

THE
**preacher's
magazine**

DECEMBER '76

50
YEARS

**PREACHING
CHRISTIAN
HOLINESS**



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DECEMBER, 1976

VOLUME 51 NUMBER 12

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Published monthly for Alderagate Publications Association by **James M. Press of Kansas City, 2923 Troost Ave., Kansas City, Mo. 64109**. Editorial office at 6401 The Paseo, Kansas City, Mo. 64131. Subscription price: \$3.00 a year. Second-class postage paid at Kansas City, Mo. Address all correspondence, including subscriptions to your denominational publishing house. CHANGE OF ADDRESS: Send us your new address, including ZIP code, as well as the old address, and enclose a label from a recent copy. Authors should submit all material and correspondence to **James McGraw, 1706 N. Meyer Blvd., Kansas City, Mo. 64131**.

Back to Bethlehem



THE CHRISTMAS MESSAGE is distorted almost beyond recognition when it becomes a story of fantasy rather than truth. Since the time of the Bethlehem advent, we have slowly moved away from its glorious truth. We are allowing it to become a dream world of exotic but useless ideas.

Slowly but surely, the celebration of the birth of our Lord Christ is becoming cluttered with confusion. We are preoccupied with how many shopping days remain, or how we plan to spend our "holiday." Worst of all, there are thousands who see Christmas as a time to make sure there is plenty of liquor on hand for the occasion.

We sing songs about a "White Christmas" with glistening treetops and jingling sleighbells. We tell stories about how Santa was sick with a cold and stayed in bed, or how "Chris Kringle" got started in the Santa Claus business. We talk about a Grinch who stole Christmas, or a Scrooge who hated it.

These attitudes suggest a tendency to accept substitutes, and Christmas substitutes are not good enough for the Christian. In this day, with a new generation in revolt against everything that smacks of the "phony," why not begin a revival of reality?

It is time to go "back to Bethlehem" for a long look at the real Christmas.

Luke records the words of the shepherds, who were the first to hear about the Christmas event, and they are appropriate words for our time: ". . . let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us" (Luke 2:15b).

Back to Bethlehem, Christmas emerges as *a story of opposition and adversity*. Mary brought forth her Child in a stable, of all places (v. 7). The Holy Child, God's own Son, lay in a manger. The weary parents were denied a room in the inn that night.

Thus the inspired author, Dr. Luke, captures a graphic scene. Here is a picture of disappointment. There is a quality of adversity and opposition in the experience of Joseph and Mary on that first Christmas night.

Luke, the good physician, would sense the adversity in the situation. It was something with which he was familiar. He had doubtless

observed it in the lives of his patients. More than the other Gospel writers, he seemed to be sensitive to the hurts people faced.

People out there in our pews know about adversity. The student who fell behind in his studies because of illness and then had his car damaged beyond repair in an accident knows. The pastor's wife knows as she battles with the effects of cancer and tries to toil on at the side of her husband. Most of those who live around us know about it. And Christmas is for them. Jesus knew it too, if you believe in Bethlehem.

Back to Bethlehem, Christmas is *a story of evangelism and missions*. “. . . they made known *abroad* the saying which was told them concerning this child” (v. 17). The most natural result of experiencing what Christmas means is to tell about it. It affects people that way. The shepherds went “glorifying and praising God,” and the people marvelled at what they heard.

Luke writes about this facet of his faith, for he is the one who remembered Jesus as saying to him and his companions, “From henceforth thou shalt catch men” (Luke 5:10b). Matthew's account was that Jesus said, “I will make you fishers of men” (Matt. 4:19b). Do you suppose there is something significant in the fine distinction between being a “fisher of men” and “catching men”? Those who have fished would realize a vast difference between being a “fisherman” and catching fish! Luke's story of Bethlehem emerges as a story of *catching* souls with the power of the gospel.

Back to Bethlehem, the story of Christmas is clearly *a story of joy and praise*. It is seen in the message, and it is seen in the messengers. These were “good tidings of great joy” (v. 10), and the best news ever published. So much so that a “multitude of the heavenly host” (v. 13) came to praise the God of heaven.

Why should Christmas be anything but a time for joy and praise? We miss the real spirit of Christmas if we allow the cares of this occasion to overburden us. This is no time for trudging wearily in search of something for “that person who has everything.” It is not a time for gloomy complaints or grumpy moods. It is a time to sing with Isaac Watts, “Joy to the world, the Lord has come!”

The most joyful life of all is the sanctified life, and one of the most joyful times in that life should be Christmastime.

And if you go back to Bethlehem, you will see the Christmas story as *the story of redemptive love*. It centers in the good news that we now have “a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord” (v. 11). It means that God gave us His only begotten Son that we might have everlasting life. This is God's way of saying, “I love you, world.”

O Lord, take us out of the world's mold of dreams and make-believe, and bring us into the reality of this holy celebration we call Christmas.

Let Christmas bring out the best in us, as it did in the shepherds who hurried into the village to tell others the good news. Let it move us as it did the wise men who came with rich gifts to worship Your Son.

We bring You our richest gift. We give You our lives, our souls, our all.

Amen.

The "Lion of Lincolnshire" made his mark as a Wesleyan teacher, theologian, and preacher of the Word

William Cooke— *A Model for Holiness Preachers*

A FEW YEARS AGO, an item in a secondhand theological catalogue caught my attention: "*Christian Theology*: 760 pp., W. Cooke (Methodist)." A Methodist theologian called Cooke? Watson I knew, Pope I knew, but who was Cooke? Somewhere in the back of my mind I connected a Cooke with William Booth—a vague remembrance of these two names together—but no recollection of who Cooke was. I bought the volume which was my first real introduction to Dr. William Cooke, Methodist New Connection preacher and scholar. Since then I've come to know and love this nineteenth century English Arminian theologian and would like to introduce him to readers of the *Preacher's Magazine* who have not already made his acquaintance.

William Cooke was born at Burslem, Staffordshire, England on July 2, 1806. The son of a Methodist

home, Cooke was converted while a teen-ager, became a local preacher, and at age 20 was appointed a regular minister in the Methodist New Connection church.

A word of explanation here about the M.N.C. This movement, the first serious break in the ranks of the Wesleyan Methodists, was organized in Leeds, England, in August, 1797, six years after John Wesley's death. Methodism's founder and Methodism's first radical reformer were both born in Epworth, Lincolnshire: John Wesley in 1703 and Alexander Kilham in 1762. An enthusiastic and strong-minded individualist, Kilham was impatient with Methodism's ties with the established church, arguing it was inconsistent that a Methodist preacher could lead a man to Christ, yet did not have the authority to administer the Lord's Supper to him in a Methodist chapel. In the 1795 Methodist Conference, Kilham was expelled for his radicalism, but many Methodists agreed with him; and when he and three other expelled preachers organized the M.N.C. church two years later, 5,000 Wesleyans joined them. This was the movement in which William Cooke was appointed a minister in 1828.

Cooke was a diligent student, taught himself Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, and read widely. He was soon



by
Herbert McGonigle

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recognized as the most able and scholarly preacher in the Connection. On three occasions—1843, 1859, and 1869—he was elected president of the M.N.C. Conference. In 1845 he was made editor of the M.N.C. magazine and conference book steward. This necessitated his living in London, and for the next 25 years, among other engagements, he opened his home to help prepare young men called to the ministry.

Thus began the lifelong friendship between Dr. Cooke and William Booth, the M.N.C. minister, who with his wife Catherine, began the mission that was to become the Salvation Army. Booth commenced his theological training in Cooke's home in 1854, and as the historian writes: "William Booth, the fiery preacher of revivalism in Lincolnshire, became all at once a humble student in Camberwell, surrendering himself to the domination of a Rev. Dr. William Cooke, theologian. From excited prayer meetings, from furious preachings, and from the popularity and hero-worship of tea parties, this lion of Lincolnshire suddenly abased himself to the schoolroom and opened Greek and Latin grammars with a valorous effort to acquire the habitual meekness of a divinity scholar."¹

Cooke wrote much, mostly on theological subjects, and engaged in a number of interesting public controversies. The most important of these was with Joseph Barker, a former Connection minister turned Unitarian. For 10 nights, he and Cooke argued the pros and cons of the divinity of Christ and kindred subjects. Barker retired from the combat, and the organizers recorded their thanks "in being assembled, on this occasion, to celebrate the late triumph of truth and testify their gratitude to the Rev. W. Cooke for his very able defence of Christianity and exposure

of infidel sophistry."²

Among Cooke's many published works, mention must be made of *The Deity*, *A Survey of the Unity of Sacred Truth*, *The Shekinah*, and *The Testimony of the Ancient Jewish Church*. This last volume arose out of a controversy with another Unitarian, Dr. F. R. Lees, and had to do with the importance of the "Memra" in the Targums and its relation to the New Testament doctrine of Christ.

Following his death in 1885, the Minutes of the M.N.C. Conference inserted the longest obituary given to any of its members: "As a preacher, Dr. Cooke was eminently popular . . . his natural abilities were of a high order . . . His desire and effort was to save souls, and God gave him seals to his ministry in every circuit . . . He gave himself continually to prayer, prosecuting his studies, preparing sermons, and preaching in the light and power which come only from habitual communion with God. He leaves as a precious legacy to the Church an unblemished reputation, the splendid fruit of great labour as a preacher and author."³

Cooke's most important literary work was his *Christian Theology*, more than 700 pages of closely argued biblical, dogmatic, and systematic theology, ranging from "The Attributes of God" to "The General Resurrection." Here is a veritable treasure of Christian scholarship, of particular interest and delight to the holiness preacher. Something of the dogmatic flavor of this work may be gauged from the preface. "From necessity, and not from choice, the work is controversial throughout. The author felt it a sacred duty to meet without reserve the objections which Infidelity, German Neology, Unitarianism, Formalism, Universalism, Popery, and other systems of error oppose to the precious truths of the gospel and thus to furnish a de-

fence, as well as an exposition, of doctrinal Christianity."

Here are a few examples of his storehouse of Arminian theology. On original sin and depravity, Cooke writes: "The case is not that Adam's sin is imputed to us as *ours* for this notion alike contradicts our personal identity and moral consciousness and the principles of the divine government revealed to us in the holy Scriptures but the case is that, from our relation to Adam, we are subject to natural and moral evils resulting from his apostasy . . .

"The proceedings of divine government never make one man accountable for the sins of another, yet permit the effects of one man's transgression to involve suffering and woes upon others . . .

"The various names applied to our depraved condition imply that it is natural and hereditary. It is called emphatically 'Sin'; sin, so full of activity and energy that it is the life and spring of all others. 'Indwelling sin,' sin which is not like the leaves and fruit of a bad tree that appear for a time and then drop off but like the sap that dwells and works within, always ready to break out at every bud. The 'body of sin' because it is an assemblage of all possible sins in embryo. 'The law of sin' and 'the law in our members' because it hath a constraining force and rules in our mortal bodies as a mighty tyrant in the kingdom which he hath usurped. 'The old man' because we have it from the first Adam; . . . 'the flesh'

as being propagated by carnal generation . . . and 'concupiscence,' that mystical Jezebel who brings forth the infinite variety of fleshly, worldly and mental lusts which war against the soul. He who lives under its influence is called the 'natural man' and as such he receiveth not the things of God."⁴

One final extract to illustrate Cooke's teaching on Christian holiness. He argues that the born-again believer is "already sanctified in an important degree"; he is separated from the *practice, love, and guilt* of sin. "Sanctification as we have said includes two ideas—namely separation from an inferior or sinful use and dedication to a holy religious use. The believer is sanctified already in a great degree because he is separated from sin and dedicated to God. Now apply the adjective *wholly* or *entirely* to this explanation of the word and we have the nature of the doctrine expressed. To be sanctified *wholly* is to be *wholly* separated from sin and to be *wholly* dedicated to God . . . In the possession of this blessing the believer keeps the law under which he is placed in the economy of grace . . . His will is lost in the will of God and all the graces of the Holy Spirit abound in his heart and are exemplified in his life."⁵

1. Harold Begbie, *Life of William Booth*, 1:175.

2. Samuel Hulme, *Memoir of the Rev. William Cooke, D.D.*, p. 69.

3. *Minutes of the Methodist New Connection Conference*, 1885, pp. 9-13.

4. *Christian Theology*, pp. 238-45.

5. *Christian Theology*, pp. 453-79.

Christmas celebrates the entry of the Eternal into time, the heavenly into the realm of the human. Aaron N. Meckel has reminded us that when God wanted to give us music, He didn't hand us a book of scales. Rather, He wrapped a song in feathers, set it on a bough, and bade it sing. At the first Christmas, God wrapped His glory in the tender loveliness of a little child and offered himself to the humanity that so needed Him. —*John A. Knight*

Some of our most effective ministry comes in times of crisis and emergency. How do we measure up?

The Holiness Pastor in Crisis Ministry



SOME PASTORS MAY enjoy emergencies. Ego trip, or sincere desire to serve humanity—whatever the motivation—I confess I fail to share an enthusiasm for dashing off to the emergency room of the local hospital, or to the scene of a domestic tragedy, or to the bedside of a dying person.

If after 20 years in the pastoral ministry, my reaction to the telephone bell in the wee hours is not really panic, at least on the lonely ride to the hospital I will admit that my stomach tightens into a knot that feels just like a question mark.

Every crisis is unique. There is always the element of uncertainty involved. But the holiness minister does have tremendous resources

available for crisis ministry. He will do well to prepare himself to the best of his capabilities.

He will, of course, depend upon the infilling of the Spirit. Then with diligent application, in due time, he can become proficient in crisis ministry. Even though he does not enjoy others' misfortune, he will come to derive deep satisfaction from the sense of being an instrument of God's grace in the time of someone's deepest hour of need.

How to prepare for emergencies may well be a matter of individual opportunity and capability. Certainly classroom preparation in pastoral care is valuable. Case studies and texts are available. The minister's personal experience becomes his most valuable tool.

To get the greatest benefit from personal experience, each crisis incident should receive a thorough "post-mortem," and if possible be discussed with another minister. Situations can be analyzed and catalogued for future need.

An essential preparation is a clear thinking through of a personal philosophy of crisis ministry itself.



**by
Russell Metcalfe**

Pastor
Church of the Nazarene
Edison, N.J.

Beyond just learning what to do or say, the reasons for doing are of vital importance in adding or detracting from the overall ministry.

While being aware of the approach other ministers take, we should chart our own course. Our ministry must be scripturally sound, Christlike in spirit, neither copying others nor reacting against their actions.

The extreme solution-postures in crisis ministry could probably best be summarized in one of two positions, neither of which is ours, but both of which can speak to us.

On the one hand the liberal or existential-trained ministers will approach crisis ministry with their vaguely Rogerian-psychological stance which says: *I nor anyone else really knows the need of this person in trouble. So my role is to confidently support him, be open, non-judgmental, with no message other than the (usually ethereal) love of God.*

The opposite extreme position might be termed superfundamental. It says: *No matter what the appearance of the crisis, it is a spiritual need that can only be truly met by doing the work of an evangelist—complete with sermon and altar call.*

The faults of both of these philosophies are obvious. The soft and winsome sympathy of the former will never come to grips with sin and darkness. The harsh insensitivity of the latter will often convey the message that *souls* are more important than people.

Yet these extreme positions can speak to the minister hammering out his own philosophy of crisis ministry. He must be loving to everyone. He must, above all, be honest and faithful to God and the Bible. Only the indwelling Holy Spirit can enable the minister to approach any crisis with the quiet confidence that he will be effective, faithful to God, and genu-

inely loving and kind to man, without compromise.

Some practical principles that have gone into my personal philosophy of crisis ministry are so simple that I hesitate to share them:

1. There is no occasion when I should be unkind or rude.

2. In the moments I have before I minister, my thoughts must be centered on the fact that God is going to meet a person's needs through me—not so much in my words, technique, or wisdom, but by His Spirit in me.

3. Often I must *not* say immediately what needs to be said, but wait until a later time—in broad daylight, or after a few hours have given perspective to harsh words. Then I may present the spiritual confrontation.

4. I do not have to explain everything for God.

5. Just *being there* is often the most eloquent speech I can make. My sympathy or the loan of my calmness and strength may undergird a beloved parishioner when words seem especially empty.

Our most valuable contacts with the people we serve may come during the times when they are in extreme stress. When we minister to a person by the Spirit of God in his hour of deep need, we usually have an open door to minister to an entire family for the duration of our ministry.

As a related postscript to this matter, we should also be alert for the opportunity to minister to strangers who are in any way connected to the situation. Words of concern to the patient in an adjoining bed—including him in a brief prayer—can often be the means of opening doors to God and the church.

Just as sure as you are a pastor, that midnight call will come—again and again! You are going to minister to people in crisis. You can be effective. By God's help, *let us really minister!*

Is the multiple staff the best answer in every case?

Small Church— Big Plans— Multiple Staff



IT'S A STRANGE FEELING to be both excited and filled with anxiety at the same time. Nevertheless, this is the quandary in which I find myself periodically when I see churches in marginal financial condition employ one or more staff members to work with the pastor. When that church has adequately surveyed its needs and potential and finds that God appears to be leading in the direction of adding staff to multiply ministry, I am thrilled. However, when a church feels nothing is moving, so they employ an associate to "help them out," I have concern for them and for that associate.

Every church already has elected to its highest offices the potential for a multiple-staff ministry in that local church. A discipling pastor can take the persons elected to major church offices, and by God's grace enable

them to become effective associate ministers. By their vote, the congregation has already acknowledged their leadership influence and potential for ministry in that body. Additionally, each of these leaders has his or her own unique opportunities and modes of ministry. By regularly sharing vision and prayer burdens, carefully developing objectives, organizing total resources, delegating appropriate responsibilities, and supporting each other through mutual encouragement, the church utilizes the leadership potential it already has.

If these staff members are insufficient in number or capability to carry the load of the church where you serve, think of the other local members already in the Lord's employ. How about the leaders in other important areas of the church? Can these work with other staff members and with the pastor on a continuing basis as a parttime (usually unpaid) member of the staff? The capital assets and investment opportunities of the church are much more than monetary. The chairman of the stewards may be limited to certain activities by virtue of his office, but that does not mean that as a member of the church he is limited to serve only within the confines of that elected



**by
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office. The church has already recognized his leadership abilities. His voice is respected in the church. When a pastor performs his equipping ministry, this lay leader can become a minister too.

Is your church fortunate enough to have a congregational song leader? Perhaps he's not the best in the denomination. But is there potential for improvement? Are there people in the community who could help this person with a better understanding of the role of music in worship and Christian nurture? Is there a community college or university in the area where this person could increase the technical aspects of ministry? Could funds include some good books on the ministry of music? Can you,

the pastor, help this person to see that the ministry of music is both to and through others?

Perhaps we have missed it when we think of the good fortune of the large church which can "afford" to hire associates to minister to the church. Even the large church which has the philosophy of a professional staff "working in their stead" is seriously hampered in its potential for ministry and growth. Paul's letter to the church at Ephesus indicates that there are several calls for one purpose—that of equipping the saints for the work of the ministry. You have a multiple staff with multiple gifts and calls *for one purpose!* How are you ministering? How are they ministering?

Employing a youth minister will not solve all the problems of the church. It can even create a few. But properly performed, this ministry can be a real blessing.

Some Pitfalls of the Youth Ministry

By David MacDonald*

IN THE seventies, with an increasing awareness of the value of multiple-staff ministries, the minister of youth has assumed a more prominent role in thinking of many pastors and congregations. The benefits can be many for those who approach this field with well-thought-out programs and methods, as well as spiritual priorities. However, experience has taught that there is a second side to

the coin, which demands attention. The following observations involve very real situations with which the minister of youth must be prepared to deal.

1. The program and experience of the youth can easily become centered around the youth minister instead of Christ. When the youth minister leaves, the experience of the youth as well as the program can virtually come to a stop. This is due to the emotional makeup of this age level.

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The transition from one youth minister to the next can be very difficult.

2. It is possible for the youth to become accustomed to having everything done for them, and as a result develop no creativity or responsibility for a share of their own planning and programs.

3. Youth can become conditioned to believe that they are "special," require special programming, and a special type of person to work with them. This is partially a result of the current secular emphasis on youth. The youth may begin to believe that they really are special, and if the designated worker fails to meet their expectations, they may reject him as being unable to "communicate with teens." It can become an unspoken "give us what we want, not what we need, or we will tune you out."

4. A full schedule of youth programming where youth have all their own meetings separate from the regular church services and programs, tends to isolate the youth from the mainstream of church life. When these same teens become young adults and are expected to take an active, creative, positive role in the church, they may find that they are unprepared for such a role. Many are lost to the church during this period of transition.

5. Popular youth programming of today tends to be entertainment-centered, its goal being to attract youth and build and maintain large youth groups. Entertainment-centered programs appeal to large numbers, while spiritually centered programs tend to appeal to smaller numbers. Success, as too many see it, is measured by

the world's standards of numbers and excitement. Once caught in the entertainment trap, it is most difficult to escape. Attitudes and conditioning formed in the teen years will carry over in degree to the adult years. A church with an exciting and entertaining program has great appeal, but spiritual results do not come from nonspiritual causes.

6. Problem areas include self-discipline, group discipline, respect for the authority of the Bible, respect for the man called of God and for the office of pastor, accepting responsibility, a right view of standards, and creative use of intelligence.

7. The person who would work with teens on the pastor-person level is *not* a baby-sitter. He is called of God to be a *spiritual leader*, not a social director. It is a trick of Satan to divert us from our real purpose and goal—that being to make disciples out of our teens. The church's greatest need in the teen area is not for lively programs or large numbers of activities, or even large numbers of teens in attendance, but for Spirit-filled youth with a sound understanding of what God has provided for them through Christ—namely, forgiveness, cleansing, and power to live for God and others.

The youth ministry is not a cure-all solution for our youth problems. It is false to think that a youth minister can do in a couple of hours a week what parents and home have failed to do in 13 to 16 years. But God help our youth ministers, for theirs is a task and responsibility that only eternity will properly evaluate.

Pastor, Go Home

By William L. Coleman*

A SEMINARY PROFESSOR who had spent several years as a pastor was asked what was the biggest difference between the two jobs. He replied, "I no longer feel the guilt and the pressure." Many former pastors say the same thing. They are relieved to be rid of the pressure.

The modern pastor has far more demands on his time, knowledge, and expertise than his grandfather predecessor 70 years ago. Maybe it would be wise for our lay leadership to evaluate the pastor's role and help him turn it into a reasonable calling. Does it make sense for him to work six days and five nights? Is it realistic for him to labor 60-70 hours a week? How many weeks does a pastor sacrifice his day off and deny the very principles of Scripture?

But where is the origin of this pressure? Part of it comes from those who surround him, both the laity and his fellow clergymen. One friend asked a pastor, "Are you going to the crowning of the Bandage Rolling Queen?" When the minister explained his reluctance to attend, the inquirer replied, "But these ladies work hard every year, and this event is very important to them."

Worthy causes abound and meetings fill the air. Will you give a devotional at the Boy Scout picnic? Can you attend the special meetings across town to show support? Can

you be a judge at the WCTU poster contest?

The pressure to serve on committees is stronger than King Kong's grip. Meeting with the music committee though he cannot carry a tune . . .

In all fairness, the minister's mammoth demands do not all come from other people. Few parishioners would drive him as hard as he drives himself. Often afraid to exercise his ex officio status and avoid a committee or two, he plows on relentlessly. He frequently develops into a workaholic and finds it impossible to relax, even with his own family. His hobbies consist of musing over attendance charts or spending his day at a ministers' conference discussing Gog and Magog.

While counseling dozens of people on how to handle guilt, he is often unable to solve his own. As one reflective pastor put it, "I had gotten to the place where I couldn't sit down and read the newspaper at home without feeling guilty about what was left undone."

One experienced minister has told his colleagues that overwork in his first few churches may have cost him his first son, who now totally rejects Christianity. Nevertheless this same man still runs night and day.

Sometimes unsure of the boundaries of his job, he finds he must work himself endlessly in order to live with himself. Seldom content to labor

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from 8 to 5, he struggles from 8 to 11 p.m.

While many of these difficulties are of the minister's own making, the laity can go a long way toward helping him solve his problem. As Exodus 18:18 explains so well, the leader and the people suffer from an overburdened chief executive.

A young couple asked for an appointment for pre-marriage counseling. The pastor's secretary returned the call and set the time for Tuesday at 4 p.m. The fiancée was upset. He would have to get off work. Why couldn't they meet in the evening? What an inconsiderate minister who did not really care about the needs of his people.

But the more he thought about it, the more sense it made. His doctor was not going to check his epidermis in the evening. His dentist was not going to clean his molars in the moonlight. Yet a minister is supposed to be different.

Would it be so pagan to encourage more people to bring their difficulties to the pastor's office? Would it be unloving to confine more activities within office hours—except for emergencies?

Some congregations fully expect that a pastor will visit every member of their group. In order to accomplish this, the minister has one of two options. The first is to go out that fifth or sixth night of the week and abandon his own home. The second is to visit the women of the family in the daytime. . . .

Ministers need correcting occasionally as everyone else. But how of-

ten do church leaders go to a pastor and say, "The Bible says that a pastor must rule his house well. We think you should spend more time at home and keep your family the fine people they are."

Instead of insisting that he maintain so many unscriptural functions, he needs to be reminded that 1 Timothy 3:4-5 is true. A side benefit of our clergy leading a normal life is that his sermons may very well improve and become the expressions of a well-rounded person.

A veteran minister was once concerned about the price his children had to pay for being P.K.'s. Wondering if they were teased at school, he asked his eldest child, "Do you find it tough to be a minister's kid?" She replied, "Oh no, just as long as you are home evenings."

There are many pastors who thoroughly enjoy their responsibilities and would not change it for anything. But once in a while they need some helpful laymen to come to their side and assure them that they want the pastor to keep his family in perspective.

After a hectic day of chasing lawyers and arguing with contractors on a building project, a minister with stomach in knots called one of his board members, "Fred, how would you like to get a new pastor? Get me out of the building business and let me do the job you called me to do."

Most churches could have a new pastor and still keep the old one. All the laity needs to do is to encourage the minister to do just his job and then, "Pastor, go home!"

Wesleyana



Wesley and Ecclesiastical Separation

By R. Larry Shelton*

ONE OF THE MOST problematic issues of John Wesley's ministry is the question of whether or not he intended to create a separate body of believers, another church. The question of whether Methodism fulfilled Wesley's ideals or deviated from them by becoming a denomination is still pertinent. A number of statements from both the early and later years of his ministry can be presented to substantiate the view that he never intended the formation of a church. On the other hand, numerous acts which he performed seem to indicate that the only direction he saw to go in performing the "chief care" of souls was away from the dead sacerdotalism of the Anglican church. His dilemma was the tension he felt between his evangelical calling and his High Church heritage. In theory he was a traditionalist, but in practice he was unable to contain his message in the old wineskins.

Wesley's ideal was to remain an integral part of the Anglican church. In April, 1790, he wrote:

*Assistant pastor, First Wesleyan Church, High Point, N.C.

I never had any design of separating from the Church. I have no such design now. I do not believe the Methodists in general design it when I am no more seen. I do, and will do, all that is in my power to prevent such an event. Nevertheless, in spite of all that I can do, many of them will separate from it (although I am apt to think not one-half, perhaps not one-third of them). These will be so bold and injudicious as to form a separate party. In flat opposition to these, I declare once more that I live and die a member of the Church of England, and that none who regards my judgment or advice will ever separate from it (Fitchett, *Wesley and His Century*, p. 403).

In 1787, he said, "When the Methodists leave the Church of England, God will leave them" (Fitchett, p. 401). He did everything in his power to prevent alienating his converts from the church. He decreed that Methodist services not be held during normal hours of worship on Sundays. He himself attended services in the Anglican church when possible and was a regular communicant at the Lord's Supper. "The Methodists are to spread life among all denominations," he declared, "which they will do till they form a

separate sect" (*Letters*, 8:211; To Thomas Taylor, April 4, 1790).

In actual practice, however, Wesley did not find it possible to fulfill his ideals for ecclesiastical unity. His primary concern was the care of souls. He saw the necessity of preserving his converts and providing for them a context for nurture. He saw the existing church as severely lacking in opportunities for Christian fellowship, prayer, study of the Scriptures, and sharing Christian experience. He thus formed the Methodist societies, and was accused of causing schism in the church and destroying fellowship (Wood, *The Burning Heart*, p. 189). He answered dryly, "That which never existed cannot be destroyed" (*Works*, 8:251). He sensed a complete lack of Christian nurture in the church, and no concern for the care of his converts. He asks:

Who watched over them in love? Who marked their growth in grace? Who advised and exhorted them from time to time? Who prayed with them and for them, as they had need? This, and this alone is Christian fellowship. But, alas! where is it to be found? Look east or west, north or south; name that parish you please: Is this Christian fellowship there? Rather, are not the bulk of the parishioners a mere rope of sand? What Christian connexion is there between them? What intercourse in spiritual things? What watching over each other's souls? What bearing of one another's burdens? What a mere jest is it then, to talk so gravely of destroying what never was! The real truth is just the reverse of this. We introduce Christian fellowship where it was utterly destroyed. And the fruits of it have been peace, joy, love, and zeal for every good word and work (*Works*, 8:251-52; "A Plain Account of the People Called Methodists").

It appears then, that practical considerations led Wesley to function more and more independently of the church. In his "Twelve Reasons Against Separation" published in

1758, he introduces a principle which governs his ecclesiastical practice. "Whether it be lawful or not, which itself may be disputed, being not so clear a point as some may imagine, it is by no means expedient to separate from the Established Church." Expediency becomes the fundamental policy of his theory of the church. Out of necessity, because of the persecution and uncooperativeness of the Anglican church, Wesley found it expedient to reject the Episcopal concept of apostolic succession. In 1784, he ordained Coke, Whatcoat, and Vasey for ministry in America. The next year he ordained helpers for Scotland. In 1787, he dedicated a number of his buildings as Dissenting Chapels. In 1789, he ordained helpers for work in England itself. These were all acts of direct separation. How can they be reconciled with his theory?

Fitchett contends that Wesley's conversion changed his entire perspective in regard to theology and ecclesiastical form. Religion became a spiritual reality, and ecclesiastical formulae and methods in their High Church forms became mere chaff in contrast to this new life. However, these new and radical concepts of expediency did not erase completely all of his heritage. The old High Church language sometimes shone through, even though he had renounced its practices. In spite of his conviction that the Anglican church had persecuted his converts and refused to allow them to worship God after their own conscience, he found it difficult to promote separation even under these conditions. Fitchett says it well:

Who studies . . . this aspect of Wesley's work, finds in it the picture of a man with an obstinate High Church bias drawing him in one direction, a bias due to birth and training and temperament; whilst, step by step, led by Providence and com-

pelled by facts, he moves on a path which leads to quite another goal, a goal undesired, but not wholly unseen (Fitchett, *Wesley and His Century*, p. 409).

How prudent it would be of twentieth-century evangelicals to emulate the gravity of Wesley's example. All too often, evangelicals exhibit a strong tendency to separate from other bodies, even evangelical ones, for the sake of "purity." We substitute the principle of isolation for that of expediency, and the posture of noninvolvement for that of cooperation and infiltration. These are questionable substitutes at best, and at no time can they be considered truly Wesleyan.

Christmas is not a holiday package wrapped with gay ribbon and holly. It is a time for meditating, for recalling that night long ago when Bethlehem cradled to its heart and gave mankind the Redeemer of the world.

Christmas should mean kind thinking, forgiveness, forgetting old cares, old grievances, fears . . .

Christmas is a gift transcending human understanding; imperishable glory from the very heart of Heaven to the farthestmost part of earth.

CHRISTMAS IS PEACE.

—selected.



Practical Points

*that make
a difference*

He Is an Organized Man— What a Relief!

Dear Son:

I enjoy sitting in my pastor's study, for he knows where he is going and why. His room is neat, well organized, and clean. His files are well stocked with interesting and contemporary materials which continually emerge as illustrative material in his sermons.

His secretary knows what she is to do on certain days, and is never at a loss for work.

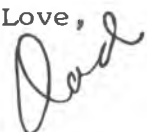
Our pastor plans his days into categories of interest. We know as a congregation that he is studying and praying every morning in order to feed our souls on Sunday and Wednesday.

We expect him to be in his study and protect that time as sanctified for a profound ministry.

His noons are taken up with administrative tasks, and he is ever present in the time of sickness. In the evenings he is making calls. He knows on Sunday night where he ought to be that week. Now we know that the task is more than one man can handle. We know that he is busy training us for the task of the Kingdom.

We constantly remind him that he must take time for his lovely wife and fine family. But he gets a great deal done. Why? Because he is a planner from the first, and organizes his materials for the sake of the Kingdom. How better is there to serve Jesus Christ?

I could go on and on. I know that sometimes his plans are interrupted. But he has the long-range view and knows the direction his judgments are leading him to—and we love him for it.

Love,


Job's Comforters in the Pulpit

By J. J. Wheelbarger*

The biblical account of Job's sufferings tells of the three friends who came to comfort him. These comforters postulated their program on three basic assumptions. (1) They assumed a spiritual superiority. (2) They assumed an intellectual superiority. (3) They assumed guilt on the part of their listener.

There is a temptation to assume a spiritual superiority when one presumes to speak for God. The three comforters thought of themselves as God's spokesmen as they came delivering what they thought (probably in all sincerity) to be God's message of condemnation coupled with demands for corrective action.

God's messengers should be intellectually competent, but it does not follow that the worshipper is intellectually incompetent—even in spiritual matters. The comforters were overcome by the brilliance of their own arguments. Job invoked a little sarcasm when he suggested that wisdom would die with the death of these three.

Our religious training helps us to recognize certain indicators as signs that something is wrong. This is helpful in Christian living. However, human weakness prevents this evaluation from being perfect. This is the basis for the biblical injunctions against judging. The spokesman for God is vitally concerned with wrong, but his humanness sometimes prevents accurate conclusions as to wrong on the part of the worshipper. The comforters evaluated Job's situation on the basis of their own concepts. These concepts were con-

sistent with contemporary religious thought, but the evaluation was incorrect.

When the minister of today stands in a pulpit to declare God's message to the modern world, he may be tempted to make any or all of these assumptions. The comforters made the three assumptions and were incorrect on all three. Today's minister is subject to the same errors, but a realistic knowledge of his fallibility would help him avoid some of the pitfalls.



PREPARE FOR CHRISTMAS

Take time this Christmas to get
A little way apart,
And with the hands of prayer
Prepare the house which is your
heart.

Brush out the dusty fears, brush
out
The cobwebs of your care,
Till in the house that is your heart,
It's Christmas everywhere.

Light every window up with love,
And let you love shine through,
So those who walk outside may
share
That blessed light with you.

Then will the rooms with joy be
bright,
With peace the heart be blessed,
And Christ himself will enter in
To be your Christmas Guest.

—Author unknown

*Director of Learning Resources, Trevecca Nazarene College, Nashville.

● **General Superintendent Stowe**



The Crib and the Cross

LOOKING FOR a Christmas sermon topic? Here's a good one. This is more than catching alliteration. It is really what Christmas is all about.

With all the crass materialism and shallow sentiment that have diluted the true meaning of this sacred season, the man of God must faithfully proclaim that Christmas, at heart, is a redemptive event. Helmut Thielicke observes that the crib and the cross are of the same wood. The angelic instruction concerning the Child's name affirmed this fact in the prophecy that "he shall save his people from their sins" (Matt. 1:21).

Not only should the Advent sermon associate Christmas with Calvary, so should all the special presentations. Salvation seed should be planted in the fertile minds of Sunday school children. Their program materials should be carefully chosen with an eye to more than just poetry and platitudes. Let their songs and recitations tell the gospel truth about who the Babe in the manger is and why He came.

Then what a glorious opportunity Christmas music affords for exalting the Infant-Saviour. As the traditional carols are sung, draw attention to the salvation message which they proclaim. In selecting the special presentation which the choir will bring on Sunday night, be sure that it is more than just a collection of pretty melodies. The most important consideration should be, Does it communicate the true message of Christmas? Happily, a number of the newest cantatas climax on an evangelistic note and can well conclude with an invitation by the pastor. What better way to conclude this meaningful Lord's Day than with seekers finding salvation at the foot of the Cross?



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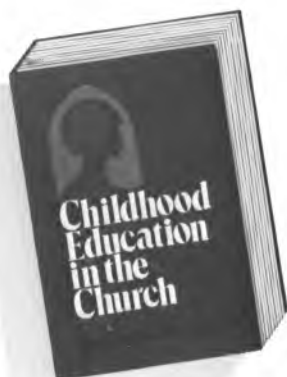


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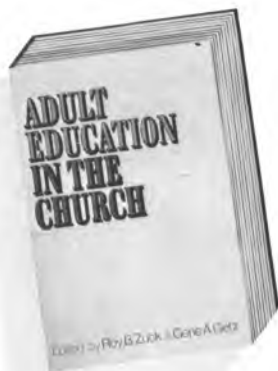
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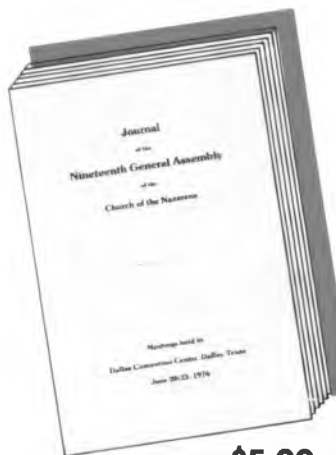
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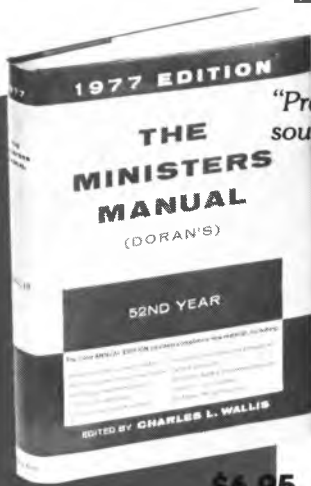
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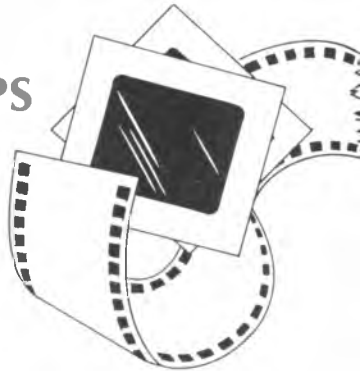
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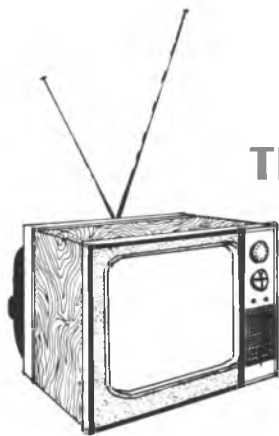
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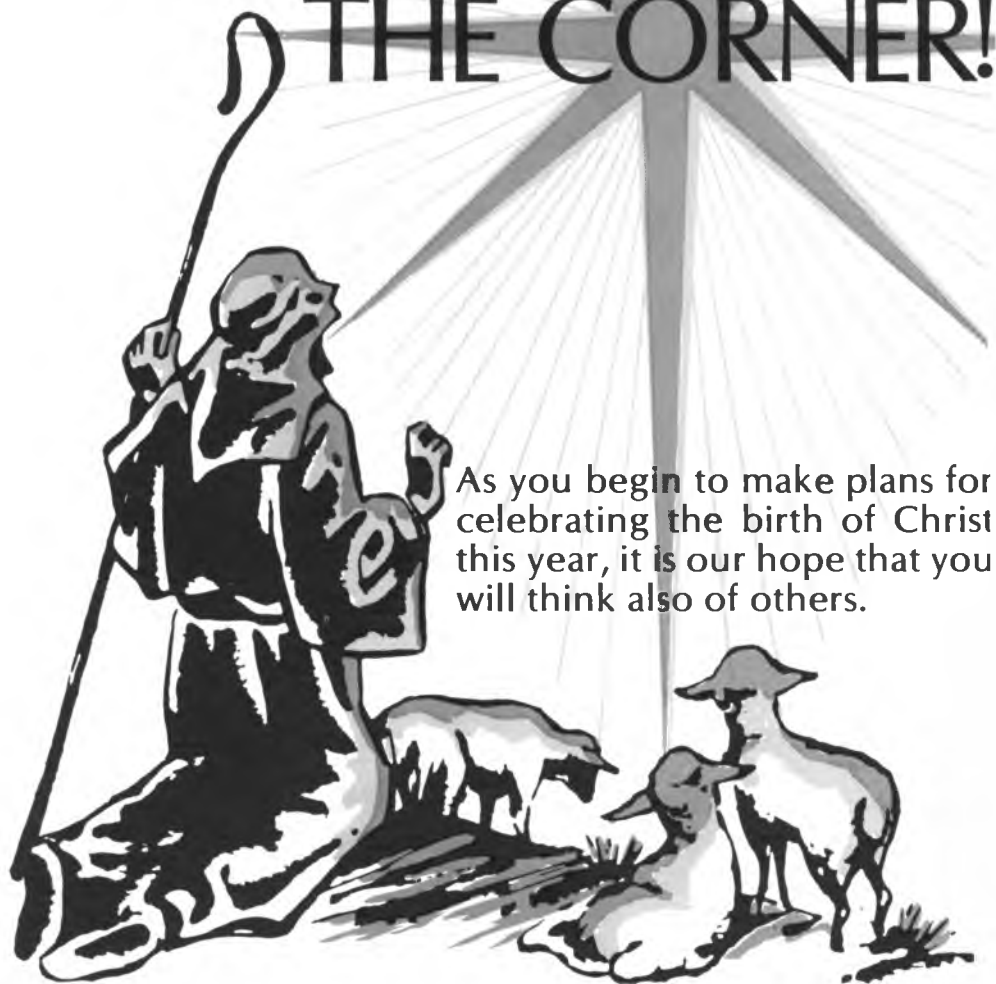
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THE PREACHER'S WIFE

The Month Before Christmas

CHRISTMAS WILL soon be everywhere. Lights glowing, children gazing, old folks sighing, teens smiling . . . The smell of pine, candles, and fresh-baked cookies filling the air . . . Every home, church, school, and store will echo with the sights, sounds, and smells of this treasured day.

As ministers' wives, we are chief participants in this celebration. At home and church we can create an atmosphere of happy preparedness. Let me reiterate some simple suggestions.

Start your Christmas preparation early.

Christmas in our first pastorate was a joyous time, but do you know what I remember? Tears and frustrations over trying to make shirts, stuffed animals, aprons, and embroidered pillowcases which I should

have started six months earlier.

The other thing I remember is holding back tears during Christmas play practice, as we—the crew—cut, painted, and made props from cardboard boxes. Even we pastors' wives sometimes attempt greater projects than our emotional maturity underwrites. More seasoned advice would be to start early, and, in some instances, keep projects simple. Relaxed simplicity is more beautiful than disordered extravaganzas.

Make Christmas a family affair.

Since you are a minister's wife, the church will probably get its proper share of your time and energy during the month of December. Make sure your family does the same. The first rule will help here. Have the bulk of your baking finished and in the freezer ahead of time. Then you can reserve an afternoon for helping the children decorate their favorite cookies. Have most of the gifts bought and wrapped early. This permits an evening of family shopping and gift wrapping.

As you mark your calendar, remember Susie's Christmas concert at school and Jim's request to have his class over for a party. In our adult celebration, we sometimes neglect to give the children that which they want most—time and attention.



by
Frances Simpson

Pastor's Wife
Linwood Church of the
Nazarene
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Keep Christmas Christ-centered.

Much of what the commercial world attaches to Christmas is appealing; but it is up to the church to keep the season holy. Put up your crèche before you put up your Christmas tree. Send religious cards or insert a promise for the coming year. Play the carols more often than "Santa Claus Is Coming to Town." Be sure to have a family Christmas Eve service. Make all the Christmas activities at church a happy time for your family.

Build some Christmas traditions.

A simple act can become very meaningful as it is done every year in the atmosphere of Christmas beauty.

I remember how much our family wanted a crèche. I went to the dime store and bought three figures—Mary, Joseph, and Baby Jesus for 39c each. My husband made a crude stable out of plywood left from a building project. The children gathered straw and we had our crèche. Every Christmas thereafter, we selected one figure for the crèche until we had shepherds, wise men, camels, sheep, and donkeys. Today the crèche is priceless.

Rev. Sam Roberts, an Indiana pastor, introduced us to the tradition of having a special candle which we light only on Christmas Eve as we read the Christmas story together. This pastor told how his children, grown and married, would feel the

tug of the Christmas Eve scene around the aging candle, and would make last-minute trips home to hear Father read the familiar words.

I like Kathryn Johnson's tradition of having the younger children act out the Christmas story, using the crèche figures.

Adopt some time-honored custom or create your own new and novel idea. As you do it year after year, it will become a cherished tradition.

Help create peace on earth, goodwill toward men.

As a minister's wife, you will do some entertaining during the Christmas season. This need not be elaborate or expensive, but plan well. If you have the church board in, make it a memorable evening by having carolers stop by. Share Christmases past by candlelight.

If you have a young adult class over after church, plan for the children who will be present. Turn out the lights, sit around the fire (this keeps the children still), recite "'Twas the Night Before Christmas," and let the children share their excitement.

Experience Christmas in your own heart.

Take time to bow anew at the manger, knowing it has been transformed into a throne via a cross. Let His living presence radiate through you to a busy, mixed-up world.

A family where a husband and wife love each other more deeply and faithfully as years go by . . . where a husband can affirm his wife's gifts without thinking he is giving up his manhood . . . where a wife can joyfully adapt to her husband's leadership and still be liberated . . . where children are a gift and not a burden . . . where simplicity is the keynote and not slavery to consumerism . . . where security in Christ is so real that children don't have to be rushed off to private school to flee integration—that family is a powerful evangelistic statement before a word is said. —*Leighton Ford*

Evangelistically Speaking—

How Not to Conduct a Revival

By Lawrence H. Bone*

THIS ARTICLE is written with a fervent hope that it may help some of my brethren to be aware of some basics of revival work that may be overlooked.

Seldom, if ever, has the writer experienced such chaos as was his misfortune to experience in a recent revival. The evangelist was entertained in an adequate parsonage, and the pastor and his wife unselfishly gave their own room to him while they slept on a less comfortable bed in another room. Such unselfishness is deeply appreciated.

However, two children, both under six years of age, were allowed to so dominate the household that at times chaos reigned. These small children were allowed to yell and pound the table or high chair with silverware, even while grace was being said. They were allowed to interrupt conversations, run screaming through the house, at times to throw temper tantrums while the parents did little or nothing to control them. Sometimes this crying and screaming went on very late at night.

To compound the problem, these children, together with others, were

allowed to create confusion during church services, even though the church had an adequate nursery and play area.

There were no ushers—during the week or on Sunday—stationed at the rear of the sanctuary to meet, greet, and seat people coming in. Nor was there a greeter at the church entrance.

The church board frowned on taking offerings during the week, for fear (they said) of offending visitors. It is the writer's opinion, having served both as pastor and evangelist, that many of the people who visit our services want to help us financially. It is a wise pastor who realizes that friends of the church can help him raise his revival budget.

The closing Sunday morning was unbelievable. Five minutes were taken out of the morning service to take birthday offerings that should have been taken in Sunday school. Too much time was taken for announcements, and almost nothing was said about the congregation giving liberally to the revival offering, although the church had called both an evangelist and singers, and no offerings had been taken for six nights.

*Nazarene evangelist, Covina, Calif.

The evangelist preached following two special musical numbers (isn't one enough on revival Sunday mornings?). He did his best to present God's Word and show people their needs. When he concluded his message and had the congregation stand for the invitation, he was shocked by what followed.

Adults in charge of boys and girls who had come on a bus (the children were sitting in the center front seats of the sanctuary) began herding the children to the aisles and out of the sanctuary. Had they waited 10 minutes, some of those boys and girls might have given their hearts to Christ. But those adults seemed more intent on keeping a bus schedule than in leading children to the altar.

The damage of the interruption was irreparable. The audience was distracted. The singers sang the invitation songs, and the evangelist urged people to seek the Lord. One child and one adult did come to the altar. But one wonders if many more might have come had they not been so distracted. Whatever spirit of conviction had existed was destroyed by sincere but unwise people.

One thing more needs to be added. A visiting pastor whose evening service was early enough to allow him to drive 20 miles and visit the Sunday

night service was not even recognized by the host pastor, even though he came in before prayer time. The writer was embarrassed both for the visiting pastor and for the host pastor.

Truth is stranger than fiction. These things actually happened. In hope of their not recurring, we offer the following suggestions:

1. Give careful attention to 1 Timothy 3:5, "(For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)"

2. Use good ushers during every service.

3. Always have a greeter at the door to welcome visitors—and regulars too.

4. Give the friends of the church opportunity to help in the revival finances.

5. Try to train parents with small children to use the nursery.

6. Delete all unnecessary items from the Sunday morning revival service.

7. Plan for children to stay for the altar call, and encourage them to seek the Lord when the invitation is given.

8. Be cordial and courteous to visiting pastors. Recognize them in the service. Make them feel welcome. They will do the same by you when you visit their church.

My Morning Prayer

Lord, Your fields of ripened grain are so vast; Your orchards of full, ripe fruit stretch as far as eye can see; Your vineyards are loaded with ripened grapes; and Your gardens are filled with foods for every need.

Please give me a basket and send me to the garden, field, orchard, or vineyard of Your choosing, and I will faithfully gather there, and in no other, and at the end of the day I will bring my gleanings to You.

Your loving servant,
T. W. Willingham

THE STARTING POINT

A Word About Forgiveness

In Colossians 2:13-15, *The Living Bible** gives us a beautiful resume of forgiveness in these thoughts:

1. Forgiveness is the answer to the deadness sin brings. "You were dead in sins, and your sinful desires were not yet cut away. Then he gave you a share in the very life of Christ, for he forgave all your sins" (v. 13).

2. There is a clearing up of the charges against life. "... for he forgave all your sins, and blotted out the charges proved against you. . . . He took this list of sins and destroyed it by nailing it to Christ's cross" (vv. 13-14).

3. There is a new way open to Him. Two phrases suggest this: "... he gave you a share in the very life of Christ" (v. 13), and "God openly displayed to the whole world Christ's triumph at the cross" (v. 15).

Help from a Great Preacher

Helmut Thielicke, the great German preacher, once confided to a friend: "Every conversation I engage in becomes at bottom a meditation, a preparation, a gathering of material for my preaching."

You and I must gather daily from our experiences, our study, our reading, our conversations, and our observations those

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choice items that will add a dimension to our preaching. And that man who is not gathering has nothing to share.

The Motto of Life

Ann Kiemel, in her recent book *I Love the Word Impossible*, gives us the perfect illustration and sermon idea for a holiness message. This is what she writes: "The motto of my life is YES, LORD. Anytime, anywhere. Yes to whatever He wants, wherever He leads" (p. 93).

The Goal of Every Preacher

Someone writing of Abigail Adams' letters and speeches of two centuries past, concluded that they had "an inability to be dull."

Of few—so very few—will this ever be said. But that it could be our goal would be a great boost to our ministry and our preaching.

A Good Illustration

Lawrence Housman, in his autobiography, *The Unexpected Years*, tells of a rehearsal incident during a stage play on the Nativity. The scene had moved to the time when wise men were paying their visit to the Christ child. The script called for all the lights to be switched off as they left, except the light over the manger. A stagehand accidentally hit all the switches, and the entire stage was in darkness. A voice rang out, "Here, you've switched off Jesus!"

A Word for the Preacher

I close this month's column with the words of Dean Tilroe, Syracuse University. He gave this advice, just before his death, to Dr. Norman Vincent Peale: "Never make a speech that you don't tell people that they can have a great life."

That's good advice. May this be true of your preaching and mine.

Junkyards and Parks

Harold E. Kohn, in his book *Best Wishes*, passes along this interesting observation. "A junkyard and a park symbolize two contrasting kinds of living—jumbled and purposeful. The junkyard's ugliness is found chiefly in its disorder.



By C. Neil Strait

Pastor, Taylor Avenue
Church of the Nazarene
Racine, Wis.

The stuff that is there may be old and broken, but its ugliness is not in its age or disrepair, for the goods in an antique shop are old and yet often beautiful, and material stacked neatly in a repair shop may be broken without being unsightly.

More than any other feature, it is the disorderliness of a junkyard that makes it ugly" (p. 69).

You could draw the contrast between the chaos of sin and the creation of the new birth from Kohn's observation.

IN THE STUDY

Seeds for Sermons

December 5

JESUS NEVER MEETS A STRANGER

TEXT: "And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for to day I must abide at thy house" (Luke 19:5).

One of the nicest compliments a person can receive is that he is so well adjusted socially that he never meets a stranger. Even if it is a first meeting, the extrafriendly person makes the new acquaintance feel so much at ease that the closing remark of their first contact will be "Seems like I have known you for a long time." Also, the extrafriendly person never waits for a formal introduction but engages the other person in conversation from the moment their paths cross. Such friendliness is a wonderful social quality

to possess. All of the admirable social qualities mentioned above exemplify the way Jesus approaches people. He never meets a stranger. This is clearly demonstrated in His relationship with Zacchaeus. Zacchaeus, thinking he was a total stranger and completely out of Jesus' range of vision, discovered three things about Jesus' attitude toward him.

I. HE SEES ME—"He looked up, and saw him." Zacchaeus thought Jesus was so absorbed in the swirling commotion of the crowd surrounding Him that He would never glance upward. But Jesus located him in his obscure place of hiding. This lets us know that Jesus does not overlook anyone. Some people think they are so worthless and insignificant that no one ever looks their way. They think of themselves as the forgotten person, or the handicapped person, or the displaced person. This negative approach is completely turned around when Jesus enters the picture. He has a way of letting each person know that He overlooks no one, sees everyone, and has an interest in each.

II. HE KNOWS ME—"and said unto him, Zacchaeus . . ." Jesus had never been introduced to Zacchaeus, nor had their paths crossed before, yet Jesus knew him by his first name. This was the surprise



by
Mendell Taylor

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of a lifetime—to be called by name by a person he had never seen before. This was an unforgettable moment. All of us take pride in the important people with whom we are on a first-name basis. Each of us is on a first-name relationship with the most important Person who has ever lived on the planet Earth. What a thrill it is to be on such a personal and intimate relationship with Jesus that He knows us by our first names.

III. HE LOVES ME—"for to day I must abide at thy house." This was the greatest discovery that Zacchaeus made—namely, He wants to have fellowship with me; He wants to be with me and my family. Jesus is no respecter of persons, so He desires to have you know that He loves you and wants to live in your heart. At the same time, He desires to live in your home and make that home circle one in Christian fellowship. When He is a part of the home, everything will go better in the push and pull of the daily exchange.

CONCLUSION: You are really somebody on the social register of the Lord. You are important enough that He never overlooks you. He knows you by first name. You are the type of person He wants to keep company with.

December 12

WHEN GOD'S SON WAS DEMOTED

TEXT: "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men" (Phil. 2:6-7).

We show our love for our sons by wanting them to have better educational advantages than we have had; by having a higher standard of living than we have had; by having a better home and furnishings than we have had. But at the divine level, God reversed this order and allowed His Son to be demoted so He could show to what lengths His love would go to reveal himself to mankind. At the Christmas season, we are re-

minded that when God's Son stepped down to identify himself with sinful man, the departing word from the Father was: "Give them all My love." There are three reasons He was willing to lay aside His equality with the Father and make himself of no reputation:

I. HE STEPPED DOWN TO BECOME SIN SO WE COULD PARTAKE OF THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD.

As God's greatest Christmas present to mankind, Jesus was gift-wrapped in the clay of humanity. He became like us at every point, even to the degree that He became sin (without committing sin) so that we could step up to the level of sharing the righteousness of God. Sin is always considered as separation from God, or estrangement from God, or alienation from God. This is exactly what Jesus became as He was on the Cross and had to cry out in the deepest agony: "My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Also, on the way to the Cross He fell in the dust of the road, and this symbolized to us that He went as far down in the dirt and filth of sin as a man can go so He could lift the worst of sinners to the level of receiving the righteousness of God.

II. HE STEPPED DOWN TO THE LOWEST LEVEL OF POVERTY SO WE COULD PARTAKE OF THE RICHES OF GOD.

He became so poverty-stricken that He had no place to lay His head. He did not have a coin to pay the small amount of tax. He had to beg for a cup of water to slake His thirst. He was so poor that He had to earn His living by the sweat of His brow, with corns in His hands as He worked with a carpenter's hammer. Through His poverty He identified himself completely with us so we could partake of the riches of the Lord's grace and love and power. Jesus tells us in John 16:15 that what the Father has is His; and what is His will be shown to us by the Holy Spirit, so that everything He has is made available to us. This enables us to be all-sufficient and to abound in all things, unto all good works.

III. HE STEPPED DOWN TO BECOME THE SON OF MAN SO WE COULD BECOME SONS OF GOD.

He became what we are so we in turn

could become what He is. He became one with us so we could be one with Him. He partook of our humanity so we could become partakers of His divine nature. He became finite so we could share in the infinite. He became involved in the temporal so we could participate in the eternal.

CONCLUSION: His demotion makes it possible for us to be promoted. His coming down to our level makes it possible for us to be lifted to a divine level. His taking on the form of a servant makes it possible for us to reign as priests and kings.

December 19

FOUR WAYS OF TREATING JESUS

TEXT: “. . . they [the wise men] saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh” (Matt. 2:11).

Jesus is the most unique personality in the history of the world. Every person is confronted by Him in one way or another, at one time or another. At the time He arrived on this enemy-infested globe, there were four attitudes taken toward Him, and everyone in our world today will be in one class or the other. The four possible ways of treating Him are as follows:

I. IGNORE HIM—This is the way the innkeeper treated Him. He let the parents of Jesus know that there was no room available for them to occupy even though the mother was in labor. (This may be the first and most famous of all “No Vacancy” signs.) The innkeeper could have made some shifts and rearranged his guests to make room for one more family if he had thought the guests were important enough to warrant this change. But he was ready to ignore the One who was destined to become the most distinguished name possible to have on a guest list. In today’s world, many people live such overcrowded lives that they have no room for Jesus. Thus they ignore Him.

II. DEPLORE HIM—This is the way Herod treated Him. Herod did everything within his power to destroy Jesus. He wanted to run everything his own way, and he thought there was a possibility that Jesus might someday rival him in rulership. He was so threatened by his fears of Jesus that he ordered all babies destroyed so there would be no chance for His survival. This is the same spirit that caused Jesus to be crucified 33 years later. The mob said: “We deplore Him because He is setting aside our traditions and customs, and we want to run our religion our way.” That is the spirit that crucifies the Lord afresh today: “We want to be our own bosses and operate our lives the way we want.”

III. EXPLORE HIM—This is the way the shepherds reacted. They made haste to the place where He was born so they could “See this thing which is come to pass” (Luke 2:15). They wanted to be classified as observers. They were curious enough to want to see the unfolding drama of Jesus’ birth, but they were not attracted enough to make a commitment to Him. They were glad to be classified only as spectators. Many in our contemporary scene are in this class. They read about Jesus just to find out about Him as a historical figure, but they never go beyond this in their relationship to Him.

IV. ADORE HIM—This was the attitude of the three wise men who came into His presence and “fell down, and worshipped him: and . . . opened their treasures” to Him. They went all out in their overwhelming desire to worship Him as Lord of all. They gave Him the best they possessed because they wanted to demonstrate that they loved Him without reservation. They went overboard to reveal how much they adored Him. This is the wisest choice any person can make. Just as the wise men went home a different way, so when we adore Him as Lord, we go home a different person with a different attitude.

CONCLUSION: The best way to celebrate Christmas Sunday, 1976, is to move into the presence of Jesus and let Him know that we love Him, we worship Him, we adore Him with all of our being.

WHERE DO YOU STOP LISTENING?

TEXT: "... and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers" (Acts 7:52).

The background for this text is the occasion when Stephen is being tried before the religious leaders of his day. They gave him a chance to speak in his own behalf before they rendered a verdict regarding his future. Stephen spoke for about 10 minutes as he recounted the way God had dealt with His chosen people. Stephen called attention to the fact that the God of the Jewish nation was a revealing God, a communicating God, a covenant-keeping God, and the God of miracles. His listeners were captivated by his review of the way God had manifested himself in the stream of Jewish history. However, they turned him off the moment he referred to Jesus as the Just One and to the fact that they were guilty of destroying this divine Messiah. They stopped listening and built insurmountable walls of resistance when the speaker touched the area of their prejudices and pet peeves. This same audience response occurs today when the minister declares a truth that cuts across the personal interests and prejudiced opinions of the listeners.

However, we are the losers if we stop listening to the truth because it is cross-grained with our unexamined conclusions. Truth is to be followed, even if it hurts, if we are going to be at our best for the Lord and have His best in our lives. If we stop listening when any of the following subjects are brought up, we pay a heavy penalty for our hostility because we may walk back of light or disobey the command of God.

1. Repentance, restitution, or confession to clear up the past record
2. Consecration, commitment, or surrender to the full will of God
3. Separation from the world to show the lordship of Christ
4. Faithful attendance to the means of grace
5. Sabbath observance
6. Faithful in stewardship in the areas of our time, talent, and treasure

7. Visitation evangelism, witnessing, and person-to-person contacts

8. Christlikeness in word and deed, in the home, in the school, in business

9. Honesty, integrity, and fidelity in family relationships

10. Bible reading, family devotions, and "taking time to be holy"

Other items too numerous to mention can be brought into focus as the local needs are considered.

CONCLUSION: This checklist reveals how open we are to light from the word of the Lord and to guidance by the Holy Spirit. We must keep our lives squared with these basic principles if we keep pace with the Lord's plan for our lives. Only as we walk in the light, saying a positive YES to the Lord as He leads the way, will we discover the pathway that is brighter and brighter until the perfect day.

By
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Gleanings
from the Greek

1 Corinthians 16

"Collection" (16:1-2)

The first thing we would note is that "collection" (v. 1) and "gathering" (v. 2) in the KJV is the same word in the Greek and obviously should be translated the same way in both places.

The Greek word is *logeia* (only here in NT). Deissmann says: "It comes from *logevo*, 'I collect,' a verb which, like the derivative, was found for the first time comparatively recently in papyri, ostraca, and inscriptions from Egypt and

elsewhere. We find it used chiefly of religious collections for a god, a temple, etc., just as St. Paul uses it of his collection of money for the 'saints' at Jerusalem" (LAE, p. 105).

In verse 2 we have a hint of Christian tithing. On the first day of the week each one was to "set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income" (NIV).*

"Liberality" or "Gift"? (16:3)

In only one other place in the KJV is the word "liberality" found (2 Cor. 8:2). There the Greek is *haplotes*, which literally means "simplicity" or "sincerity."

But here it is a very different Greek word, *charis*. Occurring 156 times in the NT, it is translated "grace" 130 times. Here most recent versions have "gift," which is obviously the meaning in this context. But since there are other Greek words that simply mean "gift" in the sense of something given, the most adequate translation here would be "gracious gift."

These three verses suggest three principles governing our giving. First, it is to be *systematic*—"upon the first day of the week" (v. 2). Second, it is to be *proportionate*—as one is prospered (v. 2). Third, it is to be *voluntary*—a gracious gift, given freely (v. 3). God does not want what is given grudgingly but what is given gladly. Paul did not want to put on the pressure when he arrived.

"Conduct" or "Send"? (16:11)

"Conduct him forth" (KJV) suggests something formal and public. The verb *propempe* does have this meaning in Acts 20:38; 21:5. But for this passage Arndt and Gingrich give: "*help on one's journey with food, money, be arranging for companions, means of travel, etc., send on one's way*" (p. 716). "Send him on his way" (NASB,** NIV) is the simplest translation.

"Quit You like Men" (16:13)

This is all one word in Greek, *andri-zesthe* (only here in NT). Arndt and

Gingrich define this verb as "conduct oneself in a manly or courageous way" (p. 63). Abbott-Smith has simply "play the man" (p. 35). This verb occurs frequently in the Septuagint, three times (2 Sam. 10:12; Ps. 27:14; 31:25) in combination with "be strong" (*krataiousthe*), as here. Robertson and Plummer (ICC) render the two "Be not only manly but mighty" (p. 394).

"Charity" or "Love"? (16:14)

The correct translation is: "Do everything in love" (NIV). That is a most significant command for all of us!

A Good Addiction (16:15)

In these days of addiction to drugs, alcohol, and tobacco, it is refreshing to read of a family that "addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints." These first converts of Paul in Achaia (specifically Corinth) were now ministering to others.

The verb is *etaxan*, "arranged, ordered, appointed." Robertson and Plummer (ICC) comment: "They had spontaneously taken this service upon themselves. Just as the brethren appointed (*etaxan*) that Paul and Barnabas and others should go to Jerusalem about the question of circumcision (Acts 15:2), so Stephanas and his household appointed themselves (*etaxan heautous*) to the service of their fellow-Christians. It was a self-imposed duty" (p. 395).

Such spontaneous consecration to a ministry to others is an expression of true love. Probably the best translation today is "devoted themselves" (NASB, NIV). This kind of Christian devotion seems to be increasing in the church, and for this we are devoutly thankful.

"Anathema" (16:22)

In most other places in the NT this word is translated "accursed" (see our comments on Rom. 9:3 and Gal. 1:8). But here it is transliterated from the Greek. The one who does not love the Lord Jesus Christ is under a divine curse. (Paul is addressing professing Christians.) Behm says that the word means "something delivered up to divine wrath, dedicated to destruction and brought under a curse" (TDNT, 1:354).

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"Maran-atha" (16:22)

In the KJV there is not punctuation between Anathema and Maran-atha, though there should obviously be a period. A. T. Robertson says, "It was a curious blunder in the King James Version that connected *Maran-atha* with *Anathema*" (WP, 4:204).

The Bible Society Greek text has *Marana tha*. According to Edgar J. Goodspeed, the first edition of the KJV (1611) read, "Let him bee Anathema Maranatha," with no separation in the last word (*Problems of NT Translation*, p. 166).

Arndt and Gingrich say that *Maran-atha* means "[our] Lord has come." But they immediately add "better separated *marana tha* . . . [our] Lord, come! an Aramaic formula which, according to *Didache* 10:6, was used in the early Christian liturgy of the Lord's Supper" (p. 492).

The *Didache* (pronounced dee-da-kay) comes from the second century. The passage cited is a part of the Thanksgiving that was to be repeated aloud at the close of the Communion service. The people were to say: "Hosannah to the God of David. If any man be holy, let him come! if man be not, let him repent: Maranatha, Amen" (*The Apostolic Fathers* ["Loeb Classical Library"], 1:325). A footnote in this Loeb edition reads: "A transliteration of Aramaic words meaning 'Our Lord! Come!'"

This *Didache* passage reminds us of the closing promise and prayer of the NT (Rev. 22:20): "'Yes, I am coming quickly.' Amen. Come, Lord Jesus" (NASB).

Robertson and Plummer (ICC) call attention to a slight problem. They write: "Why St. Paul gives this warning in Aramaic rather than Greek [writing to Corinth] is unknown. The most probable conjecture is that in this language it had become a sort of motto or password among Christians, and familiar in that shape, like 'Alleluia' with ourselves" (p. 401). The *Didache* seems to give some support to this view.

It is our privilege and responsibility to live in constant expectation of our Lord's return. This attitude is one of the strongest safeguards against carelessness in conduct, and it also is a powerful incentive to devoted service for our Master.



The Child of Bethlehem

INTRODUCTION: There are 333 detailed prophecies about Christ's first advent.

TEXT: "Thy holy child Jesus, whom thou has anointed" (Acts 4:27).

- I. The child of prophetic promise (Gen. 3:15; Mic. 5:2; Luke 1:30-33; Gal. 4:5)
- II. The man of fervent prayer (Luke 18:1; John 17)
- III. The child of divine purpose (Isa. 9:6-7)
- IV. The man of spiritual power: "All power is given unto me . . ." (Matt. 28:18-20).
- V. The child of enduring preeminence (Col. 1:18).
- VI. This child made the gospel possible (Matt. 1:23; Luke 2:7-10).
- VII. Christ brings the evangel at Christmas (Luke 2:7-25).

Christ is beyond Bethlehem now, beyond all sufferings and a fulfilled earthly ministry (John 19:30). But He works through His own servants divine miracles to the glory of God.

JOSEPH T. LARSON

Try This Idea—

Christmas Project

Looking for a way your church can give a little extra to missions during the Christmas season?

Why not enlist your young people to set up a post office in the church foyer? Announce to the church members that they are to address their Christmas cards and bring them to the church Christmas post office. The money which would have been used for postage is given to a special missionary offering. The young people

are responsible to sort through the cards, stack them according to names, and tie them in bundles. At a designated time the church families stop by the post office and pick up their cards.

A way to save even more for missions would be to have the young people make and set up a giant Christmas card in the foyer. The church people may sign their names to this card and give the money for both cards and postage to a special missionary project. The young people should be on hand during all services to collect the money.

BETTY B. ROBERTSON

BULLETIN



BARREL

CHRISTMAS

We are in danger of losing the awe, the wonder, the praise of true worship by failing to keep before us constantly the mystery and glory of the Incarnation.

—WILLIAM GREATHOUSE

Let's approach Christmas with an expectant hush, rather than a last-minute rush.

In Denmark, people say to one another at Christmastime, "May God bless your Christmas, and may it last until Easter." That's much better than our jolly "Merry Christmas," isn't it?

GIFT OF ALL GIFTS

The great Gift, the unique and living One, is not a thing but a person. It is Jesus Christ himself. In Him God has given himself, no longer just things which He creates or has created, but His own person, His own suffering, His own solitude, given unto death itself. He declared it himself, just before turning to face His cross, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." This Gift of all gifts is the self-commitment of God himself, who carried

it through to the bitter end so that we may entrust ourselves to it.

The almost unbelievable news of the revelation is that it really is a gift. It is free, without reservation and without recall. Whatever our virtues may be, whatever may be our times of repentance, they all would be unequal to the payment of such a treasure. Thus it is that God offers it freely. He is the One who has paid its price, in the death of His Son. The erasure of all our failings and all our remorse, of all our regrets and our rebellion—what a gift it is! The redemption of all our joys about to be swallowed up in death, and their fulfillment in eternal joy itself—what a gift indeed!

—PAUL TOURNIER

A CHRISTMAS CANDLE

A Christmas candle is a lovely thing;

It makes no noise at all,

But softly gives itself away—

While quite unselfish, it grows small.

—Eva Nickolson

Said the Spider to the Fly

Once a spider built a beautiful web. He kept it clean and shiny so that flies would patronize it and not get suspicious.

Then one day this fairly intelligent fly came buzzing by the clean spider web. Old man spider called out, "Come and sit." But the fairly intelligent fly said, "No, sir. I don't see other flies, and I am not going in alone!"

But presently he saw on the floor below a large crowd of flies dancing on a piece of brown paper. He was delighted! So he came in for a landing.

Just before he landed, a bee zoomed by, saying, "Don't land there, stupid! That's flypaper!" But the fairly intelligent fly shouted back, "Don't be silly. Those flies are dancing. There's a big crowd there. Everybody's doing it. That many flies can't be wrong!" Well, you know what happened.

Some of us want to be with the crowd so badly that we end up in a mess. What does it profit a fly (or a person) if he escapes the web only to end up in the glue?

THE LOG

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AMONG OURSELVES

This has been a historic year for our magazine. It marks our fiftieth anniversary since its beginnings in 1926, and it has been a glorious year in our history. Our readers are thoughtful and gracious in their comments and criticisms, and our contributors are writing better articles as time goes by. A special word of thanks is due to Dr. Mendell Taylor for his year-long series, "Seeds for Sermons." Many have expressed appreciation for the fresh ideas in these sermon starters. And we like your title so well, we just may borrow it for the continuation of this series, if you don't mind, Doctor. Our friend and brother, Rev. Mark E. Moore, of Sylvania, Ohio, will present "Seeds," beginning in January. And the names of many others to whom we owe a debt of thanks would take more space than our magazine could provide, so we say to all of them, and to all of you, may this Christmas season be a joy and the New Year a time of rich blessing.

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