

THE
**preacher's
magazine**

MARCH—
APRIL '78

**PREACHING
CHRISTIAN
HOLINESS**

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MARCH—APRIL, 1978

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The Lord's Perfect Timing

(A true experience)

By Betty Morgan*



Editor's note: *The author is an enthusiastic new Nazarene who witnesses to the saving power of Christ everywhere she goes. This article was written as a special favor for the editor who has been recovering slowly from a major surgery.*

A YEAR AGO in early spring on a brisk day when the grass was still brown, and the dry leaves were still blown against the fence rows, I drove to Bartlesville, Okla., to see my daughter and son-in-law and two grandchildren. I wish I could remember the words of my prayers at the beginning of that exciting day! But likely, then as now, my prayer was to be used of the Lord, to be bold in my witness (with wisdom and finesse), and to be so strongly led that I would "fall in" to doing His will.

The drive to my family's is about a three-hour trip from our farm in Wichita, Kans. As I neared the end of this journey, I became so sleepy that I had to find a place to pull my car over and nap. I searched for a safe stop for several miles. Finally, I left the highway to drive into the Osage Hills State Park. A scant half-mile inside the park, I drove up on a wide shoulder beside a fence and parked. I rolled down one car window a little and locked all the doors. Still in the driver's seat, I leaned over and went immediately to sleep.

Shortly I was awakened by footsteps in the dry grass and leaves. I sat up quickly to look around. Right outside my car window, just across the fence, stood a beautiful white-faced bull all by himself staring placidly at me.

The clock on the dash of my car showed 6 o'clock. I had slept 20 minutes. My daughter was expecting me for dinner. I knew the Lord had awakened me with that gorgeous animal, so I said "Thank You, Lord," Then I drove back to the highway.

*Wife of a Wichita physician.

When I had traveled about a mile on the highway, I came upon an automobile wreck across the way on my left. The car was upside down in the ditch. Then I knew why the Lord had awakened me.

One thought was in my mind—there might be someone dying in that car who did not know the Lord! I forced my car to a stop and ran back down the highway to the scene of the accident. By this time there were three men helplessly examining the wrecked car. I asked one of them, "Is there anyone in that car?" He nodded yes.

I got to my knees to look inside the car and saw a woman lying on her back with her head underneath the dash so that I could not even see her face. By her sturdily-built body, I estimated her age to be fortyish. I could not tell if she was dead or alive, injured or uninjured, conscious or unconscious.

I hesitated a moment, but knew there was no time to lose. I touched her gently on the shoulder, then said, "Ma'am, do you know the Lord Jesus Christ as your personal Savior?"

There was complete silence. I did not know if she heard. But I could not give up. I shook her shoulder gently and said, "Ma'am, ask the Lord to forgive you your sins."

Suddenly with a cry of anguish for all to hear, she said, "Jesus forgive me!"

I stood up stunned. Then I kneeled beside her again and encouraged her. "Keep praying, keep talking to the Lord." The men were watching and listening nearby.

I learned the woman's name, and that she lived in a small town some 30 miles back in the direction from which I'd just come.

Suddenly an ambulance sped in. Attendants lifted her into the ambulance and whisked her away toward Bartlesville.

A day or two later, I wrote this lady in care of the Bartlesville Hospital. My letter was returned unmarked and unopened. I wrote her again in care of her hometown. My letter was again returned unmarked and unopened.

Was she saved that day? With the fervor of her anguished cry inscribed indelibly on my memory, I feel there is a chance she was.

The Church is never a place, but always a people; never a fold, but always a flock; never a sacred building, but always a believing assembly.

The Church is you who pray, not where you pray. A structure of brick or marble can no more be a Church than your clothes of serge or satin or double knit can be you. In this world there is nothing sacred but man—no sanctuary of man but the soul.

That's the Church.

—Selected

In the traditional concept of success, where does the minister fit in?

The Minister's Sensitivity to Destructive Influences

By W. S. Muir*

I AM REMINDED of the minister who sold a mule to a friend. The mule was trained to go forward when the minister said "Praise the Lord," and to stop when he said "Amen."

The purchaser mounted the beast and rode away. As the mule began going faster and faster the rider kept calling "Whoa," with no response. At last he remembered and shouted "Amen!" The animal stopped. Wiping his brow, and taking stock of the situation the man observed he had stopped at the very edge of a cliff. Again wiping his brow, he declared gratefully, "Praise the Lord!"

With these words, I venture over the cliff.

Why are we in this profession? How did we get here? What are we doing in it today? As we face these questions, I ask three questions:

What is the minister?

The minister is one who is called of God. God's calling is strange indeed. Paul was a persecutor, Augustine was licentious, Luther was born at the back of an open stall in the market of Eiselben and could not say the words "Our Father" without a shudder because they reminded him of his own

coarse father. Carey was a cobbler, Kagawa, the son of a Geisha girl. Strange that God would choose these men to shake whole countries with the gospel message. And strange indeed that He chose you and me to be His witnesses. Amos never grew accustomed to the strangeness of the call—"I was no prophet, neither was I a prophet's son." So here we are, still human, and that answers the first question, What is the minister? He is human.

What must the minister be?

As ministers we are called to be God's man to the people. We are to be God's man to the church board, to the congregational meeting, to the children in the streets, to the local city council, to the sick, to the dying. We must be God's man when we stand to preach, when we kneel with the congregation to pray. Can our congregation say of us, "Christ served among us in that man"?

We are preachers of the Word, never settling with a few stories. We are in the hospitals so much we seem like permanent residents, nurses know us by name. We stand with the bereaved, and families will say later, "We could never have gone through this without our pastor."

I yearn to see the pastorate take on

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this meaning. I weary of being a promoter, and of my success being largely measured as to how I do that promoting. I have difficulty with Matt. 25:31-46 where Jesus speaks about being hungry and we fed Him, naked and we clothed Him, thirsty and we gave Him drink . . .

In our failure to do this we are admonished to depart, are cursed, and sent to everlasting punishment prepared for the devil and his angels.

This then brings me to the third point:

What must the minister avoid?

Perhaps we could better respond to the question by asking, What is success? Each of us wants to be successful, and indeed, God wants us to be. However, in the traditional concept of success, where does the minister fit in? A large salary; large, sporty cars; a large, well-furnished home; a cottage on the lake; a boat? I am always drawn to my knees with the realization that some of God's greatest men, in the eyes of man, were not at all successful—indeed, they were complete failures. Stephen was stoned. Paul had his head chopped off. All of the disciples but one were executed. Jeremiah was ridiculed and scorned. Jesus himself was crucified.

Success is not in the amount of the salary we draw. One of the most destructive influences in the ministry is this matter of salary. Many men have lost their way because of this factor. Indeed, how many have become sour because the church board wouldn't raise the salary, or because a neighboring pastor received a call to a church that paid more. How many have aspired to First Church in order to get a bigger salary? At the edge of the cliff I hesitate long enough to say, "Praise the Lord!"

Though I believe that each man must receive an adequate salary, yet we must remind ourselves that we lit-

erally took—or should have taken—the vow of poverty when we entered the ministry. Even if we "climb the ladder" and reach what some consider the peak of success, we will still be making less money than many, or most, of our laymen.

Neither is success measured in statistics.

Lest I be judged too quickly, I recognize that there are souls in our goals. However is it not time to realize that the atmosphere of competition, though wholesome for a while, can be our worst enemy? Must we call on another pastor's members and proselyte, rationalizing that they aren't getting anything over there anyway? Must we constantly strive to be at the top at any cost? Just what are we doing in the ministry? What do we hope to attain?

Third, success is not measured by the size of our buildings. I favor good buildings. Yet many of us get caught up in creating monuments to what we did while in a pastorate. Some of us have to pursue the more unglamorous task of paying the bills afterward. There is no glamorous publicity, no exciting dedication day in paying those monthly mortgage payments.

The spiritual advance of the congregation may not be as noticeable as a sanctuary or an education unit. These speak to a minister's leadership. But a minister may spend more time on new building plans than he does with the sick and dying. Our beautiful buildings may get us the headlines, and succeeding generations may say, "Those were the days." But were they?

Finally, success is not measured in a man's education. I do not ascribe to ignorance. Gerald Kennedy reminds us that well-trained men often fall into the pit of despising the man who lacks formal training. The preacher who has had the advantage of college and seminary will do well to sit at the

feet of the man whose training came from his love for people and his desire to serve them. Jesus said some things are hidden from the wise. Avoid the the human aspect of success—the gods of money, of statistics, of showiness, and of pride.

When, then, is success? Simply answered in the Master's prayer: "Thy will be done . . ."

We must be God's representative.

Years ago there was a Methodist preacher named E. C. Powell whose bishop appointed him to a little town to start a church. It was his job to gather a congregation and build a building. He set out calling from door to door inviting people to contribute to the church fund. He hadn't gone far before he ran into the village atheist. He didn't argue or try to get him to join the church, but he did ask him for a contribution. The man replied that he didn't think he owed the Methodist Church anything. "No," agreed Brother Powell, "but I think you do owe God something."

"Well," said the other, "maybe you are right." So he wrote out a check for \$25.00, making it payable to God. Brother Powell accepted the check, thanked the donor, and went right down to the bank. He endorsed the check "God, by his agent, E. C. Powell." And the bank cashed it! God's representative!

Remember, young pastor—who is enjoying "visible" success today—many before you labored and sacrificed to keep the doors open, laying a foundation that makes your success possible.

The Master's parable of the sower shows us that before harvesting there must be months of hard labor in breaking the ground, planting, cultivating, and watering.

Where, then, lies the success for which we all strive? Is it to get a larger church, then a larger, and perhaps to be a district superintendent, a college president, an executive at headquarters, and then the epitome of success—a general superintendent or a bishop? Is this what it is all about? What would Paul say? "If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal." All these years to master the art of preaching, and Paul calls it "noise." All that study, all those gifts . . . and faith to remove mountains . . . and giving my goods to feed the poor, even to dying a martyr's death. Yet if I have not love, it profiteth me nothing.

Ford, in his book *An Expository Preacher's Notebook*, reminds us of Christ himself in the days of the flesh. Christ reading people, spurned by people, mixing with people, staying with people, rebuking them, forgiving them, giving each what he needed. Sensitive, yes. A man of sorrows, yes. This is a true preacher. Not a man with the gift of gab, though he ought to strive to be an excellent preacher. Not a man with a first in theology, though he ought to know his theology. Not just an ecclesiastical diplomat, though he ought to be able to get along with his brethren. He must be a sensitive man who has himself found God in the secret place of his own soul, meeting his own need, speaking to his own condition. That is the man who speaks to others. That is the man through whom God speaks.

And so, like my friend sitting on the mule at the edge of the cliff, I say "Praise the Lord!"

It's okay to admit you are "fit to quit"—
then begin to do something about it

Fit to Quit

AS A SUPERINTENDENT I have often visited with pastors and others who tell us with heavy hearts, "I'm awfully tired." I know they are talking about a special kind of tiredness and sometimes more than tiredness. After looking in the Bible, and talking with some of my more vigorous friends and co-workers for some answers, I think I have something to offer.

First, no one should be ashamed to admit he is tired. We live in a fast-paced world. Dr. Donald Larson, professor at Bethel College, says this is a common problem in our time. One of the reasons people can't keep up is the increased velocity of change. It leaves modern man breathless. "For modern man as machine to act in irregular and unpredictable ways is to throw the entire system into turmoil. Hence, the masses dance in meaningless conformity to the tune of the creative few." He says further

that our "fantastic ability to produce more than what we could normally consume has forced upon us the necessity of consuming far more than common sense would dictate."¹

Thus we face a deep craving for monetary satisfaction, and may be actually destroying our capacity to appreciate the enduring values of life. We have learned to recycle bottles, but what about people?

This is not just a problem in American society. I received a letter from a missionary in Nepal who quoted Olan Hendrick's book *Management and the Christian Worker* to describe the situation on his mission field. "We must educate people to cope with whatever changes may occur, and there are only three things about the future that we are certain of: (1) It will not be like the past; (2) It will not be like we think it is going to be; and (3) The rate of change will be faster than ever before."

I have another observation about the cause of tiredness. We seem to be subject to more severe attacks as the problems mount. This is particularly true when the problems are greater than our ability to cope. I can play golf with vigor and gusto nearly all afternoon when things are going well, but when I take a stupid swing and make a lousy shot, suddenly I get tired.



by
Norval Hadley

Superintendent, Northwest
Yearly Meeting of
Friends Church,
Newberg, Ore.

I think people get especially tired when they are in an assignment for which they are not spiritually gifted, or physically, mentally, or emotionally qualified. This is why the work of the nominating committee is so important. This is why it is so vital that we get our laborers by praying to the Lord of the harvest.

One of the most important jobs of the pastor is that of selecting and developing Christian workers. It is amazing how much vigor, life, and enthusiasm are injected into the tired old system just by the simple therapy of seeing success.

Whatever the cause of the tiredness, it will surely be helpful to admit it. It's okay in the words of Ian Thomas to admit you are "fit to quit." Then the way is clear to begin to do something about it.

Here are some things to try:

1. *Learn to praise the Lord.* This is one of God's magic formulas for seeing your way through a tunnel. It is quite exhausting to carry a load of worry and anxiety, but the Bible says, "Do not fret or have any anxiety about anything, but in every circumstance and in everything by prayer and petition with thanksgiving continue to make your wants known to God" (Phil. 4:6, Amp. NT).² "In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you" (1 Thess. 5:18).

Dr. Bill Bright wrote, "I have found that the greatest deterrent to depression is praise and thanksgiving to God—even when my heart does not feel like praising Him. We are not hypocrites when we praise God despite the way we feel; we are simply being obedient to the command of God."

In *Springs in the Valley*, Mrs. Charles Cowman tells us of a legend of a man who found the barn where Satan kept his seeds ready to be sown in the human heart, and on finding

the seeds of discouragement more numerous than others, he learned that those seeds could be made to grow almost anywhere. But when questioned, Satan reluctantly admitted there was one place he could never thrive. "Where is that?" asked the man. Satan replied sadly, "In the heart of a grateful man."

2. *Maintain an abiding vine attitude.* Ron Dunn, writing in the March 1977 issue of *Worldwide Challenge* says he decided to take a poll of the branches in a certain vineyard to find out how they managed to take the strain of bearing fruit. "After interviewing as many as possible, I came to some interesting conclusions. Not one had an ulcer, was on tranquilizers, was uptight or apprehensive, physically worn out, or mentally fatigued." When he asked their secret, they said, "We just learned to abide. Have you ever seen a branch struggle and strain and worry and get uptight? We don't do that, because we understand that the responsibility for production is on the vine."

There is a rest for the people of God. When you are obeying, no matter how severe the problem, you can always pray, "God, You put me here, now You see me through." Even if He sees you through by taking you to heaven, that's okay. In some cases that may be the best solution. We don't have to worry when we are obeying.

I have a Swiss missionary friend, Heini Germann-Edey, who prayed for his colleagues back in Indonesia and I heard him say, "Lord, keep them restfully busy . . . It's not by trying, but by dying."

When the problems get so heavy we cannot bear them ourselves, I think it is all right to pray, "Lord, you've got a problem here." As Robert Girard suggests, we're too prone to read Prov. 3:5-6 as follows,

“Trust in the Lord with all thine heart . . . and keep a plan in the back of your mind in case that doesn’t work.”

Jesus says, “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” “If you are digging a hole,” Major Ian Thomas said in a message in Girard’s book *Brother, Hang Loose*, “And I come and say to you I’m going to give you rest, what do you expect me to do? Sing a song? Quote Bible verses to you? Give you a new shovel?”

“No! You will expect me to climb down into the hole and dig, while you climb out and rest. That is what Jesus means to do for you, when He says, ‘I will give you rest.’ He expects you to quit, so He can get down in your hole and do the digging.”

Recently when my problems were especially complex, God let me see that problems and suffering are God’s agents of change. If we never saw our need to change or improve, we would not change.

3. *Wait on the Lord.* “They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint” (Isa. 40:31). As Jesus was about to leave the men He had trained for three years, He commissioned them to make disciples of people everywhere, but told them first to wait in the city of Jerusalem until they were endued with power from on high.

They had seen Him risen from the dead, were convinced He was the Messiah. They had a life-changing story to tell. Among them was impetuous Peter; hot-blooded Simon the Zealot; James and John, those ambitious sons of thunder; Levi the tax collector, who was a shortcut ex-

pert if there ever was one. Waiting simply was not their pattern. They were men of action, ideas, and solutions. But Jesus told them to wait. In essence He said, “Don’t try anything—not a testimony or sermon or evangelistic crusade or missionary journey. *Wait* until you are filled with the Spirit.”

Many are so tired because they are trying to live a life for which they have insufficient resources. If the primary resource—the infilling and empowerment of the Spirit—is missing, life can get terribly exhausting. Waiting, worship, and communion with our Source renews that inner well springing up into everlasting life.

Recently I talked to one who had quit having devotions because the pressure of business was too demanding on his time. That is when he most needed the resources God can give. During those waiting times God can either make us equal to our task or reveal to us that we should change our assignments. He may show us different patterns by which we can achieve therapeutic success. When we leave that upper room, it is good to know we don’t go out alone, but in the anointing and power of the Holy Spirit, who is able to produce Pentecosts.

Are you fit to quit? Then praise the Lord. Go ahead and quit. Quit trying, get out of the hole, let Jesus do the digging for you. Rest in the Lord, keep abiding in Him and waiting on Him, and keep available to Him as a channel through which He can work. When He does it, you’ll feel like your ministry is borne on the wings of eagles.

1. Nov., 1972, issue of *Universitas*.

2. *The Amplified New Testament*, copyright 1958 by the Lockman Foundation, La Habra, Calif.

Is it possible that a “call conscious” pastor may be using time and energy unprofitably?

Pastoral Calling

FOR MANY YEARS pastoral calling for me was a burdensome duty. Failure to make a sufficient number of calls in accordance with someone’s numerical ideal produced deep feelings of unfaithfulness and even guilt. That favorite cliché of convention and workshop speakers had already been around for a long time: “A home-going pastor will always have a church-going people.” I believed it so completely that I thought pastoral calling was the whole key to church attendance. Periodically I would take my little book of recorded calls and start out to make up my quota. I discovered that by random contacts and careful counting I could rack up a pretty respectable report.

That kind of pressure soon got to me. Calling became such a heavy duty I couldn’t even enjoy meeting people. People began to look like numbers. I believe they knew it too. I decided I had to find a better ap-

proach. I was confident pastoral calling was a more spiritual assignment than counting numbers. Furthermore, I felt it ought to have some scriptural basis as well.

By prayerful thought I arrived at an important conclusion. Calling is just one method of ministering to people, and it must take its place along with other methods equally important. I decided that calling was not the only method, nor necessarily the most important one. When calling is given such priority that it becomes a dutiful, compulsive task, more involved with numbers than people, it loses its love. Such an approach can make a pastor feel like a salesman trying to keep up with his assigned number of contacts in order to fill up his sales quota.

There is always the possibility that the more people a pastor contacts, the more he may win to the Lord and the church—but not necessarily. The quality of pastoral calling is more important and effective than its quantity. Qualitative calling should be the desire and goal of every pastor.

That qualitative and not quantitative calling is the scriptural approach is abundantly demonstrated in the ministry and example of Jesus. It was a study of the Lord’s approach to people and their needs that helped



by
Mel E. DePeal

Pastor, East Toledo
Wesleyan Church
Toledo, Ohio

me to settle on a scriptural approach to my calling.

It was a little surprising to discover that Jesus spent very little time in people's houses. Most of His ministry was done publicly. People either came to Him or were brought to Him by others who had heard Him preach and seen Him heal. Jesus was not at all concerned about the mathematics of home calling. His concern was with people's needs. Whenever there was a need, Jesus was available and present.

Any pastor who is available and need-conscious will be a calling pastor. I suggest that a call-conscious pastor may sometimes be where he is not wanted. Pastoral calling demands some priorities.

Stewardship of time and energy in calling is wise and profitable. There ought to be a core of strong, stable Christians in every church who need very little pastoral care. These are people who thrive on ministering instead of being ministered to. They pray for the pastor, provide him with referrals and leads, and are themselves watchful and prayerful over the souls of the weak and the fallen. These people are especially valuable because they will do much of the cradle-tending in the church, while the pastor gives himself to prayer and the ministry of the Word (Acts 6:4).

It is easy to see that Christ's greatest priority was the needs of people. His entrance into their homes was always at the beck and call of need.

An example of Christ's keen sensitivity to need is recorded in Matt. 9:9-13. Jesus had gone to eat with Matthew, a publican and sinner. Along came the church members and asked of His disciples, "Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners?" Christ's answer is a keen insight into pastoral priorities: "They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick."

I believe it is possible for a pastor to be making contacts with his people even in their homes, and not be in contact with them at all. He may rack up a good calling report and fail to establish a good rapport. Cultivation of good rapport surely is more essential than a good report.

Several factors are involved in cultivating good rapport. It begins with the realization that love and esteem can never be obtained on demand. They must be merited. Without this love and esteem he will have a fruitless ministry.

Good rapport must be merited in the pulpit.

A pastor must study to have a well-prepared sermon worthy of the time, attention, and intelligence of his congregation. He must strive to be a specialist in pulpit demeanor, knowledge of the Bible, and ability to present its truth. Truth in presentation should be palatable, appealing, and attractive. Even strong truth, when offered with compassion and tenderness, will be acceptable. While a pastor needs to speak with authority and assurance, the only authority he needs is the Word of God. The Bible is its own best Authority. Any attempt to complement the divine authority by human authority will only detract from the effectiveness of Bible preaching. "Not with enticing words of men's wisdom . . ." is a splendid approach to pulpit preaching.

Good rapport must be merited in interpersonal relationships.

What a pastor is out of the pulpit cannot be separated from what he is in the pulpit. It is not enough to preach godliness. A pastor must live a godly life. He cannot preach love, patience, and long-suffering in the pulpit, and fail to live it in his relationships with his people. He must not only be a good preacher, but a

good father, husband, neighbor, and a kindly chairman of the church board. Divine love is a pastor's greatest asset. On occasion it will be his greatest defense as well.

Good rapport must be merited through acceptable calling methods.

One method is by appointment. Permissuous calling, dropping in on people at inconvenient times, walking in on their private affairs when not expected, is discourteous. Pastoral calling should be kept above the level of the meter man, who stops by anytime without warning, and is apt to walk in at a most inconvenient time. Appointments may not always be possible. When they are not, calling must be done discreetly and courteously. Each pastor may acquaint himself with the work schedule and family habits of his parishioners and then make his calls accordingly. He may inquire "When is the most convenient time for a pastoral call at your home?"

Referral is another method of calling, and every effort should be made to make such calls. When a pastor receives referrals from his parishioners he knows that he has their confidence and esteem. He is a trusted friend, who is being asked to repre-

sent his parishioner in the home of a friend or relative. It is an honor. Impressions made by a referral call are not only important to the one being called upon, but also the parishioner who entrusted the call to the pastor. A pastor who projects himself pleasantly and acceptably in people's homes may well become a community pastor.

Good rapport is merited when a pastor keeps his heart warm.

Warmth and friendship are scarce articles these days. Professionalism and impersonal relationships have crept into our society and even into the church. A pastor must always be conscious that he is contacting a human being for whom Christ died. People can tell when he is really interested in *them*, or whether he simply wants them in church to fill up an empty pew, increase attendance, and become a number on his conference report. Cold, calculated, dutiful calling void of the love of Christ is undesirable and unacceptable to people in need.

A faithful pastor will make as many calls as his ministry requires. But he will see to it that it is quality calling and not just quantitative.

The reason so many people get very little from their Bible study is similar to the reason why maple syrup is so high-priced. About 36 gallons of sap have to be evaporated to make one gallon of syrup, and then a great quantity has to be further boiled down if one wishes to make a single cake of maple sugar. If you are going to gain a knowledge of the Word of God, you cannot be lazy. There must be gallons of devotion evaporated with more gallons of yieldedness to the Word, before there can be true growth in the knowledge of the Scriptures. But when the end product is reached, it will be "sweeter than honey." —*Selected*

Wesleyana



Wesley's Instructions on Singing

By Donald D. Wood*

JOHN WESLEY cared for the singing of his Methodists. He cared what they sang, and he cared how they sang. This concern courses through the prefaces to his many volumes of hymns, is sprinkled about his *Journal*, and finds expression in the minutes of his conversations.

In the preface to *A Collection of Hymns, for the Use of the People Called Methodists* (1780), he wrote, "May I be permitted to add a few words with regard to the poetry? . . . (1) In these hymns there is no doggerel, no botches, nothing put in to patch up the rhyme, no feeble expletives. (2) Here is nothing turgid or bombast on the one hand, or low and creeping on the other. (3) Here are no cant expressions, no words without meaning . . . (4) Here are, allow me to say, both the purity, the strength, and the elegance of the English language, and, at the same time, the utmost simplicity and plainness suited to every capacity" (*Works*, XIV, 341).

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Seven years later in the preface to *A Pocket Hymn Book, for the Use of Christians of All Denominations*, Wesley gave as the reason for omitting some 37 hymns included in an earlier volume that "fourteen of them appeared to me very flat and dull; fourteen more, mere prose, tagged with rhyme; and nine more to be grievous doggerel" (*Works*, XIV, 343). When someone informed Mr. Wesley that the people enjoyed some of the hymns he chose to omit, he indicated that their enjoyment only demonstrated their poor judgment and reflected poorly on the Methodists. He would not continue that poor reflection.

Question 39 in *The Large Minutes* of Wesley's conversations, 1791 edition, asks, "How shall we guard against formality in public worship; particularly in singing?" In his answer, Wesley directed his reply to preachers, who were charged with leading the singing in most of the societies. He said, "(1) By preaching frequently on the head. (2) By taking care to speak only what we feel. (3)

By choosing such hymns as are proper for the congregation. (4) By not singing too much at once; seldom more than five or six verses. (5) By suiting the tune to the words. (6) By Often stopping short, and asking the people, 'Now do you know what you said last? Did you speak no more than you felt?'" (*Works*, III, 346).

Perhaps the best known of Wesley's remarks on music are his famous "Directions for Congregational Singing." He there stated five principles which reflect his views most clearly to his Methodists.

"That this part of divine worship may be more acceptable to God, as well as more profitable to yourself and others, be careful to observe the following directions:—

"1. Sing *all*. See that you join with the congregation as frequently as you can. Let not a slight degree of weakness or weariness hinder you. If it is a cross to you, take it up, and you will find a blessing.

"2. Sing *lustily*, and with good courage. Beware of singing as if you were half dead, or half asleep; but lift up your voice with strength. Be no more afraid of your voice now, nor

more ashamed of it being heard, than when you sung the songs of Satan.

"3. Sing *modestly*. Do not bawl, so as to be heard above, or distinct from, the rest of the congregation, that you may not destroy the harmony, but strive to unite your voices together, so as to make one clear melodious sound.

"4. Sing *in time*. Whatever time is sung, be sure to keep with it. Do not run before, nor stay behind it; but attend closely to the leading voices, and move therewith as exactly as you can. And take care you sing not too slow. This drawling way naturally steals on all who are lazy; and it is high time to drive it out from among us, and sing all our tunes just as quick as we did at first.

"5. Above all, sing *spiritually*. Have an eye to God in every word you sing. Aim at pleasing him more than yourself, or any other creature. In order to this, attend strictly to the sense of what you sing; and see that your heart is not carried away with the sound, but offered to God continually; so shall your singing be such as the Lord will approve of here, and reward when he cometh in the clouds of heaven" (*Works*, XIV, 346).

Impartial Love

Ever stand by in wonder and look on amazed
As a waif from the lowest of people
Seems to stir, so to speak, in a filthy cocoon
And emerges a spiritual steeple?

Well, my friend, let me tell you the terms high or low
Were unknown to our Christ in His yearning:
He loved folk who were high, and the lowest of low—
All were souls to be plucked from the burning.

—Roy McCaleb

Evangelistically Speaking—

Pluralism, Toleration, and Evangelism

By Leon A. Hynson*

AMERICA WAS ONCE KNOWN as the “melting pot” for the world. The great immigrations which reached these shores in wave upon wave of questing souls made this land a caldron of dynamic activity. Aptly portrayed by Oscar Handlin as *The Uprooted*, these diverse peoples came together in a new world and, through all the greed of human manipulation, thrust their roots down in the soil of their adoptive nation. Immortalized in Emma Lazarus’ famous commemorative work, these “huddled masses yearning to breathe free” forged a new America.

The nation became a testing ground for the expression of suppressed visions, a land where the seeds of aspiration might grow and come to full harvest. The symbol of the “melting pot” was a vehicle for bearing the national sense of material, social, and religious development.

However, the persons who came in those inundations to be poured into America’s social caldron were the bearers of a cherished heritage which was destined to significantly alter the chemistry of the nation. Acculturation is not a thing of quantifiable ingredients, measured parts of a recipe,

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or the deliberate strokes of the social architect. Like the wind which comes and goes as it will, so spreads human culture.

If the symbol of an America of another era was the “melting pot,” the consequence of that infinite variety of men, women, and opinions would be another America, whose symbol might now be Jeremiah’s “boiling pot” with its contents spilling over upon the land, in a plethora of disparate concerns. This land has become a society where every person seeks to do what seems right in his own eyes. In the term which Paul Tillich has made common theological coin, this is an autonomous society. In summary, it is characterized by an almost infinite pluralism.

Toleration

In a pluralistic world, the spirit of toleration is demanded of all. A homogeneous society may find that its traditions forge chains which bind or build walls that are both inclusive and exclusive. This community may require less concern for toleration, while being less capable of displaying it. Toleration is not exercised in a social vacuum, but in a climate where varieties exist, where tensions are ready to surface. In a heterogeneous world, such alternative

views, ideals, and commitments are always present, necessarily calling forth a spirit of reasonableness and understanding if the society would possess any cohesion and common purpose.

Little imagination is needed to recognize the different requirements for tolerance in a pluralistic in contrast to a monistic society. In a state of society where one dominant force reigns, toleration is extended by the grace of that authority, and is ordinarily curtailed when any counterbalancing force threatens. However, where there are a diversity of powers, each pressing for recognition, each carving out its own space in society, toleration is evoked by the dynamic of the intersection entities. In the monistic society, toleration, if extended, is more patriarchal, handed down from above by a superior authority. In pluralism, toleration is the consequence of many voices seeking to be heard, able to command tolerance because the concerns of one are enough like those voiced by the other segments of the society. Pluralism creates the maximum setting for toleration. The monistic society bestows tolerance from above; the pluralistic evokes it as the product of a response from within.

In the religious dimension, pluralism, while admitting the greatest variation, allows the most significant expression of religious persuasion. This seems paradoxical, since one religious view so quickly encounters another, with resultant fermentation and tension. However, in a pluralistic setting, no single commitment may override another without encountering still another. Thus a series of barriers is raised to prevent an intolerance which destroys the privileges of others. A monistic context lacks that kind of resiliency, being subject to the uncertain grace of the dominant authority. In contrast

to many societies where toleration was a tenuous benefit granted from above, the American experiment of religious diversity makes possible a reasonably consistent pattern of religious toleration.

Evangelism

A new potentially volatile element enters the picture when the Christian concern for evangelism is considered. The Christian's call to evangelism cannot be ignored, despite the awareness of potential conflict in society. The considered opinion of some is that evangelism produces a sure tension with the spirit of toleration. "Live and let live" is a common viewpoint. How may religious toleration coexist with Christian evangelism?

W. K. Jordan, author of the classic study *The Development of Religious Toleration in England*, has proposed a definition of "philosophical toleration" as the attitude of the mind "which has definite and pronounced religious opinions, but which is able and willing to concede to other minds the right to retain and practice contrary religious beliefs . . ." He argues that philosophical tolerance logically leads to a skeptical attitude of mind. The Christian, therefore, who is possessed of an "evangelical intelligence," confronted with immortal souls facing eternity, cannot exercise such tolerance.

Jordan's thesis deserves attention, for it expresses a rather common opinion regarding evangelism. There is a potential tension between personal liberty of conscience and the evangelical concern. How may we harmonize the two, especially in a society where many evangelisms are existent? If one believes that every person is alienated from God, and that Christ is the one Lord and Savior, can that person rest in the peace of indifference? Is there an element of

intolerance naturally arising from the compulsion of the evangelical call?

The answers to these questions require continuation of the task of evangelism. The invitation to Christ must be presented in a pluralistic world—urgently, courteously, thoughtfully. Evangelism entails a persuasion to commitment, not an intolerance which denies to others the right to believe what they consider to be truth. Ultimately every man must give account to God for what he believes, or what conscience requires.

It is precisely here that Christian Good News functions. Since every person answers to God, he or she must be given the revelation of God's will in Christ. The right of religious liberty and the necessity of religious toleration does not circumscribe the exercise of the evangelical call. The insistent proclamation of Christ and the corollary of persuasion to decision is a Christian imperative.

The right to personal beliefs is to be cherished by all. Tolerance of other viewpoints does not demand silence about one's own. In evangelism, the Christian recognizes and values liberty of conscience, seeking nonetheless to persuade. Paul wrote: "Knowing . . . the terror of the Lord, we persuade men" (2 Cor. 5:11). There are forms of persuasion which do not honestly recognize the principle of tolerance of human rights. Persuasion may be exercised without integrity, without recognition of the rule of Christ: "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them."

According to John Wesley, founder of Methodism, evangelism is "offering Christ to humankind." Evangelism in the Wesleyan heritage is a genteel ministry, characterized by compassion, respect, and toleration. Wesley abhorred the exercise of psychological or social forms of coercion to bring about decision. Evangelism

must never be subverted by disrespect for persons, or by denial of liberty, including the right to a free choice. He resisted a certain kind of "Gospel preaching" in which a "pert, self-sufficient animal that has neither sense nor grace [might] bawl out something about Christ. . . ." "neither sense nor grace" is the key phrase. *Sense* and *grace* are always important to the *offering of Christ*. Sometimes persuasion containing sanctions is employed and is thus akin to persecution.

The task of Christian evangelism requires the persuasion of love. Integrity and patience must characterize our efforts. When this is faithfully performed, the evangelical demand may be legitimately carried out in the midst of pluralism. Evangelism, therefore, is not undermined by an appeal to tolerance.

Conclusion

A pluralistic context offers the maximum opportunity and challenge both to toleration *and* evangelism. The evangel really becomes one among many evangelists. Evangelism within a monistic setting struggles either with an affiliation with the dominant authority structure or against it as a tolerated minority expression. In pluralism, the voice of Christian evangelism must compete with the many voices of persuasion heard in society. That is its challenge. However, here is the open door to the announcement that God has incarnated himself among men; that life is God's great gift in His Son; that fulness of life is guaranteed in the Kingdom, which is both realized and hoped for; that the anguish of earthly discord is to be succeeded by the triumph of God's grace in the universe which He created, and redeemed through His Son.

1. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1940), p. 16

We make much of birthdays. Why not really celebrate the birthday of the Church? Begin plans early.

Pentecost Sunday Can Be a Big Day In Your Church This Year!

By Gordon W. Johnson*

WITHOUT TRYING to sound dramatic I would say that the survival—let alone the growth—of any denomination depends upon what we do with Pentecost. In this brief article it is our design to look at Pentecost as to its origin, its significance for the truly sincere Christian, and also some practical suggestions for its observance.

It should be remembered Pentecost has its origin in the Old Testament. The Septuagint (which is the Greek translation of the Old Testament) uses the word *pentekostos* (meaning fiftieth) when speaking of this feast.

The Feast of Pentecost was celebrated on the fiftieth day *after* the Passover, or seven weeks plus one day. It was the first of the two agrarian feasts of Israel and always indicated the end of the barley harvest. Pentecost was the Feast of Weeks and occurred on the day after the completion of the seven-week period.

The central feature of the Pentecost Feast was the presentation of the two loaves of leavened, salted bread. According to the Mishna, the length of one of these loaves was seven hand-

breadths, its width four, and its depth seven fingers. This is important to remember if one wishes to understand the Christian concept of Pentecost which is spoken of later in such passages as Rom. 8:23; 11:16; and James 1:18.

Historians agree that when the Jews suffered banishment from their homeland (i.e., the Exile period), it gave them a new appreciation for Pentecost. After the Exile, it became one of their great pilgrim feasts and served to bind and unite them as a nation. There is evidence of God's hand in this.

As in all things, it took our Lord Jesus himself to fill Pentecost with new meaning and make it a true power source for a thrilling, fruitful life-style. The second chapter of Acts pictures the band of 120 defeated disciples in an upper room waiting in obedience to their Lord's command when He said, "Behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high" (Luke 24:49). And tarry they did. Then Acts 2 tells us *when* and *how* that enduement came. Read Acts 2:1-21 in as many translations as you can lay your hands on.

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Possibly at the very moment of the Spirit's descent, the high priest was in the act of waving the leavened, salted loaf before the Lord in the traditional Pentecostal ceremony that had, by now, lost all true significance. Little did the high priest know that only a "sabbath day's journey" from the Temple the mighty Holy Ghost was falling on humble disciples in an unpretentious upper room. His coming undoubtedly put a shout in the soul of at least some of them, while in the hearts of others, there was such an awe, inspired by the majesty of the Spirit, that they were almost prostrated with "the weight of glory."

The experience *completely changed* the disciples and marked the true beginning of the Christian Church. We have ever since regarded Pentecost as our birthday.

We make much of birthdays, whether among relatives, within our families, or even in our Sunday schools. Since this is so true on a human level, it ought to be true of the birthday of the Church of our Lord. Would not that birthday still be worth commemorating?

Pentecost Sunday will fall on May 14 this year. The celebration of this day in our churches gives us a great opportunity to really hand ourselves over to Him who gave us our being—namely, the Holy Spirit. What a chance for pastors and congregations to measure and evaluate their growth in Christ; to analyze their motives and goals in the light of the Holy Spirit's claim upon their total being! Perhaps we should begin by asking ourselves if we are like that high priest who was "just waving his loaf" before the Lord. (Lots of waving and

loafing going on in the church these days.)

Pastors should take time to prepare their congregations for this day. Selected scripture references dealing with the theme of the Holy Spirit could be printed in the church bulletin beginning in April and continuing through Pentecost Sunday could be suggested which deal in a helpful way with the filling of the Holy Spirit and His working in today's lay person. Starting several weeks ahead, pastors could deal with the grand message of sanctification and the Spirit's fullness at least once a Sunday, climaxing on Pentecost Day itself. The subject has so many aspects that you will only get started by the time May 14 rolls around.

Laymen should be involved in this. A board member, a Sunday school teacher, or an auxiliary leader (also a young person, if you wish) could give a much-prayed-over testimony to heart holiness in the morning service just prior to the pastor's Pentecost Sunday message.

May we mention that all the Early Church fathers highly esteemed the celebration of this day and looked upon it as a day of consecration to the Lord and as a rich opportunity to grow in grace. Chrysostom called Pentecost "the metropolis of festivals." Gregory called it "the day of the Spirit." Jerome said that he felt it was the experience that "gave birth to the notes of the gospel trumpet."

When I think of Pentecost I like what an old man prayed at the funeral of William Booth. He knelt by the casket of the great leader after the crowd had left, and with a soft, weeping voice exclaimed, "O Lord, do it again!"

God did not make a mistake when
He drew His eternal blueprint

Injustice Vs. Victory

WITHIN 12 hours prior to His death on the Cross, Jesus was literally dragged through six trial courts: Once before the retired high priest, Annas; once before the son-in-law of Annas, Caiaphas, the latter serving as high priest; once before the Sanhedrin, the highest tribunal in Jerusalem with the high priest as president of such; once before Herod Antipas; and twice before the Roman procurator, Pilate.

At least 10 reversible errors occurred during this fiasco in injustice.

1. It was against Jewish law to initiate legal procedure on a Jewish Sabbath or on a Feast Day. This regulation was obviously violated, as Jesus was arrested on the Passover Feast Day.

2. No legal procedure could be begun during the night of a trial which was to take place before the Sanhedrin. Jesus was taken as a criminal around midnight on that Thursday—consequently this rule was broken.

3. The Sanhedrin had no jurisdiction concerning capital punishment situations. The Jewish court had been divested of that authority some 40 years prior by the Romans.

4. It was legally wrong for High Priest Caiaphas to have served as judge when he had publicly proclaimed, before the trial itself, that Jesus deserved to die. Caiaphas should have disqualified himself in that he evidently revealed his bias in the case.

5. Caiaphas, serving as judge, should not have tried to press Jesus to confess. This was an attempt to coerce a conviction by the accused's own confession without having supporting evidence. Such violation of law infringed on the person's guarantees against self-incrimination.

6. The Sanhedrin had not convened for a regular meeting, therefore the group was not actually in formal session, and consequently was without legal power.

7. The Roman Empire stipulated that trials were to be public; the grilling before Annas and Caiaphas were held in private, so were legal errors.

8. Jesus was appointed no lawyer. He had no legal counsel. If He himself could not have provided one, then the political system was under obligation to provide Him with one, but no lawyer was given Jesus.

9. It was not legal for the Sanhedrin Court to convict an individual



by
J. Grant Swank, Jr.

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on the same day of the trial itself. The Court could acquit on the same day; but it had to wait at least two days for a verdict of guilty concerning capital punishment cases.

10. Procurator Pilate, having taken the position that Jesus was in fact not guilty, erred in allowing the crazed mob to win out with their verdict of guilty. The judgment on evidence was overruled by the insistence of the mob.

Jesus was confronted with six trial courts prior to the Crucifixion. However, there was a seventh trial of Jesus. This latter was conducted in the courts of heaven before the Judge Father. *Six* is the number of man, but *seven* is the number of Deity. And Deity had the last sentence—the sentence of innocent/victory—in the dedicated life of the Son. The Supreme Court of Eternity pronounced Jesus free from guilt.

Then why was it that Jesus had to undergo such injustice? In part, such was to fulfill the Old Testament prophecies. For example, in Ps. 35:11 there is a prediction that the Messiah will be falsely accused. In Isa. 50:6 there is the prophecy that He will be maltreated, spat upon, and the hair of His beard plucked. In Isa. 50:6 and 53:5 there are the predictions that He will be beaten with stripes. In 53:7-9, it is foretold that He will be condemned and oppressed as well as mercilessly maligned. Yet through it all, the providence was at work to yield the verdict of the seventh trial court in heaven: innocent/victory.

The personal application for the

believer is to trust the same God to be at work just as meticulously in His bringing triumph out of trial. Can the Christian have faith in God to believe that through the injustices of life in the dedicated believer's days there will finally be victory in light of eternity?

Corrie ten Boom wrote, "Sometimes it is difficult to understand the secret of God's plan for this world. But one thing I know, God did not make a mistake when He drew His eternal blueprint. God never makes mistakes. He knows exactly what He is doing."

Then she tells of how she and her sister Betsy, in the concentration camp, prayed that God would heal Betsy, who was so weak and sick. Betsy had said with confidence, "Yes, the Lord will heal me."

But she died the next day, and Corrie could not understand it. When she viewed Betsy's thin body on the concrete floor along with all the other corpses of those who had died that day, it was hard to understand, to believe that God would have a purpose for all that. But she says, "Yet because of Betsy's death, today I am traveling all over the world telling people about Jesus. . . ."

"Now everyplace I go across the world, people tell me how much they love my sister Betsy. . . . She is a blessing for more people because she died than if she had lived. God makes no mistakes."¹

1. "The Coming Tribulation," Corrie ten Boom, *Logos Journal*, Plainfield, N.J., November-December, 1974, pp. 19-20.

A new world opens up to the person who, in his suffering, senses the possibility of using it rather than bearing it. We cannot explain suffering, but we may exploit it.

—W. T. Purkiser

Before "giving up" on the rural church, we should take a careful look at its unique problems and hopeful solutions

The Congregation in the Rural Setting

By Howard A. Kuhnle*

A CHIEF EMPHASIS in the church in recent years is on the urban problem, but the long-time emphasis on the rural situation cannot be pushed under the rug in the necessary continuing consideration of church renewal. Indeed, rural congregations need just as much renewal as urban churches.

A basic question needs to be faced: Is the rural congregation essentially different from the urban church? There are differences, of course. But there are important similarities. Both are concerned with *people*.

For example, the people in Richmondville and Seward, Schoharie County, N.Y., a county whose largest village is less than 5,000 population (where this writer formerly served) are well informed chiefly because of the communication media—particularly radio and television. They know as much about the wars, Russia, the Peace Corps, and the stock market, as "city slickers."

Farmers have large investments these days, especially because of the high cost of land and farm machinery. Interestingly enough, because of

modern technology and research, the number of farms and farmers is decreasing every year, while the average size of farms and the production of milk (and many other items) are increasing. The number of cows is also decreasing.

Farmers are also subject to many changes. The best example from Schoharie County is the use of "filled," "substitute," and skimmed milk, meaning that there is less demand for milk from farmers. Part of the reason is that many people are more and more diet-conscious.

Many farming areas are now "rurban," meaning that some men are employed in factories and do farming on the side. Other farmers drive school buses. Some men work in nearby towns or cities and do not farm. Many wives work in small village factories.

Rural poverty is prevalent since there are "hill-billies" everywhere, including New York state. Moreover, there are the migrants, chief publicity for whose problems has been given through various church groups.

The people in the country churches are *people* who need renewal.

Most people in the country are con-

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servative in all ways. This is especially noticeable in race relationships. For example, some people in rural New York left New York City and vicinity because they wanted to escape from the racial problems in their former areas. Indeed, from their standpoint, they were justified in making the move.

Rural conservatism also means that many country people are often reluctant to accept the guidance of pastors and officials of the church-at-large. Rural churches are also likely to be conservative in the matter of renewal in worship.

Some rural churches are "two-year churches" and other "five-year." This means that the congregation wants a change of pastors after approximately two to five years. To be sure, some pastors are also "two-year" or "five-year" pastors.

So the rural church problem has really been under discussion for a long time. Truly, renewal is as important in the country as in the city! All kinds of solutions have been suggested, although, as in any situation, it is easier to state problems than solutions.

Is any solution possible? There is no easy solution, especially with the current problems of inflation, war and peace, poverty, affluence, materialism, shifting and decreasing rural population, increasing city and suburban population. Indeed, everybody and everything is stirred up by the present unstable conditions.

Chiefly, the answer is likely to be found in proper leadership.

As a matter of principle, the writer, as a pastor, sees the importance of pastoral leadership. Too many pastors won't stay in the country long. Too often the country pastorate is a man's first or last call. His defence is that often the people won't listen to him even though they have called him as one trained and experienced

in the work of the Lord Jesus Christ in and through His church. There are young pastors who come with the idea of staying for a while, getting some experience, making a reputation, then moving along to "greener pastures."

Since many rural and town churches have a small membership, it is difficult to recruit lay leadership. Moreover, the same leaders are also needed in the fire companies, school boards, senior citizens' groups, service clubs, and the like. Village people are as much "overorganized" as those in large cities. Many don't want to give the necessary time. Many act in petty ways and are undependable in carrying out assignments which they have accepted, although not more so than people in city and suburban churches.

A trend all over the country now is the formation of a new type of parish. Often this involves the institution of a "team ministry," the closing of some buildings which are too close together, and in some instances the erection of new buildings in strategic locations. In a sense, this has been going on for a long time because hundreds and even thousands of rural and town churches have been closed in the twentieth century.

Despite the trend to consolidation, many rural people, because of their conservative nature, resist any change, although from the standpoint of the church-at-large, rearrangement of parishes is the only solution.

Ultimately, the best and only real solution is complete renewal, commitment, and consecration of laypeople and pastors to the Lord Jesus Christ as the Saviour of mankind and of the world. "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household" (Acts 16:31, RSV).*

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

Gleams of Immortality

By W. B. Walker*

II. "I Was Not Born to Die"

LET US CONSIDER the answer of instinct to Job's question, "If a man die, shall he live again?" (14:14). This eternal longing seems to be implanted in our very nature. The longing for immortality is instinctive. Every normal soul longs for a life beyond the grave. Practically all nations have believed in it. The Chaldeans, Grecians, Egyptians, and Chinese all believed in it. It was taught by Plato, Homer, Socrates, and Cicero.

This universal impression was imprinted by the Finger of God. There is in the soul of every man a boundless desire to meet God in peace. This is true whether rich or poor, educated or illiterate, heathen or Christian. It matters not how wicked a person may be, there is within him a fear to meet God unprepared.

When the soul comes to the terminus of the way, there is a sincere longing to meet its Maker in peace. Who gave us these eternal longings? Do you believe that a Holy God would give His creatures this normal longing for immortality without providing satisfaction to meet it? Do you believe that man is an organized lie?

Do you believe the Creator will keep His word with us? Truly He will, because He has said, "He is faithful that promised" (Heb. 10:23). Wherever there are wings, the Lord has provided air to match them. Where there are fins, the Lord matches them with water. Where

there is an eye, He gives light. He gives to the ear sound. Where there is perception of the beautiful, He gives beauty to match it.

From our possession of constitutional instinct, we expect existence after death. I do not believe that the Lord gave us these longings to tease us.

The late Dr. Charles Edward Jefferson said, "My belief in immortality is instinctive. I feel I was not born to die. I had it when a boy, and it does not become less with the passing of the years. There is something down deep in me which rebels against the idea of personal extinction. I feel the revulsion most keenly on the death of a man both great and good. This instinctive recoil reaches its climax at the suggestion that Jesus of Nazareth is no more."

Then Dr. Charles R. Brown says, "Can anyone name a single normal desire which does not have over against it a corresponding satisfaction? If men hunger, there is food for them. If they want breath, there is air in abundance. The desire to live on after death is normal, widespread, persistent—why not trust the integrity of the universe to keep tryst also with the demand of human nature?"

So the question of immortality is the age-old question of humanity. It belongs to the scholar and it belongs to the man of the street. Kings and peasants alike ponder over it. It beckoned to us when we were children, and it will haunt us when we are old.

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The men of the schools and the men who cannot read stand side by side and peer into the great beyond and say, "If a man die, shall he live again?" So long as men keep dying, the heart will continue to ask the age-old question of Job. The question is kept fresh by death.

Every age must give its answer to this question. Wherever man has left legible traces of his existence he has left evidences of his belief in a life after death. Changing scenes of earth will not destroy this belief. According to the apostle Paul, immortality is the glorious discovery of Christianity. He said, "But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel" (2 Tim. 1:10).

Dr. Mendell Taylor, in his excellent book *Every Day With the Psalms*, says in commenting on the Twenty-third Psalm, "The Lord is faithful to the homing instinct of the lower forms of life. The robin will fly to the mild climate during winter season. But the next spring it will return to the same tree in the same backyard to build its nest. The salmon will leave the Columbia or some other river and go thousands of miles to its secret feeding flats in the Pacific. Then when its life cycle is about ended, it returns to the same river it left; fights its way up the falls and through rocky shoals and refuses to stop until it is at the same bend in the river where it hatched. If the Lord is faithful to these homing instincts, He will be faithful to fulfill our desire to live, and love, and learn forever."

Practical Points

that make a difference

He Planned How to Leave His Church

Dear Son:

Our pastor left us today for sunnier fields. But as I look back on the transition I am thankful both for his foresight and planning. In the first place, he so arranged his move that the district superintendent was able to come in and meet the board the same week that he announced his resignation. Then the new pastor came to town, and the two men met with the church at a fellowship dinner. Afterwards the new pastor met with the church board and the principal committees. The following week our pastor closed his ministry in the morning and our new pastor opened his in the evening.

There was a good spirit in the move, a line of continuity, and the congregation felt the support of the local and district leadership in it all.

Now I know that it cannot always happen this way—and for us it hasn't in the past. But I felt that our pastor moved deliberately to work it out so that we could absorb the shock and look forward toward new leadership.

He was also concerned about his family in all of this. He helped his wife in the packing, as did the congregation. He was sensitive to the needs and traumas of his children. His anticipation paid off in every way—both for the congregation and the pastoral family.

Pastor Downey is fitting in well and adjusting more rapidly than I ever anticipated. A lot of the credit goes to our former pastor, who paved the way.

How about spending a few days with us during the week sometime?

Love,
Dad



Compiled by the Department of Stewardship |

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

General Superintendent Greathouse



Leading Your People in Worship

WHEN YOUR PEOPLE gather on the Lord's day, assume they have come to worship—to see the Lord high and lifted up, His glory filling the temple; to worship and adore the risen Jesus and discover in a deeper way the meaning of His Lordship; to experience a new outpouring and infilling of the Holy Spirit.

Worship, however, does not “just happen” when God's people meet. It may. But usually it occurs when certain forces are operative. At the top of the list of these motivating factors is the minister himself. Assuming you have prayerfully planned a service which should usher your congregation into the presence of the Triune God, what is your role? Permit me to share a few suggestions.

1. Anticipate God's manifest glory. He will be there. Expectation is the key.
2. Enter the pulpit in the awareness of the Presence, with joy and praise. The general preparation is a holy life. The special preparation is a time of waiting before the Lord. Let the fire burn within your own soul!
3. Call your people to worship. Let your voice be the first to be heard. But never say, “Good morning, folks; nice to see you here. How good of you to come.” If it were your house, this would be appropriate. You, and the people with you, have gathered in God's house. It isn't your service; it is His. You aren't in charge. He is. He is God; you are but His servant. The people, and you, are there together to meet the living God.
4. Lead your people in worship. Avoid distracting conversation on the platform. Sing with the spirit and with the understanding. Read the Scripture reverently and with interpretation. Permit God to minister to your own being throughout the service.
5. Bring your people into God's presence with you. As their priest, you represent them before God—with all their needs, their hurts, their victories, their failures, and inarticulate yearnings. Let your pastoral prayer gather all these together as you lead the congregation into the holiest.
6. As God's priest, you represent your people before God. As His prophet, you represent Him to them. You are His mouthpiece. Preach the

Word. Prepare to preach as though all depended upon you, then rely on the Spirit as though you had made no preparation. Expect God to speak through you. Look your people in the eyes. Don't be bound to your notes. Above all, don't be glued to a manuscript. Be free in the Spirit! Be responsive to the congregation and let the people help you preach. Be courageous but tender. "Comfort the afflicted; afflict the comfortable." Aim at results. Know where you are going, and by God's help get there quickly!

7. Close the service appropriately, ordinarily with a carefully selected hymn. Encourage the people to respond to what God has said to them through your sermon. Expect a miracle. When the service has reached its conclusion, give the benediction. The great benedictions of the Bible should be committed to memory. If your memory is poor, type them out and have them close by.

Finally, train your people to remain quietly in their pews as you take your accustomed place at the close of the service. "Let all things be done decently and in order" (1 Cor. 14:40).

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Paul Martin

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1 Cor. 1:18

"People are made aware of their spiritual needs in revival services and respond to God's call in their life who may not have by other means."

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CST—Alive and Well

The legislation of the 19th General Assembly made a number of organizational changes, some of which had a direct bearing on the work of Christian Service Training.

These organizational changes were designed to strengthen, not weaken, the whole cause of lay training in the Church of the Nazarene. The importance of lay leadership has not diminished. Marion Lawrence said, "Leadership, humanly speaking, is the only problem before the church."

John R. Mott said that the main problem in the church's life was that its forces were immobile. It cannot, of course, be otherwise unless due attention is given to dedicated and capable leadership. In *Better Leaders for Your Church*, Weldon Crossland says, "Four indispensables are to be found in every successful church. They are program, organization, morale, and leadership; but the greatest of these is leadership."

Christian Service Training is now the lay training sector of the Department of Education and the Ministry. Adjustments are being made in this new working relationship as rapidly as possible. While these adjustments are being made, the work of CST continues to have a vital ministry. The statistics for the 1976-77 assembly year were most heartening. A total of 74,007 credits were reported to the General CST office. Nearly 2,300 churches reported training classes. So in this period of transition lay training is alive and well.

Not all adjustments can be made immediately. In a number of areas there are texts that have been outdated by the organizational changes. The replacement of these texts will take years. The new Division of Christian Life whose training programs, such as Teacher

Training and SS Administration, serviced by the CST office, are working to update all their texts or find replacements. This task is a gigantic one. In the meantime, all of us must do our best to provide opportunities and programs for lay education in the local church.

Even in transition the resources of CST are helping our people. The following letter from Pastor William O. Hand of our Bloomingdale Church in Savannah, Ga., says it well: "Thank you for your letter of October 10. I am honored to receive the Certified Teacher certificate. This is a great program. I appreciate the privilege of having a part in it.

"A little over a year ago we started the CST program in our church. In order to set an example, I thought it would help for me as pastor to take a few books to show how important I thought this program was. I soon got hooked. Most of the books I had never read as a pastor for more than 30 years. I have enjoyed each book very much. I believe I am a better preacher as a result.

"In a little over a year my little church has received more than 300 credits, won the top district award, have 11 Registered, 7 Qualified, and 3 Certified teachers. In two years our SS has grown from an 18 average to 55 last year, 64 last month, and so far 69 this month. In two years we have received 39 members into the church.

"God receives all the glory, but much of the credit goes to an informed laity, as a result of CST.

"Thank you for all your work in producing and correcting papers to help us. We shall continue to study CST and promote it in any way possible."

Mission INSPIRATION is important . . . but Mission INFORMATION is also necessary!

Plan to use the new 1978-79 missionary materials.

Missionary Books

The Rising Caribbean Tide, by John Smee, is the new resource book which provides interesting, up-to-date information on the work of the Church of the Nazarene in the Caribbean area.

1978-79 Missionary Resource Manual, by Mary Alice Smee, gives suggestions on ways to present interesting, inspirational lessons based on this year's resource book.

Adult Books

Miracles Are Happening in the Dominican Republic, by Louie and Ellen Bustle
Stop, Look, and Listen, by Paul Miller
Puerto Rico Profiles, by Juanita Porter
You Can't Tell if It's Sharp Until You Cut, by Thomas Pound, with Jerald Funk
Ever the Pioneer, by Dowie Swarth, with John Oster
A Balm in Gilead, by Helen Temple

Junior Books

Missionary

To Grandma with Love, by Kendra Seaman, with her parents
Children from the Gaps, by Helen Temple
Treasures from the Land of El Dorado, by Alberta Danner

Biography

A Song Is Born—Haldor Lillenas, by Bill Young

Fiction

The Mystery of the Dunes, by Margaret Howard

Christian Living

Only Dopes Use Drugs, by William Goodman

Primary Books

Letters from Kendra, by Kendra Seaman (adapted for primary by Elizabeth Jones)

Stories from El Dorado, from **Treasures from the Land of El Dorado**, by Alberta Danner (adapted for primary by Robert Troutman)

The Bearded Island, from **Children from the Gaps**, by Helen Temple (adapted for primary by Jeanette Wienecke)

See the 1978-79 missionary slide sets!

Adult Study Sets

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Belize
Dominican Republic
Haiti
Leeward Islands

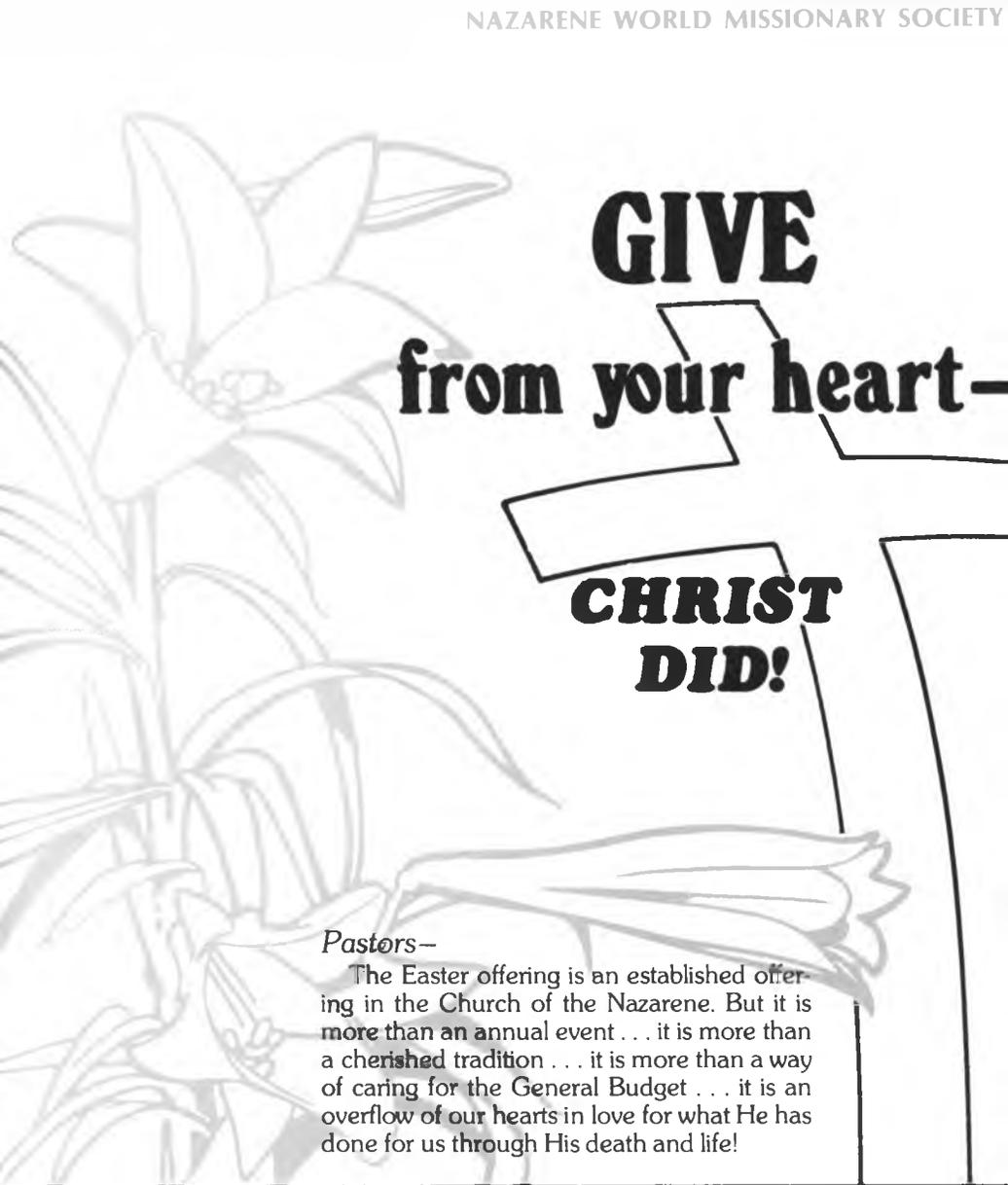
Children's Study Sets

Bahamas
Dominican Republic
Haiti

Children's Missionary Lessons

Caribbean Cruise, compiled by Alberta Danner. The packet contains material for 12 complete missionary lessons, 3 posters, 1 map, 20 stencils ready for handwork (both junior and primary materials). A *must* for every church!

USE INFORMATION TO INCREASE INSPIRATION!



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For full information, write: Melvin ShROUT, 6401 The Paseo, Kansas City, MO 64131

1976-77

DISTRICT RECORD

for payment of the Pensions and Benevolence budget

Annual premiums for Primary Group Term Life Insurance for ministers are paid by the Department of Pensions and Benevolence. "Double Coverage" is automatic to all ministers for the 1977-78 assembly year if: (1) they are insured under this plan, and (2) the district of which they are a member paid 90 percent of its official Pensions and Benevolence budget apportionment during the 1976-77 assembly year.

The Pensions and Benevolence budget is equal to 4 percent of the total spent for local purposes, except monies spent for buildings and improvements and church indebtedness, in the past assembly year (4 percent of the sum of Column 9 less Columns 1 and 2, in the pastor's annual church financial report).

A minister, if his church fails to pay its Pensions and Benevolence budget in full each year without sufficient reason, may face service-year penalties at retirement.

1977 Summary of 90 Percent Districts



DISTRICT PERCENTAGE

* Hawaii	109.62
* Western Latin American	101.63
* Maine	100.63
* Minnesota	100.06
* Alaska	100.00
Central Latin American	98.92
Oregon Pacific	98.42
Kansas	97.82
Intermountain	97.30
Canada Central	96.88
Northern California	96.65
Illinois	96.56
Northwest	96.23
Canada West	95.95
Southwest Oklahoma	95.89
Northwest Indiana	95.82
North American Indian	95.33
Nebraska	94.84
Rocky Mountain	94.79
Canada Atlantic	94.74
Washington	94.53
Georgia	94.32
Dallas	94.21
Michigan	93.80

Chicago Central	93.68
Kansas City	93.53
San Antonio	93.33
Pittsburgh	93.20
Southeast Oklahoma	93.05
Canada Pacific	93.01
New Mexico	93.01
West Virginia	92.89
North Arkansas	92.84
Southwestern Ohio	92.48
Central California	92.42
Mississippi	92.26
Northwest Oklahoma	92.26
Northeastern Indiana	92.16
Arizona	92.04
Washington Pacific	91.99
West Texas	91.87
Eastern Michigan	91.62
Northwestern Ohio	91.62
Colorado	91.46
Sacramento	91.39
North Florida	91.29
Alabama	91.27
Eastern Latin American	91.10
Iowa	90.97
Indianapolis	90.93
East Tennessee	90.77



Upstate New York	90.77
Philadelphia	90.72
Houston	90.71
Kentucky	90.68
South Carolina	90.62
Southwest Indiana	90.54
Southern California	90.53
Louisiana	90.49
Southern Florida	90.27
Akron	90.20
Dakota	90.16
Virginia	90.16
Central Ohio	90.14
Central Florida	90.12
Los Angeles	90.08
Northwestern Illinois	90.08
Joplin	90.03
Eastern Kentucky	90.00
New England	90.00
New York	90.00
North Carolina	90.00
North Central Ohio	90.00
Northeast Oklahoma	90.00
South Arkansas	90.00
Tennessee	90.00
Wisconsin	90.00
Missouri	82.84

DENOMINATIONAL AND DISTRICT PENSIONS AND BENEVOLENCE BUDGET PAYMENT RECORD

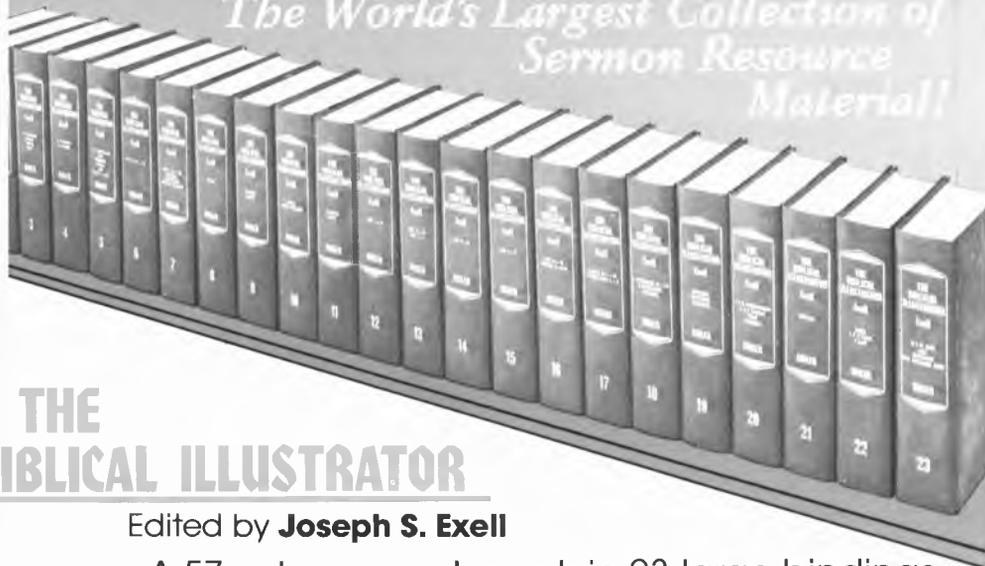
The shaded spaces indicate each year the district paid at least 90 percent of its Pensions and Benevolence budget.

DISTRICT	1974	1975	1976	1977	
Akron					90.20
Alabama					91.27
Alaska					100.00 *
Arizona					92.04
Canada Atlantic					94.74
Canada Central					96.88
Canada Pacific					93.01
Canada West					95.95
Central California					92.42
Central Florida					90.12
Central Latin American					98.92
Central Ohio	N.A.	N.A.			90.14
Chicago Central					93.68
Colorado					91.46
Dakota					90.16
Dallas					94.21
East Tennessee					90.77
Eastern Kentucky					90.00
Eastern Latin American					91.10
Eastern Michigan	N.A.	N.A.			91.62
Georgia					94.32
Hawaii					109.62 *
Houston					90.71
Illinois					96.56
Indianapolis					90.93
Intermountain					97.30
Iowa					90.97
Joplin					90.03
Kansas					97.82
Kansas City					93.53
Kentucky					90.68
Los Angeles					90.08
Louisiana					90.49
Maine					100.63 *
Michigan					93.80
Minnesota					100.06 *
Mississippi					92.26
Missouri					82.84
Nebraska					94.84
New England					90.00
New Mexico					93.01
New York					90.00
North American Indian	N.A.	N.A.			95.33
North Arkansas					92.84
North Carolina					90.00
North Central Ohio					90.00
North Florida					91.29
Northeast Oklahoma					90.00
Northeastern Indiana					92.16
Northern California					96.65
Northwest					96.23
Northwest Indiana					95.82
Northwest Oklahoma					92.26
Northwestern Illinois					90.08
Northwestern Ohio					91.62
Oregon Pacific					98.42
Philadelphia					90.72
Pittsburgh					93.20
Rocky Mountain					94.79
Sacramento					91.39
San Antonio					93.33
South Arkansas					90.00
South Carolina					90.62
Southeast Oklahoma					93.05
Southern California					90.53
Southern Florida					90.27
Southwest Indiana					90.54
Southwest Oklahoma					95.89
Southwestern Ohio					92.48
Tennessee					90.00
Upstate New York					90.77
Virginia					90.16
Washington					94.53
Washington Pacific					91.99
West Texas					91.87
West Virginia					92.89
Western Latin American	N.A.	N.A.			101.63 *
Wisconsin					90.00

DENOMINATIONAL AVERAGE

92.66 92.32 93.26 92.38

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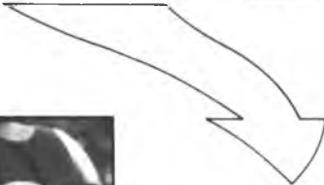
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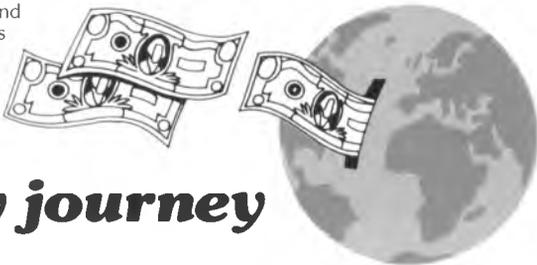
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THE PREACHER'S WIFE



The Reconciler

HER NAME IS RECONCILER. She is a rare adhesive owned by the Master Creator-Mender. The Master designed her especially for His most delicate projects. They work side by side creating works of art and mending those masterpieces that are broken in the rush of life.

One day Reconciler became curious about herself and her role in the workshop. "Master," she timidly probed, "why do You always make sure I'm not seen when we mend those china teacups? Don't You think it would be good if others saw me and knew what good work I am doing?"

The Master replied, "I place you where I need you the most. I ask you to do the job you do best. I approve. Isn't that enough reward?"

"O Master, it is! But sometimes I feel so insignificant."

"Reconciler, let me tell you how es-

sential you are to my work. My work of creating and mending could not possibly go on without you. I cannot get in between the broken parts to hold them together except as I place you there to make that bond. Also, the jobs where I use you require total self-involvement. I cannot use my other glues which participate halfheartedly. Finally, I made you strong so that with you at the center, my creations do not fall apart under the stress of everyday use. I don't know what I'd do without you!"

God needs all of us, but there is a special group that appears indispensable. Paul writes, "All things are of God, who . . . hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation" (2 Cor. 5:18). I believe that the ideal pastor's wife is the most strategically placed reconciler. Her main ingredient is self-giving love. She is the glue that holds her husband, her home, and even her church together.

In the husband-wife relationship, many times it is the woman who first senses a break or a problem. Filled with self-giving love, she tries to mend that broken relationship or help solve the problem. Such support is essential to the pastor's ministry at the church, because he cannot minister effectively with problems drag-



by
Jeannle Orjala

Student, Nazarene
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(Prize-winning essay
on the ideal preacher's
wife)

ging him down. The wife is a lifter, not a discourager.

Sometimes the pastor faces situations with which he cannot deal effectively because they involve other women in the church. A divorced woman I know was so lonesome for male company that she could not be her true self with the pastor. She opened up to me, and with someone to listen, she began to solve her problems creatively. The alert pastor's wife is ready to step into those ministries designed especially for her.

But the home is the main field for the work of God's chosen reconciler. The busy, irregular life of the parsonage family tends to pull apart this sacred creation. So the wife must try harder than others to instill a sense of security and structure in the lives of her children. Strength for this task comes only through a solid relationship with her God. There is a sense of poise and satisfaction that the children pick up when Mother is in perfect tune with her Master.

Holding the home together does not mean that the wife is the dominator of her husband and children. One of the main characteristics of a good mending job is that the glue is not seen. The ideal pastor's wife is willing to work behind the scenes. She builds up her husband and children in areas in which they are gifted. She takes joy in their accomplishments as if they were her own—and they are! She also knows that the Father who sees in secret is rewarding her.

The unique position of the pastor's wife is that she is an indispensable reconciler in the church. She has access to the thoughts and feelings of the women—and thus, the families. Her womanly, Spirit-heightened sensitivity detects potential problems. She communicates these to her husband, and the wise husband listens.

The reconciler also works to bond the needs of the church together with

the talents of the members. Pastor and wife are both talent scouts for God's game of life. Both have access to their own sets of people. As the wife works to bring out the best in her husband and children, so she seeks to bring out the best in her church members. Often this means training others in her field of expertise and encouraging them as they take over.

Reconciler is more than the bond that holds husband, children, and church together. She is called by God to reconcile all people to Him. She studies to learn the basic skills with which to communicate her faith to an alienated sinner. Practice and self-giving love make her one of the best personal evangelists in the church. But her concern does not end with winning. She helps organize follow-up workers and seeks help for the emotional and physical problems of the new converts. She is a student of the Bible and a student of mankind.

The pastor and his wife are in ministry together. Each has unique and indispensable gifts to bring to God's service. Together they include their children in ministry. As a child I remember distinctly how my parents included us children in every project and outing possible. Of course, there were times when the invitation said, "No children." And we did not go. We knew, though, that Mom was unhappy with the host. The simple act of taking time to plan to include children separates the ideal parent from the average.

The time pays off. In our day when most parents are wondering where their 19-year-old son is, my mother has no fear. Last Sunday Jon brought his friends home for some fellowship after church. Mom discovered a brown paper sack in the refrigerator and asked what it was. Jon answered, "That's a surprise!"

Later on as Mom was turning in for

the night, she heard the voice of her son telling the others that they would like to have Communion together. The surprise in the paper bag was the bread and grape juice. My self-giving mother rejoiced in the Lord as she

heard the young voices lifted in prayer and thanksgiving to God. Together, she and Dad had helped to prepare the next generation of reconcilers—children in tune with the Great Reconciler.



Prayer for the Morning After

O Lord,
This is the morning after board
meeting.
I am impressed. I am depressed.
I am amused. I am sad.
I am glad—but I feel bad
Because my brother frets and hurts,
And cannot relate to a board situation.

O Lord,
He is bothered, and he blames.
He seeks short-term solutions
To long-term problems.
Others seek no solutions at all
And are content to just stand by.
Where, oh, where is the line for action?

Dear God,
Give us some short-term emergency
measures
Along with long-term solutions.
Make my mind fertile—not futile,
And my soul open to receive construc-
tive criticism.
May the ache I carry with me day
and night
Somehow be redemptive.

O God,
May my brother who gave his verdict,
“I’m disgusted and quitting,”
Hang in there,
To find solutions
Which will be satisfactory to all,
And pleasing to you.

Jesus,
I have read what has been written so
far.
You see the tears on my cheeks.
I hope they are not tears of self-pity,
But the sign of a broken heart.
I do want to be accepted by *You*.
May faith find fertile soil in broken-
ness.

O Lord Jesus,
Please forbid that frustration
And panic should overwhelm me,
To drag me down into the pit of
despair.
When others panic, help me to see *You*
Standing before Pilate saying,
“You have no power over me except
as God allows.”

O Lord God,
Forgive me for chaffing under what
You allow.
Forgive me for being galled under the
rigors of this assignment.
To panic, I must not. I shall not—by
Your grace.
Help me to build on firm foundations,
Moving steadily ahead, sowing the
seed,
Discouraged by neither cloud nor rain.

In Jesus’ name,
Amen.

—Anonymous





Exegetical Studies in the Scriptures

Frank G. Carver, Professor, Point Loma College

The Interpretation of Micah 6:8

“He has told you, O man, what is good;
And what does the Lord require of you
But to do justice, to love kindness,
And to walk humbly with your God?”
(NASB).¹

I. The Historical Question: Where do we find our text? What was the life setting of Micah?

In what historical form? Micah belongs to the shorter prophetic writings known as the “minor prophets.” The book of Micah is a collection of sayings and reports (of visions, symbolic actions, etc.) originating from the ministry of the prophet, preserved both in written and in oral form until arriving at their present arrangement.²

From what historical setting? The ministry of Micah belongs to the last half of the eighth century B.C. (1:1), most of his extant oracles coming from the reign of Hezekiah.³ Micah stood in the company of the eighth-century prophets—Amos, Hosea, and Isaiah, his great contemporary. The new feature in the

preaching of these men, shocking to their hearers, was that God “was summoning Israel before his judgment seat, and that he had in fact already pronounced sentence upon her.”⁴ Divine wrath was a fact for these men on “their contemporaries’ whole way of life, their social and economic attitudes, their political behavior and, in particular, their cultic practice.”⁵ But their proclamation of judgment led to the proclamation of salvation, salvation on the basis of fresh acts of God. Because of God’s judgment the prophets put Israel’s life on the new basis of God’s future salvation; they called not for a new legalism, but for a life in relationship to God, founded not on past performance but on God.

Micah himself came from Moresheth (1:1), a small village in the hill country of Judah southwest of Jerusalem. He was probably a free farmer with firsthand knowledge of the grievances he spoke against.⁶ He prophesied at a time when Judah existed as a vassal state under the increasing encroachment of mighty Assyria, a political fact that informed the eighth-century prophets, announcement of judgment. In Micah’s day both Damascus (Syria) and Samaria (Northern

1. From the *New American Standard Bible*, copyright © The Lockman Foundation, 1960, 1962, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975.

2. George Fohrer, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, tran. David Green (New York: Abingdon Press, 1965), pp. 349, 360.

3. Leslie P. Allen, *The Books of Joel, Obadiah, Jonah, and Micah*, *The New International Commentary on the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1976), p. 265.

4. Gerhard von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, tran. D. M. G. Stalker (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1965), II, 178.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 179.

6. Fohrer, p. 443.

Israel) had fallen and even Judah was overrun in 701 B.C. by Assyrian troops because of Hezekiah's seditious activity. But Jerusalem was not captured and Hezekiah was let off with fines and some loss of territory.⁷

Micah's day saw an influx of material prosperity. But it spawned a selfish materialism in which greedy men dispossessed the poor of their land (2:1 f., 8 f.), corrupt rulers not only did not dispense justice but were themselves guilty of cruel oppression (3:1-3, 9-11), and even the clergy uttered no rebuke, for its only concern was its living (3:5, 11). Religion became a means of achieving human desires and the age-old sanctions of the divine covenant were shrugged off. For Micah, the most heinous crime of all was the exploitation of the poor on which he fiercely pronounced the judgment of God (2:2).⁸

In this situation, Micah, linking together the socioeconomic, religious, and national situations, proclaimed Judah on the brink of disaster under the judgment of God. Micah's controlling theme was the universal God of the covenant who holds His people responsible. On the basis of His covenant righteousness and covenant promises, He is the God who destroys and delivers, the God of judgment and the God of salvation.⁹

Although it is impossible to know how soon Micah's oracles were committed to writing and to retrace precisely the process of their collecting and arranging, the final editor appears to stand "in the post-exilic era before the appearance of the dynamic Ezra and Nehemiah, who set the struggling community on its feet."¹⁰ This means that we understand the book in at least two settings, that of the prophet Micah sketched above and that of the final editor. It is significant also that the prophecies of Micah functioned as a living tradition in the life of the community in the intervening centuries.

The postexilic editor intended the oracles of Micah to serve as a digest of the counsel of God for those who had re-

turned to their homeland. The ministry of Micah, seen in the light of the subsequent history in which God's wrath is vividly seen at work, serves as an implicit warning that the path of disobedience leads to national disaster. Having taken to heart the message of judgment, the people can now rightly await the renewal of salvation history, the promise of a divinely guided future (7:8-20). The book was probably issued in its final form for use in Temple worship.¹¹

How does Micah 6:8 function in the book?

Following the heading (1:1), the book of Micah reveals a threefold structure.¹² "Penalty and Promise" characterize 1:2—2:13 as oracles of warning (1:2—2:4 are crowned by a short oracle of hope, 2:12-13); "Hope Beyond Affliction" summarizes 3:1—5:15, as oracles of distress and hope concerning Jerusalem and Israel intermingle; and "Grace Triumphant over Sin" covers the final combination of "messages of reproof and lament" (6:1—7:7) with "confident hopes and prayers" (7:8-20). Our text falls in "God's case against Israel" (6:1-8) which opens the final major section. The case against Israel is stated in vv. 1-5, the defendant poses self-justifying questions in vv. 6-7, and v. 8 is the prophet's answer, elaborating Yahweh's requirements of His covenant people.¹³ Here is the prophetic declaration of the demand of God upon His people in the face of past failure, the only foundation of hope for the future.

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

How does the writer seek to communicate his message?

What is the form¹⁴ and structure of the text? In 6:1-8 two quite diverse forms or genres have been utilized to construct a third. Verses 1-5 represent a legal case in which Yahweh brings a grievance against Israel, and vv. 6-8 are molded on a

11. *Ibid.*, pp. 252, 256.

12. The analysis of structure followed here is that of Allen, pp. 257-61.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 364.

14. When questions of form are not handled by the commentaries used, the analysis of structure should be done first as preliminary to making one's own judgment as to the form(s) represented by the text.

7. Allen, p. 239f.

8. Armor D. Peisker, "The Book of Micah," *Beacon Bible Commentary* (Kansas City, Mo.: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1966), V, 192.

9. Allen, pp. 235, 257.

10. *Ibid.*, pp. 251 f.

cultic entrance liturgy¹⁵ which consists of “an individual’s inquiry as to the conditions of admission to the sanctuary and an official answer.”¹⁶ The law court and the sanctuary furnish the dress in which Micah presents a recital of Yahweh’s saving deeds and a call to obedience, the two motifs of the covenantal formulation.¹⁷ This resultant form is “an impressive unity built around the theme of the divine covenant and its outworking in human society.”¹⁸ Verse 8 is a comprehensive call to covenant obedience expressing in catechetical form “the quintessence of the commandments as the prophets understood them,”¹⁹ the expected life of Israel in the light of divine judgment.

The structure of the covenantal formulation as a whole and of its concluding element (v. 8) is now evident:

6:1-5—Yahweh’s case against Israel

6:1-2—The summons of the people to trial and the call to the witnesses

6:3-5—The indictment, Yahweh’s recital of His saving acts

6:6-7—The defendant’s self-justifying questions

6:8—The prophetic answers, Yahweh’s covenant requirements

6:8a—Introduction: “He has told you, O man, what is good.”

6:8bcde—Catechetical summary definition of the covenant demand

8b—The leading question: “And what does the LORD require of you?”

8c—The first requirement: “But to do justice.”

8d—The second requirement: “To love kindness.”

8e—The third requirement: “And to walk humbly with your God?”

Our text functions in the structure of the covenantal formulation as the prophetic answer to Israel’s questioning of vv. 6-7. The people’s questions are their repudiation of Yahweh’s accusation that they have failed to remember or ap-

preciate all He has done for them (vv. 1-5). Their occasional delinquency has always been repaired quickly. They are offended by the attack which to them is quite unwarranted.²⁰ Raised, however, is the basic question about the response God wants from His people to which v. 8 is the authoritative answer as it sets forth Yahweh’s covenant requirements.

Introduction (8a): “He has told you, O man, what is good.” Israel, personified as an individual worshiper in vv. 6-7, is now addressed by the prophet as “man” (*adam*), a term often used collectively. It can stress what is creaturely in the human constitution in contrast to divine power and glory. Here the thought of the distance between Yahweh and Israel is picked up (v. 6) and the intention is to remind the people of their subordination to God and to cut them down to size after their presumptuous retort.²¹

The answer is traditional: “He has told you.” The message had been given long before and repeated regularly in the cultic proclamation. The appeal is to the summons to obey, the other side of the covenant formulation (1 Sam. 12:24). It is to the “good” as the stipulations of the divine covenant which have been previously accepted in the history of God’s people (Hos. 8:1-3).²² The call to the good is the call to life, life in covenant relationship with God (Amos 5:14, 4).

Catechetical summary definition of the covenant demand (8bcde). The prophet, posing as a priest, follows the form of the entrance liturgy in giving a short catechetical answer to the inquirer. His words form “a classic definition of the people’s duty toward each other and toward their God.”²³ Summed up in a single sentence are the legal, ethical, and spiritual requirements of true religion,²⁴ the great distillation of the prophet proclamation (Amos 5:24; Hos. 6:6; Isa. 30:15; 57:15).

The leading question (8b): “And what does the LORD require of you?” This lead-in phrase articulates the question latent in vv. 6-7 to which the following demands are the revealed answer.

The first requirement (8c): “But to do

15. Other examples are Psalm 15 and Isa. 33:14-16.

16. Allen, p. 363. We are dependent here on his identification of the forms utilized by Micah.

17. Examples are Exod. 19:3-6; Joshua 24, and 1 Samuel 12. See the similar covenant lawsuit in Deuteronomy 32 and Psalm 50.

18. Allen, p. 363.

19. von Rad, p. 187.

20. Allen, p. 371.

21. *Ibid.*

22. *Ibid.*, p. 373. See Deuteronomy 10.

23. *Ibid.*; see Hos. 12:6; Matt. 7:12; Mark 12:29-31.

24. Peisker, p. 223.

justice." Concrete action in the context of the human community to which one belongs is listed as Yahweh's first demand. The Old Testament man belonged to a covenant community; the people were bound together in a common relationship with God. Social and moral standards, founded on their common commitment to Yahweh, were to be observed in their relations with one another. This social obligation which the Israelite owed to the God of the people to which he belonged, the prophets often summed up as "justice."²⁵

"Justice" is a social justice, justice administered impartially (3:1-7) and practiced by the individual. It is doing the "right" and seeing to it that the "right" is done in the covenant community. It excludes all forms of oppression, particularly in Micah's use, the economic exploitation of the poor (2:2, 8-9). Justice "calls for a sense of responsibility toward weaker members of society lest they go to the wall. It insists on the rights of others; it demands an instinct for *social preservation*."²⁶

The second requirement (8d): "to love kindness." Communal obligations continue to be stressed, but now the language is that of relationship, "expressing an attitude of covenant obligation."²⁷ "To love" indicates a deliberate choice, a disposition of the will with the resultant sincerity of feeling. But the great word is "kindness" (*hesed*), meaning covenant loyalty often translated as "lovingkindness" or "steadfast love." First it describes the covenant "loyalty of Yahweh toward Israel, his quality of constancy toward his own."²⁸ God in grace had taken upon himself covenant obligations He was honor bound to fulfill.

Second, Israel was to have the same attitude of heart toward God. In this word of mutual loyalty, man's faithfulness to God was included along with God's faithfulness to man (Hos. 6:4).

Third, as here in Micah, "kindness" describes the manifestation toward one another of this same covenant loyalty. Deeper than the legal or external doing of

the "right" in social relationships is an ethic which, like the command to love in the New Testament, takes its cue from the revelation of the heart of God. Here is "the high ideal of a national solidarity enriched and empowered by the solidarity of the divine commitment to Israel (Hos. 4:12).²⁹ Micah summons the nation "to reflect in every corner of their society God's own concern for them,"³⁰ for only as they do, will the covenant purpose of God reach its goal in a society where theology and ethics are one.

The third requirement (8e): "And to walk humbly with your God." The character and will of God was the implicit ground of the legal and ethical requirements of the covenant. This divine dimension is now explicitly expressed as "a careful walk with God."³¹ The verb *to walk humbly* occurs elsewhere in the Old Testament only in Prov. 11:2 in contrast to pride. It appears to belong to the language of wisdom connoting the idea of discernment or circumspection.³² Involved in Micah's counsel was a life of discerning fellowship with God (Eph. 5:15, 17). Allen suggests that "the response God sought was a comprehensive one of constant consideration of his grace in the past and of his will for the present, and a readiness to be guided by him in all life's ventures."³³

What is the writer attempting to accomplish in the passage?

The historical setting of our text in its present literary context is broadly the use of the prophetic oracles of the eighth-century Micah in the two subsequent centuries of the life of the people of Israel. In continuity with its function in the prophet's own ministry, Mic. 6:8 authoritatively declares in a catechetical summary Yahweh's demand upon Israel in view of God's radical judgment on their history. The neglected covenant requirements are restated on a basis new to the prophet's hearers, for their hope as a people of God is no longer possible on the basis of past faithfulness in cult or ethic, but only on the basis of the saving acts of God in the future. Set forth in this con-

25. Allen, p. 373.

26. *Ibid.*

27. *Ibid.*

28. *Ibid.*

29. *Ibid.*

30. *Ibid.*, p. 374.

31. *Ibid.*

32. von Rad, p. 186.

33. Allen, p. 374.

text of judgment and salvation, Israel's existence as defined by the prophetic re-interpretation of the ancient covenant in eschatological perspective, is God's requirements for His people in their continuing present.

Required is the revealed "good" of God. As von Rad insists, "there is no demand here for ethics instead of a cult, as if the prophet's desire was to lead men from one set of laws into another. No, something quite simple is contrasted with the arduous performance of works which can end only in destruction—a way along which men can walk before God."³⁴ This is the way (1) of justice executed in human affairs and (2) of a commitment to covenant loyalty in life's relationships, (3) a way enabled by and the substance of a careful walk with God. Excluded is any misunderstanding of the nature and purpose of the covenant in a reliance on form rather than substance, on a detailed or extravagant observance of law or ritual to the neglect of the heart's obedience to God fulfilling the intent of the obligations of the covenant. Yahweh's sovereignty extends to the whole of one's life and character.

III. The Life-Response Question: How does our text apply to contemporary life?

What do I hear?³⁵

What do I proclaim?—a sermon: The Life of Worship.

Introduction

1. God's people were under judgment for failing of His covenant requirements (vv. 1-5; 2:1f., 8f.; 3:1-3, 5, 9-11).

2. The people, offended by the charge, asked in exaggerated form the question,

34. von Rad, p. 187.

35. See previous issue for suggested subquestions. Again, space prohibits the articulation of this indispensable question in the interpretative process.

Not what you own,
But what you give;
Not what you learn,
But how you live;
Not how you talk,
But what you do,
Make up the person
Known as you.

What worship and services does the Yahweh really require? (vv. 6-7).

3. The prophet answers that the required worship is life, the life of the revealed covenant will of God for His people in v. 8.

The Foundation of the Life of Worship: "He has told you, O man, what is good."

1. God has revealed to man His good.

a. In the old covenant, Deut. 10:12-13, Amos 5:14, 4; Hos. 8:1-3.

b. In the new covenant, Mark 10:18, Rom. 12:1-2.

2. God has revealed to man his creatureliness (Gen. cc. 1—3).

The Fundamentals of the Life of Worship: "And what does the Lord require of you But to do justice, to love kindness, And to walk humbly with your God?"

1. Worship is a life given to justice in the human community.

2. Worship is a life committed to the real needs of one's fellowman.

3. Worship is a life lived in discerning fellowship with God.

Conclusion

The worship that God requires is that we live in His presence, discerning who He truly is in relation to men, and thus sensitive to the depth of our own need and the needs of others. It comprehends an ethic that flows totally from the grace of God.

God's Abiding Love

God's love can mean so many things,

Because it is so vast.

It gives us hope for future days,

And saves us from the past.

It shines down through the clouds
above,

And brightens saddened hearts,
And brings real joy in serving Him—
that's what His love imparts.

His love can mean a peace of mind

While wars around us roar,

And true contentment through His
grace;

His love is evermore.

—Linda Maurice

THE STARTING POINT

The Journey of Faith

In Ephesians 2, there is a context that spells out the journey of faith. It breaks down into these three progressions:

1. The journey begins in *darkness* (sin) as mentioned in vv. 1-3 (NIV). From the context, three observations could be made about this life of sin: its only destination is death; its only companion is darkness; its only view is despair. What future is there to a life like that?

2. The journey of faith continues with *discovery*. The discovery of freedom—through Christ—vv. 4-7; discovery of faith, vv. 8-9; discovery of a future, vv. 11, 13; discovery of the family of God, v. 19; discovery of a foundation—in Christ—vv. 20-22.

3. The journey of faith leads to *discipleship*, v. 10 (TLB).

Discover Your Wealth

In Ephesians 3 there is a gold mine of God's resources awaiting our discovery. These are projected by the apostle Paul in the following ways:

1. The *discovery* of the riches of God's grace, v. 16, "out of his glorious riches" (3:8, NIV).* This Ephesian letter talks about God's "unsearchable riches" (3:8).

2. The *dividends* of our riches in Christ, namely, "strength" and "stabil-

*All scripture from Ephesians 3 and 5 are from the *New International Version*, copyright © 1973 by the New York Bible Society International. Used by permission.



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ty" in vv. 16-17—"Strengthen you with power through his Spirit" (v. 16), and stability represented by the words "dwell," "rooted," and "established" in v. 17.

3. The *delight* of our riches in Christ. We delight in the *inexhaustible grace* (3:8, "unsearchable riches"); we delight in the *power of his grace for the inner man* and the *indwelling Christ* (vv. 16-17).

Challenge of Holy Living

God's call to the church at Ephesus for Christian living is articulated in Ephesians 5. We see it, first, as a *challenge*. "Be imitators of God" (v. 1);* "live a life of love" (v. 2); "Live as children of light" (v. 8); "be very careful . . . how you live" (v. 15). Christian living is presented as a challenge and as an expectation, for in v. 3 he talks about "God's holy people."

The second aspect of chapter 5 is the *arena of living* in which the challenge is echoed: "deeds of darkness" (v. 11) and "evil days" (v. 16). Every contest—be it sports or spiritual—has a setting in which the opposition is a reality.

The third thought of chapter 5 is the *strategy* given to us to become "God's holy people" (v. 3), and it is seen in the admonition of v. 18, "be filled with the Spirit." When life is filled with God, it is empty of self. So the strategy is to move into the arena of temptation and trial with the fulness of God. For out of the fulness comes resources for life and holy living.

Run Life

David A. MacLennan, writing in the *Clergy Journal*—basing his remarks on Phil. 1:21, "For to me to live is Christ"—gives four solutions to life and how it can be run.

1. You can run away from life.
2. You can run along with life.
3. You can run life.
4. You can let Christ run your life.

While it is simply stated, it is something that men need to hear, ever and again.

A Look at Ministry

A. J. F. Behrends, writing in a recent issue of *Pulpit Digest*, wrote something

every preacher needs to read occasionally. "The deadline in the ministry, as in any other calling, is the line of laziness. The lawyer cannot use last year's briefs. The physician cannot depend on last week's diagnosis. The merchant cannot assume that a customer of ten years' standing will not be enticed elsewhere. And the preacher must be a live, wide-

awake, and growing man. Let him dye his brains, not his hair. Let his thought be fresh and his speech be glowing. Sermons, it has been well said, are like bread which is delicious when it is fresh, but which when a month old is hard to cut, harder to eat, and hardest of all to digest." (A. J. F. Behrends, "Deadline," *Pulpit Digest*, March/April, 1977, p. 43).

Seeds for Sermons

March—Big Words in Our Vocabulary

March 5

CHARGE!

TEXT: "I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing" (2 Tim. 4:1).

The most versatile word in our vocabulary is *charge*. It is applicable in every area of activity. At sporting events one word that is often yelled is, "Charge! Charge!" The football team is urged to give the second effort by hearing the fans shout "Charge!" Often a rally at the baseball game is kept alive by the people in the stands yelling "Charge!"

In the business world, as you go to the cash register to complete a transaction, the question will be asked, "Cash or charge?"

In the mechanical world, we must make sure that the battery and alternator register *charge*. A red light comes on to give a warning that something is wrong in the wiring system if there is a change from *charge* to discharge.

In the legal world, a person who is apprehended by the law will always raise the question, "What is the *charge* against me?"

In the military world, when an offensive is launched, the final command by the officer in charge of the operation will be, "Charge!"

In the psychological world, one of the questions asked by the counselor will be, "What gives you a *charge* in life?" The implication is that a key to understanding your personality is found in what turns you on, or gives you a thrill.

In the administrative world, there is always an organizational chart which shows who is in charge of certain aspects of the operational program.

In the spiritual world, the supreme



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question is, "Who or what has charge of your life?" We can let the Lord who made us have charge of our lives, and He will *remake* us so we can live life at its highest and most rewarding level. Or we can let the gods that we make have charge of our lives, and they will *unmake* us. If the latter are in charge, they will demand more and more, and give us less and less in return. Whereas, if the God who made us in in charge, the more we give to Him the more He returns to us in the form of compound dividends. The more we are held captive by Him, the more free we are to fulfill His will.

Let Him have charge of your life.

March 12

ABILITY

TEXT: "... if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth" (1 Pet. 4:11).

One of our most important words is *ability*. Usually this word includes so much by way of talent, skill, and competence that we think it is all-sufficient in itself. Thus the individual with a bountiful supply of ability may think that he has everything it takes to make a go of this business of living. However, ability is not enough. For it is related to a family of words that must be operational as a team. When the words that have a kinship with *ability* form a cluster, then a person will realize a maximum of efficiency and effectiveness.

Dependability is the word related to ability. This means that a person is punctual regarding his appointments; responsible regarding his commitments; and faithful in the performance of his duty. Too often a person with plenty of ability will be negligent in some of these areas. He thinks he has so much talent that he does not need to give attention to these areas of regulation and regularity. However, ability will be weighed in the balances and found wanting unless it is linked to dependability.

Adaptability is another word related to ability. This means that a person is flexible in his methods; tolerant of the ideas of others; and sociable in his interpersonal relationships. Often, a person with un-

usual talent will think there is only one way to do things—his way. Or he will think of himself as superior to others and not bother to be friendly. However, ability will be weighed in the balances and found wanting unless it is linked to adaptability.

Expendability is another word related to ability. This means that a person is ready to share without measure for a cause that he loves better than his own life. He will spend himself without reservation to make what he has available to others. Ability will be weighed in the balances and found wanting if it is not interlocked with expendability.

March 19

HANDS

TEXT: "... and there was a man there which had a withered hand . . . and he stretched it out: and his hand was restored whole as the other" (Mark 3:1, 5).

Our hands are involved in about everything we do. There could be no music, no art, no architecture without the use of hands. There could be no writing, no driving of a car, no mechanical work without the use of hands. Thus a person without the use of his hands will be severely handicapped.

Probably no other word is used in so many combinations with other words as *hands*. Some of the secular use of phrases which combine *hand* with another word are very expressive. For instance, we often use the phrase "handout." This may mean that we are expecting someone to give us something, so we are looking for a handout. Or it may mean that we are anxious to give someone something so we are ready to give them a handout.

Another combination is "hands up." This could apply to a robbery when an order is given, "Hands up!" It may apply to a prisoner of war who is told to come out with both hands up. Or it may apply to a situation where a policeman is searching someone and he is told to keep his hands up.

Another combination is "hands down." This refers to a person winning a victory without much effort.

Another is "hands off." This is a frank

way of saying that the other person is to stop meddling in your affairs. This partial list of the uses involved with *hands* is sufficient to let you know the many ways we make use of the same.

The spiritual world also makes extensive use of references to the hands. For instance, "hands down" would indicate that we are letting go of everything that would interfere with a vital contact with God. "Hands up" indicates that we are anxious to receive the best the Lord has to offer. "Hands out" would indicate that we are reaching out to be His hands extended and that we are sharing what we have with others. As Christians, we are to have healing hands, lifting hands, serving hands. Above all, we are to walk hand in hand with our Lord.

March 26

GRACE

TEXT: ". . . he might shew the riches of his grace" (Eph. 2:7).

The most important word in the Christian's vocabulary is *grace*. The greatest exponent of the concept of grace was the apostle Paul. He referred to this term in the salutation of every letter, and in the conclusion of every letter—with frequent use in between. We will define this word in our study today by structuring an acrostic that gives a rich flavor to the word:

G—God's—will be the word that is represented by the *G* in grace.

R—Resources—will be the word that is represented by the *R* in grace. He is perfect in His attributes of being all-powerful, of being all love, of being everywhere, of being all-wise. He is all-sufficient in all ways, and has absolute holiness in the quality of His being.

A—Available—will be the word that is represented by the *A*. Everything that God is and has, He makes available to us. His consuming desire is to share His power, His wisdom, His nature with us. He makes this boundless supply of assets personally accessible and intimately available to all of us. All of these resources are on deposit in the bank of heaven.

C—Claimed—will be the word that is represented by the *C* in grace. The moment we start exercising our privileges in the Lord, we start drawing on this resource, claiming this limitless supply, and appropriating these assets as our possessions. We claim one aspect of these provisions to receive forgiveness, another to receive cleansing, another to sustain us in our daily work with the Lord.

E—Enthusiastically—will be the word that is represented by the *E* in grace. This means that we accept the resources of the Lord gladly, joyfully, and wholeheartedly. We revel in the mystery, the majesty, and the grandeur of His resources. We are in contact with something that gives us excitement, enthusiasm, and exuberance for our pilgrimage with the Lord.

April—Key Phrases In Our Vocabulary

April 2

"BEND OVER BACKWARDS"

(Baptismal service)

TEXT: "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism" (Eph. 4:4-5).

The English language is dotted with catch phrases which are meaningful to those who are thoroughly familiar with our language. As idiomatic expressions they serve the purpose of conveying an idea, and at the same time there is a double meaning applied to the words which will make the connotation clear. One of these phrases is "bend over backwards." This can be applied in many ways. If someone is extremely demanding, it is in order to say that they expect you to "bend over backwards" to meet their demands. Again, if someone is well adjusted socially, and has a supreme desire to keep everybody happy, it can be said of that person: "He will bend over backwards to get along with everybody." Or, if someone is bent on

servicing others to his utmost capacity, it can be said: "They knock themselves out as they bend over backwards to do the greatest good for the greatest number."

One of the distinctive rituals of the universal church is to administer baptism to new Christians. When the mode of baptism is immersion, one aspect of the ceremony is that the minister will bend the candidate backwards into the water. With the practice so universally observed, the point could be made in the message on baptism that those who engage in this sacrament are literally saying to the Lord: "I will bend over backwards to please you, Lord, from this moment on."

Some of the ways in which we can bend over backwards to please Him are: (1) When we know what His will is, there will be no questioning of the same, but we will bend over backwards to follow it. (2) When we have a chance to witness, we will bend over backwards to do justice to the opportunity.

April 9

"NO STRINGS ATTACHED"

TEXT: "... that in all things he might have the preeminence" (Col. 1:18).

Another phrase that is used often in communicating ideas is "No strings attached." One way this is used is to enter into a contract with another party, and to conclude the list of terms relating to the agreement with the statement: "No strings attached" that would change the terms or be a hidden restriction on what was meant in the statements.

Again, if an individual making a promise wishes to convey the idea that nothing is going to happen that would cause him to change his mind regarding the matter, he can make this point clear by saying, "No strings attached." Again, when we want to assure someone that he has our complete confidence and loyalty, we can make statements along this line and then clinch the point by saying, "No strings attached."

Our chief concern in living the Christian life is to give Jesus the preeminence in all things. Thus when we express our

love, loyalty, and devotion to Him, we should let Him know that He has these things with "no strings attached." The same is true in the area of commitment and dedication to Him. When we refer to our relationship with Him and tell Him that we belong to Him without reservation or limitation, it is in order to conclude such a declaration with the words, "No strings attached."

When we want Him to know that He holds the place of top priority in our thoughts and words and activities and that we are under His absolute sway, we can make known the finality of our faithfulness by saying, "No strings attached."

April 16

"IT'S NOT WHAT YOU KNOW, BUT WHO YOU KNOW THAT COUNTS"

TEXT: "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" (1 Tim. 1:12).

This phrase usually comes up when political maneuvering has brought about a promotion for someone who was not qualified for a position. However, they were given the special position because they knew someone who was able to use his influence to bring the special advantage to a favorite. This practice goes under various headings such as: "playing politics," "pulling wires," "pushing favorites," "undercover manipulating." All of these have negative overtones. They imply that competence and ability are bypassed for the sake of giving a person a break just because he knows the right people.

However, this statement is absolutely true and is the very essence of the Christian way of life. The one Person that we must know if we are going to make progress spiritually is Jesus. What we know is of no special merit in this relationship. Intellectualism and rationalism, if accepted just for the sake of exalting self-sufficiency, can become a serious barrier to spiritual development. The gospel is so designed that the ignorant and unlearned can find their way to the Cross and become acquainted with the Christ of Calvary. From this point, it is not

what we know but who we know that counts.

On the other hand, the smartest person in the world cannot rationalize his way into an experience of salvation. His intellectual pride may be a severe handicap to him as he endeavors to be saved. He must become acquainted with the Christ of Calvary for this to happen.

Thus it is not what we know but who we know that counts.

April 23

"PUT YOUR BEST FOOT FORWARD"

TEXT: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38).

We live in an overpolite society. One of the popular books is designed to inform us on the subject: *How to Win Friends and Influence People*. Studies of this type accent the theme of "Put your best foot forward," "Master the techniques of making a good impression," "Polish your manners on the emery wheel of etiquette so you will be admired." The underlying principle involved in this type of thinking is to let people see only the good side and keep up the appearance that makes you socially acceptable.

This whole approach is utterly contradictory to the Christian way of life. Instead of trying to put our best foot forward to prove that we are worthy of salvation, we put our two worst feet backwards as we kneel before the Lord. We do not try to prove how good we are, but we bring up the matter of how terrible we have been. When we repent before the Lord, we acknowledge that we are disgusted with ourselves, that we are responsible for the wrongdoing that we have engaged in, and we are at fault for messing up our lives. When we confess to Him, we are acknowledging how hopeless, how mixed up, how sordid our lives have been.

The beautiful thing about doing business with the Lord is that we plead guilty of every count that is against us on His record, then we throw ourselves on the mercy of His court. At this point we get a verdict of acquittal that frees us from the

penalties of our past record. We do not try to show how innocent we are by putting our best foot forward, but how guilty we are by acknowledging how terrible we are, so we can receive His pardon.

April 30

"LOST IN THE SHUFFLE"

TEXT: ". . . thou understandest my thought afar off . . . and art acquainted with all my ways" (Ps. 139:2-3).

At the present we are doing everything on a massive scale. In the economic field we are engaged in mass production; in the communication field we are informed by the mass media of communication; in the transportation field we are trying to come up with a mass transit system; in the educational field we are striving for mass education; in the psychological field we are concerned about mass hysteria; in our urbanization program we have mass centers of population. All of this accent on masses has caused us to lose sight of the individual. The common feeling of Mr. Common Man is that he is "Lost in the shuffle." He considers that he is nothing, nobody, and nil on the social register.

However, in the spiritual realm no one is lost in the shuffle. The Lord knows us by name, by nature, by need. He is so interested in each person that He knows us by voice. He designs a voice box for each of us so our voice will be different from everybody else's. When we come into His presence, we do not need to inform the Lord about our identity. All we need to do is start talking and He knows who is speaking.

The Lord does not deal with us in wholesale lots or carload amounts. He operates on a person-to-person basis. He is so interested in us that He keeps up with the thoughts which we entertain in our minds and the activities in which we participate. His amazing interest in us is not generated because He is curious to find bits of information that might be used as gossiping subjects, but He is interested because we are so important to Him that He wants to keep up to date on everything that is a part of our lives. It is thrilling to know that He who knows us the best loves us the most.

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Gleanings

from the Greek

Matthew 3:4—4:23

“Meat” or “Food”? (3:4)

The Greek word is *trophe*, which comes from the verb *trepho*, to “nourish” or “feed.” So the basic meaning is “nourishment” or “food.” One of the many ways in which the KJV fails to communicate accurately to people of our day is in its constant use of “meat” for food in general.

“Fan” or “Fork”? (3:12)

The word *ptuon* means a “winnowing fork or shovel.” Today in Palestine one can still see a man on a threshing floor using this instrument to throw grain into the air, to let the wind blow the chaff away. The word occurs (in NT) only here and in the parallel passage in Luke 3:17.

“Garner” or “Barn”? (3:12)

The word *apotheke* literally means a place where things are “put away” (from the verb *apotithemi*). Abbott-Smith says it means “a storehouse, granary” (p. 50). Aside from here and Luke 3:17, the KJV regularly translates this word as “barn” (Matt. 6:26; 13:30; 12:18, 24), which is the correct rendering here (NASB, NIV).

“Unquenchable” (3:12)

The Greek word is *asbestos*, which we have taken over into English. It is claimed that the material we now call “asbestos” was discovered when a man threw a bird’s nest into a fireplace fire. To his amazement it did not burn up. He sought and found the source the bird had

used. Aside from Luke 3:17, the word is found only in Mark 9:43, where it is applied to the fire of hell (gehenna).

“Suffer” or “Permit”? (3:15)

The verb *aphiemi* means “permit” (NASB). “Suffer” no longer carries this meaning. But we find this obsolete usage many times in the KJV.

“It is written” (4:4)

The Greek verb for “write” is *grapho*, from which we get “graphic” (“Phonograph is compounded of *phone*, “voice,” and *grapho* because the voice is “written” on a record.)

Here we find the perfect tense *gegraptai*—literally, “it has been written.” But the perfect tense in Greek emphasizes not only completed action, as in English but even more so, a continuing state—“it stands written.” So “it is written” is a good translation, followed in most versions today.

The force of this should not be missed. The Word of God was written many centuries ago. But it still stands today, carrying full divine authority. In the *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Schrenk says of *gegraptai*: “This denotes not merely the appeal in Greek law to the impregnable authority of the law but also the validity of what is written for Israel both in the absolute religious sense and also in the juridical. What is quoted as *gegraptai* is normative because it is guaranteed by the binding power of Yahweh the King and Lawgiver” (1:747). For Jesus the Old Testament was God’s Word. Each time He answered the devil He used this formula (vv. 4, 7, 10).

“Imprisoned” or “Arrested”? (4:12)

The Greek verb *paradidomi* literally means “give beside” or “deliver up.” So “had been put in prison” (NIV) and “had been taken into custody” (NASB) are equally accurate. Since John the Baptist’s imprisonment would have immediately followed his arrest, there is no problem here. The important point is that Jesus did not begin His public Galilean ministry until John was imprisoned. He had no desire to run in competition with him.

“Upon the sea coast” or “By the Lake”? (4:13)

Anyone reading “upon the sea coast” and looking at a map of Palestine would naturally assume that the expression referred to the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. But such was not the case. Capernaum is on the north shore of the Lake of Galilee, a body of water only 13 miles long and 6 or 7 miles wide.

The Greek here has the adjective *parathalassias*, “by the sea” (only here in NT). But we do not speak of a small body of water as a “sea.”

“A net” (4:18)

Matthew uses a special word for net, *amphiblestron* (only here in NT). It comes from the verb *amphiballo* (found only in Mark 1:16), which literally means “throw around,” and so, “cast a net.” Matthew’s noun, then, means “a casting net,” as distinguished from a drag net *sagnen*, Matt. 13:47, and only there). A casting net would be used in shallow water.

“Mend” or “Prepare”? (4:21)

Most versions say that James and John were “mending their nets,” but NIV has “preparing their nets.” Why?

The Greek verb here is *katartizo*. It literally means to make *artios*, “fit” or “sound” or “complete.” Thayer suggests for this passage and Mark 1:19: “to mend (what has been broken or rent), to repair.” But he notes that these passages may also be included under the meaning “to fit out, equip, put in order” (Lexicon, p. 336). Since the word usually carries the broader sense, it was felt that “preparing” should be used, which would include washing the nets and getting them ready for the next night’s fishing.

“Preaching” (4:23)

The Greek verb is *kerysso*, which comes from *keryx*, “herald.” So it means “be a herald, proclaim” It was the function of a herald to make an official proclamation for his king or military general. So the preacher is responsible to proclaim God’s Word, not “air” his own ideas.

“Gospel” or “Good News”? (4:23)

The Greek word for “gospel,” *evan-*

gelion, literally means “good news.” That is what the gospel is—“the good news” of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ and His atoning death for us at Calvary. That He died for us—that is good news, the best news there is.

We are used to the word “gospel” and most Christians today know that it means “good news.” So it is hard to decide between these two translations. The NASB has “gospel,” the NIV “good news.” These are equally accurate and acceptable.

“Lunatick” or “Epileptic”? (4:24)

The Greek has the participial form of the verb *seleniazō* (only here and in 17:15). It comes from *selene*, “moon,” and so literally means “moonstruck.” But it was the term used for epileptics, because it was thought that epilepsy was caused by the moon. So the correct translation is “epileptics” (NASB, NIV).



The Obligation of Holiness

By Ross Price*

SCRIPTURE: 1 Pet. 1:13-16

INTRODUCTION:

1. Following a paragraph of doctrine, Peter now turns to exhortation.

2. Great doctrines always carry great implications for both conduct and character. Thus he offers practical admonition for the Church as God’s New Israel.

3. Because of the provisions of divine grace just previously considered, there are some moral obligations in our Christian calling.

4. Salvation is both *experience* and *ethics*. So the election of the *Father*, the sanctification of the *Spirit*, and the

*Superintendent, Rocky Mountain District, Church of the Nazarene.

sprinkled blood of the *Son* all demand and provide for holiness in man. (Cf. 1 Pet. 1:1-2.)

5. *Chosen holiness* is the purpose of God for all mankind. Peter would have us embrace this divine characteristic, and obey the ancient command (Lev. 11:44).

"Holiness is the glorious fulness of God's moral excellence, held as the principle of His own action, and as the standard for His creatures" (Wm. N. Clarke, *Outline of Christian Theology*, p. 89).

I. BASIC TO THIS HOLINESS ARE

A. *An understanding mind*

1. A girdled thought life

a. "Having girded up the loins of your mind." (Peter uses the aorist middle participle here to concentrate the action into one moment—one principal act.) This makes one ready for energetic action and instant obedience to God. An Oriental, wearing long flowing garments, tucks the dangling folds up under his belt so he will not trip over them, and they will not hinder instant and swift action.

b. The mind of each Christian must be brought into a compact frame, cutting off loose thoughts and idle speculations that lead nowhere and only hamper obedience.

2. So it is time for modern Christians to wear the girdle of truth.

a. God commands us to love Him with our *minds*.

b. The Church must liberate people from superstition and error.

c. Sermons that only entertain but do not instruct are, at best, superficial.

d. The modern cry for less theology is not in harmony with the demand of the gospel.

e. We should seek to become and remain "intelligently sanctified," and let nothing rob us of our poise, sanity, and sound judgment.

B. *A sober spirit*

1. Spiritual sobriety must exclude spiritual drunkenness.

a. Both Peter and Paul contrast these two states, Paul in Eph. 5:18 and Peter in Acts 2:15 ff.

b. Spiritual sobriety guards men against the intoxication with false views that are doctrinally and morally capricious.

2. This grace enables one to walk circumspectly without rashness or foolishness. So Peter commands it of his readers (1 Pet. 5:8; 4:7).

a. Let us remember that the Holy Spirit is not the author of confusion.

b. There is no substitute for spiritual sanity.

C *A hopeful heart*

1. This kind of heart is "perfectly hopeful about the possibilities of grace." "Hope for the grace being brought to you in the revelation of Jesus Christ."

a. Peter himself is the great Apostle of Hope. Paul joins him in declaring that this hope has no reason or occasion to blush for shame or disappointment. (Rom. 5:5).

b. Christ is not a disappointment. Let us perfectly hope in the grace revealed to us in Him.

2. The hope of Christians must not become mixed up with foolish and fanatical fancies of the glories of a temporal Messianic Kingdom, and thus surrender the true reign of Christ's grace in the heart. The Christian's hope is greater than modern speculative "future-peeking."

II. THE TWO PHASES OF THIS HOLINESS (vv. 14-15).

A. *Holiness means separation*

1. God's people are possessed and indwelt by a spirit of *obedience*.

a. Obedience is one of the cardinal virtues of the New Testament Christian.

b. Those of us who live in this modern age of rebellion need to take note of this.

c. "Children of obedience" are "children of light." They are opposites of the "sons of disobedience" or the "rebellious house" (Ezekiel's term for false professors of sonship to God. Cf. Ezek. 3:26-27; Jer. 5:23).

2. Their entire life-style is different.

a. They are not conformed to the former ignorant passions of Gentile animism.

b. "Not fashioning yourselves" means not schematized after the mode of life in the preconversion state.

c. "Not conforming yourselves to the lusts which formerly ruled you in your ignorance."

d. The sanctified give no sanction

to desires that are other than what God allows (cf. 1 John 2:16).

e. Ignorance is never holy. Sin darkens the understanding with a cloud of prejudices and false notions. Licentious living arises not only from lust, but from ignorance of true values and the things that matter most.

f. So Peter insists there must be no relapses into the former bad habits with which they were bound as pagans.

B. *Holiness means sharing the divine nature* "Holy like God." "Be holy yourselves in all your conduct."

1. This involves *cleansing*

a. There is no impurity in deity.

b. God is holy because He is separate from all uncleanness.

c. Man must have goodness in the inner part of his being.

d. What's in the heart is certain to appear in the life.

2. This involves *conduct*.

a. "Do ye also *become* (aorist imperative) holy in every manner of life." (The aorist tense and the imperative mood denote here an action that is to take place immediately.)

b. In all your turning to and fro, or walking up and down (cf. the Greek term, *anastrophe*).

c. Here is the divine summons to holy behavior.

d. Holiness after the divine pattern of God is both the chief requirement and the goal of our vocation.

3. This involves a *radical operation* of divine grace.

a. Our only hope is in the grace revealed to us in Christ as His purpose for His people (Heb. 13:12).

b. Our sanctification is an act of divine grace. God's grace seeks not only to wash us from lawlessness, but also to purify a people for His own possession who are "zealots" for good works. (Cf. Titus 2:14.)

III. THE STIPULATION AND THE PROMISE (v. 16). Because it is written, "Ye shall be holy, for I am holy."

A. *The demand of Scripture is holiness*

It is written: Lev. 11:44; 19:2; 20:7, 26. Here God's people are to *make distinction* between the *clean* and *unclean*. They are to be severed from uncleanness so that

God can call them "mine"—a people for His own possession.

B. *The promise of the Scripture is holiness*

God says, "I will cleanse you . . . and ye shall be clean." (Cf. Ezek. 36:25-27; also 37:23.) So Peter's tense here is future and yet used as an imperative. God promises to *make* His people holy. He therefore has the right to demand it of them.

CONCLUSION:

1. Holiness is the perfect realization of the hope for mankind unveiled in the transforming grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

2. The "girding up" and the "hoping" are concentrated into action realized in one moment—one principal act—as the aorist tense would indicate (so say the commentators).

3. The choice is ours, but the demand is God's. Nothing less could be His purpose for mankind.

4. *Chosen holiness* will be the character of all who populate heaven (Rev. 21:27). And it is the obligation of all who hear God's call on earth.

Not by Bread Alone

By C. D. Hansen*

SCRIPTURE: "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matt. 4:4).

INTRODUCTION: The devil tempted Jesus by pointing to some small stones that looked like bread and said, "If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread" (Matt. 4:3). There is no doubt that the temptation had to be fierce. Nevertheless, Jesus did not succumb to the trial. He confronted the devil with the Scripture. The Christian, also, must refute the devil with God's Word.

The Christian today is confronted by some physical needs:

1. *The Bread of Pleasure* (Luke 12:19)
Satan's lie to men of every clime is that they should enjoy life with the

*Pastor, First Church of the Nazarene, Lowell, Ind.

pleasures of sin, for they have plenty of time to repent.

2. *The Bread of Unbelief* (2 Thess. 1:8-9)

A teacher was telling her class about the miracles of the Bible, and how many of them were myths, but good for illustrating faith. "For example," she said, "we know that when the Israelites crossed the Red Sea, there was only six inches of water." From the back of the class came the response, "Praise God for the miracle!" Rather annoyed, the teacher asked, "What miracle?" "The Lord must have drowned the whole Egyptian army in just six inches of water," explained the student.

3. *The Bread of Malice* (Eph. 4:31)

Malice ruins the mind, body, and soul. Maligning another causes more hurt to the person carrying the grudge, than to the one being misjudged.

4. *The Bread of Pride* (2 Cor. 5:15)

Pride is a diehard. It can be overcome. Pride always comes before a fall. Someone has penned these words:

*When all is done, renounce your
pride,
Self-praise and boasting ever
scorn;*

*Thus will you glorify the Lord,
And by His grace Christ's name
adorn.*

5. *Bread of Neglect* (Heb. 2:3)

We often neglect others, until it hits us personally. We can neglect our own salvation until it is too late.

6. *Bread of Alibis*

Some time ago a newspaper carried a story about Mrs. Lila Craig, age 81, who had not missed church for 20 years. With tongue in cheek, the writer asked, "What's wrong with Mrs. Craig?"

"Doesn't Mrs. Craig ever have company on Sunday? Doesn't she ever go anywhere on Saturday night so that she gets up tired on Sunday morning? Doesn't she ever have headaches, colds, or nervous spells, tired feelings, poor breakfasts, sudden trips out of the city? Doesn't she ever go on Sunday picnics, family reunions, or doesn't she ever sleep late on Sunday morning? Doesn't she ever have any friends who invite her to go out of town on a weekend trip? Doesn't it ever rain or snow on Sunday?

Doesn't she ever become angry at the minister? Doesn't she have a radio or TV set so she can stay home and hear some good service? Doesn't Mrs. Craig ever get her feelings hurt by someone at the church?"

Alibis—who needs them?

7. *The Bread of Partiality* (James 2:1)

The Lord condemns the fawning over rich or influential individuals. The Lord is no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34).

CONCLUSION: Yielding to temptation is sin. Man does not live by the bread of this world—but by the Bread of God. Jesus is the Bread that can help man overcome the temptation he faces every day. It is Christ in me, that helps me be the overcomer. St. Patrick expressed it in these words attributed to him:

Christ be with me, Christ within me,
Christ behind me, Christ before
me,
Christ beside me, Christ to win me,
Christ to comfort and restore me,
Christ beneath me, Christ above me,
Christ in quiet, Christ in danger,
Christ in hearts of all that love me,
Christ in mouth of friend and
stranger.

The Garden Experience

SCRIPTURE: Gen. 3:22-24

I. WHAT WAS LOST IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN?

- A. Right relationship with God
- B. State of holiness
- C. Life of heart purity
(Mark 14:32-35)

II. WHAT WAS FOUGHT FOR IN THE GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE?

- A. Confession of weakness
- B. Surrender of Will
- C. Crucified with Christ
(John 20:11-26)

III. WHAT WAS WON IN THE GARDEN OF THE TOMB?

- A. Resurrection with Jesus
- B. Restoration in His image
- C. Newness of life

—RALPH W. MOSGROVE

I Will Never Walk Alone

SCRIPTURE: Psalm 23

I will never walk alone again, for the Lord is MINE. He is—

- I. MY DIVINE COMPANION
"The Lord is my shepherd."
- II. MY DIVINE PROVIDER
"I shall not want" (v. 1)
"He maketh me to lie down in green pastures" (v. 2)
- III. MY DIVINE LEADER
"He leadeth me beside the still waters" (v. 2)
- IV. MY DIVINE COMFORTER
"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me" (v. 4).
- V. MY DIVINE ASSURANCE—through Him—
"I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever" (v. 6)
—The late REV. W. R. ROBINSON,
Regina, Saskatchewan, a few weeks before his death with a terminal cancer

Ideas That Work

Picture Presentation

Nothing thrills new parents more than showing real interest in their baby. One church capitalizes upon this and shows its care and concern by taking a Polaroid picture of each new baby in the nursery. This is given to the parents in an envelope which reads: "It was a pleasure to have your new baby in our nursery. Do hurry back to worship with us real soon. We have nursery facilities provided for infants and children up to three years of age during all our services. We invite you to leave your children with us."

—BETTY B. ROBERTSON

Pastor's Party

Within three months after my husband and I arrived at our new pastorate, we had a "Pastor's Party" for the boys and girls in our church and neighborhood.

It was held in our backyard. Puppets were used to tell a simple Bible story.

There was also singing, organized games, and refreshments. Registration slips were made for each child so we had names, addresses, and response to church attendance.

It provided a unique opportunity for the pastor to get acquainted with the children. It was also the initial contact for a brother and sister to start coming to Sunday school. In the years which have followed, they have been responsible for bringing seven other children from the neighborhood to our church.

The pastor could continue to have parties once a quarter, or a community club could be started in the church neighborhood for a more concentrated effort.

BETTY B. ROBERTSON

Show and Tell

On the first Sunday night of each month, following the evening service, we have what we call "Show and Tell." It is a time of light refreshments in our fellowship hall, and one of our members shows pictures of a vacation trip or some other pictures of interest.

We have found this to be a time of real Christian fellowship, sharing, and getting better acquainted—even for those who have known each other for years.

This idea has worked wonders for our Sunday night attendance, and not only on "Show and Tell" night.

DONALD K. AULT, JR.

BULLETIN



BARREL

*My neighbor is a faddist
With a little mental quirk—
He jogs five miles with gusto,
Then drives five blocks to work.*

**Lord, when the night is long and dark,
And my way but a shrouded lane,
Let love and faith plant lights of hope,
Like porch lamps in the rain.**

—Ira E. Fowler



HERE AND THERE



AMONG BOOKS

Conducted by the Editor

All books reviewed may be ordered from
your Publishing House

Christian Personal Ethics

By *Carl F. H. Henry* (Baker Book House, 1957. 615 pp., \$7.95).

Baker's edition of C. F. H. Henry's *Christian Personal Ethics* is a welcome addition to their library of paperbacks. Though it represents a mass of material on ethical alternatives with a strong affirmation of Henry's interpretation of the Christian ethic, it is not "easy reading." It is rather for the resource material of a minister or student. It is a welcome alternative to situation ethics and its in-cipient antinomianism.

OSCAR F. REED

The Minister's Manual

1978 Edition

Edited by *Charles Wallis* (Harper and Row, 280 pp., \$7.95).

The 53rd edition of Doran's *Minister's Manual* contains "completely new material" which is personally helpful to the pastor. Seven hundred contributors and eight indexes will give suggestions for any occasion.

OSCAR F. REED

Pungent Prayers

By *Phil E. Pierce* (Abingdon Press, 1977. 119 pp., paperback, \$3.95).

The preface indicates the motive of the author and the contents of the book. "The aim of this devotional analogy is to reflect the fresh new spirit of freedom, talking with God in everyday language about earthy problems, both personal and social."

From "A Time to Laugh, a Time to Cry" to "Lord, I'm Hurting," the author has expressed himself beautifully in the spirit of contemporary worship without doing offense to the appropriate.

OSCAR F. REED

The Message of Jonah: A Theological Commentary

By *Terence Fretheim* (Augsbury Publishing House, 1977. 144 pp., \$4.95).

Professor Fretheim has rendered a valuable service to pastors and evangelists who wish to preach from Jonah. This is no mere "this Hebrew word doesn't mean what you think it does" approach. Rather, true to the subtitle, Fretheim has explored the theological *significance* of the book of Jonah.

Fretheim is a believer with courage to believe that tough, serious questions about text, history, the fish, the worm, or anything else can never diminish the saving truth of Jonah. Ministers will especially appreciate the honest effort to

consider one's 20th-century responsibility for mission in light of the message of a biblical book. All in all, this is a provocative and useful book to be highly recommended.

CHARLES D. ISBELL

The New Bible Dictionary

Organizing editor: *J. D. Douglas* (Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1,424 pp., cloth, \$14.95).

Now in its 11th printing, this wonderful A to Z storehouse of biblical knowledge gives easy access to background information on the Bible and its teachings. Subjects range from the people and places, the geography, history, customs, and culture of the Bible lands and times to clear studies of the great doctrines of the Christian faith. Introductions to each book of the Bible are given. Included in the 2,300 items are 237 specially prepared drawings, 17 beautiful 4-color maps, 41 brilliant reproductions, and 33 outline maps and plans.

Plain Talks on Romans

By *M. G. Gutzke* (Zondervan, 1976. \$3.95).

This is another of the growing material on biblical theology which is terse and to the point. Dr. Gutzke has written 69 briefs from Romans. It ought to be valuable for both devotional material and midweek service helps. It is an addition to his 11 other books from the New Testament of the same character.

OSCAR F. REED

Preparing for Platform and Pulpit

By *John E. Baird* (Baker Book House, 197 pp., paper, \$3.95).

An excellent text for would-be preachers. This author is thorough, practical, and well-organized in the subject matter presented. Especially helpful: "Projects and Assignments" section at end of each chapter; practical points such as the content presented on pages 60 and 61. The easy-to-grasp format of the text makes it enjoyable reading as well as instructive. Sound advice throughout; no bizarre recommendations from the author. Fantastic appendix provided!

J. GRANT SWANK, JR.

The Parables He Told

By *David Redding* (Harper & Row Publishers, 167 pp., paper, \$1.95).

An outstanding resource for preaching. Well written, incisive, well researched. Excellent illustrative material. Every pastor ought to read it. The print is difficult to read, but the content is well worth the effort. Originally copyrighted in 1962, reprinted in 1976.

JESSE MIDDENDORF

The Biblical Authority

By *Jack Rogers* (Word Publishers, 1977. 196 pp., paperback, \$4.95).

I highly recommend this book to pastors. It reviews the "battle over inerrancy" with scholarly insight, acknowledging that many evangelicals used the scripture to "bolster up unbiblical behaviour behind a cloak of impeccable orthodoxy." On the other hand, it exposes the tendency of both liberals and neoorthodoxy to make private interpretation.

This is one of the best I have read on the subject. It concludes that the Bible is our infallible authority in all that has to do with salvation, faith, and life. It then encourages us to "study it even more thoroughly, obey it ever more humbly, and share it ever more gladly."

MILLARD REED

Preachers' Exchange



FOR SALE: 1 set of *Barnes' Notes* (27 vols.), good condition, \$35.00; 1 set *Handful of Purpose* (12 vols.), \$10.00. Harry W. Glaspy, 300 N. McKean St., Kittanning, PA 16201. Phone: (412) 548-5707.

FOR SALE: Permanently bound volumes of *Preacher's Magazine* for 1955 through 1959. Also loose-leaf bound for 1969 through 1975. Ralph Thompson, 1114 Linwood Dr., Carter Lake, IA 68110.

WANTED: *Holiness and the Human Element*, by H. A. Baldwin. E. M. Fox, 100 Walnut St., Laurel, DE 19956.

WANTED: *The Book of Hebrews*, by H. Orton Wiley; *Pastor's Ideal Sermon Books*, compiled and edited by C. M. Halstead; *Sermon Outlines on Bible Characters*, by Alexander Whyte. M. A. Walker, 2216 West Indiana St., Evansville, IN 47712.

WANTED: Set of Lange's Commentary of the Bible. Fred A. Wagner, R.R. 2, Lexington, IL 61753.

WANTED: Old tracts and book on *Mil-lennial Dawn* by Christian writers, as well as writings by Chas. Taze Russell, founder of the Watch Tower, or any old W. T. publications. Gene E. Ahlstrom, 1025 N. Harding Ave., San Fernando, CA 91340.

WANTED: Used copies of *Praise and Worship* hymnals (fair condition) for home mission church (donation or reasonable price). Henrietta Griffith, Ken-

tucky Mount Bible Institute, Van Cleve, KY 41385. Phone: (606) 666-7867.

WANTED: Seminary student desires a complete set of Mendell Taylor's *Fifty Years of Nazarene Missions* (3 vols.). Also back issues of *Christianity Today* from oldest issues to 1973. Send list and prices to Steve Blankenship, 1304 E. 83rd St., Apt. 2, Kansas City, MO 64131.

WANTED: Complete 6-vol. set of *Adam Clarke's Commentaries*. Cecil Lobb, Star Rte., Box 188A, Summersville, KY 42782.

WANTED: Vols. 1 and 15 of *Proclaiming The New Testament*, edited by Ralph Turnbull (Baker Book House). Vol. 1, "Matthew," written by Herschel Hobbs, and Vol. 15, "Revelation," by Merrill Tenny. Marvin C. Helman, 353 S. Shaw, Richmond, MO 64085.

WANTED: John Miley's *Systematic Theology*; Olive M. Winchester and Ross Price's *Crisis Experiences in the Greek New Testament*. Edward L. Bean, 1029 Hillcrest Dr., Eden, NC 27288.



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