



THE

# Preacher's

MAGAZINE

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NOV 26 '90

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**THE GOD WHO WAITS**

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**HOW IT HAPPENS:  
THE WAY DOWN**

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**DESPERATE**

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**WEDNESDAY NIGHT  
BIBLE STUDY  
IS BORN AGAIN**

---

**CHURCH GROWTH  
VERSUS MINISTRY**

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*A PASTOR'S PRAYER*

***H**eavenly Father, strengthen the bond  
between Your servant and his people.*

*—Sharpen the vision before us.*

*—Undergird our trust with the reality of  
Your Word.*

*—Fill us to overflowing with the joy of  
Your salvation.*

*—Wrap Your almighty arms of love  
around us and hug us close.*

*And then turn us loose to touch Your  
world with the abiding presence of Your  
Holy Spirit.*

*Amen!*

*— Delbert L. Bieber*



# PASTORAL MINISTRY: THE ARENA OF HUMAN EXPERIENCE

by Randal E. Denny

Spokane, Wash.

**R**iding home alone at midnight, I reflected on the day. The morning hours were spent working on a sermon in the Psalms—one of six favorites selected by my congregation. By noon I sat with good friends who proudly showed me their new baby—born at home. They rejoiced with broad grins over the arrival of a girl to complement their three sons. A beautiful family sharing with me a beautiful event!

By two o'clock I sat with a retired couple in their front room. She had fallen down a flight of stairs—at the church. The bruises and bumps and cuts proved the harshness of her tumble. This couple have been faithful supporters of the church and of me, their pastor. If the doors of the church swing open, they are some of the first to arrive. Do you need a Sunday School teacher? She's tremendous! Do you need a room painted? He's a professional—the fastest I've ever seen. We prayed for her soon recovery.

At eight o'clock I stood on the platform of the sanctuary with a groom and his best friends as we watched the bride and her father march with delight down the aisle. The couple are upper-class students at Northwest Nazarene College. It seems God is directing them toward urban ministry. Eight years ago when I came to my church, she was a giddy, talkative, energetic junior high girl. I've had the privilege of watching her grow into Christian womanhood with a sense of mission in life. Inwardly I rejoiced at the powerful symbolism as bride and groom lit the unity candle together—an enactment recalling God's intent for marriage: "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh" (Gen. 2:24).

After completing the legal marriage documents and obtaining all the proper signatures, I excused myself from the wedding reception and

got in my car. I arrived at another home by 9:45 P.M. Unexpected death had stolen away a mother. She had been found dead, alone. Official estimates placed her death as having occurred three days earlier. The son and daughter, both married, had gathered with their families awaiting my arrival. There is often that mixture of emotions—sorrow over bereavement and delight in reminiscing over a life that had influenced the family in special ways. I listened. Death is reality. People hurt. But, once again, the human experience of death and bereavement has given me opportunity to build bonds of love with my people. I'm not so good with answers; but having experienced loss myself, I am comfortable just being with them. Probably I never *feel* more like an agent of God, His personal representative, than entering into the dark night of grief to stand beside the people I love.

In a sense, that was not a typical day. I've been a pastor long enough to learn that there are no typical days. Yet that one day had brought me into the arena of human experience—from birth to death. Do you know what powerful thought struck me as I drove home at midnight? I'll tell you! I felt honored to be selected by God himself to tell the best news my people will ever hear. The good news of Jesus brightens the whole arena of human experience, from birth to death—and beyond! I don't have enough Sundays left to answer questions nobody is asking. The Bible says,

There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven: a time to be born and a time to die, . . . a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance, . . . a time to be silent and a time to speak (*Eccles. 3:1-2, 4, 7*).

My involvement in the arena of human experience gives meaning to God's call to preach the good news of

Jesus. Seeing the faces of my people in need helps me prepare the message from God's Word. I am not interested in "making the Scriptures relevant," but in helping my people see the tremendous relevance of the Scriptures in the arena of human experience.

During my days at seminary, Dr. V. H. Lewis spoke in chapel. A line he quoted from Milton has stuck with me for all these years: "The hungry sheep looked up and were not fed." With God's help, I have tried with diligence to feed my "hungry sheep" on the nourishing Word of God. Richard Baxter lectured at Yale University long ago with this admonition: "Boys, preach to broken hearts and you will always be up-to-date!"<sup>1</sup>

Perhaps you'll join with me in the prayer Harry Emerson Fosdick said before getting up to preach: "Somewhere in this congregation is one person who desperately needs what I am going to say; O God, help me to get at him." 



#### NOTE

1. Robert Schuller, *Your Church Has Real Possibilities* (Glendale, Calif.: Regal Books, a division of G/L Publications, 1974), 131.

#### EDITORIAL NOTE:

In the section The Minister's Mate, a letter is printed that I received anonymously. The message of the letter broke my heart. I could not sleep that night. The heartache expressed haunted me. I decided to let you, the readers, have an opportunity to help. *The Preacher's Magazine* will print some of the important suggestions in an upcoming issue.



# The Preacher's

MAGAZINE

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Authors should address all articles and correspondence to Editor, *The Preacher's Magazine*, 10814 E. Broadway, Spokane, WA 99206. Self-addressed, stamped envelopes should accompany all manuscripts.

## PREACHER'S EXCHANGE

The work of our Nazarene church in West Africa is developing in many terrific ways. One of the really exciting areas is Nigeria, where we have around 9,000 members. The work there is the result of a merger with a group who had desired to be a part of the Church of the Nazarene for many years.

Under the leadership of a Nigerian graduate of NTS, Rev. Festus Azubike, the Nigerian Nazarene Theological College has begun. There are around 40 students, of which about 25 would be full-time equivalency. The problem is that we have **no library**. You can imagine how difficult it is for a teacher (even an NTS grad!) to adequately teach when there is no library to support his teaching. We are desperate for books so that these men can more effectively preach the gospel and be equipped to pastor their churches. If you can help, books may be sent to:

Rev. Festus Azubike, director  
Nigeria Nazarene  
Theological College  
P.O. Box 604  
Abak, Akwa Ibom State  
Nigeria, West Africa

\* \* \*

I am interested in obtaining any published works by Uncle Bud Robinson, particularly items now out of print. If you have any of his works and are willing to part with them, please write:

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# THE GOD WHO WAITS

by J. Wallace Hamilton

*The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance (2 Pet. 3:9, KJV).*

Somewhere along in our study of indirection we begin to see that serendipity has some profound theological implications. While it tells us much about the nature of life, it also tells us much about the nature of God, the kind of God who could create the kind of world in which serendipity is possible; a world in which man is left so much on his own, with freedom to search and seek and have dominion in creation without being overwhelmed by its Creator.

The writers of the Bible are unanimous in the faith that one of the crowning attributes of God is His patience and that His patience is a conspicuous part of His greatness. He is not the Almighty Dictator, the Grand Sultan of the universe, pushing people around and snapping His fingers to get His will done in a hurry. He is the God who waits—with infinite patience. He waits; and it is not easy for human minds to grasp that. Patience is a human word with distinctly human qualities, and it is difficult to apply it to an eternal Being who is all-knowing and almighty. How can we reconcile in our minds the twin facts that God is power and patience—almighty, yet slow to act; and that He is just, yet puts up with injustice? It seems a contradiction. But we have to hold these twin ideas in our minds at once, however difficult it is. Part of His majesty is in His mercy, and part of His power is in His patience.

## One of God's crowning attributes is His patience.

There were people back in early Christian centuries who were troubled with that; in fact, they were beginning to fall away from the faith, impatient with the slowness of God, the seeming absence of God. He had made certain promises about the future, and nothing had happened. Scoffers were everywhere, saying, "Where is the promise of His coming?" Things are no better than they were. Everything goes on, with no sign of God doing anything. The world is as full of evil as ever. What's the good of it?

The writer of this Epistle, whoever he was, moved in on that mood. Speaking to his fellow Christians, he said: "We have a sure word of prophecy to which we do well to take heed. It's a light shining in a dark place until the day dawns. And we need to remember this, that the Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as we think of slackness. It's His patience—that's it. He is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish. He will wait, wait for a thousand years as though it were a day. He limits His power by His patience, and waits for man to choose and to conquer."

You are as much aware as I am that we could quickly get beyond our depths in this. Through the years there has been endless debate on it: in philosophy, determinism; in theology, the sovereignty of God, the free

will of man. We propose, however, to keep it within manageable proportions, at least in an area where we can think the thought. This is the small key to a great mystery: the God who waits for man.

See it first in *the mystery of the undiscovered truth*. Think how the Creator has waited through long centuries of time for the mind of man to open, to break through, and to learn even a little about the hidden mystery of creation. All these powerful energies here—these here-before-we-got-here things—half-concealed, waiting for someone's seeing eye and hearing ear. The world was round a long time before anyone discovered it, and it was rich in hidden treasure long before anybody knew it. The scientists are the preachers of nature's gospel, and their favorite theme is the patience of God, although they do not call it that and do not speak His name. With their incredible mathematics they tell how through millions of years the mountains were built up, the seas carved out, the great worlds fashioned, where distance must be measured by fantastic new yardsticks. The thoughts of God are long, long thoughts not scaled to our dimensions. And His ultimate purpose is veiled and shrouded in mystery.

They could have had electricity in the Garden of Eden, as Emerson once hinted. Nobody invented it; here it was, from the beginning of time, waiting. All discovery is simply a new grasp of something already there. Uranium has been here a long time, hidden in the rocks, bombarding the universe right under the nose of the scientists. Coal! Oil! For long millennia before man came on earth, nature has been storing up the cellar with fire and fuel for his use; but for generations he shivered in his cold, damp houses, not knowing what was under his feet. Alexander the Great conquered the world and marched his armies over land rich with oil,

those lands of the Middle East. In some spots it oozed out of the rocks, polluted the water, lay there on the sand. Moses' mother waterproofed his little basket with pitch. Tar, asphalt, oil—tons of it in the earth and nobody knew it, and wouldn't have known what to do with it if they had. In fact, not too many years ago gasoline was a waste product, a by-product of kerosene. They didn't know what to do with it, and laws were passed to keep refiners from dumping it in the rivers. Illustrations at this point could be multiplied.

Trace the story of research in medicine, science, philosophy, and see how slow has been the process of knowing about the world, about ourselves—here a little, there a little, bit by little bit coming through. And God—silent as the sphinx about it all. No sudden revelation, no breaking in to do what man should be doing for himself, no Self-advertising; just a hint here and there, as though saying, "Here it is, seek and you shall find." The God who waits!

I don't know why the French existentialists are so wrought up about what they call "the frightening and frustrating absence of God." At least in one area we're not wholly in the dark about the why of it. A certain absence or hiddenness of God is essential for science and for faith. Too much light, too much divine intrusion would eliminate both. Who would want to live in a world without surprises, where every question was answered, everything done, everything known, and nothing left to discover? God has gifted man with incompleteness, and as urgently as he needs bread for his body he needs mystery for his mind—something not yet seen, not yet said, not yet known. If we were told we had reached the end of discovery, it would discourage us utterly. Dr. Harlow Shapley, after a lifetime study of the stars, said, "We can't escape humility. And as groping scientists and philosophers, we are grateful for mysteries still beyond us."

Lin Yutang, the brilliant Chinese philosopher, after a long excursion into agnosticism, has returned to Christian faith. In his autobiography, *From Pagan to Christian*, he said,

If I were God, and therefore a master chemist and physicist, I

would be extremely interested in seeing how the chemists and astronomers and biologists on earth proceed to unlock my secrets. I would, of course, remain silent and give no help. But I would be very interested in watching their discoveries, giving them perhaps a century or two to pry open my secrets and think them over and work them out.

So, even to our human minds there has come some hint of the divine wisdom that remains hidden, seems absent, and waits for man to discover.

We have learned a little, and it has meant so much. But around us still is the vastness, the mystery that stretches into infinity; and no matter how long man may live upon the earth, he will never lose his curiosity, never reach the end of mystery. For nature conceals herself behind a veil, and God makes thick the clouds that surround the throne. Not His absence, but His patience is the key: God is forever waiting for man to break through to the undiscovered truth.

Move a bit deeper now; see it in *the mystery of unconquered evil*. Clear through the Bible runs the promise of a coming kingdom of God's making, some final issue in the hand of God never clearly defined. The kingdom of God! Prophets and apostles pointed to it; good men in every age cling to it. And God, said this writer, keeps working toward it with an unwearying persistence. He is not slack concerning His promise, as it may seem to some. His slowness to act doesn't mean His lack of power to perform. He is not absent, as some complain; He is patient, beyond all our comprehension of that word. He waits for man, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance; that is, come of their own accord and by their own free choice to a knowledge of His way.

Of course, this impatient world has never been at home with such a God. We have never really Christianized our concept of God. We want Him to be in a hurry because we are; patience, in our book, is weakness. We want Him to be the Almighty, the Sultan on the throne, throwing His weight around, stopping wars, crushing enemies, putting an immediate end to tyrants, making

things happen. In fact, one of the most marked moods of our own time is impatience with patience. We can't *wait* for things to happen; we have to *make* things happen. Millions have turned from democracy because it is too slow. They've pinned their hopes on the strong men who make things happen in a hurry. Many have turned away from the Christian church, lost all patience with it, because God is too slow. His way of waiting for the law of the harvest, His way of changing life from within is long and difficult. You get there faster by coercion and mass manipulation.

Perhaps a fitting symbol for our time is the Polaroid camera: Push the button, pull the picture—so typical of our passion for right-now things. We can't wait—nor be patient with anyone who is. We want right-now things, right-now pictures, right-now riches, right-now solutions, right-

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**All discovery  
is simply a new  
grasp of something  
already there.**

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now social heavens. Our little moment is so short that we clamor for immediate results. And it's this human passion for immediacy that keeps alive the idea of the "sultan" God. We read our moods into His mind; we bestow on Him our wisdom, arm Him with our weapons, and make Him like ourselves. We know, or we think we know, what we would do if we had almighty power in our hands. There would be a funeral or two well placed.

George Bernard Shaw was asked once what he would do if he had almighty power. If he could be Noah and another deluge came, who would he pick among the people of history to start a new dispensation? He flashed back, "I would let them all drown!" And I suppose he would have.

Martin Luther couldn't understand how God could put up with man. "If I were God," he said, "and the world had treated me as it has treated Him,

I would kick the wretched thing to pieces." And I suppose he would have.

But God is patient, long-suffering, and His purpose is not measured by the small dimension of our minds. The whole Bible is the story of the patient God, the record of maturing revelation, of His long struggle in the darkness to break through the dullness of man's mind—patiently training a stiff-necked people to be the people of God, getting them out of slavery, getting slavery out of them, putting up with their ignorance and disobedience, often their insolence, and never breaking in with overwhelming power to drive them to their knees. But always, like some elusive shadow in the dark, behind the dim unknown, God is keeping watch, waiting for their minds to catch on, to break through, and through their own experience make the discovery.

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## God is so humble we do not even recognize Him when He comes.

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We need to come to terms with this: Moral truth, like any other truth, comes not suddenly like the lightning flash but slowly like the dawn—first the darkness, then the twilight, then the dawn. It takes a long time for an idea to break through to the minds of men. And it must always be their own discovery, arrived at by many defeats and repeated failures. This perilous gift of freedom—the risk God took in bestowing it! There is no almighty sultan on a throne to override it. There's an Almighty Father waiting on His children as we must wait on ours. It took a long time for monotheism, the idea of one God, to be discovered. It took a long time for brotherhood, the idea of man's essential unity, to be discovered. It is taking a long time for the way of peace to be discovered, although there are many signs and signals.

Henry van Dyke once put in a few

simple verses this roundabout way of God, this patient way of His of dropping a hint, waiting for man to find it; and when at last he makes the discovery, he sometimes takes the credit for himself.

God is like that—not absent, but patient. He can wait, trusting with that huge faith of His that man will come to it after a while, catch on, break through, and of his own experience make the discovery.

I wonder if you've noticed how often in His parables Jesus talked about this, about God putting man on his own and withdrawing himself, leaving the whole responsibility in human hands. "The kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods" (Matt. 25:14, KJV). There they were, on their own; God allowing man to be man and have dominion. In even the greatest parable of the prodigal son there is no almightiness in the father to break the prodigal's will. He must, in love and patience, wait for a rebel son to make the discovery, to "come to himself." And that certainly brings it within the reach of our understanding, for we are parents too.

A good friend of mine, Dr. Edward Crothers of New York, passed on to me a story he had found in his reading: "When Mother Went to the Mountains." A young woman born in the hills of Vermont married a farmer from Kansas and lived on a ranch in Kansas for 12 years. On that flat prairie she was homesick for the mountains and every summer talked about going home and spending at least a week in the mountains. Of course, it was only talk; there was no money to go with or time to get away. One summer, however, she talked so much about it that her hardworking husband said, "All right, honey, why not pretend? This is a big house, three stories. We never use the top story. Why don't you go up there for a week, get away from the children, and pretend you're in the mountains. We won't go up to you, and you must not come down to us."

So she did. She packed a bag with enough food for a week, took some books she had always wanted to read, and went upstairs "to the mountains." On the first day she did what people do when they go to the mountains—she slept. Next day she read

those books. On the third day she thought she would like to look at the scenery. So out on the balcony she took a rocking chair and looked out across the flat lands, pretending she was looking at the Vermont hills. Then suddenly she heard voices, loud voices of her children on the lawn below. She just couldn't keep from looking down, and what she saw shocked her. There they were in various stages of dirtiness. One had a runny nose that hadn't been attended to for a long time. The littlest one had a diaper that hadn't been changed since morning. They were dirty, irritable, quarreling. She could just imagine what the kitchen was like and the rest of the house. Her immediate impulse was to go down. But then she remembered the bargain: She was gone for a week in the mountains. So she just sat there, rocking and worrying.

Along about the fourth day, she made an important theological discovery. She felt that she knew a little of what God felt, looking down on a spinning earth, and a sinning human race, seeing His children get unclean and quarrelsome. But because He had made them free, He must let them choose their way. He must deny himself the deep impulse of the parent's heart to break in and break down the limitations He had imposed upon himself. Love that knows how to wait—that's what the whole Bible is about.

No, not quite all of it. At least another word must be added that gives meaning to the rest of it. The infinite patience of God is most vividly seen in the coming of Christ, in the mystery of the Incarnation. We see Him on Palm Sunday; we have called it the Triumphant Entry. Triumphant? A Man riding into town, into the city of His death, on the back of a donkey. You get it all in this. The Jews were looking for a king, and God sent to them a Carpenter. We can never get over the wonder of this; that God should take this long way around, this way of indirection; that when He set out to perform His highest act in history, when He wanted to reveal himself in the fullness of His power, He did not come with the pomp and pageantry of kings but in the lowly garb of a Workman. Can anyone imagine a more risky, unlikely way for God to come? Not in strength—in

# Keep Your Perspective

by C. Neil Strait

Grand Rapids, Mich.

weakness; not a palace—a stable; not a prince—a Peasant; not a sultan—a Servant; not a conqueror—a Carpenter.

Why all this anonymity, this hiddenness, this "smallness of entry," this veiling of divine majesty and power? "Why doesn't He land in force?" C. S. Lewis asks. Why did He not come in majesty and power, at least with enough splendor to impress, at least with enough overwhelming evidence of His almightiness that no one could possibly question or disbelieve? If we were launching a program of world conquest, we would not do it that way. We would at least move from a position of strength to win an immediate response. Here it is again—the infinite patience of God. Power withholding power in the poignant drama of the Cross.

Watch Him as He sets out to win the world—no show of force to drive men to His will, no robes of royalty, no pressure of prestige, no dazzling demonstration of divinity to overwhelm their minds and sweep them off their feet. So great was His respect for the dignity of the free soul, He would not use His power to overwhelm it. He took the way of indirection and patiently led them step by step until of their own free choice they came to it. "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matt. 16:16, KJV). God is so humble, we do not even recognize Him when He comes. We expect Him in the spectacular; He comes in the commonplace. His royalty is His humility; His majesty is His modesty. "Behold, thy King cometh . . . ; lowly, and riding upon an ass" (Zech. 9:9, KJV).

It's such a reversal of all our ideas of power that the true image of the Almighty God is revealed in a Man who came to earth through a stable, made himself of no reputation, and died one day on a cross; that He has no might to win except the power of a love that never gives up and never breaks down. He does not thrust himself upon us. He does not bind us with an excess of light. He waits for us with infinite patience until we come to it, until we bend the knee to Him who is the Lord of life. 

**M**other Teresa has spent a lifetime encouraging people. Our focus for encouragement in this issue is from this Nobel peace prize recipient. She said,

In our efforts to listen to God's words to us, we often neglect what might be called his "first word" to us. This is the gift of ourselves to ourselves: our existence, our nature, our personal history, our uniqueness, our identity. All that we have, and indeed our very existence, is one of the unique and never-to-be-repeated ways God has chosen to express himself in space and time (*Leadership, Fall 1989, 137*).

Every pastor must keep in perspective the fact that God has uniquely gifted and called him into ministry. If the sovereign God saw something in you and called you into ministry, then it is a fact to celebrate and from which to draw strength in the hard times.

What erodes this sense of uniqueness and personal style is the criticism that comes. Such occasions can be devastating, discouraging, and disruptive. It is for such occasions that Mother Teresa's words were written.

What each pastor must keep in mind is that no one is the final word—or even the best word—on your ministry. Criticism all too often is a spin-off from what the critic is feeling or the backlash from some conflict he is experiencing. As such, the criticism is neither valid nor right.

Now we must be careful to properly assess valid criticism. One must be objective. There are times when we are wrong. Where we are, it is only the better part of integrity—and wisdom—to admit it and learn from it.

However, our response to the unwarranted and invalid critic must be one of caution and composure. Caution in that we do not let it erode the person we are or the uniqueness of our creation. To change ourselves to satisfy every critic is both destructive to us and a wasted appeasement to our critics. What one will find, if he lives long enough, is that some critics do not criticize to change or make better. They just criticize because that's their nature. So don't always do a mad dash to satisfy your critics. For while you are changing, they are retooling for the next chapter in their addiction to criticism.

The composure that you and I must have is that we do not overreact to our critics. Some are very sincere. Some are right! So our attitude must be one of listening, understanding, and objectivity.

After each criticism, we must do three things. One, if the critic has a point or is right, we must admit it, change what needs to be changed, and move on with gratitude that our critic has helped us. Two, if it is unfounded or unfair, we must not retaliate or argue. Simply bring closure and move on. Three, keep in mind, during the whole process, of who you are, your uniqueness, your gifts, and your relationship to God. Most of all, remember that God is the best and final word on your ministry.

Be encouraged, pastor! God has called you and will equip you for ministry in a unique and meaningful way. It is ours to bring our critics to the altar of our hearts and let the Holy Spirit help us sort out the facts. Where we have His Word ringing in our hearts, it is adequate oil for healing and help. His confirmation and instruction silence the sting and hurt of the critic. 

## A Remedy for the Illustration Blues

by Stanley H. Purdum

Bellevue, Ohio

**F**rustration. That word describes one of the keenest memories from my early years of sermon writing. I would find a text or a theme that was appropriate for my congregation and that inspired me as a preacher. I worked diligently getting my thoughts down on paper and organizing them in logical form. I wrote and rewrote furiously for several hours and drew to the end with—frustration.

This annoying feeling came from the realization that, though I had explained the text and had elaborated the homiletical theme, I couldn't think of the right illustration to give life and flesh to the sermon. Sometimes I vaguely remembered having read a suitable story somewhere. I would spend hours searching through my personal library to find it. Other times I would go to the public library to use the *Reader's Guide to Periodic Literature* and the card catalog, trying to ferret out that choice story or example.

Occasionally these efforts yielded an acceptable illustration or two, but more often than not I ended up delivering the sermon without that needed "clincher." I would leave the pulpit, feeling that the sermon was incomplete. Frustration turned into annoyance when, a week or two later, I would come across the perfect illustration.

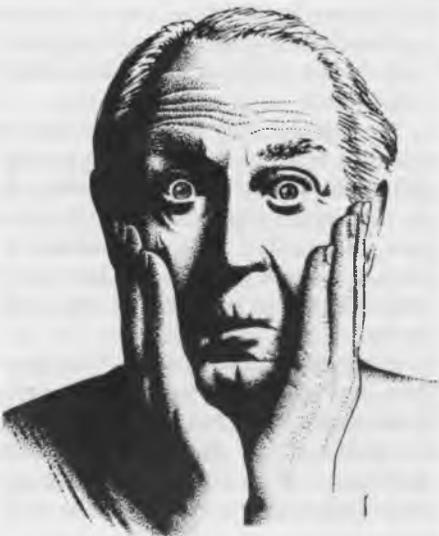
I seldom experience that frustration anymore. At the urging of a friend, I finally began an illustration file. Several systems work, but some are more complicated. The simple key to my system is reading with pen and scissors ready.

Most pastors do a lot of reading, including books, magazines, newspapers, other preachers' sermons, etc. These are good sources of illustrations. The problem is that when we need these examples, we have forgotten them.

Today, however, when I read an item that strikes me as a good sermon

illustration, I clip it out (if it is in a magazine or newspaper) and *immediately* write on it the category under which I wish to file it.

For example, a story appeared in our local paper about a man who had a car that was continually plagued with mechanical problems. Finally he became so enraged at the vehicle that he took a gun and shot the car several times. I cut this item out, wrote "Anger" on it, and then tossed it in a box kept for clippings to be filed.



If I find an illustration in a book, I use a pencil to bracket the section I wish to save. Then, when I have completed the book, I photocopy the illustrations and write the subject directly on them.

This is neither as difficult nor as time-consuming as you might imagine. First, you are already doing the reading anyway, so it only takes a moment or two longer to clip and save the juicy illustrations and exciting quotes.

Second, you do not need to set up the whole file at once. Let us sup-

pose you begin reading and saving. After a few days you have five clippings on five different subjects. Start file folders for those five subjects and add others as the need arises. You will be amazed at how fast your file will grow. I started mine five years ago, and I now have three file drawers full of illustrations, thought starters, quotes, and examples. Also, I do not worry about getting everything filed right away. Gathered illustrations are tossed into a box or big envelope until opportunity arises to do the filing. I find that about one hour every other month or so is sufficient to keep up the file.

Actually, this file system saves more time than it takes to maintain it. Time spent searching for sermon illustrations is vastly reduced. Scanning stories and quotes in the file pertaining to the selected topic of the sermon for that week often sparks other thoughts that enrich my sermon. Half of the time, while checking for an illustration in my file, I end up not using what I find but discovering a new line of thought suggested by some item in the folder.

For those interested in developing an illustration file of their own, here are some techniques I have found helpful:

1. As a general rule, do not save entire articles or whole chapters from a book. When searching for an illustration, you do not have time to wade through the whole article again. Clip just the story, quote, or example you wish to save.

2. Label anything you save for your file *immediately* when you cut it out. This saves having to reread it later when you are filing.

3. Always use a pencil when labeling a file folder. You will be surprised how often you will end up consolidating or changing folders. For example, after about a year of fil-

*Continued on page 27*

# Rehearsing Your Sermon

by Rolland R. Reece

Akron, Ohio

**M**y wife, Martha, and I often wondered what kind of preacher our friend might be. So when we received an invitation to visit him one weekend, we eagerly said, "Yes." It turned out, however, to be an embarrassing experience. Our friend stumbled badly. Here and there we caught glimmers of thought, but they got covered by countless "Ahs" as he searched for his next thought. In place of sharp insights, he offered commonplace generalizations and uncertainty. When he finally sat down, we felt relief.

Many ministers devote themselves to hours of hard study, thought, and prayer in sermon preparation. But if they lose what they have attained from their effort—through poor delivery and faulty mechanics—what a loss! The pulpit, by far, is the largest continuing contact point between pastors and their flocks. It is not the place for a shabby witness.

Effective preaching, I've happily discovered, is within reach of nearly everyone. In fact, many of the problems attendant in poor delivery can be corrected through the simple discipline of rehearsal. Rehearsal, the literal practice-preaching of a sermon, can be as much a part of the pastor's preparation as study, thought, and prayer.

## Why Rehearse?

Rehearsing enables a preacher to hear if the sermon "hangs together." Does it move forward sensibly and come to a logical conclusion? The eye and mind can convince a speaker that what is written down (manuscript, outline, notes) will be easily communicated to the listener. But when the voice is added and the focus shifts from the written word to attentive faces, that clear line of thought may evaporate as the morning mist.

Hearing your own voice "make sense" is also a great confidence builder. The more confident you be-

come, the more easily you speak. The more easily you speak, the less effort the congregation employs in "pulling you through" the sermon, and the more available thought they can give to the content of your message.

Rehearsing exposes grammatical errors. Verb tenses have a way of changing in midparagraph, and pronouns from one person to another in midsentence. Up to this point in your preparation, you may have been looking for these errors. Now they will be coming to you through your hearing.

Practicing your sermon aloud to an imaginary congregation will make you less dependent on your written preparation. As a consequence you will be able to give your listeners increasing eye contact. Though my aunt's minister regularly produced carefully crafted sermons, she was angry with him because he always read them. "I wish he would just talk to us once," she groused. "I get tired of looking at the top of his head."

After rehearsing your sermon four to six times, you will appear to be speaking more spontaneously. The less your eyes and mind are dependent on your manuscript, the more free you become to engage the congregation. Your freedom in delivery will enable worshipers to focus on what you are saying, not on how you say it.

## What to Rehearse?

Obviously the entire sermon needs to be rehearsed, but particular sections call for closer attention. For example, take the opening sentence and paragraph. If you mumble and stumble here, you may lose the worshiper for the entire sermon. Famous persons or great national leaders may get away with woolgathering in front of an audience. But for most of us who do not have novelty or prestige aiding us, we need to introduce our thinking with carefully selected words. The first sentence can't be too lean. M. Scott Peck started a book

with the sentence "Life is difficult." That hooked me into the next sentence and the next sentence and finally the entire book.

I wrote a sermon on "Man" beginning with the sentence, "Man has always had difficulty understanding himself." In rehearsal that sentence came across flat. It was more suited for a term paper. After several other attempts, the first sentence became "Man puzzles himself." It zipped to the heart of the problem in three words. In a sermon on love, as experienced in childhood, I began with, "When I was a boy, love was my father buying me a baseball mitt." To start a sermon portraying a truth I came across by the slimmest of chances, I said, "It may be hard to believe, but I found a needle in a haystack."

Also requiring attention are transitional sentences. If you don't move logically and smoothly from one point to another, don't expect your congregation to do it for you. When you present clear transitions, you enable the congregation to see the framework upon which you have built your thinking. If you halt after each point and need to look for your place, you have some bridgework to do.

The last lines of anecdotes need the same careful attention as do punch lines for jokes. Even if the line is delivered only slightly askew, it can render the story pointless.

Finally, the closing paragraph and sentence need to be rehearsed with great care. I have practiced closing paragraphs and sentences 10 or more times to make certain they said what I wanted them to say. Remember, you're streaking to the point. Blubbery words and sentences leave a sermon unresolved and the listener frustrated.

While rehearsing a sermon on love in friendship, I decided to take a page from Lee Iacocca (whose commercial was getting a lot of play at the time), "When life comes to the

*Continued on page 34*

## Recovery and Rehabilitation: Hope for Pastors Who Go Down in Flames!

by Donald M. Joy

Wilmore, Ky.

**I**n three small fictional samples I described three pastors, all men, who failed sexually. We need help now or later on dealing with women in ministry who fail. Public and local scandals involving women leaders and pastors have rocked us across my 60 years, but these articles are exclusively focused on men who fail.

Mark Goodson, our first fictional case, was a pastor who "loved too much," got his ministry mixed up with his affectional attachment, and found himself in tragic and painful adultery. He was bonded to his wife by love and marriage and family. But Pastor Goodson had invested so much care with a church member that he found himself "double bonded" also to her.

Lem Lindley, our second case, was wounded at the core, and symptoms of his compulsive addiction finally shut down his ministry when he became sexually involved with the teen daughter of a single-parent family. His compulsive behaviors included alcohol and pornography, as well.

Tony Christensen's case was the "blockbuster." He was the eminently successful pastor of a superchurch, of which he was the founding pastor. His style was private, and he maintained clear boundaries by which his authority was maintained in the congregation and in his own family. This chain-of-command model of church growth would never have been thought to be maintaining a second woman with children only an hour's drive away from his cathedral.

In this final segment of three articles looking at ministers who "go down in flames," I want to walk you through two optional paths down which a failing minister may go. We

frequently stand with him at the fork in the road. But often he has no idea where either leads or how to avoid the tragic "external" option.

In a concluding section of this article, I will outline what the rehabilitation strategies are for each of the three types of failure I have illustrated: Mark Goodson's adultery, Lem Lindley's fornicating addiction, and Tony Christensen's tournament male care-giving. I defined and distinguished the three kinds of sexual disorders in the first of these three articles. In the second, I suggested strategies for congregational recovery following pastoral failure. Now, here are pastoral options, followed by three closing custom-fitted rehabilitation strategies:

### Two Roads Emerge

There is a Christian tradition as old as the command of Jesus in John 20 that runs like this:

1. Whoever confesses sin to you is entitled to forgiveness articulated by you as the Spirit-inbreathed agent of Jesus.

2. Whoever's sins must be confronted by you is entitled to your straightforwardness and your "retaining" that sin, by the same Spirit-inbreathed authority, thus holding the person responsible for coming to a good confession and accepting consequences.

If we do not learn how to forgive sins, we are locked into brittle, pharisaic legalism. If we do not accept responsibility for confronting sin, we indulge either in cheap grace or in indifference to the tragedy of failure with its eternal consequences.

### *Dealing Grace: Internal Forum*

This ancient distinction boils down to two choices. Consider the

first option. Let's assume the confession is confidential, penitent, and throws the outcome in the hands of any Spirit-filled listener. That hearer is then bound to the sinner, the sin, and its consequences. In such a role, you are obligated to declare forgiveness in the name of Jesus, then confidentially to support and guide the penitent to restitution and restoration. In no case may you announce the confidential information to anyone. You have no choice but to swallow the secret, however serious, and move heaven and earth to stabilize the confessing guilty sinner. The secret will go to your grave with you. No civil or ecclesiastical authority can weasel it out of you. Only the penitent sinner has the right ever to reveal the tragic failure, to whom, and under conditions he alone may choose. In many cases you will need to stabilize the confessing person, urging him: "Leave it with me for now. Let me carry the guilt with you. You are in no condition now to make decisions about 'next steps' or who must know. Eventually you will be able to own the truth, but not in suicidal ways." Thus stabilized, the person will be ready to move to the next immediate integrity steps. Disclosure to a spouse, for example, will be essential in some way at some time, but not now.

In the Roman Catholic tradition, only the ordained priest could offer absolution. On that tradition all Western law was constructed, most of which still recognizes the right of "privileged confession." Clergy in most states remain immune from revealing confidential information even in a civil court. By the same principle, any Spirit-filled person—clergy or lay—is obligated to con-

fidential absolution. We call this supra-Roman doctrine "the priesthood of believers," which means we live and move in a community of agents of the Holy Spirit. Dr. Mildred Wynkoop, lecturing on our campus, made the text vivid. I recall my own shock at hearing her interpretation of John 20:20-23. This is what I heard:

We love the part about Jesus breathing on them and saying, "Receive the Holy Spirit." And we especially like the part about "As the Father has sent me, so send I you" [see KJV]. But we have to admit that we cannot choose the parts of the passage we like. We will have to take it all or let it go.

If Mark Goodson had made a voluntary confession, where might the road called "internal forum" have taken him? I saw one of my distinguished former students take that road once. Robbie and I were weekend guests in the pastor's home. Following the Sunday morning service and the conclusion of my responsibilities for the weekend, we were to be their dinner guests. But the pastor's wife disappeared after church. We found her an hour later, alone, walking out her silent devastation in a village park. The pastor blurted out the awful truth that his wife had just discovered: He was sexually involved with a woman in the church.

By late afternoon Robbie and I were on our way back to Kentucky. He was going to convene the governing board to resign the next day. I was in deep grief, trying to give him up to any future ministry. Imagine my surprise when he phoned to say the board refused to accept the resignation and asked him not to notify his bishop: "You need some time away, but we will not let you resign. We will meet with the woman and her husband, and we will meet with both you and your wife regularly. We will take responsibility with you for your failure. You will never get away with this kind of failure again. But we are asking that you not call the bishop or take any steps to go public or to resign from this pulpit."

The leadership for the move came from a man who followed his pastor's terrified penitent confession with these words: "I know some of what you are feeling. When I was almost exactly your age, I got involved in an

affair. I thought our marriage was over. But it wasn't. With your honesty, you don't need to give up on your marriage or on your ministry. I suggest we find a way to hold you steady through this."

The episode is now more than 10 years in history. His pastoral ministry has been continuous since the confession, and with continuing contact with the congregation and with seminarians across the years from that church, I have never heard a hint of scandal. The confession was good, and the absolution and rehabilitation were confidential—and it happened with a board!

In contrast, the more typical Mark Goodson scenario is that he opens his heart to a traitor who reports at once to ecclesiastical authority to cover the coward's own reputation. We may have in this criminal behavior a test of "on whom the Holy Spirit has been breathed." The instinct for confession is in any healthy person, even a sense of needing to expiate or pay for our sins. Left in isolation, this need for expiation can become paranoid, even suicidal. Professional suicide is a sudden death that seems just to the screeching, shame-filled sinner. So we make a good confession. We select the most trusted and respected spiritual adviser we know. We open our hearts.

But in this worst case scenario, we are betrayed: "I feel for you, of course, but I will have to phone the bishop, or I will be guilty of shielding you from the consequences." And we are, as we say, dead in the water. The self-confessing, humiliated sinner will be publicly exposed, likely expelled instantly from vocation, residence, work, and income. In most cases, the trauma of betrayal with its string of falling dominoes wreaks such devastating effects that the pastoral marriage does not survive.

#### *Grace That Binds: External Forum*

Now look at the second option. When moral failure breaks out into the public arena and the second- or third-hand reports break into a crescendo of gossip, the sinner and the sin make up a veritable cyclone of scandal. So what will happen when scandal rocks the community?

If we take the external forum road, we are obligated as Spirit-breathed people to confront the person with the alleged sin. "Whose soever

sins you retain, they are retained" [see KJV]. This implies face-to-face verification of responsibility and clear fixing of guilt. Imagine this confrontation: "I don't know whether you are aware of rumors that are hitting us from every side. I abhor gossip, but I treasure you. If there is any truth in the gossip, can you find someone you trust and get yourself on the way to recovery?"

Shall we admit it? We are apparently cowards and dislike confrontation. But a surgical location of truth is essential for the sinner and for the community. For the sinner it provides an opportunity to seek out internal forum grace. It is urgent for us to send gossipers back to confront the sinner before repeating the story again. Could we at least do something like this: "Have you confronted the person about what you are telling me? If you have eye-witness evidence, you are obligated to go to the person, to offer him a chance to repent, and to take responsibility for his sin. So don't talk to me or anybody else until you talk to the person you are reporting on. There are many more degrees of freedom open to sinners who can take responsibility and report their own failure than for those who have to suffer natural consequences."

We are desperate to bind people to forgiving and healing grace. But if they rebel or refuse to come to the truth, we must bind them to their responsibility: "I release you to Satan," with all of its sounds of utter abandonment, may be Paul's formula for fixing responsibility. His bottom line was a breath of hope. He yearned that Hymenaeus and Alexander would "be taught not to blaspheme" (1 Tim. 1:20). If the "image of God" has been invested in the combination of sexes, "male and female," as Gen. 1:27 says, then any failure involving our core of sexuality is ultimately not sin; it is worse: it is "blasphemy." So rebellion, when confronted about sexual disorders and failures, constitutes blasphemy.

In a similar line in 1 Cor. 5:1-5, a persistent fornicator was also handed over to Satan "so that the sinful nature may be destroyed and his spirit saved on the day of the Lord." Such binding to truth is the Spirit-filled Christian's last resort and is appropriate only if there is no repentance, no

restitution, and no acceptance of radical personal accountability for immediate and continuing obedience to Jesus. When we delay confrontation, we reduce the possibility of the sinner coming to full confession and finding restoration.

But if we blow the whistle on someone who has confided in us, we ourselves have retained sin when we should have forgiven sin and bound ourselves to confidential support and recovery assistance. And what may be sinful in a deeper way, we may have turned an honest and appropriate confession into a global scandal.

A third road may fork off into another dark woods. Independent churches, because there is no tracking system on deviant leaders, and some mainline Protestant systems, because they assume that "forgiveness means never having to repent," are likely to turn wounded and bleeding pastors loose to heal themselves. They frequently open yet another chapter of their failure at a new location. The parsonage may be suddenly empty, creating only a vacuum of speculation about the sudden departure of the minister's family. The independent congregation has saved itself any liability for pastoral recovery healing but has turned the wounded loose on the streets with only a more complicated sexual disorder. The mainline system, with its potential for "laundering" a tainted pastor, tends to relocate him with a naïve sense of grace and of sexual disorders. "Heal thyself" (Luke 4:23, KJV) simply does not work when sexual failure has occurred, so a new congregation is often unwittingly put at risk. The pastor's family in such cases survives by hardening of emotions and by fear of future humiliation when he fails again in a new place but with an old rerun of the former episode.

Unfortunately we rarely mount the courage to act on a careful John 20 version of internal forum, and our sinners become our wounded victims. Death by firing squad would be merciful compared to the way we tend to torture our screeching, guilty, voluntarily confessing sinners.

### **When Tragedy Breaks Externally**

Internal forum handled with dis-

cretion and confidential accountability offers the double blessing! (1) The congregation and community are not shaken by scandal, and (2) healing occurs as ministry continues. Any treatment program that requires the pastor to be absent can be represented for what it is: an affective disorder complicated by pastoral stress, and requiring inpatient treatment. A stress leave of absence to enter a clergy retreat center with therapy programs for pastoral couples, for example, carries the commitment of the supporting congregation and the expectation of a healthier pastoral couple on their return in four to eight weeks.

Because we are more often clumsy and frightened, we tend to turn a case of authentic internal forum into tragic external scandal by our mutilating the sinner and scandalizing the community. In any case when the story explodes, the way we drop Humpty-Dumpty makes it virtually impossible to put him back together again, and we often succeed in shattering his marriage and family like eggs spilled along the wall as well. Here are our options, in descending order of hope.

#### *Shoot the Preacher!*

Ministers who handle truth and announce the standard of righteousness and all things holy should be killed by lightning if they fail sexually. And if God doesn't strike them dead, leave it to us! Oddly enough, congregations often gloat over their "successful pastor" and are sure that "the blessing of God is proof of his moral purity." Let us accept a basic premise that is quite different: There is no necessary correlation between purity of heart and ministerial or any other kind of worldly success. Indeed, a compulsive preacher often covers his moral failure by working harder—by creating a smoke screen of success. We shouldn't be surprised that moral-failing compulsive pastors take the "success theology" one step further: "God's 'blessing' during my affair or my porno binge is proof of His approval. I will continue to denounce the sin for ordinary people, but I am above the law. I write the law." An omniscient arrogance is flowering where humility and repentance should have been nurtured in an honest man.

I wrote to a prominent televange-

list who was humiliated on the six o'clock news: "If you will go public with your rehabilitation, you will minister to hundreds of thousands of your supporters who also suffer from compulsive addictions." I had been offended by his compulsive preaching. Once, when he was railing against Rahab the harlot, I murmured Shakespeare's old line about the person who "doth protest too much, methinks." I grieved with the whole world but was not surprised when his compulsive sexual failure was documented in external forum for all to see. But I suspected then and now that his most ardent supporters around the world are wounded, shame-based, compulsive Christians. I wrote to him in the hope that he could demonstrate to his compulsive supporters how to be healed from the lifelong, shame-driven motor of a nest full of addictions.

#### *Pull the Plug*

"Call the bishop. He's unfit for ministry. Impound his credentials. Empty the parsonage. Bring on the fumigator and the disinfectant." These "sudden death" impulses move typical congregations into permanent states of denial. They commonly get lodged in Stage Two of the grief ladder: Anger. They become rude to each other and within their families. Divorces often lace the congregation. Youth groups scapegoat the new pastor's teen. Denial is a tragic state that must be a foretaste of hell. Blame and shame control everyone, the innocent and the guilty alike.

#### *Discipline That Restores*

If we are Christians, then we know how entrapping sin is; we once lived within its grip. Therefore the recovery of a failing pastor becomes the acid test of the validity and the vitality of our congregation's and our denomination's theology. Don Baker's *Beyond Forgiveness* offers both case and strategy for bringing discreet confession and accountability out of external forum failure. By that pattern, the recovery setting was the congregation in which failure occurred. The accountability involved congregation and leadership. And the healing was completed with a public commissioning of the restored minister to accept a pastoral position in a new location.

If we object that "some sins are unforgivable," then we are living in a cloud of ultimate denial and have no concept of the uniqueness of Christ's death and resurrection. And anyone who arrogantly assumes that any pastor cannot be rehabilitated has not recently held up the mirror to himself while reading Paul in Colossians 3, or Jesus' words to the woman caught in the very act of adultery, as recorded in John 8. "And such were some of you" (1 Cor. 6:11, KJV) or "You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived" (Col. 3:7) are Paul's serious cautions.

### Three Disorders: Three Ways Home

#### *Grieving and Healing from Adultery*

Mark Goodson's attachment to the parishioner that compromised his sexual bond with his wife was adultery. Adultery can only happen with a pastor who places a high value on people, is empathetic, and genuinely cares.

So a confession of such an affair must be drawn through a counting of the cost of "slaying the lover" and knowing she can never live again. It means the end of an important relationship. Such losses bring on depression when they are honestly faced. Denial, anger, and bargaining are stages of getting to the clear-eyed reality: "Life on this planet has ended in any recognizable form for me." Elizabeth Kubler-Ross's landmark work on stages in grief is as helpful a grid as any to understand recovery from adultery.

Bargaining frequently wants to negotiate from adultery to friendship. But no relationship that has once been sexual can move immediately into a nonsexual friendship. Death of the relationship is the only way.

So the recovery plan for the adulterer, defined in this sense, is the simplest of the three disorders we face, but it is laced with the deepest pain. The recovering minister needs support in ventilating the grief and loss, and "having a good grief." Only those who can own the pain will be healed. Our tendencies to shame them for their feelings only prolongs the agony or drives them into denial and sets them up for later failure. The first principle for all ministry is to "rejoice with those who rejoice,

weep with those who weep" (Rom. 12:15, RSV). The confidential "priest" or the support network in a congregational external recovery plan as outlined in *Beyond Forgiveness* must nurture the recovery from deep loss and not trivialize it.

#### *Eradicating Roots of Addiction*

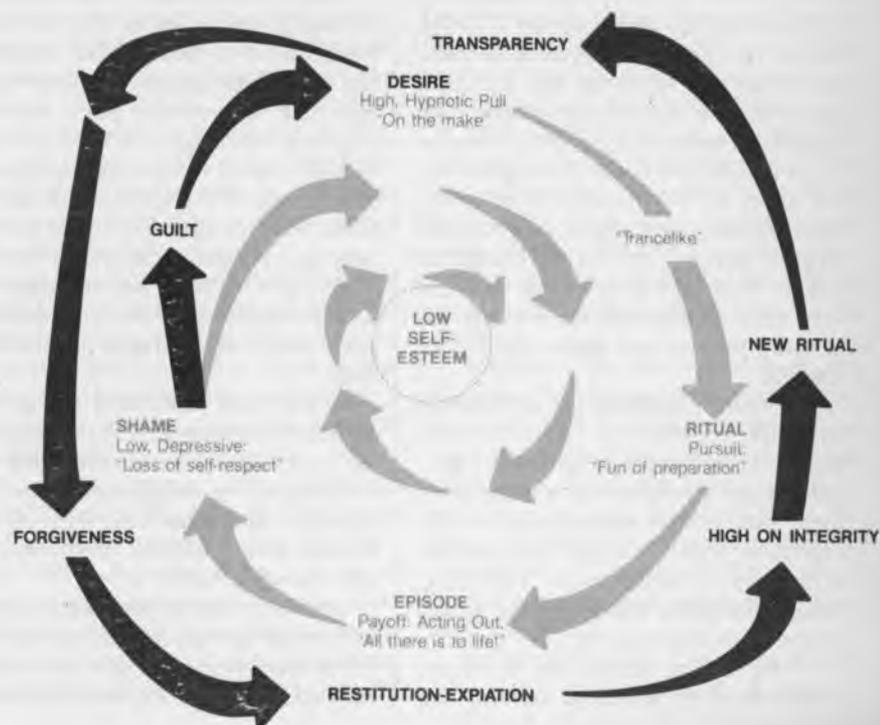
Lem Lindley's compulsive set of behaviors, which finally brought him down in external forum disgrace, presents a disorder requiring a healing plan immensely more complicated than simple and painful grief over loss. And if you are the fortunate person to whom a compulsively sexual pastor confesses, know this: The recovery plan is long and rigorous. But with confidential internal forum, the recovery can best be done on the job.

In the first article I outlined the cycle of addiction and offered a diagram of the devastated self-respect that is both the motor and the result of addictive behavior. Now let me offer a healing cycle diagram and describe the steps out of compulsive addiction disorders. Typical sexual failures are almost always rooted in compulsion and include pornography, promiscuity, adult bookstore services, massage services, prostitution, and homosexual activity.

Any of these or a combination are so devastating to endure and to hear about that we have a tendency to "call the ecclesiastical police" without diagnosing the case and seeing that the criminal is also the victim! And when the root is compulsive, the present failure that prompted the confidential confession is often only the tip of an iceberg of a whole set of compulsive behaviors. Workaholic, "successful" pastors are often acting out a compulsive addiction simply expressing their devastated self-respect in compensatory ministry. When a person is healed at the core, when the hole in the cup of self-respect is restored and whole, we will see a new energy source driving ministry and all of life, and it will be a very different person than we knew before.

Now watch the diagram. Remember that Shame produces devastation of Self-esteem. And Shame occurs after each compulsive behavior episode. The healing trajectory requires that a confession occur as a result of Shame. Shame-based confessions, however, are self-protecting, partial, but are often accompanied by emotional devastation, tears, and personal or professional suicide tendencies. It is urgent, as you listen, to coach the person into transforming

#### Recovery from the CYCLE OF ADDICTION



Shame into Guilt. Guilt is not self-protective and partial but describes a long history of the disorder, takes responsibility for being a dangerous person and feeling out of control, and wants to unpack the story of yet other parts of life that are out of control.

Forgiveness offered for a Shame-based confession tends to give no lasting relief. Here is the scenario. Every pastor and many laypeople have been the listeners: The person is in trouble and comes to us, trusting us with terrible truth about an immediate failure with its embarrassment or his fear of being caught. We jump at the opportunity to pray with a crying or emotionally distraught person. So we do our "evangelism package" and "lead the person to Christ" in repentance for sin. We offered relief for immediate Shame but did not stabilize the person and assure confidentiality while the longer task unfolds. "I'll pray with you now, but we have more ground to cover. Let me assure you on the basis of your honesty that God's grace is undergirding you. I'll carry your load with you, but let's get the whole story out. And I'll have words of forgiveness for you a little later. You are doing the right thing, and I'll need to see you/hear from you every day this week to get you on our way to total recovery."

In my *Unfinished Business: How a Man Can Make Peace with His Past*, I offer a sanctified version of the Alcoholics Anonymous Twelve Steps. The program began as a spiritual renewal strategy but became popular in a secularized form. The good confession required for Twelve Steps involved reconstructing the entire story of the history of the problem. In our eagerness to administer "quick grace," we have liturgized public invitations until we provide very few settings in which any repenting person can make a full confession.

The compulsive addict will need a support network of three to five highly committed people. In internal forum confidential restoration, these may not be readily and locally available. If they are not, then private compulsive addiction therapy, which includes therapist-led group support, is a second choice.

If the failing pastor has been exposed through external forum, the

healing community can easily be found among the continuing staff and congregation in which his rehabilitation is being supervised. Once external, it is unlikely that he can remain in visible leadership, and his emotional healing will be lengthened in direct proportion to the extent of his public humiliation.

Compulsive disorders of all kinds, rooted as they are in devastated self-respect, need lifelong care. "I am a recovering alcoholic" is a truthful statement of a person who has been off of alcohol for years. "I am a recovering compulsive person" is likely true of many more of us. Indeed, the bottom line for the truly holy has to read, "I am a recovering sinner." Sanctification is both the cure and the process. "Humans are born broken," Eugene O'Neill put in the mouth of his character in a famous play; "they spend their lives mending." And "The grace of God is the glue."

Recovery to a "control" state can come instantly, but the network support needs to be in place for the long term, best on a weekly meeting basis. Most of our churches would be well served by a Sunday School class devoted to biblical grounding for those of us needing help with compulsive impulses having to do with food, money, power, success, and sex. Our vulnerabilities are pervasive!

#### *Bringing Down the Monarch*

Tony Christensen is no Humpty-Dumpty; he is king of the mountain. This chain-of-command, lonely-at-the-top commanding general of the universe is without peer. He reads Scripture through the lens that justifies his authoritarian style of pastoral leadership. He appoints, names, and otherwise manages to have his own way in everything beneath him: his wife, his children, his congregation. And on every committee to which he gives time, he manages to have it his way.

Because of this high point from which to rule and view the universe, he is discreet, secretive, and convincing in his seduction. "But I can afford it, and what I do with my own money is no concern of anyone else, not even my wife."

Recovery for the tournament male, who justifies his harem on the basis of his own philanthropy, his resources, and his righteousness, is virtually

impossible. If he crashes and burns, it will be somebody else's trick, a trap, or a grave injustice he did not deserve. He was framed. His motives were pure. He is misunderstood. If we only understood, we would not blame him.

Unfortunately pastoral ministry, by virtue of its frequent isolation, likely cultivates the tournament male impulses. If he does pastoral counseling, he has to hear stories of abuse and abandonment. He listens to a woman tell how she has been sexually scorned or frustrated for her entire marriage. Every generous rescue impulse in him is challenged to rise to the occasion. He can right the wrongs, show her the tenderness and love she has missed for all these years. He will be her "savior" in a tangible and sensuous way.

If he crashes and burns, he may look again at Scripture and discover that his dominance is predicted in the curse but never justified. "He shall rule over you [the woman]" in Genesis 3 is not God's order for marriage or for congregations; it is a curse and a consequence of original sin. And men tend to dominate everything in sight. Recovery for the tournament harem pastor is possible, but the process follows all of the compulsive addiction recovery steps after the theological earthquake shakes him down from his high tower of omniscience and omnipotence. There will be an extended grief process over wasted years, wrong teaching, and doing restitution to those he has shaped in his own image across the years of his pastoral leadership before the fall.

Now, in three articles I have traced the tragedies pastors and congregations face when ministers fail sexually. I gave suggestions in the second article to congregations, their recovery, and their role in pastoral recovery. Now in this article I have outlined alternative paths a pastor may take in entering the rehabilitation and recovery route. I have not described pastors after humiliation, expulsion, and unfrocking. But finally, I have offered brief scenarios to show the very different recovery patterns needed to bring men back from adultery, from compulsive sexual fornicating, and from collecting multiple women in the style of Old Testament kings and patriarchs. 

# On the Road Again: Pennsylvania Pastor Enjoys His Motorcycle

by Angela Elwell Hunt

Largo, Fla.

**Y**ou may have seen them on the interstate: Riding their hulking motorcycles like sultans of the open road, they sit imperiously on black leather seats, their black leather jackets blazing with emblems. They are all blue-jeaned; the men are bearded, and the women ride with their faces tilted up toward the sun and their tanned arms casually resting on legs booted to the knee. Sometimes single file, sometimes two abreast, they ride in an awesome pack that can intimidate a solitary automobile. They are a motorcycle club.

You've probably given them a more generic name: Hell's Angels, gang of bikers, bunch of hoodlums. But no matter how similar their appearance, all motorcycle clubs are not the same. One particular group is very different.

The Ready Riders, a local Pennsylvania chapter of a national organization, the Christian Motorcyclists Association, was founded in 1981. Wayne Reese, who pastors the Victory Baptist Church in Lehman, Pa., rides with the club as often as he can. He and his wife, Charmaine, began riding bikes years ago, and neither is ready to stop.

Reese, 58, believes the admonition of 1 Cor. 10:31—to do all things to the glory of God. "I'd like to be able to lead people to Christ through motorcycling," he says. "I know the Lord has used it before in people's lives. We know a man who began a Christian ranch because he loved horses. People came to the ranch to ride horses and had a chance to accept Christ. Motorcycling isn't on that scale, of course, but it is the same principle."

When the Reeses bought their first

bike years ago, they had no intention of becoming bikers. "My wife was working, I was working and in school, and we simply needed another vehicle," recalls Reese. "We bought a small motor scooter from Sears and Roebuck; I didn't know a thing about it, and neither did the salesman. As I rode the scooter home, I got it in the wrong gear going up a grade, and it reared up just like a horse, knocked its chain off, and cut my leg. I ended up pushing it to a gas station."

It wasn't a good beginning, but soon the entire family had mastered the motorcycle. Reese found it to be an invaluable aid in his ministry. It was portable, inexpensive to run, and it fulfilled its purpose.

During the summers when the family worked on a Christian ranch, Reese and his family took the bike out into the woods to find unexplored fishing spots. Reese was able to lead one young fisherman to the Lord on such a trip. "My wife and I and he and his wife would go into the woods to fish and fellowship," says Reese. "That's why he began to grow in the Lord. The Lord uses times like these to help people."

Reese has pastored the Victory Baptist Church for 10 years, and he finds his church's members accept their bike-riding pastor. "You might think that motorcycling would be a hindrance to a pastor, that people would think you're a Hell's Angel," he says, "but we have never found that to be so. We've had people in our church buy motorcycles, and we travel with some of them. Not only have I used the motorcycle as a pleasure vehicle, but also I use it when weather permits in home visitation, hospital visits, and wherever I go. Of

course then I don't dress as a motorcyclist but as a pastor. Sometimes I get some stares, but I've gotten used to it now."

When he is not visiting his church members, he and his wife are out on the open road for their own relaxation and enjoyment. They now ride on a 1,200cc 1984 Goldwing, and last summer they took a 3,000-mile trip that was the cyclists' equivalent of Huck Finn's cruise down the Mississippi. They traveled to a New Jersey state park on an island, got off their bike and swam in the cool waters, and left at their leisure to visit a daughter and son-in-law who are also motorcycle enthusiasts.

The next week the Reeses took the Delaware Ferry across Delaware Bay, then rode down Route One through Ocean City, Md. They rode the length of Assateague Island, home of the wild ponies, then continued on to Chincoteague Island. They then explored the man-made tunnels under and through Chesapeake Bay.

They visited their son in Virginia, a pastor friend in Tennessee, a cousin in Indianapolis, and then drove across the Blue Water Bridge across Lake Huron. On the Canadian side, they stopped to swim in Lake Huron, in the "clearest blue water you ever saw."

While on the road they were not lonely. The Reeses had each other, and they had good fellowship. As they sat inside a Denny's restaurant in Michigan, a fellow biker came in, and the Reeses noticed his CMA patch, which is embroidered "Riding for the Son." They invited him to eat with them and had an enjoyable time together.

Members of the Christian Motor-  
*Continued on page 31*

# A Christmas Gift

by Thelma M. Chandler

*Pastor's wife, Rockland, Maine*



**W**hen my husband and I moved from Kansas to Maine to pastor a church on the East Coast, I had planned on working to supplement his small salary. God had a special plan for using our lives to show His keeping ability, and my working was not part of His plan. We felt strongly that we were not to work outside the church for at least one year. That one year has stretched into three and a half, and the green light for outside work has never yet been given.

It has been difficult at times to be continually short of money. I have not always been able to soar on wings of faith. Sometimes I feel frightened, even though God has always rescued us. We reached our lowest point just before Christmas.

But God took care of us in such a beautiful way that I must share it.

We had been so short of money during November that I only had \$5.00 each week for groceries. December found us just as short, and my daughter and granddaughter were coming to visit for a week right after Christmas. What would I feed them? Our life insurance and car insurance had been canceled for nonpayment. Then my husband's two front teeth broke off, and he looked awful. On top of that, the chain saw needed about \$60.00 worth of repair work. (We cut our own wood for winter fuel, and our chain saw is absolutely essential for survival.)

Some of my family had given me Christmas cards, knowing that I would not have money to buy any. I

couldn't mail them, since I didn't have the cash for stamps; but with our other troubles, mailing cards wasn't really important.

We had almost lost our car insurance several times, but God had always supplied the premiums. What had happened this time? My husband felt that it was irresponsible to drive without insurance.

"I can't go out and pick up all those boys and girls for Sunday School without insurance to protect them," he said. "Take our salary check, and have the insurance reinstated."

"If God wanted the insurance reinstated, He would have sent the money," I retorted. "And if you spend the whole check on insurance, you can't pick them up anyway. You need gasoline."

"I can't believe that God will fail us now. Pay the insurance," he demanded.

I paid the insurance and waited for disaster to strike. My heart was heavy. God had never allowed us to go so far under before.

The very next day, we received a letter from a friend whom we had not heard from for over a year. It contained a check for \$100, the exact amount of our salary. My husband was gracious enough not to say, "I told you so," but he was grinning from ear to ear.

The rest of that week, enough money came in from different friends to fix the chain saw, pay the dentist for a good smile, and buy much-needed bathroom and laundry supplies. When an aunt sent me \$20.00 I felt enough confidence that God was indeed supplying our needs to mail my cards.

One of our local public officials brought over nine bags of groceries to divide among the most needy folks from our congregation. Since

we were as needy as anyone in our church, God assured my heart that it would be all right for us to receive a share. We set up a table and began to sort everything into stacks. I gave careful thought to the division so that we would not keep more than a fair share. There were many things that would help me feed my coming company, and I was truly grateful.

There was a two-and-a-half-pound can of beef stew that I started to keep, then decided another family needed it more. My husband likes Spam but, after debating, we passed it to another's stack. There was a two-pound package of spaghetti that I knew I could use, but we decided to pass it on, as well as a five-pound bag of potatoes. I don't know when I have enjoyed anything so much. God was not only supplying my need but also allowing me to help bring cheer to others!

My husband had just finished delivering the groceries the next morn-

ing when we heard a knock on the door. The Salvation Army folks walked in with a big tub of groceries just for us. We hadn't expected help from that direction but were happy to have it. I had the most wonderful surprise when I went through the tub. Among the many other good things, there were a 2½-pound can of beef stew, a can of Spam, 2 pounds of spaghetti, and a 10-pound bag of potatoes. Everything that I had started to keep but had shared with someone else, God had returned to me, even down to the same brand! You may call that coincidence, but I believe that God was showing me that He is in control even when I can't always see it.

A couple of nights later, a lady in a neighboring village called up and told us to fix a kettle of mashed potatoes, and she would be right over. We puzzled over it while we boiled the potatoes. When she arrived shortly thereafter, she carried a roast turkey

luscious enough to have stepped out of a magazine menu! It was hot, stuffed and ready to eat, and accompanied by salads, vegetables, gravy, and two hot pies. We were overwhelmed at her kindness and God's goodness. There was far too much food for just two of us, so we had the pleasure of sharing with some of our people.

During the Christmas season we received a tower of goodies from Swiss Colony, a box of mixes and syrups from the Wisconsin Cheese man, a box from my old group from work (I couldn't believe they remembered, I'd been gone so long), a cheese assortment, a dried fruit tray, candy, cookies, and too much to even mention. Many of the things were far nicer than I would have bought myself. What appeared to be our bleakest Christmas turned out to be the biggest shower of blessings that I could imagine. God is teaching me that I can safely trust Him. 

## Letter to the Editor

### Editor's Note—

*Pastors and wives, please read the following letter. What would you say to its author? What advice could you offer?*

*Please send your reply to:*

THE PREACHER'S MAGAZINE  
10814 E. Broadway  
Spokane, WA 99206

*I have a feeling she is not alone.*

Dear Editor:

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

You see, my church is dead. Or, to

be more optimistic, it's nearly dead. There's only a handful of members. Most of them are senior citizens. All of them seem very complacent. I've been going there for nearly four years. The church hasn't grown. And now I'm dying spiritually too.

The people are good. They're very kind to me, and they love the Lord. Also, they're very tolerant of my two children, just about the only little children that attend. And I am the only young mother.

It is a chore for me to get my girls ready for Sunday School each week. Often I'm too tired or discouraged to take them on Sunday and Wednesday nights, but I feel guilty when we stay home.

The pastor is very nice, but his sermons are rather shallow. I don't think he has spent much time on them. But I'm sure he's very busy. Our small church can't pay him much, so he must work at two other jobs.

I long for deep preaching, outreach ministries, and spiritual fellowship. I have some friends who go to the Baptist church. I have visited there, and I like it. But I can't agree with their doctrine.

I wish you could give me some advice. I really don't know what to do. I have considered looking for another church, but that is not feasible, you see. I'm married to the pastor.

Name withheld by request

Pontius' Puddle  




# He Is Lord— on Monday?

by Arthur L. Rouleau

Garden Grove, Calif.

Choir and congregation in unity of spirit and unison of voice rise to heights of spiritual joy as the words to "He Is Lord" fill the chapel or sanctuary. The Holy Spirit descends and condescends to fill human cups to overflowing.

The joy doesn't end then and there. After church doors are locked and families gather around the table for Sunday dinner, the chamber of the heart still echoes the words. Sometimes the impulse to voice the words again cannot be constrained: "He is Lord." An awesome quiet prevails with the realization that the Lord is present. His wounds became even more precious.

But tomorrow is Monday.

What is the matter with Monday? Nothing.

Mondays are great when He is Lord. But Mondays usually initiate the test: "Is He Lord?" Outside the walls of the sanctuary we are not protected from worldly distractions. The church family separates to embrace the day without the collective influence. Each disciple must face the test alone: "Is He Lord?"

Several decades ago some ministers in the Southwest devised a newsletter called *Monday Morning Madness*. It was an appropriate name for the newsletter because Mondays can be terrible testing days for pastors. Someone has said that more ministers resign their churches on Monday than on any other day of the week.

A. B., as he was called, came to my church study on Saturday nights to pray with me. As a pastor of a church in unusually difficult circumstances, I welcomed that partnership in prayer. One Saturday night we prayed through our prayer list but still felt a burden that we couldn't put into words. We continued to pray as best we could, with much praise, until late in the evening when the burden on our hearts at last rolled away. Joy

filled the gap left by the departed burden. We knew something good would follow.

My spirits soared during the Sunday morning service. The anointing of God's Spirit prevailed. A man in his 70s had been visiting our church. His wife had requested prayer for him on several occasions. He was a good husband and a good moral man. And now, with the invitation to come to Christ extended, he made his way down the aisle to meet Jesus.

One man in his 70s. One study revealed that out of a 1,000 Christians, 526 had found the Lord before 20 years of age. After 60—only 1.

God condescended to let A. B. and I share in the great miracle of intercessory prayer.

My heart sang!

But God, in His wisdom, places checks and balances in many congregations lest a pastor forget he is made of the same clay as other men. That morning, greeting the departing congregation at the door of my church, my "thorn" grasped my hand.

"Pastor," he began in his most funereal tone. I braced myself. "Pastor! Do you know that you forgot to pray before you preached this morning?"

He had me. He was right. In my relish for beginning the sermon, my customary prayer that precedes it was neglected. I wanted to tell him that A. B. and I had prayed half the night before while he was watching wrestling matches on TV. I wanted to point to God's answer to prayer that far outweighed my momentary neglect. But "He is Lord," and He would have me love and pray for the man.

Then came Monday. The words "He is Lord" were still there, but the music had evaporated like the air from a perforated balloon. I had to deal with those feelings in order to regain the lost inner music.

On Monday, the teacher returns to her class, the mechanic to his garage,

the computer technician to drives, chips, and programs. All enter the week by the door called Monday. Each one must face the realities that include "thorns" with the roses.

There will be "thorns"!

But we are not alone!

Jesus is Lord of Mondays! He knew no padded pew in a sanctuary with stained-glass windows. No choirs lifted His spirits. No pastor inspired Him to new heights of faith and service. He prayed in a garden, on a mountaintop—wherever.

The little book *The Practice of the Presence of God*<sup>1</sup> has blessed believers for several hundred years. It is a collection of letters and recorded conversations of a Carmelite monk. Brother Lawrence, as he was called, served in a monastery. Central to the little book is his emphasis on practicing God's presence at all times—including the most menial tasks. Brother Lawrence detested kitchen work, but in the monastic life such tasks are shared by all.

The kitchen, to the edge of old age, was his realm, hot, smoky, unperturbed, and unpreoccupied.<sup>2</sup>

It was the same in the kitchen to which he had a strong natural aversion, but he trained himself to do everything there for the love of God.<sup>3</sup>

With the practice of God's presence, the good brother found joy in the turning of a pancake or even the most demanding task—scrubbing the floors. The difference was in the fact that he wasn't alone. The glory of God's presence affected a miracle in Brother Lawrence and his loathed work. The thorn of a menial task was transformed into a rose.

Perhaps Paul and Silas were in prison on Monday! Though their feet were in the stocks, their hearts were full as they sang. They practiced God's presence. The prison shook, the doors swung open, "and every one's bands were loosed" (Acts 16:26, KJV). A guard met the Savior.

Monday's adversity may turn into great opportunity if "He Is Lord" of Monday by practicing His presence in the power of His Spirit. 

#### NOTES

1. E. M. Blaiklock, *The Practice of the Presence of God—Brother Lawrence* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, Publishers).

2. *Ibid.*, 11.

3. *Ibid.*, 23.

# How It Happens: The Way Down

by Fred Wenger  
Parsons, Kans.

Several years ago a pastor gave me permission to tell his story; he added, "If it would do anyone any good." As I hear of brothers in the ministry who fall into sin, I feel a burden to share this anonymous pastor's experience.

The man talked about coming to see me at my office for a month or more. One day, when he mentioned it again, I pulled out my appointment book and asked, "How about setting a time?" We agreed on a date. He came to the chaplain's office, and we made ourselves comfortable in the matching overstuffed chairs. He talked about one thing and another. Actually, he didn't say anything that seemed very significant to me. He indicated that he'd like to have another appointment at the same time next week. I was willing. After he left, I wondered why he had come and why he wanted another meeting.

The second session seemed similar to the first. We set another time to get together. Before he left, I ventured, "I want you to do one thing before you leave. I want you to bring to mind the worst, most embarrassing thing you know about yourself. I want you to think in terms of something that would be very difficult to tell me or anyone else. Simply bring it to mind."

He reacted as though I had hit him. He not only knew what it was immediately, but he began telling me. I tried to delay him and told him to share it anytime he was ready. He told me, "I want to share it now!"

Then, in a few minutes, he blurted out his awful story. He felt guilty because he had been to big cities alone on two separate occasions for the purpose of buying sexual favors from a sex parlor. He said, "Only God and I know, but that's almost unbearable."

He asked what he should do about it.

We explored the options of someone in his denomination to whom he could talk. We agreed that for the moment he needed to do at least two things: first, to stop the sinful behavior; and second, to seek the forgiveness he had preached to others. I thought he would seek that forgiveness then and there, but he left without saying anything more.

In subsequent visits, we examined how he had gotten himself into such a mess. Not excusing himself, he explained that he and his wife had never had a satisfactory sexual adjustment. At their young age, they didn't want another child. However, they didn't want surgery to eliminate that possibility either. Ordinarily his wife should have been invited for joint counseling. But he hadn't confessed to her yet. We counseled together without the benefit of her presence and involvement. Even with this handicap, he was making progress.

In the next several appointments he realized how he first admitted that his needs were not being met. He had decided it was his wife's problem, and he had built up strong resentments toward her for being stubborn and inflexible. When badgering her failed to win what he desired, he let the problem fester in his spirit. Soon he had rationalized: "She owes me sexual satisfactions as my wife. If she won't pay, then I have the right to do what it takes to be satisfied. Besides, doing it my way won't hurt anybody, since nobody will know about it."

While his evil thoughts had festered within, the idea had gained some plausibility—at least it seemed so to him at the time. My friend con-

fessed that he didn't realize that he had been so angry until we looked at it honestly together. After getting in touch with his deep resentment, he took another step and redefined the whole problem as "ours" instead of "hers."

I don't know if he ever told his wife. But I know he began changing in desirable ways. I recall with tenderness the day he shared, "You know, lately I've been preaching a lot on God's unconditional forgiveness. It has meant so much to me in a more personal way than ever before."

I gently probed to see if he knew why. His face lit up as he replied, "I think it began the day I told you the worst about me, and you didn't condemn me. You accepted me. That must be how God does it too."

During our last meeting together, we spent time talking about the personal work of the Holy Spirit in our lives. My friend was beginning to see the Holy Spirit at work.

This anonymous pastor has gone forward in ministry. He communicates with me every so often. He reports that he is doing well. I'm thankful to God that I had been there for him. I only regret that he didn't realize that I had been there for him *before* he went astray. His experience taught me a most important lesson: I must know and face my feelings, or they will get repressed and come back to haunt me in ways that are not as much under my conscious control. Perhaps this is what happens when a pastor gets involved with his secretary or a counselee. If the attraction is there, whether he has a strong marriage relationship or not, it's time to refer the counselee to someone else and seek understanding of oneself. Until he knows, "Why am I so attracted to this person at this time?" he is in a highly dangerous situation. One sex therapist told ministers, "When I find myself looking forward to our next appointment, then I'm on thin ice."

Awareness of one's own feelings is the best defense against ending up on the ash heap of failure. Though it may be scary to admit, I'd rather seek a counselor to discuss why I'm sexually attracted to a counselee than to have to seek forgiveness and restoration of my life and ministry because I had ignored the first warning signs.

# DESPERATE

by Alan Nelson

*El Toro, Calif.*

### Our Pastor's Desire for Church Growth Led Him to Prayer

If one thing epitomized Alan Nelson, it was a desire for success—ministerial success, “holy” success. Following graduation from Olivet Nazarene University, I committed the next five years of my life to an informal investigation of achievement principles. I cataloged over 500 spiral notebook pages full of key points from the plethora of self-help books, tapes, articles, and seminars I consumed. I always sensed a call to the ministry, a “specialness” God had for me. I thought I’d be another Billy Graham.

I traveled as a speaker during and after college until a pastor in Thousand Oaks, Calif., called my wife and me to be youth ministers. From there I finished graduate work and was prepared to be a Zig Ziglar for churches, preaching the gospel of self-improvement and success. My wife joined the staff at Skyline Wesleyan Church in San Diego, where John Maxwell is the pastor. The first year there was the worst in my life. My speaking ministry dwindled. The beautiful principles lay dormant in three-ring binders. No one would publish my books. I felt washed up. I worked at a department store that Christmas season selling sweaters to make ends meet.

During this wilderness period, I realized God was replacing my dreams with His. Only three things have I vowed never to do: “I’ll never be a youth pastor, never have children, and never plant a church.” Our first ministerial position was a fulfilling youth pastorate. We have a beautiful son with child number two on the way. And God was clearly calling us to begin a church in South

Orange County. (I think I’ll vow never to be a millionaire!)

After wrestling in prayer and fasting, God vividly opened the doors for us to move to Saddleback Valley, the area between Saddleback Mountain and Laguna Beach, 20 minutes south of Disneyland, depending on what time of day you’re driving. This was it! As a student of success, I became a “church growth” junkie. I hopped around the country, attending “How I Grew My Church” conferences, and I read the right books. West Coast Church was destined to be an overnight hit.

Eleven weeks after moving to Mission Viejo, we had accumulated a total of 15 men, women, and children to begin our first public service. Because the area is so new and expensive, nearly half the churches

200 after one year. But at two years, when we became fully organized, our numbers were still around 110 in Sunday morning worship. Sure, I was studying small groups, worship, and leadership concepts. Yet my frustrations increased. We had done everything but stand on our heads, but the growth wasn’t continuing. We did telemarketing, direct mail, news ads, community involvement, Friend Days with celebrity guests and Mrs. Field’s Cookies (the cookies worked the best). The messages were positive, practical, and popular. We tried to convey excellence in all we did. Yet it was not enough.

When you compare your church to smaller ones, you’re tempted to become egotistical or apathetic. When you look at big church numbers, you become jealous and/or depressed. I was the latter. I signed up for Fuller Seminary’s “Breaking the 200 Barrier” seminar, which proved very insightful. However, during a two-month span, God was doing something else in my life. I was burned out on hearing the techniques of church growth and leadership, although they are important. Something else seemed to prevent our growth.

During the Fuller seminar, I spoke to Dr. Peter Wagner. He said, “I’ve been using your quote in a news article for my classes, where you say, ‘We’re not a small church; we’re a big

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## During this wilderness period, God replaced my dreams with His.

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meet in schools or rented spaces. We would start in the cinema at the Laguna Hills Mall, the highest traffic area in the valley. Our Christmas Sunday service had 192 people, netting a core of 50 regular attenders from which to grow. Within 6 months our average attendance rose to 100. We were thrilled; I could visualize the megachurch already. Maybe I’d have a church growth conference, too, someday.

Then it hit: the infamous plateau. Like a marathoner’s wall, we vacillated between 100 and 130 for the next 18 months. Our goal was to run

church just starting.” I chuckled. He said, “How about lunch today with my wife, Doris, and me?” I responded, “Well, I’ll try to fit you in my schedule.” (Kidding, of course.)

As we ate lunch, I revealed the church’s growth and my frustration. Dr. Wagner asked me about prayer; “God seems to be especially working through prayer these days.” I had sensed a leading this way for several weeks and had begun a morning prayer time. But I was nearly the only one there. Then Dr. Wagner said, “How would you like to meet Larry Lea?” I had just read Lea’s book

*Could You Not Tarry?* "I'd love to," I replied.

"Larry Lea feels a call to the Los Angeles area for prayer, and we're having a luncheon at Fuller for pastors and megachurches in southern California. We'll send you an invitation," Dr. Wagner said.

The next day at the seminar, John Maxwell suggested we have lunch. He invited Carl George, who was turning 50 that day. I knew God was working, since I had not pursued lunch with any of the three speakers.

My wife, Nancy, and I had been in discipleship groups with Ray and Anne Ortlund the previous year. Dr. Ray Ortlund called and asked us to be their prayer partners at a Forest Home pastors' retreat. The theme of the conference was prayer and worship. At the Fuller Seminary luncheon, Larry Lea shared how God had transformed his life and called him to prayer.

A few weeks later, I took a group of our church's leaders to a seminar. We arranged to meet Jack Hayford, who emphasized prayer and worship: "The primary thing that releases leadership is the breaking of our own perceptions and our own sense of the need to verify who we are. Not in an arrogant or conceited way, but in the sense that every leader is constrained by circumstances, by his own constituency, to somehow prove his leadership. We are raised to prove that by being strong or unlike something we fear. The main thing happening in the Body of Christ right now is that the Lord is bringing the whole Church face-to-face with the fact that you cannot be neat, slick, sophisticated, and have the power of God. You cannot."

Tommy Barnett, at Phoenix First Assembly of God Church, said, "God cannot use you until you're broken." Each of these achievers was saying the same thing.

The frosting on this spiritual lesson came during a premier Fuller Church Growth Institute seminar on prayer. They hit the nail on the head when someone quoted J. Herbert Kane: "The proponents of church growth, with very few exceptions, have emphasized the human factors and all but overlooked the divine factor. We need constantly to remember

that 'Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it' (Ps. 127:1, KJV); or, in the words of Zechariah, 'Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord Almighty' (4:6)."

In that seminar, I did not learn a technique, but rather a life-style. It was as if the covers were pulled back, and I could see the skeleton, the true structure of dynamic ministries. It is the power of the Holy Spirit, usually working through an anointed leader who is seeking God and hearing Him.

I was beginning to fear I was a

Saturday evening service in a nearby suburb.

Every few months, I meet with Rev. Tim Timmons and bounce ideas off him. Last week I said, "What role do you attribute to the Holy Spirit in the tremendous growth of this church?"

He said, "He is *the* key. We try to be wise in our management, but God seems to choose certain works and various times to bless."

Next, I asked with a little bit of anger, "Then why do so many pastors put on church growth seminars, giving techniques: 'Here's how we do it?'"

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## Human skills are not enough to build God's Church.

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"Christian leader" groupie. Perhaps I had sought their presence but not caught their essence. God showed me that He had brought these individuals my way so that I would brush against them and learn what He wanted to teach: pray and obey.

Someone said, "You can do more than pray, but you cannot do more until you have prayed." Another helpful quote is, "Prayer is not preparing to do the work. Prayer *is* the work." My desperate desire to see our church grow has driven me beyond my own talents and strategies to helpless pleading at the Cross. God seems to be saying that human skills are not enough to build His Church. I now agree that if I'd experienced such rapid "success" with such an attitude, I'd soon cave in like a hollow Easter bunny.

During this time, we began a formal prayer ministry. Every week a group of 20 people committed to pray receives an updated "praise and request" report. We held a prayer life seminar also. Every Sunday prior to our service, we have the "Hour of Power" in the teachers' lounge at the school where we meet. This time is for concentrated group prayer by the prayer team. We phone intercessors with urgent matters.

As soon as we began this focus, our attendance jumped 25 percent with no promotion, ads, or Mrs. Field's Cookies. We had 300 on Easter. New people visit weekly. Soon we'll go to two services, and we're beginning a

Rev. Timmons smiled. "I think it's because humanly we're still in the numbers game. And in our Western culture, we want to be able to explain it and package it." It made sense.

What I have learned is that there is no key technique to church growth. Most of these leaders have, at times, been very receptive to God. The Holy Spirit has provided unique insights into how He wanted to work in their specific situation. For some, it was slick promotional big days or good preaching. For others, it may have been buses, evangelistic campaigns, or quality worship music. Some honestly admit that they have no idea.

My type-A driven behavior is fleeting now as I spend more time in prayer. I've been pretty consistent in my commitment to invest one to two hours minimum in daily prayer, seeking God. My intentions have always been good, but not good enough. I need to pay the price. Instead of asking God to bless what I'm doing, I'm seeking God to show me what He's blessing. Although I believe God has called me to a vision that will attract the masses, I no longer need to be the pastor of a big church. I am still occasionally tempted to look over the statistics and hope for a Pentecost-type growth spurt, but prayer humbles my fleshly compulsions. I came to realize that kneeling before the altar was not enough. God wanted me on the altar. 



# Why Pastors Resign

by **Croft M. Pentz**

Cranford, N.J.

**B**ill Johnson pastored First Assembly of God for 10 years. The church enjoyed a steady growth. Under his leadership it went through two building programs. Finances were at an all-time high. He was loved and appreciated by the membership.

The church board was stunned when he read his resignation in the monthly board meeting. Asked why he was resigning, he simply replied, "I just feel it is time to move on."

The board encouraged him to give it more thought and prayer. Within a few weeks he changed his mind and remained as pastor. The past few years have been the best years of his ministry.

Churches have been hurt by the untimely resignation of the pastor. Some of these have struggled on for months without a shepherd. Attendance and finances have dropped drastically.

Of course, there are cases where pastors are square pegs in round holes. They just don't fit. Perhaps they were hasty in accepting the pastorate. Or maybe church members

were too quick in making the selection, permitting personality and charisma to rule instead of seeking God's will.

There are exceptional cases when God may use a pastor for a few years in a given church.

However, most will have to agree that the average pastor resigns too quickly and too often.

## **Why Do Pastors Resign?**

### *Because of People*

Some pastors have difficulty understanding and getting along with people. They take any disagreement personally. In some cases the wife does not relate to people, and this eventually leads to problems.

Communicating with people is an art the pastor must develop. Since no two persons are alike, he needs divine wisdom and understanding in dealing with his flock.

People's moods can change as often as the weather. Studying human nature is a course from which one never graduates. Some basic courses in Christian psychology might be helpful.

Don't resign, thinking you will find a better situation in the next church. People are basically the same wherever you go. The grass may seem greener on the other side, but it is just as hard to cut.

Study your people carefully. Speak to God about them. Seek the wisdom God has promised if we ask (James 1:5).

At all times use proper ethics. Be consistent. You may compromise in policy but never in principle. Always be courteous even to those who oppose you. Never be rude to anyone.

Don't resign when everything is going well. Don't resign when everything is going wrong. Resign only when you know without a doubt it is God's will. Beware of feelings that can be deceptive, causing you to feel you should move on.

### *Because of Problems*

Sometimes a pastor creates his own problems. Not knowing how to handle people and situations properly as a qualified leader, he fails to solve the problem but rather becomes part of it.

Certain difficulties if left alone will work themselves out. However, others we must confront and seek to work out.

Some pastors are fearful in attempting to settle problems. They play politics, not wanting to hurt anyone. A true leader makes the decision as to what is right and lets the chips fall where they may.

God has given proper tools for settling problems: spiritual gifts of wisdom, knowledge, and discerning of spirits (1 Cor. 12:8, 10, KJV).

Learn to depend upon divine wisdom and guidance. You will have less problems, and those you do face will be much easier to solve. Remember, this is God's work, and these are God's people.

Always be firm and fair. Deal with problems in love.

Of course, the greatest help in solving problems is a systematic method of preaching God's Word, expository style. With this type of preaching each week, God's Word does the speaking.

Keep in mind, no churches are free of problems. How you as a pastor deal with them will determine their removal or growth.

#### *Because of Pressure*

The late Harry S. Truman said, "If you can't stand the heat, stay out of the kitchen." If you cannot live with pressure, you don't belong in the ministry.

Sometimes the pastor is not qualified to live with pressure. Therefore, instead of relieving the tension, he only adds to it.

At times pastors fail to practice equality; then concessions are made to those who provide financial backing. Standards are lowered. There is compromise. This leads to pressure.

Out of pressure emerges the real you. Pressure can help you mature or discourage you. Pressure causes many to resign. It causes some to leave the ministry.

There are various ways to relieve pressure. Hobbies, sports, exercise, or a vacation may be the answer. Someone has said, "If you don't come apart and rest awhile, you will go to pieces and rest a long time."

Of course, the best way of relieving pressure is to cast all your care upon the Lord (1 Pet. 5:7).

Keep in mind, the church you pastor is not yours—it is God's! The bat-

tle is the Lord's. Don't fall prey to the mistake some make of building their own kingdom.

In every church there are people and factions that create stress. You can never avoid this. How you deal with it determines how long you remain as pastor. It also determines how long the pressure remains.

#### *Because of Privation*

Privation and sacrifice are a vital part of the ministry. All God's servants are required to make sacrifices. The ministry is not a profession, it's a calling.

1. *Social privation.* God has not called you to be a friend, pal, or buddy. He has called you to be the spiritual leader.

Though the pastor and his wife deal with people daily, the ministry can be a lonely life.

2. *Financial privation.* In recent years the pastor's salary, retirement benefits, and housing allowance have increased considerably. Still the average pastor is not in the same league with the businessmen of his church.

Some churches cannot afford a large salary and benefits. Home missions, inner-city, and special ministries churches cannot afford salaries and benefits equal to the established congregations. Thank God for those who will serve in these areas for years without adequate salaries and benefits.

God will be a debtor to no one. He will more than make up for the sacrifices. If you work overtime, remember, God keeps good records.

3. *Physical privation.* Many pastors must labor overtime to accomplish God's work.

They will have to rearrange their schedule often. It will mean extra hours of work. Here is where the will of God becomes more real than ever. If the ministry were a profession, few would work the extra hours without pay.

4. *Domestic privation.* Though it is necessary for the pastor to take time with his wife and family, sometimes family plans must be rearranged and canceled.

The sudden death of a member, the urgent call to the hospital, the responsibility of comforting the family of a runaway youth—these needs cannot be rearranged.

Some members of the family may

not be able to accept this. More than one pastor has been forced to resign because of such privation.

What a great reward awaits the members of families who were willing to endure these privations!

#### *Because of Pain*

Regardless of how you sacrifice, work, and help people, some will turn on you and hurt you.

The axiom "People you help the most often hurt you the most" is so true in being a pastor.

Christ was made King on Palm Sunday as He rode into Jerusalem. However, probably some of those who made Him King on Sunday were there to shout, "Let Him be crucified."

The prophets were faithful servants of God, yet they were mistreated by those they served. The disciples suffered and gave their lives for the sake of the gospel. Jesus was perfect, yet He was crucified.

How you react to those who hurt you determines the difference between success and failure in the pastorate. Most never see the person who strikes the first blow. When you retaliate, the whole church sees.

Sometimes you may be the whipping boy for your members who are expressing their feelings toward the previous pastor. They were hurt by him. Now they are directing their feelings toward you. This you will have to overcome.

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Before you resign your church, ask yourself these questions:

1. Are people causing me to resign? If I understood them better, would I still leave?

2. Are problems causing me to resign? Should I not stay and work out the problem? If I resign prematurely, will not the problems only increase?

3. Are pressures causing me to resign? Have I allowed the pressures to overcome me, instead of overcoming the pressures?

4. Are privations causing me to resign? Does material gain mean more than the call and will of God?

5. Is pain causing me to resign? Have the unthoughtful acts and speech of some caused me to give up?

Of course, there is a time to resign. But be sure beyond doubt it is God's will. Leaving prematurely will hurt not only the church but also God's work. 

## The Governmental Theory: An Expansion

by J. Kenneth Grider

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**H**ardly any area of Christian doctrine is more widely misunderstood among the holiness movement's clergy than the doctrine of the Atonement. I have had whole seminary classes raise their hands, signifying that they believe Christ paid the penalty for us. It is also widely understood that Christ's death paid the debt we owed to God. Also, it is sometimes thought that, in this area, we can use a smorgasbord of theories.

As I understand Scripture, though, it teaches what Arminians have called the *governmental* theory, when that theory is expanded to make room for such matters as ransom and love and God's holiness (as emphasized by P. T. Forsyth).

The governmental theory of the Atonement is at its base the view that Christ suffered for us so that the holy God could forgive us and still govern us justly. The seeds of this theory are in the teachings of James Arminius (1560-1609); but it was first taught, as an Atonement view, by one of his students, Hugo Grotius. Late last century it was explicated quite thoroughly by Methodism's John Miley in his *Atonement in Christ*.<sup>1</sup>

The theory will be discussed first by showing what it cannot incorporate into itself, and then by treatment of what it can and does consist of.

### What It Cannot Incorporate

The governmental theory can incorporate into itself everything that Scripture teaches about the Atonement. It can incorporate into itself, therefore, the salient aspects of several Atonement theories, such as the classical *ransom* and *moral influence* theories. These matters will be discussed presently.

At the same time, it is not so eclectic that it has any affinity for the main elements of two of the major Atonement theories: the payment of a debt in the *satisfaction* theory; and Christ's being punished, as in the *punishment* theory.

Whereas Calvinists boldly teach that Christ paid the penalty for us—that He took our punishment—and believe their view to be biblical, it is altogether opposed to the teaching of Scripture. Neither the Hebrew Old Testament nor the Greek New Testament ever teach this view. The NIV, translated by Calvinists in the main, renders the Hebrew *musar* in Isa. 53:5 as "punishment" (reading "the punishment that brought us peace was upon him"), whereas the KJV uses "chastisement." The KJV, also translated by Calvinists as a matter of fact, does not once use any form of the English word for "punishment" to describe what happened to Christ. Always the word is "suffering," or certain synonyms of that word. Scripture

teaches that Christ *suffered* for us, not that He was *punished* for us. The KJV states 27 times that Christ suffered for us.<sup>2</sup> The NASB has the same number;<sup>3</sup> the NIV has 1 more.<sup>4</sup> The RSV uses some form of the word "suffering" for what Christ did for us 26 times.<sup>5</sup>

The reason why Scripture teaches that Christ suffered for us instead of being punished is, in part, because He was sinless and therefore guiltless. It is also in part because God the Father really does forgive us, whereas, if He punished Christ instead of us, He could not then have forgiven us. In Christ's substitutionary punishment, justice would have been satisfied, precluding forgiveness. One cannot both punish and forgive; surely a parent could not.

The other aspect of the atonement theory that the governmental theory cannot incorporate into itself is Anselm's *satisfaction* theory's main aspect: that Christ's death paid a debt for us. Even as one cannot punish and then also forgive, one cannot accept payment for a debt and still forgive it. Roman Catholics teach, even make a sacrament of, the doctrine of penance. This is the doctrine that we do not receive sheer forgiveness, but that we must first do various disciplinary penances in order to receive forgiveness. So Anselm's satisfaction view suits Roman Catholic teaching but not Protestant doctrine. Protestants do not understand that Christ paid a debt for us. That is, we do not formally and ideally believe it, although the idea creeps into Protestant practice—as through the Elvina M. Hall hymn, "Jesus paid it all; All to Him I owe." We might even think of Christ's paying a debt for us because of the Scripture passage that reads, "You are not your own; you were bought at a price" (1 Cor. 6:19-20). This no doubt means that we are bought with the price of Christ's suffering, not by a debt being paid for us. And the hymn can be sung with a similar understanding. "Jesus paid it all" can mean that He paid the cost of suffering, and that we owe Him everything because He, the altogether sinless One, suffered on our behalf. Yet many Protestants no doubt interpret both the Pauline statement and the Elvina Hall hymn according to the Roman Catholic teaching that Christ's death paid the Father a debt on our behalf. But again, as with punishment, so with this teaching: Neither a human being nor God can accept payment for and still forgive the same debt. And forgiveness, sheer forgiveness, is unique to Christianity of all the religions and must be protected.

It might seem to some people that there is scriptural basis for Christ's paying our debt in the Bible's saying that Christ gave His life as a "ransom" (e.g., Mark 10:45). But payment of a debt and ransom are different. This is partly

because the debt was thought of as paid to God, whereas Christ's giving His life as a ransom redeems us, buys us back, from the slavery to Satan that sin had gotten us into. Thus Halford E. Luccock says that Christ's death as a ransom is "the price by which people have been delivered from bondage."<sup>6</sup>

### What It Can Incorporate

While the governmental theory cannot incorporate into itself the understanding that Christ paid the penalty for us, or that He paid a debt for us, it can indeed incorporate into itself all the various teachings of Scripture and numerous understandings promoted in the other major Atonement theories.

For one thing, it can incorporate into itself Peter Forsyth's emphasis on how God's holiness figures in the Atonement. The basic elements of P. T. Forsyth's understanding of the Atonement can be—and should be—incorporated into the governmental theory. One of Forsyth's contributions, in his great book on the Atonement, *The Work of Christ*, is that in this deed, God himself made the "offering." Forsyth says, "The real objective element in atonement is not that something was offered to God, but that God made the offering."<sup>7</sup> He similarly says, "God made the atonement."<sup>8</sup> This is a profound understanding.

Forsyth also says that the Atonement was "something actually done, and not merely said or shown, by God, something really done from the depth of God who is the action of the World."<sup>9</sup> So God actually did something for us. Some interpreters have suggested that, since Forsyth was saying things like this in 1910, he might well have influenced Karl Barth's emphasis on the deeds that God actually did on our behalf. This understanding, which emphasizes what is concretely historical and actual, in distinction from what is merely ideational and ethereal, or conceptual, can and should be incorporated into the governmental theory.

A kindred emphasis in Forsyth that should also be incorporated into the governmental theory of the Atonement is that it is not quite that "Christ and His death reconciled God to man,"<sup>10</sup> but that in that death we have "God reconciling himself."<sup>11</sup> He means to say that there was no "third party" who reconciled God and man, but that God himself did it.

Forsyth also viewed the Atonement as something done for the race, somewhat as Olin Alfred Curtis had done in his *Christian Faith* of 1905. This racial concept can also surely be incorporated into the governmental theory. Forsyth says, "The first charge upon Christ and His Cross was the reconciliation of the race, and of its individuals by implication."<sup>12</sup> Surely Paul had something like this in mind when he spoke of the racial significance of both Adam and Christ (Rom. 5:12-21; 1 Corinthians 15).

Perhaps the single most basic aspect of Forsyth's Atonement view is his emphasis on God's holiness. Indeed, that emphasis is part and parcel of these other matters. Forsyth says, "What is meant by the holiness of God is the holy God."<sup>13</sup> Holiness is more than an attribute. It is what

God basically is. And it is because of this, for Forsyth, that God had to bring judgment upon sin by Christ's atoning death, before being able, as holy, to forgive sin. Sin defied God as the "Holy One." We would not even respect a God who told us that our sins were simply being overlooked. In the Atonement, the holy God himself became an offering for the whole race, judging sin, making it possible for himself to forgive sin without sin's being appraised lightly. This is similar to the governmental theory concept of John Miley and others. It is even more profound, though, than Miley's theory that Christ's death makes it possible for God to forgive the sinner and still maintain

His governmental control over us, since we will see that sin is serious since Jesus had to die before it could be forgiven. Forsyth says that Jesus had to go to the Cross because God could not otherwise forgive us and still be the Holy One. Miley's view is biblical, and Forsyth's is also biblical. Forsyth's un-

derstanding is more profoundly biblical and theological than Miley's, and it should be incorporated into the governmental theory.

The governmental theory can incorporate into itself the emphasis on Christ's ransoming us as in the classical *ransom* theory of the Atonement. Christ did indeed ransom us from Satan, as Scripture teaches us. Christ did indeed "give his life as a ransom for many," as we read in Matt. 20:28 and Mark 10:45 (also see Heb. 9:15). The Greek word for ransom is *lutron*, and it literally means "a means of loosing." Here the accompanying preposition is *anti*, meaning that Christ gave His life as a means of loosing us from Satan's bondage—"instead of" those who accept Him giving their own lives over to Satan's continuing bondage.

Paul uses the ransom figure the only other time it is found in the New Testament in 1 Tim. 2:5-6, where he speaks of "the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom [*antilutron*] for all men." Here the preposition "for" translates the Greek *huper*, "on behalf of." Instead of His doing this for "the many," as in the Matthew and Mark statement (which might conceivably suggest that it was done for the elect, but probably refers to the ones who accept the benefits), Paul here says it was done for "all," "indicating that the ransom was provisionally universal."<sup>14</sup>

Moreover, the governmental theory incorporates into itself the emphasis on God's love that is the main point in the Abelardian *moral influence* theory. As long as we are not talking about an emphasis on God's love so extreme as to deprecate His holiness and man's sinfulness and other important Christian emphases, a governmental theorist may and should include an emphasis on God's love. John 3:16 excites Christians commonly, where we all read, "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." Christ's own love spelled out for us in drops of blood from five bleeding wounds is also common to all Christians, for we all read, "For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died

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Christ *suffered* for us,  
not that He was  
*punished* for us.

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for all. . . . And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again" (2 Cor. 5:14-15). Christ's love—displayed so vividly on the Cross, when He did not have to die but did, when He could have called for more than 12 legions of angels to deliver Him from His enemies but did not do it—compels us to turn to the Father for forgiveness. The RSV, instead of "compels," translates it with "controls us." The Greek word there means "shuts us up to a given course," so that we can hardly do anything else but respond to such a Golgotha deed.

Moreover, the governmental theory includes the vicarious aspect of the Atonement. That is, it includes the understanding that Christ did something on behalf of us. Here the preposition is *huper*. It is used in Scripture numerous times for what Christ did. It is translated "on behalf of," and it means that Christ's death was "on behalf of" us. This is the special basis for our understanding that there is a vicarious element in the Atonement. Not only was it something done as a substitute for something else, but also it was done vicariously for us, or on our behalf, so that its benefit can be transferred to us. The use of this word *huper* means that the worth of His substitutionary suffering can be transferred to our account, if we repent and believe.

### It Has Wide Applications

Since Christ's suffering on everyone's behalf is provisionally redemptive, our present suffering on behalf of others is also provisionally redemptive. This might be the inmost kernel of truth of the Christian faith: that suffering is provisionally redemptive. And its application is wide-scooped. It means that when we suffer for others, it can become a means of their turning to God to receive the benefits of Christ's suffering love on the Cross.

This is why Paul says, "For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for him, since you are going through the same struggle you saw I had, and now hear that I still have" (Phil. 1:29-30). The word for "granted" here is *eccharisthē*, from *charidzomai*, meaning "to give . . . graciously as a favor." It means that the Philippians had been gifted with the privilege of suffering on Christ's behalf.

Paul is more clear still about the redemptive value of our suffering when he says to the Colossians, "Now I rejoice in what was suffered for you, and I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions, for the sake of his body, which is the church" (1:24). It might seem strange that something is lacking in Christ's suffering, which Paul says he makes up for through his own sufferings. Yet that is what he says. And what is lacking in Christ's afflictions is that they were done a long time ago and a long way off. They are of infinite worth, of course, but there is much space and time difference between His sufferings and the life situations of specific people today. But when we suffer for them, when we stand right up in front of people and suffer on their behalf, it commands their attention. When a mother suffers for an erring son, not sleeping until he gets home at night, praying for him, it commands his attention. When a Christian factory worker does his own work, plus that of

a fellow worker, uncomplainingly after the worker has been too drunk on the weekend to return to the workplace, it commands the worker's attention and can become redemptive. When a Christian husband suffers through a wife's unchristian practices and still cares for her as the prophet Hosea did, the suffering can be redemptive. Such instances of suffering can occasion a straying person's turning to the God of suffering love for the forgiveness that He offers.

The governmental theory is also substitutionary. According to this theory, what Christ did became a substitute for something else that would otherwise occur. In the punishment theory, His punishment is a substitution for the punishment the elect would have received in hell. In the satisfaction theory, Christ substituted the payment of a debt man owed to God by His meritorious death—earning points since He was sinless and therefore did not deserve it. But there is substitution also in the governmental theory—substitution of a different sort. Here there is a double-dimension substitution. There is substitution in the sense that something Christ did substituted for something that would have been required of the finally impenitent. But then, there is a substitution of the guiltless Christ's suffering for the punishment that those who repent and believe would have received in eternal hell. Scripture speaks of some form of substitution. This is when Scripture uses the preposition *anti*, "instead of," as when we read, "The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for [*anti*] many" (Matt. 20:28; Mark 10:45).

Surely then, we Arminians, in our preaching and teaching, are not to tell people that Christ paid the penalty for us or our debt. And surely we are to expand the theory of our tradition to include whatever is scriptural, particularly its teaching of the ransom figure, of God's love in it, and of God's holiness. 

### NOTES

1. John Miley, *The Atonement in Christ* (New York: Hunt and Eaton, 1889), 167 ff.
2. These are: suffer (Matt. 16:21; 17:12; Mark 8:31; 9:12; Luke 9:22; 17:25; 22:15; 24:46; Acts 3:18; 26:23), suffered (Luke 24:26; Acts 17:3; Heb. 2:18; 5:8; 9:26; 13:12; 1 Pet. 2:21, 23; 3:18; 4:1), suffering (Heb. 2:9), sufferings (2 Cor. 1:5; Phil. 3:10; Heb. 2:10; 1 Pet. 1:11; 4:13; 5:1).
3. These are: suffer (Matt. 16:21; 17:12; Mark 8:31; 9:12; Luke 9:22; 17:25; 22:15; 24:26, 46; Acts 3:18; 17:3; 26:23; Heb. 9:26), suffered (Heb. 2:18; 5:8; 13:12; 1 Pet. 2:21; 4:1), suffering (Acts 1:3; Heb. 2:9; 1 Pet. 2:23), sufferings (2 Cor. 1:5; Phil. 3:10; Heb. 2:10; 1 Pet. 1:11; 4:13; 5:1).
4. These are: suffer (Matt. 16:21; 17:12; Mark 8:31; 9:12; Luke 9:22; 17:25; 22:15; 24:26, 46; Acts 3:18; 17:3; 26:23; Heb. 9:26), suffered (Heb. 2:9, 18; 5:8; 13:12; 1 Pet. 2:21, 23; 4:1), suffering (Acts 1:3; Heb. 2:10), sufferings (Rom. 8:17; 2 Cor. 1:5; Phil. 3:10; 1 Pet. 1:11; 4:13; 5:1).
5. These are: suffer (Matt. 16:21; 17:12; Mark 8:31; 9:12; Luke 9:22; 17:25; 22:15; 24:26, 46; Acts 3:18; 17:3; 26:23; Heb. 9:26), suffered (Heb. 2:18; 5:8; 13:12; 1 Pet. 2:21, 23; 4:1), suffering (Heb. 2:9, 10), sufferings (2 Cor. 1:5; Phil. 3:10; 1 Pet. 1:11; 4:13; 5:1).
6. Halford E. Luccock, exposition of Mark 10:45 in Geo. Buttrick, ed., *The Interpreter's Bible*, vol. 7 (Nashville: Abingdon), 818.
7. P. T. Forsyth, *The Work of Christ* (London: Independent Press, 1910), 99.
8. *Ibid.*
9. *Ibid.*, 100.
10. *Ibid.*, 103.
11. *Ibid.*
12. *Ibid.*, 99.
13. *Ibid.*, 131.
14. W. E. Vine, *Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words* (Old Tappan, N.J.: Fleming H. Revell, 1981), 247.

# A Remedy for the Illustration Blues

Continued from page 8

ing, I discovered I had started separate files for "Faith," "Trust," and "Doubt." It made sense to consolidate these. I erased the titles on two folders and was able to reuse them.

4. File both positive and negative sides of the same topic together. This not only saves folders but also makes sense, since both sides of an issue usually enter into a sermon. For example, I have files for Faith/Doubt, Providence/Fate, and Loyalty/Betrayal.

5. As a general rule, use the positive aspect as the key file word. In other words, the Loyalty/Betrayal folder is filed under L, not B.

6. Don't worry about what topics to file. As you start saving illustrations, each one will suggest its own topic. After a short time, similar ones can be clumped together. My own file now has over 400 topics, but I find that most illustrations fit into one of those categories. At this point in the process, I add only two or three new topics each time I file. My entire list of topics is too long to include in this article, but as a sample, here are my Cs:

- Called of God, Chosen
- Capital Punishment
- Cause and Effect
- Causes, Crusades
- Change
- Charity
- Child Abuse
- Children
- Choice, Decision Making
- Christian Growth
- Christian Living and Practice
- Christianity Defined
- Christmas, Incarnation
- (The) Church, Community
- Church History
- Church-State Separation
- Comfort
- Commencement
- Committees
- Communication
- Communion
- Communism
- Complacency
- Complexity
- Compromise, Lukewarm
- Confession

- Conflict
- Conscience
- Consequences
- Contentment/Dissatisfaction
- Cooperation
- Courtesy
- Covenant, Promises
- Covenant Services
- Creation, Creationism
- Creativity
- Cross, Good Friday, Tenebrae
- Cults
- Culture (Modern), Life-style, Secularity

7. I encourage you to note the source and date of each illustration directly on the clipping (such as *Gazette*, 1/3/88, p. 2). Some real-life stories are so odd that someone will ask where you heard such a thing. You can back up your illustration with a source reference. More important, however, should you ever choose to publish any of your ser-

mons, such verification is necessary.

8. Illustrations can be found everywhere. Publications like *Guidedposts* and *Reader's Digest* are littered with them. Some of the freshest illustrations are often found in the daily newspaper and weekly news-magazines. However, I have found good illustrations in sources as diverse as a prison ministry newsletter, a personal letter from a friend, my own notes from seminary, a police officers' guide for homicide investigations, free public information pamphlets, and, in one case, even a slogan from a tea bag tag! Anything you read is potential fodder for your sermon cannon, even if you use it only as a negative example of your thesis.

9. Most important of all, don't wait until you need an illustration to start hunting for one. Start saving those good ones you find now. You will be glad you did.

Scissors in hand? Start reading. 



"Some snowstorm we had last night, eh, Reverend?"

# Do You Take This Church . . . ?

by David P. Markell

Greenville, Ill.

**I**f you really love your church, it's time to take those membership vows.

"So what's in a piece of paper? The important thing is that we really love each other." Where have we heard that before? You're right, but I'm not talking about marriage or living together. I'm talking about joining the church. Obviously, two people living together without being married is not in the same moral league as regularly attending a church without joining it. But at the relational, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual levels, there are some parallels.

Our culture has done something to our idea of joining things. Somehow it has made us leery of linking ourselves to anything that will require more commitment of us than we think we can give. It has also eroded the value of membership in anything, causing us to feel that the "piece of paper" really isn't a big deal. Commitment on the emotional level ought to be enough without making it concretely official.

If you are being urged to join the local church you are now attending, you are most likely looking for reasons to do so beyond the fact that it's the expected norm. You want to know what's in it for you. You want to know if you can honestly assent to the beliefs and values, the standards and procedures of a denomination. You want to know what level of commitment will be required of you.

Let's go back to the analogy of a marriage. In taking the vows and in signing the paper, we gain some bene-

fits not otherwise available. Many of these are parallel to joining a church.

### Identification

An obvious benefit of marriage is that of identification. Two people now belong to each other. In most cases, they take the same name. They have an identity as a couple, a family.

Along with the identity come several rights and privileges. Each partner has an equal vote in the affairs of the family. Financial and legal matters now pertain to the couple. Children born into that family take their identities from their parents, who are legally obligated to care for them.

What's in it for us to be identified as "Free Methodists"? To just be associated with the church without actually joining it may be nice and safe, nondemanding and comfortable. But what happens when such a person begins to get active in the fellowship, using his spiritual gifts in service as all Christians should? Sooner or later an issue comes up for consideration that affects them and calls for involvement on their part in decision making. They have no official identity with which to participate in the process. When a crisis hits their family, the base of support is automatically limited to their local church because there is no identity to attract the attention of a broader network of help. The full rights and privileges of membership simply are not there.

### Security

Another benefit of a legal marriage is that of security. Part of it comes from the identity of the marriage. But a bond is established that cannot be easily or frivolously broken. There is a legal obligation for provision and protection, which, if violated, will result in legal action to correct the problem. There is a place to run to when one needs a comfort zone. There is the security of not

being alone, of having a safety net underneath when the bottom falls out of life.

In joining a church, we receive the benefit of care and protection from that church. That church is obligated to care for us in many ways. Ideally, that church is there to support its own when crisis comes; to not let its members walk off the plank spiritually or morally; to affirm its people with a love that brings emotional security.

This is not to say that some measure of security won't be available for nonmembers. But they limit themselves from the full extent of what is available to them.

### Commitment

A third benefit is that of commitment. I committed myself to love, honor, and support my wife through thick and thin. When we have differences or are frustrated with each other, when as in all marriages the emotional commitment is tested, there is still that legal, willful commitment to one another that we will see everything through together.

As our relationship deepens, so does our resolve to go the distance for one another regardless of the cost. Without that willful commitment, sanctioned legally, any kind of commitment is on shaky ground.

When I joined the Free Methodist church, I made a commitment to it, and it made a commitment to me. Its commitment to me is part of my security base. But I also need to have a commitment to the church in order to keep me accountable and challenged to live outside my own protective cocoon.

Many people have become gun-shy of commitment because they are afraid of getting hurt or of being let down by people or organizations. So, out of fear, they become self-centered and protective. But that's not the kind of life Jesus called us to live.

If I were not a member of my church, there would be nothing other than friendship to push me to extend myself to serve others. Doing things for friends is easy, but serving those I don't know or don't like becomes a matter of obedience to Christ. The obligation of my commitment keeps me where I need to be spiritually.

Suppose I begin attending a church without intending to join it. Friendships develop and opportunities to contribute to the lives of others are constantly available. It feels good to give what little I can. But imagine that I get in a bind and church members come to my rescue. I receive their love and help, yet I

still do not want to identify with them. It puts me in an awkward position emotionally, owing a debt to them I am not willing to settle.

Are there ever good reasons not to join a church? There may be honest theological differences preventing people from embracing the beliefs of a church. To join a church is to accept and live by its beliefs and standards. If that is the case, then all ought to agree that the level of fellowship will of necessity be limited, but it should never exclude the expected kind of love and support Jesus wants His followers to extend to all fellow believers.

In my own crisis of health, I have needed my church. And as God has blessed me with more to give through what He has done in my life, my church needs me. The give-and-take is free. The sense of identity becomes richer, the security becomes deeper, the commitment level increases. I expect that, in the end, the kingdom of God will spread and strengthen because of the benefits all the way around of my belonging to the church.

The piece of paper really matters!

This article originally appeared in *Light and Life* magazine. Used by permission.

## Ten Important Books on the Small Church

by Steven E. Burt

Bethel, Vt.

Sometimes small churches need consultants. Other times they simply need resources—ideas, newsletters, articles, organizations, and especially books. Here are 10 helpful books.

### *Developing Christian Education in the Smaller Church*

Carolyn Brown

(Nashville: Abingdon, 1982)

This book seems to have become a classic. The sections on finding and training teachers are very helpful as is the section on what to expect from a "small church" pastor.

### *Activating Leadership in the Small Church: Clergy and Laity Working Together*

Steven E. Burt

(Valley Forge, Pa: Judson Press, 1988)

This book has nudged up to its third printing and is required reading in many U.S. and Canadian seminaries. It is one of four books in Judson's "Small Church in Action Series," which includes *Christian Education in the Small Church*, *Developing Your Small Church's Potential*, and *Money, Motivation, and Mission in the Small Church*.

### *Beyond Survival: Revitalizing the Small Church*

James R. Cushman

(Parsons, WVa:

McClain Printing Co., 1981)

The author has done a nice job describing the historical foundations of the small rural church. The book makes a very significant contribution to the corpus of good "small church" literature. Technically out of print, there may be a few copies left, available direct from Dr. James Cushman, Presbyterian Church USA, 100 Witherpoon Drive, Louisville, KY 40202.

(Continued on page 66)

# Wednesday Night Bible Study Is Born Again

by Lisa Ausley

Gulf Breeze, Fla.

**W**ednesday night Bible study at the Aquilla UM Church was pathetic. Rather than being a healthy, vigorous body of believers, it was more like a candidate for the intensive care unit at the medical center.

Driving toward the small, wood-frame church in our little Southern community carried with it emotions that might accompany one upon entering a morgue. The same two cars were parked on the grass that had been parked there every Wednesday night since one could remember. As my husband and I trod morosely toward the one glimmering light in the sanctuary window, study books underarm, our disappointment was once again confirmed.

Three dear gray heads posed complacently on the front pew. Every church has them. The saints. The ones who will be at the church door every time it is open. Bless their hearts. The only reason we came was that my husband was the pastor. But what compelled *them* to come week after week to this Wednesday evening session of lethargy?

Somehow this feeble fellowship did not fit into the vision we had for our first church. In seminary we had envisioned an excited, robust group of young Christians starved to grow to maturity in Christ. But the reality of our first appointment and our first Wednesday night Bible study quickly dispelled our naive idealism.

If Bible study were to be the vivacious, healthy organism we had expected, then we would have to create it!

Our first treatment was to bathe the patient in prayer. For three weeks we prayed and dreamed, dreamed and prayed. Our goal was to envision the kind of fellowship that Christ would desire for our little country church. We turned to our three faithful ladies and asked them to join us in this prayer effort. It was important

that God's dream became theirs too. And naturally, they wanted to be part of the healthy body for which we wished.

The next days of brainstorming, idea building, and praying brought us to our chief conclusion: *We must change the image of Wednesday night Bible study.* The study needed more than a face-lift. It was a corpse that needed to be buried and then resurrected to new life.

The first change needed for this new life was new people. We had to attract the unreached. Bible study had been at the church house for years, and people weren't coming to us there. So we decided to go to them.

After announcing in advance the birth of our new adventure and making it sound as interesting and provocative as possible, we scheduled the kickoff night in the home of a popular young couple. Their invitations by telephone to all the church members were not invitations just to the study, but rather to *their* home. That first night we had six. Success! Our group had doubled!

After two consecutive weeks in a home, we moved to another volunteer residence. And with the move, we had a chance for a new couple to invite, once again, all the members in the church. Some who didn't come at first now came, simply because it was at the home of a friend. In the beginning some people came out of obligation to their friend or relative. So we had to have something to keep them coming.

Our time together had to be creative and new, something they would talk about when they'd gone. We had to create a warm, welcoming atmosphere.

A change in the host home every few weeks helped. Hosts naturally welcomed the guests into their home. We, the leaders, tried to arrive first in order to speak a word with each person as he walked in the door.

By the time Bible study began, much talking, greeting, "catching up," and even laughter had taken place. Each one was seated comfortably in a rocking chair, sofa, or on the carpet. A time of interchange and singing led to the study. If a piano were available, simple choruses to familiar hymns were sung. If not, out came the guitar. Choruses were taught; Scripture songs were learned; action songs for the younger, more limber folks were enacted. Babies cooed from their blankets in the middle of the circle, with the little children joining in the singing and, later, exiting to the back bedroom for play during the study time.

By the time the study began, the group was at ease and cheerful—a necessary preparation for our change in image. Unless the study material was well chosen and carefully prepared, interesting and response-arousing, it would fail. Hours of personal study went into those first lessons, which centered on the Book of Philippians. Thought-provoking discussion questions got the people into participation—thinking and sharing. Then we focused on the text: asking questions, making observations, and seeing what the author said. A time to discover the implications of the biblical material followed. Finally application was made. This method might involve writing down a meaningful truth and sharing it with a partner, or closing in prayer centering on how that scripture touched each one, or drawing a picture to describe improvements we'd like to see in our lives. The more creative the better.<sup>1</sup>

Responsibility rested upon the leader. He needed to be sensitive to each member, to carefully plan each question to bring appropriate responses, to tug gently to bring each person into the group action. Most important, he needed to center the study on the Bible and to meet practical needs of the group.

To conclude the evening, the host would provide a table of "share and snack" goodies, encouraging 15 to 45 minutes of unstructured fellowship. The creation of this good feeling along with discussion-oriented Bible studies began to put our little fellowship on record as the "big happening" of our church and community.

It worked. After four weeks, our group had grown to 10 people, then to 15. After six months, 80 percent of our Sunday morning adult attendees go to Bible study.

As the momentum increased, we initiated personal growth in various areas. The leader began to require each member to come with a memory verse to recite. After the study of

Philippians concluded, a list of study books were brought by the pastor for our evaluation. The group chose its own direction from this carefully screened listing of topical studies. With this came the second requirement, the reading of each week's selected chapter and corresponding scripture. Discussion increased as each one came excited about the truth he had gleaned that week from his own study.

After six months of alive and vibrant study, Christians from other denominations began to come. Thus we changed the Bible study to Tuesday night to enable others to attend. Our study group has been an outreach for Christians wishing to touch their

friends for Jesus. It has served as a catalyst for changed, converted, and committed lives. Most encouraging, it has brought new life to our entire church.

Sunday attendance has increased, programs are expanding, giving has risen to new heights. Because of Bible study? No, but since that study has helped transform lives, it has ushered in a new spiritual climate to our church.

Bible study started with three white-haired women. It started with prayer. It started with a pastor dreaming God's vision. 

1. We are greatly indebted for the success of our studies to Lawrence O. Richards' book *Creative Bible Teaching* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1970).

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## On the Road Again: Pennsylvania Pastor Enjoys His Motorcycle

*Continued from page 15*

cyclists Association often travel to motorcyclists' meetings and, like many other "special interest" groups, they set up booths and distribute gospel tracts. The CMA members at first glance aren't any different from other motorcycle club members. Their beards are just as windblown, their faces just as tanned, and their blue jeans just as faded and worn. Only their triangular "Riding for the Son" patches and belt buckles visibly set them apart.

"But when you get among them, their talk is a lot different," explains Reese, smiling. "Most Christian motorcyclists greet each other with a hug, and they are very open about affection for each other and their love for Christ."

CMA also sponsors trips, many of which revolve around rallies where evangelists give invitations to receive Christ. "Of course the idea is to try to get people who are interested in the same thing you are acquainted with Christ," explains Reese. Among the staff and representatives of CMA are eight staff evangelists and three lay evangelists.

Being involved with CMA and the Ready Riders is a great pleasure for Reese, but his greatest pleasure in the last year has come from his

church. "Seeing a young couple in our church turn around from their former life-style to be drawn closer to the Lord Jesus Christ has been a great blessing," says Reese. "The husband has become activities director of our youth group, and he is beginning to arrange activities and give devotions. It's just a great pleasure to see people's lives change. There are also some older ladies in the church who have been struggling with cancer—they have been a great blessing to me."

During their thousands of miles on only two wheels, the Reeses have only had one close encounter. One day last year they had a near collision with a car, which sent them sliding over the gravel and pavement. Reese recalls the sliding sensation, "and then I looked up and saw Charmaine rolling in front of me and the motorcycle sliding in front of her. Our boots were torn and scraped, and we were bruised, but we weren't hurt that badly. We were able to get back on the bike and ride home."

"It was the closest call we've had, but we know we have to be careful. You have to be careful on any vehicle, but you're more exposed on a motorcycle, and you have to choose whether or not you want to take that

risk. We don't ride at night anymore, and we don't like to ride in the rain. It's just too dangerous."

A few days after their return from their 3,000-mile trip, the Reeses were involved in a serious accident—in their car. A man ran a stop sign and rammed into their automobile. Reese suffered a broken rib; Charmaine had two broken ribs and a cervical sprain in her neck. For several months she had to wear a hard collar to support her neck.

But nothing has stopped the Reeses. "It's relaxing to have the wind in your face—although with the windshields on bikes today, you don't actually have the wind in your face," says Reese. "But on a bike you do feel the changes in temperature much more readily than you would if you were walking or in a car. Smells come to you more quickly too—fresh country air or unfresh country air." Skunks? "Yes," he laughs. "They're out there."

For how many more years do the Reeses plan to ride together? "As long as we're able," he says. "We know a couple who are in their 70s and still riding. We are a little more careful and wiser than we used to be, but we still love the motorcycle." 

## The Making of a Disciple

by Lee M. Haines

Superintendent, The Wesleyan Church



**T**he Church's primary responsibility as set forth in the Great Commission is to "make disciples" (Matt. 28:18-20). A decision for Christ is important as an early step toward the discipling process. But it is the lifelong task of discipling to which the Church is called and in which it must engage for its own survival and fulfillment.

Before Jesus came, there were other teachers or masters who had disciples. But He and His followers took the word *disciple* and gave it new content and meaning.

A Christian disciple is not self-selected or self-made. In the New Testament era Jesus called His disciples. Today He has charged the Church, in the power of the Holy Spirit, to make disciples.

A Christian disciple's primary commitment is to the person of Jesus Christ, not just to a set of ideas or to a pattern of thought. His relationship to his Master is one of faith, of personal trust.

Christian discipleship is a permanent condition or relationship. Other teachers attracted disciples who expected in time to become teachers who would attract their own disciples and excel their earlier teachers in fame and glory. But a Christian is a disciple forever. He does not seek his own disciples but only disciples for his Lord.

A Christian disciple is not, strictly speaking, a learner nor a student but rather a servant or even a slave. His response to his Master must always be obedience.

A Christian disciple, responding to his Master's call, discovers that it is a call to suffering. Just as Jesus' radical commitment to Godlikeness led to His being denounced and eventually arrested and crucified, so His disciple will suffer reproach and even persecution to some degree.

A Christian disciple is turned inside out as far as his priorities are concerned. As he trusts his Lord and obeys Him, he follows his Master in self-sacrificing service to his brothers, his neighbors, even his enemies.

He looks not for what he can gain but for what he can give.

A Christian disciple evidences his discipleship by his love—an agape love that loves even those who are unlovely, those from whom there is no response of love, even those who return hate for love. This love is the badge of his discipleship to the world.

A Christian disciple is a witness to the person and claims of his Master. During Jesus' earthly ministry a disciple was to be an eyewitness to His ministry, His teaching, His miracles, and eventually His death and resurrection. Those disciples added after His ascension were to be living witnesses to His continuing work in their own lives and those of others. The disciple's task is not to argue or convince so much as to tell who Jesus is and what He has done.

As the Church faces an ever-growing multitude of billions of people across our world who desperately need to know and serve our Lord, our hearts cry out for some way to reach them and to evangelize them. We struggle to develop a program of evangelism and to train evangelists. But we cannot meet this challenge on a superficial level. We are called to evangelism in depth—to discipling. We ourselves must first be disciples in the full sense of the word—in a trusting, obedient relationship to our Master, in a loving, even suffering ministry to others, telling, always telling about Him. And then in the power of the Holy Spirit we must call others into discipleship and make them disciples.

Our Lord has called us to this task. And the Great Commission also reminds us that He possesses all authority in heaven and on earth, and He will be with us to the very end of the age. His authority and His presence are given to enable us to carry out His Commission. We need only Him! With Him we shall succeed!



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# The Sensitivity of Christ

by Morris Chalfant

Norwood, Ohio

**A** boy excitedly entered a barber shop and shouted, "Mr. Arnold! Mr. Arnold! Your store is on fire!"

With this a man leaped from a chair and ran wildly out the door and down the street. Then he stopped and said, "What am I doing? My name isn't Arnold!" A silly story? Yes. But here was a man sensitive to danger.

Jesus was sensitive to the tragic plight of mankind. This sensitivity impelled Him to reach out and lift up fallen humanity. This sensitivity superseded defeats and disappointments. It conquered hate, prejudice, doubt, and death. To "put on Christ" (Gal. 3:27, KJV) means to put on the sensitivity of Christ. It means concern, compassion, and passion for the lost.

We do well to compare our compassion and concern for others with that of Jesus. How long has it been since you wept over the community in which you live? How long since you wept over the spiritual needs of your church? How long has it been since you were so disturbed that you were unable to sleep?

Jesus' deep, yearning, compassionate love for men drew them to Him. To the extent that love and compassion motivates us, we will make our testimony of grace felt. Everyone understands the language of love on fire.

Even though I believe in using the most up-to-date methods in the most aggressive way possible, I strongly believe there is one all-important requisite, which, when missing, does more to hinder our work than anything else. It is a passion for Christ, spiritual realities, and eternal verities. The attitude of complacency does much to hinder the Church. The Early Church was born in an age of corruption, when every moral law was violated without conscience. Its

members had little wealth, no social prestige, and no help from Christian institutions. They were without privileges and advantages such as we have today. But they were possessed with a passion to save people.

Study the lives of great Christians, and you will notice the great themes that characterized their ministries.

George Whitefield preached, "Ye must be born again" (John 3:7, KJV), so often that many people criticized him. When asked why he used the same text over and over, he answered, "Because you must be born again!"

Jonathan Edwards often emphasized God's judgment. Billy Sunday stressed, "Be sure your sin will find you out" (Num. 32:23, KJV). Gipsy Smith's forte was the beauty of Jesus. On A. B. Simpson's heart was world evangelization.

D. L. Moody also had a major theme. He printed the words "God is love" on every light in the old Moody Church. His personal study of God's love evoked the response, "I just couldn't help loving people." A sermon on God's love ministered to him so completely that tears would stream down his face.

But each of these had in common a passion for souls. Their fervent desire to see people come to Christ made the difference.

Most Christians are touched occasionally with the need of reaching the lost. If the sermon is right, if the emotional involvement is sufficient, we tell ourselves that we really must do something about winning lost souls to Christ.

But this passion for the lost should dominate our lives. This passion for the lost caused Paul to write, "I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in

my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh" (Rom. 9:1-3, KJV). Paul could not give up his spiritual experience as a sacrifice to see others saved, but he could dedicate his life to that cause.

The best mechanics that soul-winning courses offer will not motivate a congregation to win souls. But a heaven-sent revival will! We need a revival that will shake us out of smug, churchgoing complacency while lost souls are passing into hell at the rate of scores each minute.

Instead of asking the easy question, "What is wrong with our evangelism?" we should ask, "What is wrong with our hearts? Where is the passion, the burden—the urgent mood, the 'evangelistic expectancy' that made our evangelism joyous, spontaneous, and effective, not only in revivals but in our regular services?"

The "mood" of evangelism cannot be manufactured. That "evangelistic expectancy" cannot be organized into people. Compassion can never be compelled. Passion is never a matter of pressure or promotion or program—regardless of how sincere the pressure, or smooth the promotion, or slick the program.

Evangelism as a passion is concerned primarily with souls. Evangelism as a promotion is concerned chiefly with statistics.

Evangelism as a passion is used by God to advance His kingdom. Evangelism as a promotion is used by men to enlarge an institution.

When evangelism is a passion, joy and exhilaration pervade the performance of its task. When evangelism is a promotion, pressure and strain affect the performance of its duties.

When evangelism is a passion, wit-

nessing is spontaneous and urgent. When evangelism is a promotion, witnessing must be coaxed and coached.

Evangelism as a passion is a spiritual exercise of the caring heart. Evangelism as a promotion is a religious gimmick to achieve ecclesiastical success.

God declared in His Word a long time ago, "Where there is no vision, the people perish" (Prov. 29:18, KJV). One of the primary elements of vision is a passion for souls. Unless we have a genuine burden and passion for souls, we will never have a vision of our field and the task to be done. A passion for souls is born in the place of prayer.

My father, Dr. E. O. Chalfant, served as a pioneer district superintendent for the Church of the Nazarene in the state of Illinois from 1922 to 1952. His first sermon as district superintendent, preached at Chicago First Church of the Nazarene in 1922, was typical of his spirit and emphasis as a preacher and administrative leader. His outline was:

I. A man who succeeds in the

Christian life goes for a vision that is sane, yet seemingly insane.

II. He must have an activity that is superhuman.

III. He must have a passion that partakes of the nature of mania. (And mania means crazy.)

In the proper sense, he was driven by a holy zeal that exemplified the "mania" or "craze" he spoke about in this sermon. That "mania" to preach Christ, to insist on scriptural holiness, to advance the kingdom of God, drove him to organize more than 250 churches during his ministry. It compelled him to inspire and challenge the members of his first pastorate to give more money for missions that year than all the other churches on the district combined. It motivated him to help raise the money that helped save Olivet College from bankruptcy and extinction in 1917, and give 37 unselfish years as a member of her Board of Trustees, without ever accepting a cent of pay or a dollar of expense money. It drove him to assist in the financial campaign that helped save Nazarene Publishing

House from financial insolvency during her crisis years, and it kept him busy in the work of Jesus wherever he found work that needed to be done.

How is the world to be won for Christ and His kingdom? Jesus said, "Go ye into all the world" (Mark 16:15, KJV). Go where? "Into all the world." That means next door, the next block, or Africa or India. It means speaking to the person working at the next machine or bench or desk.

Passion! That is our need. As ministers we need holy passion. We need a heavenly vision with all its accompanying passion as characterized the Early Church. We read of those Christians: "They that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word" (Acts 8:4, KJV). If we 20th-century Christians were called upon to face a scattering as this, what would the record be? Those early New Testament Christians had the spirit of their Master, of whom it was said, "The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up" (John 2:17, KJV). Paul caught the same spirit. He said, "It is good to be zealously affected" (Gal. 4:18, KJV).

## Rehearsing Your Sermon *Continued from page 9*

bottom line in a friendship, what other act [love] is there?" Even more to my liking are sentences that summarize the sermon theme, such as: "Losers hide. Winners are courageous." "In pleasing Christ, we shall, at last, please ourselves!"

### How to Rehearse

To improve your delivery, practice your sermon using one or more of the following: tape recorder, video camera, or mirror. Once you witness your weak and strong points, you will be motivated to correct the weakness and enhance the strength. A minister friend confessed she didn't believe how many times she adjusted her glasses and straightened her stole in the course of a sermon. Her husband had told her, but she discounted his criticism until she saw the tape revealing her behavior.

When you rehearse your sermon, select a place where you'll not be interrupted. Imagine the congregation in front of you, and preach to them. The way my study is arranged, I preach to my word processor and a shelf full of Bibles. Without their per-

mission I turn them into people in the pews and earnestly address them with my sermon. Up to this point they have made no attempt to escape.

I time the last several rehearsals. In the parishes I have served, 20 minutes was the ideal length for a sermon, with 25 minutes being the limit. No one complained if I ran under 20 minutes.

If at all possible, rehearse the sermon from the pulpit where it is to be given. This allows you to fit the sermon to the place of delivery. Then when you actually give your sermon, you will feel at home with your message. This is another confidence builder. I like arriving at the church an hour and a half ahead of the first event. I can usually preach my sermon twice before any early attenders appear. However, occasionally someone enters the sanctuary ahead of time and is greeted with my thunder. I don't know which of us is more surprised.

One of my clergy friends, after listening to me expound on the benefits of rehearsing sermons, asked, "Where does the Holy Spirit come

into your preparation?" My answer only mildly surprised him. I revealed that it was the Holy Spirit who led me to this discipline. Up to that time I was "winging" sermons and as a consequence was repeating myself and failing to establish a central point. The Holy Spirit made it clear that I could do better.

On a television show recently a producer of commercials described all the effort that goes into a 30-second "spot." The cost, the attention to detail, and the thoroughness are staggering. So are the number of takes. The producer keeps shooting until he reaches as flawless a production as possible. He goes far past six times, which I have suggested for sermon rehearsals. He has a product to sell, and frequently millions of dollars ride on the outcome. Technique, hopefully, will never replace content, but it can make the content more easily understood.

So you and I rehearse, rehearse, rehearse—for we have far more than millions of dollars riding on the outcome.

## Staying Pure in an Impure World

by J. Grant Swank, Jr.

Walpole, Mass.

**W**e unpacked our suitcases and looked longingly at the motel pool. It would be pleasant after a long day's drive. We would also visit some friends in the area.

Later that evening we prepared for a sound sleep. Before turning off the light, I flicked on the television to catch the late news. On that channel were the naked bodies in an orgy.

I turned the television off promptly; but I was left with such disgust, such anger at sin, that I was in no mood to rest. I was ready for battle.

How can a Christian stay pure in an impure world? Jesus said, "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God" (Matt. 5:8, KJV). If He said it, it must be possible.

In our own strength we cannot be holy. Therefore, His Spirit must empower us with such righteousness.

Jesus accented the heart. He went to the heart of the matter of holiness when He focused on the center of our longings. Our core of commitment must be so aligned with Jesus that the impurity encircling us does not lodge in us.

We must furnish the heart's desires with Bible reading and prayer. We must fellowship with those who likewise hunger for more of Jesus.

Determining to know more of the Spirit of Jesus in practical holiness is to "see God," Jesus promised. That means seeing God now.

When we separate ourselves consciously from the evil in the world, we must likewise separate ourselves unto the purity of Jesus. The more we walk and talk with Jesus, the more we see Him with the vision of our hearts.

Paul wrote: "Those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit" (Rom. 8:5, NKJV).

Wickedness never takes a vacation; it was loose in the first century. It was necessary for Paul to preach about separation from evil to righteous-

ness, the flesh warring against the Spirit. Paul pointed to victory one could get by setting one's mind on things above. He wed the accent on the head with Jesus' accent on the heart.

Paul stressed the free will of the believer, instructing Christians to set their minds on the Spirit. That means consciously working out personal salvation in fear and trembling by refusing to have anything to do with sin.

This underlines the need for developing holy habits. Being holy does not happen automatically. It results from a disciplined life, one rooted in the Scriptures and determined to pray through to triumph over evil.

Paul also wrote: "Those who are in the flesh cannot please God. But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you" (Rom. 8:8-9, NKJV).

Paul contended with those who testified of the Spirit's presence but did not live up to the profession. Not only is holiness a testimony, but it must be a daily reality.

Paul continued: "Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit" (Gal. 5:24-25, NASB).

Jesus calls us to live holy, even in an impure world. Believers must crucify the flesh with its passions and desires. As we look about us at a decaying world, we give God thanks that we have hope in Jesus. Our ties are not here. But in the meantime, we have a work to do. It is the work of purity. God "chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him" (Eph. 1:4, NASB).

What a privilege to live today. We have the glorious opportunity to be God's salt of the earth, His lights of the world.

Place your heart in the Bible. Pray. Fellowship with the saints. Keep your eyes on Jesus. With all that going for you, you need never fall.

### Creating a holy home

Here are some ways holiness can be exemplified in your home:

1. *See to it that the magazines and books in your home could be read by Jesus.* Subscribe to those publications that promote biblical values. Read aloud to your young children to train them in the reading habit.

2. *Keep a careful watch on your television.* Note what the children are viewing. Set time limits on TV watching. (We have a half hour a day for our children.) Do not use TV as a baby-sitter.

3. *Train family members to talk with a clean tongue.* Point out the vulgarity that sometimes comes into so-called good TV programs. Instruct them that such language is not becoming to a Christian.

4. *Screen all videos.* As a parent, know what is in that video from start to finish. Check out what videos are shown in your children's friends' homes.

5. *Discuss the matter of evil in our world at family gatherings.* Be realistic and open. Get to the matters of values and holiness standards in the Christian home. Explain why these standards are held by conscientious parents.

6. *Allow plenty of fun times in your home.* Plan family doings. Make time for the children—older as well as younger ones. Do not simply prohibit this and that; provide that which is conducive to pure living.

7. *Make friends with believers.* Introduce your children to families who agree with your standards of righteousness.

8. *Cooperate with your church leaders in youth activities.* Drive the car or make the brownies or chaperone the events. Everyone is needed to keep Christian youth on the right track.

9. *Pray with your family regularly.* Have Bible reading and prayer after a meal when the family is around the table. Emphasize that the holy life is the way of fulfillment and contentment.

10. *Set the example.* Let those in your home see you reading the Bible, praying, attending church faithfully, talking like a Christian, and relating to others in a Christian manner. 

# Little Ones, Come to Me

by Lois Hoadley Dick  
Newton, N.J.

**A** little boy, hearing the story of Jesus' love, asked his Christian father if he could let Jesus come into his heart.

"You're too little," came the abrupt reply.

"Jesus promised to carry the lambs in His arms," the child persisted. "I am just a little boy. It will be easy for Jesus to carry me."

The father could not argue against such faith. He led his son to the Lord.

The story of Jesus receiving little children has been recorded in the first three Gospels, its importance emphasized by repetition.

What does it mean to "permit" little ones to come to the Lord Jesus Christ? What does it mean to "forbid" them?

In Matthew and Luke the Greek word for *permit* is *aphiemi*, meaning "to let go," almost carrying the sense of abandon. Some parents hang on to their children and do not want God to have them. They fear the claims of Christ. They do not want older children to become committed Christians for fear the foreign mission field will be the next step.

According to the story in Mark's Gospel, the Greek word for *permit* is *epitrepō*, meaning "to commit, entrust." Is it accidental that two different Greek words are used for *permit*, bringing out different shades of meaning? Both words stress the importance of giving our children to the Lord so that His will might be done in their lives.

The disciples may have said in rebuke, "Jesus is too busy," "The children are too little to understand," "Children are not as important as the grown-ups waiting to see You."

Mark says that Jesus was "indignant and pained" over the incident (Amp.). It was not enemies of Christ who tried to forbid the children, but disciples and perhaps some parents who held little hands too tightly.

In all three accounts, *forbid* comes from the Greek root *kōluō*, meaning "dock or clip." Forbidding children to come to Jesus, one mutilates them spiritually, keeping them from becoming whole.

It is a strange contrast that in Judaism a child, trained and qualified by age 12, becomes *bar mitzvah*, a son of the law, responsible before God and man. However, in Christian circles, a child is often ignored until



age 12, which the church has decided is old enough to *begin* learning spiritual things.

In 607 B.C., four royal children, young princes, were taken out of their orthodox homes to the pagan nation of Babylon. Daniel and his three friends are referred to as "children," though they were no doubt in their late teens or early 20s because they were "cunning in knowledge, and understanding science" (Dan. 1:4, KJV). Their childhood training is not mentioned, but their later lives witness to it. Parents and teachers must have influenced those young lives!

Solomon relates how when he was a young child, his father taught him to think highly of wisdom and understanding and to seek them (Prov. 4:3-7). Later, as a young king, he pleased God greatly by asking for those two qualities.

Samuel lived in God's house from the time he was very young. He learned respect for the place of worship, despite many bad examples around him.

As a child, Timothy knew the Holy Scriptures. As a lad Isaac was offered to God. As a child, David composed and sang songs of praise to God.

The lives of these Bible children demonstrate that we should allow children to come to Jesus, and we should refrain from hindering them.

Teach them, from babyhood up, even before they understand. Barby Jeanne Murk, youngest of the Murk Family Musicale group, tells how she first heard of Jesus' love. "It is the earliest thing I remember. My mother says she whispered it into my ear ev-

ery time she laid me in my crib, 'Jesus loves you.' Later, in my own little bed, I heard it every morning and night. 'Jesus loves you.'"

Teach Bible verses to little ones. Memory is greatest in childhood. Take them often to church. One mother used to bring her newborn baby in a washbasket and put him neatly under the pew while she attended a Bible study.

Make music a part of their babyhood—good music, gospel songs, great hymns of the church, and classical music. Better still, play an instrument. Let young children handle it. Start them early, and they will love good music.

Tell little ones about miracles and answers to prayer as did the wise father in Deut. 6:20-25.

"Teach . . . when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up" (Deut. 6:7, KJV). This training goes beyond formal teaching. Parents taught their children in friendly conversation, in the outdoors where God's wonders could be seen, as the children played around the house, early in the morning, and late at night.

The command to train children is repeated in Moses' farewell address (Deut. 11:19). How is the nation to be kept united, separate, and pure? By *teaching* each new generation *while they are still young*.

This is more than routine reading and rote learning of God's words. "You shall whet and sharpen them, so as to make them penetrate, and teach and impress them diligently

upon the [minds and] hearts of your children" (Deut. 6:7, Amp.).

"Teach them thy sons" (Deut. 4:9, KJV). Teach what? What is "them"? Church history! In preceding verses, Moses mentioned the righteous statutes and judgments and law. Teach Old Testament history to the little ones. Teach the Reformation. Tell stories of heroism and Christian adventure from other lands.

The church needs to rethink its attitude toward little ones. A young doctor in the 18th century was asked how he was coming along in his study and practice. "I'm learning," he said. "I don't have the knowledge or experience yet to treat adults, so I'm beginning with babies."

No modern doctor would make such a statement. We know now that the field of pediatrics is a specialty; only the very best of physicians should treat little ones.

But does the church understand that?

The church needs to be most careful in teaching and training little ones. Patient and loving teachers, with an understanding of the child's nature, should teach the littlest ones. The curriculum, simple though it must be, should lay a good foundation for later learning.

David was not considered important enough to appear before Samuel.

"Are here all thy children?" (1 Sam. 16:11, KJV), asked Samuel the prophet.

"All but the youngest."

How surprised they must have been when the youngest one turned out to be the greatest, the best-loved king, the man after God's own heart!

## Pontius' Puddle



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# Preventing Sexual Abuse in the Sunday School Classroom

by John and Dee Conlon

Leavenworth, Kans.



**D**oors of the sanctuary are not barriers against those who sexually abuse children. Carmen Berry relates that “nearly 90 percent of all sexual abuse occurs between two people who know each other. . . . Sometimes the offender is a friend of the family . . . a trusted member of the church.”<sup>1</sup>

Mothers and fathers send their children to the church, trusting fully in the integrity of its child care, Sunday School, and youth programs. They base their trust on the philosophy of the church to develop solid moral character through religious ideals of purity and integrity.

How can pastors ensure that sexual deviants and maladjusted persons are prevented from working their ways into positions of ministry and teaching within the church? Who will screen candidates for teaching positions among children?

The apostle Paul exhorts Christians to avoid even the “appearance of evil” (1 Thess. 5:22, KJV). The church is vulnerable to evil because

we open our doors to both the good and bad. But, in the spirit of love, we have a responsibility to demand that the children placed in our care are kept safe at all times.

Parents trust their children to the superintendence of the church while they worship. Parents assume that their children receive quality care in a safe environment free from physical and emotional injury.

“Preventative maintenance” is a term that the church needs to apply to policies of obtaining volunteer and paid children’s workers. So often the staff of workers is spread so thinly that when a warm body comes forward, he is sent to “stand in the gap” with little more than his word to verify his character.

Is it sacrilegious to question an applicant’s profession of faith, or ask for evidence of character? James did not think so. He said, “Shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works” (James 2:18, KJV).

We are not expected to simply believe everyone who comes to us. We are to examine them and test the word of faith by the fruits of their lives.

We have had enough scandals. We need to know for sure that we can trust workers in our Sunday Schools, Caravan ministry, and Youth Departments.

It is the church’s responsibility to care for the people involved in ministry. Approximately 30 percent of an average church’s attendance is made up of children. The church ministers to strengthen families and meet their needs.

To do an effective job of providing the best child caretakers and work-

ers, a screening process should be established to review applicants expected to work with young children:

1. Ask all applicants to list past experience and personal references.

2. Review all statements on the application. Note lapses of time or discrepancies.

3. Check out all references in writing. If there is not a response in a reasonable length of time, call the references. Make any notations about information given, even the fact that the informant was hesitant to give certain information.

4. Conduct interviews with the most promising applicants. Ask the applicant about questionable information.

5. Check for a history of child abuse.

Once workers are obtained, conduct training sessions to teach workers about child abuse. Emphasize its prevalence—even among Christian communities. Identify the symptoms and signs of abuse. Ensure that each worker understands reporting procedures if child abuse is suspected. Review and strengthen church policies regarding child care procedures.

In addition to training, close supervision of workers ensures that both the children and the workers are protected. Care should be taken to have more than one worker scheduled for any group of children. This procedure will cut down on the possibility of a child being abused. It will also provide an extra pair of hands in case of emergency. There should always be at least two sponsors for all youth events, preferably both male and female.

A common misconception among

workers is that because they are in the church, everyone accepts what they do as aboveboard and innocent.

This is not the case. Church workers must take the same precautions to avoid suspicion as other workers. Accusations of wrongdoing are as much a hazard in ministry as in corporate business. Children should not be left unattended in the church setting. Small children need to be protected to ensure that strangers do not have opportunity to take advantage of unsupervised situations.

The church's responsibility to care for children is not limited to teaching children's workers only. But training and support groups should be offered to parents as well. Parenting is one of the most critical jobs for an adult. However, there is very little training to prepare young people for parenting. Some of the ministries that the church could provide include: parent support groups, prenatal programs, prenatal bonding, and parenting skills. Parent education workshops should include "how to" topics such as: child development, appropriate discipline, ways to deal with stress, how to cope with a new baby in the house, and how to teach children about personal safety.

Educational programs for children should also be offered as a part of the personal safety included in Caravan curriculum. Personal body safety might be taught in the light of other safety issues such as water safety, fire safety, and traffic safety.

Church staffs should be aware of qualified Christian psychiatrists, psychologists, counselors, therapists, and other community service professionals available to help victims,

families, and perpetrators. Human resource personnel such as health care, day care, legal experts, teachers, and other caring individuals should be identified to assist in the restoration process.

The church is not in the business of "witch hunts." Pointing accusing fingers at people without sufficient cause destroys many innocent lives. But to turn a blind eye toward the possibility of sexual abuse and to fail to take appropriate preventive measures is unforgivable. The most important thing is that we are aware of

the problem. We need to implement stringent administrative measures to screen and identify potential problems. We must take proper steps to preclude even the hint of evil-doing.

Workers are scarce in churches, but it is better to have no worker at all than to accept someone without knowing and find out too late that the person is a child abuser. As professionals, we must not ignore warning signals.

1. Carmen Renee Berry, "Family and Sexual Violence: What the Church Needs to Know and Do," *Herald of Holiness*, March 1990, 17.



## Pontius' Puddle



## Put Your Parish in Print

by Michael E. Ramming

San Francisco

Seeing a church written up in newsprint is a real tonic! It lifts the spirits of the members to see their church's name in print. Knowing that the successful parish program will be read about enhances the committee's sense of accomplishment and satisfaction. Information on unique or exceptionally effective activities, when shared among churches through the print media, lends encouragement and often sparks fresh ideas and actions from others that bring about unforeseen, yet rich benefits.

To serve up some of this tonic for your parish, direct some effort into newsprint publicity. Appoint an interested volunteer to serve as parish information coordinator. Compile addresses for local, denominational, and organizational newspapers, and keep this information handy. Encourage your parish leaders to "think publicity" by anticipating stories; taking pictures; jotting down information on events; drafting articles about programs, activities, unusual occurrences, and significant events; and submitting them to the parish information coordinator for distribution. Such items as special future events, unusual approaches to common projects, exceptionally success-

ful campaigns, awards, retirements, anniversaries, and special visitors—to name but a few—are often newsworthy. Nothing gets into print, however, unless the article is drafted, the picture taken, and the material submitted. It is not difficult to get your parish into print. It simply takes a little planning and follow-through.

There are some simple guidelines that help bring about a successful program of parish journalism. Just remember that:

—*Future events* require lead time for information distribution (4-5 weeks).

—*Reporting past events* means getting the material in to the papers as soon as possible.

—Include captioned *action photos/portraits* with the story.

—Provide *complete, accurate information*.

—Provide a *point of contact* should the editor need more information.

—*Follow basic reporting technique*.

Being a successful reporter is not difficult if you *remember the basics*. It can be as easy as one, two, three. First, before drafting the article,

gather *all the necessary information* by answering the *five key journalistic questions: Who? What? Where? When? Why?* Get the accurate, specific details down on paper for each question, and ensure that all names are spelled correctly. Careful selection and use of action verbs and colorful adjectives will make for interesting reading. And if you want to get fancy, use some quotations from individuals who have planned or participated in the event to help answer the five key questions. Now you are ready to write.

Second, when drafting the article, follow basic *newspaper reporting technique* by summarizing *all the necessary information* in the *first paragraph*. Use the next paragraphs to explain, expound, or enlarge upon the information in the lead paragraph. Make certain that the *least important information is at the end* of the article. When space requires an editor to trim an article to fit, cutting begins at the end of the story. The second and third paragraphs of an article should give more details about the story. Here is a good place to expound on "why" this story item is so important or interesting. Use of quotations from individuals is very effective at this point. The remaining paragraphs can be used to elaborate on the story with colorful and interesting details, historical information, and participant reactions.

Finally, *complete the article by including photos with captions* that explain what is going on in the picture. Name everyone shown and check for correct spelling. Create a title for the story, but don't feel badly if the editor changes it. The editor wants your article to be an eye-catcher, and the editor is "the pro." Give the editor a *point of contact* to telephone if additional information is needed. *Type the article double-spaced and mail it right away*. Send the same story material simultaneously to every paper you think might be interested in running it.

The more you create and submit articles, the better you will become at getting your church and her successes in print. One last thing: Keep a file of the stories submitted, to whom sent, and copies of the newspaper items as printed. The file will be helpful in tracking and evaluating your publicity successes.

**A**re you good at parliamentary procedure? Most people are not too well acquainted with *Robert's Rules of Order* (we'll refer to them as ROR). In most church groups and denominations, ROR are the standard format for doing business as decision-making bodies. Learning and using this detailed set of rules of procedure is no small challenge. Many leaders have looked for help to the less bulky guidebook, *Parliamentary Procedure at a Glance*, by O. Garfield Jones. Since the complex procedure feels too cumbersome and stilted for some people, church boards often "dispense with the rules" and handle business in a more "folksy" style. This results in a decision process that has no rules to guarantee fairness for all its members. ROR, fortunately, offers us another alternative for doing business when the size of the board or committee is around 12 members or smaller.

The small board should not have to do business in the same style required for assemblies and large groups. If your committee or board is around 12 members or less, ROR allows you to do business on a more informal basis and still be following proper rules for procedure. These special rules intended for small boards are found in S48 of ROR.

One special rule has to do with discussion. Generally, no discussion is allowed until a motion is on the floor properly made and seconded. In a small board, informal discussions are permissible even when no motion is pending. In the more informal small board, you may have discussion before the motion is formally made. The discussion could bring about a carefully reasoned and agreeable motion that is clear to everyone. Therefore the motion can be more easily passed without the usual lag of debates or amendments. This allows the board to work efficiently with an idea until a clear and agreeable motion is made that is ready to be put to a vote.

Normally, a member must first address the chair and receive recognition from the chairperson. In the small board, this eliminates a rule that would be too stilted and dilatory. A person is free to speak up as long as he is not violating other members' rights. Members of small

boards do not have to stand to speak or to make a motion.

On the small board, motions do not have to be seconded. A person may make a motion and a vote be taken without a second being required. The chair is still responsible for ensuring the propriety and legality of the motion. This modification may not be as helpful or as timesaving as others. Seconds to a motion are seldom hard to obtain, and they may give some indication of the board's interest in the motion. So the board may wish to require a motion to have a second before acting on it. It is their privilege, however, to dispense with the requirement of a second.

The usual limit to the number of times a member can speak to an issue is also changed under these special rules. There is no limit to the number of times a person may speak to a question. The importance of this liberty is underscored by a corollary change. Motions to close or limit debate should not be entertained. In a smaller board, time is not as much an issue as when there are many people trying to debate. So the rule is modified to allow full time and scope for discussion.

At certain times a vote may be taken when no motion is on the floor. Let me quote from ROR: "When a proposal is perfectly clear to all present, a vote can be taken

without a motion's having been introduced." The vote taken this way is no different than usual, except that the first vote on a smaller board may be taken by a show of hands. Extreme care must be taken here, especially if the vote is by common consent. The requirement is that there be complete clarity on the issue. This is not a license to "slip something through," for that is outside the norms of Christian conscience and ROR. Louise Bereskin, a well-known parliamentarian, once suggested that ROR is basically a codification of the golden rule for business.

In the small board, the chairperson does not have to remain the neutral party. The chairperson of a small board may participate as a regular member of the board without the usual requirement to temporarily vacate the chair. The chairperson can speak to an issue and can usually make motions and vote on every issue.

The use of these special rules should conserve time and encourage participation by eliminating certain encumbering rules that are useful only when large crowds are involved in the decision-making process. These adaptations to the rules of order for the small board are not obligatory. The important issue is consistency. The board should adopt a format and stay with it.

# Rules of Order and the Small Board

by Ron Dalton

*Cincinnati*

# AIDS—the the Christian Challenge



by William O. Harrison, M.D.

**T**he media has presented a plethora of information about the AIDS epidemic, much of which is untrue, half true, or contradictory. On the one hand, there are articles that state that the epidemic is clearly becoming a heterosexual one and that much of the world's population is at risk. On the other hand, such respected medical journals as *Cosmopolitan* and *Penthouse* say that the heterosexual risk is overstated and that there is only minimal risk to heterosexuals. Whether that is in fact the case is irrelevant to the Christian health-care practitioner because our responsibility is to all patients, regardless of their life-styles.

Based on patients seen over the past three years, I believe that in the United States AIDS is becoming more widespread in the heterosexual community. Three case reports illustrate that point of view.

### Case 1

Evelyn was 19 when she presented for evaluation to the navy's HIV treatment unit. Her story was typical of teenagers in the U.S.A. She had become sexually active at age 14, although she was not promiscuous. She had only one partner throughout her junior high school. When she entered high school, she met a 21-year-old man and began a sexual relationship with him. Eventually Evelyn became pregnant. At that point her boyfriend disappeared, and she was left as a high school dropout, with no training and minimal prospects for the future.

She chose what she thought was a wise course and joined the navy. The navy furnished her with child care, training, and a salary. Eventually she became a technician. Life was looking bright for her. Then her ship's company was tested for antibody to HIV. Evelyn was positive.

When she entered my office, she was angry. She said, "This is a big mistake. I'm not homosexual, and I've never used drugs. I've only had two sex partners in my entire life. Your test is wrong!"

But it wasn't a mistake. She was positive; and, in fact, the night sweats, persistent yeast infections, and skin rash that she had noted for the previous three months were the earliest stages of AIDS-related complex (ARC). Evelyn's baby was also positive for antibody to HIV.

We were able to contact her former boyfriend, and although he was not willing to be tested for HIV, he did answer some questions. He said that he was sexually active with multiple partners; he did use drugs and on occasion shared needles with other drug users; and he did not use condoms when having intercourse.

It was clear that Evelyn had acquired her infection from her boyfriend. In addition to impregnating her, he also infected her with HIV. Approximately one and a half years later, Evelyn has AIDS, and her prognosis is poor. Her baby has not yet shown any manifestations of the disease, but the chances are about 90 percent that she will develop AIDS before age five.

### Case 2

Rick is 50 years old and the archetypal successful businessman. He had founded his own business and become independently wealthy by age 45. In the process of so doing, he had also gone through a bitter divorce. After being divorced by his wife, he became severely depressed. During that time, he met a young lady who offered to provide him with sexual comfort. He had a brief but torrid affair. The young lady told him that she needed to have sex on a regular basis and that she had sex with multiple partners. After approximately six months, he moved to another part of the state and lost contact with the young woman.

Approximately two years later, he began to have recurrent bouts of "bronchitis" and was treated on multiple occasions over a four-month period with antibiotics, decongestants, and antitussives. While on a business trip he developed pneumonia and was hospitalized at a university teaching hospital. He was diagnosed as having pneumocystis carinii pneumonia; his HIV serology was strongly positive. He was a devout member of a fairly rigid religious organization and, except for the six-month affair, had had sexual contact only with his wife. He denied homosexual or bisexual activity, intravenous drug use, blood transfusions, or use of blood products. After being informed of the diagnosis of AIDS, he sought to contact the young woman with whom he had been sexually active, only to learn that she had died of AIDS some six months previously.

### Case 3

Steve is a 28-year-old blue collar worker who noted a 30-pound weight loss, night sweats, and swollen lymph nodes at age 26. He sought medical attention for this, and his HIV serology was positive. He refused any further medical evaluation for approximately 2 years until he developed a severe outbreak of herpes zoster. At that point, he was noted to have a T4 lymphocyte count of 300, a T4-T8 ratio of 0.3, and significant anergy on skin testing for cell-mediated immunity.

When questioned, he denied homosexual or bisexual activity, blood

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## Our responsibility is to all patients, regardless of their life-styles.

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transfusions, intravenous drug use, or use of blood products. He did say that he had had approximately 75 sexual partners between ages 18 and 25, including prostitutes in most areas of the Pacific Basin and casual "one-night stands" in many cities on the West Coast. His current spouse was tested for antibody to HIV and was negative. His first wife was in good health, but Steve had not had the courage to tell her that he was positive or to ask that she be tested for antibody to HIV.

These three cases have in common the transmission of HIV between heterosexual partners who were not in the usual high-risk groups. Tracing the infection back more than one generation is difficult because of the multiple sexual contacts, but there is strong evidence that these individuals acquired the infection through exclusively heterosexual contact. In many of the cases that I have evaluated, there is a history of intravenous drug use, blood transfusion, or homosexual contact at some prior point in the chain of transmission. It is probable that many of the early heterosexual infections in the United States can be attributed to the introduction of HIV into the fast-track homosexual population some

years previously. Nevertheless, it is clear at this point that the epidemic has gone beyond the homosexual/bisexual/intravenous drug user groups of high-risk behavior and has begun to enter into the heterosexual community.

How many individuals are currently infected in the general population? Unfortunately there is no easy way of knowing or even making a rational guess. Estimates by the Centers for Disease Control vary from 1 to 1.5 million infected individuals, but the officials at CDC admit that this is speculation based on the most meager of facts. The rate of HIV seropositivity among 18-year-old men and women volunteering for military service ranges from 0.5 per thousand to as high as 10 per thousand, depending on the ethnic group and residential location of those tested. These individuals, however, may not be representative of the general population.

The rate of seropositivity among navy and Marine Corps personnel after the first servicewide screening in 1986 was 2.5 per thousand, or approximately five times the rate among potential recruits. If one extrapolates from a rate of 2.5 per thousand in the navy and assumes that that group is representative of the civilian population, a figure of more than half a million infected individuals becomes a possibility. Whether the number is 500,000 or 5 million is irrelevant. The vast majority of these individuals are sexually active; this is the method by which they acquired the infection. Most of them continue to be sexually active. The majority of these men and women do not know that they are HIV positive; therefore they take no precaution to prevent the spread of the infection. If each of these individuals transmits the virus to one additional person in a year's time, and each of those infected persons transmits the virus to an additional individual in the subsequent year, simple arithmetic indicates a burgeoning of the number of HIV seropositives over the next decade. Whether this will happen or whether the virus is much less easily transmitted by conventional heterosexual activity is something that remains to be proven. What is clear is that effective efforts to alert groups at risk are lacking.

The place of the Christian health-care practitioner in this epidemic should be clear. We have a great responsibility, not only to diagnose accurately and treat compassionately those individuals who are infected but also to speak out vigorously for standards of conduct that we know to be appropriate. When individuals are treated for sexually transmitted diseases, for example, it should not be enough to tell these persons that they need to be more careful in their behavior. We should forcefully state to each of these individuals that promiscuous sexual activity not only puts them at risk for getting gonorrhea, syphilis, herpes, chlamydia, hepatitis B, and other STDs but also puts them at risk for AIDS.

Most of the population, especially young people, even though they see the media presentations about AIDS, still do not incorporate into their consciousness the fact that each one of them is at risk. Even when these individuals have friends who have acquired AIDS, they still have difficulty in believing that they are equally at risk. Strong statements by medical professionals pointing out to them the facts in a clear and non-judgmental fashion frequently have the effect of making the individuals more circumspect in their sexual activities.

One concern of practitioners as well as patients is whether AIDS will inevitably develop once an individual is infected with HIV. In fact, there are no data to show that 100 percent of individuals infected with HIV will develop AIDS. Data from the navy screening program indicate

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## Chances are about 90 percent that she will develop AIDS before age five.

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that at initial identification as seropositive, only 2 percent of individuals have AIDS or develop AIDS within the first six months. An additional 8 percent have some evidence of immune suppression at their initial evaluation. This means that fully 90 percent of the individuals who are

HIV positive are not immune suppressed and show no evidence of serious sequelae of HIV infection. These data are from individuals who were identified during the first round of military HIV testing. Many of these individuals have been infected early in the onset of the HIV epidemic, some eight years previously. Over the intervening three years since being identified as positive, more than 70 percent of these individuals have remained asymptomatic and without immune suppression.

Unfortunately, in order to tell whether some people can be infected with HIV and not develop immune suppression or AIDS will require 20 to 25 years of observation. The indications are that individuals who are basically healthy, who have solid immune systems initially, and who do not abuse their bodies by means of drugs, alcohol, tobacco, or life stresses will continue to stay healthy.

## OUR RESPONSIVENESS

### Ethical

The response of the Christian physician to the AIDS epidemic can be divided into four separate categories. These are not necessarily of equal importance.

The first of these is medical ethics. The response so far among most health-care practitioners has been straightforward. It has been to evaluate the problem and to respond to it as befits one whose primary purpose is to serve. There have, however, been notable exceptions to this response.

Some Christians have been judgmental of individuals infected with HIV and adopted a position that these individuals are simply incurring the natural consequences of their own actions. Therefore, they don't merit empathy or any other than minimal care. Another response has been that such patients shouldn't be taking up valuable and limited medical resources. There have been suggestions by practitioners and students alike that the amount of resources used to care for AIDS patients should be limited because the disease is fatal. Therefore, don't waste time, effort, and resources in caring for these patients. They should be allowed to die quietly and quickly.

Another response that has been common is fear, both fear of the unknown and fear of the patients themselves. Since science knows very little about the epidemic, fear causes us not to want to deal with the problem or the patients, and so our response is avoidance. Many of us have unresolved feelings about homosexuals—fear, loathing, and other negative emotions—and until each of us comes to grips with our own negative feelings and develops a therapeutic position with regard to homosexual behavior, the effectiveness of our ministering to individuals who are sexually active homosexuals will be blighted. The same idea applies to drug users. We can hate the sin while still loving the sinner.

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## Significant numbers of AIDS patients are turning to false religions.

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Another concern that has blunted some individuals' response to the AIDS epidemic is economics. Very simply, patients with AIDS, particularly those with later stages of the disease, require a great deal of care. Many of these individuals have lost medical insurance, and consequently caring for them requires resources without recompense. Some practitioners have been unwilling to care for AIDS patients simply because they may receive no remuneration for such care. Another aspect of this particular problem is seen in areas where the practitioner depends on public goodwill for patients. Particularly in some smaller towns the fear is present that if the practitioner becomes known as an individual who takes care of AIDS patients, other patients will not seek care from that practitioner because of the fear that they may somehow acquire AIDS in the office.

### Professional

A second aspect of this epidemic is the professional one. None of us can sit back and say that this is a family

practice or internal medicine or infectious disease or venereology problem. Each one of us must become involved. We each must be available to see and deal with AIDS patients. The complications of AIDS are such that every subspecialty in medicine will be involved. We all need to take an active part. We should be known in the professional community as willing to see and care for AIDS patients, and we need to work actively within our communities to provide all the benefits of medical care for AIDS patients in the same way that we strive to ensure that medical benefits are available to all our patients.

### Moral

The third aspect of this epidemic for which the Christian is uniquely fitted is the area of morals. There has been a great deal of discussion about "safe sex," and how to avoid being caught in the epidemic. Not enough has been said publicly about the moral principles involved.

Anyone who has studied the HIV epidemic realizes that sexual promiscuity is one of the major causes of this epidemic. It doesn't make any difference whether this promiscuity is heterosexual, homosexual, or both—multiple sexual partners and casual sex contacts place a person at high risk for becoming infected. Rather than promulgating the idea that there is such a thing as safe promiscuity, there needs to be a very strong emphasis on the idea of abstinence before marriage and monogamy after marriage. This will be the ultimate solution to the AIDS epidemic.

The popular press, the medical press, and medical spokespersons have been reluctant to be forthright about this. The popular wisdom is that monogamy is good and abstinence is good, but human nature won't follow such recommendations. Thus they stress only "safe sex" and safe behavior.

It should be strongly stressed by Christian practitioners that there are very definite moral principles involved and that sexual promiscuity is not in and of itself a life-style to be sought after. We should be very open and clear in stating that neither is sex before marriage in God's plan nor is it particularly safe, and that monogamy after marriage is clearly the most

ideal way to avoid not only AIDS but all the other sexually transmitted diseases that are rampant. There is no penalty for saying this. We may be criticized for not understanding human nature, but these principles are very clear. Possibly the major good that we can achieve from this epidemic will be from a very clear emphasis on these moral principles.

### Spiritual

The final aspect of the epidemic is one in which the Christian practitioner is again uniquely qualified. This is the spiritual arena. As people who are infected with HIV come to grips with their own mortality and realize that they are likely to die much earlier than under ordinary circumstances, they become very open to spiritual discussions. Unfortunately, the holistic religions, Eastern mysticism, and a number of other cult activities have stepped in to fill this breach, and significant numbers of AIDS patients are turning to false religions in the vain hope that this will somehow either extend their lives or fit them for life and death.

As Christian physicians, we should not be loath to open up spiritual discussions with our patients, and we should discuss with them the basic tenets of our faith. We should begin with the fact that God loves them just as much as He does anyone else. Their HIV infection is not, as some televangelists would have us believe, a sign of God's displeasure with them but rather a natural consequence of their life-style and possibly an indication that God is attempting to reach them for deeper spiritual ends. We should manifest God's love to these individuals. Instead of being harsh, judgmental, uncaring, and unfeeling, we should be an example for these men and women of how God feels toward them.

If a practitioner feels uncomfortable in counseling patients with AIDS and discussing their eventual mortality, or discussing spiritual ideas with them, there should be a referral to Christian psychologists or social workers. In a busy family practice or surgical clinic, if there is not time to sit down and talk with the patients about what they will do with their remaining time, then opportunity should be afforded for interaction with someone who does have the time and the counseling skills. Each

of us should have a referral network of pastors, counselors, psychologists, and social workers whom we trust to provide this kind of input to our AIDS patients.

In addition, the church and the Christian practitioner should actively work to establish hospice care for AIDS patients. AIDS patients require frequent and sometimes prolonged hospitalizations. As we see more and more AIDS dementia occurring, it becomes clear that some patients will require long-term custodial care but not necessarily acute care. Therefore, the hospice is ideally suited for AIDS patients in the

also from uninformed church people, as a result of caring for AIDS patients. I have, on a number of occasions, noted a response from someone with whom I have just shaken hands who expresses concern, after discovering that I care for AIDS patients, that they may have acquired the AIDS virus just by shaking hands. Sometimes this is in jest, but usually it is a true concern. Until the entire world is well educated as to the epidemiology of HIV infection, this kind of subtle ostracism will occur.

Another risk that we face is having our motives misunderstood, or more deeply, our life-styles. Because I

## We should be an example for these men and women of how God feels toward them.

last months and weeks of their lives. Just as the church in previous eras provided leprosaria, tuberculosis sanatoria, and other long-term care facilities as a part of its ministry, so we need to become involved in these same activities with AIDS patients. This may well be the opportunity for the church to become active again in the mainstream of medicine.

### Risks

Finally, it needs to be said that this kind of commitment to the AIDS epidemic is not without risk. The most obvious problem is the risk of infection. It is clear that there is a certain risk entailed with caring for AIDS patients. There are well-documented situations where practitioners have become infected through contact with their patients. This is simply a matter of becoming exposed to blood or body secretions in a vulnerable way. Needle stick accidents, surgical accidents, contact with blood and blood products in situations such as emergency rooms and dialysis units are all clear risks for medical practitioners. But it should not be the case that we refuse to care for AIDS patients because of the risk. In preantibiotic eras, the risk of dying from an infection transmitted from a patient was always present and did not deter physicians.

A second risk that we face is ostracism. We may well find disapproval, not only from our medical peers but

relate well with my patients and they trust me, and because I attempt to achieve everything that can be achieved in terms of benefits for my patients, I have become somewhat of a hero to the homosexual community in my town. This has led certain individuals to conclude that because I interact well with homosexual men, I must therefore be homosexual myself. This attitude has been expressed on a number of occasions both passively and openly. This kind of prejudicial behavior will happen more often as more and more individuals become infected. We need to be aware of it and to take it into account. We should evaluate this attitude for what it is and discard it, just as Jesus dealt with it.

Not only are the risks there, but so are the rewards. There is almost nothing more satisfying to the practitioner than to have a patient come to him and say, "Thanks, Doc. You were there when I needed you."

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# God Needs No Defense

by Mary L. Jones

Houston

The quickened steps and restrained attitudes of the doctors and nurse sent a message more clearly than any words they could have spoken. The shallow breathing of Albert, my husband of 47 years, as he lay quietly on the hospital bed, was an echo of their unspoken message.

Only a few minutes earlier the doctor had said, "He appears to be stable and should have a comfortable night. You may go down to the waiting room. It is against hospital rules for you to stay in his room tonight."

The mercurial changes in Albert's condition were following the pattern of the last three months since lung cancer was diagnosed. With the help of friends and volunteers, he had remained an outpatient until 4 A.M. Thursday when a friend came to take us to the emergency room of the hospital well known for its treatment of cancer patients. The day had been spent keeping him as comfortable as possible, talking with him when he indicated a desire to visit.

Our son had driven down from San Antonio, visited, and returned home to keep an appointment, since no unexpected changes were indicated.

Arleeta, the dark-haired nurse with sensitive, childlike, enormous, brown eyes reflecting her concern, said, "Is there anything I can do for you; anyone I can call?"

My reply, "No, thank you," seemed to puzzle her as she left me sitting on the edge of the bed. When she returned, I told her I really did not want to leave the room. She assured me that I did not have to leave, regardless of hospital rules.

The blanket and sweater brought by friends for use in the waiting room during the night lay on the chair, which seemed too far away from my husband. I knew that nothing I did would really change anything, but it seemed necessary to try.

Arleeta reentered the room to say,

"The doctors need to talk with you. They are in the room past the nurses' station. We'll stay with him."

The doctors only confirmed what I knew was happening. The procedural instructions were helpful, and the concern in their voices was comforting.

When I returned to Albert's room, Arleeta said, "Are you sure that I can't call someone? I could call the chaplain."

"I don't really need anyone. My pastor's line was busy when I called, so someone else needs him. Perhaps you could call the chaplain to have prayer with me," I replied.

"I'm not sure which chaplain I can get at this hour, but I can get someone," she said.

"As long as he knows Jesus as God's Son, anyone is acceptable," I said, wondering why the night seemed so long.

The chaplain, a big man with dark eyes and an air that seemed almost defiant, entered, introduced himself, and sat quietly for a few moments, as if sizing up the situation.

Expecting him to take the lead, follow an accepted routine, and be on his way, I was taken by surprise when he asked, "What did you want me to pray about?"

After a moment of thought I replied, "That I will continue to stand strong throughout this time of challenge."

His brief reply, "Why?" pierced my defense even more.

"Because for many years, my family and friends have recognized that God is the center of my life, that I believe He supplies all our needs, giving strength as needed," I replied, almost defensively.

"Yes, and what about it?" asked the chaplain.

"Well, I must stand strong, showing God does what He promises; I can't be weak and cry and let God down. I must stand." The words hurried from me, even as I held Albert's

hand and listened to his labored breathing.

Rev. George, the chaplain, asked, "Who made us able to cry?"

"God, of course," I replied somewhat angrily, wondering why he asked a question with such an obvious answer.

"Then why don't you?" Rev. George said.

"Because—" The words were swallowed by a sob, followed by more sobbing as Rev. George provided the welcome Kleenex.

"God is God. He needs no defense. He is God whether you stand or not—or whether any of us stand. Nothing changes God. He has said, 'I change not, and that is the way it is. He made us able to cry, to release the sorrow within so that we can be healed and go on with life. Now we can have a prayer, but not for what you asked,'" Rev. George said, as he looked across the bed behind me.

The comfort of prayer by one who walks closely with God cannot be measured. To have a need met that we aren't even aware of yet is God's way.

The sound of a quick, shortened breath drew my attention, causing me to hold Albert's hand more closely. But I knew it was a desire to place our hands in God's, accepting His plan to give and take away.

Rev. George said, "I must go now. Someone needs me. Remember, God needs no defense."

No doubt Arleeta, who appeared instantly, had given an unspoken message. She asked, "Is someone coming for you? We'll take care of the necessary things. You will be called tomorrow, since you have agreed to the autopsy. May I help gather your things? You are so brave."

A caring nurse and a wise chaplain made a fact of life—death—a shared experience that has made the following days, weeks, and months more worthwhile, enabling me to share with others the great truth, "God needs no defense." 

# Postfuneral Counseling: What to Do After the Service

by Victor M. Parachin

Villa Park, Ill.

Recently a faith community was shaken when one of their families suffered a terrible blow. The mother, aged 32, and her twin daughters were killed suddenly as a result of an automobile accident. The funeral, which was attended by nearly 1,000 people, displayed three caskets—one, a full adult size, surrounded by two children's caskets.

Sooner or later every clergyman's nightmare becomes a personal reality and a pastoral responsibility. According to the U.S. Census Bureau there will be nearly 7,000 deaths every day this year in the United States. That figure translates into 8 million new "grievers" each year.

And for almost every family affected by death, the second call they make, after the one to a funeral director, is to a clergyman. More than any other professional it is the clergyman who is in a unique and a pivotal role to help with grief recovery.

When tragedy strikes and loss is experienced, ministers and priests can play a powerful role in facilitating a hurting person to recover, heal, and reenter the mainstream of living.

Following the funeral service, there are eight ways a clergyman can help the grieving recover and reenter the mainstream of living.

**1. LISTEN CAREFULLY.** In supporting those who have suffered a loss, theologian Paul Tillich's statement ought to be a guiding credo: "The first duty of love is to listen." One of the most common complaints and frustrations among the bereaved when they refer to a loved one is that they are told, "You're being morbid," or, "Let's not talk about that," or else the subject is abruptly changed.

In the months following a funeral, the greatest need that griever has is to talk honestly and candidly about

the loss without being silenced or judged. Therapy and listening are synonymous terms. This type of hearing is called "listening with the third ear" or "listening with the heart." Know that people want to talk about their loss. Encourage them in this. Do very little talking yourself, just a thoughtful word or gentle question.

A positive example comes from this encounter between a man and his chaplain. The father's son committed suicide, and the chaplain was quite effective in helping during the grieving period as reflected in the man's comments.

"Unlike my wife, I don't have as many close friends, and I don't have her support system. But I was very fortunate to have a chaplain who came to see me every week for several months. During his visits he said very little and always asked, 'How are you doing?' I didn't have to lie to him and say, 'I'm feeling fine.' With the chaplain I could be emotional and angry without ever having him make me feel badly for that. He always accepted me and my moods whatever they were."

**2. PROVIDE LITERATURE.** Information is power. Insights about mourning always help to normalize the process for the bereaved. Consequently, they generally welcome opportunities to hear and read about the experiences of others who have losses.

This means that religious professionals should become well acquainted with books and pamphlets on grief. Some excellent books are: *How to Survive the Loss of a Love*, by M. Colgrove, H. Bloomfield, and P. McWilliams; *Tracks of a Fellow Struggler*, by John Claypool; and *But I Never Thought He'd Die*, by Miriam Baker Nye.

In addition, exceptionally good pamphlets are published by Abbey Press, St. Meinrad, IN 47577. Their

literature is written to provide both understanding and comfort.

It may surprise the clergy to know that their own local funeral director often has such materials readily available at the funeral home. Various funeral associations publish extensive materials on bereavement, which are purchased by local funeral homes for distribution to the bereaved.

**3. RESPOND WITH EMPATHY.** When it is time to speak, do so simply and softly. By using helpful statements such as the following, you can help someone in grief cross over from the shores of despair to the land of understanding and growth.

*How can I be of help?*

*Tell me how you are feeling.*

*It must be hard to accept.*

*That must be very painful.*

*I'm sorry.*

*I wish I could take the pain away.*

*It's OK to be angry with God.*

All of these statements convey both feeling for the person in trauma as well as acceptance of the individual. The last statement is particularly important because one of the common reactions during a difficult time is to be angry with God.

"On Mother's Day, I awoke alone in a silent house, angrier than I'd ever felt before. 'It's Mother's Day,' I stormed at God, 'and You've killed my husband and children and injured me beyond hope of ever having a family again. What do You want from me that You haven't already taken away?' The fact is most grieving people experience anger and rage with God and need to be assured that God can handle all of our emotions including anger."

**4. AVOID CLICHÉS.** These are never helpful because, for the bereaved, they minimize the loss. Some sentences to avoid are:

*It's God's will.*

*I know how you feel.*

*Time heals all things.  
She/he led a full life.  
You will marry again.  
You can have other children.  
Your child is now in heaven.*

Statements such as these serve only to further frustrate someone in grief.

For example, while doing some banking, I observed that one of the bankers seated behind a desk was crying softly. Approaching her, I introduced myself, explained I was a minister, said I noticed that she seemed upset, and wondered if I could help. She told me that day was the second anniversary of her son's death due to cancer. As she talked, she told me how many family and friends had been truly helpful following the funeral.

However, she recalled one person saying to her: "God must really love your son to have taken him." That statement infuriated her and only caused more pain and frustration.

**5. PRACTICE UNCONDITIONAL LOVE.** This means accepting whatever feelings emerge from the bereaved. Feelings of rage, anger, frustration, and guilt are not always pleasant to observe or hear, yet need to be expressed.

One man, whose wife died suddenly of a brain aneurysm, lamented: "Many of my friends have let me down by being intolerant of my feelings. They have made it clear that my emotional expressions make them very uncomfortable and are unacceptable."

Unfortunately, friends failed to create a safe environment for him to freely express the entire range of his feelings without being judged, isolated, and left feeling abandoned.

Psychologist Nancy O'Connor, Ph.D., and author of *Letting Go with Love: The Grieving Process*, advises family and friends of those in grief to accept unconditionally whatever emotions surface. She writes:

If the mourner doesn't feel like talking, don't force conversation. Silence is better than aimless chatter. The mourner should be allowed to lead. When suffering spills over in words, you can do the one thing the bereaved needs above all else at that time—you can listen. Is he emotional? Accept that. Does he cry? Accept that too. . . . Accept whatever feelings are

expressed. Do not rebuke. Do not change the subject. Be as understanding as you can be.

**6. RECOMMEND KEEPING A JOURNAL.** Writing on a daily or weekly basis is highly therapeutic in two ways.

First, it frees one to be in touch with his deepest feelings and emotions. Susan Forward, Ph.D., and author of *Men Who Hate Women and the Women Who Love Them*, often invites her clients to write "letters" to people who have caused them pain. The letters are never mailed. However, the writing is an effective means of getting in touch with anger, resentment, and hostility. She suggests that the letters be structured around these types of statements:

- *This is what you did to me.*
- *This is how I felt about it.*
- *This is how it affected my life.*

She also advises her clients not to worry about the tone but to simply let it all pour out without holding anything back. Dr. Forward states: "Expressing repressed anger in a safe and controlled environment is one of the best antidotes to feeling like a helpless child."

Second, a daily or weekly documenting of feelings, moods, and thoughts allows an individual to focus upon the positives in his life. No matter how great the loss, keeping a journal will become an ideal place to record dreams, fantasies, and goals. Doing this keeps a person a little more objective about himself and his situation. Shakti Gawain, author of *Creative Visualization*, recommends the writing of "affirmations" for people who feel particularly vulnerable and negative about themselves. The affirmations could take these forms:

- *I accept myself completely here and now.*
- *I accept all my feelings as part of myself*
- *I am beautiful and lovable however I am feeling.*
- *I am now willing to experience all my feelings.*
- *I love myself when I express my feelings.*

She states: "Writing affirmations is a very dynamic technique because the written word has so much power over our minds. We are both writing and reading them at the same time, so it's like a double hit of energy."

**7. BEWARE OF SETTING DEADLINES.** Establishing deadlines for grief usually comes in these forms: "It's been a year now," or, "Don't you think you should be over this by now?"

One mother, whose son died from leukemia after a four-year struggle, says: "There is no timetable for grief. No one need feel ashamed if getting over a traumatic loss is a long, complex business. The pressure outsiders sometimes put on families to return to 'normal' is deplorable. There's nothing wrong with a family that remembers, cares, and cries, even years after a loss."

Thus a key concept in helping someone through grief is to be patient with him and for him. Know that grieving can take anywhere from three to five years.

One mother whose daughter died describes the diminishing of her pain as taking place after "a thousand sunsets," or nearly three years. At that time she wrote the following in a journal:

One night about a thousand sunsets after Laurie's death, I put my hands on my heart. I'm surprised it's not raw and bleeding anymore. There is just a big scar. I move my arms and legs and they don't feel like lead weights anymore. . . . Now I have a scar. The bleeding is gone but not all the tears.

**8. SUGGEST PROFESSIONAL HELP.** Sometimes people do get stuck in one place and are unable to move through the loss and grief. A young mother anonymously wrote the following to a newspaper columnist:

I need help. I lost a two-month-old daughter in February 1983. I know the doctors did an autopsy and said it was crib death. Sudden Infant Death Syndrome. But I know I did it. Yes, me. She was in our bed when I rolled over in my sleep and killed her. Now I'm going through this nightmare over and over. The death certificate and coroner's report said it was SIDS. How can I prove they are wrong? I know what happened. I remember waking up and checking her. She was warm, but her eyes were still and hard when I looked at them. Paramedics worked on her for a long time. . . . Why won't anyone be-

*Continued on page 80*



# THE ARK ROCKER

## Frumple's Law

**F**rumple has done it again. With his unusual gifts of profound insight and concise articulation, he has at one and the same time put into useful form the heretofore felt but unspoken opinion of leadership, given us a truly memorable principle to live by, and resolved an ancient theological question. I'm perfectly willing to dub it Frumple's Law.

I heard Frumple himself announce it in a preachers' meeting, as one point among several concerning life among his fellow clergy, but I hear that he has also presented it in academic, administrative, and local settings, with appropriate adjustments, so it has wide application. And it has met with grateful approval among the pooh-bahs of several ranks.

The academic version of the law is probably the one easiest to expound upon in a preachers' magazine, so that's the form we quote: "Behind every threat to the campus social order is a scheming faculty member."

Now the form of it may put you off a bit. But consider this law's genius. It meets perfectly the requirements of valid scientific explanation: It is simple, it is universal in application, and it can be tested with reasonable expectation of exactly the same or functionally the same results. Moreover, theologically, Frumple's Law solves the age-old puzzle of the precise nature of original sin. At least, it solves it insofar as it has anything to do with congregations, districts or conferences, and denominational educational campuses. Whenever a congregation questions pastoral leadership, we may be certain that the original impulse for it came from some unsanctified member who is probably continuing to stir the pot;

we may be certain that when the district or conference is uneasy about something leadership has done or not done, some malcontent or personally ambitious reverend is egging it on; and when our college students engage in questionable social behavior, especially behavior of the sort that creates problems between administration and constituency, we may be certain that some faculty member, for goodness knows what subtle and complex reason, is generating it all.

Obviously, clarifying insights like this simply do not come along every day, and since we need all of them that we can get to help us analyze our situations accurately, one is reluctant to tinker with it. But I got to thinking that we need to state it more positively—and more palatably. There is, after all, a very bright side to all of this apparently rather negative rule of thumb, and that side should be duly noted.

First of all, on the bright side, Frumple's Law indisputably implies that congregations are of themselves too pure, the pastors on a given conference or district are too near absolute sainthood, and the students are too innocent ever to engage in critique or rise to dispute. That some of our best analyzers, having looked things over so carefully, have come to such a cheering, though unspoken and merely implicit, conclusion really encourages me. And when you put this spirit-lifting implication with the second one (also indisputable)—that of infallibility and absolute inculpability, if you are a leader—you cannot but be deeply heartened and motivated to throw yourself into the work with abandon. Consider how simple, clean, and cer-

tain Frumple's Law makes your disciplinary work. Behind every critique aimed your way, behind every uprising of any sort, in your jurisdiction or on your watch, there must be an unseen egger. You can narrow your search and keep your press releases, as it were, scientifically elegant. And it undoes the damage done by your folks when they taught you to accept responsibility and even feel guilty once in a while.

Of course, I do have a question or two. As a pastor, I am generally in agreement with the analysis of congregational troubles. But I feel a little uneasy about the generalization concerning us reverends. And I am plumb confused with the insistence that there is a faculty member behind any student social misbehavior that threatens the peace and order of the campus.

I have found congregations to be very gullible and easily misled by some scheming soul, but on the whole they really are quite innocent and pure. I credit that to the splendid work of my predecessors—all but the very last one, who would have wrecked them if he hadn't left and I come at just the right moment. So Frumple's Law holds there, I think.

I do find the law just a bit harder to accept when it comes to us reverends. In the first place, I'm uneasy because I'm not sure that Frumple, and others like him, really believe that it is true in our arena. These folks will publicly say, "See, the whole fuss was simply a matter of one guy trying to mislead all of these pure, innocent reverends." But privately, they believe that complaints about the way in which the conference works (or doesn't) are often

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*Hampton*

# All Is Bright

by J. Grant Swank, Jr.

Walpole, Mass.

**T**he Christmas wreaths were still hung on the walls of the front meeting room, but it was evident that the season's mirth had ebbed away.

Some of us from the church had gone to the convalescent home to bring Advent's good cheer. Since other organizations had clogged the home's December calendar, we stepped aside from our usual first Sunday afternoon of the month to opt for January's first Sunday.

"Even though Christmas is over, we will still sing the carols," someone suggested, with the rest of us unanimously agreeing. Therefore, with carol books in hand, we greeted our elderly friends.

One of the women was not very attentive to our being there. She kept pushing the tablecloth over the edge while another resident yanked at it from another direction. Both were too senile to understand what they were doing.

Across from those two was another woman who was strapped to her chair so that she would not fall on the floor. Nevertheless she kept leaning forward as if to defy the strength of the cloth straps. As we sang forth, she mumbled under her breath, evidently not at all happy with her state.

More women than men populated that nursing home, so that when we were able to get even a couple of men to attend services, we felt quite elated. So it was that one of the men had folded his arms as if in defiance, shouldering himself against our presence.

This is a pitiful sight, I thought to myself as one of the laymen read aloud from Luke 2. I wondered what the children in our group were think-

ing as they pondered the forlorn mood of the room. Certainly this was a far cry from what they had enjoyed in their own homes during the school vacation.

HOLIDAY GREETINGS still hung in huge red and white letters from the ceiling's beams. At least they were doing their job in reminding us that someone had thought enough of the Christmas joy to tack up the usual saying.

But how secular it all was. Even on the shelves there were only Santa figurines—not a hint of the Nativity scene. Yet surely a number of these elderly folk had church backgrounds and had at one time worshiped faithfully in some sanctuary.

To my right there was a resident who insisted in calling out gibberish while we gave forth with "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing." How noble of the church people to courteously ignore her clamor in favor of the traditional Christmas strains of gladness.

The staff is to be commended for taking care of these poor people day in and day out, I concluded. I wonder if we are making any impact on their tethered minds, I thought further.

"Let us give it our best!" I cheered on as I announced that "Joy to the World" would be our next carol. That upped the decibels somewhat, but not all that much. Thank the Lord for loyal church people who would at least sympathize with the pastor in feeling with him what no one wanted to put into words.

Outside, the frosted earth gave us no warmth to encourage our faltering attempts in communicating the gospel story. Frost on the window-

panes warned of more days of frigid temperatures.

Several times our group was interrupted by outsiders who had come to the home to visit a relative or friend. As the passersby traipsed through, they cut into what flimsy attention we had mustered.

Some days are like this, I whispered to my soul. Just keep on keeping on; be patient in well-doing.

One of the church women had brought along a large box of fresh oranges. It was now time for the boys and girls to hand a couple of oranges to each of the residents in attendance.

As the children wove in and out of the wheelchairs, going around the several tables and then returning to their own seats, I watched their young faces. They wore smiles that reached up into the older ones' eyes. Their little hands touched the wrinkled ones.

One old woman took hold of a little girl's arm and drew her near. No doubt it had been months since she had touched a child.

"The children do make a difference," I said in between verses of the carol. Several nodded in agreement.

Finally it was time for some prayers. But it was difficult to hear the prayers, for some of the nursing home folk kept breaking in with their nonsense. Such a pity.

These people were once babies and then toddlers. They once romped as boys and girls, sliding down back slopes and climbing apple trees. They had fallen in love, married, and had children of their own. They had held jobs, paid bills, and worried about world events. But

now they were lined up in a front room, hardly knowing what was going on at Christmas.

The Christmas tree lights kept blinking off and on, oblivious to the surroundings.

"Now we are going to close with probably the most favorite Christmas carol. Let us all sing 'Silent Night!'"

A sigh seemed to gently breathe from my own as they realized that they had been faithful workers for the Lord. The battle waged against the contradiction of the season's weariness was soon to be won by a benediction.

Yet the marvel happened before our eyes. Whereas no one from the home had sung one syllable of any previous carols, as one they joined in on the hallowed hymn. Slowly but surely the minds came together, alert and touched by some spell from without.

"Silent night! Holy night! . . ."

Lips that had seemed glued shut were now moving, singing, gladly. They *did* know what we were up to, why we had come. They *were* discerning the meaning of Christmas joy for one more year. It was that especially familiar carol that had unlocked their awareness.

The two women stopped pushing at the tablecloth. The other one quit pulling at her straps. One by one the elderly were coming together with those from the church. By the time we sang the last verse, the whole mood had changed. One could sense that with the tree's lights our hearts were also set aglow.

It has been worth it after all, I thought. God has honored our being here. His Spirit has reached into the gloomy hearts of those too often forgotten by the rest of the world for most of the year.

"You people have sung so well on that hymn that I think we should sing it again as a prayer to the Christ child," I offered. With that, the voices reached the ceiling as one smiling face responded to another. A wreath of cheer had come down upon all.

As I closed with prayer, I could think of no other words so appropriate to the occasion than those from the carol: "All is bright." Certainly in the gathering together in His name, His glory had embraced us and the season once again.

# Advent Series— the Gifts of God

by Russell Payne

Hillsdale, Mich.

TITLE: The Gift of God's Grace

TEXT: Eph. 2:8

- I. God's grace is undeserved—a wondrous gift.
- II. God's grace is unconditional—available to all.
- III. God's grace is unending—available for eternity.
- IV. God's grace is unfathomable—who can understand it completely?



TITLE: The Gift of God's Care

TEXT: Phil. 4:19; Psalm 23

- I. God's care is available in all of life's vicissitudes.
- II. God's care is there when we are least aware of it.
- III. God's care is there when we are most in need of it.
- IV. God's care is available when we pray.



TITLE: The Gift of God's Son

TEXT: John 3:16; Isa. 9:2-7; Matt. 1:18-25

- I. God's Son is the focal point of the world.
- II. God's Son is the focal point of God's child.
- III. God's Son is the focal point of the church.
- IV. God's Son is the focal point of heaven.



TITLE: The Gift of God's Eternal Life

TEXT: John 17:3; Matt. 19:16-22

- I. Eternal life cannot be earned.
- II. Eternal life is God's gift.
- III. Eternal life will be spent where Jesus is.



TITLE: The Gift of God's Way for My Life

TEXT: Isa. 64:8

- I. God's way is the way of Peace.
- II. God's way is the way of Hope.
- III. God's way is the way of Life.
- IV. God's way is the way of Holiness.
- V. God's way is the way of Victory.



## CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

by Barbara M. Sutryn

Montoursville, Pa.

Picture five points far overhead;

A baby hushed on a makeshift bed;

A shepherd tending his drowsy flock;

A wise man, wise man, wise man . . .

Symbols of a Savior born—  
Cards, religious, assorted  
dozen?

Or musings of a restive mind  
On the scene of an Advent  
Sunday morn?

Faces of mesmerized worshipers  
quicken

As the white-robed chorus lifts  
its voice,

Releasing them, with the angels' song,

From a lofty sermon gone on  
too long.

# Church Growth Versus Ministry

by Steven E. Barnes  
Stevenson, Wash.

**T**here are times when I question my church. Perfect love is certainly not what I feel when I get the mail and find more church growth seminars advertised on glossy paper announcing "big" names in the church world as speakers. Before you jump to the wrong conclusion, let me assure you that I am the pastor of a growing church. As a matter of fact, my church has grown fivefold in the last five years. But I still get upset when I open my mail.

As I analyze my emotions about this, I don't find anything carnal—a relief to my congregation and my district superintendent. But I do feel like a cat being stroked the wrong direction. I wasn't called to "church growth." I was called to minister! Let me explain the difference.

When God called me to pastoral ministry, He had some expectations of me, as did the denomination that licensed me to preach. The local church that called me to be its pastor also has some expectations. However, everyone must keep in mind that I am a minister of the gospel of Jesus Christ. My call is to ministry, not church growth. To me there is a difference.

Ministry is composed of such things as preaching, baptizing, counseling, calling, conducting funerals and weddings, and caring for physical and spiritual needs of my community. Not all of these things result in church growth, but all of them are ministry and fall within my calling.

Every year I am held accountable for how many calls, services, baptisms, etc., that I have done. Yet the bottom line is really CHURCH GROWTH! That's what the monthly newsletter emphasizes. That's what the awards at district assembly are given for. That's what is lauded and applauded—and that's what comes in the mail. But that's not what I was called to do!

**I AM CALLED TO MINISTER! CHURCH GROWTH IS THE RESULT OF EFFECTIVE MINISTRY OVER A PERIOD OF TIME, BUT MINISTRY IS NOT A RESULT OF CHURCH GROWTH OVER A PERIOD OF TIME!** In our desire to be effective, we have put the cart before the horse. Statistics show that it's not working very well. We have rationalized that the more people in church, the more people to whom to minister. We have become so preoccupied with getting them and keeping them that we have not had time and energy to minister to them. Let me illustrate.

In nations beyond the United States and Canada, where most of church growth is taking place, the church uses a completely different strategy than is commonly used in North America. On the mission field, it is common to minister to physical needs of the people. Then, explaining their spiritual need, Jesus Christ is presented as the answer. Time has proven that this method works. The church sends out missionary doctors, missionary farmers, missionary teachers, missionary builders, etc.,

and the church grows. For them, church growth is not by taking people from a different congregation but by professions of faith. Here in North America we don't do it that way. We attempt to attract people with bigger and better programs, paved parking lots, fancy buildings, and the trappings of success. At best, we are moving people from one congregation to another.

We've tried bigger buildings with better programs, and I'm not opposed to either. But let's try ministering to people and see if that works as it has in the past and does in other areas of the world. You may think that rich Americans have no needs. But you are wrong. One in four girls in the U.S. are sexually molested against their will by the time they are 18 years old. Approximately one in nine U.S. adult males is a sex offender. The number of Americans with drug and alcohol problems is staggering. The number of single parents approaches the number of married parents. In rich America is a chronic problem with homeless people, even in small towns.

In recent years I have been greatly encouraged to see more and more publicity about what's happening in some of our inner-city ministries. My discouragement comes from two directions. First, most people think that ministries are only needed in large cities. Second, people keep sending me these glossy church growth ads.

## A. W. Tozer: Prophet at Large

by James L. Snyder

Glen Burnie, Md.

Someone observed, "Fortunate is the person who has a Tozer book in hand when going through a dry period spiritually."

That person may have had in mind *The Pursuit of God*, or *The Knowledge of the Holy*, or perhaps one of a dozen other books from the pen of Dr. A. W. Tozer. Although he died in 1963, his ministry continues through his many books.

Many are familiar with the writings of Dr. A. W. Tozer, but few know much about the man. Even during his lifetime few could rightfully claim to know Dr. Tozer in any degree of familiarity. By choice and design he walked alone. This in itself proved to be the source of his spiritual strength and ever-widening influence in the evangelical community. Many regarded him as an eloquent preacher, while others thought of him as an outstanding writer. But these were mere products of a life consecrated to God. Dr. Tozer was first and foremost a great Christian.

Aiden Wilson Tozer was born April 21, 1897, in the mountainous region of western Pennsylvania. He was converted to Christ at the age of 17 and in 1919, without any theological training, began his ministry with the Christian and Missionary Alliance. For 44 years he labored in a variety of ministries, his longest and most known ministry being the Southside Alliance Church of Chicago from 1928 until 1959. He was pastor, author, editor, and Bible conference speaker.

During his lifetime, Dr. Tozer earned the reputation as a 20th-century prophet. He saw through the fog of modern Christianity, pointing out the rocks on which it might flounder if it continued its course. Able to express what he saw in a beautiful, simple, forceful manner, Dr. Tozer was often the voice of God when the

words of others were but echoes.

There were times when Dr. Tozer stood alone on certain issues, which never intimidated him in the least. He was never concerned about who stood with him on an issue. His concern was always with the truth. He was fearless in his denunciation, which made enemies rather quickly. He once criticized a popular new Bible translation. "Reading that new translation," Tozer said, "gave me the same feeling a man might have if he tried to shave with a banana."

Dr. Tozer's ministry, whether writing or speaking, always ministered to those hungry for God. He never dabbled in religious nonsense or trivia but always dealt with issues of paramount spiritual importance. A person came away from Dr. Tozer's ministry with the haunting sense of having been in the presence of God.

In 1950 Tozer was elected editor of the *Alliance Weekly*, later *Alliance Witness* and now *Alliance Life*, official magazine of the Christian and Missionary Alliance. Under Tozer's leadership the magazine quickly doubled in circulation. Someone observed that the *Alliance Witness* was the only magazine subscribed to solely for its editorials. Many people unfamiliar with the Christian and Missionary Alliance subscribed to the *Alliance Witness* simply for Tozer's racy editorials and insightful articles. There usually was a strain of controversy in what Tozer wrote.

As editor, Dr. Tozer was required to write an editorial for each issue. This put a drain on his creative and spiritual energy. At times he would come to his study facing editorial deadlines "as uninspired as a burnt shingle," as he would say. Tozer would get his Bible and a hymnbook and kneel by his couch and begin to worship God. He would read some Scrip-

ture and perhaps read through or softly sing a few hymns. As he released his spirit into God, he would soon be enveloped in His presence.

Ideas would begin to come. He would pick up his pencil and write as fast as he could to keep up with what was being poured into his soul. Within an hour sketches of two or three editorials would be before him. Later he would painstakingly polish these sketches for publication.

Tozer's forte was his prayer life. He often said, "As a man prayed, so was he." His preaching as well as his writings were but extensions of his prayer life. What he discovered in prayer soon found its way into sermons, then articles and editorials, and finally into his many books.

The great care with which he produced his books established him as a devotional writer of a classic nature who will long be read when his spoken ministry is forgotten. He labored diligently to develop a style and strength of expression that continually attracted attention. His motto was, "Hard writing makes for easy reading."

One of the areas Dr. Tozer had to watch was his humor, and he struggled to keep it under control. He was not a storyteller or joke-teller, but in the turn of a phrase, a sharp observation through satire, or a grotesque illustration, he got his point across most tellingly. Raymond McAfee, longtime associate of Tozer in Chicago, said, "I could always tell by the content of humor in his preaching just how tired he was. If the audience was convulsed by his discourse, he was tired, his guard was down, and humor sneaked through."

Tozer's own hunger for God eventually led him to the study of the Christian mystics. He discovered that

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## John Wesley's New Testament Notes— Heirloom of the World Wesleyan Family and Aid for Preachers

by David Tripp

West Midlands, England

**W**e live in the next valley to the one in which Francis Asbury was bound apprentice, and in sight of the church where Richard Baxter, one of the great Puritans who paved the way for the 18th-century revival, preached his first sermon. So this brief study comes from John Wesley's homeland as a greeting across the Wesleyan family, with love.

John Wesley's *Explanatory Notes upon the New Testament* first appeared in 1754. He continued revising them for many years. They were intended for the use of all serious Bible students, especially those without opportunity to study the languages of the Bible, and specifically for Mr. Wesley's preachers who were expected to read them daily. In the British Methodist tradition, they retain officially, but rather nominally, the status of a confessional document that they have not usually had elsewhere in the Methodist world. But his notes remain a central document of the Wesleyan tradition, a precious heirloom of the Wesleyan branch of the Christian family. Like many heirlooms, they tend to be undervalued, hidden away, and left to gather dust. But like the best heirlooms, they deserve to be brought out, dusted off, and shared.

Mr. Wesley gave these *Notes* a high status, not because he had any great confidence in his powers as a commentator, but because he had complete confidence in God's power to make the Bible a transforming instrument of love in every generation.

Can John Wesley's *Notes* be used today? Yes, if we use them in sympathy with Mr. Wesley's intentions and with even more sympathy with the Author of the Bible! I write as one who has used the *Notes* from time to time over the last 30 years since I was a high school student. The *Notes* are

not solely an exegetical commentary, giving the sense of the text in an objective way; nor are they solely a devotional commentary, responding on a personal level to themes in the text. They are both! They are designed to be read as a studious exercise leading repeatedly into prayer.

With the *Notes* before us, we read the text first—very close to the King James Bible, but not the same. John Wesley corrected the translation throughout. Next, look down to the notes, finding that the key phrases are repeated and followed by comments. To make full sense of his comments, we have to look up again at the text to see how the comments flow out of the *whole* text, taking up what went before the passage and stimulating us to ask the questions that will be answered in the next verses and chapters. We are taken into the flow of the inspired words, so that the experience of the writers is reproduced in us, the readers.

Mr. Wesley brings in principles of Trinitarian orthodoxy and urgent problems of daily ethics. The text is made sharp and demanding and promising. We can only bear this kind of reading if we allow it to become a conversation with God, asking at each uncomfortable or unexpected turn: "Is this *really* what You meant? Is this *really* what You want of me *now*? Will You *really* do this for us? Forgive, please! Help, please! And thank You."

For example, follow John Wesley's treatment of Col. 3:1-5:

Verse 1. *If ye are risen, seek the things above*—As Christ, being risen, immediately went to heaven.

Verse 3. *For ye are dead*—To the things on earth. *And your real, spiritual life is hid from the world, and laid up in God, with Christ*—Who hath merited, promised, pre-

pared it for us, and gives us the earnest and foretaste of it in our hearts.

Verse 4. *When Christ*—The abruptness of the sentence surrounds us with sudden light. *Our life*—The fountain of holiness and glory. *Shall appear*—In the clouds of heaven.

Verse 5. *Mortify therefore*—Put to death; slay with a continued stroke. *Your members*—Which together make up the body of sin. *Which are upon the earth*—Where they find their nourishment. *Uncleanness*—In act, word, or thought. *Inordinate affection*—Every passion which does not flow from and lead to the love of God. *Evil desire*—The desire of the flesh, the desire of the eye, and the pride of life. *Covetousness*—According to the derivation of the word, means the desire of having more, or of any thing independent of God. *Which is idolatry*—Properly and directly; for it is giving the heart to a creature.

Such close reading is impossible unless it becomes and remains a humble, questing dialogue with God. In his rule for the daily reading of his preachers, Mr. Wesley was giving them—and us—a rule of prayer. His *Notes* form part of the Wesleyan version of what other Christian traditions call the "divine office," the daily respects that the church delights to pay to the Triune God.

Whether or not we use the *Notes* themselves for this purpose these days, we need some similar exercise to open ourselves to what the Word promises and to let God mold us, our praises and petitions, our sermons and our works, according to the image of His divine love.

I would plead for occasional use, at least, of the *Notes* in this way by

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# Tax Procedures for Congregations

Part 1

Board of Pensions and Benefits USA

Church of the Nazarene



The federal tax information that follows is offered *only as a guideline* to help local churches cope with the legal requirements of being an employer and is intended to provide some resources for further investigation. No attempt has been made to cover state and local income tax situations or Workers' Compensation, which would differ for each local church. Federal Unemployment Tax is not discussed here either, since churches are generally exempt from this tax.

## CLASSIFICATION OF EMPLOYEES

Since legal and tax obligations of the church board as employer differ for the lay and ministerial employee, it is very important that the classification of each of its employees is accurately determined. The church may have employees who are considered to perform ministerial functions by the church board, but who are actually defined as lay employees by IRS definitions.

Most churches will have at least one employee, the pastor. This is usually a **ministerial employee**, since most pastors either are ordained or district-licensed ministers. Staff associates who are ordained or district-licensed ministers are ministerial employees *as long as they are performing ministerial functions*. Additional paid employees, such as

secretaries and janitors, are **lay employees**. Any other employees also are considered lay employees by the IRS and must be treated as such for tax purposes. Where an ordained or district-licensed minister is performing "nonministerial" duties (such as custodial services, etc.), the church should carefully consult with their tax adviser to determine the tax status and obligations for that particular individual. Generally such an individual serving in that capacity would *not* be considered a ministerial employee by the IRS.

The following chart may be helpful:

### Self-employed:

itinerant evangelists and song evangelists who are *not* incorporated

### Employees:

#### A. Ministerial:

1. pastor who is an ordained or district-licensed minister
2. staff member who is an ordained or district-licensed minister and who is performing ministerial duties

#### B. Lay:

1. pastor who is not ordained or district-licensed
2. church secretaries and janitors

3. staff members who are *not* ordained or district-licensed ministers
4. ordained or district-licensed ministers who are not serving in a ministerial capacity

These distinctions may not be consistent with the way the role of the individual is seen in the local church. However, they are important to understand, for they are based upon the IRS guidelines.

## THE MINISTERIAL EMPLOYEE

The issuance of Form W-2 *does not* affect the way a ministerial employee pays his estimated income tax and Social Security (SECA) (using the self-employment tax rate) on Form 1040ES. It is still the individual minister's responsibility to make these estimated quarterly payments in advance to the IRS. The local church is under no obligation to withhold federal income tax or Social Security for the ministerial employee. However, each church will need to check their own state and community rules regarding state income tax or city earnings tax. Under special arrangements, a minister and church board *may* agree to a withholding of the income tax portion. However, this should only be done following the careful directions and advice of a tax consultant.

While many church boards pay the minister's Social Security, it is an allowance to the employee for a personal expense. A Social Security allowance is taxable income, and it must be reported as a part of cash salary on Form W-2.

### THE LAY EMPLOYEE

Upon hiring a lay employee, the church assumes the obligation to withhold income tax and Social Security (FICA) from the employee's salary and likewise to report that salary and withholdings to the IRS and also to the individual. Failure to comply can result in penalties and serious problems, which should be carefully avoided. For example, in a federal court ruling, four church officers were each held personally responsible for over \$200,000 of the church's unpaid payroll taxes. (You will want to check your local situation to see if withholding requirements also include state and city income taxes.) The obligations, procedures, and tables for withholding federal income tax and FICA (Social Security) are explained in IRS Publication 15 "Circular E—Employer's Tax Guide."

Since January 1, 1984, lay employees (both full- and part-time) are automatically covered by Social Security under the FICA plan. This requires withholding part of the tax from the employee, paying an amount from the employer's own funds, remitting the funds to the proper depository institution, and reporting this total to the IRS at least quarterly. The amount of salary paid and the amounts withheld for income tax and FICA tax must be reported quarterly by the employer on Form 941, otherwise, there are penalties.

### THE EMPLOYER IDENTIFICATION NUMBER (EIN)

Your congregation is required to report employment taxes (federal income taxes and Social Security taxes withheld) and give Form W-2 tax statements to employees, including the minister, whether or not any taxes are withheld. Therefore, your church probably already has a federal Employer Identification Number (EIN) and in some states a state identification number. *Your congregation must use the EIN on all items sent to the IRS.*

### WHAT IS TAXABLE FOR FEDERAL INCOME TAX PURPOSES?

For the ministerial employee, taxable income consists of cash salary paid as compensation, any cash bonuses, automobile allowances, and Social Security allowances. It *does not* include car expenses reimbursed under a qualifying arrangement, housing allowance, tax-sheltered annuity, business expense reimbursements, reimbursed professional fees, and any other tax-free benefits allowed by IRS. Clearly the greatest exclusion for the ministerial employee is the value of housing and utilities provided for him, or that cash compensation designated as housing allowance and which is used for that purpose.

For the lay employee, taxable income consists of cash salary paid as compensation, any cash bonuses, automobile allowances, Social Security allowances, *and housing allowance*. It *does not* include reimbursed car expenses, tax-sheltered annuity, business expense reimbursements, reimbursed professional fees, and any other tax-free benefits allowed by IRS. The *cash* housing allowance *or* the fair market rental value of a parsonage and utilities must be reported as taxable income for lay employees. Only ordained or district-licensed ministers performing ministerial duties may claim the housing exclusion provided by Section 107 of the Internal Revenue Code.

### INCOME TAX WITHHOLDING

For the ministerial employee, it is *not* the employer's responsibility to withhold any income tax. This is because of a special exception in the federal income tax law. The ministerial employee will file his estimated tax, quarterly, along with his Social Security (SECA) payments. However, if the ministerial employee and the church agree to income tax withholding, it can be done just as it is done for any other employee (*but no withholding for FICA is possible for the minister*).

For the lay employee (both full-time and part-time), the employer *MUST* withhold income tax according to the provisions of the tax law. There are fines and penalties provided for failing to comply. The lay

employee cannot choose to file estimated tax on a quarterly basis as a minister does. The employer must secure Form W-4 on which the employee claims any exemptions for himself and dependents. The amount withheld is then determined by using the charts provided by the IRS in Publication 15, "Circular E—Employer's Tax Guide."

Care must be taken with lay employees to withhold on the basis of all taxable income, *including* the value of housing and utilities provided in lieu of cash compensation.

### SOCIAL SECURITY WITHHOLDING

For the ministerial employee, the church *cannot* withhold for Social Security as it does for lay employees. The law provides that payment be made directly by the ministerial employee for this purpose. The tax is based on the current self-employment rate even though the minister is technically *not* self-employed. This rate must be applied on taxable income *and housing allowance* (whether a cash allowance *or* the value of housing and utilities provided in lieu of cash). Many churches provide to the minister a Social Security allowance equal to the full amount of this tax. That allowance in turn becomes taxable income.

For the lay employee, Social Security laws changed January 1, 1984. Since that time, lay employees (both full-time and part-time) are automatically covered by Social Security under the FICA plan. Therefore, church employers *MUST* withhold for FICA at the current employee rate from the lay employee's wages that are subject to Social Security (including any "salary-reduction" TSA contributions) *and pay an additional amount from their own church funds*. This total amount is then paid to the government for the individual. It does not matter if the lay employee is full-time or part-time. Many churches may want to give an allowance to the lay employee equal to the full amount withheld. Of course, such an allowance becomes taxable income. 

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

# Jesus' Impossible Commandment

OR

## Love Your Enemies? You've Got to Be Kidding!

by C. S. Cowles

Nampa, Idaho

Matt. 5:43-48

I feel a bit like an ad I read this week: "Chain saw for sale. Runs terrible. Cuts crooked. Excellent loaner. Always returned. Nobody asks to borrow it again!"

New Testament scholar F. F. Bruce has written a book titled *The Hard Sayings of Jesus*. None of Jesus' sayings are more difficult for us to deal with, and yet more important for us to face, than what has been described as Jesus' Third Great Commandment, or the Impossible Commandment. Jesus said to His disciples:

You have heard that it was said, "You shall love your neighbor, and hate your enemy." But I say to you, *love your enemies*, and pray for those who persecute you in order that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven (Matt. 5:43-45, NASB, italics added).

### "LOVE YOUR ENEMIES"? You've got to be kidding!

Love God? Sure! Love your neighbor? Of course. Not only Jesus but also Moses said that. But love your enemies? Neither Moses nor any of the prophets of Israel ever said anything like that! Neither Confucius nor Buddha nor any other religious

leader ever uttered anything so bizarre, so impractical, so impossible as that! Of all the "hard sayings" of Jesus, none are harder than that!

Peter Cartwright was a Methodist circuit-riding preacher back in the days when our nation was young and expanding westward. He was a top-ranked prizefighter before his conversion. In a town where he was trying to organize a Methodist church, he was accosted by the town tough, who said,

"I've heard that you Methodists believe in entire sanctification."

"That's right."

"And that entire sanctification so fills you with perfect love that you'll not fight."

"That's right."

"That means that if I slug you, you'll not hit me back."

"That's right."

But before the man could hit Cartwright, the preacher jumped in, grabbed the fellow by his collar, and said, "But pity thy poor soul, brother, if thou shouldst inadvertently discover that I am not entirely sanctified."

With all due respect to Jesus, I want to first speak concerning reason.

### I. REASON SPEAKS IN PRAISE OF HATING ONE'S ENEMIES AND DEALING WITH THEM SEVERELY (v. 43).

First, reason says, *We have a moral responsibility to take a strong stand against enemies.*

To mollycoddle enemies is to blur

the distinction between right and wrong, between good and evil, and it is to risk compromising the truth. We must draw sharp lines, take a firm stand. There are, after all, matters of principle at stake! To go soft on enemies is to encourage them in the error of their ways. Furthermore, how will the enemies ever change if we do not deal with them severely?

Deanna, our youngest, was in the fourth grade. One night she said to me, "Dad, I've made a Christian out of Bobby."

"Marvelous," I replied. "Tell me about it."

"Well, Bobby was the meanest boy in my class at the beginning of the year. And he cussed all the time. But since I made a Christian out of him, he has been so nice. And he hasn't said one bad word!"

"Great, but how did you do it?" I asked.

"I beat him up!"

Second, reason says, *We have a psychological need to clearly identify our enemies.*

We define who and what we are by declaring passionately who and what we are not! How better may I declare myself a red-blooded patriot than to be militantly against the enemy?

I did not become a member of the Church of the Nazarene until I was in college. Wanting to find out what kind of a church it was that I had joined, I read what was then a newly released book titled *Why I Am a Nazarene*. The first eight chapters were devoted to "Why I am not a



Mormon," "Why I am not a Jehovah's Witness," "Why I am not a Seventh-Day Adventist," and so on. The final chapter answered the question "Why I am a Nazarene." It is much easier to declare what we are not than to define who we are. Psychologists tell us that our self-image receives its sharpest definition over against the people we dislike!

We are somewhat like the woman who told a friend, "I ran into an old high school classmate yesterday. Couldn't believe it. She looked terrific! Didn't have one wrinkle. Hadn't gained an ounce. So I ran into her again!"

Third, reason says, *Our survival depends upon taking a strong stand against our enemies.*

Our enemies are enemies precisely because they are out to destroy all that we value, prize, and believe in. They are enemies simply because they are seeking, night and day, to do us in! Destroy our country! Divide our church! Compromise our faith! Hence, we must take a strong stand and be ready to strike back with a swift and terrible sword, or we will be eaten alive!

Those clean-cut young men dressed in black suits are not riding their bicycles up and down our streets seeking to win people to an evangelical understanding of Christ. They must be exposed, discomfited, and resisted in the strongest terms.

Fourth, reason says, *It feels so right, so good, to do in one's enemies and deal with them severely.*

Winston Churchill was accosted by his arch-political enemy, Lady Astor, at a social gathering. Said Lady Astor, "Sir Winston, you are drunk."

"Lady Astor," he replied, "you are ugly. The difference between you and me is that tomorrow morning I will be sober."

Oh, that feels so good!

Fifth, reason says, *God hates enemies and deals with them severely!*

Did not God send floodwaters to destroy a wicked world during Noah's generation?

Did not God rain fire and brimstone from heaven upon corrupt Sodom and Gomorrah?

Did not God command Joshua to destroy the degenerate Canaanites down to the last crippled old lady and newborn child?

Did not the prophet Isaiah say, "Be-

hold, the day of the Lord is coming, cruel, with fury and burning anger, to make the land a desolation; and He will exterminate its sinners from it" (Isa. 13:9 ff., NASB)?

In Jesus' day, Jews would stand up in their synagogues and denounce Gentiles, denounce Samaritans, denounce the hated Roman oppressors, denounce the immoral, and denounce all the enemies of God. What better way to identify yourself with God's cause than to expose and denounce His enemies. And what better way today for us to affirm our devotion to the true gospel than to expose the manifold errors of the Catholics, the cultists, the kooks, the charismatics, the feminists, the abortionists, the liberals, the satanists, the pornographers, and of course the secular humanists—whoever they might be. To be on God's side is to be against whomever God is against.

Oh, I know all about how good it

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## Jesus commands us to love our enemies because He loves them.

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feels to burn against one's enemies. There's nothing so calculated to focus the mind and stir the passions as to become exercised over some great wrong that has been done, some terrible evil that has been perpetuated.

I never feel more right, more keenly perceptive than when I burn against enemies, against those who are a threat to the faith, to the Church, to all that is decent and holy. I search the Scriptures and arm myself with 1,000 verses. I mount my great white horse named Righteousness and Truth. I march to battle convinced that God and His Word are firmly on my side. The band strikes up. The flags unfurl. The trumpets blow. The music plays. Angel choirs sing. I mount up with wings as eagles.

I unleash the sword of the Lord. I find a vulnerable spot. I take careful

aim. I thrust with a "Thus saith the Lord." And I twist it. Oh, does that feel good! To strike a mighty blow for righteousness' sake!

The enemy staggers. Stumbles. Falls. Mortally wounded! Hallelujah! Righteousness has triumphed! Truth has won! Justice has at last been served!

But wait a minute. Who is that stranger kneeling beside the enemy? Wiping his forehead, binding his wounds, giving him water to drink? Something familiar about Him. Imprint of nails in His hands. Impress of thorns on His brow.

It cannot be! It is! Jesus! "But Jesus, what are You doing down there? Beside the enemy!"

I look again. What is that? A sword lodged in His heart? I study it. I am shocked! It is my sword! Jesus looks at me. Tears are in His eyes. He doesn't have to say a word. It whispers in the deepest part of my being, "Inasmuch as you do it unto the least of these, you do it unto Me!" (See Matt. 25:40, KJV.)

I am devastated! My heart is broken!

People of God, no matter how bizarre, no matter how impractical, no matter how impossible, if we are serious about following Jesus, we have no choice but to take with utmost seriousness what He had to say. Jesus commands us to love our enemies because He loves our enemies! The misguided, the wrong, the unprincipled, the devious, the dangerous, the divisive—even the ungodly. He loves them all!

## II. JESUS SPEAKS IN PRAISE OF LOVING ONE'S ENEMIES AND DEALING WITH THEM MERCIFULLY (v. 44).

First, Jesus teaches that *we must love our enemies because God loves His enemies!*

This is the radical, new revelation about God brought to us by Jesus of Nazareth! Jesus says that if we are to be true sons and daughters of our Father in heaven, we will treat enemies like He does. He loves enemies (vv. 44-45)!

But you say, what about the Old Testament and its statements about God hating enemies?

Jesus opens a window to let us see something about the character of God that was not fully perceived by

the holy men of old, nor by any other religious leader in history: namely, that *while God hates sin, He loves the sinner!* "For God so loved the world, the whole world, the ungodly as well as the godly, that he gave his only begotten Son . . ." (see John 3:16).

Nowhere do we see this radical love of God expressed as clearly as in the cross of Christ. In Jesus, we see a God who would rather be destroyed at the hands of sinners than destroy sinners.

In Jesus, we see a God who would rather be hung by heretics than to hang heretics.

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## God's radical love for the enemy is clearly expressed in the Cross.

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In Jesus, we see a God who would rather *die* than *damn*, and who did!

It was a tragic accident about a dozen years ago. Four Point Loma students were on their way to New Mexico. The driver fell asleep. The car plowed into the back of a parked truck. Ester Frampton died instantly. Elizabeth died 10 days later.

Jerry White was the pastor at San Diego First Church at the time. He conducted both funerals. He said that following the service for Elizabeth, after the friends had paid their respects, there was only the immediate family in the sanctuary and one heavily bandaged young man, his leg in a cast. He was the driver of the death car. He had just been released from the hospital to attend this funeral. Painfully he got his crutches under him and hobbled down to the casket, where he looked on what remained of his fiancée, Elizabeth.

Betty Frampton, the girls' mother, quietly came up and stood beside him. As he wept, she put her arm around him, kissed him on the

cheek, and said, "Gordy, I love you!"

That's God's kind of love!

Second, Jesus teaches that *retribution doesn't work!*

The Mosaic code of "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth" never solves any problems or heals any wounds. Not only does retribution escalate hostilities, but also it sets the enmity in concrete.

Have you ever been told off, for your own good, by a friend? Have you ever received a scathing letter? When you see that person, what is the first thing that comes into your mind?

Retribution often misfires! I heard about a woman who bought a newspaper and a Kit Kat candy bar on a Seattle ferry. She laid the candy bar down on the bench beside her as she began to read the paper. Then she reached down for the candy bar, only to discover it wasn't there. The man sitting next to her had it in his hand and had begun to eat it.

That really frosted her! She grabbed it out of his hand, picked up her paper, and stormed to the other side of the ferryboat. She finished off the candy bar. Then, still very angry, she got up and began to pace up and down. Right at the corner of the gangway, she ran smack into that same man, who had just bought a hamburger. She grabbed it out of his hand, took a big bite out of it, gave it back to him, and stormed off, feeling so good! She'd really taught him a lesson!

As she was waiting to drive her car off the ferry, she opened her purse. Guess what she found lying there? A Kit Kat candy bar!

Can you imagine what that fellow said to his colleagues at the office the next day?

Third, Jesus taught that *in loving our enemies, the enmity is destroyed in that we make them our friends.*

Suppose, however, that the enemy will not be reconciled to us. What then?

Let's look at what Jesus did when Judas refused his Master's gentle overtures of reconciliation and friendship. He invited him to supper. He gave him the place of honor. He presented him with the first and largest serving of food. He offered Judas, before any others, the cup of forgiveness. Jesus treated Judas with kindness and re-

spect. Even though he knew that Judas had already stabbed Him in the back, He did not expose him or humiliate him in front of his friends. He let him stand tall.

And in the garden, Jesus greeted His betrayer by calling him "Friend!"

Do you want a good definition of hell? It is to turn your back on Jesus and go through eternity with Jesus' last word to you ringing in your ears, "Friend, friend, friend."

Do you want a good definition of heaven? It is to hear Jesus say to you, throughout eternity, "Friend, friend, friend."

Fourth, Jesus taught that *in loving our enemies, we are released from the terrible burden of hatred, resentment, and bitterness.* Those things eat at the core of our spirit like cancer, robbing us of God's joy and peace.

Lee Iacocca, in his best-selling autobiography, shouted out for millions to read that he hated Henry Ford II. He says of his former mentor and friend who unceremoniously

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## Jesus treated Judas with kindness and respect.

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fired him as president of Ford Motor Company, "I hate Henry Ford, not only for what he did to me, but for the pain and suffering he caused my wife and two daughters. For what he put them through I'll never forgive him!"

Ironically, when he fired 25 of Chrysler's vice presidents shortly after taking over leadership of that company, he showed not the slightest sensitivity to the pain he was causing wives and daughters of those executives.

No wonder when Lee Iacocca's face appears on our television screens, there is a hard set in the expression of his face and a steely cold glint in his eyes. How can he exhibit warmth and joy when he is carrying

around the dead corpse of Henry Ford wherever he goes?

Oh, what a glorious release it is to be set free from all hatreds, all resentments, all grudges, all anger and hostility until there is absolutely nothing in our soul but the love of God for everyone, friend and enemy alike!

When asked, "What is the essence of entire sanctification?" John Wesley responded:

"The heaven of heavens is love." There is nothing higher in religion; there is, in effect, nothing else; if you look for anything but more love, you are looking wide of the mark, you are getting out of the royal way. . . . Settle it then in your heart, that from the moment God has saved you from all sin, you are to aim at nothing more, but more of that love described in the thirteenth of the Corinthians. You can go no higher than this, till you are carried into Abraham's bosom (*Works* 11:430).

#### Conclusion:

Dr. Paul Cho, of South Korea, pastor of the world's largest church, tells

how the Lord delivered him from an unforgiving spirit and set him free to love his enemies.

I was born in a difficult time in Korean history. We were not a nation. We were under the oppressive hand of Japan. Against their will millions of Koreans were carried as slaves to Japan. We were not allowed even to speak the Korean language. So, as a child, I grew to hate the Japanese.

Eight years ago, the Holy Spirit started dealing with me about Japan. I told the Lord, "Dear Lord, I know that my attitude toward the Japanese people is not correct, but I can't help how I feel." Yet the Lord had a special way of healing me. I was invited to minister to a group of Japanese pastors.

Arriving in Japan, I felt very uneasy. This was the land that had taken away our name and language, had punished our patriots, had burned our churches and massacred our Christians who had remained faithful to their religion and nation. When I got up to speak, I tried to say some nice

things about Japan, but I could not. I began to weep. A deep silence filled the audience of ministers. I then looked up and confessed how I felt.

"I must confess that I hate you all. I don't hate you personally, but I hate the fact that you are Japanese. I know that this is wrong, but this is the way I honestly feel. Won't you please forgive me? I am repenting of my sin and ask you to pray for me." With those words spoken, I simply bowed my head and began to cry aloud. When I looked up, I saw that all of the ministers were crying also. After a few minutes, one of the ministers stood on his feet and said, "Dr. Cho, we as Japanese take full responsibility for the sins of our fathers. Will you please forgive us?" Then I came down from the platform and threw my arms around the man who had just spoken. "Yes, I forgive you and I commit myself to pray for you and Japan." I instantly felt healed of the bitterness that I had felt since a child. I was free (*More than Numbers*, 118).

## Today's Books for Today's Preacher

### TWO GIANT STEPS AND THE ROAD BACK

by Wilbur T. Dobson  
Indianapolis: Wesley Press, 1989  
PA089-827-0707 \$6.95

In his introduction, Wilbur Dobson gives the theme of his book: Just as mankind took two major steps away from God, so individuals must make two major steps back to God in reverse order. Man's first step away was to desire to commit evil. The second step was the carrying out of the desire in actual acts. To return to the Father, man must retrace his steps. First, by seeking forgiveness for his committed sins. Then he must seek to return to a pure heart relationship with God.

Dobson proceeds to diagram this idea on pages 14-15, which gives a

good visual aid in presenting the truth of his theme.

The remainder of the book is a series of homilies dealing with the theme or with one of the many aspects of living out holiness in our daily lives. The homilies can be studied individually with their own emphases. Each one gives sound, insightful, practical advice in some area of Christlike living. While interesting and helpful, they give more a pastoral approach to the two steps back than a theological treatment of the subject. The first few chapters of the book present some of the theo-

logy behind the concept being presented and are springboard for the practical chapters.

In reading the introduction, one's appetite for a theological development is whetted. But that hunger is somewhat unfulfilled as the book becomes a series of sermons on living the sanctified life. However, on the positive side, chapters are beneficial for seed ideas for sermons that one could expand in his own private studies or for his own devotional benefit. Dobson says many of the old truths about living the Christlike life in interesting and helpful ways.

—Jerry Warren

# Sermon Illustrations

by D. Schuster  
Pietermaritzburg, South Africa

**SOURCE:** Personal experience

**TRUTH/CONCEPT/DOCTRINE ILLUSTRATED:** Our prior knowledge of what God has done puts our minds at peace, knowing that just as He was able in the past, so He is able today.

**SUPPORTING SCRIPTURE:** Heb. 13:8

My wife and I were visiting the city of Durban (RSA) and took a ride on what could best be described as a ski lift.

As we were enjoying an unrestricted view of the ocean and beaches, I

glanced up at the cable that was supporting us and about 30 other chairs and then looked down at the ground some 100 feet below us.

The thought went through my mind, If that cable breaks, we're dead! However, I remembered the time when I was an apprentice working for an elevator firm and had to know by heart the breaking strain of different-sized cables.

This particular cable had a breaking strain of between 25 and 30 tons. My mind was immediately at peace, knowing that I was safe, and I could once again enjoy the view.

My previous knowledge gave me comfort.

by Blair F. Rorabaugh  
Uniontown, Ohio

**SOURCE:** Gunnar Mattsson tells about his romance with the woman who is to become his wife in his book *The Princess*.

**TRUTH/CONCEPT/DOCTRINE ILLUSTRATED:** The value of faithfulness in marriage

The author quits dating others because "married happiness is like a tree; it has to grow before you can enjoy its shade. And it doesn't grow if you don't take care of it but run around admiring other plants. It takes many years. If you concentrate your love on a single tree and wait, you can see it grow, and there comes a day when you can lean against it and find coolness in its shade."

## Idea Mart

# Share Your First Impression

by Terrell Earnest

Guymon, Okla.

To help visitors reflect on the worship service, create a memory, and help form a bond with our church, I send a follow-up letter with a self-addressed, stamped "Share Your First Impression" card enclosed. In my letter I ask the visitors to reflect on their time in our service and return the completed card to us. We purposely left no place for their name and address on the card, as it was intended to be a positive, nonthreatening opportunity.

I receive approximately one out of five "Share Your First Impressions" cards back. The feedback is beneficial, and I find that visitors are encouraged to know that the church welcomes their opinions.

### SHARE YOUR FIRST IMPRESSION

1. How did you find out about the Church of the Nazarene?  
\_\_\_\_\_ Yellow Pages \_\_\_\_\_ Newspaper \_\_\_\_\_ Drove By  
\_\_\_\_\_ Personal Invitation \_\_\_\_\_ Other
2. When you arrived, what did you notice first?
3. Did you feel welcome? \_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No
4. Please share the three most important factors for you in choosing a church home:  
a.  
b.  
c.
5. Do you plan to attend again?

Thanks for your help!



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**WORSHIP**

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**& PREACHING**

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**HELPS**

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Aubrey D. Smith

## December / January / February 1990-91

Prepared by Aubrey D. Smith

### INTRODUCTION

Preaching is exciting; it is studying and sharing the Word of God. Not one of us can share adequately without availing ourselves of the collective wisdom of others across the ages. However, the ultimate presentation must come from the "spark" of our own talk and walk with God. In turn, what we share with our congregation must be according to our insight and perceptions into their hurts, needs, and longings. My prayers are with you in this glorious endeavor.

The sermon thoughts herein offered are prescribed as a series of three miniseries. Hopefully you will sense a flow of intended direction and purpose for your congregation. However, adaptation and even independence for your needs are of utmost importance. Therefore, the material can be used as scheduled or in any independent variation.

Worship should turn man's attention to God. The worshiper should go away with new hope and comfort, even if holy conviction has been God's instrument for healing.

The structure of the service is not what provides the healing; God alone is able to transform the inner spirit. However, the human functions of the service are definite tools of God to perform His mission. The service should have smooth flow that makes it easy for the people present to be attentive. There should be variation that creates interest, but in such a style that does not make the people uncomfortable or more involved with the system than with the Spirit. Above all, the service is not performance or even presentation—not even the preaching—but overflow. When the preacher, choir members, musicians, singers, ushers, etc., are overflowing vessels, beautiful and powerful transformations take place among individuals present in collective worship.

# "WHERE IS HE?"

by Aubrey D. Smith

Matt. 2:2

Dec. 2, 1990

## SERIES INTRO:

Christ's presence is an answer to the loneliness that plagues us, especially at Christmastime.

The Psalmist wrote (103:2-5) that our God is One who forgives our iniquities, heals our diseases, and desires to crown our lives with loving-kindness and tender mercies. Isaiah prophesied concerning the coming Messiah (61:1-3) that He would be One of compassionate redemption. In 53:4-5, we hear Isaiah telling us that this One that is to come will bear our griefs, carry our sorrows, and that by His stripes we can be healed. Malachi (4:2) speaks of the One that shall come with healing in His wings.

The coming of Christ brought a renewal of these same promises. In Luke 2:10-20 we find, first, the angels bearing glad tidings, and then the shepherds glorifying and praising God. In Matt. 2:10 we find the wise men coming with exceeding great joy. When Christ came, He did not fall short of the prophecies nor disappoint those with expectations. However, we do find a message in the story of the shepherds, wise men, and others that no one can seek Him for us. They can tell us about Him, but no one can take our place in the quest to find Him.

## INTRO:

**ILLUS.** The newspaper article was one of grief. It told how the Christmas presents were still wrapped and in the attic. They were not under the tree this year or the preceding year. The little girl of the home, while sitting in a car in the shopping center of one of our cities, had been abducted. No word had been received; the parents had no knowledge after 12 long months of suffering and agony. Christmas would never be the same again.

There are many different searches in our world and in our lives. Some are important, some are rather unimportant. We misplace some things of insignificance; other things we lose that represent life-and-death issues, such as a missing loved one.

Loneliness is the symptom of something missing. It is represented in various forms of absence.

## I. Emptiness Is a Symptom of Something Missing

A. Emptiness is not having what we need. It represents the fact that something should be there that isn't. A glass may not be scientifically empty because it is filled with air. But we consider it empty because the glass was created and designed to hold not air but a cool drink of water or beverage.

B. We are vessels—created to hold the presence of God. We may be full of all else, but we are empty if we are without Him. The Scriptures remind us that our body is not our own; it belongs to God. We are the temple—dwelling place—of the Holy Spirit. It also reminds us that we should be vessels of gold and silver, the very best of containers for His presence.

## II. Aloneness Is a Form of Absence

A. It is frightening to know that we are alone, that there is no one with whom we can share, no one to help us. None of us is often all alone. Though other people are around, sometimes we feel alone. Many social organizations are created for the purpose of helping people avoid being alone. Many other organizations thrive on the need of people to be with someone. And yet, on a busy street corner of a crowded city or in a congregation of people, we can feel all alone.

B. Man has been so created as to be incomplete without God. Even God wanted fellowship and love; thus He created man for His pleasure.

## III. Absence Is Missing the Most Important One

A. Loneliness does not usually spring from having nothing or no one. At Christmas we are usually surrounded with many people and activities, but their presence only enhances our agony. Psychologists tell us that this joyous season is one of greatest trauma for many because it reminds them of inner emptiness and loneliness. For the small child whose pet is missing, the number of mongrels roaming the street is no comfort. For the woman searching for a precious heirloom handed down for generations, a similar piece or new present is not satisfactory.

B. No one but Jesus satisfies this emptiness. He was born to be our King, Friend, Healer, Redeemer, and Savior. We may have material things and increased abundance during this time of year. We may have friends around us but be without our truest Friend. We may have parties, fun, and thrills, but be void of the peace for which we long.

**ILLUS.** The songwriter penned "Only Jesus Can Satisfy Your Soul."

## CONCLUSION:

The Bible gives examples of the search for true meaning: Mary Magdalene, in all of her mental anguish, looking for happiness; the soldiers in Gethsemane seeking Christ for wrong reasons; the Greeks coming to Philip seeking Jesus; Mary and Martha at the death of Lazarus sending word for Jesus; blind Bartimaeus crying out.

The magi searched to find Jesus. The shepherds found Him, but they had to choose to look for Him. Come and look, not because Jesus is hiding. To the contrary, Jesus reminds us that the Good Shepherd seeks the lost sheep. He stands at the door of our heart and knocks. We must open up before He will come in (Rev. 3:20). John reminds us that we can walk in the light with Him (1 John 1:7).

To each of us Jesus promises, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. 11:28, KJV).

### **SUGGESTED WORSHIP ORDER**

Preservice Welcome and Ministry Reminders  
(Service theme of the day, Announcements, Prayer requests, etc.)

Prelude

Choral Invocation

Hymn "Come, Thou Long-expected Jesus"

Hymn "Trust and Obey"

Preparing Our Hearts in Prayer

Chorus "Because He Lives"

Pastoral Prayer Open Altar

Chorus "O Come, Let Us Adore Him"

Our Joyful and Obedient Stewardship

Reading from God's Word Matt. 2:1-10

Worship in Special Song

Message "WHERE IS HE?"

Matt. 2:2

Personal Response to God's Word

Hymn "How Firm a Foundation"

Prayer of Consecration and Faith

Postlude

### **Creative Worship Ideas**

#### *Preservice and Beginning*

Between Sunday School and morning worship, while the choir is gathering, talk informally to the congregation. Let the musicians continue to play softly. During this time there can be announcements, welcome of visitors, mention of prayer requests, and the setting of the theme of the service.

The people can then be brought into a spirit of meditation to prepare their hearts for worship. A chorus, scripture reading, silent prayer, or silently looking at a special hymn can add reverence and condition the mind for true worship.

#### *Christmas worship ideas*

—This can be done during the evening service. Provide an informal setting. Families or representative groups can come and each turn on a light. Then everyone sits in the glow of the tree, singing, giving testimony, etc. A children's story around a mock fireplace can be added. The message of the symbolism of the tree can be used as a meditation (i.e., beauty, evergreen, place of gifts, light). Throughout the season, as people see the lit tree in the sanctuary, it will remind them of the message and purpose.

—Advent Wreath/Candles and "Hanging of the Greens" have been used by many with excellent results. The local library or Christian bookstore should carry informational sources.

—Gifts for the Christ Child. Use this time of focus on the Christ child to help other children. Make a list of nursery items needed, then allow them to be purchased, wrapped, and placed under the church Christmas tree. These may be donated to a local shelter or someplace where needy children are provided for.

## **Ten Important Books on the Small Church**

*Continued from page 29*

### ***Making the Small Church Effective***

Carl S. Dudley

(Nashville: Abingdon, 1978)

One of the first in the small church movement, this book is now a classic and considered by many to be the "Bible" of small church literature.

### ***Unique Dynamics of the Small Church***

Carl S. Dudley

(Washington, D.C.: Alban Institute, 1977)

Though only a slim pamphlet, this is a gem. It focuses on the "single cell" nature of the small church.

### ***Entering the World of the Small Church: A Guide for Leaders***

Anthony G. Pappas

(Washington, D.C.: Alban Institute, 1988)

This is the most significant contribution to the literature in a long time, particularly for its important work of bringing together the small church and Robert Redfield's concepts from "The Folk Society."

### ***Small Churches Are the Right Size***

David R. Ray

(New York: Pilgrim Press, 1982)

Favorable to small churches, Ray's book affirms their uniqueness and their worth.

### ***The Small Church Is Different!***

Lyle E. Schaller

(Nashville: Abingdon, 1982)

It is one of the best for its insights into the workings of the small church.

### ***The Pastor and the People***

Lyle E. Schaller

(Nashville: Abingdon, 1973)

This is one of the real contributions Schaller has given to the church.

### ***New Possibilities for Small Churches***

Douglas Alan Walrath, editor

(New York: Pilgrim, 1983)

Two chapters stand out in this book by small church experts: Walrath's "Possibilities for Small Churches Today" and Dudley's "The Art of Pastoring a Small Congregation."

Many other good resource books are available.

# "ARE YOU THE ONE WHO IS TO COME— OR DO WE LOOK FOR ANOTHER?"

by Aubrey D. Smith

Matt. 11:3  
Dec. 9, 1990

## INTRO:

Our belief in Christ does not always come from a "Mount of Transfiguration" or from an empty tomb. Like John the Baptist, we often face the trial of our faith in the midst of crisis. Our questions are legitimate.

### I. "Jesus, Are You the One?"

A. Pilate asked if Jesus were indeed King. Phillip asked if any good thing could come out of Nazareth.

B. With world religions invading our communities, we must answer for ourselves if Jesus is indeed the One.

C. Our hurts, conflicts, and confusions test our faith to identify Jesus as the Supreme Comforter.

### II. "Or Do We Look for Another?"

A. John the Baptist looked for verification. He had been a true and faithful proclaimer of the coming of Christ. He reminds us that we must know and believe in Jesus before we can commit ourselves and trust Him. The Jim Jones mentality will not suffice. Jesus is more than the creator of a new cult. He is the Foundation of our lives.

B. When Jesus asked His disciples if they, too, would leave Him, Peter responded, "To whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life" (John 6:68, KJV). The apostle Paul said, "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day" (2 Tim. 1:12, KJV).

### III. A Legitimate Question Deserves an Answer

A. "And Jesus answered them, 'Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them'" (Matt. 11:4-5, RSV).

B. The world does not want a theological answer, but hope and help.

C. Our witness centers in what we have seen and heard. The world can argue against doctrine, but not against lives transformed by the grace of God.

D. We need to experience Jesus' answer so that we can share it. Our relationship with Jesus must be vital and vibrant. Only an up-to-date walk with Christ convinces the world.

## CONCLUSION:

"He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God" (John 1:11-12, KJV). We must follow Jesus.

**ILLUS.** In O. Henry's moving story titled *The Gift of the Magi*, a young married couple, Della and Jim, were very

poor and very much in love. Each had one unique possession: Della's hair was her glory, long and flowing like a robe. Jim had a gold watch given to him by his father. The day before Christmas Della wanted to buy Jim a gift but had little money; she cut her hair and sold it for money, which enabled her to buy Jim an expensive chain for his watch. Jim had sold his watch in order to buy Della an expensive set of jeweled combs for her hair. Each had sold his prize possession to express love to the other. God gave His Son to show His love. Jesus gave His life to demonstrate the Father's love. We must accept His love and offer our love.

### SUGGESTED WORSHIP ORDER

Preservice Welcome and Ministry Reminders  
A Christmas Story  
Choral Invocation  
Hymn "Jesus Is All the World to Me"  
Hymn "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"  
Opening Our Hearts to Christ  
Chorus "Oh, How He Loves You and Me"  
Open Altar Prayer Season  
Chorus "He Is Lord"  
Choral Praise  
Our Joyful and Obedient Stewardship  
Worship in Special Song  
Message  
"ARE YOU THE ONE WHO IS TO COME  
—OR DO WE LOOK FOR ANOTHER?"  
Matt. 11:3  
Personal Response to God's Word  
Hymn "Joy to the World"  
Prayer of Consecration in Faith  
Postlude

### Creative Worship Ideas

#### *Christmas worship ideas*

—Recruit several laypeople and assign them to study a particular character from the Christmas story. At the appointed time in the service, have these people come together, dressed for their parts, to be interviewed as if they were those characters. Try to make the questions and answers as realistic and relevant as possible. It is interesting how much the participants will learn from their study and how captivated the audience will be. Character options: Shepherd, Magi, Innkeeper, Joseph, Mary, Elizabeth, Simeon, Herod.

—Explanation of Christmas symbols, decorations, and traditions. Old copies of *Ideals* magazine give good information on these.

—Sponsor a home mission pastor and family on the district. Gifts can be given, and the pastor and family could share in an evening service, followed by a time of fellowship.

# "ARE YOU GREATER THAN OUR FATHER JACOB?"

by Aubrey D. Smith

John 4:12

Dec. 16, 1990

## INTRO:

To entrust our lives to someone means that person must be trustworthy. The Samaritan woman questioned Jesus to see if He were greater than the one who represented for her strength and authority. She asked sincerely, "Are you greater than Jacob?" Her ancestor, Jacob, created the well where she stood. Could Jesus be greater than Jacob?

## I. Jesus Confirms God's Truth Intellectually

Jesus is God's Son. "And what about the well that Jacob dug? Who made the earth in which to dig? Who provided the water for his well?" That answer would lead to God.

Today people ask, "Is Jesus greater than physicians capable of transplanting various organs within man's body? Is Jesus greater than engineers who build computers, send crafts into space, and light up the night as day?"

The God to whom we entrust our lives must be worthy of our trust. People can fool each other. Powerless gods have been offered to mankind.

Who created knowledge to be stored in computers? Who created space wherein man can fly? Who separated night from day wherein light shines? Each question brings us back to God! Jesus was God's Son.

The comparisons of Jesus and Jacob give answers to her question. Jacob was wealthy. As the Son of God, Jesus owns all. Jacob was powerful; Jesus is omnipotent. Jacob was the son of Abraham; Jesus is the Son of God. Jacob was a spiritual leader; Jesus is our great High Priest and Intercessor. The covenant of Abraham was carried on through the descendants of Jacob; Jesus fulfilled the covenant.

## II. Jesus Confirms God's Truth Experientially

Jesus speaks to experience. John the Baptist sent his disciples to ask Jesus if He were indeed the promised Messiah. Jesus answered: "Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them" (Matt. 11:4-5, RSV).

## III. Jesus Confirms God's Truth Eternally

Jesus built His answer on the logic of the woman's knowledge. He spoke to her personal experience. Jesus reminded her that Jacob's provisions were limited, fallible, and temporary. Jesus offered her that which was lasting, permanent, and eternal.

People's offers have limitations. They may give guarantees, but they break down. Lifetime warranties fade, dissolve, or cease to function. Man's greatest inventions have limits. A multi-million-dollar, highly sophisticated scientific project can fail because of one very small, inexpensive component—a bolt or a nut.

Jesus offers that which is perfect, eternal, and indestructible. No one can take away the forgiveness, cleansing, peace, and joy that Jesus gives.

The apostle Paul wrote that nothing can separate us from God's love and power (Rom. 8:37-39). Inner peace is not dependent upon people or circumstances. Corrie ten Boom could write about her inner peace during the atrocities of a Nazi concentration camp.

## CONCLUSION:

The Samaritan woman's question reflected her confusions, her longings, her searching. But she reached out for hope. Jesus offered hope to her.

She accepted His word and experienced peace. She told others about Jesus, and they, too, found Jesus as God's Anointed One (v. 42).

Jesus is greater than our sin, greater than our burdens, greater than our needs, and greater than our weaknesses.

### SUGGESTED WORSHIP ORDER

Prelude	
Praise in Special Song	
Opening Our Hearts to God in Prayer	
Chorus	"Fill My Cup"
Pastoral Prayer	
Hymn	"All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name"
Hymn	"There's a Song in the Air"
Prayer Season	
Open Altar	
Chorus	"O Come, Let Us Adore Him"
A Witness to the Blessings of Giving	(layman)
Our Joyful and Obedient Stewardship	(Received by same layman)
Reading of God's Word	John 14
Choral Praise	"The Crystal Fountain"
Message	"ARE YOU GREATER THAN OUR FATHER JACOB?" John 4:12
Choral Invitation	"Ho! Every One That Is Thirsty"
Personal Response to God's Word	
Benediction	

### Creative Worship Ideas

#### Christmas worship ideas

—Family Home Idea pamphlets can be obtained inexpensively through Focus on the Family. Distribute these to the church families.

—An all-church Christmas dinner or all-adult banquet. Everyone being together fosters the "church family" feeling that needs to be encouraged.

—A letter to individuals who have lost loved ones during the past year can be a real ministry by the pastor. The first Christmas without that loved one is painful. The poem by Albert Simpson Reitz, "My First Christmas in Heaven," can be helpful.

# "ARE YOU KING?"

by Aubrey D. Smith

John 18:37  
Dec. 23, 1990

## INTRO:

Jesus came to provide salvation. The angel told Mary that His name would be "Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins" (Matt. 1:21). The angel announced to the shepherds good tidings of great joy, for a Savior was born (Luke 2:10-11). John the Baptist prepared the way of the Lord. John preached about Jesus' coming.

The Christmas season reminds us of our responsibility toward God. People who relegate Jesus to the closet most of the time are confronted at Christmas with Him. At Christmastime, it is hard to ignore Jesus. We see ourselves reflected in Pilate. We must ask ourselves these questions.

## I. If Jesus Is a King, Why Do You Want to Know?

A. What does Jesus' Kingship matter if you do not allow Him to be your Savior? Where Jesus leads doesn't matter if you do not follow Him.

B. If you do not allow Jesus to be Immanuel ("God with us"), it doesn't matter whether you celebrate Christmas.

**ILLUS.** In 1988 and 1989, two cities in Pennsylvania were legally challenged concerning Christmas scenes on government property—Pittsburgh and Bethlehem. Bethlehem, founded by Moravians, has become known as Christmas City, U.S.A. It caused quite a community controversy when city fathers made some compromises in '89 concerning the Christmas scene. They added whimsical figurines such as elves and snowmen to the Nativity scene to offset the spiritual emphasis. But it is more important that Jesus be displayed in your lives.

## II. If Jesus Is a King, of What Is He King?

A. Pilate confronted the question of Jesus' Kingship (v. 36). The real question for Pilate is, Would Jesus be his King?

B. Will Jesus be accepted as King? Jesus taught His disciples to pray, "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven" (Matt. 6:10, KJV). In heaven Jesus had full authority. Will you give Jesus full authority in your lives?

C. God's kingdom exists in His people, not only over a kingdom of angels.

## III. If Jesus Is a King, Will You Make Him Your King?

A. Pilate referred to Jesus as King, but he did not honor Jesus as King. The soldiers crowned Jesus as King in mockery (John 19:2-3), but they did not give Him the reverence due a king.

B. The people rejected Jesus as King. If we reject the Lordship of Jesus, we yield that position to someone or something else.

C. Jesus did not respond to Pilate's question. Neither did Jesus resist the wishes of the people. Only they could decide what place would be given to Jesus. Jesus said, "For this cause came I into the world" (John 18:37, KJV).

**ILLUS.** I have seen a game played at Christmas parties wherein as gifts are passed around, individuals with a called number have the opportunity to either choose a gift yet unwrapped or to take a gift from someone else already opened. This swapping of gifts can become quite hilarious. However, we must not swap Jesus around, depending on our whims and wishes at the time. We must refuse to exchange loyalty to Jesus for misplaced priorities and pleasures of the moment.

## CONCLUSION:

Jesus is God Incarnate. He had the power to cancel the tragic act of crucifixion. But God grants to us the power of accepting or rejecting His love and the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

Someday Jesus will be our Judge, but He can be our Master in life only by choice. We crown Him or crucify Him, love Him or leave Him. The choice to accept or reject Jesus is ours.

To crown Him King means to sincerely grant Jesus rulership of our lives. Will you allow Jesus to be your King?

### SUGGESTED WORSHIP ORDER

Preservice Welcome and Ministry Reminders  
Prelude  
A Christmas Story or Choral Uplift  
Hymn "O Worship the King"  
Hymn "What Child Is This?"  
Pastoral Prayer  
Chorus "Alleluia"  
Our Joyful and Obedient Stewardship  
Hymn "Angels, from the Realms of Glory"  
Worship in Special Song "Down from His Glory"  
Message "ARE YOU KING?"  
John 18:37  
Personal Response to God's Word  
Hymn "Crown Him with Many Crowns"  
Prayer of Accepting Christ as My King  
Postlude

### Creative Worship Ideas

#### Christmas worship ideas

—Communion at the Manger. Arrange the front of the church as the manger scene. Have a couple dressed as Mary and Joseph. Serve Communion to the people in some setting close to the manger.

—Christmas Lighting Service. So much can be done with dim lights, devotional music, meditations on the "Light of the World," and the opportunity for individuals lighting personal candles. The meaning of light and the sharing of that light is significant, and the visual effect enhances the message.

# "WHY HAVE YOU SO DEALT WITH US?"

by Aubrey D. Smith

Luke 2:48  
Dec. 30, 1990

## INTRO:

The feeling of Jesus' absence in your life is not always due to personal rejection or sin. Sometimes godly people feel that Jesus is absent.

Mary and Joseph traveled to Jerusalem to fulfill a sacred rite. They were endeavoring to doing the right thing.

Mary and Joseph were caring parents. They may be held accountable for human error, going so long without checking on Jesus. But the mistake was one of human frailty.

What is our response when we perceive that Jesus is not obviously present? From this story we gain an understanding.

## I. Though Appearing Absent, Jesus Was at Work Doing God's Will

Not knowing where God is during our tough times can be frightening.

Alone in a dark well and later in prison, Joseph could not see God. Facing a fiery furnace, the Hebrew children had no outward assurance of God's presence. In a den of hungry lions, Daniel appeared to be alone. Chained between two prison guards, Peter seemed to be forsaken. At midnight in a Philippian jail, Paul and Silas appeared to be abandoned.

**ILLUS.** Of the disciples' fear on a storm-tossed sea, Mary A. Baker wrote the words of the hymn "Master, the Tempest Is Raging."

In each situation, we can look back and see God was at work. In the fiery furnace God's presence was demonstrated through His power. God has not abandoned us. Isaiah gave God's promise: "Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God" (41:10, KJV).

Mary and Joseph could only see that Jesus was absent. But He was doing the will of His Father. While we cannot sense His presence, Jesus is at work on our behalf.

**ILLUS.** A songwriter declared "He Was There All the Time."

Will H. Thompson writes in another hymn "Jesus Is All the World to Me."

## II. If We Keep Searching, Jesus Will Be Revealed

When Mary and Joseph could not find Jesus in their company, they began a diligent search. They went back to where they had last seen Jesus. It is wise to make sure that we have not walked away from Jesus. We can find Him waiting at the point of our departure.

Jesus will be found by those who seek Him. Jesus said, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" (John 6:37, KJV).

**ILLUS.** Johnson Oatman, Jr., has written "No, Not One."

Helen Steiner Rice says, "No one ever sought the Father and found He was not there. And no burden is too intricate to be lightened by a prayer" (source unknown).

Our sorrow turns to joy when we seek Jesus and know that He is there. Joyful triumph came out of sorrow for Joseph, the Hebrew children, Daniel, Peter, and Paul and Silas. Mary and Joseph discovered Jesus at work and we will also.

We do not always understand life's events. But each event can teach us more about Jesus and His ways. "Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart" (Luke 2:19, KJV).

## CONCLUSION:

When Jesus does not seem present, make sure that we have not left Him behind. Then we must trust Him to walk faithfully with us. In time, He will reveal His presence.

**ILLUS.** A well-known poem talks of a man who one night had a dream that He was walking along the beach with the Lord. But when the last scene of His life flashed before him, he looked back at the footprints in the sand. He noticed that at times along the path of his life there was only one set of footprints. Those times seemed to correspond with the saddest, darkest times. This bothered him. He questioned God as to why He had left him alone when he needed His help so desperately.

The Lord replied, "My precious child, I love you and I would never leave you. During those times of trial and suffering, when you see only one set of footprints, it was then that I carried you."

### SUGGESTED WORSHIP ORDER

Preservice Welcome and Ministry Reminders	
Prelude	
Trumpet of Praise	
Call to Worship	
Scripture	Ps. 40:1-5, 13
Chorus	"God Is Still on the Throne"
Invocation of God's Blessings	
Hymn	"Be Still, My Soul"
Hymn	"Great Is Thy Faithfulness"
Choral Praise	"My Faith Still Holds"
Our Joyful and Obedient Stewardship	
Reading of God's Word	Luke 2:39-52
Worship in Special Song	
Message	"WHY HAVE YOU SO DEALT WITH US?" Luke 2:48
Personal Response to God's Word	
Hymn	"Does Jesus Care?"
Open Altar	
Prayer of Consecration in Faith	
Postlude	

# REDEMPTION IS A CHANCE TO START OVER

by Aubrey D. Smith

Isa. 9:2 and 2 Cor. 5:17-21

Jan. 6, 1991

## INTRO:

**ILLUS.** In '31 he failed in business; in '32 he was defeated for the state legislature; in '34 he failed in business again; in '41 he suffered a nervous breakdown; in '43 he tried for his party's nomination for Congress and failed; in '55 he ran for the Senate. He failed again. In '58 again he ran for the Senate and failed. In '60 he finally succeeded. In 1860 Abraham Lincoln campaigned and was elected president of the United States.

One of the greatest privileges of life is to be allowed to start over after failure.

The apostle Paul referred to a hope even more glorious than new, human opportunity. We can bring our failures, shortcomings, mistakes, improper actions and reactions, even our sins to God. He is willing to wipe our record clean, allowing us to start over.

Jesus promised Nicodemus that he could begin again. It is the experience of a new birth.

## I. Salvation in Jesus Gives Me a New Record

A. A new record means that I have a fresh start. My sins will never be remembered against me.

B. My sins have been justified by God. He does not condone my sins of the past, but He clears my record. Justification means "just as if I had never sinned."

## II. Redemption in Jesus Gives Me a New God

A. No one but Jesus can give true satisfaction and security.

B. God brings me peace, joy, and hope. We have hope that our future can be better.

## III. Redemption in Jesus Gives Me a New Experience

A. This new experience brings joy, fulfillment, and peace. This experience comes from God who guides me and helps me overcome. We will be "more than conquerors" (Rom. 8:37, KJV).

**ILLUS.** I remember the night Jerry was saved. He had tried everything—wine, women, song, and the drug scene. But nothing had satisfied. He testified a few weeks after receiving salvation, "Life is so different; I can't believe it. Now I love people that I used to hate, and life is fun."

## IV. Salvation in Jesus Creates a New Nature

A. Salvation enables me to keep that new record clean. In Ezek. 36:26-27, God promises to place a new spirit and a new heart within us.

B. I am made different. I have now a spiritual heredity. I have been reborn with Christ's nature within. By God's help I can live in His likeness (Rom. 8:14-16). The term *regeneration* means "made over" or "made anew."

**ILLUS.** Madelaine Miller calls regeneration in Jesus a "reestablishment on a better basis."

## V. Redemption in Jesus Creates a New Walk

A. We are spiritually buried with Christ, but in Christ's resurrection we are also raised up (Rom. 6:3-4). Therefore we walk with Him in newness of life. We are responsible to walk a different path, now that we walk with Jesus (8:1-5).

B. We must leave behind the sinful walk. We look forward to the opportunity of experiencing a new walk in Jesus Christ (1 John 1:6-7).

**ILLUS.** When my older son was preschool age, he used to play with his cars in the dirt of our flower bed beside the driveway. He only had one problem with his fun—he hated to get dirty. He would cry, running to his mother, asking to be cleaned up. Then soon he would be back in the dirt again, wanting to be cleaned up. To let Christ clean us up, we must walk with Him, and His grace will keep us clean.

## CONCLUSION:

We have opportunity for a fresh start through the forgiving grace of Jesus.

**ILLUS.** When a young man, Bev Shea struggled over what to do with his life. His mother knew that the decision had to be his. She placed a poem by Rhea Miller on his piano. One day, after reading those words and struggling over his decision, Bev sat down at the piano. His fingers casually ran down the keyboard as he composed music to the words of Mrs. Miller's poem. It has become the well-loved song "I'd Rather Have Jesus."

God wants to give us a fresh start.

### SUGGESTED WORSHIP ORDER

A Personal Witness	"A Call to Newness of Life"
Men's Quartet	"A New Name in Glory"
Hymn	"Arise, My Soul, Arise"
Hymn	"And Can It Be?"
Reading from God's Word	2 Cor. 5:8-17
Prayer Season	
Choral Praise Medley	"Grace Greater than Our Sins/My Burden Is Gone"
Our Joyful and Obedient Stewardship	
Message	"REDEMPTION IS A CHANCE TO START OVER"
	Isa. 9:2 and 2 Cor. 5:17
Personal Response to God's Word	
Hymn	"Jesus, I Come" or "I Am Resolved"
Prayer of Consecration and Transformation	

### Creative Worship Ideas

#### Music

Special choirs for Sunday evening service may include senior citizens, teenagers, men only, women only, children, Sunday School class, etc.

# SICK OF BEING SICK —BREAKING THROUGH TO VICTORY

by Aubrey D. Smith

Mark 5:21-34

Jan. 13, 1991

## INTRO:

A. In Mark 5 Jesus was on His way to minister to Jairus' daughter.

1. Jesus desires to meet our needs (Matt. 8:1-3 and Mark 8:1-3).

2. Jesus never forces but is always willing to help.

B. Jesus stopped for a needy woman (Mark 5:22-24).

1. Jesus does not set priorities or exclusions in helping people as we do.

2. Jesus was on His way to the home of a wealthy and influential person, but He stopped to meet the need of an obscure, penniless, outcast woman.

3. She did not expect Jesus' help. She only knew she needed His help.

4. She had tried all else. Jesus was her only hope.

ILLUS. The songwriter rejoiced when he wrote the hymn "The Solid Rock."

5. Her condition was growing worse. Our spiritual maladies grow worse until we bring them to the Great Physician.

## WHAT CAUSED THIS WOMAN TO RECEIVE JESUS' HEALING TOUCH?

### I. She Was Determined

A. She recognized and admitted her need. We receive no help until we come to the point of admitting our need.

B. Obstacles did not stop her. Her own weakness did not keep her from pushing through the crowd. What others thought about a defiled woman did not keep her from seeking help. The fact that others had unmet needs did not weaken her faith.

C. She did not excuse herself because of her obstacles. Who could have blamed her for giving up and turning back? But she would have missed the victory. We can always give excuses as to why we do not experience God's full blessings, but that does not meet our needs or bring victory.

### II. She Was Desperate

A. She was "sick of being sick." No doubt others had as great a need and had suffered as much and long as she. But no one was as dissatisfied with his condition as she.

B. The discomfort of her malady pressed her to find a solution. We must become so dissatisfied with the status quo and spiritual malady of our era that we cannot live without remedy.

C. Healing came in response to the diligence of her effort. She said, "If I may touch but his clothes" (v. 28, KJV). Hers was not an effortless endeavor, but a significant, sacrificial, struggle. She sought victory at all costs.

### III. She Was Deliberate

A. An accidental touch was not enough. Many others touched Jesus, as suggested by the disciples' statement. But her touch was one of deliberate desire and action of faith. Salvation requires personal action and deliberate choice.

B. We may "brush against Him," even in group worship. However, it is the determined, desperate, and deliberate touch that transforms. Like this woman, we must break through our fears and obstacles to find victory in Jesus.

## CONCLUSION:

The woman was delivered from her illness (v. 34). God was faithful to provide His healing power in response to the diligent quest of a needy person.

### SUGGESTED WORSHIP ORDER

Preservice Welcome and Ministry Reminders	
Prelude	
Choral Invocation	"There's a New Song in My Heart"
A Call to Newness of Life	
Chorus	"He Touched Me"
A Witness of Transformation	
Hymn	"My Wonderful Lord"
Hymn	"Blessed Assurance"
Prayer Season	
Praise in Special Song	
Our Joyful and Obedient Stewardship	
Reading of God's Word	Mark 5:21-34
Choral Jubilation	"The Comforter Has Come"
Message	"SICK OF BEING SICK—BREAKING THROUGH TO VICTORY" Mark 5:21-34
Personal Response to God's Word	
Choral Invitation	"Only Trust Him"
Prayer of Consecration for Victory	
Postlude	

### Creative Worship Ideas

#### Music

Seasonal hymns out of season can be a blessing. Christmas hymns such as "Come, Thou Long-expected Jesus" and "Joy to the World" offer a message of hope anytime. What a tragedy to lift the sounds of praise such as "Come, Ye Thankful People, Come" and "We Gather Together" only in November.

# NEVER TOO OLD FOR A FRESH START

by Aubrey D. Smith

Joshua 14 (Caleb)

Jan. 20, 1991

## INTRO:

Caleb is not among prominent names of the Old Testament. No book bears his name. He is not listed among the kings, judges, prophets, or leaders of Israel. However, Caleb serves as one of the most beautiful and powerful spiritual examples of Sacred Writ.

Caleb served as one of the 12 spies sent by Moses to check out Canaan. With Joshua he spoke against the other 10 spies who turned the hearts of the people to fear and rejection of God's will for conquest.

Caleb's spiritual life was witnessed to from three sources: (1) his own personal testimony (v. 8); (2) the testimony of others about him (v. 9); and (3) the testimony of God concerning him (vv. 10, 12, 14).

We are led to believe that we are stuck in our ways and cannot change. We begin to think that the promise of a new life will not materialize. Caleb shows us how a fresh start becomes reality.

## I. Caleb Did Not Become Bitter Because of Others (vv. 7-8)

One sad result of sin is that innocent people often share the burdens of sin's consequences. Caleb had been faithful to God. Returning as a spy, he courageously stood against the odds to defend the right. With Joshua, he pled to follow God's directions. Because others lacked faith, Caleb spent 40 more years in the wilderness. Forty years of insecurity and turmoil, when he could have lived in a land "flowing with milk and honey" (Exod. 3:8).

Caleb did not allow bitterness over circumstances, others, or God to keep him from the promise of a new life. We must harbor neither bitterness nor resentment.

**ILLUS.** E. Stanley Jones explains the accuracy of the old expression, "Blind with rage." Some doctors experimented with rats. They found that after the rats had been kept angry for an extended period of time, opaque films came over their eyes. Their sight was affected. Optometrists say that they cannot examine the eyes of an angry man, for "he cannot see straight."

## II. Caleb Did Not Grow Jealous over God's Blessings to Others (v. 6)

Caleb was one of only two faithful spies that had earlier entered Canaan. He had been faithful, yet no book in the Bible bears his name. He had been as true as Joshua, but Caleb was never appointed coleader of the Israelites.

There is no indication that Caleb allowed any temptation of jealousy to stand in his way of a fresh start in a new land. His prime desire was to possess the fulfillment of God's promised blessings in his life.

## III. Caleb Maintained His Faith (v. 6)

Faith is more than marching across a dry riverbed or

climbing over the ruins of Jericho's fallen walls. Faith is holding on to the dream until it becomes reality.

Caleb held on to God's promise for 40 years. He spent all those years in the wilderness, believing that someday he would dwell in Canaan.

Caleb maintained his faith because he was confident of his commitment to God.

## IV. Caleb Did Not Expect God to Do All the Work (vv. 1-12)

We can abuse the privilege of prayer in an effort to get God to do all our work and to wage all our wars against sin. God seeks to work with us.

We must work to fill classrooms and pews. We must do our share of work to present the gospel to our family and neighbors. We must boycott, picket, and stand up against evil in society. Then God brings victory—even if miracles are needed.

Caleb faithfully fought the battle, confident that God would bring victory.

## CONCLUSION:

Like most godly people, Caleb faced numerous circumstances that would hinder him from entering a new land and starting a new life. Powers of evil will always tempt us to be bitter, jealous, and unfaithful. However, by yielding to that temptation, we lose the fulfillment of our glorious dreams for a fresh new start.

### SUGGESTED WORSHIP ORDER

Preservice Welcome and Ministry Reminders  
Choral Invocation "There's a New Song in My Heart"  
A Witness to Newness of Life (Someone saved later  
in life)  
Hymn "Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah"  
Hymn "Love Divine, All Loves Excelling"  
Pastoral Prayer "Because He Lives"  
Our Joyful and Obedient Stewardship  
Worship in Special Song  
Message "NEVER TOO OLD FOR A FRESH START"  
Joshua 14  
Choral Adoration Salvation Medley  
"I Know Whom I Have Believed/The Solid Rock"  
Personal Response to God's Word

### Creative Worship Ideas

#### Music

A closing hymn of triumph can send people away with renewed confidence to face the coming week. It causes the service to end less abruptly and helps to increase faith after an invitation without visible response.

# LEARNING TO LOVE

by Aubrey D. Smith

John 20:1-17

Jan. 27, 1991

## INTRO:

The possibility and power for a changed life and a fresh start is available in Christ.

No one appears more faithful to love Jesus during His crucifixion than Mary Magdalene. She had been a faithful follower and supporter (Luke 8:1-3). She stood by the Cross (John 19:25), followed those who took Jesus' body to the tomb (Mark 15:47), brought spices to His grave (16:1), and was willing to care for His body (John 20:15).

No one received a greater response of love from Jesus than did Mary Magdalene. She was the first to whom He revealed himself (John 20:16). She was the first to bear the news of His resurrection (v. 18). She serves as a symbol of the love and grace of Jesus Christ in transforming lives.

## I. How Did Mary Love Jesus?

A. She loved Jesus completely and continually. From the beginning of her conversion, she followed faithfully: before the Crucifixion, after His death, and following His resurrection.

**ILLUS.** Jerry Self says that at the tomb, Mary was not alarmed by thoughts of guards or the presence of angels; she was looking for Jesus.

B. She loved Jesus unselfishly. It was not what Jesus gave her, as it was with others (John 6:26). It was what He meant to her: a Savior and a Transformer. She gave as a steward to Him. While others were hiding in self-preservation and self-pity, she thought only of Jesus.

C. She loved Jesus genuinely. She was not ashamed to be known as His follower. She was willing to bear the risk. Her love was deep enough to compel her, even when in His death, Jesus could not respond.

## II. Why Did Mary Love Jesus?

A. Jesus represented what Mary wanted to be. Her traumatic, immoral life had brought her many companions, but she was lonely. Her life afforded financial gain, but she was a pauper in spirit. Jesus held no formal claim to fame, was of the common class, and possessed no wealth. Yet she longed for what He had and for what He offered. Her life that had appeared so full was empty.

**ILLUS.** Janis Joplin, rock star of the '60s, before her suicidal death, once said, "I make love to 25,000 people on stage, and then I go home—alone."

B. Mary Magdalene loved Jesus because He accepted her as she was. Yet He offered her power to be transformed.

## CONCLUSION:

**ILLUS.** In Hans Christian Andersen's classic story, an ugly duckling was despised and laughed at. Later it became a beautiful swan. A great transformation took place in Mary Magdalene's life. It happened not through growth and age but in an instant, by the grace and power of Jesus. She was changed much like an ugly duckling being transformed into a beautiful swan; like a caterpillar into a lovely butterfly; like a frog from the fairy tales, kissed and changed into a handsome prince. Mary was miraculously changed, different, new.

The apostle Paul reminds us that Christ has the power to make us a new creation (2 Cor. 5:17). Like Mary, we can be changed; we can experience new life in the love of Christ. She represents our need and Jesus' transforming power.

### SUGGESTED WORSHIP ORDER

Preservice Welcome and Ministry Reminders  
Prelude  
Choral Praise "Hallelujah, We Shall Rise"  
Hymn "Jesus, the Very Thought of Thee"  
Hymn "O Love That Wilt Not Let Me Go"  
Coming to God in Prayer  
Hymn "O, How I Love Jesus"  
Pastoral Prayer  
Repeat Chorus  
Our Joyful and Obedient Stewardship  
Worship in Special Song  
Message "LEARNING TO LOVE"  
John 20:1-17  
Personal Response to God's Word  
Hymn "Wonderful Savior"  
Open Altar for Prayer of Love to God  
Hymn "My Jesus, I Love Thee"  
Postlude

### Creative Worship Ideas

#### Stewardship

Train our people that the "time of tithes" is a form of worship. Avoid ideas or terminology that focus our hearts on money. Rather, encourage the understanding of tithing as an expression of love and obedience.

# MOTIVATIONAL HINDRANCES TO A FRESH START— GOING FORWARD OR LOOKING BACK

by Aubrey D. Smith

Genesis 19  
Feb. 3, 1991

## INTRO:

The story of Lot and his family is both familiar and relevant. We face change and the challenge of how we will allow change to affect us.

From "Marriage Enrichment" comes the axiom, "Change is inevitable and automatic; growth requires deliberate action." Some changes we desire; some we do not. Some changes are pleasant and exciting. Other changes invoke fear and dread. Our challenge is to face each change with promise and use change for personal growth. To use changes as growth opportunities requires deliberate and positive effort on our part. The story of Lot and his family draws a parallel and reminds us that:

## I. Change Is Difficult

God told Lot to get out of Sodom and Gomorrah. Part of sin's tragedy is its addiction. If Satan is allowed to gain control of any part of our lives, it is extremely difficult for us to have the courage and discipline to break free.

**ILLUS.** Florence Nightingale was a young lady who had lost hope. She assumed she was on her deathbed. It seemed that the end was near. But through a change of circumstances, she decided to get up, try life again, and to fulfill her goal. In so doing, she started one of the greatest ministries, and her name has become synonymous with nursing. It was, however, her willingness to make changes in her life that made things different for her and many others.

## II. Growth Is Difficult

Lot and his wife did not wish to change their situation. If change is hard, growth is even harder. With God's help, we can walk toward new horizons and experience a new and better life.

**ILLUS.** He was a Scotsman and a member of a rebel cause in his day. Considered a fugitive, he was hunted by the law. Finally he fled to America because he had spent much of his young life in prison. He did not want to return to jail. In America he started a fresh life. Instead of being a rebel, he found himself involved in law enforcement. Turning his energies to defending the right, he set up an honest law enforcement organization.

People came to him because he would help in an honest and upright manner. He was dependable. Known far and wide, he set up legitimate organizations of law enforcement across America. This man allowed a change to take place in his heart that brought positive growth. Because of it, his name became synonymous with security and law enforcement. His name was Pinkerton!

Lot and his family were satisfied with the status quo. For them comfort took priority over God's purposes.

As Lot realized that leaving was their only means of survival, he tried to take the easy way out. God pointed him toward the mountains—symbols of the place of worship in spiritual heights. But Lot looked for places close by, places more like that to which he had become accustomed. Like Lot, too often we want our changes to be as convenient as possible.

Cherishing the town and the plain (v. 20), Lot followed the route of rationalization, compromise, and halfheartedness. Do we rationalize and halfheartedly compromise in responding to changes that God requires?

God instructed Lot and his family to go forward to a new life, and not to look back at the old.

Lot's wife looked back, the direction of her longing. She liked the past. She had enjoyed living for her own satisfaction. She did not want to separate herself from her former life.

Christians can fall prey to the temptation of holding on to the past and failing to move forward to new and better days in God's plan.

The new convert may be tempted to hold on to past sins when God reveals a new and better way.

## CONCLUSION:

In Phil. 3:7-14, the apostle Paul spoke of counting what he had given up as loss and forgetting the things of the past in order to reach for the new and higher prize in Christ Jesus.

### SUGGESTED WORSHIP ORDER

Preservice Welcome and Ministry Reminders  
Hymn "He Leadeth Me"  
Hymn "Higher Ground"  
Praise in Special Song  
A Testimony of Vision  
Our Joyful and Obedient Stewardship  
Reading from God's Word  
Chorus "Have Thine Own Way"  
Pastoral Prayer  
Choral Meditation "Sweet Will of God"  
Message  
"MOTIVATIONAL HINDRANCES TO A FRESH START—  
GOING FORWARD OR LOOKING BACK"  
Genesis 19  
Personal Response to God's Word  
Hymn "All the Way My Savior Leads Me"  
Prayer of Consecration for the Vision

### Creative Worship Ideas

#### Stewardship

Occasionally sing a hymn of thanksgiving, praise, or consecration as the offering is being taken.

# MATERIAL HINDRANCES TO A FRESH START— DETERIORATION OF A RELATIONSHIP

by Aubrey D. Smith

Malachi  
Feb. 10, 1991

## INTRO:

Nehemiah, the great revivalist, was called back to report to Artaxerxes, the king. Apostasy had set in among the people of Israel. Ezra died and the revival of his time had waned. While Nehemiah had been away, spiritual disobedience among the people had increased. At this time God raised up a prophet by the name of Malachi to help Nehemiah preach to the people about restoration and revival. Malachi challenged the apostasy of Israel. His message is needed today.

Israel and God had a very special relationship. God had claimed them for His own. There existed a unique bond between them. As in any relationship, there must be a conscious effort for its continuation. From Malachi, we see Israel falling away from God. Let us look at some warning signs of breakdown in our relationship with God.

## I. Israel Questioned the Value of the Partner in the Relationship

Do I appreciate the other person as a friend?

In the book *Psychology of Love*, the author suggests that a partner must be valued so that one recognizes that he could not get along without the partner. You want to foster that relationship because of your dependence and need for the relationship. In a strong marriage, each person needs and desires the support of the other. For a strong relationship with God, we must realize that we need Him.

The people of Israel had begun to question the value of their relationship to God. They openly practiced idolatry. They no longer felt that they needed God.

## II. Israel Challenged the Love of the Other Party

God said, "I have loved you" (Mal. 1:2). Yet the Israelites responded, "How have you loved us?"

They questioned God's love. There are three symptoms that take place: suspicion, ingratitude, and lack of objectivity. The people had lost their love for God, then they questioned His love. Suspicion arose and then ingratitude. After all that God had done for the Israelites, they were ungrateful and disobedient.

**ILLUS.** Winston Churchill told the story of the little boy that was drowning. A sailor happened by in the park and saw him. He jumped in and rescued him, saving his life. Later the mother of the young boy saw the sailor and said, "Sir, are you the one that rescued my little boy?"

The sailor was embarrassed, thinking that he was about to receive great praise, and replied modestly, "Yes, ma'am."

She looked at him with anger in her eyes and said, "Well, tell me something, sailor. Where is my boy's cap?"  
Ingratitude is inconceivable.

Third, they lacked objectivity. They blamed the deterioration of their relationship on God.

When our relationship with God deteriorates, it is evident in prayerlessness, failure to tithe, neglected witness for Jesus, faultfinding with people.

## III. Israel Wanted to Receive Much but Gave Little

Israel said, "It is vain to serve God: and what profit is it that we have kept his ordinance, and that we have walked mournfully before the Lord of hosts?" (Mal. 3:14, KJV).

Though Israel wanted to receive much from God, they wanted to give little in return. Their offerings were either nonexistent, partial, or inferior (1:12-14).

## IV. Israel Placed the Blame Elsewhere

The Israelites had profaned the altar of the Lord with polluted sacrifices (1:12).

Their attitude reflects the hypocrisy of a deteriorated relationship. They offered polluted sacrifice, then denied that it was polluted, then complained when left with that same polluted meat.

## CONCLUSION:

The Israelites questioned God's love while being unfaithful with their love for God. However, God graciously offered redemption and renewal (3:10-11).

Let us not follow the same pattern of deterioration. We must recognize our guilt and accept God's gracious offer of revival.

### SUGGESTED WORSHIP ORDER

Preservice Welcome and Ministry Reminders  
Choral Invocation "Pentecostal Fire Is Falling"  
Hymn "I Will Praise Him"  
Hymn "A Heart like Thine"  
Opening Our Hearts in Prayer  
Pastoral Prayer  
Chorus "My Desire"  
Reading from God's Word Mal. 3:1-10  
Worship in Special Song "The Giving Song"  
by Lanny Wolfe

#### Message

"MATERIAL HINDRANCES TO A FRESH START—  
DETERIORATION OF A RELATIONSHIP"

Malachi

Personal Response to God's Word  
Bringing Our Complete Offering to God  
Hymn "Take My Life, and Let It Be"  
Prayer of Complete Consecration

#### Creative Worship Ideas

##### Stewardship

Ask a layperson to testify about the joy and blessing of giving. This can be a powerful "sermon" before the offering is taken.

# ATTITUDES AS A HINDRANCE TO A FRESH START— LIVING BENEATH OUR MEANS

by Aubrey D. Smith

Luke 15

Feb. 17, 1991

## INTRO:

Our attitudes concerning life's circumstances can hinder a new life.

**ILLUS.** Several years ago in Hollywood, Fla., an elderly woman passed away. She had moved there after the death of her husband. She lived in a run-down house and had no car. She depended on neighbors to take her to the supermarket every week.

The widow died suddenly. Upon her death the police ordered an autopsy and a search of her house. During the search, police found stuffed in shoe boxes \$1 million and receipts for another \$1 million in the savings and loan association. The autopsy report came back, listing malnutrition as the cause of her death.

In Luke 15, Jesus told a story known as the parable of the prodigal son. The account spoke of his rebellion and riotous living. He squandered his inheritance and eventually returned to his father, penniless and shameful. But he found welcome and forgiveness and was given a feast, a robe, and the family ring.

All of us can identify with the prodigal's waywardness. But we rejoice in God's gracious forgiveness and reception into our Heavenly Father's family.

Another character is mentioned in the story, the older brother (vv. 25-32). The prodigal son had broken his father's heart, carelessly spent a portion of the family wealth, and left his older brother to do all the work. The older brother had worked faithfully. He had carried the burden of the estate. Suddenly the prodigal is being given a feast and royal welcome. The older brother vents his feelings to his father.

Have you ever felt this way? Have you ever done the work and someone else got the credit? Has someone else received the promotion you deserved? Has someone less deserving been elected to the position you wanted? Within your family, have you cared for the aged parents, but another member of the family received the praise—maybe the inheritance?

**ILLUS.** A few years back an immigrant purchased a ticket for a voyage on an ocean liner. He had saved for years in order to come to America and had managed just enough for his ticket. During the voyage he longed to eat in the ship's beautiful dining room, but he had no money. Therefore, each day he ate from his previously bought supply of cheese and crackers, which soon became rancid and soggy. Only near the end of his journey did the immigrant discover that the purchase price of his ticket had entitled him to three meals a day in one of the ship's dining rooms. He could have eaten whatever he wanted and as much as he wanted.

When his father invited him to the banquet, the elder brother refused because he had never received such special treatment. Yet the feast was celebrating the return of his wayward brother. In all three of these stories the per-

son lived beneath his means, missing out on that which was so abundantly available.

Like the elder brother we can miss out on God's special provisions.

## I. We Must Not Let Our Spiritual Life Become Mundane

If our walk with Jesus becomes mundane, we will lack joy. If we avoid spiritual conquest, then we miss out on a fresh start and a new life. God has planned a glorious victory.

## II. We Must Not Live on Past Victories

## III. We Must Not Surrender to Petty Grievances

If we allow the climate of our spiritual life to be determined by actions of other people, we will be the losers. The elder brother's attitude was not justified. His own attitudes caused him to miss the feast. By his own admission the celebration was the greatest event that had taken place in their household. No previous celebration could match it. No other time of merriment and joy could compare. But his petty attitudes caused him to miss it all.

## CONCLUSION:

Resentment caused the eldest son to miss what had always been available to him. His father reminded him that his provisions had been there all along. The son had only to claim the father's provision.

Often we Christians miss spiritual blessings and long for the new convert's joy. But our Father loves all His children equally. Our circumstances may not be the same, but God offers equal and full provision of His blessings for all. He is preparing a great celebration for us all.

### SUGGESTED WORSHIP ORDER

Preservice Welcome and Ministry Reminders  
Prelude  
A Call to Worship in Special Song  
Hymn "This Is My Father's World"  
Hymn "A Child of the King"  
Prayer Season  
Open Altar  
Chorus "Fill My Cup, Lord"  
A Testimony of the Blessings of Stewardship  
Our Joyful and Obedient Stewardship  
Hymn "Count Your Many Blessings"  
Choral Worship  
Message  
"MY ATTITUDES AS A HINDRANCE TO A FRESH  
START—LIVING BENEATH OUR MEANS"  
Luke 15  
Personal Response to God's Word "Jesus, I Come"  
Prayer  
Postlude

# MY DECISIONS AS A HINDRANCE TO A FRESH START— CONFRONTATION BETWEEN CONSCIENCE AND CONVENIENCE

by Aubrey D. Smith

John 18—19

Feb. 24, 1991

## INTRO:

Each one must make the choice for a new life.

Conscience represents truth—that which is right, just, and best. Convenience represents that which is easier, often more appealing, and seemingly more satisfying—but wrong. Like Pilate, we will confront this conflict of choice. But also like Pilate, we must choose whether or not to follow what we know to be right. Pilate said to Jesus, “Do you not know that I have power to release you, and power to crucify you?” (John 19:10, RSV).

Each one of us has the power to choose. Though we may not be a monarch or a government official, we have the power necessary to reject Christ or to release Him to be our Lord and King. In their confrontation, Pilate asked three questions equally relevant for us.

### I. “What Is Truth?” (18:38)

A. Truth is the realization of the difference between right and wrong. A spiritually sensitive conscience identifies truth for us.

B. Truth is the awareness of the right. The Holy Spirit faithfully guides us into all truth.

C. Truth is the acknowledgment that I must choose between right and wrong. Most of our struggles come, not at the point of knowing the right, but at the point of choosing to follow the right.

### II. “Are You the King?” (18:33, 37)

**ILLUS.** The Rosetta Stone was discovered in 1799 and bore inscriptions in three languages, one of which was ancient Egyptian hieroglyphics. The scholar trying to decipher the meanings surmised that names of the king and other royalty were connected. He was right. Their names became the key to translation. Likewise, when a German scholar was deciphering cuneiform, the ancient Near Eastern writing system, he guessed that certain signs were referring to King Darius. In both cases, the king's name became the key to unlocking the language. There is another king whose name unlocks the answer to life's most troubling questions. His name is Jesus, and He wants to be King of our lives.

A. King equals Master and Lord: the One who is Sovereign over our lives.

B. Jesus responded to Pilate that he must decide the answer to the question himself (vv. 34, 37). It is not the omnipotence of God that determines whether He is King, but our own personal choice.

### III. “What Shall I Do with Jesus . . . ?” (Matt. 27:22, RSV)

A. This important question is the climax of the previous questions. Pilate had to decide, “What shall I do

with Jesus . . . ?” We must confront that question today. After theoretical and theological questions have been debated, after finishing our doctrinal discussions, and after our ceremonies have ceased, we must stand before God and decide, “What shall I do with Jesus?”

B. This important question is not answered without a struggle between our desire for convenience and our conscience, which cries out for us to choose the right. Look at Pilate's struggle:

John 18:31 “Take him yourselves.”

18:33 “Are you the King of the Jews?”

18:35 “Am I a Jew?” (So how should I know?)

18:37 “So you are a king?”

18:38 “What is truth?”

19:4 “I find no crime in him.”

19:6 “Take him yourselves.”

19:10 (Answer me.) “I have power . . .”

19:12 “Pilate sought to release him.”

19:14 “Behold your King!”

(All verses from RSV)

## CONCLUSION:

Pilate struggled to place his responsibility for choice on others. He tried to get Jesus to give an answer. He tried to cleanse his conscience by washing his hands. His actions were of no avail.

There is no greater struggle than the struggle of the unsundered will. It involves confronting truth—desiring the right, but refusing to choose.

New life can be a reality through Jesus' power to forgive, cleanse, and renew. However, we must release Him to be King.

### SUGGESTED WORSHIP ORDER

Preservice Welcome and Ministry Reminders

Prelude

Hymn “He's a Wonderful Savior to Me”

Hymn “Turn Your Eyes upon Jesus”

Worship in Special Song

Pastoral Prayer

Chorus “Spirit of the Living God”

A Witness to God's Transforming Grace

Reading from God's Word John 19:1-10

Choral Meditation “Room at the Cross for You”

Message

“MY DECISIONS AS A HINDRANCE TO A FRESH START  
—CONFRONTATION BETWEEN  
CONSCIENCE AND CONVENIENCE”

John 18—19

Personal Response to God's Word

Hymn “I Am Coming, Lord”

Prayer of Repentance and Redemption

Postlude

# A HAVEN OR HELL— IS MY HOME A HINDRANCE TO A FRESH START?

by Aubrey D. Smith

3 John 4

## INTRO:

Satan tries to use our home relationships to hinder a fresh start.

No relationship affects us emotionally, socially, economically, and even spiritually, as our relationships at home. Thus the home may serve to hinder our hopes and efforts for a new beginning. No institution can bring such joy into our lives; none has more capacity to create heartache.

Our home can be a haven—a place of peace, serenity, and inner security—or it can be the closest thing to hell on earth.

**ILLUS.** Charles Hembree tells the story that during a battle in Vietnam, two young men were in the thick of the fight. Bullets were flying about, shrapnel bursting overhead, and occasionally a grenade exploded nearby. One of the terrified young men gasped, "Isn't this awful?"

The other soldier replied, "Oh, not really. It reminds me of home."

Though the story brings a smile, its reality bears no humor. Four answers help determine whether a home is a haven or hell.

## I. Home Is Not a Haven Where There Is No Discipline

A. The home needs firmness with children. When children run wild, all is confusion. When children are uncontrollable, chaos results.

B. The home needs fairness by parents. Be fair in relationships, and be fair in example. Dr. James Dobson reminds us that values are "caught" more than taught.

C. The home needs a family altar. To maintain an effective family altar requires the discipline of parents.

## II. Home Is Not a Haven Where There Is No Dedication

A. The home needs family time with the children.

B. The home needs fidelity to spouse. Playboy philosophy and TV role models create a sense of insecurity. Parents, let your children know that you love each other.

C. The home needs faithfulness to God.

## III. Home Is Not a Haven Where There Is No Delight

A. Delight in having fun. Play together—games, picnics, etc.

B. Delight in having fellowship. In the home, bring others into the circle of your family. Teach children to care, love, and enjoy other people.

C. Delight in having frivolity. Teach children to laugh;

it is a sign of joy; it is a sign of experiencing the positive. Laugh, even in tough times. Teach children to laugh at themselves; teach them to laugh with others, not at others.

**ILLUS.** Abraham Lincoln said, "Most folks are about as happy as they make up their minds to be."

## IV. Home Is Not a Haven Where There Is No Deity

A. Reemphasize family altar and influence.

**ILLUS.** According to a study released a few years ago, if Mom and Dad attend church regularly, 72 percent of the children will remain true to the church. If Dad only attended regularly, 55 percent of the children remained faithful; if Mom only, 15 percent. If neither attend, only 6 percent remained true.

**ILLUS.** We are told that the typical church-related child is under the following influences per week: television, 40 hours; school, 35 hours; home and others, 35 hours; church, 2 hours.

B. Reemphasize faithfulness to God. Our faith affects how we respond in tough times. Our personal faith shapes conversation—how we talk and reflect our thoughts; character—how we act and react; conscience—how we think responsibly.

## CONCLUSION:

Home, a haven or hell! Our home should not be a hell; it should be a haven. It ought to be a haven! The choice is ours, but it takes continual and deliberate effort.

### SUGGESTED WORSHIP ORDER

Preservice Welcome and Ministry Reminders

Prelude

Choral Uplift

Children's Choir

Hymn

"O Perfect Love"

Hymn

"I Would Be True"

Pastoral Prayer

Choral Praise

Our Joyful and Obedient Stewardship

A Teenage Witness for Christ

Reading from God's Word

(Jointly read by husband and wife)

Worship in Special Song

"May Those Who Come  
Behind Us Find Us Faithful"

Message

"A HAVEN OR HELL—

IS MY HOME A HINDRANCE TO A FRESH START?"

3 John 4

Personal Response to God's Word

Hymn

"A Christian Home"

Prayer for All Homes

Postlude

# A. W. Tozer: Prophet at Large

Continued from page 54

these great saints were uncontrollably in love with God. "These people," Tozer would say, "know God, and I want to know what they know about God and how they came to know it." He had his favorites like Fénelon, Faber, Tersteegen, and Lady Julian.

Tozer was a great lover of hymns, and in his study he maintained a collection of old hymnals. Tozer offered this advice to young Christians:

After the Bible the next most valuable book for the Christian is a good hymnal. Let any young Christian spend a year prayerfully meditating on the hymns of [Isaac] Watts and [Charles] Wesley alone, and he will become a fine theologian. Then let him read a balanced diet of the Puritans and the Christian mystics. The results will be more wonderful than he could have dreamed.

This was his pattern year after year.

Toward the end of his life Tozer remarked, "I have found God to be cordial and generous and in every way easy to live with." For almost 50 years Tozer lived in God. He once requested of his congregation:

Pray for me in the light of the pressures of our times. Pray that I will not just come to a wearied end—an exhausted, tired old preacher, interested only in hunting a place to roost. Pray that I will be willing to let my Christian experience and Christian standards cost me something right down to the last gasp!

On May 12, 1963, A. W. Tozer's earthly labors ended. His faith in God's majesty became sight as he entered into the presence of God. Even though his physical presence is far removed from us, Tozer will still continue to minister to those who are thirsty for the things of God.

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## Postfuneral Counseling

Continued from page 48

lieve me when I tell them I killed her?

It is very sad that this young mother has been immobilized by grief and tormented by guilt. Suggesting professional help might easily have helped her see that it was highly unlikely she smothered her child and that, in any event, the autopsy would have shown that were it true.

Other signals that a person needs more help are: severe depression from which there is seldom any relief; suicidal thoughts that are frequent, recurring, and very dominant (NOTE: Most people experience some suicidal feelings following a loss; however, these are usually passing and temporary); excessive use of prescriptions, drugs, or alcohol. Referring people on for longer and in-depth counseling by a therapist is not disloyal but an act of wisdom and love.

By following these eight steps, ministry will become a healing factor. Through good pastoral care, the grieving will be helped to move from hurting to healing and from futility to faith.

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## Frumple's Law

Continued from page 49

matters of consensus. Frumple knows that the consensus, with its usual courage, simply left some guy, who thought to speak his mind publicly, to twist slowly in the wind, by himself. So when Frumple or his co-believers get their hands back on the levers, you know that they do not believe in the innocence and purity of the vast majority. In fact, they trust it less with Mouthpiece gone than they did when he was still around.

But it is another level of experi-

ence that gives me my really important reason for having doubts about the applicability of Frumple's Law to us reverends. No class of persons on earth is better equipped than we to recognize the infallibility and absolute inculpability of leadership implied in Frumple's Law—an ability made even sharper by the innocence and purity that the law recognizes. Yet we do not seem to see it where we are supposed to. The only legitimate conclusion that I can draw from this is that we reverends are not as pure and innocent as Frumple's Law says we are. I leave it to you to theorize on where lies the sin in the camp.

And as to my confusion concerning the law's applicability to academic faculties, I would simply say that it arises from current practice. They tell me that it's the in thing now to give faculty rank to folks like Frumple. That really broadens too much the circle within which one should look for the source of trouble.

But enough of this quibbling. I say, "Three cheers for Frumple!"

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## John Wesley's New Testament Notes

Continued from page 55

every preacher of Wesleyan descent. More important, with our modern resources of biblical study, follow the principles that motivated John Wesley:

1. To use the most exact scholarship available.

2. To learn from other Christians with complete openness. John Wesley borrowed heavily and gladly from Anglicans, Puritans, a Lutheran, Congregationalists, and Presbyteri-

ans in these *Notes*.

3. To check out our perceptions of the Word with our companions. The *Notes*, as we learn from the *Journal*, are a team effort, though John took responsibility.

4. To let the Word move us along in *its* direction, not ours, and at *its* speed, not ours. That will mean allowing God to take us where He wants, by whatever way He chooses.

# FROM TEXT TO SERMON

## BIBLICAL RESOURCES FOR HOLINESS PREACHING FROM TEXT TO SERMON

Edited by  
H. RAY DUNNING & NEIL B. WISEMAN

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| II  | <b>Holiness as Perfection</b><br>Stephen Green, Floyd Perkins, Oscar Reed                               | VII  | <b>Holiness and Ministry</b><br>Tom Findlay, Alex Varughese, Daniel Spross  |
| III | <b>Prayers for Holiness</b><br>Richard S. Taylor, Bruce Petersen, Melvin McCullough                     | VIII | <b>Holiness as God's Provision</b><br>John M. Nielson, Wilbur Brannon, C. S. Cowles                               |
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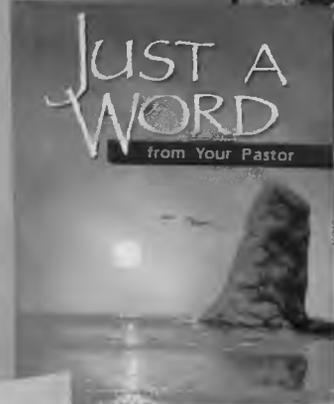
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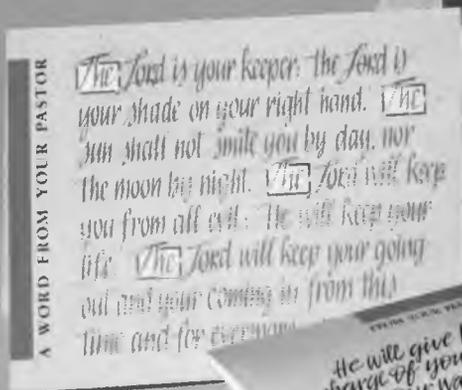


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# GROW

*A Journal of Church Growth, Evangelism and Discipleship*



## ***Mission Achievement in Portland & Beyond***



*What comes after the Sabbath Year?*





# HOW LEADERS GROW

“**G**row in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 3:18). Plain advice from the Apostle Peter. Followers of Christ who want to progress in their faith, must grow in experience and knowledge of the Lord.

But how do Christian leaders grow? Leadership assignments are often placed on persons who must stand on tiptoe to be equal to the task. The continuation of the job requires growth.

A Christian leader needs to grow spiritually. Immersion in God’s Word and fellowship with God in prayer are essential to growth.

Knowledge is important for Christian leaders. There are various degrees of effectiveness as a leader. The skill

level of a leader can be improved through increased knowledge.

Knowledge essential to growth may be acquired through reading and person-to-person interaction. Seminars and conferences are common means of conveying knowledge about leadership.

For knowledge to become learning, it needs to be practiced. Christian leaders will grow as they muster the courage to put their knowledge into practice.

Constantly learning and continually practicing will develop Christian leaders of high competence to the glory of God’s work on earth.

*Bill M. Sullivan*

## Mission of Church Growth Division

To contribute to the advancement of God’s kingdom by fostering growth in the Church of the Nazarene.

To promote aggressive evangelism in all its many forms throughout the denomination.

To create an awareness throughout the church regarding the necessity for planting new churches, including the mission potential among cultural minorities.

To increase participation and effectiveness in a reproductive ministry that is engaged in Christian mission.

# Caravans Open Hearts for New Church in Small Town



## **Planter Leads Caravans Four Nights Each Week**

**U**sing Caravans as a church planting strategy in a small Oregon coast town sounds unusual — or perhaps amazingly incredible. In September 1987, George Spencer and his wife, Donna, started Caravans in their family room as a first step in establishing a new congregation in Warrenton, Oregon. The town, economically supported by lumber and fishing, with a population of 2,650 people, is influenced by six established churches.

Since their fifth-grade daughter, Christy, had a cluster of friends, they started with a Girls' Adventurer group for fourth through sixth graders. To suit family schedules, the first group decided to meet after school on Thursdays.

Because no lay leaders existed, the pastor and his wife were forced to

lead each new Caravan group themselves in their own home on four different afternoons.

The talk of the town soon publicized their purpose. Contrary to most small-town gossip, these rumors were

---

### **The talk of the town publicized their purpose.**

---

absolutely accurate — this beginning church was especially interested in children and families.

Six weeks after beginning the first Caravan group, the church started services on October 14, 1987, in the

Masonic Lodge Hall. Pastor Spencer recalls, "We brought in the Lamp-lighter Quartet from Portland and ran an ad in the local newspaper. We also had support from Astoria Nazarenes, who sent two families to each of our first four services. We had 27 people in the first service and continued to average 18 to 25 through the spring of 1988."

On the first weekend of March, the pastor felt compelled to phone parents of Caravan children to invite them to church. He reports, "As I made calls that Saturday night, the Lord gave me a boldness that I had never felt before. To my amazement, all the parents I invited came to church that morning, and every one of them is part of our congregation now." That Sunday, attendance reached 32.

# Caravans Open Hearts

People's attention was captured by other factors, too. Pastor Spencer took a job at the local grocery store soon after he moved to Warrenton, working 30 hours per week. In no time, everyone was acquainted with the new pastor who so kindly helped people in the grocery store. Near the start of the work, the pastor and his wife canvassed the town and left pamphlets that he had printed at a neighboring church. And the pastor's concerns for families, in a town with almost no other ministry for children, also created interest and appreciation.

In August 1988, the pastor adjusted his outside work schedule as Vacation Bible School time approached. In response, the small church increased

his financial support so he could cut back to fifteen hours at the grocery store. Forty children attended that first Vacation Bible School — in a

---

**The Lord gave me  
a boldness  
that I  
never felt before.**

---

church less than one year old. In the fall, Caravans expanded again, to follow up on those who had attended Vacation Bible School.

Growth continued throughout the fall and winter months; 90 attended the Christmas program.

By April 1989, the attendance reached 60; 92 people attended worship on Easter. Then, a new emphasis on ministry to others started so the church began tithing its income to care for the needs of others and began paying church budgets, although none had yet been assigned. That summer, the church sent 20 children to district camp, started a nursing home ministry, and added a teen group. The work flourished in the fall and early winter. A new high attendance of 120 was reached on Christmas Sunday 1989.

The ministry continues to stabilize. Warrenton church was officially or-



ganized on January 14, 1990. Ninety-five persons were present. Pastor Spencer now gives full time and energy to his ministry. This new church gave \$30,000 for all purposes last year. Seven teens were sent to Mexico on a Work and Witness project. A Family Enrichment Week, something halfway between a family camp and a revival meeting, was held last summer,

---

## The church began tithing its income to care for the needs of others.

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emphasizing personal spiritual growth and the Christian home; attendance never dipped below 65.

When GROW staff asked Pastor Spencer why they come, he answered,

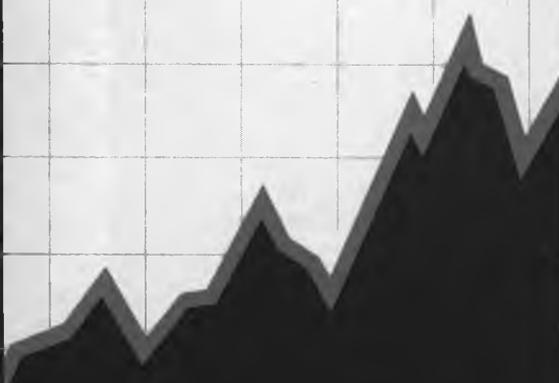


"It's hard to say why the Lord has blessed us the way He has, but I know this: Our people love the Lord. And when they gather, they come to worship. If we had a motto, it would be, 'Lord, make me a blessing.' And my prayer is that people will see our 'works' and glorify our Father Who is in heaven."

Still meeting in a lodge hall, an average of 80 people gather to worship each Sunday morning. Half re-

turn on Sunday night. Not surprisingly, 80% were reached through the Caravan ministry. At press time, three more families, all parents of Caravan children, began attending. And the fifty children who take part in Caravans each week provide fertile soil for a continuing gospel harvest for the kingdom through the Warrenton Church of the Nazarene.

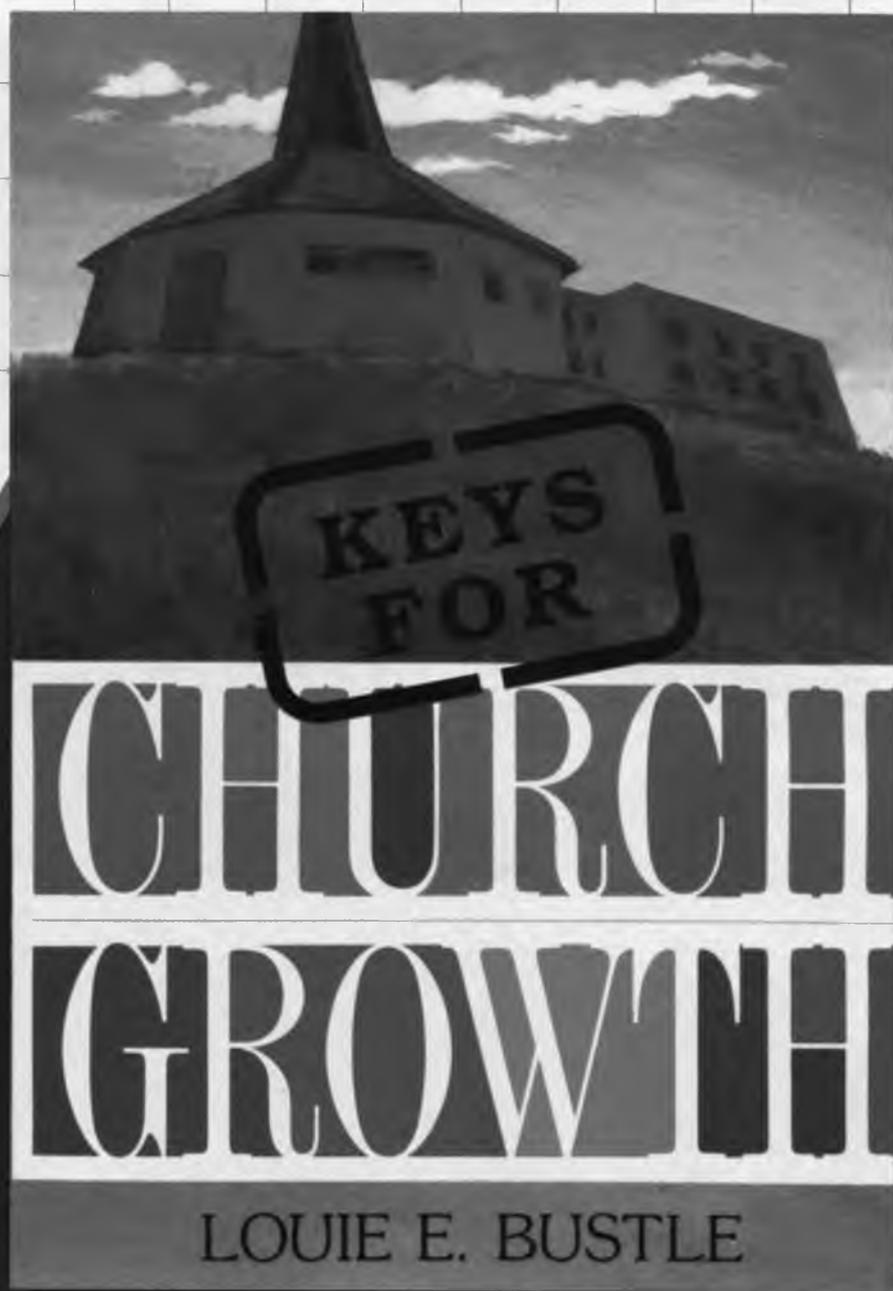
—by Neil B. Wiseman  
with George Spencer



**KEYS FOR  
CHURCH GROWTH**

By Louie E. Bustle

*"This book," says Dr. Bill Sullivan, "is characterized by spontaneity and is written by a 'producer' of church growth."*



The author's basic premise is that  
*"Church growth is more than a strategy—it is a way of life. It is just as natural for a church to grow as it is for a person to breathe."*

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## Growth Markings & Main Points

**J**esus' instruction to wait for the Holy Spirit is significant. It indicates beyond all question that we will not, even cannot, obey the Great Commission apart from the Spirit's power.

J. E. Conant

**T**he Christian in whose heart Christ dwells inclines toward brotherhood as water runs down a valley.

Donald McGavran

**T**he pastor fulfills his leadership role in evangelism in three ways: by teaching and preaching evangelism from the Scriptures, by modeling evangelism in his life and ministry, and by organizing the congregation for evangelistic thrusts in the community.

Roger S. Greenway

**T**he nature of evangelism is the communication of the Good News. The purpose of evangelism is to give individuals and groups valid opportunity to accept Christ. The goal of evangelism is to persuade men and women to become disciples of Jesus Christ and to serve Him in the fellowship of His church.

Lausanne Covenant



**T**he Church Growth Movement feels that it is not legitimate to set quantity against quality in church growth. No church growth advocates that I am aware of would deny the need for high-quality churches.

Peter Wagner

**I**n the early days of a new congregation, there will be few material or human resources. The pastor of an infant organization must be persuasive and adept in evoking the best in people and enabling the early members to do many tasks for which they may not have had prior training or experience.

Ezra Earl Jones

**C**hurches grow as they identify people with needs that the church can minister to, either by extending ministries already in place or building new ministries.

George G. Hunter



**P**aul evidently views Antioch of Syria, Antioch of Pisidia, Ephesus, Philippi, Thessalonica, Corinth, Athens, Rome, and other metropolitan areas as evangelizing centers. From these radiating points, the gospel could penetrate an entire region (1 Thessalonians 1:6-8).

Paul Benjamin

**I**n a growing church, the method is never to be considered as important as the task. Under God, a healthy church possesses a growth conscience which prompts it to "outreach at any cost" and then finds the methods which will prove successful.

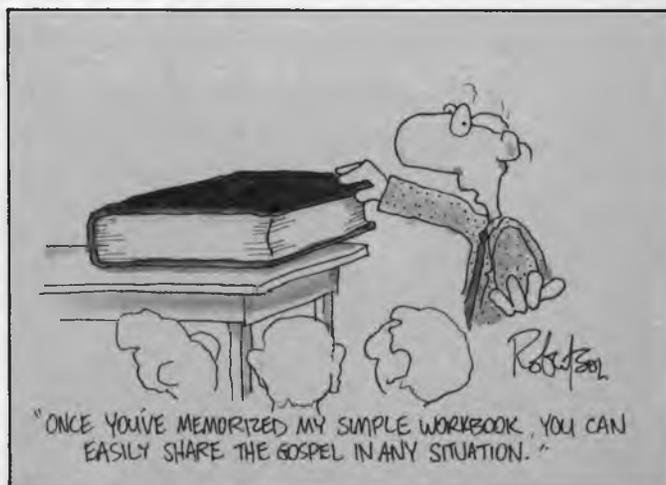
O. C. Emery

**M**any churches have failed to grow because they have not understood this simple rule: Organizational expansion always precedes numerical increase.

David Womack

**T**he greatest mobilizers, like John Wesley, are persons who live near their maximum capacity not just for a few moments, but for years — not just for fame or wealth or sport, but for meaning. . . . All they have to offer is themselves, but that is more than others give to anything.

Dean M. Kelley



# GROW

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# THE GOSPEL CREATES CONTRASTS FOR HOMELESS

**Mission Achievement in Portland and Beyond**

# THE GOSPEL CREATES CONTRASTS FOR HOMELESS

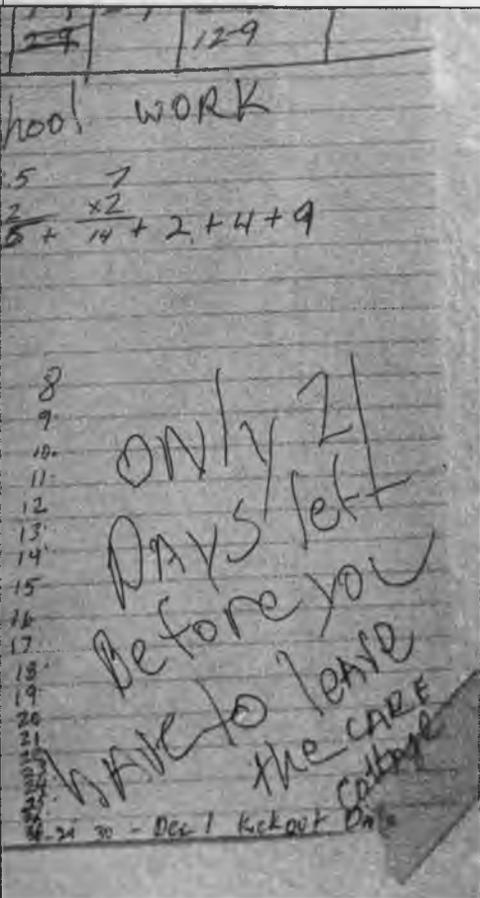
**A NEW LIFE SOMETIMES FLOWS FROM COMPASSION**



MINISTRY TEAM: David Wheeler and Steven Johnson.

**O**PERATION CARE, a ministry to the homeless and needy in Portland's inner-city and sponsored by the Oregon Pacific District Church of the Nazarene, is led by Rev. David E. Wheeler. OPERATION CARE is a cooperative ministry done by many people which flows from the heart concerns of the Oregon Pacific District, area churches, Nazarene Compassion International, Church Growth Division, and volunteers from Nazarene churches who provide food, clothing, friendship, and authentic models of Christian witness.

**Contrasts describe how the Gospel affects people.** The long list of biblical contrasts includes light for darkness, life for death, and salvation from sin. While walking the streets of Portland, Oregon, any morning just before dawn, one sees the despair of the homeless as they leave abandoned buildings and crawl from under cardboard blankets to search for food. But the Care Cottage, in the same city, provides a vivid contrast and a silent witness of the transforming power of Christ. The Care Cottage is a place





where a homeless person is offered a warm bed, a simple meal, a second chance, a family he does not have and, most of all, the old story that points the way to new life in Christ.

Care Cottage, a trans-shelter home for single, homeless men opened in 1986, provides a variety of helps for

starting over, such as a weekly friendship meal with volunteers from area Nazarene churches, alcoholics' victory support group meetings, Bible studies, and individual counseling. The plan offers men a place to live while they get established in a job and become self-sufficient.

**Steven Johnson, resident host and ministry director**, is uniquely qualified for ministering to homeless men because of his bachelor's degree in criminology from Southern Oregon State College, his ministerial training from Nazarene Bible College, and his military service in Vietnam.

Similar ministries have been offered in Solace House, for single women, and children, and Grace Cottage, for homeless teen-age girls. In resident programs, continued witness, week-by-week friendship, and patterns for Christian living can be established over time.

A new and growing ministry of OPERATION CARE is the Job Finders Workshops. This program trains lay leaders in the churches to help the unemployed and underemployed acquire meaningful jobs. Rev. Andy Hanners directs this project, which recently trained 27 persons to lead Job Finders Workshops and also assisted 20 job seekers to find useful employment.

Contrasts created by the Gospel keep expanding like the ripples from

pebbles dropped into a pond. OPERATION CARE, in the name of the caring Savior, offers life-changing contrasts such as hope for despair, food for hunger, salvation for sin, new beginnings for old failures, and friendship in place of isolation.



**MEAL PREPARATION:** Cooking and cleanup shared by residents and staff.



**MICHAEL O'BRIEN PREPARES TO LEAVE:** Michael was recently baptized by Steven Johnson.

# ONE MINUTE FROM YOU CAN PREPARE THEM FOR ETERNITY.

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We've a story to tell to the nations. Behind the Iron Curtain. Into the Arab-speaking world. Throughout Third World countries. Beyond borders and boundaries long closed to the Gospel. Today, *World Mission Radio* reaches millions with the saving message of Christ—reaching men, women and children who until recently have been considered unreachable.

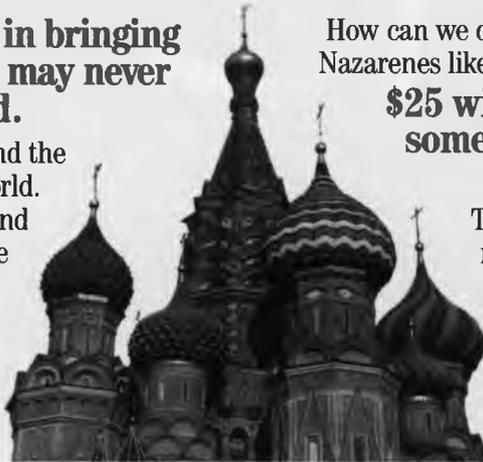
Never before have Christians had such an opportunity to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ to so many people, in countries where the Word of God has never been broadcast. Never before have Nazarenes had such a challenge to provide Christian programs to so many people.

## The Iron Curtain has lifted and a window of unprecedented outreach has opened to *World Mission Radio*.

Recent policy changes in the Soviet Union provide a receptive climate to outside spiritual influence. Perestroika and Glasnost is creating unprecedented opportunity—and great uncertainty—for the church in the Eastern bloc countries. And signs indicate immense spiritual hunger among the Soviet people.

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Will we do it? By God's grace and working together we will.



*The Soviet people have an immense spiritual hunger and World Mission Radio has an unprecedented opportunity to feed them.*

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world. Won't you take a minute right now and write a check to ensure that someone on the other side of the globe will hear the Good News?

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"Look at the fields!  
They are  
ripe for harvest."

*John 4:35b, NIV*



EASTER 1991

EASTER 1992

That the World May Know — GO!

THE YEAR OF THE HARVEST

# MINISTRY TEAM PLANTS CHURCH IN UPSCALE SUBURB

## NEW CHURCH STARTED IN OREGON'S FASTEST GROWING COMMUNITY

**A** new church thrives in Tualatin, Oregon — the fastest growing community in the state; 55% of the population are between the ages of 25-45. The Tualatin Fellowship Church of the Nazarene reported 65 members, 38 new Nazarenes, and 81 in worship attendance to the 1990 Oregon Pacific District Assembly, only 14 months after the church held its first service in March of 1989. And the church continues to grow.

Several unique factors have contributed to the impressive beginning and continue to impact the church's continuing growth.

**LEADERSHIP** of the church started with a three-member ministry team composed of David White, pastor; Chris Conrad, associate pastor; and Lee Hart, minister of music. The team dream came to White and Conrad as they prayed about the Father's plan for their ministry near the completion of their studies at Nazarene Bible College. All three have tent-making skills to assist in earning their support.

**FIRST CONTACTS** came through telemarketing. 23,000 phone calls were made with the help of Portland First Church members and friends. A second series of calls introduced the church to thirty more families.

**THE OPERATION CENTER** is a suite of offices in a business complex where phone ministry, Bible studies, and counseling are done. This gives a sense of permanence to the work and provides space for weekday ministry, a missing component in many church plants.

**METICULOUS CARE** is given to every detail in preparation for the



THREE-PERSON MINISTRY TEAM: Chris Conrad, Lee Hart, David White.



*Sunday services at Tualatin Elementary School. This makes all who attend feel like someone has been getting ready for them all week. Details include a welcome center, a book table, name badges, potted plants at the platform, worship folders, and stately recorded music to help set the mood for worship.*

**FIRST-CLASS GRAPHICS** and quality printing show in newsletters, bulletins, and promotional mailings. Everyone appreciates this quality, especially those who are interested in being a part of a church that appears to be headed for greatness.

**SUNDAY SERVICES** are traditional enough to make traditionalists feel comfortable and welcomed, but contemporary enough to attract the unchurched.

**PERSONAL SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT** stands at the core of the ministry; it is encouraged in the public services, the weekday Bible study, and individual conversations with the ministry team.

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## The church was officially organized as a Church of the Nazarene with 65 members.

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### LET PASTOR DAVID WHITE TELL THE STORY IN HIS OWN WORDS:

The writer to the Hebrews tells us that "faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see." It is this faith that has carried us from the beginning to this point. The past two years could be described as the most exciting and certainly the most challenging years of our lives. The Lord's blessings and His faithfulness have been real and never-ending.

### It Was by Faith the Ministry Team Came Together

Chris and Vickie Conrad and my wife, Leslie, and I moved to Oregon in August 1988 to begin the planter church. Lee and Cathy Hart, ministers of music at Pompano Beach (Florida) First Church, resigned their assignment and joined the ministerial team. Each family came without the promise of housing or full-time jobs. God has been faithful to meet those needs, though not always as we anticipated.

A home Bible study was begun in the pastor's home in October 1988. From this foundation, contacts into the community were made and the anticipation of starting the Tualatin Fellowship grew.

From this core group of excited people, and with the help of volunteers from Portland First Church, a two-month telemarketing project (23,000 phone calls) was implemented in January 1989. This project resulted in 177 in attendance at our first service on March 5 in the Tualatin.

# MINISTRY TEAM PLANTS CHURCH IN UPSCALE SUBURB



**WORSHIP:** Lee Hart and Pastor White lead worship service.



**PREPARATION:** Chris Conrad checks to see that the school is ready for visitors.

latin Elementary School — a church was born.

Because many who began attending were not acquainted with the Church of the Nazarene, a pastor's class, entitled "Foundations of the Fellowship," was held, discussing philosophy of ministry, doctrines, and church history. On April 30, 1989, 40 people were received in membership of the Fellowship. Our first baptismal service was held May 28 at Portland First church, and eight believers were baptized.

### It Was by Faith the Church Was Organized

On October 29, 1989, the church was officially organized as a Church of the Nazarene with 65 members. Also in October, a second telemarketing project was carried out and, on November 19, 30 new people discovered the Fellowship and decided to make it their home.

March 4, 1990, we celebrated our first birthday. After one year, we were walking on our own without help from the district and had seen growth numerically and spiritually. To God be the glory!

### It Was by Faith We Achieved

Our first annual meeting was held on April 1. Reports were read and emotions ran high. Elections were held for various positions of leadership, and delegates to the assembly were elected. Prior to this time, an advisory committee, consisting of three people from the congregation, the three pastors, and two business consultants, served to steer the church through its infancy. At this annual meeting, the members elected a church board of eight dedicated persons who have a true love for Christ and who strive to see His vision for the church.

At the close of the first district assembly year, our average attendance was 81. At the 1990 Oregon Pacific District Assembly, the Tualatin Fellowship Church received the Evangelistic Honor Roll, Honor Sunday School, Great Commission Fellowship, and All Budgets Paid awards. The Lord has blessed our church with fantastic laymen who support, not only the staff but each other in times of need, with words of encouragement and actions of love.



**SPONSORSHIP:** Pastor Gary Henecke motivated Portland First Church to sponsor new church.

### **It Is by Faith We Minister to Needs**

As you might expect in a family church, approximately one-third of the congregation is under twelve years of age. That means children's ministries are a key part of our work in ministries like Sunday school classes, vacation Bible school, backyard Bible clubs, puppets, and Bible quizzing.

Youth, singles, and adult ministries are headed by laymen who responded to interest surveys. Other needs have been met through S.A.V. (Substance Abuse Victories) and a Big Brother program to assist single moms raising young sons. Seminars have been offered on "Prayer" and "Traits of the Happy Married Couple."

### **It Is by Faith We Anticipate Adequate Facilities**

Facilities continue to be a goal of the church. While the elementary school provides room for growth, it is a temporary meeting place, and as



building funds continue to grow, we continue to look for the right location at the right price.

God enabled the faithful at Tuatlatin to give \$58,671 for all purposes this last fiscal year. One year ago, the church voted to support its senior pastor part time, and the church eagerly awaits the time when it can have all its pastors in full-time ministry.

### **It Is by Faith We Face the Future**

The Lord has proven Himself faithful in the past, He is proving Himself faithful in the present, and He will continue to be faithful in the future. The Psalmist tells us that the Lord is "faithful in all He does."

While the figures and history of this young church express some of the exciting aspects of His work, the highlight of ministry comes when the one hurting soul turns to a loving Christ Who understands and forgives. May we continue to be the people God has called with "a heart for the community — His heart."



**TEAM MEMBERS:** Vickie Conrad, Cathy Hart, Leslie White.



**TENTMAKING:** Chris Conrad and David White sometimes work as trash collectors to support their families.

ANNOUNCING

# VISION '91

Entering the decade with the harvest in view . . .



**U.S. Quadrennial Conference on Evangelism  
October 29-31, 1991**

*Fort Worth/Tarrant County Convention Center  
Fort Worth, Texas*

# WHAT COMES AFTER THE SABBATH YEAR?



**H**e had our attention. No one knew just what to expect as the man started up the platform steps and headed for the pulpit. The service was over and the pastor was about to pray the benediction. The unusually long silence had prompted those with eyes closed in reverence for the expected prayer to look around for the cause of the strange delay. Hundreds of people stood, puzzled, but without the tension that might be expected in this unconventional proceeding. The quiet confidence of the pastor made many wonder if the whole thing might have been previously planned.

**He moved on to the pulpit.** The pastor gently slipped his arm around him and asked, "Do you have something to say to us this morning?" The spontaneous nature of the situation became apparent to everyone. Extremely large congregations seem to develop intimacy groups, so only a comparative few of those present really knew the man. The uneasy silence was profound.

"I really don't want to do this," he began, quietly, humbly, "but I promised the Lord I would share my new-found level of spiritual fulfillment." Gripped with emotion, he continued, "A few months ago, it seemed that God was calling me to a new life of prayer. I have been devoting my early mornings to God. I don't mean to say that I didn't pray before, but my hunger for intimacy with God has drawn me to prayer in a way I have never previously known. I am experiencing an exciting spiritual growth and the Lord is revealing new and wonderful disci-

plines of holy living. I just want to encourage any of you to intensify your praying and find this happy experience of spiritual growth."

This occurrence is not as rare as it sounds. Some are saying that the church is, at this time, experiencing the greatest prayer movement in living memory. God appears to be inviting people personally, and individually, to a new intimacy with Himself. The movement is spontaneous and growing. It is not bound by denominational distinctions, and it moves through all cultures, worldwide. God-appointed intercessors are spending hours in prayer, and the number of intercessors continues to grow.

The influence of this move of God has impacted us. A wave of affirmation seemed to move across the General Assembly in Indianapolis during the report of the Board of General Superintendents. Dr. Jerald Johnson announced that 1990 would be "The Year of the Sabbath" in the Church of the Nazarene. The audience welcomed the announcement with enthusiasm. The denomination seemed to be ready for the emphasis. A general hunger for spiritual renewal seemed to prevail. This "Year of the Sabbath" would give the church opportunity to pull away from frantic activity and focus upon prayer and matters of spiritual importance.

**God calls his people** to greater intimacy with Himself for a purpose. His interest is not simply that of restoring or affirming empty rituals and exercises of religious pose. People who draw close to God begin to see things as God

## WHAT COMES AFTER THE SABBATH YEAR?

### "Each Nazarene member may know the power of the Spirit."

sees them. Intimacy with God opens one's heart to God's view of the world and His attitude toward prevailing circumstances and conditions. Those who draw close to God develop an awareness of His heart and His concerns. The current prayer movement is not an end; it is the avenue through which the Father will reveal His priorities and stimulate urgency for the accomplishment of His will.

God has brought periodic renewal to the church throughout history. Every revival has resulted in the same dynamic: the church stirred and readied for a new advance or battle. When "The Year of the Sabbath" was announced, no one knew exactly where God would lead. Where this spiritual emphasis has been reverently observed, an identical awareness has been developing. God is giving His people a new vision of lost souls and a renewed hunger for evangelistic results!

The Board of General Superintendents, sensitive to this divine guidance, has directed the church to make the year following "The Year of the Sabbath" a year of all-out emphasis upon evangelism. Evangelism Ministries, challenged to give form to the emphasis, has developed the campaign named:

#### HARVEST NOW!

#### "That the world may know — GO"

The goal of the campaign is to *win the lost and disciple them into church membership*. A secondary goal is that of seeing *every active church win at least one new Nazarene* during the year of the campaign. I believe the Lord will help us to receive more new Nazarenes during the **HARVEST NOW!** campaign than during any previous year in our history.

Since we agreed to engage in no promotion during "The Year of the Sabbath," the campaign will not run on a calendar year schedule. We will use the first three months of 1991 to introduce the campaign and distribute materials, and the campaign will run from Easter 1991 through Easter 1992. Each district within the United States and

Canada will establish its own goal for new Nazarenes during the campaign. I believe a reasonable cumulative goal for those districts would be at least 100 new Nazarenes per day, a total of 36,500. The **HARVEST NOW!** campaign will be the focus for the entire denomination. Regional directors in world areas outside the United States and Canada have enthusiastically agreed to participate. They are now involved in the goal-setting process for their areas of the world.

We have suggested that district superintendents allow each local church on the district to establish its own goal. This should be a year in which every activity of the church will be evaluated by this question: What contribution does this activity make, enabling the church to accomplish the objective of winning the lost to Jesus Christ? This is not a contest, and there will be no losers. Every soul won to the Lord is a victory, and victories should be celebrated. No region, district, or local church will be in competition with another. The self-established goals will be the only measurement for the campaign.

Monthly reports will be gathered through the Sunday school reporting mechanism, and the results will be published each month in the *Herald of Holiness*. Since periodic reporting is difficult or impossible in many world areas, the international regions may not be able to report each month. Those reports will be published as they are received. A total goal for the international church will be announced upon receipt of the goals from regional directors and district superintendents in the United States and Canada.

This international focus upon evangelistic outreach should become the consuming interest of every region, district, and local church. It should be the motivation for every missionary effort, every educational institution and every church program. Each Nazarene member may know the power of the Holy Spirit in a new resolve to be an active witness and soul-winning Christian during this year of harvest.

"The Year of the Sabbath," properly observed, will result in spiritual renewal for the church. Let's join in prayer during these final days of the Sabbath year, asking God to show us how the renewal He has given may find its fruit in a bountiful harvest of souls for His glory.

—by M. V. Scutt, Director, Evangelism Ministries,  
Division of Church Growth



For God  
so loved the world,  
that he gave  
his only begotten Son,  
that whosoever  
believeth in him  
should not perish, but  
have everlasting life.

JOHN 3:16

LOVE LOOKS FOR  
A REASON TO GIVE

**TITHING**—*God's plan for His people*

# CONTINUING THE LEGACY

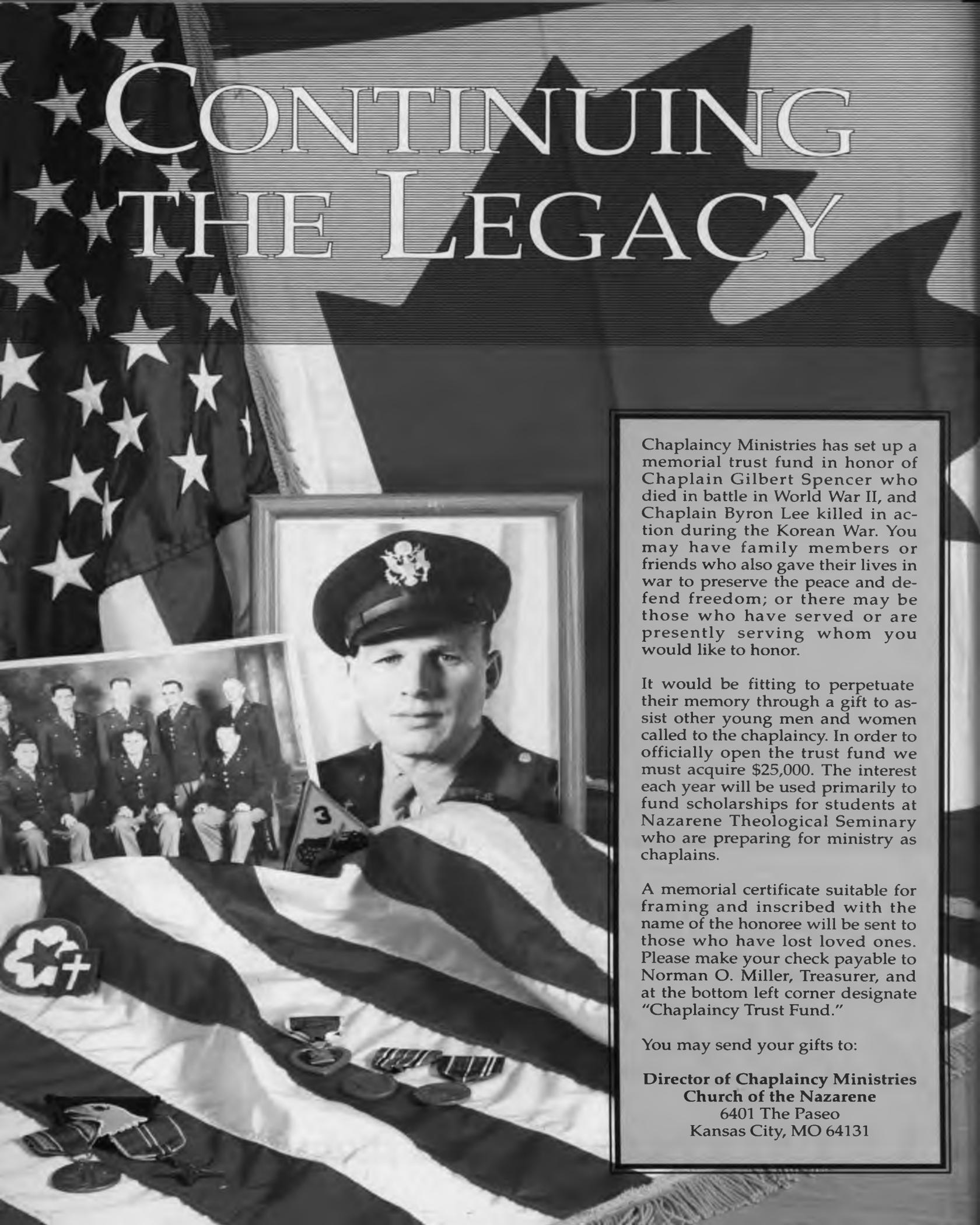
Chaplaincy Ministries has set up a memorial trust fund in honor of Chaplain Gilbert Spencer who died in battle in World War II, and Chaplain Byron Lee killed in action during the Korean War. You may have family members or friends who also gave their lives in war to preserve the peace and defend freedom; or there may be those who have served or are presently serving whom you would like to honor.

It would be fitting to perpetuate their memory through a gift to assist other young men and women called to the chaplaincy. In order to officially open the trust fund we must acquire \$25,000. The interest each year will be used primarily to fund scholarships for students at Nazarene Theological Seminary who are preparing for ministry as chaplains.

A memorial certificate suitable for framing and inscribed with the name of the honoree will be sent to those who have lost loved ones. Please make your check payable to Norman O. Miller, Treasurer, and at the bottom left corner designate "Chaplaincy Trust Fund."

You may send your gifts to:

**Director of Chaplaincy Ministries  
Church of the Nazarene  
6401 The Paseo  
Kansas City, MO 64131**





# ROOTED IN CHRIST

Personal Growth Helps for Leaders

## A Servant's Heart

### WEEK ONE

#### A SERVANT'S GENTLE TOUCH

*"If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet" (John 13:14)*

It was Christmas Eve. Snow was heavy on the ground outside. The wind howled, but we cared not as our family huddled around a roaring fire in a mountain cabin. All of my grown children, with their spouses and children, had come home to celebrate the holidays.

In accordance with our family tradition, we had a worship time centering in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper prior to exchanging gifts. Dean, our oldest, shared with us a scene that unfolded before his eyes just before leaving his inner-city mission to fly home. They had just opened a day-care center for the homeless. He chanced to look in on the lounge area. Nurse Ann, who gave a half-day a week to the center, was on her hands and knees, washing the men's feet.

Dean was astonished. He had never before witnessed such a ritual. He stood in the doorway and watched as she knelt before each man, threw away the rotten socks, bathed his feet in warm epsom-salts water, trimmed toenails, anointed sores with healing

ointment, bandaged wounds, and then gave each a pair of clean, new socks. After changing the water, she went on to the next, and the next. While she worked, she softly sang Christmas carols. Those men, most of whom had not felt a warm human touch in months and years, were too moved to say anything. Yet the tears coursing down weathered cheeks said it all. Dean testified that he had never felt so much the presence of Jesus as he experienced that frigid, wintry night when Nurse Ann literally followed Christ's example of servant-love.

### WEEK TWO

#### THE SERVANT AS ENABLER

*"Therefore encourage one another, and build up one another, just as you also are doing" (1 Thessalonians 5:11)*

Whatever the form of ministry, the goal of servanthood is to encourage and build up people in Christ. The Greek word Paul uses here for "encourage" is *paracletos*, which means "alongside of." An encourager is one who helps people to feel better about themselves, to stand tall, to look good.

Just before Arturo Rubenstein was to begin his concert at Carnegie Hall, a five-year-old boy got away from his

mother, ran down the aisle, went up on the stage, climbed onto the piano bench and began to plunk with one finger "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star." Before the embarrassed mother could retrieve him, the great pianist parted the curtains, came over and sat down by the boy, reached his arm around him, and began to play right along with him. The boy, now utterly engrossed, played his song over and over again. Rubenstein's variations transformed that simple tune into a concerto that filled the concert hall with such beauty and grace that the audience was brought to its feet in enthusiastic applause. What a poignant demonstration of an encourager.

### WEEK THREE

#### THE FORGIVING SPIRIT

*"But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you in order that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven . . ." (Matthew 5:44)*

The date was May 13, 1981. The place, St. Peter's Square in Rome. A pistol shot rang out that was heard around the world. Pope John Paul II lurched backwards on his chair, face frozen in shock as blood soiled his white robes.

Ordinarily, such spasms of senseless

## ROOTED IN CHRIST

savagery recede in time, retreating to a vivid and ugly memory. But *Time* magazine headlined a most astonishing sequel over two years later, in its January 9, 1984 issue. On the front cover was a picture of the Pope with his arm around the would-be assailant, Mehmet Ali Agca. The lead article reported, "In a bare, white-walled cell in Rome's Rebibbia prison, John Paul tenderly held the hand that had held the gun that was meant to kill him. For 21 minutes . . . the two talked softly. . . . The Pope forgave him for the shooting. . . . It was a startling drama of forgiveness and reconciliation. . . . The meaning of John Paul's forgiveness was profoundly Christian. He embraced his enemy and pardoned him."

It was shortly after this widely publicized demonstration of the forgiving spirit that Pope John Paul made a triumphant return to his homeland, Poland. And it was that event, more than any other, that initiated the rollback of Marxist Communism and began the unraveling of the iron curtain. But what can Marxism do to withstand a great host of Christians whose only strategy in dealing with enemies is servanthood and whose only weapon is forgiving love?

### WEEK FOUR

#### THE Poured-OUT LIFE

**"I will allot Him a portion with the great . . . because He poured out Himself to death" (Isaiah 53:12)**

Farley Mowatt, in his collection of Canadian Yukon stories, *The Snow Walker*, tells about Ano, who came upon a snow house nearly buried under a terrible winter blizzard. He dug down through the roof to find it a tomb, filled with Indians who had starved to death. He was about to crawl back out when he noticed something moving under the rotting hides. Incredibly, there was a little girl, skin hanging on delicate bones, too weak even to cry but eyes burning brightly with life.

Ano knew what he had to do. He cut a vein in his arm and fed her his blood a

drop at a time, over a period of several days, until she was strong enough to chew dried seal meat. He took her to live with his people. She grew and blossomed into a beautiful teenager. Ano fell in love with her and took her to be his bride.

Several years later, his people suffered a terrible winter famine. Ano left home in a desperate search for food. By the time he had located fresh seal meat and returned three weeks later, most had perished, including his wife. As he unwrapped her body, frozen on a snow ledge in the igloo, he found his four-year-old son, alive and surprisingly strong. He checked his wife's arms. As he suspected, she had literally poured out her own life's blood in order that their son might live.

Jesus revealed his servant heart by pouring Himself out unto death for our sakes. Can we do less than pour out our lives in servanthood love in order that others might live in Him?

### WEEK FIVE

#### A SERVANT'S AWARENESS

**"If any one wishes to come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me" (Matthew 16:24)**

Jeffrey Zazlow tells the story of a Little League coach of eight-year-olds. He had several excellent players and some who just couldn't get the hang of the game. They hadn't won a game all season.

It was the last inning of the last game. His team was down by a run. He had one boy who had never been able to hit the ball — or catch it. With two outs, it was his turn to bat. He surprised the world by getting a hit. He made it to first. He was so excited!

The next batter was the team slugger. At last, there was a chance that the team might win one. The slugger connected and, as the boy on first ran toward second, the line drive came right at him. Not being sure of baseball's rules, he reacted instinctively. He caught it — barehanded. Final out! Game lost.

The coach turned to his stunned

team and led them in a cheer. He then ran out of the dugout onto the field to congratulate the boy who, in the last game of the season, finally succeeded not only in hitting the ball but in catching it, as well. Thus, that coach preserved the greatest day of one young boy's life.

Christ's servants care little about who wins or loses, but they are more than willing to bear the cross of lost games, lost incomes, lost leisure time in order that others might be saved, lifted up, and made to feel good about themselves as children of God.

### WEEK SIX

#### THE TENACITY OF THE SERVANT

**"We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed . . ." (II Corinthians 4:8-9)**

Glenn Wasson tells how, while in the woods, he swatted a pesky bee to the ground and crunched it into the sand with his boot. He was startled, moments later, by a minor explosion of sand at his feet. His tormentor emerged with its wings buzzing furiously. This time, he stood up and ground it into the sand with all of his 210 pounds.

Once more, he sat down to finish his lunch. After several minutes, he noticed a broken but living bee feebly digging out of the sand. Intrigued by its survival, he got down on his hands and knees to survey the damage. It was bruised and bloody. The left wing was crumpled like tissue paper. Nevertheless, it began to groom its sand-encrusted thorax and abdomen. Next, it began to smooth its crushed wing by running its legs down the length of it. Gradually, the wing's gossamer veins began to fill and harden. After each session, it buzzed it as if to test its lift. This hopeless crippled thought it could still fly.

Wasson was a pilot. He knew that the bee was finished. No way could it ever fly again. But it kept on grooming its damaged wing. With an audible buzz, it actually lifted off a few inches, only to hit a rise in the sand, tumbling end over end. It righted itself and continued its repair work. Again it lifted off, this time flying six inches before

crash-landing. More grooming and test flights until finally it cleared the sand, dodged the trunk of a tree, gained altitude, and finally disappeared into the forest.

Servants of Christ are like that bee, according to Apostle Paul — knocked down, but not knocked out; dying, and yet continuing to live by many resurrections from the dead.

## WEEK SEVEN

### RADIANT LOVE

***"And it came about when Moses was coming down from Mount Sinai . . . that [he] did not know that the skin of his face shone" (Exodus 34:29)***

British television journalist Malcolm Muggeridge made a trip to Calcutta in 1968 to do a documentary on Mother Teresa and her Sisters of Charity who, up until that time, were unknown to most of the world. The centerpiece of their work was the House for the Dying. Every day, the Sisters gathered up dying people from off the streets and brought them into their old, converted warehouse so they could die in dignity and in sight of a loving face. Most did die, but some recovered.

Muggeridge wanted some film shot inside. Ken, the cameraman, said it was impossible: there was not enough light and no electricity for photo lamps. Muggeridge told him to go ahead and shoot anyway. By way of insurance, Ken shot some scenes of recovering people lounging in a sunlit courtyard.

Ken was shocked to discover, when he developed his film, that the pictures he shot inside the dark, cavernous hospice were perfect. It appeared as if the room was bathed in a kind of ethereal glow. How to explain this "technological miracle"? Muggeridge developed a theory. He suggested that there was so much love flowing for those dying people that it created such a radiance that the photographic film could pick it up even when the light meters could not.

An even greater miracle occurred, however. That radiant love penetrated Muggeridge's atheistic heart. A short time later, though in his sixties, he became a confessing Christian, was baptized, joined the church, and has since become a vocal witness.

## WEEK EIGHT

### THE SERVANT COMMUNITY

***"And He went up to the mountain and summoned those whom He Himself wanted, and they came to Him. And He appointed twelve, that they might be with Him" (Mark 3:13-14)***

A cartoon strip caught my eye. It was lunch hour. Teams were being chosen on the school ground. Up the first-base line, one captain called out, "Harry." Up the third-base line, the other captain called out, "Bobby." As each name was called, my attention was drawn to one little fellow whose sagging shoulders and sad eyes conveyed that it was going to be another one of those days when nobody would want him on his side.

It was the last choice. The captain paused, surveyed the pitiful group huddled around home plate, and then called out the greatest name that one little fellow could ever have heard: "CHARLIE BROWN." The last frame showed a boy, with tiny legs pumping, mitt swinging, face beaming, running down the third-base line. Underneath was this caption: "Happiness is being chosen to play on the team."

One of the greatest joys of being Christ's servant is that we never walk or work alone. We are surrounded and supported by a great company of fellow servants. Paul's favorite way of describing the church was to speak of it as the "body of Christ" (it appears 31 times in his letters). It is more than a human organization: it is a divine organism. And from its life, we derive our lives, which enables us to serve others in Jesus' name. Happiness is being chosen to "play on the servanthood team."

## WEEK NINE

### THE SERVANT'S JOY

***"Therefore . . . let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus . . . who for the joy set before Him endured the cross" (Hebrews 12:1-2)***

It is easy to begin a race. It is exhilarating to finish a race. The difficult part is the long, hard pull between the beginning and the end. Jesus never promised that servanthood would be a

cake walk. Servant ministry does cost. Getting involved redemptively in people's lives is risky.

It was the middle of the third century. The church was under siege, suffering persecution from without and schism from within. It was during the darkest hour that Cyprian, a bishop who was soon to be martyred for his faith, wrote a letter to an unbelieving friend, in which he testified:

*It is a bad world, Donatus, an incredibly bad world. But I have discovered in the midst of it a quiet and holy people who have learned a great secret. They have found a joy that is a thousand times better than any pleasure of our sinful life. They are despised and persecuted, but they care not. They have overcome the world. These people, Donatus, are the Christians — and I am one of them.*

Many have asked Sir Edmund Hillary, the first to conquer Mount Everest, how he did it. His stock answer is, "Just one step at a time." So it is that servants of Christ carry out their ministry, just one step at a time, until that day when Jesus Himself shall say, "Well done, good and faithful servant . . . enter into the joy of your master" (Matthew 25:21).

## WEEK TEN

### THE SERVANT'S REST

***"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not of [servanthood] works lest any man should boast" (Ephesians 2:8)***

Hal Perkins tells about growing up in a small church. Since there was no junior church, he had to sit with his parents. More often than not, unable to "be good" throughout the whole service, he would be subjected to his mother's shushes, pokes, pinches, and frequent spankings after church for being "naughty."

One Sunday, he sneaked a bag of marbles to church in his pocket. Alas, when he pulled them out, the top burst open. The marbles bounced off the pew, crashed onto the sloping wooden floor, rolled noisily to the front, rebounding off the wooden altar. The pastor stopped preaching. Every head

turned, and every eye fixed upon him. He knew that judgment day was at hand.

On this particular Sunday, however, his father happened to be sitting between Hal and his mother. Instead of pinching or scolding him, his dad deliberately put his arm around his son's shoulder, gave him a squeeze, and then began to pat him gently — all the while staring straight ahead, as if nothing had happened. After church, his dad interceded with his mother on Hal's behalf, saying, "Boys will be boys."

"It was at that moment," confesses Hal, "that I learned the meaning of grace."

As Christ's servants, we need to rediscover that our standing before God does not depend upon our compulsive activity, but upon God's grace.

## WEEK ELEVEN

### A SERVANT'S SENSITIVITY

*"Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God . . . emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant . . . being found in the appearance (form) of a man . . ."* (Philippians 2:5-8, NASB, italics added)

I made an astonishing discovery recently, while working through this great "Christhymn." Paul uses two Greek words for "form" in this great confession of faith. *Morphe*, "inner essence," describes that about a person which never changes. *Schema*, "outer existence," defines that which does change. The *morphe* of a man, for instance, his essential nature as a particular human being, never changes, but his *schema* passes through many changes: conception, birth, infancy, childhood, adolescence, adulthood, death.

When Jesus became a man, he emptied Himself of His divine attributes but not His divine nature, His *morphe*. He was God in the flesh. What did change was His outer form. He took upon Himself the *schema* (form, appearance) of a man. I always assumed that, along with assuming

the *schema* of human nature, He likewise adopted the *schema* of a servant. Thus, when exalted by God after His resurrection (vv. 9-11), He left behind both His outer human form and His servant role.

That is, until I happened to notice that Paul uses *morphe* and not *schema* to describe Jesus' nature as servant. In other words, when Jesus assumed the *schema* of a man, He revealed the *morphe*, His essential nature, that of a servant. He exhibited for us to see what He had always been and forevermore shall be: a Servant-Lord, One Who rules and reigns — not with coercive might, but in the power of suffering love.

## WEEK TWELVE

### WHERE IS JESUS BEING EXALTED?

*"Therefore also God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name . . ."* (Philippians 2:9-11)

I had always assumed that this final movement in Paul's eloquent "Christhymn" referred to Christ's exaltation in heaven, that great and glorious day to come when "every knee shall bow . . . and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (vv. 10-11).

I began to think more deeply about this, however, in the light of discovering that the heart of Jesus — hence, the very heart of God Himself — is that of a servant (see previous devotional). If that insight is true, then it raises this question: Where is it that Jesus is being highly exalted? The answer can only be: Jesus is being highly exalted wherever we are exhibiting His servant heart in deeds of compassion, love, and witness.

It began to dawn on me that God is bestowing on Jesus "the name which is above every name" wherever we are engaged in servant ministry. It is as we give a cup of cold water to a little one in the name of Jesus that He is being highly exalted. It is as we feed the hungry, clothe the naked, visit the sick and those in prison that the name of Jesus is being lifted up.

We don't have to wait for the Second

Coming of Christ to see people bend the knee before Him in the obedience of faith. We don't have to wait until the end to hear people confess that "Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father" (v. 11). It is happening daily, all around us. And we can enter now into the joy of seeing Jesus highly exalted as we exhibit, in Jesus' name, the heart of a servant.

## WEEK THIRTEEN

### THE SERVANT'S REWARD

*"Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master"* (Matthew 25:21)

The place was Manchester, England. We were about ten weeks into our sabbatical when I awakened in the middle of the night with the first major attack of homesickness I had ever experienced. I missed my children terribly. I yearned to see them so greatly that I lost all interest in the European tour still on our schedule. I shared my feelings with my wife the next morning and she nearly burst into tears. I headed straight to the nearest office of British Airways, only to discover that I would have to pay full fare if we changed our return date. Since I didn't have the money, we endured our tour of the continent to its bitter end.

Finally, our Boeing 747 touched down at Boston's Logan Airport. We sped across the country. It was 10:30 p.m. when we crested a rise on the freeway. John Denver just happened to be singing over the car radio, "I'm going home," as the lights of our city burst into view. The tires squealed as our car leaned into the corners. As we drove up to our house, lit up like a Christmas tree, painted on butcher paper and stretched across the front, we saw a sign which shouted, "Welcome home, Mom and Dad!" Doors flew open. Arms embraced. Tears flowed.

One of these days, Jesus — the Lord of the Church — is going to call us home. Across the front of heaven's gate will be displayed a great sign: "Welcome home, children!" Better still, Jesus Himself will greet us and say, "Well done, good and faithful servant." When that day comes, it will have been more than worth it all.

—by C. S. Cowles

# A New Perspective



## JOIN THE TEAM!

**For more information contact:**

International Coordinator of Work & Witness  
Church of the Nazarene • 6401 The Paseo • Kansas City, MO 64131 • 816-333-7000



"This has been one of our best years for missions. I attribute much of it to our emphasis on Work and Witness, for it has broadened the base of our giving and challenged our people at new levels."

Janet Stiefel

*District NWMS President*  
Oregon Pacific District

"We will have no problem raising our General Budget now that we have seen how important it is to the mission of our church."

Gordon Stuart, *layman*  
Mason, Mich.

"Work and Witness has increased our giving . . . and the pleasure of giving. It has not interfered with General Budget but has made it come alive. (It) has added spiritual depth and a new dimension of faith and vision."

Pal Wright, *District Superintendent*  
Joplin District

# AN OREGON PLAN CHURCH PLANT

## Florence Church — Pastor Michael Arnold

86 Members • 62 Worship Attendance • Organized 1981

Pastor Michael Arnold fulfills his ministry through the Florence Church, where he has served since 1986.

This growing resort town, located on the Pacific coast 60 miles west of Eugene, receives its economic support mostly from lumber and tourists. Increasingly, retirees, moving from California, are adding to the reachable people groups in this area.

At present, the church is experiencing significant spiritual renewal as a result of an emphasis on holiness. Last year, the church received ten members by profession of faith. About 15 charter members are still active in the life of the church. Unlike many beginning churches, this congregation has its own building.

Florence Church is especially effective in ministry to teens and their families. New members testify that the church is a happy, caring, loving group that ministers to the whole person and the entire family.



Rebecca and Michael Arnold

“We are willing to try new things to attract new people.”

# AN OREGON PLAN CHURCH PLANT

## Harrisburg Church — Pastor Wes Wornell

20 Members • 26 Worship Attendance • Organized 1981



Marjory and Wes Wornell

Pastor Wes Wornell builds friendships with the people of Harrisburg, population 1,800, by serving on the volunteer fire department, working in the town's only hardware store, and coaching fifth-grade girls' basketball. His wife, Marjory, also works with the fire department.

A remodeled funeral home on Main Street houses church and parsonage. Though the spacious building is well located, it badly needed repairs and renovation. Groups and Sunday school classes from area Nazarene churches, including Salem First Church and Eugene First Church, helped remodel and refurbish the building. Now, the facility looks like something important happens there — and it does.

After ten years in the Army, Pastor Wornell felt called to the ministry. In response to that call, he returned to his hometown, Nampa, Idaho, to prepare for the ministry at Northwest Nazarene College. He completed his degree in 1988 and moved with his wife and their three children, Becky, Benjamin, and Emily, to Harrisburg to begin serving this baby congregation.

Ministry at Harrisburg is hard work, but God is enabling this parsonage family to make a significant difference in their town.

“Wherever I was, the preacher appeared.”

# Oregon Plan Started on a Holy Day in May

**\$400,000 Pledged in One Service to Plant 23 Churches**

**N**azarene church planting took a giant leap forward when a visionary plan was launched at the Oregon Pacific District Assembly held in May 1979. Now that a decade has passed, the Oregon Plan bears eternal fruit — new converts, church plants, and rekindled outreach in sponsoring churches. The Oregon Plan, though not intended as a pattern for other settings, is filled with useful ideas for extending the Kingdom.

It started with a heart concern for 64% of the state's population who were unchurched. At the beginning, District Superintendent Carl Clendenen called seven people to study with him to determine what might be done to increase evangelistic effectiveness in western Oregon by intentionally evangelizing the many communities without a Church of the Nazarene.

Next, they shared their findings and vision with district boards, pastors, and local church boards in area meetings. Then came tough questions: How to generate a ground swell of enthusiasm and participation among the existing 62 churches? How to unlock financial resources for starting churches? How to select, train, and place the right people, at the right time, at the right place, to assure successful church plants?

Subsequently, those who attended earlier meetings were asked to pray in keeping with our Lord's instruction, "Pray the Lord of the harvest to send forth laborers." Then Nazarene Theological Seminary, Nazarene Bible College, and Northwest Nazarene College were visited. The vision was shared with graduating students who were invited to consider this ministry with no promise of salary, church build-

ministry for years were ready to pay any sacrifice as they caught the vision for lost people of Oregon. Until it happened, no one dared believe such a response was possible from those being asked to go into new communities with no Christians to help evangelize the lost, disciple the converts, and gather them into new congregations. What a challenge! What a commitment!

## The mind of the Lord was sought.

Pressures mounted to develop effective strategies to put these 23 in place. The mind of the Lord was sought. On a district made up of 62 churches, 23 sponsoring churches were enlisted. Training programs were developed for planters, sponsors, and district leaders. And means had to be found to bring 23 church planters from far-away places like Kansas City, Colorado Springs, and Nampa to the district assembly at Bend; buses had to be chartered and plane trips financed. Frightening unknowns had to be faced — where to get the money, where to house the planters, and how to gain rank-and-file support of energy, money, and prayer for this effort.

The Friday evening of the assembly was to be the key moment. Presiding General Superintendent V. H. Lewis preached. The music was moving, the congregation expectant, and the build-

## The Oregon Plan bears eternal fruit — new converts, church plants, and rekindled outreach in sponsoring churches.

After searching the Scriptures in several meetings, a strategy began to revolve to research 85 communities; they hoped to determine possible response and support potential for establishing new congregations. Two teams gathered information from many community agencies to formulate a research document for each targeted location.

ing, or church members. At that time, the district had no financial resources for this effort, but it did have many communities who needed the Lord.

Miraculously overwhelming is the only way to describe student response. Twenty-three graduates, most with families, committed to the costly church planting dream. Men and women who had been preparing for

ing overflowed with more than 1,300 people. The church planters, most entirely new to Oregon, were seated with people who had hosted them throughout the day.

Then, a modern day Pentecost took place. Following the inspiring message, District Superintendent Clendenen told how the vision had developed. He informed the people that 23 families had put themselves on the line. Then he asked the delegates and friends from the 62 existing churches if they would like to meet these people. They expected to see slides and hear recordings. But when invited, twenty-three church planter families started to move to the platform from all over the sanctuary. To the planters, Clendenen said, "You are at home. These people are now your family." To the congregation, Clendenen challenged, "These are your children who are now becoming a part of the Oregon family."

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**"You are at home.  
These people  
are now  
your family."**

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Holy pandemonium broke loose. The crowd clapped and shouted. Men stepped to the platform to hug planters' children. Women embraced the young mothers and wives of the planters. When Clendenen requested financial support, people immediately began pledging cash, cars, trucks, campers, and land. \$400,000 was committed to support the Oregon Plan before the service closed. The Plan's motto, FROM VISION TO REALITY, was already taking place.

Like contagious measles, blessing

and inspiration went from the close of the assembly on Saturday to the 62 churches on Sunday. Those churches experienced miracles of challenge that resulted in pledges of additional resources. The Oregon Plan had more support and more resources than anyone could have imagined.

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## **Fifty-seven senior adult ministry groups on the district were asked to pray.**

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Now the plan had to be implemented. Fifty-seven senior adult ministry groups on the district were asked to pray. In every church, food collections were organized on the assumption that 10,000 Oregon Nazarenes (about 4,000 families) could feed 23 church planter families by bringing one food item each week. \$400,000 made it possible to provide basic help



to each planter family for moving expenses, rental deposits, health insurance, utilities, and a small salary.

Apartments and houses were rented. Meeting places for beginning congregations were located. And sponsoring churches offered prayer support, visitation, teaching materials, chairs, pews, hymnals, altars, offering plates, office equipment, and finance for leasing worship facilities.

One year later, 500 converts from these church plants were introduced to the district assembly. At the following assembly in 1980, over \$250,000 was raised to support 16 more church planter families to go to 16 new communities. During 1980-85, 5,500 new Nazarenes were received.

Dr. Carl B. Clendenen, now retired, summarized the results: "Churches that sponsored new starts or who had part in supporting new works began to grow. Churches that were in decline or had plateaued experienced new life as they showed interest in church plants. Finances climbed to nearly \$9 million for all purposes."

He continued, "Of course, we had some heartaches; not every volunteer was able to gather a group of new Christians, but everyone who wanted to try was given an opportunity with loving support. Many pastors reported their churches became more vital as they assisted in evangelizing the unchurched of Oregon. God gave the dream, but it was dedicated Oregon Nazarenes who invested in the vision."

Clendenen concluded with this sobering thought: "I believe God has scores of young couples across the church who are ready to accept the challenge of new communities who need the gospel."

Shouldn't they be given an opportunity to make that vision a reality?

—by Neil B. Wiseman  
with Carl B. Clendenen

# Manker Calls Church Plants Emerging Bodies of Believers

## Every Church Starts as a Plant

**"H**ow does it feel to inherit a failed system?" is a curious question I was asked a few months after I became superintendent of the Oregon Pacific District.

Apparently at least one person thinks we failed in church planting because some of our attempts did not continue.

Maybe that line of reasoning goes like this: Since we are an accepted denomination with established churches, strong colleges, and a worldwide missionary program, why get involved with this difficult business of the proliferation and continuance of new church plants?

**Let me explain why.** Because of our church planting efforts, we now have 26 churches started since 1979; 24 are fully organized at different stages of development. I like to call them "emerging churches" because they are alive and developing.

A church growth specialist might call them single-cell units—new jargon for small churches. But whatever they are called, they are caring, loving, growing, developing bodies of believers—viable congregations at work gathering their part of the harvest for God. Many of their members are new believers. At assembly time, these churches had a membership of 893. Last year, they received 90 new people by profession of faith, raised \$666,519, and gave \$37,561 to general budget/specials.

I praise God for Salem First, Portland First, and other large churches that are developing much needed multiple ministries for our diverse society.

How we need them! And how we need to help churches with similar potential break the 200 barrier. And we need to provide the tools to help many of our churches go beyond "single celledness" to become multiple ministry churches.

**Where did these multiple-celled churches come from?** And where will they come from in the future? Step back with me into our district history for a moment.

The 1919 edition of the *District Journal* for the first assembly of the North Pacific District contains interesting facts. The first thing I learned is that this district in its early days began as a church planting district. On page 22, we find this report: "We your committee on ways and means recommend that the district superintendent, J. T. Little, be empowered to raise funds for the establishment of new works in new fields and for the sustaining of same until they shall become self-supporting."

Here are some interesting membership comparisons:

	1919	1939	1990
Albany	17	15	139
Ashland	31	108	119
Portland First (organized with 35)	195	226	935
Salem First (organized with 8)	55	374	2393

On page 24 of the same *Journal*, Brother Little reports, "We have organized two new churches this year, one at Eugene, Oregon, and one at Kalama, Washington. . . . The church at Eugene has been broken into and

the flock scattered. I do not think this would have happened had I at that time had sufficient home mission money to have placed a pastor in the field to have cared for the flock. I do not know at this writing whether we will be able to again bring them together and set things in order for an effective work."

That was 1919 and we seemed to have failed in Eugene. We had almost nothing; it was scattered. Then 20 years later in 1939, we had 85 members. This year, Eugene First reported 546 members, averaged 433 in morning worship and raised \$428,164.

**Church planting for Nazarenes is not a failed system.** Rather, it drives us back to our roots and takes us into our future. It is the stuff of our history. It is where we came from and from whence we will continue to impact the harvest. It is hard. I wonder how many have found Christ because we planted in Eugene?

Where do great multiple-celled churches come from? They come from church plants. This week I read a phrase that stays in my thinking: "The clapper of urgency has hit the bell of reality."

The urgency is that we live in what is the second most unchurched state in the country; we have an incredible harvest field to impact.

Will you pray with me that we will find additional resources? Will you pray with me that the Lord of the harvest will send us laborers?

—by Gerald E. Manker,  
district superintendent,  
Oregon Pacific District

# AN OREGON PLAN CHURCH PLANT

## Sandy Church — Pastor Fred Tau

49 Members • 51 Worship Attendance • Organized 1982

Pastor Fred Tau leads Sandy Church of the Nazarene, located in a scenic community at the base of Mount Hood. Sandy has an area population of 30,000. Fred and Marcella Tau, along with their four children, came to Sandy in September 1989. Fred reports he found a group with concern for each other, a desire to impact their area, and a dream of having their own facilities on the 3½-acre tract on a growing edge of town.

A group from the congregation who met with the GROW staff described their church as "friendly, caring, hard-working, and a place where the presence of the Lord draws people to Himself."

In 1982, the church started with fifteen charter members, sponsored by the Gresham Church of the Nazarene located in a nearby town.

At present, Sandy Church shares facilities with the Seventh-day Adventist Church, an arrangement that gives them room to grow and offers space for Sunday school and other church-related ministries. Everyone in the Nazarene family at Sandy is enthusiastic about the possibility of having their own church building.



Fred and Marcella Tau

"I want to develop discipleship and outreach ministries to win new people."

# AN OREGON PLAN CHURCH PLANT

## Junction City Church — Pastor Harold Parry

126 Members • 122 Worship Attendance • Organized 1980



Harold and Joyce Parry

Pastor Harold Parry, Junction City's third pastor, began ministry to this congregation in July 1988. Having started with only a small group of five or six people in 1979, the church met in a home. Later, the church grew and moved to a Grange Hall.

Now, the church has crowded out the facilities of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and looks forward to constructing its own building on a 21-acre land parcel at the corner of High Pass and Pitney Lane. Eleven members were received by profession of faith last year, and \$100,964 were given to support of the work of God through the Junction City church.

The church has established four priorities for the years ahead: 1) worship, 2) evangelism, 3) discipleship, and 4) shepherding. The well-attended services are vibrant with joyful music and helpful preaching. An insightful motto guides all ministries: "A caring church where Christ makes the difference."

"More than 70 have served in some official ministry this year."

# Pastor Explains the Spirit and Goals of the Oregon Plan

## **"I Was There for the Explosion"**

**I**t was over a barbecue dinner that I first learned about the "Oregon Plan."

It was a delicious barbecued beef dinner! It was an intriguing idea! I enjoyed both in a Kansas City restaurant with Kent Anderson and Paul Schwada, two key players in the beginning of this innovative plan for reaping the harvest.

During that dinner conversation, I listened with great interest to the ever-developing plan. The part of the plan given to me as we enjoyed the good barbecued beef revolved around gridding off the city of Eugene into geographical areas. Bible studies would be started in as many areas as possible with the hope that a preaching point could be established shortly thereafter. I learned later than this gridding plan was only one small portion of the Oregon Plan.

I moved to Oregon to become pastor of the Hillsboro church in February of 1979, just before "the explosion." It was during the district assembly of 1979 in Bend that this explosion happened, with 23 prospective planters indicating their desire to come to Oregon. The next few months would reveal in a very dramatic way how the plan on paper would be actually implemented.

The 1979 assembly is a clear memory. The choir loft full of planter fam-

**The recruitment  
of these  
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no people, and  
no buildings.**

ilies, who had responded to an invitation to come to Oregon and help reap the harvest, made a lasting impression. A pioneer spirit of sacrifice permeated the assembly.

The recruitment of these prospective planters was done on the basis of no financial support, no people, and no buildings. The resulting enthusiasm was contagious. The assembly responded to this unselfish display of dedication with a spontaneous offering which enabled the district to provide moving costs, health insurance, and some support for housing and food. A number of "item" gifts were also given, such as cars, tires, food, and clothing.

The major goal of the Oregon Plan was that every community in Oregon

with a population of 800 or more have a holiness witness. To accomplish this goal, the Oregon Plan called for churches to be developed in stages. These stages were 1) Bible study, 2) preaching point, 3) chapel, 4) and fully organized church. Each plant was to be evaluated for progression from one stage to another as they were able to demonstrate their ability to be **self-supporting** (defined as that particular body wished to define it; i.e., bi-vocational pastor who held a full-time secular job, part-time secular employment, supported by being self-employed, or fully paid by the plant), **self-governing** (that there be enough adults to form a board), and **self-perpetuating** (that they demonstrate the ability to win the lost and add them to the church).

Shortly after this epic district assembly, I was appointed to the district Church Growth Committee, from which came the original Oregon Plan. In those initial days following the assembly, the committee scrambled to accommodate the surprising abundance of prospective planters and their families. We were thrilled at the number of families who responded, but a little unprepared for them as they came on the district.

Being new to the district and not having the history of the development of the plan, I was fascinated with the

# Oregon Plan in Review

interest in the evangelistic mission of the church created by this bold attempt. Because of the willing sacrifice of the original wave of church planters, a renewal of evangelistic fervor struck almost every church on the district. I am convinced that the entire district benefited because the Oregon Plan forced every local church to examine its individual success rate in reaching unsaved people.

**The major goal of the Oregon Plan was that every community in Oregon with a population of 800 or more have a holiness witness.**

A great deal of energy was expended in the planting of new churches. This energy resulted in more people joining the church by profession of faith than any other method that had been tried to that time. The number of new converts in the plants were readily visible. The renewed evangelistic commitment on the part of the existing church was not as easily measurable.

Since the initial launching of the plan in 1979, the Church Growth Committee has grappled with a number of difficult issues. For example, the committee grappled intently with how to balance the emphasis on church planting against the need to assist the existing churches in their growth pat-

**Because of the willing sacrifice of the original wave of church planters, a renewal of evangelistic fervor struck almost every church on the district.**

terns. Several new and helpful ideas were implemented.

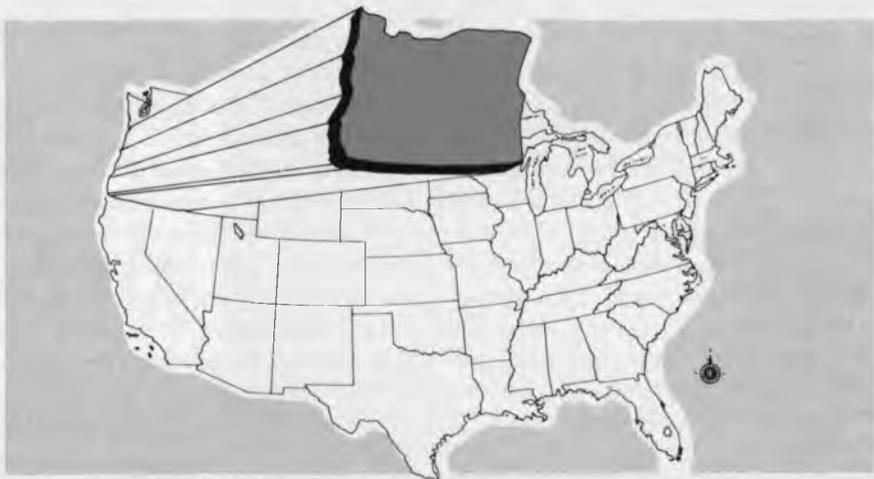
We also began to realize the plants would reach a certain size due to the initial enthusiasm, but that most tended to plateau quickly. There was a need to help these plants develop beyond the planting plateau.

We also looked carefully at where we might have failed to give adequate moral support to planters and their families and were greatly concerned at the apparent casualties that sometimes happened in the process. This led to finding better ways to help planters understand their gifts before they came to the district. We developed a screening process with the cooperation of some Bible college personnel and others. After students demonstrated planter gifts, they were interviewed as prospects for the District Church Planter Scholarships, which

helped with their tuition in exchange for a commitment to give time to the district in church planting following graduation.

In my opinion, the Oregon Plan should be labeled successful. If one of the major tasks of the church is to win the lost and bring the unchurched into her fellowship, then church planting in almost any format should be called successful. There might have been a bit of "building our wagon as we rode in it," but the re-evaluation of basic Kingdom essentials by the entire district as a result of the church planting direction of the Oregon Plan had a very positive overall effect. May the spirit of the doctrine of the harvest continue to motivate every church.

—by Ernest McNaught, pastor  
Hillsboro, Oregon



# The Oregon Plan Moves Into the '90s

## Winning People Is Primary Objective of Church Planting

**A**n interesting event took place at Universal Studios in California while they were producing a TV program. It was all dark in the studio . . . the cameras were rolling . . . the actors were doing their craft . . . when suddenly the door opened, flashing the room with outside sunshine and thereby ruining the film. In burst a fledgling young actor.

posed to be doing" comes from central casting . . . THE LORD OF THE CHURCH. It is our firm conviction that our primary objective is winning men and women to Jesus. New churches have been and will continue to be planted as a result of that objective.

However, a church will never exist if we, like the young man above, forget who we are and what we are to

●**Redmond** Our church in Redmond, planted in 1979, is healthy today due, in part, to Doyle and Patti Scroggins. Doyle and Patti were living life on the fast track going nowhere up until five years ago. Involved in a local rock 'n' roll band in central Oregon, they were beginning to experience the emptiness that accompanies a life lived without God. Realizing that their marriage and family were in desperate need of help, they began thinking seriously about God. Patti remembered that she had attended a Nazarene Sunday school as a child and the two of them decided to visit the local Nazarene church the next Sunday. The following Monday, the pastor visited them in their home and, before he left that day, he had the thrill of introducing Doyle and Patti to Jesus. Pastor Hank Allmand says that today they are a vital and vibrant part of the Redmond church. They and their three teenage children, Jodi, Stacy and Jason, are all involved in the ministry of the church.

●**Florence** Dan Bones, a single young adult man on the Oregon Coast, was hopelessly caught up in the drug and alcohol scene that so permeates our society today. But Dan became the target of the loving and ceaseless prayer of the Florence Church of the Nazarene. Having been planted in 1981 and currently pastored by Mike Arnold, this church has always believed in the double-barreled power of prayer and outreach. Pastor Arnold challenged his people to begin praying for unsaved relatives. Dan's sister-in-law, Kathy, began to do just that.

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**It is our firm conviction  
that our primary objective  
is winning men and women to Jesus.**

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He said, "Sir, I'm to be in this scene." The director turned and said, "Who are you?" The young man responded by giving his name. "No," said the director, "I don't mean that . . . I don't want to know your name . . . I want to know what part you are to play!" The young man said, "Well, sir, I don't know." Then the director said the most interesting thing: "YOUNG MAN, YOU HAD BETTER GO TO CENTRAL CASTING AND FIND OUT WHO YOU ARE . . . AND WHAT YOU ARE SUPPOSED TO DO HERE!"

When writing of the continuing challenge that drives the Oregon Plan into the future, I am reminded of the above story. We on the Oregon Pacific District feel that the answer to "who we are" and "what we are sup-

posed to be doing. Our harvest field, western Oregon, has more winnable people than ever before. But, as the late Donald McGavran often said, "It is possible to come out of a ripe field empty-handed." Therefore, we are forever reminding ourselves that our primary task is winning men and women to Jesus. If we fail at this point, we will ultimately fail at the resulting objective of planting new churches.

The Oregon Plan is continuing into the 1990s because people who have been won to Jesus are now involved in winning others to Jesus. Samuel Gordon said, "The way from God to a human heart is through another human heart." We are finding examples of that truth lived out all over western Oregon.

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## The Oregon Plan continues — one person at a time coming to Jesus.

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Before too long, Dan accepted the invitation to attend Sunday service. It was at the conclusion of one of those services, after having felt the persistent tug of the Savior, that Dan invited Jesus into his life. Today, Dan is leading the church's Young Adult Ministry, is actively involved in the Men's Ministry, and this past summer took a week of vacation to work in the district's summer Kids' Camp. Pastor Mike says of Dan, "He's got an unusual hunger for the Word of God."

● **Lakeview** In 1980, the Lakeview Church of the Nazarene was planted. Today, Craig Clause is actively walking with Jesus because of the church's loving, caring outreach ministry. Craig is well known in this small southern Oregon community as the kid most likely to cause trouble. He had grown up in Lakeview, and everyone knew Craig and knew that he could get along with no one. Constantly in trouble, he was a "biker" who cared about nothing and no one but himself. However, in God's perfect timing, Pastor Larry Owens moved to the Lakeview Church of the Nazarene. Pastor Larry is an "ex-biker" himself and God used his special sensitivity to reach out to this young man and his family. Today, Craig is a part of the Lakeview Church of the Nazarene. Craig's wife, Jackie, says, "Craig is a completely different individual since he met Jesus."

The Oregon Plan continues — one person at a time coming to Jesus. Churches are being planted in the large urban population of Portland, in small rural towns, and in large cities throughout western Oregon. The Ore-

gon Plan is alive and well because of people . . . committed people. Our greatest resource is people — individuals who are wholly committed to God and are unreservedly available to be used by Him in western Oregon. In her book *Call to Commitment*, Elizabeth O'Conner states this truth so well:

"Whenever we sit down to ask ourselves what is wrong or why it is that a project with so much potential cannot get off the ground, the answer is always that lack of inspired people who can channel to others the life of God. And always, where there is renewal and growth in the church . . . one finds

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**"I only wish  
we had  
joined hands  
sooner."**

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a person with fire burning in his bones who can say with Jesus, 'I came, not to be ministered unto, but to minister.'"

Churches are being planted all over western Oregon . . . 24 have been organized in the last ten years. Those churches have been planted and are continuing to thrive because committed pastors and laypersons have never lost sight of the primary objective of the Oregon Plan: **WINNING MEN AND WOMEN TO JESUS.**

*Life Magazine* once released a photo story about a midwestern farmer and his family who lived next to a massive wheat field. The first photo showed the farmer and his wife panic-stricken as they realized their young son was missing — nowhere to be found near the security and safety of the farm house.

The second photo indicated that the news of the missing boy had spread to the community. Neighbors had come to help search for the boy. The photo showed the confusion and distress of the people as they wandered with no direction, seeking to find the lost lad.

The third photo showed that someone had taken leadership after hours of fruitless searching. The small rural community had been organized into a human chain, each person locking hands with another and together sweeping up and down the rows of tall, ripe wheat. Each person assumed responsibility for the area immediately in front and to each side of him. They now had a plan in searching for the boy.

The last photo expressed heartbreak and sorrow. The father was pictured kneeling over the body of his son as those in the search party looked on in sad disbelief. Yes, they found the boy, but their effort in partnership occurred too late. He had died from exposure.

The only words in this photo feature were those of the grieving father as he looked up at the others. "I only wish we had joined hands sooner."

The Oregon Plan continues to be effective today because hundreds of pastors and laypersons have joined hands and have entered the harvest field to work together toward our primary objective: **WINNING MEN AND WOMEN TO JESUS!**

—by David Leavenworth,  
assistant to the superintendent,  
Oregon Pacific District

# AN OREGON PLAN CHURCH PLANT

Creswell Church — Pastor Ron Halvorson

32 Members • 35 Worship Attendance • Organized 1985

Pastor Ron Halvorson loves to be a pastor and loves to build. As a licensed general contractor, he adjusts time between ministry and construction as spiritual needs of his congregation require and financial needs of his family demand. Halvorson thinks his bivocational responsibilities help church members feel a deeper commitment to the details of ministry and allow him to understand better "how the real world functions."

Creswell Church was started by Halvorson shortly after he graduated from Nazarene Bible College in 1983. At first, the church met in a home, then moved to the VFW Hall, and now worships in the high school. Creswell is a small town, population 1895, where most of the people commute to work in Eugene, Oregon. More than half of the original charter members are still in the church.

In May 1986, Halvorson left to serve on another district, but felt constrained to accept the call to return in May 1989. The pastor says he is grateful for the opportunity of serving the second time around to help make the dream into a reality. At present, the Creswell congregation is constructing a church on a two-acre site, now at the drywall stage, which they hope to finish debt-free.



Ron and Debby Halvorson

"I believe we can have 200 in attendance in five years."

# AN OREGON PLAN CHURCH PLANT

Crow-Applegate Church — Pastor Terry Thompson

49 Members • 67 Worship Attendance • Organized 1980



Kathy and Terry Thompson

"At 29, after a series of traumatic problems, I came to grips with the fact that I had never given myself completely to God. I surrendered all in my pickup truck as I was driving alone in Eastern Oregon."

Pastor Terry Thompson, in spite of a hereditary hearing handicap, leads the Crow-Applegate Church near Eugene.

To supplement his income, he teaches instrumental music in the local school district, where the eight-member band has swollen to 37. He is the only hearing-impaired band teacher in Oregon — and maybe in the nation.

After ten years of teaching, he studied at Nazarene Theological Seminary and graduated in 1984. That same year, Terry and Kathy Thompson began their pastoral service at Crow-Applegate.

Now the church has an annual worship attendance of 67; only seven attended the first service. This congregation, which meets in a Grange Hall, has accumulated \$30,000 toward funding a church site.

"Visibility at school makes the community aware of our church."



## Take an Active Role in Kingdom Building

# ALABASTER

**O**ne hundred percent of all monies given to the Alabaster fund is used in the building of churches, schools, hospitals and clinics, missionaries' and national leaders' homes, as well as the purchase of land on

which these buildings stand. Work and Witness and Alabaster function together in some world areas, with Alabaster buying the land, and sometimes providing the foundation, for buildings finished by Work and Witness teams.

## AWARD OF EXCELLENCE

To be given in your District NWMS Convention to **churches** that overpay General Budget by either **3 percent or a minimum of \$1,000.**

Studies show that growing churches engage in positive reinforcement. The Nazarene World Mission Society wants to be generous in its thanks.

We praise God and affirm those who "also excel in this grace of giving."

(2 Cor. 8:7)

# AN EVANGELIST'S CONTRACT WITH GOD

## COUNTRY SINGER LEAVES BIG-TIME

**M**y middle name should have been "Kinigo" because, like most little boys, I didn't want my daddy and his tank-like '36 Buick to leave the premises without me. I was at his heels or chasing the car pleading, "Kin I go? Kinigo?"

But one unfortunate day when I was two years old, my father jumped into the car and, not hearing the familiar "Kinigo," assumed that he would get away without me this time — but he was wrong.

The car knocked me down as he backed out. As I tried to crawl out, my head was run over by the front wheel. My mother insists it had nothing to do with their having eleven children, that my father was a right-eous man and it was all an accident!

The tire went right up the side of my head and skidded off the top, taking my scalp with it. My father rushed me to the hospital, but it looked as though I had said my last "Kinigo." The doctor said, "He won't make it through the night. There's too much damage. Half his scalp is gone."

My Christian father answered, "Sir, you do the best you can, and I'll go to the Great Physician. With the two of you working together, my son's going to make it."

**In the dark of the night**, Dad went to the pastor's house and roused him from his bed to pray. The pastor called the board members and together they had an all-night prayer meeting on my behalf.

For three days I was in a coma, under intensive care. The nurses kept a vigilant check every 15 minutes. Actually, they were coming in to see if I was dead yet. My head had swollen like an over-filled balloon, and each time they'd be surprised to find that I was still alive.

On the third day, they did their regular check at 7:15 p.m. Everything



was the same. I was barely alive. At 7:30 they came back and, to their amazement, my head had returned to normal size, the bandages falling loosely around it. I had come out of the coma. God had performed the first of several miracles in my life.

When I was nine years old, my father's crippling arthritis forced him to sell his farm in Michigan and move to sunny Arizona. It was 118 degrees when we arrived there, and I thought my dad had surely made a wrong turn somewhere — but that hot sun somehow cooked the arthritis right out of his body. In a year's time, he had thrown away his canes and played on the church's softball team. For one year, he enjoyed himself.

Dad was planning to quit his job and buy a farm, but before he could implement his plans he was critically

injured at work and died the next day, leaving Mother with seven boys to raise. Fortunately for Mom, not all her boys had their heads run over. This one gave trouble enough. How she kept seven strapping hulks fed and clothed on the meager \$200-a-month insurance I'll never know, but I soon stood 6 feet, 3½ inches in spite of everything.

I went to Coolidge High School in Arizona, 60 miles from anywhere, out in the middle of the desert. I was probably the most holey boy in that school. I had holey shoes, holey Levis, and holey shirts. The problem with being tall was that when Mom bought new jeans for the oldest boy, by the time they got to me, I had grown so that the holes my brothers wore at the knees became high-thigh holes for me. It was embarrassing enough to have holes at the knees, but holes at the thighs — oh, my!

However, holes were the least of my problems in high school. I can laugh now — but I wasn't laughing much then. I had problems! The worst was that I couldn't talk.

I had very few dates in high school because by the time I asked a girl to g-g, g-g-g-go, g-g-g-go, g-go, g-go, it was time to take her home.

**Mother wanted to help me**, so she said, "Honey, I think if you took drama it would help you."

"Okay, I'll tttttake drama, Mom. Nnnnnno p-p-problem."

It was the drama teacher's first year at Coolidge. She was standing at the door greeting her new students when I walked up to her and said, "H-h-h-h-hi, I want to tttttake, I want to tttttake ppppppp ddddrama."

She wiped her glasses, stared at me, and said, "Young man, anyone who takes drama has to be in one high school play or I will flunk him." She thought that would scare me away,

## EVANGELIST'S CONTRACT WITH GOD



but I've been run over by a Buick and I don't scare easily.

**"Thatttt's okay. I'll bbbbbe in one,"** and I walked away.

I knew she was thinking "That kid's got a problem," but after the third day, she realized that she had the problem. She loved drama, especially love stories. She tried to find a part for me in a high school play, but if she gave me a half-decent part, it would tttttake th-th-th-three hours to do it. So she made up a part for me; it had three words in it. Now, if I was going to star, I had better do it quickly. But the three words she gave me were "What about Buderdeen?"

**Now, you don't give a guy** who stutters a word like Buderdeen. He'll kill it. I took those three words home and memorized them overnight, just like that. Come time for the play, half the town turns out. All through it, I'm waiting for my one-liner. I will never forget the moment I walked onto that stage with five other guys. They had big parts; I was waiting for my one-liner. The plot had thickened and, when my part came, it was supposed to be serious. I said, "What about B-ddddddd, what about Bb-ddddddd, B-b-ddddddd," and the curtain was coming down. I never got the third word out.

The teacher came out and said, "You've ruined the play."

"Ma'am," I said, "it's the comedy of the year. They're holding their sides laughing out there." Well, she had the audacity to ask me not to take the second semester, anyway.

The second problem was that when the car ran over my head, it messed up my face. It also messed up my left eye so that it wanders. Do you know how embarrassing it is in high school to look at a girl and ask her for a date, and have the girl next to her accept? That's embarrassing.

**I could hardly wait** to drive a car. I was 16 when I begged my brother, "Just let me drive it by myself, just this once." He warned me to be careful and gave me the keys. Two blocks down, I had a head-on collision. I was so mad at that guy that I jumped out of the car and said, "Why don't you watch where you're going?"

"Why don't you go where you're looking, fellow?" he said.

Another problem was that when Mother gave me a haircut, big, old scars showed up on my head. In those days, I got only two haircuts a year (whether I needed them or not), but those G.I. cuts left a lot of skin. At school, the kids got their jollies making fun of me: "Hey, scar-head," they

would say. Or, "Hey, ddddd — Jimmy. Hey, if you're going to talk to me, look at me."

All these problems caused me to try very hard to be accepted. I learned that if I couldn't do it any other way, I could make people laugh. Things began to take a turn for me when I invited my friend, Dwayne Eddie, home with me to play music. He played guitar and I played guitar. Dwayne became famous and was known as "Mr. Twang Guitar Eddie," but while we were both unknowns in high school, we were Dwayne Eddie and Jimmy Delbridge.

**We practiced together** every chance we got, and finally he said, "Hey, Jimmy, beings how I play the guitar better than you, y'know, why don't you play the piano?"

"What are you, some kind of a nut?" I said. "I don't play piano."

"Well, how did you learn guitar?"

"All by myself. I just picked it up and found some chords and I played."

"Well, then, play the piano the same way."

Never one to turn down a challenge, I finally found three chords on the piano. I got up every morning at 7:15 and, dodging tennis shoes and whatever my brothers threw at me, I sang every song I knew, in the same key. Then I'd come home from school at noon and play some more. My brothers ate and I played piano. I got very skinny through high school.





One day Dwayne said, "I believe we're gettin' good enough to go to the Coolidge radio station and audition."

"Hey, man," I said, "that's big time. That must be a five-watt station."

"Well," he said, "we have a 50/50 chance."

"How do you figger?"

"They can say yes or no — 50/50. That's not bad odds, y'know."

**You'd never guess** who the disc jockey was when we went to audition — Lee Hazelwood. He wrote "These Boots Are Made for Walkin'" for Nancy Sinatra and "Going to Jackson," sung by Johnny Cash and his wife — No. 1 on *Your Hit Parade*. He wrote a song for Dean Martin called "Going to Houston (hic), Houston (hic), Houston." Eventually, Hazelwood would help me make my first hit record.

I worked hard at being an entertainer because I had learned that was one way to gain acceptance. Dwayne and I went through a lot of antics, and when we got through auditioning, Hazelwood said, "You guys are weird, but we want something different, and you guys are different," so he put us on the air.

**KCKY 1150** was the only radio station in Coolidge. I'll never forget dragging Main Street in Dwayne's dad's car during that 15-minute show, waving at the kids who had KCKY blaring over their car radios. "I'm going to make these people in Coolidge real proud of me," I vowed. However, after my first hit record was out, I made a trip home and told them I was going to travel with Johnny Cash, and it was like, "Who cares?" I tried so hard to please my friends, and I found out they didn't care much.

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**"I was a  
country singer,  
but they gave me  
a rock 'n' roll song."**

---

Mom had always made us go to church three times a week — no excuses. I told her, "I just don't think I need to be in church as often as you go, and I might not be going — depends on how I feel."

"Fine," she said. "Where will you be living? If you aren't going to church with me, then you split out of here and get your own apartment, pay your own utilities, buy your own food and clothes, and do your own washing and ironing." I wasn't dumb. I stayed.

By the time I was 19, I struck out on my own because my schedule was getting heavier as I became well known. I was on four TV channels in one week, and I had made some recordings with Rev Records, a small company in Arizona. The record had hardly made the stands when someone called me one night at the nightclub where I was singing and said, "Jimmy Dell?"

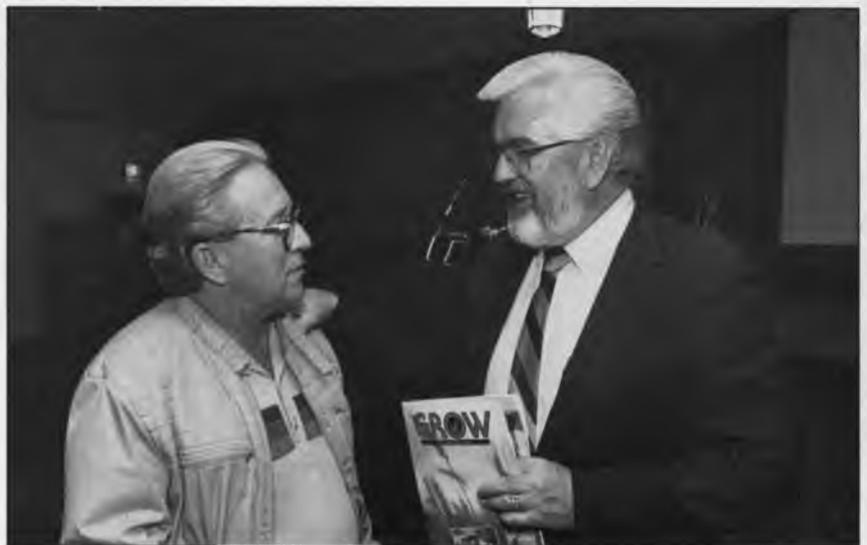
"No, sir," I said, "my name is Jimmy Delbridge — D-E-L-B-R-I-D-G-E."

"It's not anymore," he said. "This is Steve Schultz, owner of RCA Victor Recording Company, the biggest in the world. We just paid \$15,000 for your contract today and went to court and changed your name to Jimmy Dell. Okay?"

"Sir for \$15,000, you can call me Harvey Badbreath and I won't care," I said.

I was a country singer, but they gave me a rock 'n' roll song for my first record. It was the stupidest thing I ever heard — "Teeny Weeny, I love you, yeah. Teeny Weeny, love me, too, uh-huh" — with a lot of noise, music, hollering and screaming, and hand-clapping in the background. The stupid thing sold 300,000 copies the first six weeks. It was after that that I went on tour with Johnny Cash and guys like Paul Anka, the Everly Brothers, Frankie Avalon, and Fabian.

**Even though I had left God** out of my life, I never got into drugs or alcohol. I spent ten years in bars and nightclubs, six nights a week, and I don't know what beer tastes like. I



## EVANGELIST'S CONTRACT WITH GOD

always felt if it took alcohol or drugs to make you feel like somebody, you weren't anybody in the first place. I'd promised my mother I wouldn't drink or take drugs. I loved my mother, and I kept my promise.

**I met Judy at a bar** one night. I thought she was pretty, so I danced with her. We went together for about six months and I asked her to marry me. She accepted, so I took her home to meet my family. That was a mistake — or so it seemed then.



"Honey, I can't marry you," she said on the way back. "Your family — they're nuts! All they talk about is 'Oh, how I love Jesus. God is so good. It's so wonderful to have Jesus.' They're sick!"

When I explained that they were Christians, she insisted she was one, too, but that she didn't go around all day long saying how much she loved God. She wasn't going to marry me if I was going to be like them. We argued for a while about what a Christian is, then I promised her if she'd marry me, I'd never serve God. I had been ten years out of the church and, without my realizing it, sin had taken control of my life.

"Okay, I'll marry you on those grounds," she said, "but if you become a religious nut, I'm going to divorce you."

Things went fairly well for a while. I bought her expensive clothes because I wanted her to know she had married somebody important. I was a phony. They teach you to be a phony in show business.

We had been married less than a year when I was driving down the road one day, singing and having a good time. Suddenly I was singing, "Amazing grace, how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me. I once was lost, but now I'm found, was blind, but now I see." Big old tears were running down my cheeks.

I slapped my face, wiped my tears, and tried to concentrate on some of my rock 'n' roll songs.

All of a sudden, there was "Amaz-

ing Grace" again, and tears gushing like a waterfall. I couldn't see, so I pulled off the road. I was shaking like a cement mixer. It seemed like somebody opened the door and came in and sat beside me. My heart was going boom, boom, boom.

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### "Oh, God, save Jimmy."

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I'd been in church enough to know that I couldn't run from the Holy Spirit. What I didn't know was that my family had been gathering at the church nearly every Saturday night for nine years, about a dozen of them, praying, "Oh, God, save Jimmy."

God said to me, "Jimmy Dell, I'm sick of your sin. I'm tired of your using my name as your favorite cuss-word. I'm sick and tired of your mak-

ing jokes about me and the cross in your nightclubs, thinking you're so smart. Let me tell you something, Jimmy Dell — you'll never do that again. You're rotten to the core, but I love you, and I want to forgive you."

"God, I can't get saved," I said. "My wife will leave me. You know that."

"I'll take care of Judy."

There's no use trying to con God, so I finally asked Him to give me a week because my brother was coming from the West Coast to preach in our church in Coolidge. I promised God I'd be there.

When I got inside, I made up my mind that I wasn't going to the altar under my brother's preaching. I put my coat on during the singing of "Just As I Am," and God said, "Jimmy Dell, I have chosen tonight, July 19, 1964, for your salvation."

"What about your wife?" the devil asked. "She'll leave you, and you worked ten years to get where you are. You'll never see that much money if you get saved. You'll starve to death..." He was really making a strong case against my salvation.

"**You want a contract?**" God asked. "I'll give you a contract — eternal life."

I looked at my wife. She saw the tears and threatened, "You go to that altar and I'll leave you so fast it'll make your head swim!" But I went — and she left me.

I prayed for my wife for three years before she, too, was saved. Then God called me to preach. Me! "God, I can't preach; I can't even talk. You know how I stutter. I'll sing for you, but I can't preach."

"Jimmy, I'll take care of that," He said, and the first time I stood behind the pulpit, He touched my tongue. The problem was gone!

I signed that contract with God. I'm keeping my part. I've been on the road for Jesus for 20 years now as a registered evangelist and song evangelist in the Church of the Nazarene. I know this contract won't run out. God said it was for eternity. He'll keep His part — He's never broken a contract.

—by Jimmy Dell  
with Nina Beagle

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An adequate budget for evangelism at the beginning of each church year is imperative for each congregation.  
 A revival savings account is useful in building toward adequate support for the evangelist.

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**God Helps Nazarenes Plant New Works Everywhere**

# NEW WORKS VICTORY REPORT



**TRINITY COMMUNITY CHURCH  
MERGES WITH CHURCH OF THE  
NAZARENE:**

**Brentwood Trinity Church of the Nazarene** (Tennessee District) was organized February 11, 1990, with 49 members. Forty-one persons joined by profession of faith. District Superintendent W. Talmadge Johnson reports, "Brentwood Trinity Church came into being by providential developments which led to the union of Trinity Community Church with the Church of the Nazarene. Trinity was an independent church led by David Erickson and a group of laymen who were primarily won through its ministry in the Brentwood community. The union was effected following 2½ months of meaningful dialogue, study of the *Manual*, and unanimous actions by the Tennessee District Advisory Board and the Trinity Community Church Board. The organizational meeting was attended by 80 persons. **Rev. David C. Erickson** was named pastor of the newly formed church.

**FIRST TAMIL-SPEAKING CON-  
GREGATION IN THE WESTERN  
HEMISPHERE ORGANIZED:**

**Tamil Church of the Nazarene** (Canada Quebec) was organized in Montreal on March 12, 1989. District Superintendent Harry A. Rich reports, "**Rev. Yeghia Hajian** attended their prayer meetings and Bible studies. At the appropriate moment, they asked him to be their pastor, although he is Armenian/English speaking. One of the group is the associate pastor until we find a regular Tamil-speaking preacher. The group started with twelve charter members." Tamil is the language of the Dravidian people of Southern India and Ceylon that is spoken in India from Madras southward and in Ceylon on the north and east coasts.

**CHURCH STARTS WITH NOTHING  
IN MOORE, OKLAHOMA:**

**Church on the Hill Church of the Nazarene** (Southeast Oklahoma District) was organized with 27 members on September 10, 1989. **Pastor Harold Blankenship** reports, "We started with nothing — no names, no members, no meeting place. We visited door-to-door, advertised, started in homes, and later worshiped in a converted garage. We are now meeting in a day-care center. We offer a full line of services. From the beginning, we have given 10% for world mission. Our people are warm, loving, caring, compassionate — a friendly fellowship.

**INDO-PAKISTANI CHURCH  
ORGANIZED AT LAMB'S IN  
MANHATTAN:**

On December 18, 1989, the **Manhattan Indo-Pak Church of the Nazarene** (New York District) was organized with a membership of 22 in a meeting room at the Manhattan Lamb's Church of the

Nazarene. **Pastor Qamar Bhatti** reports, "The Lord is moving and there is a tremendous awakening here. Many people are coming. A church choir has been organized. The congregation is enthusiastic and spiritual."

**HARRISON CHURCH WORSHIPS IN STORE BUILDING:** Harrison Church of the Nazarene (West Virginia North District), sponsored by the district and area churches, was organized on November 5, 1989, with 26 charter members. The church meets in a store building. The first services were started as a Bible study in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Roger Cole, members of St. Marys church, on May 24, 1987. Later, a home mission revival was held by Rev. Guy Wright in the summer of 1988. Regular services as a church-type mission started on July 24, 1988. **Rev. Randy Dillon** serves as pastor.

**NEW CHURCH FOCUSES ON THE POOR:** New Promise Church of the Nazarene (Alabama North) was organized with 15 members on December 17, 1989. **Pastor Terry Graham** shares the vision, "Our church was formed out of a need for a church with ties toward the youth and poor of this community. Two families from the Vernon church started a satellite church which grew to 15 members. We are aiming at the poor people like the first Nazarenes did early in this century. Pray that we may exercise our faith to its full potential."

**TORRANCE CHINESE CHURCH GROWS OUT OF BIBLE STUDY:** Torrance Chinese Church (Anaheim District) was organized with 27 charter members on November 19, 1989. The foundation for the new

church started as a Bible class in October 1988 with seven persons in attendance. **Pastor Charlie Yam** is the pastor. The Torrance Community Church provides all facilities and babysitting.

**MONTREAL CHURCH OPENS WITH 70 IN ATTENDANCE:** Grace Church (Canada Quebec) was organized April 29, 1990, with 38 charter members. Now, the church meets in Laurentide Elementary School, having started in the pastor's home. District Superintendent Harry A. Rich reports, "This church opened with an outstanding public-relationship program and a topnotch advertising blitz was conducted. The church started with 70 and attendance is staying at that level." **Rev. Carlton Harvey** serves as the church planting pastor of this new work.

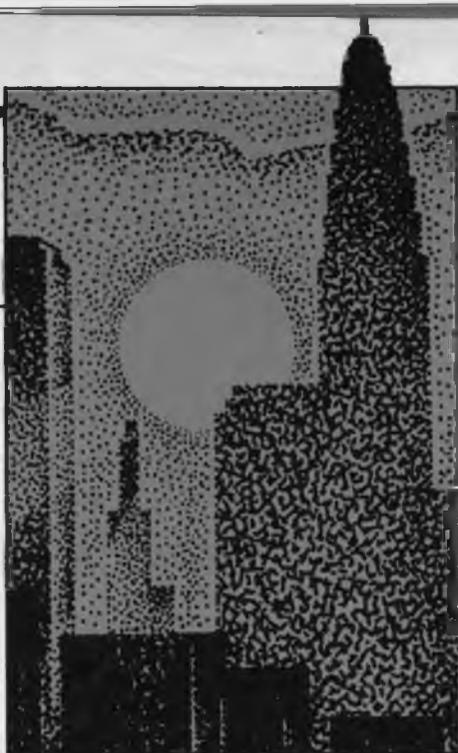
**EIGHT PROSPECTIVE CITIES IDENTIFIED FOR ARMENIAN CHURCHES:** North Hollywood Armenian Bible Church of the Nazarene (Los Angeles District) was organized April 22, 1990, as a church planting ministry of the Armenian Bible College — an extension of Naza-

rene Bible College at Colorado Springs. **Dr. Yeghia Babikian**, director of the Bible college extension, serves as founding pastor. Attendance has reached 90, with a constituency of 170.

Dr. Babikian reports, "A spirit of brotherhood, love, and fellowship prevails at all age levels. The United States of America could not have welcomed these immigrants in a better way than by the Gospel of the Nazarene. The annals of Armenian history prove that the charter members of our church were renamed NAZARENES after their first Christian forefathers. In 451 A.D., 150 years after the Armenians accepted Christianity as their national religion, the Persians threatened to massacre the Armenians if they did not deny Christianity and accept the Mazdean heathen religion. The Persian Grand Vizier wrote to the Armenian leadership saying, 'Be it known to you that every man who dwells beneath the heavens and holds not the Mazdean religion is deaf and blind and is deceived by the devils of Ahrmen. . . . Do not believe your leaders, whom you call Nazarenes, for they are deceitful.'"

He continues, "Praise the Lord, God saved the Armenian Nazarene leaders of our nation. And today, the North Hollywood Armenian Bible Church of the Nazarene perpetuates the name and the spirit of their forefathers."

Seven other Southern California cities with the following characteristics have been identified as targets for Armenian congregations: 1) more than 200 Armenian congregations; 2) no Armenian church of any denomination, and 3) the present existence of an established Nazarene church.



# THRUST TO THE CITIES

## New Churches: Goals and Results

	GOALS	FOC	CTM	LBC	EBC	ESS	PP	CP	TOTALS
Chicago '86	30	15	0	3	0	0	0	0	18
Mexico City '87	100	11	9	0	0	0	17	19	56
New York '88	23	27	8	3	0	0	0	0	38
Los Angeles '88	30	17	8	11	2	0	0	0	38
Paris '89	10	0	5	1	0	0	0	0	6
Sao Paulo '89	30	15	36	0	85	0	0	21	157
Toronto '90	27	3	7	0	32	8	0	0	50
Seoul '91	70	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	2
San Francisco '92	37	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>357</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>365</b>

GOALS—Number of New Churches; FOC—Fully Organized Churches; CTM—Church-Type Missions; LBC—Language Bible Classes; EBC—Extension Bible Classes; ESS—Extension Sunday School; PP—Preaching Points; CP—Contact Points

—Report by Michael R. Estep

**Future Cities:**  
**Calcutta '93**  
**Houston '94**  
**Nairobi '95**

# Church Plant Receives 230 Members in Ten Years

## Junction City Ministers to 85 Families

Four generations  
have been forever impacted  
by Junction City Church.

**Church at Worship:** (Upper right): Worship team Member **Kay Becham** leads praise chorus; later, (lower left): **Flo Murkin, Jody Larson, Dennis Larson, and George Murkin** lead the Junction City Church in worship; as a result, (lower right): **worshippers** reach out to God and each other.



## Church Plant Receives 230 Members in Ten Years

**J**unction City church, only ten years old, ministers to 85 families in a community of 4,000 people. Last year, 11 persons were received by profession of faith; 230 new Nazarenes have joined during the church's brief history. At the tenth anniversary celebration, an amazing rippling effect of ministry was discovered; 90% of those who moved because of job transfers after joining the Junction City congregation have associated themselves with other Nazarene churches nearer their new homes.

Even with these moves, the church is still strong and growing stronger. At the 1990 district assembly, Pastor Harold Parry reported 124 members, 122 average worship attendance, and an income of \$100,964.

**Environment:** Junction City feels and looks like Small Town, U.S.A. The area population, whom the church considers to be its spiritual responsibility, is 12,000. Economic support for the city comes from two custom motorhome manufacturers, farming, and lumber. Many people are employed in nearby Eugene.

**Worship:** Free, spontaneous, and participative worship makes Junction City church an inspiring place to attend. This spirit of joyful adoration in the Sunday services has to be a key factor in the church's growth and attractiveness.

Rotating teams of four to six persons lead worship; 22 different singers and instrumentalists take part in this ministry over a three-month period. This program, intended to involve laity in leading worship, encourages and creates amazing variety. Sometimes more than one person leads congregational singing consisting of traditional hymns and worship choruses. Often special music is provided by the team. Pastor Parry trains all team members in the meaning and purpose of worship. The spin-off means everyone either leads worship or is closely associated with someone who does. All of this decreases spectatorship at worship.

**Community impact:** The powerful influence found in a smaller church cannot be overlooked when one gets acquainted with the Junction City story. The profession of faith record, as has been stated, is outstanding, and continued faithfulness of transfer members in other Nazarene churches is impressive.

But there is more. In the first year of its existence, Junction City gave four families to plant the nearby Harrisburg church. And in a community that has ten established churches, Junction City Nazarene, even without its facilities, is respected for its active attendance, aggressive ministry, and community involvement.

**Facilities:** Junction City church is



**Four Generations Impacted by Church:** (Upper right, front row): Flo Murkin, Beatrice Record, Jody Larson, and baby Alyssa; (back row): George Murkin and Dennis Larson. (Lower left): Flo Murkin teaches a children's Sunday school class. (Lower right): George Murkin teaches an adult Sunday school class in a home near the church.





**Web evangelism.** George and Flo Murkin are inspiring examples of web evangelism at its best. Soon after the church started in the pastor's home, Flo was invited by her young sister to attend the Church of the Nazarene.

Because of the ministry of the church, Flo soon renewed her faith. George, with childhood Salvation Army roots, later reestablished his relationship to Christ. Flo's sister and her husband, James and Ruth Kiscoan, were won. Another sister, Mary Lou Reed, is also actively involved in the life of the church.

Jody, Flo and George's daughter, was in military service when her parents began attending Junction City Church of the Nazarene. In response to advice from her parents, "Go to a Nazarene Church," she found a spiritual home among Nazarenes in Spokane. Later, she returned to Junction City, where she met and married Dennis Larson. Now Jody, Dennis, and baby daughter, Alyssa, are part of the Junction City church family.

Subsequently, Flo's mother, Beatrice Record, joined her family in this venture of faith. In ten years, four generations have been forever impacted by Junction City church, and three generations (Alyssa is a little young) are now involved in active service as board members, Sunday school teachers, greeters, worship team, and whatever else needs doing.

**Focus.** Pastor Harold Parry works hard to keep his church focused on the needs of people. His commitment to lay ministry shows in the worship team concept. His eagerness for balance can be seen in his call to a serious effort to be a worshiping, evangelizing, discipling and shepherding church. His interest in serving the whole person can be observed in the developing lay-pastor ministry, which shares the work of pastoral care with responsible leaders. And the church's long-term investment in ministry can be seen in their plans to construct facilities to house their growing ministry.

Every indicator points to the likely probability that the future of Junction City Church of the Nazarene will be even stronger than its victorious past. No one involved in planting the Junction City Church of the Nazarene could have dreamed of such far-reaching results.

living proof that a church can keep growing without owning facilities. Started in a home, this church later moved to a Grange Hall and now worships in a Seventh-day Adventist Church. Without their own building, these believers do ministry with one pastor and a secretary who works ten hours per week in rented office space. To keep growing, they take some Sunday school classes into homes each Sunday.

Last year, 22½ acres were purchased as a building site for their own facilities. Involved in a three-year capital funds campaign, the congregation contributed \$40,000 above its regular giving in the first year of the program. To provide additional financial resources, this property will be divided and some of it sold; the church expects to retain at least seven acres. Site preparation has already begun. A three-phase building program has been designed.



**Pastor and Mrs. Harold Parry** (upper left) serve as third pastor of Junction City Church. **Pastor Parry and Kathy Heckart** (lower left) lead worship team.





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INTEREST COMPOUNDED SEMIANNUALLY  
JUNE 30 AND DECEMBER 31

# FOCUS

## ON OUR NAZARENE STUDENTS!

### **WHAT A GROUP THEY WERE!**

More than 75 elected student leaders from our Nazarene colleges, universities, and seminary met this spring on the campus of ONU to FOCUS on their leadership role among their fellow students.

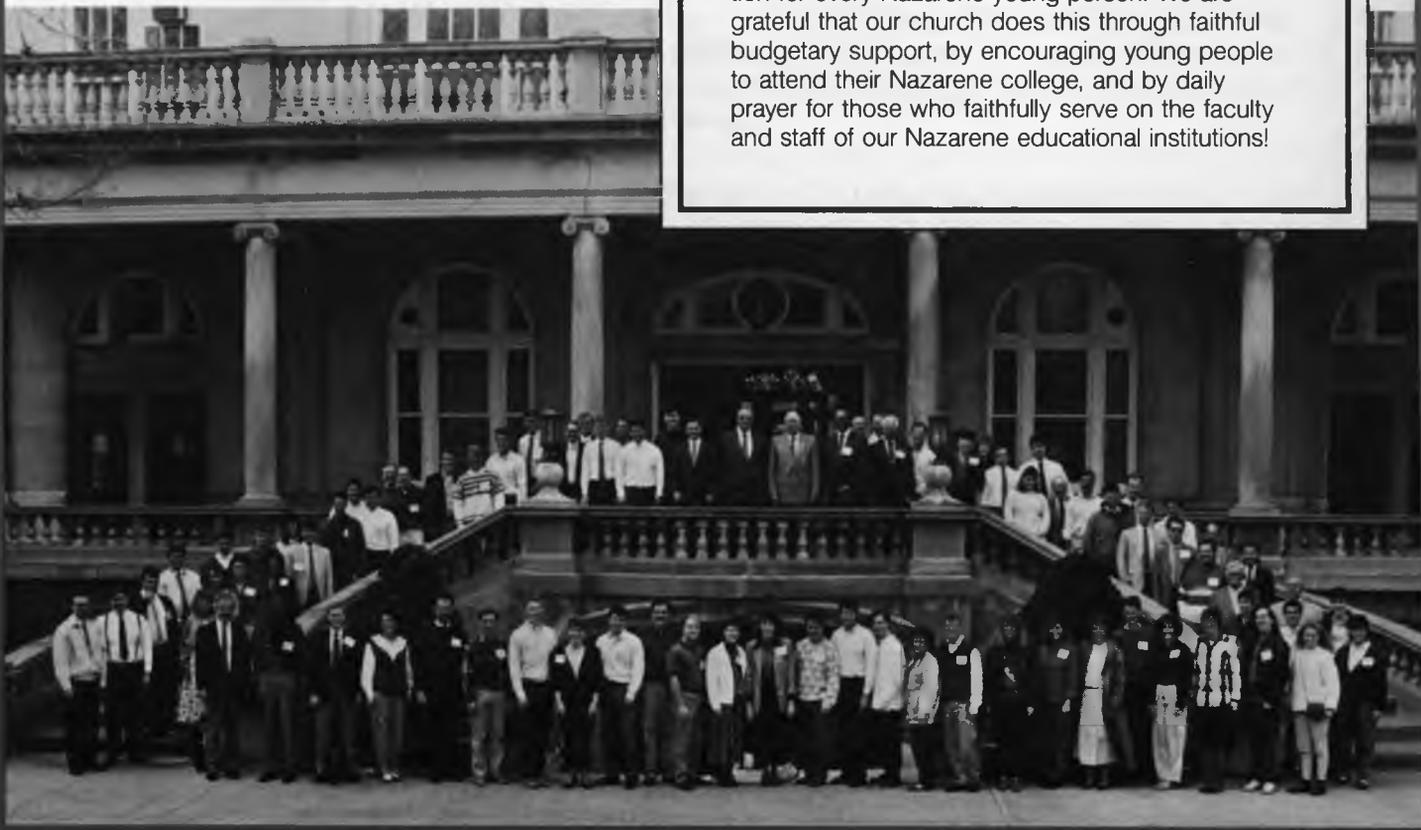
In preparation for the annual "delegate conference" a steering committee met at MANC. Prayerful but lively discussion centered around the selection of a proper theme for the conference. Finally it came into FOCUS—

### **DARE TO LEAD...AS SERVANTS!**

And so in April they met—to pray, to share testimonies of Christ's love, to plan campus "fast days" when students would forego their meals so that the money saved could be shared with others, and to FOCUS on topics like

- Leadership and Servanthood
- Servanthood and Humility
- Servanthood and Integrity
- Agape and Servanthood

And so, student leaders on all of our campuses this year are focusing on CHRISTLIKE SERVANTHOOD. Their FOCUS brings into FOCUS our need to FOCUS on providing a Nazarene college education for every Nazarene young person. We are grateful that our church does this through faithful budgetary support, by encouraging young people to attend their Nazarene college, and by daily prayer for those who faithfully serve on the faculty and staff of our Nazarene educational institutions!



1990-91 Nazarene student leaders pose at ONU during 1990 Nazarene Student Leaders' Conference

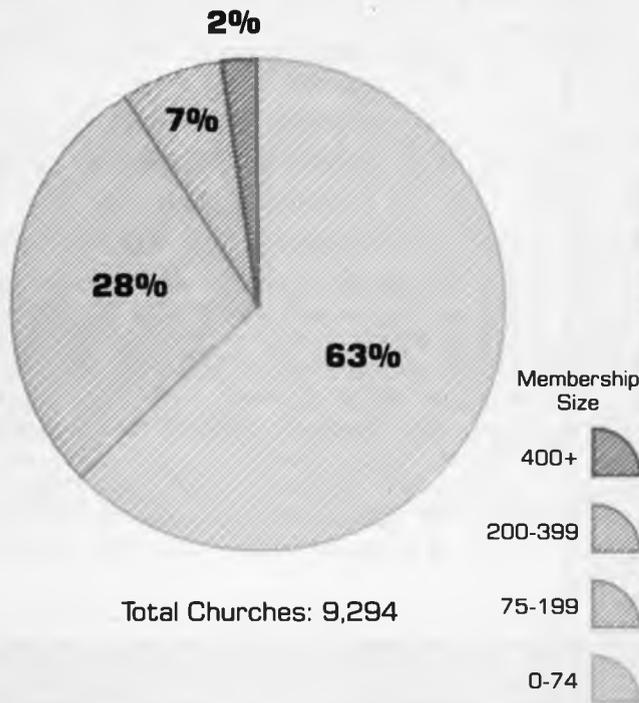
# DARE TO LEAD...AS SERVANTS!

**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 below shows the percentage of our churches in each size category.

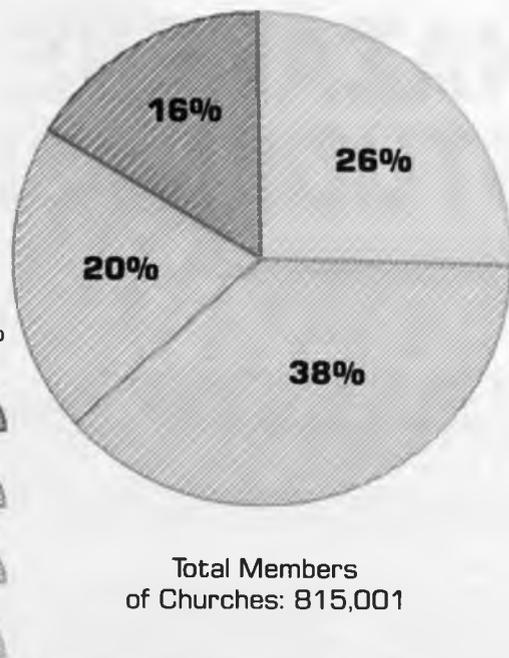
**NAZARENE CHURCHES BY SIZE  
WORLDWIDE  
1989**



**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 below shows the percentage of our members in each church size category.

**NAZARENE MEMBERS BY CHURCH SIZE  
WORLDWIDE  
1989**



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 helping 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.

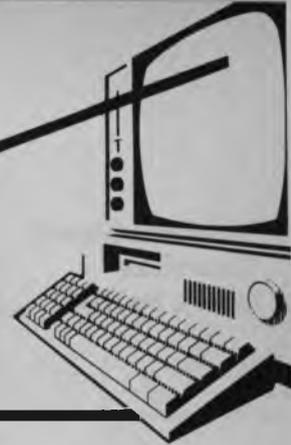
Rather than using statistics to prove a point, the Church Growth Research Center is trying to help us Nazarenes understand ourselves better. By looking at both sides of an issue, we can see the other person's point of view. Together, we can move forward to build God's kingdom.

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.

*May we help you?*

Contact the **Church Growth Research Center**, 6401 The Paseo, Kansas City, MO 64131

# RESEARCH AND TRENDS



Provided by Church Growth Research Center  
Dale E. Jones, Manager

## Birth Rates Up

Birth rates in the U.S. are beyond expectations . . . January 1989 government report gave the year 2002 as the first possible year for total births to exceed 4 million . . . but births this year will exceed that figure. Sign that adults are willing to invest themselves in a future generation . . . good news for society.

BUT materialistic emphasis can make it hard for parents to stick to their commitment . . . some calls are already being made to reestablish orphanages for children whose living parents are unable/unwilling to support them. **The church will need to provide practical helps** . . . training, counseling, day-cares, schools, recreational opportunities . . . as well as moral and spiritual support to families in the future.

## Immigrants Need Christ

Immigration to the U.S. is also up . . . **600,000 legally admitted in 1989** . . . 20% higher than projected. One-half were from Asia . . . one-third from Latin America. Churches in California and New York have best opportunities for reaching these newcomers.

Some speculation that Eastern Europe may provide next wave of immigrants . . . skilled workers facing economic dislocation may choose America. If so, expect good opportunities for ministry in traditional East European havens . . . cities of Northeast and Midwest . . . though growing cities elsewhere may get substantial numbers, too.

## Large Church Growth

50% increase in numbers of large Nazarene churches over the decade . . . 35 churches ran 500 or more in worship in 1980 . . . in 1989, 52 did so. In 1980, 7 congregations reported at least 1,000 in worship average . . . in 1989, 11. **Today, 10% of Nazarene worshipers are in congregations of 500 or more.** And half are in groups of at least 125.

## Small Church Realities

BUT most churches run well under 75 . . . Nazarenes, as well as Methodists, Southern Baptists, others. Means the majority of pastors lead small churches . . . but most members are in larger churches. **Calls for understanding between groups.** A program designed to help pastors should be designed with the small church in mind.

### **Medium Sized Churches Move to 200**

Good growth in medium-sized churches throughout U.S.A. 15 Nazarene churches in Canada and the U.S. have grown from less than 100 to over 150 since 1978 . . . not counting newly planted churches that have grown well. Some in growing states like California, Texas . . . but 2 in Ohio and Missouri . . . and 1 each in Indiana and Pennsylvania. Most in urban areas of 100,000 . . . but 2 or 3 are small-town churches. Most of the 15 had enough momentum to pass 200, as well . . . demonstrates importance of passing growth barriers quickly in order not to fall back to previous levels.

### **Profession of Faith**

Preliminary reports from Canada/U.S.A. districts show most professions of faith are among non-Nazarene households. **Some concern among researchers that much evangelical growth is children who've grown up in the faith . . .** an important means of growth, but not the quickest way to convert a lost world. Nazarene pastors were asked to report professions of faith by type . . . those who are children of current members and those who are not. Less than one-third of the professions are reported among non-adult children.

### **Inactive Nazarene Members**

Also newly reported . . . inactive members. Again, only preliminary data available at press time . . . but two-thirds of Canada/U.S.A. churches report some inactive members. Often as high as 25% of current members are on the inactive list. Compares with some other evangelical groups . . . Southern Baptists estimate up to half of their members are inactive.

### **New Reporting System Thanks**

When the Pastor's Report forms change, not all newly requested data has been kept during the previous year. Two-thirds of our pastors were able to answer these questions the first year . . . even better response rate than 1976, when we started tracking A.M. Worship Attendance. **Special thanks to pastors for their cooperation!**

# RESEARCH AND TRENDS



# Puzzled by Estate Planning



How many of the 25 words relating to your estate planning can you find? (Words may be horizontal, vertical, diagonal, backward, or forward.)

## We Have the Answers

Most of us like to solve puzzles. But planning your estate is no time to play games! We have an office staff of trained professionals and field representatives to help you get the right answers for your estate planning needs. So if you'd like to have one of our representatives visit your church, or if you'd like us to help solve your personal estate planning puzzle drop us a line or give us a call. We're here to serve you!

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Answers: Execute, lawyer, gain, will, life estate, income, gift, church, annuity, trust, unitrust, irrevocable, revocable, tax, probate, heir, child, die, Lord, joy, plan, act, kin, court, attorney, due, trust, life,

*new!*

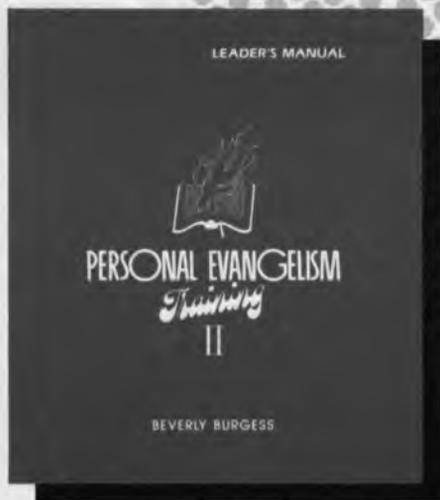
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by Beverly Burgess

FEBRUARY 1991

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P.O. Box 419527, Kansas City, MO 64141



# CHANGED LIVES

## Converts Share the Joy of Salvation

**These testimonies were given** at the Personal Evangelism Banquet at Kansas City First Church. The annual banquet is sponsored by Nazarene Theological Seminary and cooperating churches in the Kansas City area. For information on personal evangelism training in your local church, area, zone, or district, contact Evangelism Ministries, 6401 The Paseo, Kansas City, Missouri 64131, or call toll-free 1-800-821-2154.

**FAMILY PROBLEMS ARE MUCH BETTER.** "Rhonda and I turned our lives over to Christ on February 23, 1989. Jeff Hawkins came to our house to present the Gospel, and it was a day we will never forget. Since that time, we have been able to handle our stress and family problems better. We are much happier as a family because of Jesus. I feel a lot of gratitude toward people at the church. Words just cannot express the changes Christ has made in our lives." **Jim Tellson**, printer; St. Paul's Church

**EMPTINESS FILLED BY CHRIST.** "Before I met Christ, my life seemed empty and had no direction. A personal evangelism group came to my house and shared their personal testimonies. I could see Christ in them and the love that they had for the Lord. I knew they had something that I wanted. That night I was saved. *Philippians 4:13 says I can do everything through Christ Who gives me strength. I am going to keep trusting God so I can grow and delight in His greatness and in His love.*" **Julie Gentry**, nurse; Central Church

**FAST-LANE LIVING LEADS TO DEAD-END.** "Before I accepted Christ, I lived in the fast lane. When

someone would talk about Christ, I would say to myself, 'I'm not ready to join the church yet; I am not through partying.' Then I found myself on a dead-end street. I found myself financially poor, in debt, living in sin, with a child out of wedlock, and depressed that I had made all the wrong decisions. Then I agreed to allow Pastor Lott and an evangelism team to come to my house. That night, they presented the Gospel and I accepted Christ and His wonderful gift of eternal life. I knew something had happened to me, but I neglected to go to church immediately. After a few months, I started attending church on a regular basis. I became a member of the church in October of 1988, and I was baptized in April of 1989. Also in April, I was sanctified and experienced the fullness of the Lord. I am determined to continue to follow Christ." **Karen Richardson**, photographer; Blue Hills Church

**MANY INFLUENCES DREW ME TO CHRIST.** "I accepted Jesus as my Savior on April 29 of this year. I was guided to Him by a group led by Dr. Shaver with Don Harris and Gail Harris. They came into my home and talked with me about Jesus. I accepted the Lord that day,

but a lot of things brought me to that point. I went to church during my growing-up years. I went occasionally as an adult, but my ears were closed to spiritual issues. One day, shortly after moving to this area, I came home from a shopping trip to find a packet of materials left by First Church. I decided to give First Church a try — never heard of the Nazarene Church before. I heard Pastor Wright preach, and the curtain parted a bit that day. I came back to the Christmas program. Then the church was having a revival with Gary Henecke, who preached that in coming to Christ all I needed to do was accept Him through faith and I would be saved. I never heard that in all the years I had been attending church. I began reading the Bible; it was now more than just words to me. I started attending Bible study sessions. Laura Moore was my teacher; bless her for her insights. I am grateful the Lord brought me to this community and to this church." **Nancy Crowley**, accountant; Kansas City First Church

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**Let us hear your story.** If you wish to share your conversion story, the GROW staff would be happy to hear from you. Your testimony should be typewritten, less than 100 words, giving specific details, and your occupation. Please include your name, address, phone number, and date of submission of testimony. Material should be sent to Editor, GROW, 6401 The Paseo, Kansas City, Missouri 64131. Because of the press of publishing deadlines, testimonies cannot be acknowledged or returned. Neil B. Wiseman, editor.



## God Uses a Personal Witness

# A NEW LIFE BEGINS AT 32 FOR STEVE

Steven Johnson, Care Cottage resident minister, was led to Christ by a fellow student in a dorm room at Southern Oregon State College. The rocky journey toward a quality life of righteousness has taken him from Milwaukee through Vietnam, Las Vegas, Ashland, and Colorado Springs to ministry in Portland's inner-city.

Oswald Chambers is right: "You cannot meet with the Savior and walk away the same person." At about 1:30 a.m. on June 3, 1980, in a dorm room at Southern Oregon State College, a fellow student led me to Jesus Christ. I left that dorm room a different person.

I was born and raised in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. I was five years old when my mother was killed in a car accident. I was eight years old when my father committed suicide. After my father's death, I became increasingly more difficult for my relatives to manage as I rebelled against authorities. When I was fifteen, I had already been expelled from the Milwaukee Public School System, St. Thomas Military Academy, and Norris Farm, a detention facility for juveniles.

When I was seventeen, I signed up for four years in the Marines. When I received orders for Vietnam, I felt great that I could be part of something important. But I eventually received a court martial and spent four months in the Camp Allen Brig in Norfolk, Virginia. I was fortunate to be discharged with a General Under Honorable Conditions.

After my discharge, I moved back to Milwaukee. Two years later, I married Nancy, and we had a son, Eric. Within two-and-a-half years, we were in divorce court. After our divorce was final, I decided to move to Las Vegas. Of course, my problems followed me to Vegas because they show up wherever I go. I lived in Vegas for four years, after which I felt it was time for another geographical change. This time, I moved to Ashland, Oregon, and I found much more than I could have anticipated.

Not just anyone could have led me to Christ. It took the right person, at the right time; of course, God knew that. At the time of my conversion, I was at a place where God was able to get my attention. I was 32 years old. I was beside myself. I was tired of running and lying to myself. I was afraid to die and afraid to live.

It was Monday night of finals week; I needed to work on several papers that were due in two days. The dorm was noisy. My alcoholic buddies were bugging me to join in with them. I wanted to, but I knew I needed to get those term papers done. Susan offered refuge. She said I could use her room to work on my assignments.

During the course of this evening of study time, Susan

began to confront me with the Gospel. Susan asked me, "If Christ could really make a positive difference in your life, would it not be worth it to give Him that chance?"

Sometime during this conversation, I asked her this question: "What if you find out that your pastor is a crook, or that your church is teaching false doctrines?" She answered, "Steve, that would bother me, but not to

the extent that you might think. You see, Steve, my faith is not in my pastor, as much as I respect him, and my faith is not in my church, as much as I appreciate the Church of the Nazarene, but rather my faith is in Jesus Christ."

Susan challenged me to ask Jesus into my life. I was thinking that she was a nice girl, but crazy. I remember the thought coming to my mind that "she really believes this stuff." She told me to "thank God for forgiving me for my sins, and to ask Jesus Christ into my heart as my personal Savior." I started to stumble through this prayer: "Jesus, if You are real, if indeed You are the Lord and Savior, I desire that You show Yourself to me. If You are Who Susan and others have claimed You to be, I want to know You and want You to be my Lord and Savior and my Shepherd, and I will follow You."

That was the beginning of my relationship with Jesus. I became involved in the Ashland Church of the Nazarene. God placed me in a wonderful, loving body of believers with a wonderful pastor.

I took off pretty fast in my Christian faith, but eventually I became aware of some inner struggles. I was hanging in there, but hanging in there is not the same as living a victorious life. My forward progress was stalling out. Mediocrity was setting in.

I had been a Christian about six months when my pastor asked me if I'd like to be baptized. He explained the significance of the baptism sacrament. I told him that I would like to be baptized. Six of us were baptized that night. When it was my turn, I knew God had more for me, so I made a new covenant with Him that things were going to be His way. My will was going to be that His will be done in my life.

Later that year, I left for Colorado Springs and the Nazarene Bible College. At the college, entire sanctification was explained to me thoroughly, and I realized that I had received that second work of grace at my baptism.

For the past three and a half years, I have served Christ through Operation Care, an outreach ministry of the Church of the Nazarene to the inner-city of Portland, Oregon. I have been in charge of the Care Cottage, a transitional shelter for homeless men.

—Steven E. Johnson



## *It Pays to Have the Facts*

### **TAX HELP IS ON THE WAY**

**For all active ministers in the U.S.:** As usual, in January the Board of Pensions and Benefits USA will mail complimentary copies of Conrad Teitell's *Minister's Guide for 1990 Income Tax*. It will give *current* information on how a minister should report income expenses when preparing the 1990 income tax forms. Any active minister who has not received the booklet by February 10 may request one by writing to the Pensions office.

**For local churches:** Up-to-date church management memos were mailed at the end of November to all U.S. church treasurers and their pastors by the Board of Pensions and Benefits USA. Memo No. 3, *Tax Procedures for Congregations*, includes information on how to complete the new Form W-2, which has been changed for 1990 by the IRS.

**For U.S. district offices:** In January, the Pensions office will send to U.S. district offices a complimentary copy of Richard Hammar's *Church and Clergy Tax Guide* along with a set of three audiocassettes on taxes. Districts will be encouraged to use them as a lending library resource and in zone workshops with pastors and church treasurers.

**News releases:** Additional information and an endorsement of other tax helps was given in the October issue of *P&B News Notes*, the newsletter produced by the Pensions office and mailed quarterly to all active U.S. ministers. The tax information will be updated in the January issue.

CONTINUING LAY TRAINING

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**YEAR 3 • FEBRUARY—MARCH 1991**



**“Thou shall call his name Jesus:  
for he shall save his people from their sins.”**

**GROW — A JOURNAL OF CHURCH GROWTH, EVANGELISM AND DISCIPLESHIP**

Volume 1, Number 4, Winter Issue, 1990, \$4.00

**Bill M. Sullivan**, Director, Church Growth Division, International Church of the Nazarene • **Neil B. Wiseman**, Editor

**Contributing Editors:**

**Curt Bowers**, Chaplaincy Ministries Director • **M. V. Scutt**, Evangelism Ministries Director

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**GROW** welcomes local and district reports of revivals, church plants, and church growth but because of publishing deadlines, reports cannot be acknowledged or returned. Manuscripts on related subjects are also welcome, but unsolicited manuscripts can be returned only if accompanied with a return self-addressed envelope and adequate postage. Reports and manuscripts may be addressed to Neil B. Wiseman, **GROW** Editor, 6401 The Paseo, Kansas City, Missouri 64131.

# Authentic Evangelism Produces Lasting Fruit

**A**lmost everything seems to be breaking down or tearing apart these days.

Consider technology. In spite of many advances, one stalled car on a Manhattan bridge makes thousands of commuters late for work. A malfunctioning switch delays a jet for hours on a San Francisco runway, making travelers miss their Denver, Chicago, and London connections. One northern Minnesota community was forced to get along without electricity for most of a night last winter with no heat, no lights, no power. Lightning struck our office phone system last summer causing communications problems for most of a week.

Think, too, of the many relationships falling apart around us. In a day or week, divorce, death, or desertion destroys a whole network of relationships. One act of sinful passion destroys a person's life forever and causes lifelong misery for everyone close to them. In our city, an apparently harmless flirtation between a man and woman at the health club was the first step that led to murder, destruction of two homes, everlasting damage to young children in both families, angry injury to relatives, neighbors, and fellow church members, and two long-term jail sentences for the guilty parties.

In less dramatic situations, friendships break down because of careless gossip. Churches are divided over demands for selfish control by either laymen or pastors. Little remains the same anymore.

In such a world, it is difficult to think about permanence, endurance, and steadfastness. But enduring results from our evangelistic efforts are exactly what Jesus expects. He wants eternal fruit to flow from our Christian service and godly example: "You did not choose me, but I chose you to go and bear fruit — *fruit that will last*" (John 15:16, NIV). Apparently, shortcuts, manipulative techniques, belief without repentance, and surface relationships will not accomplish what He wants done.

Jesus speaks of fruitbearing seven times in 16 verses in John 15. Since lasting fruit is significant to Him, it must become important to us. Fulfilling His intentions for enduring results revolves around five issues.

**Permanence** is both required and possible. Commentators offer two possible ways of viewing this remaining fruit idea in John 15. Some think it is the natural outflow of the Christian life so others see lasting effects of the Gospel in our lives — to use Paul's idea, it is the fruit of the spirit. Other Bible authorities believe it is the visible, enduring results of our efforts for Christ.

Why not combine both? Solid, dependable, life-changing, eternal issues determine the agenda of the

Gospel. Though Fortune 500 companies may build for a decade or a century, our work is for eternity. The outcomes of our outreach march across generations, centuries, culture, and a thousand real and imagined hurdles. The most obvious example is the impact of the first disciples on their world, an impact which continues with vigor to this very day.

**Attraction** is another basic ingredient of fruitbearing. The genuine Christian, like fruit in the orchard at harvest season, has a fascinating winsomeness that draws others to Christ. This beauty creates a natural curiosity for those who seek a quality life. One transformed person is a powerfully attractive advertisement in the midst of brokenness, despair, and sin.

**Ambassadors** are the spokespersons for authentic evangelism. The preacher, whether he be an evangelist or pastor, is an important part of the whole picture. But every believer must speak for God, too. Though methods will vary with changing situations, every Christian is obligated to speak for Jesus as God provides opportunities. The world has to know that we have connections in high places. It is our task to communicate in ways they understand.

**Excellence** is needed as a way of life to produce lasting fruit. Though an effective gardener works hard at planting, cultivating, and pruning, he keeps asking himself, "How can I do it better?"

Good enough is not good enough. To borrow from management specialist Tom Peters, quality comes from people (starting with the janitor) who care and believe that everything can be done better than it is. Think of what this possibility of infinite improvement in every Christian worker would do to our churches and our world. Consider, also, the sheer joy vineyard laborers would enjoy.

**Resources** flow from the Vine. Disconnected branches never bear fruit because fruitbearing is the natural result of the life of Christ in us. Jesus precisely states the need for connectedness, "Apart from me you can do nothing" (v. 5). Ineffective evangelism, discipleship, and church growth can be observed wherever this Christ connection has been severed. Unconnected cleverness, experience, charm, or even talent does not produce lasting fruit. Jesus explains His enablement, "If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit" (v. 5).

Jesus says, "I have chosen you to go and bear fruit — *fruit that will remain*" (v. 16). And He promises the gates of hell will not prevail against us.

—NEIL B. WISEMAN  
Editor, GROW





**“A sanctified life is a delight to Jesus, a joy to the soul, a benediction in the home, a power in the church, a terror to sin, and a continual disappointment to the devil.”**

**—Phineas F. Bresee**