool than the devil's prime minister. I told him I was going to continue to preach the gospel and stay in Mansfield.

Now this is what has happened:

In a little more than three decades, with God's unfailing help day by day and moment by moment, we have seen the Mansfield church grow. When we came, we found a small, struggling group in a limited facility—1,200 square feet containing sanctuary, parsonage, classrooms that doubled as our bedrooms, pastor's study, furnace room, and broom closet—valued at \$4,000 with an indebtedness of \$3,200. Now we have a beautiful, functional, adequate building situated on a four-lane highway with 12,500 feet of floor space, and a separate four-bedroom parsonage, located high on the mountain with a breathtaking view, independently appraised at \$40,000. We have gone from having no acceptance in the community to a place of highest respect; from not being able to borrow \$100 from the local bank to borrowing \$60,000 from the same bank on an open note with no mortgage just three years ago. To quote Dr. Strickland, "We came as a church when they didn't want us, and we have stayed until they can't get along without us."

Through the years we have seen 10 people answer God's call to a full-time Christian ministry. They are all either in the field or in preparation for the work God has called them to. Many wonderful laypeople whom I dedicated as babies are now capable, dedicated, Spirit-filled leaders in the local church. We have seen every budget allocation paid in full every one of those 33 years.

All these are important, and we thank God for all He has done to make it possible. But we praise Him most of all for the spiritual growth of the Mansfield church. The people there have been and remain a wonderful, compassionate, caring, cooperative, supportive group who love God and His church. They have a passion for souls; they love each other, their pastor and family; and always abound more and more unto every good work. It has been a great joy and privilege to have been their pastor for these years.

Contrary to what some of my esteemed colleagues

(Continued on page 46)



# On Not Missing the Water Until the Well Runs Dry

by William E. Stewart

*District Superintendent, Canada Atlantic, Church of the Nazarene*

**A** phone call came, inviting me to consider accepting the position of district superintendent. The next three months were hectic. The decision was made; sad farewells were said; pleasant welcomes were experienced; the details of the move were completed; and a district parsonage became my new home.

The new assignment was exciting. It presented a whole new series of challenges, responsibilities, and ministries. I was thrilled with the possibilities that lay ahead. I began to realize, however, that along with the freshness of the new job, there were aspects of the pastoral ministry that, as a district superintendent, I was going to miss.

After 20 years as a pastor the values and habits of the pastoral life had woven themselves into the very fabric of my personality and Christian experience. They were as common to me as breathing, and just as vital. They were values around which my ministry centered. They were habits that fed my soul and stimulated me. I thrived on them. But now they were gone, and I missed them. Some of the blessings and benefits unique to the pastoral ministry were no longer available to me.

Now that that well has gone dry, let me share with you some of the waters that I really miss.

**I** miss the close involvement of the local church. From the beginning of my Christian experience I have always been deeply committed to a local church. When I became a pastor, my life and ministry revolved around a local church. I was committed to the health and growth of the congregation. I valued it, loved it, cared for it, worked for it, planned for it, and prayed for it. My heart and spirit were bound up in its welfare. It

was the focus of my functions and energies as a Christian. The local church that I pastored was also a means of grace to me. I drank in its spirit, I warmed myself in its fellowship, and I relied on its strength. I was matured by carrying its burdens, and stretched by solving its problems. I rejoiced in its victories and wept for its defeats. Suddenly, it was gone.

Now my responsibilities lie in many churches. I am overseer for many congregations but deeply involved in none. I am a friend and supervisor to many but a pastor to none; and I miss this rich, rewarding, challenging involvement.

**I** also miss the discipline of weekly sermon preparation. Some of the most inspiring moments of my life were spent during sermon preparation time—the digging into the Word, the study and meditation on spiritual truth, the defining of concepts and making them clear in my mind, so that I could make them clear to others. These hours of study nourished my own soul. They were streams of refreshment and renewal for my own spirit.

Sermon preparation time was not always easy, but it was rewarding. It challenged my mind and disciplined my personality, and I greatly miss it.

I still insist on time in the study. But now, my sphere of interest is different. The direction of thought and spirit are different. The demands on my creativity are different. Now there are no “hungry sheep” looking up to be fed. Precious indeed is the privilege of preparing a health-giving, spiritual meal that satisfies your part of the family of God.

**T**he third thing I miss is perhaps the most difficult to explain without be-

ing misunderstood. I miss the fellowship and comradeship of fellow pastors.

I do not believe I have suddenly changed. I am the same man, but in a different job. I notice, however, a change in my communication with fellow pastors. Not because I have changed, but because they view me differently. They talk to me from a different perspective. They are more guarded, more careful. The open, free, unburdening of ourselves to one another is gone.

Perhaps it is inevitable and in the nature of things, but I cherished my fellowship with my fellow pastors. I enjoyed their spirit. I shared ideas, concerns, and burdens. We refined concepts and developed programs and discussed issues. Always these times were refreshing and enriching. Pastors really have an exclusive fellowship. It was so much a part of me that I did not realize its value until it is gone. The district office can be a lonely place.

Cherish your fellowship. Take time to cultivate it. Be available to each other. You have a treasure that should be worked on and developed.

These are some of the things I miss. They have left an emptiness that I am learning to fill in other ways. But those of you who are still pastors I encourage to prize these values that are unique to your job. Plan to cultivate your appreciation and enjoyment of them. Don't waste your opportunities, for one day, like me, you may find they are no longer there.

Pastor! Enjoy the great treasures of the pastoral life while you still have them. I hope you love and enjoy and thrive on this natural center for your spiritual energies.

# Wesley's Crisis Management

by Timothy Kauffman

*Pastor, Church of the Nazarene, Frankfurt, Germany*

**J**ohn Wesley had an unusual gift of sizing up a situation and immediately knowing what to do. Recently, as I was preparing some lectures on the life of John Wesley, I came across a situation in his ministry that showed how he approached and solved crises. It is interesting to see how many management principles he intuitively used:

But it was not long before the Stewards found a great difficulty with regard to the sick. Some were ready to perish before they knew of their illness; and when they did know, it was not in their power (being persons generally employed in trade) to visit them as so often as they desired.

When I was apprized of this, I laid the case at large before the whole society; showed how impossible it was for the Stewards to attend to all that were sick in all parts of the town; desired the Leaders of classes would more carefully inquire, and more constantly inform them, who were sick; and asked, "Who among you is willing, as well as able, to supply this lack of service?"

The next morning many willingly offered themselves. I chose six-and-forty of them, whom I judged to be of the most tender, loving spirit; divided the town into twenty-three parts, and desired two of them to visit the sick in each division.

It is the business of a Visitor of the sick, to see every sick person within his district thrice a week, to inquire into the state of their souls, and to advise them as occasion may require, to inquire into their disorders, and

procure advice for them, to relieve them, if they are in want, to do anything for them, which he (or she) can do, to bring in his accounts weekly to the Stewards. (The Leaders do it now.)

In this episode, we can recognize five principles of crisis management Wesley used:

**I. He was aware of the problem.** He first heard the opinions of those who were involved in the situation: "When I was apprized of this . . ." He then asked those in charge how they felt about it. "The Stewards found a great difficulty with regard to the sick." In order to solve this problem, it was important for Wesley to hear both sides of the issue before he made any decisions.

All too often we are tempted to hear only the leader's side, or the side of the one with whom we have the best rela-

tionship. Wesley knew that taking sides and squelching the opposition might quiet the storm but not take care of the sick.

**II. He went to those who could solve the problem and effect a solution.** He went to the whole Methodist society and explained the situation to them. He wanted any solution to come from the society itself, not from the hierarchy. The society wasn't aware of the problem, and their cooperation was needed if a solution was to be effected. "I laid the case at large before the whole society; showed how impossible it was for the Stewards to attend to all that were sick in all parts of the town."

His method of operation, to this point in our study, reminds me of the way the apostles solved the problem of serving the Greek widows in Acts 6:1-6.

In both cases, the unchallenged authority of the leaders made it possible for them to be able to keep the crowd on course and unified. That is one of the true marks of a leader; to be able to effect change with the support of all involved.

**III. He unveiled his plan for the elimination of the problem.** It was very simple and included (1) getting better information about who was sick, and (2) asking for volunteers to care for them: "Who among you is willing, as well as able, to supply this lack of service?"

The leaders of the class meetings were to be responsible to get the information about the sick members of their classes and pass this list on to the stewards (later the leaders). From the leaders, the responsibility was to rest on the



Timothy Kauffman

## WORKERS' COMPENSATION LAWS AND THE LOCAL CHURCH

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

### WORKERS' COMPENSATION LAWS AND BENEFITS

Workers' Compensation laws now exist in all states and Canada. They are designed so that benefits (both medical and disability income) for the 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.

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

Church employers are subject to Workers' Compensation laws unless specifically exempted by law. A few states exempt churches from Workers' Compensation coverage, and several exempt all nonprofit employers. A few others exempt any employer, including churches, having fewer than two or three employees. However, *the majority of states have compulsory participation laws* that do not exempt churches. Unfortunately, most churches *assume* they are exempt and do not secure the insurance. Such an assumption will not protect a church from full liability in the event of a claim for benefits.

Work-related injuries 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 injured while donating labor during a building project. 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 person or his family to bring court action. However, too often it is not reviewed and updated to prove adequate.

### 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 467-68 (Minn. 1944)]

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

The answer to this question 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.

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 information contained herein is of a general nature. It is not offered as specific legal or tax advice. Local legal and tax advisors should be consulted to evaluate each individual situation.)

shoulders of volunteers who would do the visiting.

Wesley didn't, however, leave the care of the sick to chance: "I chose six-and-forty of them, whom I judged to be of the most tender, loving spirit."

Here is where so many good ideas fail to bring the hoped-for results. One asks for volunteers and feels obligated to take all those who are willing to help, regardless of their qualifications. Unfortunately, those who volunteer are all too often not able to do the job.

Wesley was looking for spiritual gifts to meet the immediate need. Because everyone has strong points, this gives us the ability to say no when we feel a volunteer doesn't have the gift for the particular need.

**IV. He divided the responsibility into manageable pieces.** "[I] divided

the town into twenty-three parts, and desired two of them to visit the sick in each division."

We want to notice that the number of those chosen determined how many parts the town was divided into. It doesn't take much to become weary in well-doing, and the partner system helps to reduce this problem. If one of them was tied up, the other visitor could go instead.

Each of the teams had responsibility for a specific area of town. Their area was manageable and specific.

**V. Each visitor was given an exact double-pronged job description:** (1) his responsibilities: "To see . . . inquire . . . relieve . . . [and] do." And (2) his accountability: "To bring in his accounts weekly to the Stewards."

If the coordination and execution of any plan works, it is only with a clearly formulated description of what each participant is to do. All were aware of what was expected of them: the leaders, the visitors, and the stewards. The sick of the society also knew exactly how they would be cared for.

So we have taken a short look at the way John Wesley's analytical, penetrating mind tackled, as far as we can determine, a spontaneous problem during one of his visits. We can learn a great deal from this master Methodist and sharpen up our crisis management tools on the whetstone of his experience.

John Wesley, *Works* (London: Wesleyan Conference Office, 1865), I:253.

# John Wesley's Views on Public Worship

by Don A. Glenn

*Pastor, Broadview, Ill., Wesleyan Church*

In his 1740 sermon "Worship in Spirit," John Wesley expresses his basic conviction that worship is larger than public, divine services. It is a life-style.

What is it to worship God, a spirit, in spirit and in truth? Why, it is to worship him with our spirit; . . . in a manner which none but spirits are capable of. It is to believe in him, . . . to love him, to delight in him, to desire him, with all our heart, and mind, and soul, and strength; to imitate him we love, . . . in thought, and word, and work. Consequently, one branch of the worshiping God in spirit and truth is, the keeping his outward commandments. To glorify him, therefore, with our bodies, as well as with our spirits; to go through outward work with hearts lifted up to him; to make our daily employment a sacrifice to God; to buy and sell, to eat and drink, to his glory;—this is worshiping God in spirit and in truth, as much as praying to him in a wilderness.<sup>1</sup>

While living is a sacrifice of worship, Wesley does not hold it to be a substitute for the divine services. These he views, in light of the scripturally designated Sabbath or Lord's Day, as loving appointments between the creature and the Creator, for the benefit of the created.

This is the day he hath set apart for the good of your soul . . . Never more disappoint the design of his love, . . . Let not a little thing keep you from the house of God, either in the forenoon or afternoon.<sup>2</sup>

By meeting together in public worship, believers unite into a visible organization, the Church. It is in such a gathering, as a worshiping congregation, that the Church takes its visible form. But, according to Wesley, for the assemblies to fulfill the qualification as a worshiping congregation, three essentials are required:

First: Living faith: without which there can be no church at all, neither visible or invisible. Secondly: Preaching, and consequently, hearing the pure word of God, else that faith would languish and die. And, Thirdly, a due administration of the sacraments—the ordinary means whereby God increaseth faith . . . to

hear his word and partake of his supper, they are then a visible Church.<sup>3</sup>

While holding and espousing these essentials for a visible Church, its expressions could and would take several forms. Therefore, the order of their priority must be adopted. Their particular presentation must be planned. The involvement of the gathered congregations must be considered. Even the environments in which they function influence them. These forms become public worship or "divine services."

When following Wesley at worship, one is impressed that no detail of the "service" (his term) is without his notice or opinion.

## ARCHITECTURAL INFLUENCES UPON WORSHIP

Wesley believed the building in which the service occurred could add to or detract from the significance of the worship experience. One Sunday in 1758 he wrote,

We went to St. Peter's Church, the Lord's Supper being administered there. I scarce even remember to have seen a more beautiful parish church: The more because its beauty results not from foreign ornaments, but from the very form and structure of it. It is very large and of an uncommon height, and the sides are almost all window; so that it has an awful and venerable look, and at the same time [is] surprisingly cheerful.<sup>4</sup>

"Form and structure . . . awful and venerable . . . cheerful"—these are architectural ingredients Wesley commends in a house of public worship. Regarding his visit to the University of Scotland, he noted, "The high church is a fine building. The outside is equal to that of most cathedrals in England, but it is miserably defaced within; having no form, beauty, or symmetry left."<sup>5</sup>

Wesley found the want of cleanliness a detraction, along with any lapse of decorum, no matter how well the liturgy was performed. He reveals this attitude when speaking of worshipping in Ireland:

At half past eleven the Church Service began. The Curate read Prayers exceedingly well, and the Rector preached with uncommon earnestness. But what I most admired was, 1. The cleanness of the church, equal to any I have seen in England. 2. The serious behavior of the whole congregation. And, 3. The excellent singing by forty or fifty voices, half men and half women.<sup>6</sup>

The building can also influence the physical comfort and well-being of the congregation, which in turn affects the quality of the program taking place within. Wesley complained and then advised in 1765:

The preaching-houses are miserable, even the new ones. They have neither light nor air sufficient; and they are far, far too low, and too small.

We have need to use all the common sense God has given us, as well as all the grace.<sup>7</sup>

### DECORUM IN WORSHIP

In his field (open air) preaching, Wesley would contend with rabble-rousers who would jeer and throw rocks, eggs, and clods. On some rare occasions he would counter and confront them. Mostly, his records imply, he ignored them.

In the church or cathedral, however, he would not be so passive about behavior. He had great respect for and expectations concerning proper behavior during the service.

Wesley's most pungent comments regarding decorum were directed at the "gentry." His great surprise registered when they behaved as he wished they would.

I went at eleven to the Cathedral. I had been informed it was the custom here, for the gentry especially, to laugh and talk all the time of Divine Service, but I saw nothing of it. The whole congregation, rich and poor, behaved suitable to the occasion.<sup>8</sup>

Once in Ireland,

Two gentlemen who were close to me . . . fell to talking together in the most trifling manner, immediately after they had received the Lord's Supper. Indeed one who sat by could not but reprove them, who I seconded in strong terms.<sup>9</sup>

Public service was serious for Wesley. He expected similar attitudes from others. Yet it seems to have been a rare commodity in some quarters. At least three times while visiting Scotland he expressed delight and surprise at finding it! Once he called it "exquisite."<sup>10</sup>

On one occasion, Wesley seemed to have found a congregation that could model his expectations not only in decorum but in simplicity. It was in the English chapel at Glasgow.

But how I was surprised! Such decency I have seldom seen even at West Street, or The New Room in Bristol. 1. All, both men and women were dressed plain: I did not see one high head; 2. No one took notice of any one at coming in; but after a short ejaculation, sat quite still; 3. None spoke to any one during the Service, nor looked either on one side or the other; 4. All stood, every man, woman, and child, while the Psalms were sung; 5. Instead of the unmeaning voluntary, was an anthem, and one of the simplest and sweetest I ever heard; 6. The Prayers preceding a

sound useful sermon, were seriously and devoutly read; 7. After Service, none bowed or curtsied, but went quietly and silently away.<sup>11</sup>

Wesley found the same attitude in worship when he visited Holland and "recommended it to the congregation here, in Sheffield and again in Carmarthan."<sup>12</sup>

In Germany he was "surprised" again by the opposite of what he had lauded in Glasgow and Holland. He lamented the extravagant apparel by both congregation and clergy, feeling it inappropriate to worship. As well, he noted: "Most of the congregation sat (the men generally with their hats on, at prayers as well as sermon), and all of them stayed during Holy Communion, though but very few received. Alas! What a REFORMED country is this!"<sup>13</sup>

Wesley deplored irreverent conduct during services. His comments range from "insufferable" to "I was greatly shocked." He felt such behavior to be "horrid, senseless pagentry," a "mockery of God, which they called public worship."<sup>14</sup>

However, Wesley was so intent in his devotion to worship that he remarked, "but all carelessness and indecency did not prevent me finding an uncommon blessing."<sup>15</sup>

Wesley was at home with an assembly numbering into the thousands, and appreciated them. Yet for public worship he "judged a small congregation with peace, preferable to a large one with noise and tumult."<sup>16</sup>

Not only did Wesley judge a congregation by its overt behavior but also by such things as what we have come to call "body language." A reverent spirit, he implies, takes a reverent posture. Said he in Scotland, "I cannot be reconciled to men sitting at prayer, or covering their heads while they are singing praise to God."<sup>17</sup>

Wesley was explicit in writing "To the Society at Canterbury," October 29, 1762:

As to your public meetings . . . I dislike several things therein: 1. The singing, or speaking, or praying, of several at once: 2. The praying to the Son of God only, or more than to the Father; 3. The using of improper expressions in prayer; sometimes too bold, if not irreverent, sometimes too pompous and magnificent, extolling yourself rather than God, and telling Him what you are, not what you want. 4. Using poor, flat, bold hymns; 5. The never kneeling at prayer: 6. Your using postures or gestures highly indecent: 7. Your screaming, even so as to make the words unintelligible: 8. Your alarming, people will be justified or sanctified just now: 9. The affirming they are, when they are not; 10. The bidding them say, "I believe!!": 11. The bitterly condemning any that oppose, calling them wolves, etc; and pronouncing them hypocrites, or not justified.<sup>18</sup>

On another occasion, in response to objections raised against himself, Wesley, in contrast to the above, stated,

1. I always use a short private prayer, when I attend the public service of God . . . 2. I stand whenever I sing the praise of God in public . . . 3. I always kneel before the Lord my maker, when I pray in public. 4. I generally in public use the Lord's Prayer, because Christ has taught me, when I pray to say, . . . I advise every preacher connected with me, whether in England or Scotland, herein to tread my steps.<sup>19</sup>



## EXCELLENCE IN THE PERFORMANCE OF WORSHIP

For Wesley, the liturgy should not be performed, it should be done well. He expected excellence. In a critique of one service it was intimated that a poor rendering of the liturgy made it difficult for preaching afterward:

I preached once more in W— Church; but it was hard work. Mr. H. read the prayers (not as he did once, with such fervour and solemnity as struck almost every hearer, but) like one reading an old song, in a cold, dry, careless manner.<sup>20</sup>

Once Wesley commended a Scottish congregation for its "exemplary decency" while decrying "so miserable a reader I never heard before. Listening with all attention, I understood but one single word . . . in the first lesson; and one more . . . in the second." Wesley pronounced it a "burlesque upon public worship."<sup>21</sup>

Always partial to his Church of England, on the same visit to Scotland, Wesley praised the Episcopal Chapel for "prayers . . . read well, seriously, and distinctly, . . . the sermon, . . . was sound and unexceptional."<sup>22</sup>

Although he felt "excellence" to be a criterion in worship, Wesley did not demand natural talent for its performance. What he did require was a sincere spirit, should the capacity for excellence be lacking.

I have many times known God to attach his power to the words of extremely weak men. The humble overlooked the weakness of the men, and rejoiced in the power of God. But all his power is unacknowledged, unfelt by those who stumble at the weakness of the instrument.<sup>23</sup>

However, Wesley expected the minister-pastor-worship leader to be an example and expression of decorum and excellence, even if he had to learn it!

Next to prudence or common sense . . . a Clergyman ought certainly to have some degree of good breeding; I mean address, easiness and propriety of behavior, wherever his lot is cast; perhaps one might add, he should have . . . all the courtesy of a gentleman, joined with the correctness of a scholar . . .

In order to this, in any public ministrations, would not one wish for a strong, clear, musical voice, a good delivery, both with regard to delivery and action?<sup>24</sup> ♪

## NOTES

1. "Sermon on the Mount—IV," *Works*, 5:305-6.
2. "A Word to a Sabbath-Breaker," *Works*, 11:166.
3. "Of Reason and Religion," *Works*, 8:31.
4. "Journal," *Works*, 2:463.
5. *Ibid.*, 286.
6. *Ibid.*, 3:498.
7. "Letters to Mr Thomas Rankin," *Works*, 12:323.
8. "Journal," *Works*, 2:134.
9. *Ibid.*, 440.
10. *Ibid.*, 4:74-75, 153.
11. *Ibid.*, 153.
12. *Ibid.*, 1:113.
13. *Ibid.*
14. *Ibid.*, 2:241, 220; 1:158.
15. *Ibid.*, 2:220.
16. *Ibid.*, 273.
17. *Ibid.*, 410.
18. *Ibid.*, 3:121.
19. *Ibid.*, 251.
20. *Ibid.*, 145.
21. *Ibid.*, 461-62.
22. *Ibid.*, 459.
23. *Ibid.*, 197.
24. "Address to the Clergy," *Works*, 10:485.

## THE LAST REPORT

(Continued from page 40)

have said, the people of Mansfield have had the privilege of voting on their pastor every four years. In fact, during these years, three good people have exercised their right to vote no, for which I am grateful. For it is written, "Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you!" (Luke 6:26).

My lovely wife has stood by faithfully and served God and the church with dedication. Now she and I are returning to a recently completed home that overlooks a beautiful Ozark valley, where the quail call through the early morning mist; the largemouth bass splash as they feed among the lilies in our small lake; the white-tailed deer bed down at night in green meadows; turkeys gobble from across the ridge; the squirrels gather nuts from nearby trees for their winter store; the whippoorwill calls in the cool of the evening; and the hoot owls hold conferences at midnight. The garden is filled with flowers, golden ears of sweet corn, and luscious red tomatoes hanging on the vine. Beautiful yellow squash, plump carrots, beets, melons, cabbage, and potatoes are in abundance. From the trees hang red and yellow apples. The beef in the pasture gets fatter day by day. The fruit room and the freezer are filled with all varieties of canned and frozen items.

The church has grown and increased numerically, financially, and in facilities. But most important, it has grown in the spirit of holiness. The pastor, as you can see, is not starving. God has always met the people's needs, has never forsaken them, nor left their seed to beg for bread.

So in closing my career as pastor, I would like to go on record with documented proof that he who follows God is no fool, that Satan is a liar and the father of lies, that God's credits always outweigh the devil's debits, that God is still on the throne, and that He never forsakes His own. If I had these 32 years to live again, I would make the same choices and travel the same road without hesitation. To be a child of God, the husband and father of a fine family, the pastor of the Mansfield Church of the Nazarene, and a member of the Joplin District has been a rich, fulfilling life. Today I hang up the towel with the joy of the Lord, with gratitude to God for all He has made possible, and with no regrets that I followed His leading.

And now, sirs, while you go back to your churches to raise money to pay the budgets, to establish goals for the new year, and to plan Sunday School rallies—I go fishing!

—submitted by Dean Wessels, Director,  
Pensions and Benefits Services, USA,  
Church of the Nazarene ♪

# WHAT SHALL I BRING?

## An Advent Meditation

by J. Michael Walters

*Senior Pastor, Houghton Wesleyan Church, Houghton, N.Y.*

**W**hat Offering Shall I Bring to Thee? . . . Thou, at whose birth the angels sing, to whom the sages humbly bring their gifts."

Those words, printed in the worship bulletin for the offertory on the final Sunday in Advent, reminded me of a scene I had witnessed a couple of hours prior to the service.

I had slipped into the rear of the sanctuary to sit and meditate, to catch the mood of that Advent Sunday prior to preaching. The accomplished musician who served as church organist was playing. Suddenly, to the left of the chancel, the door to the sanctuary opened and in he walked, dragging some freshly cut evergreen branches. He was helping his wife decorate for the morning service. I watched him, somewhat stooped and moving very slowly, drag the branches to the center of the chancel. But he paused and watched the organist for a moment, then silently went back to his task.

As a silent witness on the back pew, I was stunned by the simple beauty of this epiphany. He himself had served as church organist for nearly 30 years. He was considered one of the finest church organists in America. A Fellow of the American Guild of Organists, he had brought worldwide acclaim to the school of music that he headed prior to retire

ment. Then a stroke rendered one hand useless—unable to play, unable to bring those offerings of music performed with perfection. Nevertheless, he continued to bring his offerings. Formerly he brought Bach and Mozart, now he brought branches.

As I watched him I could not help but think that although the offerings were different, the motivation behind them was the same. Both Bach and branches were offered out of a deep love for God and a desire to serve Him in whatever way possible. In this silent tableau he seemed to be saying, "Whether the house of God is beautified by sight or sound matters less than that I offer to Him what I can to assist in the worship of God."

The scene triggered many thoughts. Does God really differentiate between an offering of Bach and an offering of branches? Would He not look deep within the heart of the one presenting the offering to determine its acceptability? The carol about the little drummer boy always struck me as overly sentimental. What use would the Christ child have for an offering of dull, rhythmic thuds emanating from a crude percussion instrument? But that's beside the point. Indeed, what possible use does the Eternal Word

have for any offering that man could bring? Is not the point of offerings, any offering, ultimately the offering of ourselves to God? The Magi brought gold, frankincense, and myrrh; but essentially they brought themselves, and that's why we remember them as "wise men."

As he dragged his branches into place and stood back, surveying his work with satisfaction, I could tell that his offering was the same as it always had been. Bach was simply a vehicle, as were the cuttings of evergreen. The real offering was himself.

Every year the Christmas shopping list presents at least one formidable challenge: that one person who is hard to figure. What can you possibly give to him or to her? In time, the marketplace will solve your dilemma, and the list will be complete. Almost. For what about Him? What offering shall I bring Him? Gold, frankincense, myrrh, even Bach and evergreen branches are superfluous. Only the offering of self, bowed before Him in adoration and worship, can be acceptable.

"And they came into the house and saw the Child with Mary His mother; and they fell down and worshiped Him; and opening their treasures they presented to Him gifts of gold and frankincense and myrrh" (Matt. 2:11, NASB).



# ADVENT NOW

Two weeks before Thanksgiving, Santa Claus drops by the town square or the suburban shopping mall—and the Christmas season is on! The mood and the atmosphere begin to build as the radio stations play “White Christmas” and “Home for the Holidays.”

Australians expect to spend Christmas on the beach in the warmth of summer. North Americans watch for snow and hear the cold winds whip through the stark, naked trees.

Christmas is a festival of lights, evergreen trees, gift exchanges, and special foods from all over the world. Christmas is sights, sounds, and feelings—even pain for some.

But Advent has nothing to do with weather, ethnic celebrations, food, or world areas. Just what does it have to do with? For children, it generally means, *Wait!* “Daddy, how many days until Christmas?” Their waiting is a mixture of joy and pain, anticipation held in check by the calendar.

Adults often experience the opposite. The days before Christmas are hurried and usually harried. In addition to shopping pressures, there are trips to be planned and visits to relatives who haven’t been seen for several weeks. Then come the Christmas parties, programs, concerts, school activities, and church celebrations ad infinitum. These all have a bit to do with Advent. But the waiting and the preparation are the twin experiences that make for a great Advent. Why?

Because I wait again. I prepare again for that great day! I look forward to, and I want my congregation to look forward to, the same announcement first made 2,000 years ago—Jesus Christ is born in Bethlehem of Judea!

Advent must always be just as though it is happening now. The shepherds, the Magi, and the angels, who are all described in the Gospels, are still part of Advent. Somehow, they are here to once again proclaim the birth of the One who now lives in our hearts. And because He *is* here, walking the dusty roads of our lives, our hearts burn within us, just as they did for the two from Emmaus as Jesus walked with them!

So, “Joy to the world! the Lord is come” rings out from every heart. W. A. Poovey affirmed, “The classic Christmas carol ‘O Little Town of Bethlehem’ says it for us all in the lines, ‘The hopes and fears of all the years / Are met in thee tonight.’” The joy is ours because Christ comes in all seasons for all people. He comes in redemption as we sing, “O come, O come, Emmanuel, / And ransom captive Israel.”

Now, as we prepare and wait, our knowledge of the first Advent kindles hope for His second coming. The truth of the first promises the second! “You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming” (2 Pet. 3:11-12, NIV).

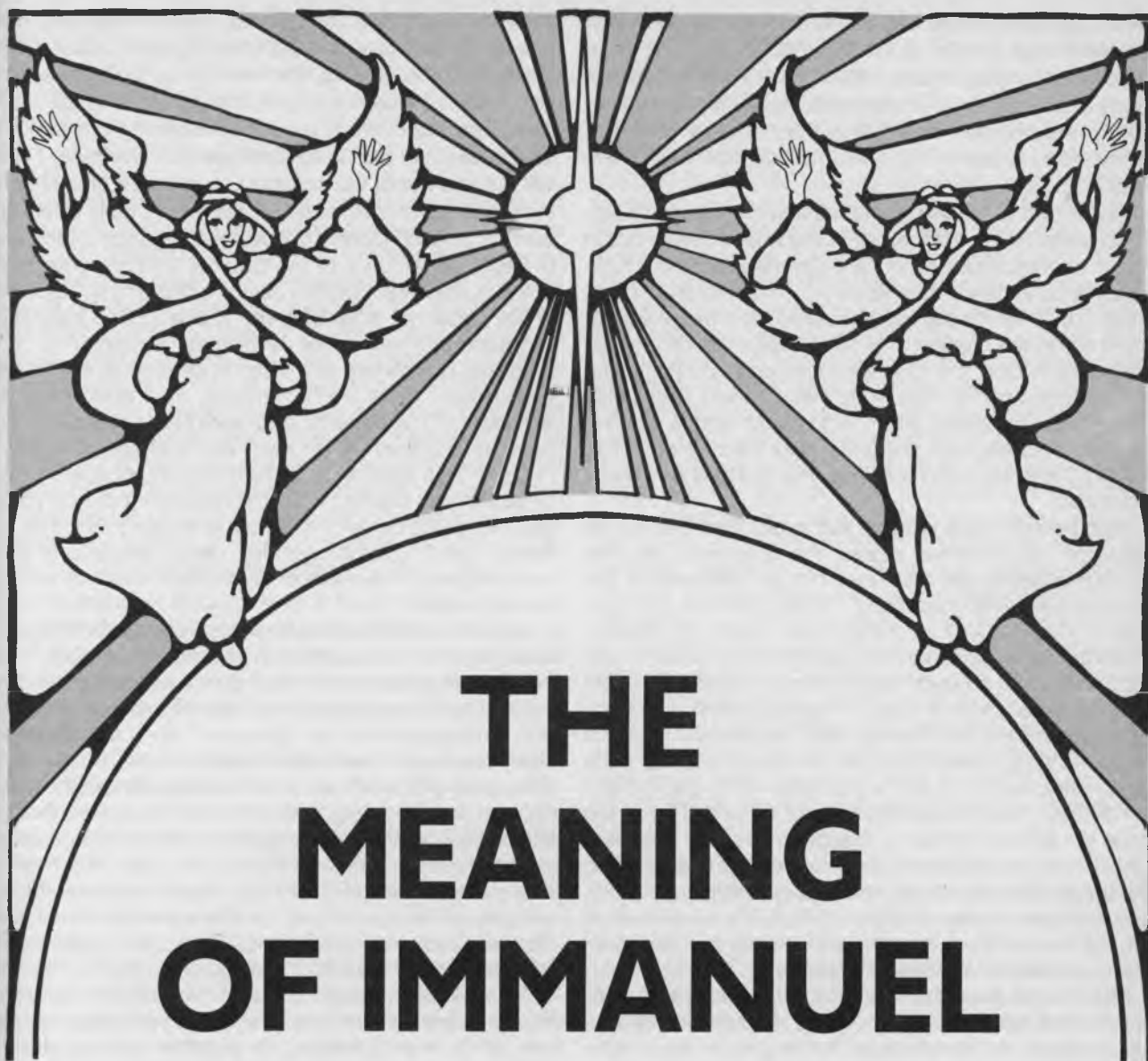
So in the midst of celebration, the pattern of Advent should be to “let ev’ry heart prepare Him room.” That is the only preparation the Church should make! Christmas is the Advent! Christmas Eve should be a celebration of Christ rather than a material exchange. The Light that has shone out of darkness should dominate the celebration.

The new year doesn’t really begin on January 1 for the Christian. It begins four Sundays before. Advent is the actual beginning of the Christian year because it causes us to remember that God, in Jesus Christ, reached out to all men. There is no other way for a Christian to start a new year.

The Bible does not mention Advent or Lent, nor does it set aside certain days on the church calendar. The proclamation of the gospel came through a church that was scattered by persecution but lived nevertheless. Their living the Good News was not a religious or philosophical idea. It was not a debate about moral concepts. They lived out the saving deeds of Jesus Christ. It is little wonder that they set aside days to celebrate. Every reminder was a blessing!

Advent is a glorious celebration when it is a reminder of Christ!

—Dallas Mucci



# THE MEANING OF IMMANUEL

by David L. Cubie

*Professor of Religion, Mount Vernon Nazarene College*

**W**hat does it mean for God to come into the world? It means a number of things both to God and to us. To Him, the meaning has both divine purpose—to “save his people from their sins” (Matt. 1:21, RSV)\*—and consciousness of rejection (“He came to his own home, and his own people received him not”) and reception (“But to all who received him . . . he gave power to become children of God” [John 1:11-12]. When He came, He “emptied himself of all but love” (C. Wesley). Yet the very divine quality that He did not renounce in becoming one of us is the cause of both our clash with Him and our faith in Him.

Love is disruptive. We all want to give and receive it. But when it comes, it challenges us. Love will not allow prejudice of any kind, even against the wicked. Our Heavenly Father sends His rain on the just and the unjust (Matt. 5:43-48) and gives His mercy even to the ungrateful (Luke 6:36) Love requires going to the Cross

oneself rather than sending another. The message of love, the preaching of Christ crucified, is described by Paul as the aroma of life unto life to those who receive it and death unto death to those who do not (2 Cor. 2:12, 14-16).

## **The Problem of Meaning**

What does it mean for God to come into this world, for love to come into a world of hostility? Lack of understanding is a problem central to the mystery of the Incarnation. Paul said to himself, “I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief” (1 Tim. 1:13). Though he was obedient to the law of his fathers, his realm of understanding, he was the “chief of sinners” through his ignorance (cf. v. 15, KJV).

Similarly, Peter is also described as a chiefest because of his ignorance. When he rebuked Jesus for choosing to go to Jerusalem, Jesus turned to him and

said, "Get thee behind me, Satan . . . for thou savourest not the things that be of God" (Matt. 16:23, KJV; more literally, "you do not have a mind for it"). Peter was not alone in his inability to understand. Jesus' repeated caution to the disciples was "What I am doing you do not know now" (John 13:7) and "You cannot bear them now" (16:12).

At the root of human existence there is a tragic inability to understand. This is not in the area of skills but in moral understanding. Men are ignorant of God's righteousness; instead, they seek "to establish their own" (Rom. 10:3). Man's own righteousness is a moral adjustment within the context of sin. It is not based on unqualified trust in God, the One who caused "light [to] shine out of darkness" (2 Cor. 4:6), "who raised [our Lord] Jesus from the dead" (Rom. 8:11), and who is the "rewarder of those who diligently seek Him" (Heb. 11:6, NKJV). Thus, as it was for Peter, the Cross is an impossible idea.

Man neither loves enough nor trusts God enough to sacrifice. As Hebrews states the question: "In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood" (12:4). Humans do sacrifice in the context of conditional love and trust—"perhaps for a good man one will dare even to die"—but sacrifice based on unconditional love, obedience based on unqualified trust in God, is beyond fallen humanity. Our human love and loyalty make conditional sacrifice possible. It must be for a cause *worthy* of sacrifice, such as country, family, or as Paul qualified it, "a good man." In contrast, "God shows his love for us in that while we were yet sinners [helpless, blasphemers, and enemies] Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:6-10). Perfect love goes to the unjust (Matt. 5:43-48), to the ungrateful (Luke 6:36), and to impious enemies (Rom. 5:6, 8, 10), as well as to the righteous. There are no qualifications that limit it either in degree or in who may receive it.

Man's righteousness is qualified. It requires justification. This justification is the program by which all ethical systems are developed. Trusting that they themselves are righteous (Luke 18:9), people, both corporately and individually, develop systems of justification. These may be the systems of philosophers or theologians, or the self-justifications of the unschooled.

Self-examination should cause recognition of moral inability. We fail to love and trust. Honest recognition of this would result in the prayer, "God, be merciful to me a sinner!" (Luke 18:13). Every person is educated in the logic of self-justification, in the fine art of rational self-defense.

Because mankind has its own righteousness, Immanuel is illogical. The self-emptying God, the One who takes our humanity upon himself, who accepts the life of a servant and a most ignoble death, does not make sense. If we make sense out of His death through incorporation into a religious system, His call to us to "die a death like His" still runs contrary to logic. Immanuel is not satisfied merely to be revered in a religious system. His coming contains the troublesome invitation, "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me" (Matt. 16:24).

Misunderstanding is a universal problem. The Incarnation took place in a world that did not understand it.

The rulers did not understand, "for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory" (1 Cor. 2:7-8). Neither do the Greeks, for whom it is foolishness, nor the Jews, to whom it is a stumbling block (1:23, KJV). Religious logic often runs diametrically opposed to God's love. As Jesus forewarned His disciples, "They will put you out of the synagogue; in fact, a time is coming when anyone who kills you will think he is offering a service to God" (John 16:2, NIV)—language descriptive of Paul's persecution of the Church. This universal ignorance is also expressed in Jesus' words from the Cross. "They know not what they do" (Luke 23:34). Ignorance is applied by Peter to the Jews in Jerusalem: "And now, brethren, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did also your rulers" (Acts 3:17). Similarly, Paul addresses the Athenians, "The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all men everywhere to repent" (17:30). This ignorance is further compounded in the Christian era. Loyalty to Christ required that everything be done in the name of love, but love was twisted by the human mind. Thus inquisitions, persecutions, and wars were waged in the name of God. God's love was still not understood.

Lack of understanding does not release us from spiritual and moral responsibility, though Paul said, "I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly" (1 Tim. 1:13). Those who ignorantly cast men out of churches and synagogues do so "because" our Lord declared, "they have not known the Father, nor me" (John 16:3). Their acts of hostility are attempts to establish their own righteousness, "being ignorant of God's righteousness" (Rom. 10:3, KJV). Reflecting the words of Isaiah, Jesus described them: "Seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear" (Matt. 13:13). Peter described the immorality of this ignorance. It is the opposite of holiness. The believers are commanded, "Do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but . . . be holy . . . in all your conduct" (1 Pet. 1:14-15). The source of this ignorance is "the god of this age [who] has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God" (2 Cor. 4:4, NIV).

The moral problem of meaning is further heightened in that the knowledge of Christ heightens this knowledge of sin and threatens the sinner, causing him to hide. Just as Paul could describe "the law [which] is good" is given so that sin might be seen to be "exceeding sinful" (Rom. 7:16, 13, KJV), so also Jesus described His own impact on the people and rulers. "If I had not come and spoken to them . . . [and] if I had not done among them the works which no one else did, they would not have sin" (John 15:22, 24). From Adam's fall to that day when men will cry for the rocks to cover them, men have hidden from God.

When Immanuel comes, He not only exposes, He threatens at the point of who we are. Malachi asked about that day, "Who can stand when he appears?" (3:2). Simeon prophesied over the infant Christ, "This child is set for the fall and rising of many in Israel" (Luke 2:34). Being threatened by His presence, they do not "come to the light, lest [their] deeds should be exposed" (John 3:20). The "Book of Signs" in John's Gospel (chaps. 2—12) is a dramatic portrayal of how incarnate



righteousness threatens. Those described as Abraham's seed start by saying to Jesus that no one "is seeking to kill you" (7:20), and end by picking "up stones to throw at him" (8:59), plotting His death and even seeking to destroy the evidence of His righteousness: "The chief priests planned to put Lazarus also to death" (12:10-11).

The exposition of their plight contributed to an ethical rationale, that of Caiaphas, who expressed his ethical wisdom by asserting, "You know nothing at all; you do not understand that it is expedient for you that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation should not perish" (John 11:49-50). Man is innately philosophical and theological, and in these he is innately ethical. He must be good in his own eyes (Luke 18:9). Thus over the generations of sin, a good is created, a meaning is developed that enables each sinner to say to the bearers of light, "You know nothing at all; you do not understand." It is to this system that the gospel is foolishness and a stumbling block. Paul reminds us, "The foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men" (1 Cor. 1:25).

### **The Meaning of Immanuel in a Sinful World**

The Incarnation, as described in John's prologue, is first of all revelation. Jesus is the Logos and Light. As Logos, He speaks forth God into the world. As Light, He is the moral conscience "that enlightens every man" and woman (1:9).

Jesus' life, death, and resurrection is the revelation of God's righteousness. God made Him our righteousness (1 Cor. 1:30). In His life, death, and resurrection, He was God's righteousness. He is the sinless One (John 8:46; 2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 4:15) who struggled against sin to the point of shedding His blood (12:4). His atoning death was to show and prove God's righteousness. In a parallel passage, the character of His righteousness is described as love: "God shows his love for us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8). Furthermore, that He is the Righteous One is declared by His resurrection from the dead (Acts 3:14-15; 7:52). God would not let his "Holy One see corruption" (2:27; 13:35).

God's purpose in the revelation of His righteousness in Christ was to show sin as that which is contrary to love for God and neighbor. In Christ's presence, the most righteous of the Pharisees comes to know both that he is a sinner (John 15:22, 24), and the chief of sinners (Phil. 3:6; 1 Tim. 1:15). Christ is God's perfect Law. He is God's perfect Revelation who reveals all sin. As John teaches, "If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin" (1 John 1:7). Cleansing takes place in relationship to revelation. The very transformation of the Christian from one degree of glory unto another (2 Cor. 3:18) is dependent on the revelation of that which is unlike Christ. The one who believes, while he is not condemned, discovers the condemnation of sin (Rom. 8:1, 4). Paul, speaking autobiographically, raised the hypothesis, "If while [I] seek to be justified by Christ, [I am] found [to be a sinner]" (Gal. 2:17, KJV), suggesting that proximity to Christ created revelation of sin. This concept is found throughout Paul's writings, as he affirms, "When we are judged by

the Lord, we are chastened so that we may not be condemned along with the world" (1 Cor. 11:32). Where perfect revelation exists, there sin abounded, and there "grace abounded all the more" (Rom. 5:20).

Christ is God's perfect Revelation. He reveals that which is contrary to the divine image not only to sinner, but also to the righteous. He is not only "a light for revelation to the Gentiles," He is also perfect Revelation, or "glory to thy people Israel" (Luke 2:32). As Paul in reverse order states it before Agrippa, He is "light both to the people and to the Gentiles" (Acts 26:23). The condition of all men is not only that "all have sinned" but also that they have "fall[en] short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). Thus, the Christian's hope is the "hope of sharing the glory of God" (5:2). The process is being transformed into His likeness from one degree of glory unto another (2 Cor. 3:18). The purpose of Christ's coming is to destroy the works of the devil. The object of our hope, and the goal of God's purpose and election, is perfect restoration: We are "to be conformed to the image of his Son" (Rom. 8:29). It should be noted that "image," "likeness," and "glory" are equivalent terms. Glory is image or likeness seen as revelation, or to use the terminology of John's first Epistle, perfect light. Thus Immanuel is not only light to darkness, He is also glory who reveals sin in the righteous.

The effect of this revelation of God's love to us is all-encompassing. Immanuel destroys all excuses (Rom. 1:20) developed by all our systems of self-justification. The whole world is "accountable to God" (3:19); "every mouth [is] stopped" (v. 19); and "boasting" is ended (v. 27).

### **The Meaning of Immanuel in a Hopeless World**

Immanuel's meaning is not just in the revelation of sin. Immanuel is also the revelation of God, the One who forgives, who "is faithful and just . . . [who] will forgive us our sins" (1 John 1:9, NIV), and who in the Atonement makes repentance possible. The knowledge of forgiveness is Immanuel's doing. The knowledge that forgiveness is available for all, Gentile as well as Jew, is a new message. The Gentiles are described in Ephesians as "strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world" (Eph. 2:12). There is no knowledge of God or His forgiving grace. Similarly, Paul announced to the Athenians, "The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all men everywhere to repent" (Acts 17:30). The newness of this possibility is underlined by his words "and of this he has given assurance to all men by raising him [our Lord Jesus] from the dead" (v. 31). Likewise, a new insight came to the Jewish church in Jerusalem when they heard that the Holy Spirit had come on the household of Cornelius. Upon hearing this, "They glorified God, saying, 'Then to the Gentiles also God has granted repentance unto like'" (11:18).

The call to repentance both by John the Baptist and by Jesus Christ was conditioned on the premise that the kingdom of God is either near or here. Similarly, Paul's invitation, "Behold, now is the acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation" is preceded by "At the acceptable time I have listened to you, and helped you on the day of salvation" (2 Cor. 6:2). This itself is preceded by two chapters describing the liberating mercies of



God which affirm, "So we do not lose heart" (4:16, 1), and, "We are always of good courage" (5:6). God is the One who wrestles victory out of defeat (4:8-10) and who comes to us through Christ: "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself [KJV] . . . We beseech you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God" (5:19-20). As Charles Wesley wrote:

*My God is reconciled; His pard'ning voice I hear.  
He owns me for His child; I can no longer fear.  
With confidence I now draw nigh,  
With confidence I now draw nigh,  
And, "Father, Abba, Father," cry.*

Immanuel brings the revelation of love that does not just convict, it also forgives. In fact, God's love that convicts creates hope once again, making contrition and repentance possible. It is the sorrow that comes from God (*kata Theou*) that "produces a repentance that leads to salvation" (2 Cor. 7:10). Though Immanuel is not sorrow, He creates sorrow unto salvation. "To all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God" (John 1:12).

This hope of forgiveness is based not only upon the goodness of God but on His power. As Jesus proclaimed, "It is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be preached in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem" (Luke 24:46-47). Similarly, the assurance of forgiveness proclaimed to the Athenians was not just that God forgives, but that He has the power to forgive. God gives the assurance "by raising . . . [Christ] from the dead" (Acts 17:31). The Resurrection proclaims that God's love is victorious. It not only proclaims God's love for the righteous—He would not let His "Holy One see corruption" (2:27; 13:35)—but it also proves to all mankind "that God . . . [is] able to do what he had promised" (Rom. 4:21).

Though we usually associate forgiveness with the Cross, it is also associated with the Resurrection. The fact of forgiveness is proclaimed in Christ's death, but the power of forgiveness is proclaimed in His resurrection. In Antioch of Pisidia, Paul recited the mighty acts of God to Israel—the call of the fathers, the deliverance from Egypt, the giving of the Law, the gift of the Prom-

ised Land, and the elevation of David to kingship (Acts 13:17-22). Then he proclaimed God's greatest act: He did not let His "Holy One see corruption" (v. 35). On the basis of this mightiest of acts, he concluded, "Let it be known to you therefore, brethren, that through this man forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you, and by him every one that believes is freed from everything from which you could not be freed by the law of Moses" (vv. 38-39). The term translated "freed" (*dikaioō*) is usually translated "justified" as it is in this passage by the NIV and NKJV. The power of the Holy Spirit on the disciples at Pentecost and on the household of Cornelius is a sign not only of God's favor but of God's creative love: "As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us" (Ps. 103:12, NIV).

### Meaning in a Helpless World

Our hope is not just for forgiveness; it is for transformation. Transformation includes forgiveness. Forgiveness is not just something done by God and known only to Him. Forgiveness includes transformation in the psychological dimensions. "While we were still helpless" (Rom. 5:6) (NASB, etc.) and "strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world" (Eph. 2:12) are Paul's descriptions of man's helpless and hopeless state. The realization of God's forgiveness is an unleashing of His power, pushing back the fear of death. The psychological dimensions of our deliverance are an expression of God's power. Immanuel, the writer of Hebrews reminds us, in His incarnation ("in flesh and blood") "partook of the same nature, that through death he might destroy him who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong bondage" (Heb. 2:14-15). Trespasses and sins result in death, but Christ brings life (Eph. 2:1). Faith is an act of Resurrection grace. It is the triumph of trust in God over every direction that fear may take—fear of man, of God, of life, of death, and of failure. As Wesley observed in his *Explanatory Notes upon the New Testament* for Rom. 4:25, "Jesus . . . was . . . raised for our justification"—"to empower us to receive that atonement by faith." Yet trust is not meaningless. The gift of faith is a gift to the mind and heart. Faith is trust in the One who has proven himself to be both trustworthy and able to do what He has promised.

Yet how do we know that God is trustworthy? We know because God proves himself to us. Those who reject and suppress the trust, Paul reminds us, do so over against God, who makes himself known. Though Paul is describing the beginning of revelation, "what can be known . . . namely, his eternal power and deity," nevertheless, "God [is the One who] has shown it to them" at a sufficient level so that faith is potentially theirs. It "is plain to them" (Rom. 1:19-20). It was at this minimal revelation that Jesus demonstrated that His Father is love: "He makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust" (Matt. 5:45). Unbelief and belief are both genuine possibilities; God has revealed himself.

All the persuasion of God in nature, in His covenant with Israel, in the death of His Son, and in that Holy Son's resurrection is given to create in rational beings a potential for the godly sorrow, repentance, and trust

that leads to salvation and life (2 Cor. 7:10; Acts 11:18). This redeeming persuasion is the activity of Immanuel. As Paul wrote, "We beseech you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake . . . [God] made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God" (2 Cor. 5:20-21).

This persuasion is both about the character and the power of God. The Resurrection does not overwhelm, it persuades. Faith as righteousness is "reckoned to us who believe in him that raised from the dead Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 4:24). Similarly, salvation is for those who not only confess with their lips that Jesus is Lord, but who also "believe in . . . [their] heart[s] that God raised him from the dead" (10:9). Thus Abraham, the man of faith, is characterized as "being fully persuaded that, what . . . [God] had promised, he was able also to perform" (4:21, KJV). This gracious persuasion of God's love through the life, death, and resurrection of Immanuel makes it possible for all who believe to "live no longer for themselves, but for him who for their sake died and was raised" (2 Cor. 5:14-15).

Faith is a mystery, a synergism of grace. I act, but behold, it is God who acts. As Paul wrote, "For this I toil, striving with all the energy which he mightily inspires within me" (Col. 1:29). By God's resurrection power I am not only made alive to believe, my belief becomes a rational affirmation. Living faith has God the Father as the Object: I believe in "him who raised Jesus from the

dead" (Rom. 8:11, NIV). In His resurrection of Jesus, God is recreating the rational dimensions of faith, a faith that God is both good and able to do what He has promised (4:21). As the Epistle to the Hebrews states, "Whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him" (Heb. 11:6). That God exists affirms His power; but when He rewards the seeker, His goodness is proclaimed. The repeated object of faith is the One who "raised from the dead Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 4:24; see 2 Cor. 1:9; 4:14; Eph. 1:19-20; Col. 2:12; and Heb. 11:19). Immanuel came to create faith, "to deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong bondage" (2:15).

The meaning of Immanuel is that He brings meaning into a sinful, hopeless, and helpless world. God is revealed, sin is made evident, and full salvation becomes possible. Thus faith is recreated not just as inward feeling, but faith that has objective content—faith in the One who both raised up Jesus and is able to raise us up with Him. The result of Immanuel is that now on this side of His resurrection, "we . . . rely . . . on God who raises the dead . . . [who has] delivered us from so deadly a peril . . . [and who] will deliver us again" (2 Cor. 1:9-10). Immanuel! God is love and He is with us! The Word is here. Meaning is being restored.

\*Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture quotations in this article are from the Revised Standard Version of the Bible.

## ZECHARIAH'S SONG

(Continued from page 61)

- C. If you want to know the presence of God, pray!

### IV. BELIEVE GOD'S WORD

(1:18-22)

- A. Zechariah's doubt prompted Gabriel to temporarily interrupt the priest's hearing and speaking abilities.

1. It was as if Gabriel said, "You have heard but have acted as if you did not. Therefore you will not hear. You have expressed unbelief with your lips, therefore you will not speak until this prophecy is complete."

- B. Perhaps a time of silence, a fast from noise, would help us place greater value on the words of God (cf. Ps. 46:10).

### V. ASCRIBE VICTORY TO HIM

(Luke 1:23-25)

- A. Elizabeth becomes pregnant and gives God the credit for the miracle (v. 25).
- B. We ought to trace our victories to their divine Source, instead of crediting "coincidence," "luck," or our own "natural abilities."

### VI. OBEY HIM EVEN IN

PROSPERITY (Luke 1:57-66)

- A. Zechariah and Elizabeth were living in parental poverty until their promised child was delivered, and then they were wealthy!

1. Zechariah demonstrates obedience by naming the baby John over the protests of friends and neighbors.

2. Zechariah did not forget God when God had given him the desire of his heart.

- B. It is easy for us to forget God in prosperity.

- C. Honor Him in the bad times as well as the good, and you will be blessed by a greater awareness of His presence.

### VII. LET GOD TEACH YOU

THROUGH HARDSHIP

(Luke 1:64)

- A. Because of being deaf and unable to speak, Zechariah missed the audible impressions of an experience he had prayed for all his married life.

- B. It is not easy to let God teach us even in hardship.

1. You may think you have learned the lesson and that the hardship should diminish, only to

find that it increases or is sustained.

2. Stay teachable!
3. If you do, you will come out of hardship with a song of praise, like Zechariah.

### VIII. FIX YOUR HEART UPON

GOD (Luke 1:67-79)

- A. Zechariah's song is like Old Testament poetry.

1. Large portions of it are recognizable in an ancient prayer sometimes called "The Eighteen Benedictions."

2. His song celebrates God more than it does the son he has received.

- B. Our songs, even at Christmastime, should focus more on God than on the gifts we unwrap Christmas Day.

### CONCLUSION:

1. Zechariah sang a song of liberation, a declaration of independence from:

- a. Years of loneliness.
- b. Years of aching for a child.
- c. The liberation of Israel.
- d. The liberation of the human soul.

2. We may also sing of such liberation, but first we must sense our need of a Savior

# ONE WOMAN'S ATTEMPT TO CREATE A PREDICTABLE PARSONAGE

by Jayne Schooler

If I could get to the highest place in Athens, I would lift up my voice and say, "What mean ye fellow citizens, that ye turn every stone to scrape wealth together and take so little care of your children to whom ye must one day relinquish all?" (Socrates, 450 B.C.)

When I picked up the phone, I knew this was an important call. The quivering voice of the young pastor's wife on the other end shook loose recent memories of my own.

"I came home from work tonight," she told me, "and my daughter was crying. I returned home later from a committee meeting to find her still upset. She says she has no friends, that she dislikes school. She pleaded with me not to make her go to the baby-sitter's tomorrow. What am I to do?"

While discussing her daughter's crisis, Kathy and I faced reality together. The problem wasn't friends, or school, or even the baby-sitter. It was more serious and uncomfortable than that. The problem was at home.

Lisa, her daughter, displayed classic confusion and insecurity caused by "merry-go-round" parsonage living. She was growing up in a home that lacked an essential ingredient to emotional and spiritual stability. That ingredient: continuity, or living in a predictable environment.

When discussing the term "continuity" or "predictable environment" as it relates to the pastor's home; many basic needs come to my mind. Such things as established routine and rituals, family structure, and consistent authority are just a few. The predictable home of the pastor is a place where each family member, including the adults, can be depended on to be there. It is a

place where each person feels secure that whatever attacks them from the outside, the family structure is in place to support and encourage them. It is more than a "changing station" to run in and out of.

This problem, lack of continuity, threatens not only this young pastor's home, it threatens our home and many others. Much like my own daughter just a short time ago, Lisa was struggling with feelings of insecurity and uncertainty. Both parents work hard. While her father tends to the multitudinous needs of his congregation, her mother attempts to fulfill the roles of nurse, pastor's wife, and mother. The stress never ends.

Meanwhile, Lisa, shuttled from baby-sitter to baby-sitter, wonders who's in charge. What can she count on? And even more sadly, *whom* can she count on? Many of us in the pastorate have been guilty of allowing this problem to creep into our homes. I have.

In her book *Common Sense Christian Living*, Edith Schaeffer addresses the issue of continuity in the home. She illustrates its meaning with a common garden accessory.

"Think of continuity as a trellis for a vine. Gradually the plant puts out tendrils that cling to the trellis and take its shape. The ivy on the flowing vine needs years to become what it can be on that trellis. To transfer it to another garden sets it back or kills it altogether. The vine can take storms . . . if it has care."

The family unit, much like that trellis, must provide continuity, a predictability that the environment will run smoothly and that someone of significance will be there. This continuity should permeate infancy to adulthood.

Predictable events—positive ones (birthday parties, family gatherings, dinner at home together) or negative

# LIFE IN THE FISHER BOWL

BEFORE TIM GRADUATES AND WE HEAD OUT INTO THE PASTORATE, I WANTED TO ASK YOU WHAT THE SECRET OF BEING A SUCCESSFUL PASTOR'S



OH WELL, THERE ARE SEVERAL THINGS. LIKE A SINCERE DESIRE TO LOVE PEOPLE, OR A WILLINGNESS TO SACRIFICE SOME PERSONAL TIME, AN ABILITY TO SENSE THE NEEDS OF OTHERS, PATIENCE, FORESIGHT, & HUMILITY.



R. GREEN

OK. BUT IS THERE ANYTHING YOU THINK I MIGHT FIND PARTICULARLY DIFFICULT?



ones (illness, arguments, disappointments)—handled consistently, mold a child's sense of well-being.

Predictable people, Mom and Dad, relishing in childhood events like that first home run or that first good grade card, cement feelings of acceptance and security.

For the last seven years, I've been a working pastor's wife. My responsibilities as a schoolteacher, pastor's wife, and Sunday School teacher consumed my energy and crowded out any time for creative family living. My daughter, I now realize, was struggling more and more with her place in our busy schedules.

One afternoon when she was in second grade, her teacher graciously confronted me.

"Christi's life seems terribly hectic. Her work is always done in a hurry. Her body and mind seem to be in such a rush. This could develop into serious problems in the future," she warned.

I wasn't prepared for this revelation. Yes, our lives were flooded with responsibilities to others. The demands upon us were overwhelming at times. The pastor's life is different, I began to rationalize. But should that difference destroy my children?

Confronting that personal situation hurt, but praise God that He woke us up in time.

In those months that followed, and even now, I've had to deal with some questions. What type of growing-up experience is my daughter having? Am I willing to structure my life-style for the sake of my family? How will I do that? What must I let go in order to create an environment where our entire family can function at their best emotionally and spiritually?

Permanent answers to complex needs do not happen overnight. At least they didn't for us. However, changes came and still come.

First of all, I determined to get off the merry-go-round. I made a decision to make my family—my husband, my 18-year-old son, and my 8-year-old daughter—my first priority, second only to my relationship with God. I accepted my personal stewardship of them above my responsibilities at church. It is my responsibility to create a home environment where peace, continuity, and predictability exist. Now, every decision I make concerning large blocks of time are made with the needs and activities of my family in mind.

Second, I began to take action. I quit my full-time job. Now I am home when the family leaves, and I am back home when they return. I work three and one-half hours a day at the church-affiliated Christian school our children attend.

As much as we may feel inadequate to be examples to our church families, as pastors' wives, we *are* examples. Shortly after my job transition, a young mother wrote me a note:

The privileges as a wife have first priority, and husbands are designed to be fulfilled by this. I believe you, as a pastor's wife, can be a real balance to your husband's ministry when you focus your attention on him and his needs. A wife cannot be so busy with her own assignments and deadlines that she has no time to be still and study her husband. This whole business takes time—lots of it.

Your desire is scriptural, and I'm sure if acted upon will bring great blessings and benefits to your lives. It will also be an example to us of the marriage God intended for His people. A real working of two lives into one flesh, which is really the most observable way to demonstrate "I in you and you in me." How beautiful, don't you think?

Many mothers struggle with personal worth, wondering if staying home is truly fulfilling. As the pastor's wife, I encourage them to do so if at all possible.

A third change involved a reordering of our finances, which my husband enthusiastically did. We are reducing debt simply by not incurring any more, and taking every opportunity to pay off what we can.

A fourth change involved our family schedule. We have taken a more active role in our children's activities. It was easy to send them to their ball games and Bible quizzes while we went different directions. Now we center our priorities around our children. We involve them in as much of our ministry as possible, like class dinners or calling, and we involve ourselves in what is important to them. We are no longer reacting to activities and demands, but are much more in control of them.

Creating a somewhat more predictable environment at home has enabled us to be more aware and involved in the most important part of our family's life—spiritual education. As in many parsonage homes, we had left the spiritual education of our children to the Sunday School teachers and to the faculty of their Christian school. We were too busy ministering to others. God has indeed convicted us, and now that area is a structured part of our daily routine. Yes, sometimes interruptions come, but overall, this remains constant.

Our parsonages are under attack. It is our duty to create an environment where consistency, not chaos, reigns; where continuity, not confusion, controls; and where peace, not strife, stands. Our lives, our homes, and our ministries depend on it.



# OUR BROKEN BODY

## A Call for Unity Among the Holiness Churches

by Richard K. Eckley

Pastor, Bentleyville Wesleyan Church, Bentleyville, Pa.

Our body has been broken. I first noticed it when I left my provincial mind-set to attend a denominational college. It became more apparent when I went to seminary and found representatives from other churches who had the same beliefs about holiness as I did. When I studied for a graduate degree at Princeton I had the privilege of studying under the great ecumenist M. M. Thomas. The class was electric with discussion, attempting to unify major theological differences. But I came to realize how far we have to go when I found scribbled across my proposal for a thesis on "Intra-Church Dialogue Within the Holiness Movement" the message: "What's the Holiness Movement?" Our brokenness has left us impotent to the world.

An ecumenical holiness has been missing from the agenda at denominational conferences in the 1980s. Unless movements such as the Christian Holiness Association and the Wesleyan Theological Society can have an effect, holiness will be a nonissue in the years to come. Students of church history read of the merger that formed The Wesleyan Church in 1968, and of the prior and subsequent unsuccessful attempts to gain relation with Free Methodists. However, in light of the new evangelical popularity, there has been an eclipse of any talk on the subject by all of the major holiness churches. At present, each group has been consumed with entre-

preneur adventures, taking advantage of the climate for expansion and worldly good graces.

Since the publication of Richard Niebuhr's prophetic work *The Social Sources of Denominationalism*,<sup>1</sup> the American denominational system can no longer look on its diversity with pride, but rather with confession and humility. His thesis, though in need of correctives, is that the social, political, and economic factors of an era have more to do with the creation of church movements than do theological ideals. We, as a major moral and social force in this country's history, know this to be true. Our founding organizations reacted against evils few others addressed, and were thus spawned.

As a son of holiness, trained in its churches, camps, colleges, and seminaries, I wish to elucidate some reasons for a lack of unified concern from the holiness movement:

1. We have been entranced with a view of evangelism that is more *bodies*-oriented than *body*-oriented. We still believe we can "wow" the world with our bigness, despite the Johannine theology of evangelism as sung by our youth at camp—"They'll Know We Are Christians by Our Love." The world doesn't care how many people we have nationwide, but it sits up and listens to one collective voice, funneled through one mouth as it pointedly addresses their needs.

Their current church growth move-

ment has motivated the local church to evangelistic prowess. At the same time, it has turned our eyes away from more unified activities with other denominations.

2. There is a humbleness required in giving up a structure we have created in exchange for a more unified structure. Duplication of bureaucratic networks would necessarily mean that some denominational executives would lose their positions. With two or more denominations doing many of the same jobs, somebody would have to step down. Of all the colleges in all of our churches, some would prove obsolete. And probably most significant, there would be the need for a new name, and with it, a loss of self-identities.

I have heard the comment from my own denominational leaders, "We have nothing to gain from merger." Yet Jesus' words "Whoever loses his life for My sake will find it" (Matt. 16:25, NKJV), speaks to the church and its search for an image. The question is not "What do we have to gain?" but "What do we have to lose?" The future of any one organization is insignificant against the Kingdom.

3. We have been told by business-wise advisors that merger neither makes good business sense nor enhances growth. We have often been told to look at the merger that formed the United Methodist church. Then we are shown the ap-

parent failures of that union. Then, too, we all know of local churches formed by the mergers of two or more smaller churches and have seen their losses in total membership.

There must be a greater reason for merger than economic or statistical gain. Sometimes things should be done just because they are right. Merger, and other ecumenical strides, makes a far greater statement than spread sheets or year-end reports.

There are more positive reasons for unity than we would care to admit. Some practical advantages, the kind that would make our leaders happy, include: savings from curriculum and publications (already there have been numerous joint efforts in this area; *The Preacher's Magazine* is an effective example!); the duplication of services such as colleges, training, and administrative expenses could be streamlined and made more efficient for the movement at large; and there could be a sharing of personnel and resources as never before.

The theological and Christian necessity of union is of even more importance than these practical advantages. T. F. Torrance writes, "Theological differences . . . stem more from the cultural environment of the Church in its journey through history than from disagreement as to the material substance of the faith."<sup>2</sup> If what Torrance says is true,

we must be willing to reexamine the differences between our systems and ask what necessitates our division—cultural or theological differences. If the differences are cultural, then we must work toward union to show the truth of the Ephesian gospel: Jesus Christ surpasses culture. A quotation in the *History of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of America* shows how cultural differences stopped the merger of that church and the Free Methodists:

The General Superintendents of the Free Methodist Church were called "bishops" . . . many Wesleyan Methodists feared that the term "bishop" meant that the merger would commit the church to an episcopal form of government and vigorously opposed the merger.<sup>3</sup>

The Free Methodist Church does not have such a government (although there are some similar characteristics). Terminology destroyed a spirit of oneness.

Simple snobbery would keep us believing we stand apart due to "theological distinctives." A lack of *koinonia* keeps us from realizing oneness more than such distinctives. We are amazed at Wesley's ecumenical spirit. The father of such a precise theological tradition reached out to other faiths with "Come, my brother, let us reason together . . . Let the points where we differ stand aside: here are enough wherein we agree."<sup>4</sup> And yet, we

cannot agree within our own theological bloodline.

At a time when so many are belittling the camp meeting as outmoded, it would appear that this program is the only interchurch movement that is having any affect for union. One such camp meeting, the Bentleyville Union Holiness Association (Bentleyville, Pa.), has a rich ecumenical history and continues to show numerical success drawing from all of the sister denominations. Ashamedly, we no longer applaud such efforts because individual church growth cannot be attested from their consequences.

Perhaps each of the distinctive traditions that flow among the tributaries of our holiness movement had sufficient impetus for their time. But to a fragmented world, which stands in danger of even greater fragmentation, the formation of a river that offers a major course for the future is sorely needed. May God quickly send the balm that will heal our broken body.

#### NOTES

1. H. Richard Niebuhr, *The Social Sources of Denominationalism* (New York: New American Library, 1929).

2. T. F. Torrance, *Theology in Reconciliation: Essays Toward Evangelical and Catholic Unity in East and West* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1975), 10.

3. Ira F. McLeister and Roy S. Nicholson, *Conscience and Commitment: History of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of America*, ed. Lee Haines and Melvin Dieter (Marion, Ind.: Wesley Press, 1976), 232.

4. As quoted in Richard P. Heitzenrater, *The Elusive Mr. Wesley: John Wesley His Own Biographer* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1984), 1:206-7.

## PREACHER'S EXCHANGE

**FOR SALE:** Many excellent old holiness books. For a list, send an SASE to William Thompson, 9 York Dr., Shore Rd., Belfast, BT15 3QY, Northern Ireland.

**FOR SALE:** Having reached the age of 80, I am selling my entire library. Several old volumes on holiness. For a complete list, send an SASE to S. Ellsworth Nothstine, Rt. 4, Box 242-3, Mocksville, NC 27028.

**FOR SALE:** Complete library of 50 years' collecting. Many old holiness classics, biographies, autobiographies, old Sunday School teachers' books full of good holiness material and illustrations, Sunday School commentaries, and so on. Must see and examine to appreciate. Great opportunity for some young preachers to purchase a good holiness library. For a list, send \$2.00 to Hugh Slater, 1120 Cedarcliff Dr., Glen Burnie, MD 21061.

**WANTED:** Pastors using the Macintosh computer in their ministry, having an interest in a user's group by mail. Write J. Paul Turner, 6401 The Paseo, Kansas City, MO 64131.

**WANTED:** "Jeremiah I" volume from *The Biblical Illustrator*. I am also interested in any reference or study on Psalms. Contact Douglas M. Downs, 3025 N. Ridge E., Ashtabula, OH 44004.

**WANTED:** Set of *Beacon Bible Commentary* for gift to the mission field. Indicate price and condition. Paul S. Bowen, R.D. 2, Brandon, VT 05733

**WANTED:** Issues of the following periodicals: *Pioneer Holiness Echoes* and *The American Holiness Journal*. I am also wanting to buy old books on holiness and the history of the holiness movement. Contact Larry P. Stover, P.O. Box 302, St. Bernice, IN 47875.



# TODAY'S BOOKS for TODAY'S PREACHER

## THE MYSTERY OF MARRIAGE

By Mike Mason, Multnomah Press, 1985, 185 pp., hardback, \$10.95 (PA088-070-0971).

Mike Mason has tackled a difficult and complex subject in his book, *The Mystery of Marriage*. I looked forward with eager anticipation to reading it. My appetite had been whetted by the lead-in on the flyleaf, which boldly proclaimed: "Never has marriage been explored with such profound beauty in a profound devotional book as this."

The teaser on the flyleaf went on to state: "An inevitable classic . . . a deep meditation on the Christian mysteries incarnate in the miracle of married love. With the power of rich truth it pierces and prods, it lifts and enlightens."

Unfortunately, the mystery is never revealed. The author is extremely gifted with the ability to use eloquent and impressive verbiage: "But the whole morning is translucent. The air holds light like a goblet. Even the mountain, that most opaque of God's creations, glows with inner light. . . . The water is yet another translucency, a moving window, liquid light." However, instead of providing a lift and enlightenment, it tends to glide along with splendid words, clouding the issues of marriage, while taking your breath away as you see his keen ability to link words together so skillfully.

—G. Ray Reglin

## DEUTERONOMY

By David F. Payne, Westminster Press, 1985, 196 pp. Cloth, \$14.95 (PA066-421-8326). Paper, \$7.95 (PA066-424-5803).

The publication of David F. Payne's commentary in "The Daily Study Bible Series" completed the Pentateuch and adds another welcome volume to the nearly complete Old Testament segment of this commentary series. The late William Barclay established the pattern for this series in his popular New Testament volumes, and the writers of the Old Testament studies follow his approach in seeking to combine both devotional reading and serious Bible study.

David F. Payne, of Queen's University, Belfast, reminds us that Deuteronomy is

not only a book of laws, but also a book of sermons and history. This reference to sermons should catch the attention of the preacher who may have to admit that he has rarely, if ever, preached from Deuteronomy. The style of the commentary, with its successive headed sections, often including paragraphs with subpoints, aids the reader in discovering the main thrust of a particular passage and in seeing how the teaching can be applied. Indeed, many of these headings will provide apt titles for sermons, such as "Glittering Attractions," "The Danger of Complacency," and "Hope for Dark Days."

It may be questionable whether this book succeeds in being a devotional guide for the man in the street. However, it is of immense value to the informed student of the Word who wishes to be better acquainted with the themes and theology of the book. The commentary helps us to understand the regulations given to Israel at this time in her history; there is a helpful treatment of the Decalogue, which is restated in Deuteronomy chapter 5; and many perceptive comments are made with reference to the dilemma of war in the Old Testament, attitudes to slavery, the doctrine of election, holiness, and the circumcision of the heart.

Not every part of Deuteronomy lends itself to sermon treatment, and some passages we would wish to avoid. However, the timeless truths concerning man's relationship to God in worship, devotion, and obedience are here and should be preached on. As we read in Deut. 6:5, "And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might" (NASB). This is "The Great Challenge."

David F. Payne speaks of Deuteronomy as one of the most important books in the Old Testament. His commentary will be an important addition to the library of the theology student and preacher who desires to be better acquainted with and more faithful to the teaching of the Old Testament.

—Colin H. Wood

## DISCIPLINES OF THE INNER LIFE

By Bob Benson, Michael W. Benson, Word, Inc., 1985, 356 pp., \$18.95 (PA084-990-4684).

Just last week I was asked once again, "Can you recommend a good devotional book?" That is always a hard question that can only be answered by knowing something about the person who is asking. I usually recommend different types of books for different types of people. I think, however, that I have discovered a new resource for devotional reading and spiritual growth that will become my standard answer to the question. *Disciplines for the Inner Life* has something that could help anyone looking for devotional resources.

Nazarenes should have special appreciation for this volume since it represents the writing and editorial work of two widely respected elders in the church; author and retreat speaker Bob Benson, and his son, Michael, a Nazarene pastor in California.

The "selections for meditation" in each of the 52 weekly segments are fresh, illuminating, and provocative with spiritual insights and inspiration. The index of authors carries 140 names, ranging from spiritual giants of the past like Augustine and Wesley to pilgrims and sojourners of the 20th century like Bonhoeffer and Hammarskjöld. Readers will also find choice selections from favorite authors like Hannah Whitall Smith, Thomas Kelly, Richard Foster, Henri Nouwen, Thomas Merton and A. W. Tozer. In addition to the enjoyment of old favorites, reading selections from this devotional guide will undoubtedly send the reader looking for the complete works of authors newly met.

*Disciplines for the Inner Life* is a treasure chest of devotional literature. It could be used of God to bring discipline, insight, and inspiration to the spiritual life of those who adopt its use. The father-son team of Bob and Mike Benson has made a solid and lasting contribution to the devotional life of the church. I recommend their work to all who wish to live "richly, deeply, and spiritually."

—Don W. Dunnington

## CREATIVE TEACHING METHODS

By Marlene LeFever, David C. Cook, Publishers, 1985, 320 pp., paper, \$14.95 (PA089-191-7608).

Some books are written to stimulate thought. Others are to inspire or to in-

struct. This is a "resource book"—a compilation of practical activities designed for use in the local church.

A pastor would not purchase this book for sermon content or for illustrations. He might purchase it, however, if he wanted to update himself on a variety of contemporary methods and resources available for Christian education programs. It would make an excellent gift for a youth or children's director. I can envision the book being used as a resource for monthly teacher-training sessions.

LeFever provides an extensively researched compilation of creative and ready-to-use resources. She includes everything from mime to drama, from simulation to case studies. The first three chapters are a detailed and researched view of what it means to be creative. She admits, however, that there is no substitute for teacher preparation with this memorable quip: "Becoming an effective teacher is simple. You just prepare and prepare until drops of blood appear on your forehead."

Most local church leaders and workers need all the help they can find. This book is jam-packed with contemporary and creative helps!

—Richard Spindle

#### CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY, VOL 2

By Millard J. Erickson, Baker Book House, 1984, 407 pp., hardback, \$19.95 (PA080-103-4191).

This is the second of a proposed three-volume work. It deals with the doctrines of man, sin, and the person and work of Christ. Unlike some theologies, this book is well written, readable, and carefully outlined. It is not weighted with ponderous and technical word studies or distracted by excessive quotations. It is an excellent treatment for pastors and for college and seminary students.

The author presents questions and problems from contemporary thought and then gives theological and biblical answers and solutions. This approach allows for both objectivity and comprehensiveness. Erickson's position on biblical authority is a mediating one, bypassing the weaknesses of both fundamentalism and neoorthodoxy.

From a Wesleyan point of view, two reservations are noted. One is the author's traditional Calvinistic definition of sin as "any lack of conformity, active or passive, to the moral law of God" (p. 578). Another weakness is the author's struggle with the extent of the atonement of Christ, which is a "moderate form of Calvinism" (p. 835).

These reservations aside, this volume is a biblical, readable, relevant, significant theological work.

—Donald S. Metz

#### THE COMING GREAT REVIVAL: RECOVERING THE FULL EVANGELICAL TRADITION

By William J. Abraham, Harper and Row, 1984, 125 pp. \$12.95 (PA006-060-0357).

Despite Jesus' prayer that "they may become perfectly one" (John 17:23, RSV), authentic unity seems hopelessly beyond the reach of all but the Trinity. Christians excel at diversity but scandalize themselves by their inability to overcome divisive forces when unity is mandated.

Theologically, suggests William J. Abraham in *The Coming Great Revival*, this is not so lamentable as it might first appear. The evangelical tradition is one of contested character. Wesley could declare himself within a "hair's breadth" of Calvin on original sin and justification but was infinitely distant when predestination was invoked as God's salvation design. This grist drives the evangelical mill, and Abraham, associate professor of religion and philosophy at Seattle Pacific University, wants us to celebrate the richness of the evangelical tradition, its convolutions and layered splendor.

His biting book, however, puts considerable distance between evangelicalism and fundamentalism. The distinction between the two became notably blurred in the 1950s, when Billy Graham, then more fundamental than now, described himself as an evangelical. This confusion has persisted in the public eye. Abraham declares that "inerrancy has proved to be a millstone around the neck of modern evangelicalism" (p. 36) because, among other reasons, it stifles scholarly investigations initiated by evangelicals when they forsook fundamentalism.

In a pivotal section of the book, Abraham isolates and illuminates seven different strands of what he considers to be Wesley's genius. These are familiar suggestions, but they shine here because Abraham's hopes for the revitalization of the evangelical tradition are so thoroughly Wesleyan. Abraham knows that both theological and spiritual renewal are works of divine grace, and what is more, spiritual reawakening must precede theological. This is Wesley from the inside out.

"Wesleyans," writes Abraham, "need to soak themselves in the broad river of their own tradition, examining its many streams and tributaries" (p. 108). The author is presumably one of the leading splashers. To be a Wesleyan and an evangelical is not the same thing, for there are other sorts of evangelicals. Yet for Abraham, evangelical unity "resides in family resemblance" and not "one agreed set of doctrines." A Wesleyan himself, Abraham's plea for tolerance within the evangelical family is most convincing.

His timely and forthright book is equally

convincing. Theology is fallible and human, and only God can right its course when errant. Humans can create religious traditions, but only God can renew them.

—Roderick Leupp

#### THE MULTIPLE CHURCH STAFF HANDBOOK

By Harold Westing, Kregel Publications, 1985, 203 pp., paper, \$10.95 (PA082-544-0319).

Dr. Westing is associate professor of Christian education at Denver Conservative Baptist Seminary. He writes from his experience in varied backgrounds and especially from that of a consultant in church staff situations.

This book comes at a good time. The increasing movement toward ministerial staff in many of our local churches has led to an increased need for good guidance for senior pastors and staff persons alike. The foreword states that "staff relations can lead to triumph and tragedy," and the premise of the book is that staff ministries can be successful, if the principles set forth are followed.

Teamwork is the key to good staff relations, and this theme is developed throughout the book as he deals with the concern, the functioning, and the maintaining of the team. He gives a good biblical foundation for these concepts and then proceeds to give the practical procedures needed to put the teamwork into action. The author uses interesting illustrations and case studies to prove his points.

Of special interest is the section that goes into detail on the staff meeting and the staff retreat. Also covered well are job descriptions, role clarifications, and financial equity. Projects are given at the end of each chapter for staff members to work as individuals or as a team. The appendix gives six cardinal principles of a philosophy of ministry that could serve as an example toward any staff team objectives.

Noteworthy quotes:

"A flow of praise should go back and forth both privately and publicly between the team leader and team members."

"The congregation is far more interested in the person's depth of life, and style of ministry, than by the title the staff person bears."

"The only way opposites on a team build a strong ministry is by supplementing each others' efforts."

"An ideal church staff needs this basic element of family as their foundation for a good social-theological system."

I enthusiastically recommend this book to pastors and staff persons alike. It will be useful to read, study, and apply in any local church-staff team situation.

—James L. Sankey

# SERMON OUTLINES



## Advent Sermons by David Vardaman

### MARY'S PSALM: A SONG OF PURE JOY

**Scripture:** Luke 1:46-55

#### INTRODUCTION:

1. Christmas is a season of celebration.
2. Music plays a key role in the celebration.
3. This Advent, listen to some of the biblical songs celebrating Christ's first coming.
4. Ask yourself, "What song will I sing this Christmas?"
5. The first is the song of Mary.
  - a. It is similar to an Old Testament psalm.
  - b. We may call it "Mary's Psalm: A Song of Pure Joy."

#### I. PRAISE BECAUSE OF GOD'S PROMISES (vv. 46-49)

- A. Christmas brings with it a variety of emotions.
  1. Anticipation—looking forward to receiving gifts.
  2. Anxiety—worry over how to pay for gifts.
  3. Loneliness—memories of loved ones are more vivid.
  4. Frustration and anger—caused by lack of appreciation for our gifts and efforts.
- B. Mary's psalm can encourage us to set a positive seasonal tone.
  1. She rejoiced not because everything went as planned, but because of the promise of God.
  2. Blessed is belief.
  3. Jesus encourages this kind of belief (cf. *Mark 11:22; Matt. 9:22, 29*).
- C. Mary rejoiced because by giving His promise, He demonstrated that He had not forgotten her or Israel.
  1. Many times we feel forgotten by God.
  2. Some of the great men and women of the Bible have felt forgotten (cf. *Pss. 13:1-2; 44:23-24; Lam. 5:19-20*).
  3. But in the circumstance of feeling forgotten, these Bible greats have often praised God

because of His promises (cf. *Pss. 42:11; 13:5-6*).

- D. If you are approaching the holiday season burdened, worried, and discouraged, begin searching the Bible for God's promises to you. Then, when you have found one, praise Him for His promises.

#### II. PRAISE GOD BECAUSE OF HIS DIVINE QUALITIES (vv. 49-55)

- A. Mary mentions four qualities of God that moved her to praise, and can be an inspiration to praise for us:
  1. His holiness (v. 49)
  2. His mercy (v. 50)
  3. His strength (vv. 51-52)
  4. His faithfulness (vv. 53-55)

#### CONCLUSION:

1. What song will you sing this Christmas?
  - a. Will you praise the Lord for His promises, mercy, strength, holiness, and faithfulness?
  - b. Will you be dominated by the people and circumstances around you?
2. Blessed is belief! Praise Him this season!

#### THE ANGEL'S SONG: "THERE'S GOOD NEWS TONIGHT!"

**Scripture:** Luke 2:8-20

#### INTRODUCTION:

1. Newscaster Gabriel Heatter is remembered for opening his daily broadcasts by saying, "Ah—there's good news tonight!"
2. The first words of the angel to the shepherds could have been the same as Mr. Heatter's.
3. That ancient world needed the good news, and our world needs to hear it.

#### I. THE ANNOUNCEMENT (Luke 2:8-12)

- A. The good news is that the Savior has been born (vv. 8-12).
- B. God has come to earth in the flesh of man (*Isa. 40:9*).
- C. This Savior shall be King (*Isa. 9:6-7*).

- D. He shall be a Deliverer (*Isa. 61:1-3*).

1. A Grand Inheritance for the poor in spirit.
2. A Physician for the broken-hearted.
3. A Door to freedom for prisoners of sin.
4. Good Cheer to those who mourn.

#### II. THE ANGEL CHORUS (Luke 2:13-14)

- A. The angels, not the shepherds, sang the "Gloria in Excelsis."
- B. The shepherds knew something important had happened, but didn't immediately grasp the joy of the moment.
- C. They responded, not with singing, but with a cautious "Let us go . . . see this thing that has happened" (v. 15, *RSV*).
- D. For some, this is the needed response to the angels' song: "I am willing, at least, to look into this matter."

#### III. THE DISCOVERY AND THE JOY (Luke 2:16-20)

- A. The shepherds located the Child, worshiped, rejoiced, and joined in the angels' chorus.
- B. The angels sang, "There's good news tonight," but the gospel is welcome news only to those who have accepted their need of a Savior.
  1. The Jewish people have long been aware of their need of a Savior.
  2. In times of physical and emotional illness, we admit our need of a Savior.
- C. However, it is usually easier to diagnose another's spiritual need than our own.
  1. We have to be shown our need.
  2. The angels' song announcing a Savior speaks also to our need of a Savior.

#### CONCLUSION:

1. The angels sang a song of deliverance.



2. It was received as good news by the shepherds and others because of an unmistakable, deep conviction of the need for a Deliverer.
3. Is their song good news to you?

### **SIMEON'S SONG: IT IS JUST THE BEGINNING**

**Scripture:** Luke 2:21-35

#### **INTRODUCTION:**

1. Listening to Simeon's song, we might think he is saying, "It is finished"; but a more perceptive ear will detect that he is communicating, "It is just the beginning."
2. Simeon's life is over, but the redemption of man has just taken on a new aspect.
3. The birth of Christ is the promise of a new beginning.
4. Simeon's song mentions four ingredients for a new beginning:

#### **I. GOD SPEAKING—MAN LISTENING**

- A. The most awe-inspiring detail of this passage is that God had been in conversation with man, and that man had listened.
- B. You can know spiritual victory if you are willing to listen as God speaks.
- C. This is the great effective event behind Advent: God speaking and people listening.
  1. Through Gabriel He spoke to Zechariah.
  2. Through Gabriel He spoke to Mary, Joseph, and the shepherds.
  3. God named Mary's baby before conception (v. 21).
  4. God spoke to Moses, giving the law (v.v. 22-24).
  5. Simeon lived in the strength of hope inspired by the voice of God (v. 26).
  6. Simeon visited the Temple on the crucial day because of the urging of the Spirit (v. 27).
- D. The first step to spiritual renewal is for hearts to become quiet and listen to God.

#### **II. GOD PROMISING—MAN BELIEVING**

- A. As we listen to God, He will speak to us often in the form of a promise.
  1. Mary became the mother of Christ because she believed God's promise (Luke 1:38).
  2. Because of a promise of God, Joseph refused to divorce Mary (Matt. 1:19-21).
- B. God's promises are not always easy to believe, but that is not because of His unreliable character, but our limited faith.

- C. When we talk about believing the promises of God, we mean two things:

1. Believing they were intended for us.
  2. Trusting that God will make His promises good.
- D. The Lord is going to rain His blessings upon those who are faithful (Deut. 7:9).
  - E. Will you accept His promises and trust Him to bring them to reality?

#### **III. GOD PREPARING—MAN WAITING**

- A. Simeon had been waiting for God to send the Savior (v. 25).
- B. "He was waiting on God" is summary of Simeon's life.
- C. Biblical waiting is not laziness, but consecrated action coupled with hopeful anticipation of the intervention of God.
  1. Anticipating the Flood, Noah built a great ship.
  2. Abraham wore the name "Father of Many Nations" when he had no children, but waited for God to fulfill His promise.
- D. What are you waiting for from the hand of God?
  1. What are you believing that God is preparing for you?
  2. Divine blessing is experienced as we receive that which only God can give.
  3. Do you need from His hand:
    - a. Freshness of spirit?
    - b. A greater vision of His person and glory?
    - c. Greater faith?
    - d. More love for Him?

#### **IV. GOD DELIVERING—MAN PRAISING**

- A. The fourth pair of conditions for a new start spiritually may be found in verses 29-32.
- B. Simeon's song is praise for God bringing the Messiah to earth at last.
- C. What are we waiting on will determine the praise we give and to whom it is directed.
- D. What are we waiting on will determine when our lives are over.
  1. Waiting upon the spiritual and eternal, we will live rich and full lives in the Spirit.
  2. Waiting only upon the next fad, fashion, or trend will yield a meaningless life.
- E. Wait upon the Lord and praise Him for His abundant blessing.

#### **CONCLUSION:**

1. The whole purpose of Simeon's life had been to see the Messiah.
2. He lived his life in daily communion with God.
3. Wouldn't you like to break out of

the old rut and make a new spiritual beginning?

### **ZECHARIAH'S SONG: A DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE**

**Scripture:** Luke 1:67-79

#### **INTRODUCTION:**

1. Zechariah's advent song is a kind of "Declaration of Independence" from the enemies of Israel and of his own soul.
2. Zechariah sang as only one who is convinced of God's reality, His nearness, and His concern with daily life can.
3. The story and song of Zechariah point out eight ways we can heighten our awareness of God in everyday life.

#### **I. TAKE GOD SERIOUSLY**

(Luke 1:5-7)

- A. Zechariah and Elizabeth intentionally looked to God and waited to know His will.
- B. We can demonstrate our seriousness toward God by reading the Bible and expecting to hear Him speak through it to us (cf. Mic. 6:8).

#### **II. SERVE THE LORD**

(Luke 1:8-10)

- A. The descendants of Aaron were separated into 24 divisions, each division being assigned to serve at the Temple for one week, twice a year.
  1. Each division, upon assembling at the Temple, would cast lots to determine the priestly assignments.
  2. There were so many priests, Zechariah probably wouldn't have been missed, but he knew the importance of ministering before the Lord.
- B. Zechariah's response to God's gifts
  1. To "serve him without fear" (v. 79).

#### **III. PRAY (Luke 1:11-17)**

- A. Gabriel appeared to Zechariah in answer to prayer (v. 13).
- B. God reveals himself to people who have begun to take Him seriously.
  1. Daniel prayed for understanding.
  2. Christ was transfigured while in prayer.
  3. Peter received the life-changing vision regarding Gentile evangelism.
  4. As John was in prayer, the Spirit came, unfolding the Revelation.

(Continued on page 53)

## We Get Letters

(Continued from page 1)

the greatest of saints that they are not sanctified. Those who sang and now sing that song simply mean that nothing Satan can do will deny them of all that God has provided in holiness. It's a good song to sing; Satan doesn't like it, though.

I wonder why you feel that pressing believers into entire sanctification trivializes regeneration. This purifying, stabilizing, empowering grace is essential to regeneration and increased growth in holiness. To linger along toward entire sanctification is like refusing to take a physician's prescription and only becoming half-well. Perhaps the disease will even go into remission and end in death.

This hesitancy to encourage, even urge believers to seek after God's richest and best is more and more puzzling to me. Sure there have been false professors in the past. There always will be. But that's not God's fault.

When God says, "It is the will of God, even your sanctification," does He mean next year? Does He mean whenever He decides to do it? Certainly He *knows* when the believer is ready, but He doesn't *decide* when. Sanctification is not contingent on God's willingness, but the believer's.

The spirit of your article is easily discerned. It is kind, humble, and teachable. But don't be too fast with your apologies. The article doesn't offend me, but it does trouble me. I'm mostly an open-minded person, even after being a Wesleyan minister for 40 years. I respect you as a fine editor. But I really do want every believer to have God's best. I think it should be served to him persistently. If it's prepared right and served properly, I'm confident that every believer will cherish it.

Really, entire sanctification is not all that difficult. It's like after the cake has been baked. All you have to do to sweeten it up and make it delicious is to put on the icing.

—Mel E. DePeal

### PERCEIVETH A SLAM AGAINST THE KJV

Two items in the DJF '85-86 *Preacher's Magazine* that I would like to comment on are the cartoon on page 17, and the word study on *paraclete*, by Ralph Earle.

The cartoon is totally ridiculous. I have never, in all my 50 years in the church, heard anyone pray like that. The words "almightieth" and "beseecheth" are apparently an exaggeration by an NIV advocate who would belittle and destroy the Authorized King James Version, which has been with us nigh unto 400 years. I wonder how long the NIV will last? Or, I wonder how long before it is revised so that it is totally foreign to the position of the Church of the Nazarene? I am disappointed that you would allow such a cartoon.

About the New Testament word studies: Admittedly, I am not the scholar that Dr. Ralph Earle is, but neither I nor many other members of the church community agree with him on many issues. And many others whom I *would* classify as "scholars" do not agree with him. He states that "Comforter" (KJV) is "certainly too narrow a translation." Naturally, I would expect him to say this, since he detests the King James Version. But the crux of the argument is found in his statement, "It has always *seemed to us* [italics added] that 'helper' was the only adequate translation." This is where his opinion, and it is only an opinion, breaks down. While it may *seem* to him to be this or that, he is only expressing Ralph Earle's *opinion*,

which I do not accept. What shall we do with some of our great hymns, such as, "The Comforter has come! The Comforter has come! . . ." Will they be revised, "The Helper has come . . ."?

—Don Jernigan, Sr.

### SOME MINISTERS ARE IN INSTITUTIONS

I just completed reading your relevant "Creative Outreach" issue of the *Preacher's Magazine* and feel I must respond. While each article had its important attributes, I feel one area of creative outreach was sadly neglected—prison ministries in particular and institutional ministries in general.

I am presently serving as chaplain of the state penitentiary in Rawlins, Wyo., as well as pastoring the local Nazarene church. Some 51 churches are involved in some kind of creative outreach to the inmates incarcerated here in Rawlins. These ministries include Bible studies, worship services, personal counseling, and an Adopt-a-Block program.

When I first became involved in prison ministry, I was told that if 2 percent of the prison population attend the worship services, it's an indication that good things are happening at the pen. We have had 6 percent to 8 percent consistently. I believe it's due to the creative outreach not only of Nazarenes but also of the 50 other churches ministering here as well.

—David Waltner

### DIVORCE ARTICLES EDUCATIONAL

Just a note to express my appreciation for the two excellent articles on ministering to the divorced (DJF '85-86). They were well written and very educational for pastors and people.

Several years ago I did an article on ministry to the divorced for the *Preacher's Magazine* and appreciated the sensitivity then and now. We must be ministering to hurting people, not judging them.

—Tom Wilson

### FROM THE PHILIPPINES

The *Preacher's Magazine* has been a rich source of instruction, information, and inspiration to me as a Christian worker. The writers, though they are mainly from the United States, write as though they have the Asians in mind.

May the Lord continue to bless your life and ministry even as you seek to enrich and enhance the lives and ministries of others through the *Preacher's Magazine*.

—Bernabe L. Alejo  
Quezon City, Philippines

### GOOD POINT

Fingering some old [*Preacher's Magazine*] clippings, I came on an editorial of yours titled "Preaching Point." I usually identify the date of these clippings, but in this case I had failed to do so.

In any case, the "point" that you were making was a good one: Work hard to replace the abstract with the concrete. Don't be woolly; be crisp.

All of us need this kind of self-discipline in our writing and speaking.

Blessings on you! As the late Ray Edman, of Wheaton College, would often say in concluding a letter, "Chin up and knees down!"

—Paul S. Rees



# NEW TESTAMENT WORD STUDIES

by Ralph Earle

## REDEMPTION

The verb "redeem" occurs 11 times in the KJV New Testament, and the noun "redemption" the same number of times. Our study today will take in these 22 passages.

Three Greek verbs are translated "redeem": *agorazo*, *exagorazo*, and *lytroo*. (The first *o* is short, the second *o* long—two separate syllables.) The first two of these are obviously related, and so we look at them first.

The verb *agorazo* comes from the noun *agora*, which is regularly translated in the KJV as "market" or "marketplace" (once as "street"). So *agorazo* literally means "buy (in the market)" and is so translated 28 of the 31 times it occurs in the New Testament. The other three times (Rev. 5:9; 14:3-4) it is rendered by the verb "redeem" (in KJV). Arndt and Gingrich note that the verb means "buy, acquire as property," used here "of believers, for whom Christ has paid the price with his blood" (*Lexicon*, p. 13). This is clearly indicated in Rev. 5:9, where the 4 living creatures and the 24 elders sing to the "Lamb" (v. 6), that is, Christ: "with your blood you purchased men for God" (NIV; cf. NASB). In Rev. 14:3-4 "redeemed" and "purchased" are equated (NIV). The NASB uses "purchased" in both verses. That is the basic meaning of *agorazo*. Since Christ has purchased us with His own blood, we belong to Him. That fact should control all our thoughts and actions. We are *His*, to obey Him and work zealously for Him.

The compound verb *exagorazo*, occurs only four times in the New Testament and is translated "redeem" each time in the KJV. The prefix *ex* literally means "out of"

—so, "buy out of (the market)." Arndt and Gingrich say that it literally means "buy back," and so "redeem" (p. 271). Buechsel writes that "*exagorazo* also means, in accordance with the sense of the *ek* in many composites, an 'intensive buying,' i.e., a buying which exhausts the possibilities available" (TDNT, 1:128). That is, Christ paid the supreme, utmost price of His own precious blood to purchase our redemption.

*Exagorazo* occurs twice in Paul's Epistle to the Galatians. In 3:13 we read: "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: 'Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree'" (NIV). Christ endured the curse that we deserved. If we accept His redemption, we will never have to experience that curse.

In Gal. 4:3-5 we find another aspect: "So also, when we were children, we were in slavery under the basic principles of the world. But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons" (NIV). Only in Christ, the Son of God, can we truly be sons of God.

The other two occurrences of *exagorazo* are in Eph. 5:16 and Col. 4:5. The former says, "Redeeming the time" (KJV), "making the most of your time" (NASB), or "making the most of every opportunity" (NIV)—almost exactly the same as the Colossian passage. This fits in well with Hermann Cremer's definition of *exagorazo* as "*to buy up*, i.e., *to buy all* that is anywhere to be bought," and so in these two passages: "not to allow the suitable mo-

ment to pass by unheeded, but to make it one's own" (*Biblico-Theological Lexicon of New Testament Greek*, p. 60).

Perhaps the more significant verb for "redeem" in the Greek New Testament is *lytroo*, which occurs only three times (Luke 24:21; Titus 2:14; 1 Pet. 1:18). It comes from the noun *lytron*, "a ransom" paid to free slaves and captives. So the verb means "to free by paying a ransom, redeem" (AG, p. 482). The two disciples on the way to Emmaus had hoped that Jesus was going to be the Messiah, who would "redeem Israel" (Luke 24:21)—that is, free it from bondage to Rome.

Titus 2:14 says that "Our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ" (v. 13) "gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good" (NIV). Here we have spiritual redemption. Cremer writes: "As to the meaning of the word, it denotes that aspect of the Savior's work wherein He appears as *the Redeemer of mankind from bondage*" (p. 409)—that is, the bondage of sin. Through Christ's death we are freed from captivity to sin, from which we could not free ourselves.

First Pet. 1:18-19 says: "For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect" (NIV). The blood of Christ, God's Son, was the only ransom price that could redeem us, set us free from the old life of slavery to sin, and make us children of God.





# THE ARK ROCKER

## A MASCOT FOR THE CHURCH

**M**any things in the human side of life are characterized by animals. I mean, like the circus—you think of a circus and you think of elephants, right? In the stock market it's bulls and bears, and in baseball it's big birds that waddle around doing tricks. Armies all have eagles on their emblems, and bars have pink elephants. Even countries have animals to stand for them. England has its bulldog, Russia its brown bear. Australia its kangaroo, and France its poodle. But what does the church get stuck with? The donkey, that's what. I think it's a shame.

We get the donkey as our mascot because donkeys are all through the pages of our early history. The Bible is full of them. Someone was always saddling his donkey to go out and anoint a king or visit a prophet. People loaded donkeys with jewels and spices and fine silks and sent them off as payola to the ancient Mafia leaders. Old nomads, whose descendants one day would make a practice of getting together to count their oil wells, themselves gathered for coffee and talked about how many donkeys they owned. Donkeys were big items in Bible times.

One of the worst donkeys in the Bible was one named Rotten Ralph, who belonged to a fellow by the name of Balaam. Not only did Rotten Ralph have a mean streak in him; he also had a mind of his own, and he could see things that Balaam couldn't. And he could talk. Honest to Abraham. Once he saw an angel with a sword blocking the road, so he got excited and ran into the field. When Balaam bawled him out, Ralph rode him up against a wall and crushed his foot. How's that for rotten? One day Balaam was whipping Rotten Ralph for going the wrong way. Finally Ralph turned his head and looked back at Balaam and said right out loud, in Hebrew, "Cut it out already with the whip. I've worked for you too long to be treated like an animal." Balaam

jumped down off the donkey and ran right home and took the pledge. What would you do if your car spoke like that to you?

Of course, the donkey isn't the only animal that has figured in the church's life. There was a snake right in there at the very beginning, and a few other snakes made the scene in later episodes. But who wants a snake for an emblem? Wolves appear often, but always as villains. Then there was the whale, the animal God personally likes. He used His favorite whale to turn old Jonah around, and once He told Job that the whale was one of His best creations. But let's face it, a whale is full of blubber and is always spouting off. Hardly a fitting symbol for the church.

Why couldn't we have had a menagerie, instead of just one animal? There could be an eagle, soaring into glorious heights like the oratory from the pulpit. A thrush would be an obvious choice in honor of all the choirs that have served Christianity over the years. How about a lion, for all those lion-hearted souls who volunteer to chaperone youth camping trips or teach seventh grade Sunday School? An owl would be nice, always blinking and twisting his head around like a third grader during a sermon. Surely there ought to be a fox—for all the sly people who have tricked millions into serving on thousands of committees over the years. As representatives of the strong urge never to come down on the wrong side of a hot issue, the mugwump is perfect. (What's a *mugwump*? you ask. It's a bird that sits on a fence with his *mug* on one side and . . . ) The church always had loads of them.

Anything but a donkey. Even a camel would be OK. He may spit and have bad breath, but he at least did carry the wise men into our heritage. But a donkey? Whom did a donkey ever carry?

*The Ark Locker*

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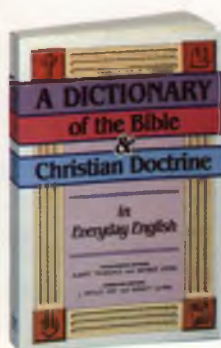
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