

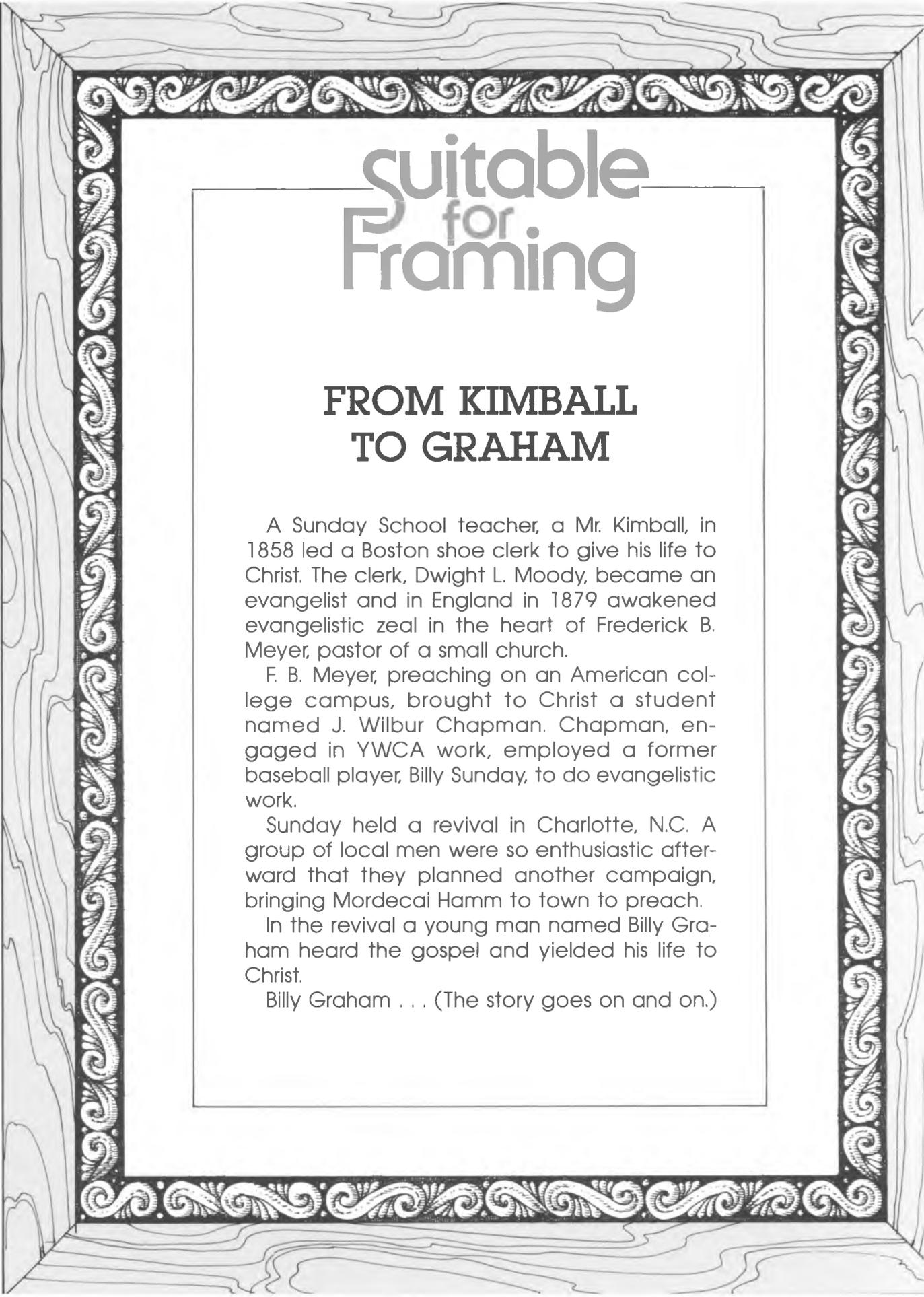
the Preacher's Magazine

PROCLAIMING CHRISTIAN HOLINESS

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PASTORAL EVANGELISM

SEPTEMBER, OCTOBER, NOVEMBER, NINETEEN EIGHTY-FOUR



suitable for Framing

FROM KIMBALL TO GRAHAM

A Sunday School teacher, a Mr. Kimball, in 1858 led a Boston shoe clerk to give his life to Christ. The clerk, Dwight L. Moody, became an evangelist and in England in 1879 awakened evangelistic zeal in the heart of Frederick B. Meyer, pastor of a small church.

F. B. Meyer, preaching on an American college campus, brought to Christ a student named J. Wilbur Chapman. Chapman, engaged in YWCA work, employed a former baseball player, Billy Sunday, to do evangelistic work.

Sunday held a revival in Charlotte, N.C. A group of local men were so enthusiastic afterward that they planned another campaign, bringing Mordecai Hamm to town to preach.

In the revival a young man named Billy Graham heard the gospel and yielded his life to Christ.

Billy Graham . . . (The story goes on and on.)

THE PREACHER'S MAGAZINE

Proclaiming Christian Holiness

Volume 60, Number 1

September / October / November 1984

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IN THIS ISSUE

EDITORIAL

- 2 Pastoral Evangelism—Seeing Sinners and the Sinned Against *Wesley Tracy*
- 4 A Theology of Evangelism *Robert W. Smith*
- 8 Preparing a Church for Revival *Duane Yoesel; Michael Grimshaw*
- 12 How to Develop an Evangelistic Congregation *Charles Shaver*
- 16 On *Doing* the Work of an Evangelist *Harold J. Stratton*
- 18 Prayer and Evangelism *Jack O. Bowman*
- 19 How to Make an Altar Call and Help Seekers *Duane Yoesel*
- 22 Equipping Laypersons for Evangelism *David L. Thompson*
- 24 Preaching from John 3:16 *Dean Baldwin; John W. Bruce; R. Wayne Sharpes; Robert G. Snodgrass*
- 32 Thoughts on Evangelistic Leadership *Wilbur W. Brannon*
- 34 Preaching from Matthew 16:26-27 *Kenneth Culbertson; J. V. Morsch; Virgil P. Applegate; L. D. Buckingham; Calvin B. Oyler; Lyle W. Curtis*
- 41 Come Running with a Bucket *Wesley Tracy*

PASTORAL CLINIC

- 44 The Case of the Unwanted Mother *Clyde W. Narramore*

THANKSGIVING

- 46 The Chivalry of Thanksgiving *David A. MacLennan*

WESLEYANA

- 48 Reproving Men for Their Sins *Donald W. Wood*

MINISTER'S MATE

- 49 Cash or Charge? *Gay L. Leonard*

FINANCE

- 50 The Tax "End" and the Ethical "Means" *Paul D. Fitzgerald*

HOLY COMMUNION

- 51 Man Is the Minnow *J. D. Eppinga*

THE MINISTRY

- 53 Wise Words from an Experienced Shepherd *Edward F. Cox*

PREACHING POINT

- 54 Let's Hear It for the Periodic Sentence *Wesley Tracy*

THESE TOO

Suitable for Framing—Inside front cover; As One Fisherman Sees It—21; Sermon Outlines—55; Today's Books for Today's Preacher—58; Preacher's Exchange—59; Old Testament Word Studies—60; New Testament Word Studies—61; Clergy Quiz—63; Ark Rocker—64



Wesley Tracy

PASTORAL EVANGELISM— SEEING SINNERS AND THE SINNED AGAINST

by Wesley Tracy

Samuel Rutherford was so Calvinistic you could lose him in a TULIP patch. Nevertheless, he had the spirit that epitomizes pastoral evangelism. In 1636 he was removed from his rural parish and jailed for not conducting the church affairs according to the Acts of Episcopacy. He wrote to his flock:

While ye sleep I am afraid of your souls, that they be off the rock. Next to my Lord Jesus . . . ye have the greatest share of my sorrow, and also of my joy; ye are the matter of the tears, care, fear, and daily prayers of an oppressed prisoner of Christ. I am in bonds for you.

Oh, how rich a prisoner were I, if I could obtain of my Lord (before whom I stand for you) the salvation of you all! Oh, what a prey had I gotten, to have you caught in Christ's net! Oh, then I had cast out my Lord's lines and His net with a rich gain!

My witness is above; your heaven would be two heavens to me, and the salvation of you all as two salvations to me.¹

Such an evangelistic spirit is the home base of pastoral evangelism in all its forms. Rutherford's letter has the same flavor as Paul's heart cry in Rom. 9:3-4: "I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen . . . [the] Israelites." Such a spirit cannot be legislated. No bishop can command it. Yet, pastoral evangelism, if it gets a hit at all, will be l.o.b. (left on base) without it.

I am not suggesting that the challenge that pastoral evangelism rises, jut-chinned to hurl, can be dismissed with a simplistic "Be more spiritual." God gave us sound minds as well as yearning hearts. Vision is indispensable—"Where there is no vision, the people perish" (Prov. 29:18). But, "Where there is *only* vision, the people have a nervous breakdown."

The pastor with a sound mind and a yearning heart will find himself as leader, director, model, teacher, and enabler of a handful of functions that have evangelistic significance.

If I understand the New Testament, the church has these functions:

1. *Kerygma*: proclamation of the incarnation, crucifixion, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The pastor's role is primary here.
2. *Leiturgia*: worship of God by believers who adore, praise, thank, and petition the Father in the Son's name.
3. *Didache* is the teaching ministry of the church.

4. *Evangelidzo* exhorts us to "evangelize" or "gospelize" the unreached.

5. *Koinonia* is the nurturing fellowship the church is called to provide.

6. *Diakonia* is the New Testament word for the service that the church is to give to those of the household of faith and to the yet unreached.

We can't isolate these functions. Most of the time we can't tell where one leaves off and the other begins. It is enough to know that we must work at all of them.

Further, we must not make a theological provincialism of any one of these functions to which the church is called. That is, we must not stress one in such a way that it dwarfs the others. I say that because, for example, when I preach on prayer with all my heart, a listener might think that praying was at least 99.44 percent of the Christian life. Next Sunday I might preach on witnessing in a 99.44 percent way, and the next week it might be stewardship, and on and on. Of the tenderhearted and uninitiated we could make confused neurotics.

Putting a magazine together can have similar risks. Thus, this issue on pastoral evangelism is not meant to diminish the other roles of the pastor. We can't say everything that is needed, not even everything that is urgent in one issue.

But given a few column inches for my own, I want to talk about *diakonia* from the foregoing list. I think it is crucial to pastoral evangelism. And it is, I would judge, the area in which we need the most improvement. Our *diakonia*, service, must reach those of the household of faith—especially. And while we are a long way from perfect in this we are better at serving our own than we are at serving the unwashed, unwanted, unreached people for whom Christ died.

Harvie M. Conn suggests that to such a standard list of churchly roles as I have presented above we should add *dikaionia*: "the righteous deed," "the doing of justice." Our evangelical task, says Conn, is to do justice and preach grace.

This is an old tension, but one we must face more squarely than ever before. We can no longer say, "Leave that kind of stuff to the Salvation Army; it is not our ministry." Seventy-five percent of the people who are unreached by the gospel are by and large the poor

people of the earth.² The balanced pastoral evangelism we need is called for by the Bible: "Pure religion . . . is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world" (James 1:27). In Acts we find those early Christians aglow with Pentecostal grace (chapter 2) and almost at once (chapter 6) organizing to take care of the helpless.

I am not calling us to make the name *evangelical* or *holiness* synonymous with freedom marches, belligerent placards, and pressure politics. Rather I am saying the balance between doing justice and preaching grace must be fervently urged.

Harvie Conn's book *Evangelism: Doing Justice and Preaching Grace* has disturbed me more than the ice storm that has split my hackberry tree in half, made a nontriumphal arch of my holly tree, and made weeping willows of the elms. With the power lines down and the city at a standstill, I read Conn's book by candlelight. Let me share five ideas that cling to me after finishing the book.

1. *Dikaioma* (doing justice) must be a visible part of our *diakonia* if we are to be biblical, evangelical Christians. I said this earlier so I'll add nothing here.

2. We must see the unreached as both "sinners" and "sinned against." It is only when we see this clearly, Conn believes, that we will have the proper attitude toward *diakonia* and *dikaioma*. To see a person as a "sinner" is to see one who needs to discover Christ as personal Savior. To see persons as "sinned against" is to recognize the structural or systematic nature of evil. It is to understand that sinful structures such as systems of racial subjection, ghettos, oppressive laws, manipulated poverty, and the like make their victims the "sinned against."

Conn explains this by way of his own ministerial experience. For seven years in Korea he had the assignment of evangelizing the prostitutes. At first he admits seeing them only as sinners, people in rebellion against God, needing repentance and saving grace. He called them to repentance, but no one changed. Then something happened. Here's how Conn described it:

The breakthrough came when one person began to change: I changed. As I worked with the women, I gathered more information about the system of which they were a part. I learned that many of them had entered prostitution because it was often the only work they could find in an Asian, male-dominated, culture. The war had destroyed their links with the extended family system. And often they were the senior breadwinners. There were brothers and sisters to take care of. Frequently the young women came from rural homes, looking for quick money in the big city. Personal problems at home or a bad economic year sent them looking for a better way. They were met at the trains by the pimps, who offered them a place to stay for the night. In the home they were gang-raped. When they got ready to leave, they were informed they had to pay for room and board. They couldn't and found prostitution the only way to pay their debts.

After a few weeks of this, their debt was paid for by another brothel owner, and they were moved closer to the 38th parallel. They had become slaves of a system from which they could never break free. Their debts were always higher than their ability to pay. They found themselves imprisoned and oppressed, their humanity buried in shame and guilt.

I discovered that a person is not only a sinner.

He or she is also sinned against. My cultural background in white, North American churches had oriented me almost exclusively to seeing a person as the subject of sin. But not the object of sin.³

Our evangelistic message must speak to the needs of people who not only are sinners, but sinned against.

3. Closely related to the previous point is the need for pastors, by example and precept, to lead today's Christians beyond mere sympathy for the "sinned against" to true compassion for them. Conn cites his ministry to the prostitutes as this kind of experience. When he saw them not merely as sinners, but as victims of a sinful cultural structure, compassion seized him and made an evangelist out of a mere missionary.

This hits home to me personally. I am one of those persons who likes to get off the hook by giving \$50.00 to one relief fund or another. Conn says that Christians like me have to be moved from \$50.00 sympathy to compassion that will get its hands dirty in ministry to the leftovers of society, the *et ceteras of culture*, as he calls them. Seeing "sinner" and "sinned against" in the same pair of eyes is a starting point.

4. Our "come" structure must be modified into a "go" structure. It is not enough to build a church and say, "You all come." Rather we must deploy ourselves to "go" out to where the unreached are. Conn says, "The church must recapture its identity as the only organization in the world that exists for the sake of its nonmembers."⁴

5. Evangelism must become gospel show-and-tell: showing mercy and preaching grace. Conn points out the order of Jesus' words to a paralytic, "Arise, and walk" (physical need) and "Thy sins be forgiven thee" (spiritual needs). This should be our pattern too, he believes. We must show mercy and compassion to the "et ceteras of culture"—the weak, the oppressed, the sinned against. Then Christ can be offered as the whole answer for the whole person. Conn is careful not to allow compassionate ministries to become incidental prelude for tongue-tied evangelists. Good deeds are never to be employed to create psychological debt so they *have* to listen to our "God talk."

Conn recognizes the urgency of evangelism. He cites one denomination that seems to have lost the urge or skill to evangelize. They lost 47,000 members in a recent year. He cites another denomination whose membership losses are on such a skid that if they continue there will be one pastor for every church member by the year 2000. All this in a country (U.S.A.) where 80 million are unchurched.

Perhaps here is where we should glance at another New Testament word—*martus*. It means "witness," "evidence," or "testimony." It is also the Greek word from which we get our word *martyr*. This word gives me the picture of a witness for Christ who is willing to do "whatever it takes" to bring the power of the gospel to "sinners" and the "sinned against" of our weary world. 🙏

NOTES

1. Frank E. Gaebelin, ed., *The Letters of Samuel Rutherford* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), 300, 302.

2. Harvie M. Conn, *Evangelism: Doing Justice and Preaching Grace* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1982).

3. *Ibid.*, 44-45.

4. *Ibid.*, 23.

A THEOLOGY OF EVANGELISM

by Robert W. Smith, Pastor
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If evangelists were our theologians or theologians were our evangelists, we should at least be nearer the ideal church," says James Denney in his book *The Death of Christ*. The ideal church, then, is motivated by a twofold goal. It proclaims a message that is theologically correct and properly communicated.

When Paul wrote his letter to the churches in Galatia, he was aware that unidentified teachers were proclaiming a "different gospel" from that which he had preached. This perverted gospel of Christ was creating a spirit of confusion within the fragile community of believers. Convinced that his understanding of the gospel was correct, Paul invoked a curse upon his opponents in Galatia (Gal. 1:8-9). From Paul's perspective there was only one gospel. Geographical location and cultural identity might generate diverse evangelistic methods. The core of the gospel, however, would remain unchanged.

In Gal. 2:1-10 it is revealed that the apostles recognized two separate evangelistic missions in the Early Church. Peter would direct his preaching activity toward the Jews, while Paul and Barnabas would work among the Gentiles. It was evident to the leaders of the Early Church that no single evangelistic method would serve the cultural needs of Jew and Gentile alike. The objective of the Early Church was to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ, for through it God's saving power was unleashed in the world (Rom. 1:16). Methods only existed to carry out this objective.

The essence of evangelism is the message it desires to proclaim. The content of this message is the gospel. The evangelist as theologian must settle for nothing less than a clear, biblical gospel message. The first task of a theology of evangelism, then, is to provide a working definition of the term *gospel*.

The gospel is first and foremost a message of grace. Grace, according to Paul, is God's comprehensive plan of salvation given to all humanity through Jesus Christ. The gospel as grace is a free gift. It cannot be purchased; it cannot be earned; neither is it ever deserved. It can only be received by faith. In the hymn "Rock of Ages," Augustus Toplady has captured this thought in the phrase, "In my hand no price I bring; /

Simply to Thy cross I cling." To proclaim the gospel as grace is to emphasize what God has accomplished through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ for all humanity. The gospel of grace is a positive word of liberation. Humanity can be set free from the tyranny of sin.

There is no place in this message for silly moralizing. The simple phrase "You ought to act like a Christian" is not a word of grace. Such a phrase may be used to confront a Christian engaged in questionable behavior, but it is useless in proclaiming the gospel to unredeemed people. Men and women are not redeemed because they behave like Christians. If they were, salvation would be the result of personal good works rather than of grace. The evangelist as theologian must exercise great care in removing every tendency to moralize the message of the gospel.

Further, the gospel is a message of *power*. In the mind of Paul "power" is not merely a synonym for "signs and wonders." The gospel as the "power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes" (Rom. 1:16, NIV) has the ability to transform human life from a state of sinfulness to the dynamic experience of Christlikeness. This power for human transformation found expression in Paul's ministry in Thessalonica. The believers there formerly worshiped idols. When the gospel message



Robert W. Smith

was proclaimed to them they turned from their idols “to serve the living and true God” (1 Thess. 1:9, NIV). The power to transform human life does not dwell in the evangelist. It exists within the gospel itself. The burden of the evangelist is to make the proclamation. God, through the gospel message, supplies the power necessary to create transformation.

The gospel, then, is the message of God's grace and power to all humanity, revealed through Jesus Christ.

The six propositions that follow are intended to provide a structure for the development of a theology of evangelism.

1. A THEOLOGY OF EVANGELISM IS GROUNDED IN THE WORK OF JESUS CHRIST

The crucifixion of Jesus Christ posed an unavoidable problem for the early Christian community. How could it defend the fact that Jesus had been put to death on a cross? The New Testament does not tell us who was the first to see God's love being demonstrated through the Cross. Nevertheless, this interpretation became the basis for most Christian preaching in the Early Church. The Resurrection, with all its glory, signaled God's vindication of Jesus, but it did not explain the enigma of His death. Paul placed the death of Jesus Christ in the mainstream of God's redemptive activity by declaring that “Christ died for us” (Rom. 5:8). The Crucifixion, therefore, was more than a bare, historical event. It was an event within the dimensions of space and time to say the least. Yet it was more than mere history.

The Early Christian Church did not confess the Lordship of Jesus Christ because they were eyewitness of the Crucifixion. The confession was the product of serious reflection on what had taken place outside the walls of Jerusalem during the Jewish celebration of Passover. In a moment of divine inspiration, history and theology met. A message began to take shape. The unavoidable question was answered to the glory of God. The riddle of the Crucifixion was solved. Although not every Christian evangelist would preach the message in the same terms, the foundation of the gospel message had been established. The Cross became the focal point of God's redemptive activity. By the Cross “God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ” (2 Cor. 5:19, NIV). No longer would a Christian evangelist be able to proclaim the salvation of God apart from the work of Jesus Christ. To proclaim God's salvation is to “preach Christ crucified” (1 Cor. 1:23).

The gospel of Christ crucified has always been a stumbling block to some and sheer foolishness to others. In spite of such reactions, the gospel of Christ crucified is the only adequate foundation on which to construct a theology of evangelism, because in the Cross God was at work, offering salvation to all who would believe.

2. A THEOLOGY OF EVANGELISM PROVIDES AN UNLIMITED VISION FOR THE EVANGELISTIC TASK

This second proposition is nothing more than an extension of the first. When a theology of evangelism is grounded in the work of Jesus Christ, someone is certain to ask, “Are there any restrictions to the proclamation of the gospel message?” The biblical answer is a

resounding “No!” It is the gospel that creates an unrestricted vision for ministry within our world. If there are limitations in the evangelistic task, they are the product of our basic misunderstanding of the gospel itself.

Several years ago I began to study the Book of Acts. It became obvious that the gospel could overcome any obstacle placed in its path. Racial and cultural barriers could not hinder its progress. Neither could established forms of religion and government. The gospel produced an unquenchable desire to preach the good news of God's salvation to all humanity. The command of Jesus, to take this gospel “to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8, NIV), was being fulfilled.

The doctrine of human persons in Wesleyan theology supports the notion of an unlimited gospel message. Human beings are not considered to be thoughtless pawns in the hand of God. Wesleyan theology affirms the free moral agency of individual existence. While God, through His Word of grace, is calling all humanity to himself, Wesleyans hold that His call can be rejected. God's sovereignty is not demonstrated in His ability to create a state of irreversible election. The sovereignty of God expresses itself in His relentless offering of salvation to all humanity. It is in the presence of the God who calls all humanity to himself that men and women stand morally accountable.

The evangelistic task, functioning within the framework of Wesleyan theology, shares the burden of Paul. Writing to the Christian community in Corinth he said, “We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God” (2 Cor. 5:20, NIV). This verse exposes the heart of the apostle. No one proclaiming the gospel message can conclude by saying, “Take it or leave it.” The eternal destiny of human lives demands that the evangelist sense the urgency of the moment. The impassioned cry, “Be reconciled to God,” clarifies the aim of evangelistic preaching. No person, for whatever reason, is to be denied the privilege of responding to this message of grace.

The evangelist is not responsible for the results of the proclaimed Word. The responsibility of the evangelist is to keep on proclaiming the gospel of grace and power.

3. A THEOLOGY OF EVANGELISM CONFRONTS THE BASIC PROBLEM OF ALL HUMANITY: SIN

“Sin” is a theological term. As such, it is never to be defined by the standards of a secular society. Secular society has little patience with talk about human sin, because it has no place for a personal God before whom all humanity stands accountable.

Recently, in the city where I live, three members of a family were brutally murdered. The response of the community has been one of shock. The story has received intense coverage in the local news media. The media, to my knowledge, has not yet attributed the murders to an act of human sin. So an entire community stands helpless as it tries to answer the nagging question of how someone could commit such a horrible act. One could only hope that a tragedy like this would expose the sinfulness of an entire community. The community, however, has responded as any typical, secular community would. People are buying guns to protect themselves. Guns—not repentance; that is how our

world attempts to confront the basic problem of all humanity.

The evangelist as theologian must always confront the human problem of sin. To repeat a tired cliché, the evangelist must hate sin but love the sinner. Nothing less is acceptable to God; nothing more is necessary.

The church cannot be content to fight against the visible sins of a specific community. Alcohol, drugs, abortion, adultery, gambling (and on and on) have all provided grist for preaching against sin. And so, the Church must continue to take its stand against the immorality of this present age. When, however, we have named all the sins imaginable and have explained the various consequences of each sinful act, the invisible problem of sin remains. From a biblical perspective the problem of human sin is not sinful human behavior. The Bible teaches that humanity is separated from God. Created beings attempt to live in alienation from their Creator. The evangelist must seize the opportunity to make known the root of our sinfulness. Perhaps no task is more demanding than to preach against sin with a broken heart of love; to preach against sin without judging the sinner; to let God be God in creating conviction within the sinner.

I am asking Christians to reevaluate their attitudes toward the sinner while maintaining a strong stance against sin. A personal experience has motivated this request. Several years ago, after a rather pointed sermon on sin, a man slipped his arm around my shoulder and said, "Pastor, don't ever stop telling me the truth." This man has since become my friend. He still makes no profession of faith. I pray for him frequently. I am thankful that he chooses to hear the gospel message week after week. One thing is clear. He has found a community of believers who have accepted him for what he is—a sinner alienated from God. Should he leave our fellowship before he opens himself to the transforming power of the gospel, I pray that his departure will not be caused by self-righteous attitudes expressed by his pastor.

The message of evangelism is for the sinner; how will they hear if we fail to accept them as they are? Risky business? Indeed, it is! The question we are forced to answer is simple. Do we care enough to take the risk?

4. A THEOLOGY OF EVANGELISM PROCLAIMS THE SOLUTION TO THE BASIC PROBLEM OF HUMANITY

If "sin" is a theological term, it is only natural to speak of its solution in theological terms. To be set free from sin, to be reconciled to God, however, are empty concepts within the secular world. This is not to imply that contemporary society does not have a doctrine of salvation. It certainly does! Worldly salvation is not the result of God's Word of grace; it is the product of one's own activity. Worldly salvation is characterized by *success*—a nontheological term that all too frequently infiltrates Christian thinking. The validity of worldly salvation is found in the slogan "Look what I have done."

The gospel of success will always be insulted by the cross of Jesus Christ. A plan of salvation requiring human merit can never be harmonized with a plan of salvation totally dependent upon God's grace. Grace says to

all humanity, "You cannot save yourself." This is a direct attack against the gospel of success. Grace proceeds to declare God's good news: "You don't have to save yourself. Salvation is provided for you in Jesus Christ. It's free!"

The evangelist as theologian must know the subtle differences between the gospel of success and the gospel of Christ crucified. Should these differences go unrecognized, the solution to the basic problem of all humanity will be stripped of its power.

At this very moment someone is misconstruing the intention of what I have just written. No, the person who responds to the gospel of Christ crucified is not destined for failure in the structure of contemporary society. Neither, however, is success an inalienable right of Christians. As the Christian lives in the modern world, the affairs of life are *regulated* by the gospel of Christ crucified. One who has accepted the gospel of Christ crucified is constructing a value system that is radically distinct from the value system of the unbeliever. The Christian value system is characterized by *obedience*. The obedient Christian knows that the gospel of Christ crucified cannot be manipulated to guarantee worldly success. The obedient Christian knows that the gospel of Christ crucified is the only solution to the problem of human sin.

5. A THEOLOGY OF EVANGELISM ANTICIPATES THE SECOND COMING OF JESUS CHRIST

For more than 1,900 years the Church has anticipated the second coming of Jesus Christ. Intemperate predictions concerning the time of the Second Coming have caused many to view it with derision. Ridicule is not, however, the product of the modern mind. In the first century people had already begun to ask, "Where is this 'coming' he promised?" (2 Pet. 3:4, NIV). Could the apostles have imagined that the Church age would last nearly 20 centuries? The question needs no answer. The fact is, it has.

The evangelist as theologian does not attempt to establish the exact date of Christ's return. More is at stake than knowing when the end shall come. Men and women throughout the world must be spiritually prepared for His coming. To multiplied millions of people this means hearing the gospel message for the very first time. Evangelism is motivated by the awareness that Christ's coming is near; that the world as we know it will not go on forever. A mood of urgency is created for the proclamation of the gospel, because no one really knows when Christ shall appear.

I recall the first sermon I heard on the second coming of Jesus Christ. Being only six years old, I was terrified! For more nights than I can remember I thought I could see the stars falling from the heavens and the moon turning to blood. It was not until my college days that I heard Christ's return proclaimed as "the blessed hope" (Titus 2:13), and that Christians did not need to fear His appearing.

From the perspective of biblical theology, the "day of the Lord" (cf. Joel 2) has become the "day of Christ" (Phil. 1:10; 2:16; cf. 1:6). The prophetic proclamation of God's judgment upon faithless Israel has become the final act of God's salvation in Jesus Christ to all human-

PERSONAL EVANGELISM: Sowing and Reaping

by Ruth V. DeLong

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"Who's there?" called Blind Bob when we knocked at his door on a Wednesday morning.

"It's John," replied Pastor Bennett. "I've brought a couple of friends with me I'd like for you to meet."

Bob warmly invited us in, stating, "Any friend of yours is welcome, Pastor."

We passed through the kitchen on our way to the living room. Sitting on the counter was Bob's morning drink, and it wasn't coffee. Bob was an alcoholic.

We visited a few minutes, building a bridge of friendship. Then I shared Christ with Bob. After presenting the gospel I asked him if he would like to repent of his sin, open the door of his heart, and invite Jesus Christ in. He

hesitated, saying, "I want to really mean it and be able to live right. I've been listening to the Bible on tapes, and just this morning I got down on my knees and thanked God for giving me a good night's rest."

I assured Blind Bob that if he was sincere in making a commitment to Jesus Christ, He would help him with his problems. Bob prayed the sinner's prayer and invited Christ in. Pastor John, my friend, and I welcomed him into the family of God.

Bob then said, "Let me tell you something about the preacher who brought you here. He was driving down the street here in Auckland when he saw me. I was snookered and had fallen into the gutter. He stopped his car, picked me up, and took me to

my home. I offered him a drink, but he wouldn't take it. But John didn't just drop me off and forget about me. He comes to see me at least once a week—sometimes twice. And he takes me to church on Sundays."

Jesus said, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Matt. 25:40). Jesus also tells us, "Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in" (Luke 14:23).

Blind Bob is an example of what can happen when we go out from our comfortable homes and pews and with love and compassion share the Good News. There are many Bobs searching for something to fill the void in their lives. You and I have the answer, and we had better not keep Him a secret. 

ity. This Christological shift in meaning does not exclude judgment. It proclaims that judgment is no longer the primary theme; the day of God's wrath is also the day of God's final act of salvation. Christians are called to proclaim the gospel of Christ crucified in the light of this blessed hope.

The evangelist as theologian proclaims the message of Christ's return as judgment and salvation. To exclude either theme from the message is to distort its meaning.

6. A THEOLOGY OF EVANGELISM IS DIRECTLY RELATED TO THE DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH

Why does the local church exist? This is a complex question that cannot be answered within the limitations of this article. One thing is certain. The local church exists to carry to the ends of the earth the proclamation of the gospel of Christ crucified. Evangelism is not an option that the church may accept or reject at will. To define the mission of the church apart from its evangelistic task in the world is to abolish the church by definition. Every aspect of the church must be viewed in the light of its evangelistic purpose. Time is too valuable and resources are too limited to build church programs that do not lend themselves to the evangelistic mission of the church.

To evangelize is to proclaim God's message of good news. The gospel of Christ crucified is able to minister to

the whole person. Evangelism, therefore, reaches beyond the revival meeting. It includes deeds of compassion and mercy in the name of Jesus Christ. It endeavors to stabilize emotional needs and it seeks to provide healing to the physically distressed. The hungry, the oppressed, the poor must never be excluded from hearing God's good news of salvation.

The integrity of the gospel of Christ crucified is not sacrificed when the concept of evangelism is expanded to include the needs of the whole person. Expanding the sphere of evangelism in projects like the Community of Hope in Washington, D.C., is to recapture the vision that John Wesley had for the church. Evangelism that cares for the whole person is the essence of Wesleyanism.

Evangelism, therefore, is not something the church ought to do; it belongs to the very nature of what the church is. If the church is to fulfill its mission in taking the gospel of Christ crucified to the ends of the earth, it must first be engaged in two preliminary tasks. First, the evangelistic church must have a firm grasp on the gospel of Christ crucified. It is this message that contains the power of God to create new life. Second, an evangelistic church must develop methods in line with its understanding of the gospel that will serve the proclamation of God's good news throughout the world. 

PREPARING A CHURCH FOR REVIVAL

by Duane Yoesel

Pastor, Church of the Nazarene, Westminster, Colo.

My heart was "strangely warmed" in Kansas City in 1966 when C. William Fisher delivered a keynote address on "It's Revival We Need!" But that was 18 years ago. As I sit in the here and now thinking how refreshing it would be to have a real revival in my church, I have to ask myself if I'm really convinced that revival is what my church needs. I'd really be happy for some increases in attendance, in giving, and in membership. That would make me look good to my leaders and my peers and would certainly add to my contentment.

We pastors are tempted to be content with that sometimes, aren't we? Maybe that's because we've tried so many times but haven't been sure that we really experienced revival. We blamed our people. They didn't attend. They weren't interested. They didn't put forth much effort. It's easy to blame the laypeople when the truth is we probably didn't adequately prepare for revival.

I recently prepared a survey for the Wednesday night crowd at my church. I felt I needed to know what my people were thinking if I was to properly prepare my church for revival. Some of them, I knew, had never experienced a "heaven-sent" revival. If they had, they'd crave another like the taste buds crave a second Pizza Hut Supreme. About 100 responded, their ages ranging from teens to senior adults.

Let me share the results of my survey:

1. Do we still need revivals in our church, or will other methods or approaches work as well or better?
 - a. We still need revivals—93%
 - b. Other methods would work better—7%
2. How often should we have revivals in the church?
 - a. Once a year—28%

- b. Twice a year—51%
- c. More than twice a year—21%

3. How long should the actual revival meeting last?
 - a. Weekend—24%
 - b. Five days—27%
 - c. One week—38%
 - d. Longer than one week—11%

We used to have revivals because we had to have them to exist. Revivals as mere tradition can be fatal.

4. What approach do you like best for a revival?
 - a. Evangelistic preaching to the lost—34%
 - b. Teaching or building up of the Christians—9%
 - c. Seminar on current theme of interest—2%
 - d. Combination of the above at various times—55%
5. Do you personally attend revivals?
 - a. Yes, most of the time—64%
 - b. No, never—11%
 - c. Some of the time—25%
6. If you do not attend, why not?
 - a. I have no interest and do not believe they are beneficial—20%
 - b. Prior commitments—80%
7. How do you gauge the success of a revival?
 - a. Attendance—5%

(Continued on page 10)



Michael Grimshaw

PREPARING A CHURCH FOR REVIVAL

by Michael Grimshaw

Pastor, Church of the Nazarene, Bremerton, Wash.

Before I became a pastor I was a much greater expert on how to prepare a church for revival (in the same way that I was an expert on raising children before my son appeared on the scene). If only I could remember those "gems" of intellect, wisdom, and deep spiritual insight. If only my vision wasn't blurred by people who feel revivals are outdated, and by others who valiantly defend such methods yet never realized the sacrifice involved for success. Oh, well, though memory fades, experience leaves me some basics on which to build my case for revival preparation.

Clarification of Purpose

Before we begin to implement plans for revival, the leaders of the church must be aware of what we want to accomplish. What is the emphasis of this special week? What is the real purpose? Too often our shotgun approach to revivals is precisely the reason for disappointing results. Even our praying is without direction.

1. *Begin with the Pastor.* He must honestly answer the following questions:
 - Is this just another activity?
 - Why are we having this meeting? Is it to meet real needs, or is it because the church *Manual* states we should have at least two revivals per year?
 - What specifically do we hope to gain from this meeting?
2. *Talk with the Evangelism Committee and the Church Board.* It is essential to involve the lay leaders. Recently, we dealt with calendar dates considered poor for revival because of their proximity to Christmas. I asked the board to make the final decision. Though some members felt we couldn't

afford the meeting at that time, the board voted unanimously to schedule it anyway, based on our desperate need for revival, and our recent probe on how to be participants in true revival.

Actual Preparation for Revival

C. E. Matthews states, "There is one thing that pre-

If I could advise every prospective young pastor, I would say: "Learn how to pray." Nothing worthwhile is accomplished without intercession.

cedes all other elements which go with a church revival, that is desire. A genuine desire on the part of the pastor and church is an absolute essential if a revival is to be experienced" (*A Church Revival*, Broadman Press, p. 35).

Many books dealing with revival preparation tell you to establish special revival committees. I have found that committees formed from the church board function most productively. The responsibilities of these committees are outlined each year as a part of their total job descriptions. Therefore, when revivals are planned, the evangelism and outreach committee is assigned prayer preparations, visitation, and follow-up, which are all part of their total areas of responsibility. The finance and personnel committee gives input and recommendations for total budget, honoraria to speakers and musicians,

(Continued on page 10)

- b. Seekers—13%
- c. Ongoing change in the spirit of the church—55%
- d. All of the above—27%
8. How long has it been since you have experienced what you would call a great revival?
- a. Less than a year—14%
- b. 1-5 years—31%
- c. 5-10 years—4%
- d. More than 10 years—25%
- e. Never—26%
9. How do you think we best can prepare our church for revival? (This was the only question where no choices were given for answers).
- a. Prayer—78%
- b. Calling and advertising—11%
- c. Preaching—4%
- d. Obedience—3%
- e. No idea—4%

Summing up the survey, it seems that our people still want revivals and almost 80 percent feel the answer is in seeking God in prayer. This is not a new thing. It was stated many centuries ago in the Old Testament: "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and *pray*, . . . then will I hear from heaven . . ." (2 Chron. 7:14).

It was disturbing to see that 26 percent of my people had never experienced what they thought was significant revival. Maybe most of those were young people, which makes it even more disturbing. If that trend continues, revival will be a thing of the past in our church. That thought alone should drive us to our knees. It must begin in our hearts and spread to the people. A good goal for all of us would be to determine that everyone in our church and under our ministry would have the opportunity of experiencing at least one exciting, soul-changing, significant revival in his lifetime.

My denomination was born in revival. We had revivals then because we had to have them to exist. Have we now come of age and see revival as a tradition rather than a necessity? How do we move from complacency to constraint?

If we agree that prayer is a top priority in preparing for revival, then the next question is, How do we get our people to pray? John J. Hancock, in *The Joy of Revival* (Chapter 6), suggests organizing prayer groups. Some of the ideas he presents are: revival Communion, prayer chains, prayer cells in homes, prayer partners, church board prayer meetings, and the old standby, cottage prayer meetings. Rev. Hancock quotes from Dr. Eugene Stowe who said, "Three months of well-organized prayer preparation should be a minimum for revival campaigns." "Prayerparation," says Mendell Taylor, "should be accentuated prior to a revival campaign and continued through the meeting. God is ready to give. We must be ready to receive."

Leonard Ravenhill, in *Revival Praying*, says, "Millions watch with thumping hearts as American scientists hurl a man into space. Yet every day thousands of souls are launched into a Christless eternity and are in orbit forever in the regions of the damned. Few hearts thump over their eternal misery; no banner headlines of the

and accommodations. The praise and worship committee takes care of music, baby-sitters, ushers, and greeters just as they do the rest of the year. A building and grounds committee looks after the janitorial duties and facilities preparation. These committees function regularly with enlarged memberships of non-board members, which helps to develop more involvement in preparation.

Advance notification is essential. Here is a place where the pastor holds the key. Once the board is aware of the meeting and of their responsibilities, it then falls to the pastor to alert the congregation of its timing, its priority, and all that is involved. Advertisement can be accomplished through bulletins, newsletters, pulpit announcements, class announcements, and a revival board displaying advance dates and names of workers. Testimonies of persons saved in previous revivals, those sanctified in revivals, and those strengthened in revivals will build expectation. Music can also be a great motivator, especially hymns and gospel songs with great revival themes.

Schedule adjustments must be made. Rearrange the church calendar to give the revival priority. As an itinerant evangelist I used to suggest that it would be possible for all of us to keep a full slate if every year had six months of October and six months of April. Many consider these two months the best timing for revival efforts. However, in the past year we enjoyed two outstanding revivals, one in the third week of June and the other the second week of December amid Advent and Christmas programming. With proper preparation God was free to move and to draw men and women to himself.

A pre-revival preaching program is often beneficial. A sermon series to set the atmosphere or to deal with issues involved in revival preparation could include:

- What Is a Revival?
- How to Prepare for Revival
- Revival Kindlings
- Prayer: The Prerequisite for Revival
- Great Prayers of God's Word

Allow the Holy Spirit to stir your sanctified imagination and illustrate what is in your ability to communicate.

Prayer is essential. The longer I minister, the more I am convinced that nothing lasting is accomplished without intercession. If I could give just one bit of advice to every young pastor, to every ministerial student, it would be simply this—learn how to pray effectively. I'm sure that my ministry would have been much more productive had I learned that lesson sooner. Effective prayer is not easy. Your people will not learn how to pray without an example. There is no limit to the ideas that can help encourage prayer.

- Prayer Partners
- Prayer Chains
- Prayer Seminars
- Prayer Circles
- Prayer Clocks

In our last revival we used the visual aid of a giant 24-hour clock, divided into 15-minute segments. We did not emphasize covering all 24 hours, but rather the in-

press scream of the eternal woe of those who can never again pass this way."

Prayer is the great force of revival, but we must also put feet to our prayers. Preparation is needed in advertising and inviting, in the actual emphasis of the services and the selection of the evangelist. We must create an air of expectancy among our people—make them believe this will be the spiritual event of the year in our church. Our people will get about as excited as we get, and their expectancy level will rise as high as our faith.

But God is not obligated to bless us just because we have called an evangelist and announced the dates. There must be preparation and perspiration on our part.

The day before Dr. George Truett died, he had some visitors. They expected to see him in his bed, but they found him kneeling with arms outstretched at the window, looking over the great city of Dallas where he had pastored for 50 years. Sick as he was, and near death, he sobbed, "Oh, people of Dallas, won't you come to Jesus?" This kind of concern will bring revival to our churches.



Grimshaw

volvement of as many as possible. While not all time slots were filled, we did have someone praying for more than 13 hours each day.

The second tool was the use of adult Sunday School classes. Prior to the revival dates, we cleared the calendar for special prayer nights and asked each adult Sunday School class to take charge on one specific evening. Anyone could attend the "around the altar" prayer times, but one class was responsible for each evening.

These are not new ideas, but they were greatly used of the Lord. Whatever methods you use, get your people praying earnestly!

A vital part of true prayer is the commitment to obedience. It is not enough to go through the form of prayer;

one must be willing to obey that which God communicates to him in prayer. Fletcher Spruce, in his book *Revive Us Again* (Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, p. 55), suggests that our prayer must be: "I want God to open my eyes, my spiritual perception, in the time of revival. I want to see with the eyes of the soul. I want a vision in my heart."

Following one such revival, our church experienced a number of continuing results. For example, two days after the close of the meetings one layman led another to the Lord. A businessman had lunch with a competitor but saw him through eyes that viewed his spiritual need. The pastor led a new man to Christ. A Sunday School class party became a time of praise.

But how do we get people to respond, to commit, to say, "Yes, I'm willing to obey"? Ultimately that is the work of the Holy Spirit; however, the administrator can help.

It has been my practice for some time to have printed sermon outlines available for every sermon I preach. In preparation for a recent revival I was doing a series on the subject of prayer. On the back of one sermon outline I printed several challenging questions for each person's private evaluation and soul preparation:

- What time each day do I pray for revival?
- What time do I pray for my Sunday School class?
- What areas of my life do I want God to deal with?
- As the revival progresses, in what areas is the Lord dealing with me?
- What new matters did God deal with me about?

Certainly, our human endeavor will not bring about revivals in the church; however, the more I read of God's promises in His Word to "pour out" revival upon His people, the more aware I become of the necessity for the human element of preparedness that is so often absent.

Real revival in the local church is premised upon four essential elements: clarification of purpose, motivation of leadership and congregation, intercessory prayer, and unwavering obedience.



From *Few Peeves*, compiled by Thom Schultze. Illustrated by Rand Kruback. Reprinted by permission. Copyright 1982, Group Books, Box 481, Loveland, CO 80539.

Then there are the preachers who still won't quit after 43 verses of "Just as I Am."

HOW TO DEVELOP AN EVANGELISTIC CONGREGATION

by Charles (Chic) Shaver
Professor of Evangelism, Nazarene Theological Seminary

It is possible to be an evangelistic pastor and not have an evangelistic congregation. It is sad if it ends there. The pastor, as spiritual leader, must lead that church to become what it should be. Let me propose seven steps a pastor can take to develop an evangelistic congregation.

1. *Establish a Confidence Base*

Many evangelistic approaches entail high risk. The present saints of your congregation will need to trust you—have a high level of

confidence in you—before they will follow you out on a high-risk adventure. Be sure you have built a solid confidence base with them before you call them to that risk.

God commissioned Moses to go to Egypt's Pharaoh to deliver Israel from bondage (Exod. 3:11; 4:21). Yet the first thing Moses and Aaron did when they arrived in Egypt was to bring together the elders (the influence makers) of Israel in order to gain their confidence (4:29-31). Then they ap-



Charles Shaver

proached Pharaoh in what they knew from the beginning was a high-risk adventure (5:1).

When Saul, after his conversion on the Damascus Road, came to Jerusalem to join the disciples, they rebuffed him. Only through the help of the already trusted Barnabas was he able to establish a confidence base. Then Saul was free to speak boldly for Christ (Acts 9:26-28).

I do not mean to say that you enter your parish situation with the idea of earning trust so you can then run your program. Oh, no! You enter that pastorate to be God's man and serve people. As a loving, faithful, integrity-filled person, willing to lay down a chunk of your life for others, you earn as a by-product the right to lead them—even to high-risk adventure.

2. Model Evangelism for Your People

You carry the greatest weight with your people when you show them how to evangelize, not just tell them. I regularly take both laity and seminary students with me on personal evangelism calls. Mrs. Shaver and I invite and entertain both Christians and non-Christians together in our home in friendship evangelism. In these situations some will come to Christ. Meanwhile the Christians who saw it happen will be encouraged to share Christ.

Peter Wagner has popularized the idea that about 10 percent of Christians have the gift of evangelism. This, of course, means that many pastors do not have the gift of evangelism. Yet Wagner states, "The pastor of a growing church does not necessarily need to have the gift of evangelism, although he should be very active in using his role of witness."¹ Such a pastor will win a few to Christ through his role of witness. In his sermons, he will illustrate with the conversion stories of those the congregation has come to know as true Christians and include his part in bringing about these conversions. This pastor will encourage those of his congregation who have the gift of *evangelist*. In one fast-growing congregation, Jean² has for several years demonstrated the gift of evangelist. This didn't threaten her pastor at all. He asked her to lead their evangelism program, went

out calling regularly with evangelism teams himself, and saw his church grow.

3. Analyze Your Church to Pinpoint Strengths and Weaknesses

An analysis of the 1977 Sunday School records of my church showed that youth and children made up 39 percent of our attendance compared to a denominational average of 58 percent. Further we discovered that our adults were predominantly older. Finally it dawned on us that we needed to concentrate more on young adults, which in turn would increase the children and youth. We took specific steps to strengthen family ministry:

- a. Redevelop nursery policies.
- b. Organize a mothers' club.
- c. Show the James Dobson film series, *Focus on the Family*.
- d. Start a men's breakfast.
- e. Begin mothers' day out.
- f. Expand summer Vacation Bible School.
- g. Add another junior high class.
- h. Add two new young adult classes.
- i. Hire a youth minister.

After years of attendance decline in both Sunday School and church, these changes were made, and the last four years have shown healthy growth. Last year we received 15 young adult lay couples into membership, received 38 by profession of faith or as new to our denomination, and grew 17 percent in both worship and Sunday School attendance. Analysis of our church was one of the keys to this turnaround. James Engel and Wilbert Norton have said, "The cutting blades of any Christian organization are a *research-based, Spirit-led strategy* to reach people with the Good News and to build them in the faith"³ (italics mine).

When a pastor is analyzing his church, he will protect himself from error by thinking of evangelism in its broadest range. In other words, he needs to be concerned with:

- a. the contact of new people
- b. the cultivation of prospects
- c. the conversion of prospects
- d. the follow-up of new converts
- e. the incorporation of converts into the life of the church
- f. the entire sanctification of believers
- g. the discipling of Christians
- h. the equipping of believers to serve
- i. service, ministry, and spiritual reproduction by mature Christians

Growth can be stopped by one break in the chain. In my first pastorate, I did very little to equip saints to serve. I put all my emphasis on reaching new people in conversion. I prayed to that end. My church was averaging about 50 in attendance. Then in a 41-day period, 42 people sought God. I had not a single follow-up worker

trained. It was impossible to establish all these converts myself. I skipped an important link and suffered for it. Now I train follow-up workers early in my pastorate and take a more balanced approach to the broader range of evangelism.

4. *Commit Yourself to an Equipping Ministry*

An equipping ministry is one in which the pastor teaches, trains, and develops his laypeople so they may discover their ministries and perform them. This concept is taught in Eph. 4:11-12. An equipping ministry is naturally a multiplying ministry. James Kennedy has stressed an equipping ministry in the area of personal evangelism training and has seen his church grow from 17 to 6,500 members. He says, "It is because winning a person to Christ is so important that training someone to win 10 or 100 or 1,000 people to Christ is so much more important."⁴

Most churches should have a training program in a planned, personal evangelism approach. Since not all will be gifted in this area, we need to provide training for the broader range of evangelism. In a given year my local church will provide workshops in friendship calling, hospitality, fellowship groups, small-group Bible studies, witnessing, follow-up, altar work, and prayer as well as the intensive 16-week class on personal evangelism.

Sometimes a fear arises that personal evangelism training will stifle spontaneous evangelism. On the contrary, it enhances it. The highly trained become more confident and more free to share Christ as spontaneous situations arise. The personal spiritual development of those so trained is amazing. Just this week I was chatting with Dan, who joined our church in 1982. He said, "I went into the personal evangelism class just to get additional Christian training—to round me out. But it changes your heart. You view relationships with a different heart. You develop 'soul-winning eyes.' You look at people as ones to witness to."

5. *Celebrate God's Grace Through Public Testimony*

Debbie testified a few months ago that God did a wonderful thing for her when He sanctified her wholly. In her full surrender to Him, she felt so much better about herself. She stopped biting her nails, brought her weight problem under control, and stopped nagging her husband. Even people new to the church could identify with this testimony. Regularly our church invites laymen to tell what God is doing in their lives—they prepare powerful testimonies in advance—and they are given in Sunday night services. And God breaks in and there are spontaneous testimonies too—I've seen as many as 40 in one service.

When new members are received, a brief biography highlighting God's working in their lives is given. Thus in a single service, God's grace is magnified from 10 or 20 or 50 perspectives.

A few years ago a powerful book appeared—*Wit-*

nessing Laymen Make Living Churches. In it, Claxton Monro and William Taegel state,

The non-Christian cannot readily identify with an ordained minister who is, in his opinion, a professional trained and paid to talk about God's glory. In his eyes, the ordained minister is someone set apart. But when he hears about this glory coming into the life of a layman like himself he is encouraged to seek the same hope for himself through pursuing a living relationship with God in Christ.⁵

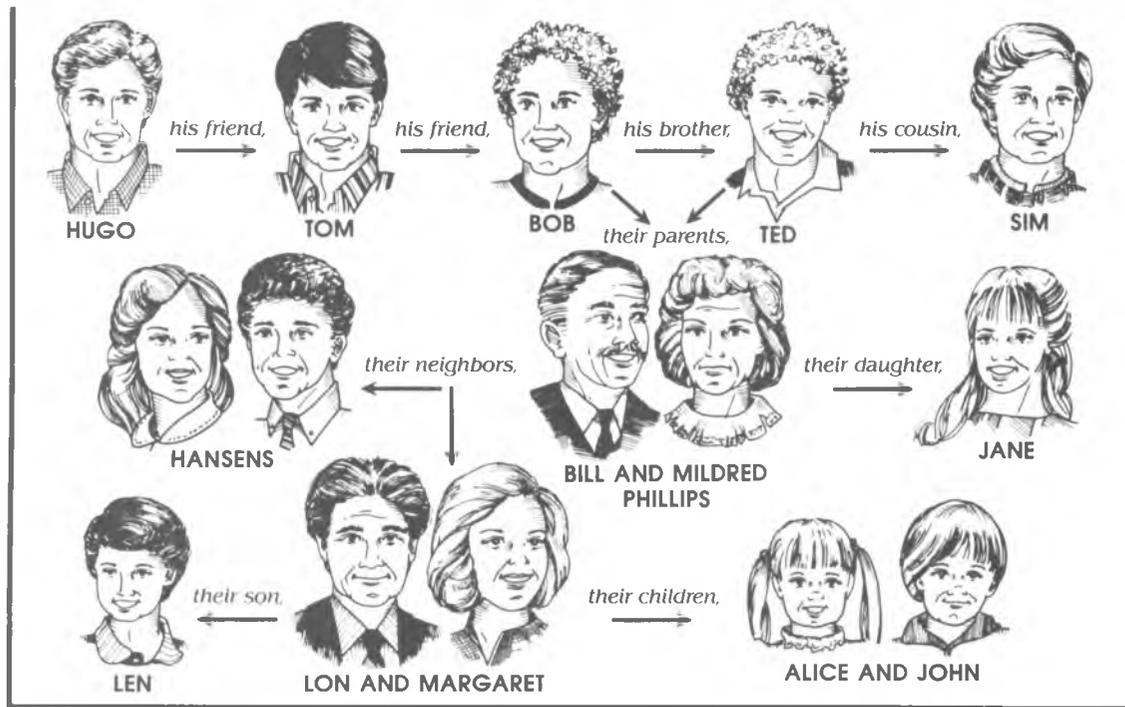
If we want an evangelistic congregation, we must have lay testimonies about what God has done for individuals. There is another step, however. Testimonies are needed, highlighting how God has used lay individuals to witness. Last Sunday night the preacher preached a powerful message on the second coming of Christ. Earlier in the service a layman, Don, had testified to God's special grace to his family at the time of the death of his infant daughter. At the funeral, certain relatives wept uncontrollably. Don's other daughter, four years old, asked why such tears. Didn't Grandpa realize that sister had gone to heaven? Don said that it might be that Grandpa didn't have that assurance of heaven. In the next 24 hours the four-year-old came repeatedly to Don and asked him to tell Grandpa about Jesus and heaven. The next day before Grandpa left to drive to his home state, Don had a serious talk with him. Grandpa prayed and invited Christ into his life.

In our public services, we are careful not to give a lot of detail of the procedures and methods used by which people come to Christ. The problem if you do is that you reveal your strategy to people who may be called on and witnessed to by your personal evangelists. However, twice a year we hold a personal evangelism banquet with between 10 and 16 new converts telling how they were reached with the gospel. They get very specific about the methods by which they were reached, but this banquet crowd is a group already Christian and committed to personal evangelism.

In public services, we express appreciation for less intense forms of witness, because people need to be encouraged to witness at all levels. Recently our minister of youth presented what he called the Sunday School tree. As he told the story of each person who invited another to Christ and the Sunday School, the individual named came and stood at the front. By the time he finished, the picture illustrated on the next page emerged. The front of the sanctuary filled with people, and people in the pews caught a vision of what could be done in their webs of relationships.⁶ Repeatedly such public displays of God's grace should send our people home talking, thinking, and praying about winning the lost to Christ and the church.

6. *Promote Exciting Public Evangelism*

Somehow a reluctance to preach evangelistically and call for public commitment has gripped many of our



pastors. All pastors should preach evangelistically from time to time. I have been teaching my students: "If what you preach is the truth, truth is important enough to act on now. So give the altar call." Phillips Brooks says, "A sermon exists in and for its purpose. That purpose is the persuading and moving of men's souls."⁷ Thus the frequent public invitation to salvation, reclamation, or entire sanctification will be appropriate.

Plan your series of special services (revivals) carefully, sufficiently in advance, and as high points in your year. Select an evangelist you have confidence in and who will have the ability to inspire your people. Many events leading up to and during the special service should involve your people (special prayer, fellowship times after services, Sunday School class nights, bring-a-friend emphasis).

I can honestly say that our revivals are exciting events that our people look to with anticipation. As I write this, it is eight weeks before our revival services, but both in our last Wednesday prayer meeting and this Friday morning prayer meeting, I heard others praying for this revival. When layman Brad prayed Wednesday night, he reflected on his two years in the church and rejoiced that the revivals during that time had been spiritual high points for his family. He asked God that the next revival have similar impact.

7. Pray!

I saved this until last, though in importance it is first. I thought that if I put it first in the article, you would just think of it as a tip of the hat to prayer and pass on.

Earlier in this article I mentioned years of decline in the local congregation of which I am a part—until four years

ago when an amazing growth began. Many new programs had already been instituted and were in place, but no growth occurred. Then about four years ago, we began "Dayspring," a 6-7 A.M. Friday prayer meeting that has met every week but three over these nearly four years. Only about 12 people meet each week, but it is burdened, faith-filled, intercessory prayer, and God is answering. New people are being won to Christ, problems are being solved, new ministries are beginning, the city is being influenced for Christ. Remember Engel and Norton said we needed a "research-based, *Spirit-led* strategy"! How the Spirit leads us as we pray. Pastor—call your people to prayer!

On a day in October, Del, a member of our church, prepared to go out shopping and to get his car repaired. He had been involved in personal evangelism training in our local church, and he was also a man of prayer. He prayed for God's guidance that day and a chance to witness for Christ. At the Firestone store while waiting for his car to be serviced, he struck up a conversation with Jim, who had been transferred to the area by his company.

They got into a discussion of church and spiritual things. Del invited Jim to attend our church. The next Sunday he was present. In a few days some of our folks went with Pastor Wright to call on Jim. They shared Christ with him. Jim prayed and for the first time in his life received the assurance of salvation. Jim now attends all the services regularly, gave a powerful testimony to the congregation on Christmas Sunday morning, and is enrolled in the membership class.

The stories of the Dels and Jims happen repeatedly in
(Continued on page 17)

ON *DOING* THE WORK OF AN EVANGELIST

by Harold J. Stratton

Pastor, Church of the Nazarene, Golden, Colo.

Do pastors today have more demands on their time than Paul did when he wrote, "Do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry" (2 Tim. 4:5, NIV)? Paul further instructs pastors to preach the Word, be prepared, correct, rebuke, encourage with a lot of patience and careful instruction, keep a cool head, and be prepared for hardship.

How do we accomplish all that when we have people in four different hospitals scattered across town, people living 30 miles from the church on whom we must call, and the Denver Broncos coming to town next Sunday?

In Paul's day people were usually in their homes or working in their fields when the pastor called. Of course half the population were in slavery or in some kind of bondage. That was hard on their personal freedom, but the pastor could find them easily. Paul didn't have to meet with a proliferation of committees before every transaction or decision. Marriage counseling was unheard of. I wonder whether hypochondriacs requesting prayer for this or that illness abounded then.

Today's pastor needs to develop good time-management skills and to set priorities. The top priority is evangelism.

Jesus spoke of leaving the 90 and 9 to find the 1 lost sheep. He spoke also of being the Good Shepherd who willingly paid any price for His sheep. Paul spoke of being "all things to all men, that I might by all means save some" (1 Cor. 9:22). In Romans, he declares his willingness to be damned if only his brethren

would believe on Christ, an echo of Moses' prayer for his people. The question comes to every pastor: How important is evangelism in my pastoral ministry?

Is evangelism something that happens when we schedule a commissioned evangelist? How important is evangelism to the church? Dr. Purkiser states, "The priority of evangelism in the preaching ministry of the church is seen in the fact that the great word for the church's message—the word *gospel*—is the very term from which evangelism comes. Evangelism is not just part of the church's task in the world. It comes very close to being the whole of it." (From *The New Testament Image of the Ministry*, by W. T. Purkiser.)

As a pastor/evangelist I feel inadequate. Perhaps you feel the same way. Faced with this we often do not do the work of an evangelist because we may meet rejection or turn people away. Many times I find it easy to do other things to keep me busy and yet give me a sense of doing the ministry of the church. But Paul wrote to Timothy, "Do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry" (2 Tim. 4:5). This is the stuff of which mandates are made.

I wonder if today's pastors see the people as Paul did: "For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ

for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh" (Rom. 9:3). I wonder if we really are doing the work of an evangelist, thus making full proof of our ministry. We can let a lot of good programs spuriously grab the first priority.

It is also easy to get caught in the trap of doing work ourselves that ought to be delegated to others. By doing this, we may try to legitimize our lack of evangelism by keeping too busy.

THE PASTOR IS THE KEY, THEY SAY

I have been doing a lot of reading and soul searching regarding this matter of pastoral evangelism. I recently read *Evangelism and Your Church*, by C. John Miller. Miller is pastor of the New Life (Orthodox) Presbyterian Church of Jenkintown, Pa., and teacher of evangelism at Westminster Theological Seminary. It is his assertion that we are



Harold J. Stratton

not doing the work of evangelism today. As I look across my own denomination I wonder if we are truly doing the work of evangelists. The statistics are not really convincing.

It is one thing for our people to invite their friends and neighbors to come to our churches, our Sunday Schools, and to get involved; but it is still another thing for us pastors to go and call in these homes, minister to them, and evangelize them.

I took comfort in the fact that a few years ago the church growth movement and the emphasis on spiritual gifts stated that only about 10 percent of the people have the gift of evangelism. I did not feel I was called to be an evangelist in the way they were presenting it. But even though I do not have that definite spiritual gift of an evangelist, I find that I still must do the work of an evangelist.

My church *Manual* states, "The minister must have gifts, as well as grace, for the work . . . Saints will be edified and sinners converted through his ministry" (401.4). "He must have a deep sense of the fact that souls for whom Christ died are perishing, and that he is called of God to proclaim to them the glad tidings of salvation" (401).

"Continuous evangelism fails wherever its spirit is not in the pastor. He is to lead, strengthen, and guide. The whole tone of his ministry and the whole tenor of his preaching must sustain the effort, or it withers," states Frederick DeLand Leite in *Every-Day Evangelism*.

Are we getting away from what Paul told his son Timothy? Do we end up spending too much time at meetings, too much time in things that dull our sensitivity to the needs of people? "Self-indulgence represents a special and continuing temptation to the pastor, because his time is largely in his own

hands," writes John Miller. "It takes the form of physical laziness and sluggishness of spirit, which really fosters fear. Personal timidity and physical exhaustion often seem to issue from the poisoned conscience of the slothful man" (*Evangelism and Your Church*, p. 29).

As we indulge ourselves, we can find all kinds of reasons for not going into the homes of people and meeting them

The greatest indictment of the church is not that it has fallen short of the evangelism mark, but that it has quit striving to reach the mark.

where they live. We don't really get to know their needs.

It is hard to get into the homes, because so many are not there during the hours that we would like to do our calling. Perhaps we need to adjust our calling to their schedules. We might also make better use of the phone. Each individual must adjust and justify, in his own mind, a calling schedule that will work.

EVANGELISM BY SEMINARS; DOES IT WORK?

We hold seminars and workshops to train people in various kinds of evangelism, and we have many items on the church agenda for discipleship training and discipling. But are we really mobilizing people? Or are we just simply teaching them to carry around notebooks? We must get them out of the classroom and out to the people.

Are we pastors setting the example? In *Evangelism and Your Church*, the writer indicates that people will not rise higher in evangelism than their pastor's example.

My church has raised more money than it ever has in its history. We've made some needed improvements on the building. But our growth by profession of faith has been quite small. Our people have been doing more things with more harmony than they have done in some time. But my preaching has not been evangelistic. I have been preaching mostly in the area of encouragement and building up the saints. I became disenchanted after preaching evangelistically for some time and not getting any response. Now I'm wondering if there may be a direct relationship between a lack of personal evangelism and a lack of persons at the altar.

There are many ways and places to gain new contacts. In my first pastorate, I found that a variety of persons gathered at one of two local coffee shops every morning to drink coffee and talk. I joined them. I was able to plant a lot of seed and gained the respect of my community—one of the benefits of pastoring in a small community. In my present pastorate, new families visit our church nearly every Sunday. These are the best prospects for evangelization.

Larry Christenson states in *Back to Square One*, "The greatest indictment of a Christian congregation is not that it is falling short of the mark but that it has quit striving to reach the mark." Let's not let programs, buildings, and finance get in the way of doing the work of an evangelist and making full proof of our ministry.

Let us hear the word of Jesus anew: "As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you" (John 20:21). 

HOW TO DEVELOP . . .

(Continued from page 15)

our church, not only because we have an evangelistic pastor, but also because we have an evangelistic congregation. And we are working and praying that it be more so. Let's work to fill our world with evangelistic congregations! 

NOTES

1. Peter Wagner, *Your Church Can Grow* (Glendale, Calif.: Regal, 1976), 81.
2. Most names have been changed to protect privacy. The events are true.

3. James Engel and H. Wilbert Norton, *What's Gone Wrong with the Harvest?* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975), 13.

4. D. James Kennedy, *Evangelism Explosion*, 3rd ed. (Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House, 1983), 5.

5. Claxton Monro and William Taegel, *Witnessing Laymen Make Living Churches* (Waco, Tex.: Word, 1968), 17.

6. Win Arn and Charles Arn, *The Master's Plan for Making Disciples* (Pasadena, Calif.: Church Growth Press, 1982), 43-44, report a survey of 14,000 laypeople. Over 75 percent attributed their being in Christ and the church to a friend or relative. Thus the web of relationships is the major reason why people come to Christ.

7. Phillips Brooks, *Lectures on Preaching* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1978), 110.

PRAYER AND EVANGELISM

by Jack O. Bowman

Pastor, Eastside Church of the Nazarene, Denver

Is anyone here hearing from heaven?" Charles G. Finney always asked that question at the start of a revival campaign. If he found one active prayer warrior, he made himself the second party, agreeing for revival on the promise of Matt. 18:19: *Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.*

The best tool for evangelism is usually the most neglected—prayer and fasting. When Jesus came down from the Mount of Transfiguration He found nine distraught, frustrated, and confused disciples who couldn't heal the father's lunatic son. Jesus healed the son, and when He and His disciples were alone, they asked: "Why could not we cast him out?" Jesus' all-important reply was: "Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, if ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you. Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting" (Matt. 17:19-21). Faith and prayer and fasting go and grow together.

Where there is no prayer there is no victory; where the price is paid in prevailing prayer the spiritual results are beyond expectation. Gene Edwards, in *How to Have a Soul Winning Church*, says, "One reason personal evangelism is so weak in the 20th century is because we never pay the price for it. To win people your church will first have to get down on its knees."

Our instructions in Matt. 6:6 are: "But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret." God is interested in our requests, knows them even before we ask, but He wants us to ask. Leonard Ravenhill (*Why Revival Tarries*) says this about God and prayer: "Prayer is as vast as God because He is behind it. Prayer is as mighty as God, because He has committed Himself to answer it."

Praying is fighting. It is said, "Satan trembles when he sees the weakest saint upon his knees." Prayer overcomes the evil one and sin. It is our best weapon. Satan not only fears prayer, but

also objects to it and fights it. He does everything in his power to detain, discourage, or defeat prayers. The greatest power we have in bringing man back to God is evangelizing in the power of prayer.

In the Book of Daniel, the 10th chapter, we read that Daniel fasted for three weeks before he received an answer. Then a certain man from heaven appeared and said: "Fear not, Daniel: for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words" (v. 12).

We need to pray for the impossible. F. B. Meyer once said: "You do not test the resources of God till you try the impossible." God is still interested in performing miracles. "Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them" (Mark 11:24). What a promise! So large, so divine, that it is hard for our finite minds and small hearts to conceive. It is the language of faith. God delights in doing hard things.

God's greatest acts are impossibilities for man. In His creation He made a universe out of nothing. His redemption overcomes difficulties impossible for human wisdom or power. "With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible" (Matt. 19:26). Pray for the impossible.

Our Lord Jesus was the Master of



Jack O. Bowman

both prayer and evangelism. To start His ministry, He spent 40 days and nights in the wilderness fasting (Matthew, chapter 4). The New Testament Church was founded on prayer and launched with the 120 in the Upper Room praying (Acts, chapter 1). The apostle Paul, when he ordained the elders at Antioch, prayed and fasted for them (Acts 14:23). Again the apostle Paul admonished the church at Corinth, "Give yourselves to fasting and prayer" (1 Cor. 7:5).

I had a godly pastor when I was a teenager. He loved the Lord, his church, and the youth of his church. One day several of us boys and this pastor were swimming in our favorite swimming hole, and one of the young men asked how the pastor got calluses on his knees. My pastor's answer was, "Talking to my Lord."

Years later, at the 1972 General Assembly of the Church of the Nazarene in Miami, Florida, I shared a small travel trailer with the same man. I noticed his knees were more callused than when I was a teenager, and I knew without asking that he still maintained his practice of "talking with his Lord." The very next year he was "graduated" to his eternal home. I went immediately to the small Oklahoma community where he and his wife lived. Standing in the funeral home, the director said to me, "I thought the family said he was a minister. Then how come he has such callused knees?"

"Sir," I said, "he got those from spending so much time on his knees in prayer, petitioning his Lord for his family, his church, and his friends." I knew, because that man was my dad. What a heritage! While standing at the head of his casket, I heard many from the community utter the plea, "Pastor, Pastor, who now will pray for us?" The words varied, but the heart cry was the same.

As for my part I shall never forget the advice he gave me: "Son, go forward on your knees."

Armin R. Gesswein, in *Evangelism in the Eighties*, says: "Prayer is the lifeline of New Testament evangelism, the oxygen of its holy fire. The New Testament was born in prayer. It knows no evangelism without prayer, and no prayer which does not lead to evangelism. God has joined these; we must never separate them."

How to Make an Altar Call and Help Seekers

by Duane Yoesel

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Today, somewhere in Jerusalem a Yemenite Jew sits cross-legged on the floor of a synagogue. Wrapped in a prayer shawl, he sways backward and forward as he recites the Torah.

In Istanbul, a man completing his Ramadan fast which has lasted for a month prostrates himself five times a day as he looks toward Mecca, the holy city of Mohammed.

In Kyoto, a Zen monk arises at 3 A.M. to sit cross-legged and immovable as he seeks to plumb the depths of Buddhism.

In India, we visualize a mother as she sacrifices her strongest, oldest child to the river to appease the gods.

In Mexico, people crawl on their hands and knees for miles and miles over rough stones and streets to worship at an idolatrous shrine.

All of these are seeking God in the most diverse ways imaginable. But the Word of God says, "We have an altar" (Heb. 13:10), symbolic of a place where men can meet God freely and openly for their spiritual needs. Most of the meaningful ceremonies and experiences of our spiritual lives center around the altar in a church. A dedication, a wedding, the Lord's Supper, salvation, sanctification, rededication, and ordination happened for most of us around an altar.

One day while talking to my neighbor friend from another denomination, he related to me unashamedly with tears running down his cheeks that he was really disappointed and disillusioned by his church. When I asked why, he replied: "They have taken the altar out of our church." Others miss desperately what we many times take for granted. I made up my mind that there would always be an altar in my church.

The altar, or "mourner's bench" as it once was called,

had its beginning in 19th-century Methodism. It was during the powerful revival of that time that the practice of inviting penitent sinners to the public altar for prayer was first introduced.

Our church altar should be frequented by both sinner and saint. We must remove the stigma or "invisible shield" surrounding our altars if we want them to complement our services. Maybe we have cultivated the idea that only liars, murderers, or thieves should ever pray at the altar. Dr. Jarrette Aycock, former evangelist and district superintendent in the Church of the Nazarene, said, "God has helped me to help thousands find help at the altar on what I call 'The Fourth Proposition.' We invite people forward to be saved, reclaimed, and filled with the Spirit; and I sometimes wonder if we should not have a fourth proposition inviting Christians to the altar to get help." He went on to say that he would invite Christians to the altar with these words, "How many Christians are there here who say: 'Preacher, I am not backslidden. I love God and I am trying to hold on to Him, but I will admit I have lost ground. I have seen better days spiritually.' You definitely admit you are not where you once were, and where you ought to be and want to be. Would you be willing to come and kneel and let us gather around and pray for you?" (Taken from *Evangelism, 139 Ideas and Quotes*, edited by Neil B. Wiseman, p. 43.)

It greatly disturbs me to see people I have pastored for years who make a profession of faith, yet who have never been seen praying at the altar for any reason. We must use our altars often in the public service if we expect needy persons to respond publicly at the invitation time. It will be difficult if not finally impossible to convince the laity of our churches that something eter-

nally significant is taking place unless they see people actively seeking God at the altars.

There is no substitute for the prayer and concern that surround the actual service.

Following are some practical ideas on how to make an effective altar call.

1. Set the mood in the service that paves the way for God's Spirit to do His work. This includes the proper songs, an atmosphere of worship and reverence, and a sermon that lifts up Christ and points men and women to Him.

2. Make sinners feel comfortable and welcome in your church, and then through God's Word and the convicting power of the Holy Spirit make them feel miserable and uncomfortable in their sins. A "holier than thou" attitude from the pulpit will chill the interest of the sinners in your church and in the Savior. Jesus, our Savior and Example, walked with sinners and socialized with them, yet He remained unspotted in the world.

3. Allow sufficient time for the altar call. Do not clutter up the service with legitimate things that take time from the expedient thing. I have witnessed, and probably even directed, some services that were not much more than a spiritual three-ring circus. You cannot get people into the spirit of worship and confront them with Christ in just a few closing minutes.

4. Never quench the Holy Spirit. I have a few so-called saints in my church who are more interested in the service not lasting more than one hour than in seeing needs met at the altar. If God moves in an unusual way, don't allow time to control what He is trying to do.

On my first Sunday at my current church I preached on the subject "We Have an Altar." In the service that day were my aunt and uncle and cousin Kathy whom I had not seen for more than 15 years. Kathy was 26 and recently divorced. I noticed that she was touched by the presence of the Holy Spirit, crying openly as the altar call was given. I closed the service after a few responded, but Kathy was not one of them. I didn't speak to her either privately or publicly about her need, because I didn't know her very well nor anything about her life. Kathy never attended church again. Three months after that service she put a shotgun into her mouth and pulled the trigger. I have often wondered what might have happened if we had sung another verse and held on a little longer.

5. Never "force" the altar call. Two or three verses of invitational music are usually enough. If nothing is happening it might be better to simply pray, or sing an uplifting song and dismiss. If you have to coerce people to respond, the spiritual encounter at the altar is usually with man and not with God.

6. Be especially sensitive during the altar call about your treatment of people and their emotions. Granted, emotions play a big part in the spiritual process, but we shouldn't manipulate people in any way. For example, I don't feel that we should make statements about this maybe being someone's last chance to get saved, un-

less we definitely have a direct word from God to that effect. Also, we have all been guilty of saying we will sing just one more verse; and then we sing more. It is better never to make that statement at all, or if you are going to sing only one more verse, do it. If you feel led to sing another, then you are free to do it. Be especially sensitive to the integrity of your statements during an altar call.

7. Be very clear to the intent of your invitation. If you are inviting people for salvation, tell them so. The same holds true for sanctification, reclamation, or as Dr. Ay-

Emotions play a big part in the spiritual process, but we shouldn't manipulate people in any way.

cock urged, for the fourth proposition. The invitation should closely follow the theme of your message. Be as definite in your invitation as you are in your message.

We must also be sensitive in our meetings to people who are not familiar with altar services. Make sure you explain quickly and simply that you are inviting people to Jesus, not to join the church or to shake the preacher's hand. We won't have any trouble making this clear in the altar call if we make it clear in our preaching.

8. Be prepared for the actual altar call. There is nothing more distressing or more disturbing than having delivered your soul in preaching, bringing the message to a conclusion, having the Spirit of God evident, and then having the song leader or pianist fumble through a hymnal trying to find an invitational song. Train your musicians to be prepared and to be as inconspicuous as possible. It seems to me that the preacher should in most cases pick out the invitational song in advance, and the more familiar song the better.

Counseling Seekers at the Altar

1. Whether you are a pastor or an evangelist, if you invite people to the altar to pray, you should have the common courtesy to stay and pray with them or for them. No visitor in your services is more important than the seeker at your altar.

2. Allow people, initially, the time to pray for themselves. Sometimes we have so many people praying around them they can't commune with God. Give them time to do business with God themselves. God the Holy Spirit is still the best Altar Worker. However, there are times when prayerful counsel is needed. Keep your counsel simple and Bible-centered. Don't bombard the seeker with denominational shibboleths or phrases that most don't understand or comprehend.

I remember one humorous incident from my youth.

As One Fisherman Sees It

by Clifford Chew, Jr.
Church of the Nazarene, Petersburg, Pa.

The destroyer was leaving the dock; the ship had made her courtesy call and, as flags waved farewell, was pushing herself away from the pier.

Soon an unseen voice rattled the rigging in a semistern manner and to the demand of the "electric box," officers and seamen "manned the rail."

There they were: soldiers in blue, standing at attention, facing the rail and lining it every 10 feet until the ship wore a perfect blue border.

The spectators murmured, cheered, and clapped. It was a beautiful sight.

Nearby stood a commercial fisherman, and on seeing this display he asked an old, retired chief boatswain's mate what useful task they hoped to accomplish with this maneuver. His reply described well a danger the church faces today.

"The war's over, mate," he said. "This is only ceremony, and we don't have ceremony during a war."

The next question followed logically: "Why do they do it then?"

"Mate," he said, "when you have no war you need to keep the crew clicking together or you lose the team! We must invent ceremonies and train our men to perfection in them."

There is no ceremony on the front line. Even the general has mud on his boots, and his jeep has no air conditioning. The boatswain put it just right when he said, "You don't shine brass when you're dropping ash cans on a sub and cross hairing torpedo bombers."

In the commercial fish business we only overhaul and paint up 1 month out of 12. Our business is catching fish, not looking sharp. The "sharp-looking fleet," full of ceremony, fishes on weekends and spends the week talking about it. A real fisherman fishes all week and spends the weekend talking to God.

The fighting crew is known for the enemies destroyed and fellowmen rescued; a fisherman by what he "packs out" at the dock. And the church? Jesus said, "By their

fruits ye shall know them." (The harvest is not all in yet; the war is still on; ceremony time has not yet arrived.)

In a war or in fishing we want all our equipment to be functional, not polished; to be used, not admired. The ceremony and shiny brass will come later, and from what I hear that part of the program is already taken care of by those already home and retired.

That "great cloud of witnesses" are not rooting for our ceremony, our buildings, LTDs, or financial reports. They are all warriors, fishermen, harvesters. They understand only one thing: total victory for holiness and total defeat for sin.

Christ has not given us power for ceremony, but to fire broadsides, set nets, and combine a harvest. And this "great cloud of witnesses" is rolling bandages for the purple heart and gold star winners.

Line the rail? Not yet, sailor. It is still battle stations and general quarters, and will be . . . until the Admiral calls us home. 

The altar worker happened to be my unique pastor from high school days. On that Sunday, a chronic seeker named John was again at the altar. My pastor got down beside him and said, "John, here is what we are going to do. I'm going to pray you through to victory, and then take this hammer (which happened to be behind the altar) and hit you over the head until you are dead. That is the only way you will ever make it to heaven." Strangely enough, it seemed to work. Whether out of fear or victory, John never had to come back to the altar again and testified to constant victory.

I'm not recommending that approach. The best altar worker I ever witnessed was a man whose name I don't remember but whose face I can still visualize around the altars of Bethany First Church while I was a student there. He had never been to an altar worker's seminar, but he was most effective. This quiet Christian gentle-

man unobtrusively prayed and observed what was happening around the altar. When he witnessed someone having difficulty in finding victory, he silently moved in and began to pray and counsel. Almost without exception, in just a few minutes the seeker found joy and satisfaction. I wonder if his secret was somewhere wrapped up in his own close walk with God and his genuine desire to help others find Him.

Effective altar calls and response do not just happen. I've found that God usually honors me in direct proportion to my plans, my prayers, and my preparation. Failure to give our best selves and our best methods to this important part of evangelistic endeavor may bar someone's entrance into this holy of holies where we make our sacrifices of praise to the Most High.

We owe it to the Kathys who may never enter our churches again. 

Jesus was truly a Man of vision. Yes, He was concerned with the everyday tasks of ministry, but I believe He was even more concerned with how they affected the future. He trained His disciples to take their eyes off present worldly problems and look to His eternal plan. In Luke 9:25, He asked them, "What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit his very self?" (NIV).

The last words Jesus spoke to His disciples before He ascended into heaven were, "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8, NIV).

Equipping Laypersons Requires Vision

Recently, I met with the senior pastor of one of the fastest-growing churches in the Seattle-Tacoma area. He shared with me his church's projected goals to 1994. He's not afraid to dream of a congregation of 5,000 to 10,000 in the next few years. He's not afraid to dream of tithes and offerings tripling. He told me he requires his staff of 15 to spend at least a half hour a week just sitting and dreaming. He has them get absolutely alone with God just for the purpose of allowing God to reveal His vision to them. I believe this is a good idea for every minister.

The Bible says, "Where there is no vision, the people perish" (Prov. 29:18). What a simple but convicting statement! Too often churches settle for mediocrity, become comfortable with normality, and soon become

stagnant as a farm pond in August. What a church needs today more than perfect programs and soothing services, is God-given vision! We need to be dreamers in action, listening to the very words of our Master. But we must also share our visions with laypersons.

Equipping the Layperson Requires Commitment

The pastor must be committed. I believe that if ever a pastor fails concerning evangelism, it's in commitment. Paul in 2 Cor. 5:19 declares, "God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation" (NIV). Imagine that! God, the Creator of the entire universe, has chosen us to do His work on this earth. He has committed it to us! But wait a minute; are we committed to Him? Are we willing to pay the price? Are we willing to lay down our lives to win people to Christ?

A chicken and a pig left the farm to seek their fortunes, the old story goes. When they came to a country restaurant the chicken conceived a great idea. The chicken said to the pig, "Why don't we go to work for the restaurant? We can provide the ham and eggs!" The pig thought for a time before replying, "No! For you that would involve a mere contribution, but for me it would mean total commitment!" As God's leaders in this sin-saturated society we need to be totally committed to saving the lost.

Jesus committed to us the task of spreading the Good News—regardless of the cost. Look what it cost

EQUIPPING LAYPERSONS FOR EVANGELISM

by David L. Thompson
*Minister of Youth/Evangelism
Church of the Nazarene, Westminster, Colo.*



David L. Thompson



Camerique

His disciples: James the brother of Jesus and James the son of Zebedee preached and were killed by mobs in Jerusalem; Matthew was slain by a sword in Ethiopia; Philip was hung in Phrygia; Bartholomew was flayed alive in Armenia. Andrew was crucified in Achaia; Thomas was run through with a lance in East India; Thaddeus was shot to death by arrows; a cross went up in Persia for Simon the Zealot and another in Rome for Peter. Matthias was beheaded and Jesus Christ died on a cross. Will it cost us anything?

The laity must be committed. A layperson who felt the need to be totally committed to God compiled a rather lengthy list of all the things he would and wouldn't do for God. He dated his list, signed it, and said to God, "Here, Lord, make my life count!" To his amazement, the Lord did not answer him right away. After several weeks, in the middle of the night he was awakened. "Son," the Holy Spirit seemed to say, "if you're really committed to Me, take a blank sheet of paper, sign at the bottom, and I'll fill it in."

If pastors are going to equip their laypeople, both must be committed. Presently I am discipling a man who has said, "Yes, I will be committed!" He has given Thursday nights to share Jesus with someone who has visited our church. He has tasted the vision; and evangelism, which once had no place in his life, is now a priority.

For too long Satan has cleverly convinced the Church that the work of evangelism belongs to professionals. The popular view is, "The pastor can do a much better job sharing Christ. After all, that's what he went to seminary for." The biblical concept of ministry is that every believer ministers. "And his gifts were that some should

be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry" (Eph. 4:11-12, RSV).

Equipping Laypersons Requires F.A.T.R. Disciples

"Whom do I equip first?" The lady who constantly asks to help in the church in some way? The excited new Christian, bursting to share his faith? The church board? The answers lie in whether or not they are F.A.T.R. disciples. I don't mean overweight; I mean *Faithful, Available, Trainable, and Reproducible*.

Usually, the last person to equip is the Christian who gets excited and enthusiastic for Jesus on Sundays, but gives the Lord the rest of the week off. Jesus equipped 12 strong, dedicated men who knew Him personally, intimately. They were ordinary men but they were faithful, available, trainable, and reproducible. Imagine the faith Jesus had in these men! Even though they were full of weaknesses, Jesus left the entire plan of salvation in their hands. When it comes to equipping our own people, we should look for F.A.T.R. disciples.

Before I equip saints for evangelism, I have them sign a contract saying they will complete the program and remain in it to reproduce themselves. Both of us keep copies of the contract as a reminder. They are required to attend all sessions of training. If they miss more than three, they will have to repeat the program. Establishing the standards and levels of expectation at the beginning of the course saves a lot of headache and frustration later.

Faithful

I believe in faithfulness and accountability. Accountability is something we often neglect in the church—something we expect only of the pastor, the youth leader, and the church board. Take a close look at Jesus' methods. "He sent them out to preach the kingdom of God"; "When the apostles returned, they reported to Jesus what they had done" (Luke 9:2, 10, NIV). First Cor. 4:1-2 tells us, "Men ought to regard us as servants of Christ . . . it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful" (NIV). Faithfulness is like a postage stamp. Its usefulness lies in the ability to stick to one thing until the job is completed. That's the kind of men and women Jesus wants to use. He wants to be able to say to us, "Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!" (Matt. 25:23, NIV).

Available

They must be not only faithful; but also available. "As Jesus walked beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. 'Come, follow me,' Jesus said, 'and I will make you fishers of men.' At once they left their nets and followed him. When he had gone a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John in a boat, preparing their nets. Without delay he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men and followed him" (Mark 1:16-20, NIV).

Every time I read this passage I am amazed at how willing and available the disciples were. I'm sure they
(Continued on page 52)

PREACHING FROM JOHN 3:16

If a truly evangelistic text ever existed, it is John 3:16. Therefore we asked four preachers to develop an evangelistic sermon outline on this “best loved” text.

LOVING IS GIVING

*by Dean Baldwin, Pastor
Crestview Church of the Nazarene, Springfield, Mo.*

Purpose: This scripture reveals how God’s love caused Him to give His most precious possession to redeem mankind.

It is possible to give without loving, but it is not possible to love without giving. Genuine love gives to the object of its affection. This is true on every level of life—natural, human, or divine. God loved man so much that He gave the One He loved the most to redeem him. This is love at its highest level, the greatest expression of love of which we can conceive. Paul tells us in Rom. 5:8, “God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” God loves everyone, and that includes you and me.

Introduction: While waiting for a ferry to take us across the Pearl River in Communist China, the 12 people in our party sang choruses. About 1,200 Chinese people gathered around us, curious about what was going on. When we finished singing we handed out copies of the Gospel of John. They pressed us back against the bus reaching for the booklets. When they received one, they took it to the edge

THE THREE “Rs” OF REDEMPTION

*by John W. Bruce, Pastor
Church of the Nazarene, Coshocton, Ohio*

Proposition: Perhaps no passage in the Word of God is so explicit regarding the seriousness of sin on the one hand, and the magnitude of God’s love for man on the other hand.

Introduction: The fact that sin is not a trifle is demonstrated vividly by this text. God sent His only Son to earth and to death, providing the only way for man to have hope and redemption. This text is often called the miniature gospel. The clear text, if taken seriously, means that no person ever needs to perish without hope.

Consider with me the dynamic and awesome impact of this text in our lives. We find three life-changing concepts: (1) God REACHING out to man, (2) Man RESPONDING to His reach, (3) The eternal RESULTS of this meeting. The initial step is:

I. God Reaching Out to Man—“For God so loved the world, that he gave [sent] his only begotten Son . . .”

A. Among all the religions of the world, Christianity is unique. In all other faiths the picture is man reaching out to

FOR GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD, THAT
HE GAVE HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON,
THAT WHOSOEVER BELIEVETH IN HIM
SHOULD NOT PERISH, BUT HAVE EVER-
LASTING LIFE.

LOVE EXPRESSED TO YOU

*by R. Wayne Sharpes, Pastor
Church of the Nazarene, Lima, Ohio*

Introduction: Learning to communicate is one of our great needs. Through history many problems that faced mankind were the result of broken communication. Today many neglect to develop interpersonal communication.

The lack of communication shows up in the high divorce rate. A magazine carried a cartoon showing a husband and wife leaving the office of a marriage counselor. The husband said to the wife, "Now that we've learned to communicate, shut up."

We understand little about the communication of love. Some things are very important if love is to be felt.

Words are not the only way we communicate. The inflection of the voice, the expression of the eyes, a loving touch or body movement also communicate.

Learning to listen is important in the family circle and especially in marriage. It is easy to misinterpret words and actions of others when we are not "tuned in." When our own self-esteem is low and our needs are high, we are often too

THE WONDER OF IT ALL

*by Robert G. Snodgrass, Pastor
Western Oaks Church of the Nazarene, Oklahoma City,
Okla.*

Purpose Statement: To show that the incomparable love of God the Father is personally and redemptively reaching out to every individual through Christ the Son.

Introduction: Quote song: "The Love of God"

1. What greater text for the message of Christmas than this?
2. Here we find the text of texts, Gift of gifts, and wonder of wonders.
3. (Break down verse)
 - i. God's Love Is Beyond Comprehension
The apostle Paul in his prayer for the church at Ephesus expresses it: that we "may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth and height" of His love (Eph. 3:18).
 - A. The measure of love is always its willingness to give and its capacity for sacrifice.

of the crowd and, gathering five or six others around them, they read the Gospel aloud. Soon the entire area was filled with small groups reading the Word. The Holy Spirit came in a marvelous way as we wept and rejoiced. When the ferry came, we went rejoicing on our way to a city-wide crusade in Song Nam City, Korea, knowing that these people had read the Gospel of John. We prayed that the Holy Spirit would open their minds and hearts to the Word and that they would know that John 3:16 included them.

I. The Reason for His Giving—"For God so loved the world . . ."

- A. His longing for man would not cease.
- B. His love for man would not die.
- C. His lifting man back to himself was imminent.

As long as there is love, there is a longing for the object of that love. As great, powerful, wise, and mighty as God is, He would not quit yearning and longing for man. He wanted him to be restored and reinstated into His love and favor.

The love that God had for the human family was not merely human love. Human love comes and goes. It is born and dies in the hearts of men. But divine love never dies. It is eternal. His basic nature is love, and He cannot stop loving any more than He can stop being holy. This love is so strong and permanent that man cannot do anything good enough to deserve or merit it, neither can he do anything bad enough to stop it. God's love is like the sunshine. It shines over everything, good and evil. The sun shines on the beautiful rose garden with its fragrance and beauty, and it shines on the garbage dump with its stench and ugliness. God's love reaches out to the best people on earth as well as the worst. God is no respecter of persons; neither is His love the kind of love that will die. So God continues to love mankind regardless of response.

God's love is strong, dynamic, and active. The object of that love must be lifted, cleansed, and restored before God's love can be fulfilled and satisfied. So He devised a plan whereby man can be redeemed.

II. The Reality of His Giving—"He gave his only begotten Son . . ."

- A. He gave from His mind.
- B. He gave from His heart.
- C. He actually gave His Son.

Since this love must be active, God gave His Son to redeem man from sin and death. In His mind He gave from before the foundation of the world (Rev. 13:8). He made up His mind to give His most prized Possession to buy back or redeem His most-loved creation. As Abraham decided to obey God and give his son Isaac, so God decided to give His Son Jesus. Not only did He give mentally, but He gave out of His heart. He loved His Son in a way that we cannot conceive in our finite minds. Jesus came to this world fresh from the heart of God.

The difference in Abraham's giving and God's giving is that God actually gave His Son. They both gave in their minds and out of their hearts. Yet when Abraham put his son Isaac on the altar and drew the knife to slay him, an angel stopped the act and provided a ram for the sacrifice. When Christ was on the Cross for the sins of the whole world, God offered no substitute (there was no other!). Pilate did not stop the sacrifice. The Roman soldiers did not stop it. The angels stood by with bowed heads. God the Father turned His head and did not stop it. Even Jesus, who could have saved himself, did not do so.

There was no one to stop that grim sacrificial offering on

his god(s), struggling, sacrificing, going through painful bodily abuses, even dying to appease or get the attention and approval of his god. But in Christianity, it is the opposite. We see God, through His Son Jesus, reaching out to us, and giving himself without reservation in cruel death for us, that we might receive salvation, redemption of our souls through Him.

B. This reaching surely proves the worth of man to God. We are unworthy but not worthless! None of us can ever be worth the price God paid for us. Who could ever be proud enough to imagine himself worthy of the blood of Christ? However, if we had not been worth it, He never would have paid the price for us. We are never worthy of that price, but the fact that He paid it makes me know I am not worthless but very precious to Him. In fact, Jesus said every human being is worth more than the total of all the material wealth in the world (Mark 8:36).

C. Here is a beautiful picture of God becoming Man. ". . . Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, . . . And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross!" (Phil. 2:5-8, NIV). We tend to pull away from people who patronizingly offer us a "tip" from their abundance. But Christ voluntarily condescended to the level of the common man, becoming a servant of God and of man. What condescension! In that humble self-emptying, we can relate to God. He did not reach down from His lofty position as mighty God, Lord of the universe, sovereign King of Kings; but rather He was born of a humble maid, a virgin, conceived by the Holy Spirit, and became flesh and dwelt among us, the poorest of the poor. We can relate to One who is flesh of our flesh.

D. This reach is ESSENTIAL, because "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). "We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way" (Isa. 53:6, NIV). "If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives" (1 John 1:10, NIV). All come under the judgment of God's wrath. He is holy and cannot tolerate sin.

E. "This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins" (1 John 4:10, NIV). "Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13, NIV). John is called the apostle of love, and love is the theme of his gospel. Love here means total unselfish giving without thought of oneself, or without calculating the cost of the giving. It is the willingness to risk everything for the good of another. Literally, God "sent" His only begotten Son for our salvation. It is unearned, undeserved. Is not this the zenith of grace, the gift of God's Son for our salvation? This deliberate, generous gift was planned "before the foundation of the world" (Eph. 1:4).

F. Had not sin been so serious, so powerful as to damn eternally God's highest creation, there would have been no need whatever for this supreme sacrifice of heaven's most priceless treasure—Christ himself!

Could anything less dynamic motivate man to respond to that love?

II. Man's Response to God's Reach—" . . . that whosoever believeth in him . . ."

A. It must be understood that believing in Him is much more than just a mental approval of truth. It involves total surrender of our wills, our minds, our spirits. God's faith in us and love for us meant more than just saying so; it meant

concerned about ourselves to really listen to those close to us. In the communication of love we learn to accept the way our mates express their love. That expression differs from person to person, determined to a large degree by our past observance of our own parents. We need to learn new ways of saying, "I love you." A fond look, a playful touch, a thoughtful gift, a word of support, a favorite dish, a phone call, a love note, sitting closely in the car, listening with genuine interest, or doing a needed task around the home can often express our love more strongly than words.

Though showing love may be a struggle for us, God knew exactly how to express His love for us. He first revealed himself by words and miracles through His prophets to His people Israel. But that communication was incomplete. God knew that for us to understand He must come himself, in the flesh, so we could see and touch Him. God sent His Son, His best, His most beloved. His love was expressed in that Gift and reinforced by Christ's every word and deed and His final act of death.

My text has been called "everybody's text" because it summarizes God's great expression of love to each of us. There are four evidences of God's love in the familiar words of John 3:16.

I. Passionate Was His Concern—"For God so loved the world . . ."

A. Resource of love—"For God so loved . . ."

The word "for" connects us with the previous two verses in which John tells of Israel's sin. God sent serpents to bring death in the camp as punishment, but He also provided a remedy in lifting up the brazen serpent. His love required a remedy. Had we stood in the camp that day, would we have wondered what kind of God would send such judgment? People still look at sin and death and question God's nature. But John declares the same love that lifted up the serpent is the love that initiated our salvation through Jesus Christ and lifted Him up as our sacrifice for sin.

B. River of love—"so loved . . ." The river of love that flows to us from eternity is in that word "so." The aorist tense is used to show God's love in action, reaching back to eternity, coming to fruition in Bethlehem and Calvary and viewed as one great central fact. "So loved" speaks of the mature, *agape* love of Christ. It goes beyond human love. His love is concerned with what He can do for us with no merit on our part. It is love and not pity that He gives. Sidlow Baxter, in his book *God So Loved*, tells of the distress of a woman who came to him after three years of married life. She found that her husband had never really loved her. He had been sorry for her in her poverty and had married her out of pity. That woman's heartbroken cry was—"Oh, I would sooner be married to the poorest of men and be loved, than have the richest of men and only be pitied."¹

C. Recipients of love—"world . . ." If Jesus spoke today to Nicodemus, He would want him to know that His love was not national but worldwide. The world meant the sum total of human life, apart from and hostile to God. The unlovable and the unlovely and those no one else loved.

"Do you like dollies?" a little girl asked her parents' house guest. "Yes, very much," the man responded. "Then I'll show you mine," was the reply. Thereupon she presented one by one a whole family of dolls. "And now tell me," the visitor asked, "which is your favorite doll?" The child hesitated for a moment and then said, "Are you sure you like dollies, and will you please promise not to smile if I show you my favorite?" The man solemnly promised and the girl hurried from the room. In a moment she returned with a tattered and

Someone has thus written of love:

"Love ever gives, forgives, outlives;
And ever stands with open hands;
And while it lives it gives;
For while it gives it lives;
And this is Love's prerogative—
To give—and give—and give."

B. Christ does not merely declare the love of God: He is the love of God incarnate.

In his daily devotional book, *Awake, My Heart*, J. Sidlow Baxter gives us the following insights:

1. "If we would measure the love of God we would measure it by Calvary."
2. "God's love is revealed in its giving, and is thus seen to be beyond all measure."
3. "We can never know the costliness of Calvary to God, nor can we ever measure the love that lay behind it."
4. "This we simply know, John 3:16—The apostle Paul speaks further of this oneness of the Father and the Son, . . . that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself (2 Cor. 5:19)."

Illustration: The late Dr. Sam Shoemaker in his writings of "How Wonderful Christ Was Born" tells of God's love in sending His Son Jesus to this earth, likening it to a small boy who has received an Erector set for Christmas with all the pieces now spread out across the floor. He doesn't understand the directions or how the pieces should fit together, but his father who gave him this present gets down on the floor with him and directs his mind and hands in the building of something that's meaningful. Spiritually, this is what God in Christ has done for each of us.

II. God's Love Is Manifested Without Discrimination

A. God's giving is so different from man's.

1. Man's giving is for self-advantage . . . "What will I get out of it?"
2. Man's giving carries certain conditions and limitations.
3. God gives unconditionally.

Note: (Rom. 5:6, 8) "In due time Christ died for the ungodly"; "God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

B. In giving us Christ God is giving us all that He is in His only begotten Son.

1. Forgiveness—Cleansing—Peace—Assurance of Salvation—Eternal Life—Pardon from Sin—Power over Sin
2. Nothing is given to us as a blessing by itself, but all are included provisionally upon the Cross through the gift of the only begotten Son.
3. Let us appropriate the Savior by faith: "That who-soever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."
4. Believing is receiving.

III. God's Love Is Made Known in Salvation

A. The story of Bethlehem's manger must include Gethsemane's suffering and Golgotha's crucifixion.

1. I must never separate the cradle from the Cross.
2. "The Word" that became "flesh, and dwelt among us" is the Word that is also our atonement and salvation.

B. His Gift is beyond comparison.

1. Paul expressed it: "He . . . spared not his own Son." He freely gave us heaven's best!
2. One writer in poetic utterance states: "There was

Calvary that day. Jesus took the full blow of Pilate's judgment, the Roman soldiers' hatred, man's sin, and God's wrath. He actually suffered, bled, and died for the sins of the entire race; for you and me, lost and away from God. Paul says in Rom. 8:32: "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all . . ." Also, in Gal. 1:3-4: "Our Lord Jesus Christ . . . gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world . . ." Isa. 53:5 tells us, "But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed." God not only gave out of His mind and from His heart, but He actually gave Jesus on a cross for the entire world.

III. The Results of His Giving—" . . . whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

- A. The extent of His giving—whosoever
- B. The expectation for His giving—only believe
- C. The eternal results of His giving—everlasting life

When Jesus died and paid the full sacrifice for our sins, it reached back to the dawn of creation and became adequate for every sin man had ever committed, even the sins of our forefather Adam. It covered every sin being committed at the time Christ died, even the sins of Pilate and the Roman soldiers who nailed Him to the Cross. It reached down through the pages of history and covered the sins of every nation, every civilization, and every individual, and will continue to cover when the last human being is born. It covered the sins of every person, in every age, over the entire scope of history, for the whole world. Thank God it is all-inclusive, regardless of who we are, where we are, and whatever circumstances are surrounding our lives. The blood of Jesus Christ can and will save to the uttermost all who come to God by Him. In Heb. 2:9, Paul says, "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, . . . that he . . . should taste death for every man." John says in 1 John 2:2, "And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."

All that God expects of us in order to be included in this glorious plan of redemption is to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. Philip said to the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts 8:37, "If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." Verse 39 records, "And he went on his way rejoicing." Paul said to the Philippian jailor in Acts 16:31, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." Jesus said in Mark 16:16, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved."

The eternal result of this entire process is that we shall have everlasting life. Jesus says in John 6:47, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life." In Lev. 17:11, we read, "For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul."

Jesus Christ, our blessed Lord, gave His blood on Calvary that we might have eternal life. Just as our physical life is located in the blood, our eternal life comes through the blood of our blessed Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who loved us and gave himself for us. Praise His holy name!

Conclusion: *The relationship of His giving to the Christian*

As God gave himself to us through His Son, then we His children are to give of ourselves to Him and to others to help redeem the lost. Many have accepted Christ as Savior but

doing something—dying for us. Even so, our faith in Him means much more than just reciting a creed, "I believe in God the Father, Almighty, . . . and in His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord . . ." Rom. 10:9 states, "That if you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved" (NIV). This confession includes repentance, or being sorry enough to quit our sinning. It is the full consent and surrender of our will, unconditionally, to *God's terms*. Man, by his very nature, will experience stiff resistance, a desire to hold on to the willful self. God gave His Son willingly, unconditionally. We can do no less in our response to His gift.

B. The message is clear and dynamic: "If we confess our sins [and forsake them], he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9, NIV).

C. We must not leave this great challenge without noting that it states "whosoever believeth." God's redemption is ALL-inclusive, not at all exclusive. It is available to every person. His love and gifts are impartial. Heb. 7:25 states, "Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them" (NIV). His grace is not a limited gift offered just to a selected few. It is the free gift of God to all—regardless of color, creed, culture, or the depths of sin to which one has gone.

D. To really believe this is to stake our lives on Him. He staked His life on us, believed in us, and loved enough to die for us. **WHAT IS YOUR RESPONSE?** His loving gift of salvation to you should create a flame of loving response by which our hearts gladly accept His salvation. Confess and forsake your sins, and be certain that His grace will pardon and receive you to himself.

But if the love of God for us is not sufficient motivation to bring a response to His overtures, the promised glorious results He offers should motivate us to respond.

III. The Eternal Results of God's Reach and Man's Response—" . . . should not perish, but have everlasting life."

A. If there were no other printed word from God, this text should be sufficient for us. It is clear in showing us God's love for us and His directives for our eternal welfare. This text clearly implies that whoever does *not* believe will perish. Everlasting damnation is as certain for the unbeliever as eternal life is to the believer. The whole structure of the universe and common sense tell us we cannot have one without the other. Rewards are given, justice is meted out to both the good and the bad, the righteous and the unrighteous.

B. Note the different tenses in the two verbs in the text (*Beacon Bible Commentary*). "Perish" is in the aorist tense, meaning "completed action, irrevocable judgment in outer darkness." In fact, it would be a travesty on the intelligence of God, an insane act, to let His Son be crucified if there were any lesser reason for it. Sin, the reason for His death, will send a person to eternal damnation unless it is repented of. By the precious blood of Jesus Christ we are saved, transformed into new creatures. The "HAVE" (eternal life) is in the present tense, and means both "abundant life" here and now, and "eternal life" in the hereafter! "I am come that they might have life, and have it to the full" (John 10:10, NIV).

C. Oswald Chambers, in *My Utmost for His Highest* (p. 325), states, "Beware of the pleasant view of the Fatherhood of God . . . God is so kind and loving that of course He will forgive us. That sentiment has no place whatever in the

dilapidated old doll. Its hair was gone, its nose was broken, its cheeks were scratched, an arm and leg were missing. "Well, well," said the visitor, "and why do you like this one best?" "I love her most," said the little girl, "because if I didn't love her, no one else would."² That is akin to God's love for broken humanity.

II. Precious Was His Cause—"gave his only begotten Son . . ."

I have often said that there is no person nor any cause for which I would knowingly or willingly take the life of my son. Yet God gave His Son. How precious was His cause and how great was His love that He would give His only Son!

A. His giving, "he gave . . ."

The very nature of love is to give. At Christmas we express our love in gifts to those who are nearest and dearest. Something that represents us or a gift made by us seems most appreciated. So the Father gave what was nearest and dearest to His heart.

God's giving we call grace. Sometimes we give to receive. Our giving is a subtle form of getting back. God gives out of pure compassion. Our giving is limited but there is no limit to His forgiveness and grace. Our giving is in response to urgent calls for help, but God gives to those who are neither aware of their needs nor appreciative of His gift. We give to our friends; God's gift is to the rebellious.

B. His gift, "only begotten Son . . ."

"Only begotten" refers to the uniqueness of God's Son as the Second Person of the Trinity. But think for a moment how precious was God's cause that He should be willing to give up His Son in death for us.

In trying to understand I took the liberty of asking a father in my congregation how he felt when he had to give up his son in death. Several things were mentioned.

1. *There was the personal loss of fellowship.* Jesus and the Father felt that moment of loss when Jesus cried, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

2. *There was outrage at the one who caused his death.* The Cross was not God's anger at man but at his sin. Christ's death made the defeat of sin possible.

3. *There was the feeling of loneliness.* I am sure the Father's heart ached when His Son hung alone on the Cross.

4. *There was concern as to what others thought about their son.* The Father cares very much what you think about His Son. Have you passed by Calvary or reflected on what He did for you there?

No doubt that father wondered if anyone knew how badly he hurt. Such hurt is felt by our Heavenly Father as well. He hurt for His Son then, and He hurts now for those who turn away from Him and "crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh" (Heb. 6:6).

III. Precise Was His Condition—"that whosoever believeth in him . . ."

God in His love wanted the condition of salvation to be so simple that no one would miss the way.

A. Condition was inclusive—"whosoever . . ."

That He loved the world in a universal way has already been declared. Now He personalizes the gift. Sometimes the individual is lost in those sweeping statements of His love for the world. But "whosoever" lets me know He thought of me. In the words of Augustine, that great church theologian, "God loves each one of us as if there was only one of us to love."

B. His precise condition—"believeth." Here is expressed the exclusive condition for entrance into salvation—exercising a living faith in the person of Christ. We do not come

no other good enough / To pay the price of sin; / He only could unlock the gate / Of heav'n and let us in."

Conclusion:

Song: "The Wonder of It All"—Using especially this verse and the chorus:

"There's the wonder of Bethlehem's manger,

There's the wonder of Calvary;

But the wonder of wonders that thrills my soul
Is the wonder that God loves me."

"Oh, the wonder of it all, The wonder of it all,
Just to think that God loves me." (Repeat.)

1. No one can live the life of a Christian in his own strength.
2. Jesus came and died on the Cross for your sins provisionally.
3. Today, He stands at the door of your heart and knocks, according to Rev. 3:20.
4. If you will open your heart's door and receive Him as Savior, He will enter and live His life in you, and through you to others.



have not made Him Lord of their lives. Christ wants all of you, so He can give you all of himself. Christian, why not make that total commitment today and let Him be first in your life?

The relationship of His giving to the unsaved

Provision for the forgiveness of your sins has already been made at Calvary. They are under the Blood. All you need to do is repent of those sins and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. He loves you with an eternal love. He longs to save you and make you happy and fulfilled. He wants to share His glory with you throughout eternity. Believe in Him now; accept Him as your Savior, and He will accept you as His very own. He will make you a new creature in Christ Jesus, and life will be meaningful and exciting. I met Him first when I was a boy. All through the years of my life He has been with me. When I failed, He was there. When I sinned, He was there to convict and lift me again. He told us He would never leave us nor forsake us. The journey has been wonderful. He sticks closer than a brother to reprove, rebuke, restore, to love, lead, and lift us.

He rejoices with us in our victories;
 He comforts us in our sorrows;
 He strengthens us in our weaknesses;
 He forgives us when we sin;
 He assures us we are His children;
 He counsels us in our confusions;
 He sustains us in all of life's situations;
 He loves and longs for you today.

Come to Him now and you will find Him to be your Best Friend. He will do more than He promises. He will be with you always, and you can be with Him forever.

Hymn: "I Gave My Life for Thee" (No. 284, *Worship in Song*)

(All scripture is from the King James Version of the Bible.)

Notes

New Testament. The only ground on which Christ can forgive us is the tremendous tragedy of the cross of Christ . . . to put forgiveness on any other ground is unconscious blasphemy. Forgiveness, which is so easy for us to accept, cost Christ the agony of Calvary. Forgiveness is the divine miracle of grace. Never accept a view of the Fatherhood of God if it blots out the Atonement. To base our preaching of forgiveness on the fact that God loves us and therefore He will forgive our sins is to make the cross unnecessary and redemption, 'much ado about nothing!'

Conclusion: God, through His Son Jesus, has set the stage. He is reaching out to us in love, expressed by His supreme sacrifice on the Cross. He earnestly beckons us to respond to His divine initiative. That response involves our will, our faith, and our complete surrender to Him. We must stake our very lives on the truth that He will give us abundant and eternal life.

(Illustration) A young prince fell deeply in love with a servant girl, daughter of a slave. The prince reasoned that to win her he could not go to her as a prince in all his splendor. So he chose to adopt a life-style like hers. He became a poor and humble servant and took on her manner of living. When he won her love, he revealed his true identity. It was not hard then for her to accept him as a prince.

Is not this a picture of Christ who loved us so much He humbled himself and became as the lowliest of men to win our confidence in himself and lift us to live with Him in all His splendor? He became a baby in the flesh, endured the experiences of men, even hatred and death, that He might get us to respond to His love and take us to himself.

What will your response be today?

Invitation: "Just as I Am"

Just as I am, without one plea / But that Thy blood was shed for me, / And that thou bidd'st me to come to Thee, / O Lamb of God, I come! I come!

Just as I am—Thou wilt receive, / Wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve; / Because Thy promise I believe, / O Lamb of God, I come! I come!

(Tie in the words of the invitation with the concepts of the message.)

Notes

to God on our terms. We do not receive His Gift just because we come to church or make an attempt to reform our lives. Belief or faith is not some good feeling inside when I hear gospel music. It is not faith in faith. It is not mental assent that says, "I know the Bible is God's Word and that Christ is God's Son."

The condition stated is, "believeth in him." The faith that saves must be placed in the person of Jesus Christ. Faith is the channel that connects us to God. It is putting my total confidence in what Jesus did for me at Calvary and believing He has applied it to my heart.

IV. Practical Was His Conferment—"... should not perish, but have everlasting life."

God in His love offered me what I needed most—to be rescued from death and given eternal life.

A. Saved from death—"should not perish."

Without Christ you are dead in trespasses and sins. The Bible says, "The wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23). Not just physical death but eternal death is the result of sin. Christ offers us deliverance from spiritual death now and from eternal separation from God in the life hereafter.

B. Saved to life—"have everlasting life."

He wants you to come into vital fellowship with Him here and now, having repented of your sins and put your faith in Jesus. His offer of grace cancels the death sentence and offers you heaven.

Would we think a man a fool who refused a physician's offer of a cure for his dreaded disease, free and with no strings attached? Would a drowning man not be a fool to push away the lifeguard who swims out to rescue him? Would a starving man not be a fool to refuse food offered him by a Red Cross worker? The man who refuses the mercy and forgiveness offered by God's Son and chooses rather to perish is the greatest fool of all.

Conclusion: There is a spot outside Denver, on top of the Rocky Mountains, called the Continental Divide. From there the melting waters flow east-west. There is a continental divide in spiritual things. Those who believe are saved and flow toward heaven. Those who refuse are lost and their lives flow toward hell and destruction.

God has done all He can to express His love and concern for you. You can either accept or reject that love. You cannot be neutral. Come, as we sing that grand hymn, "Jesus Is Calling."



NOTES

1. J. Sidlow Baxter, *God So Loved* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House), 84.
2. Charles L. Allen, *The Miracle of Love* (Old Tappan, N.J.: Fleming H. Revell Co.), 82.

Notes

WORKSHEET

In this space build your own outline of John 3:16

THOUGHTS ON EVANGELISTIC LEADERSHIP

by Wilbur W. Brannon
*Pastoral Ministries Director
Church of the Nazarene*

A significant aspect of pastoral work around which all functions must revolve is the evangelism motive of the pastor.

We are interested in something more than presence evangelism, which some denominations espouse; even something more than proclamation evangelism emphasized by Calvinists. We go a step further without denying the value of each of these and call for a "persuasion evangelism." We are not satisfied with a decision to accept Christ without a commitment to become His disciple.

Evangelism is not something extra we do along with the rest of our Christian duties. It is something that happens as the inner dynamic of Christ's love—sometimes spontaneously and sometimes intentionally—and so moves us to the unchurched that they are drawn into the stream of a new life.

Everything we do as the Church should converge at the point of evangelism, whether it's the way we handle our finances, direct a board meeting, or conduct the music ministry of the local church. If they aren't pointing to evangelism (the good news of God in Christ), they are at best irrelevant and at worst apostasy.

God's love in the heart is not only the primary motive for the conversion of persons to Christ but also the preservation of the Body of Christ, the Church.

The secret of touching the contemporary person for Christ is to allow God's sanctifying Spirit to so pervade the fountainhead of our motivations that from a pure heart flows a self-denying love that reaches out to those whose lives have been cheated.

Revival and the Future

It is the responsibility of the pastor to lead in preparing the church for revival. Revivals neither take the place of evangelistic efforts, nor are they to be confused with each other.

Revival is an experience in the church. Evangelism is an expression of the church. Revival should precipitate evangelism, but evangelism rarely if ever produces revival. Evangelism flows from revival as its most glowing product.

Revivalism historically has been described as a religious phenomenon that includes a spiritualizing experience that awakens the church and engages it in its evangelistic responsibility to the secular environment in which it finds itself and to which it must communicate the gospel.

If revivalism is to be a viable means of renewing the church within and impelling her into the world for any practical benefit in our century, it must relate to our modern culture. The fact is we are in the midst of a cultural change from an industrial to a highly technological society as radical as the shift was from an agrarian to an industrial society.

It doesn't matter how high our high technology era becomes, however. People will still respond at the point of their needs. *U.S. News and World Report* (May 9, 1983) projects

that traditional religious meanings and belief in God will be strengthened in a new age of individualism. "We should expect the quest for the sacred to intensify . . . Churches and synagogues will assume much greater roles as centers where people can gather to share common interests . . . By 2033, the number of Christians in the Third World will swell from less than half to well over 60 percent of the planet's Christian population."

The pastor needs the theological and biblical foundations for guiding his church in revival with a sense of mission and conviction. But he also must be convinced that revivals can relate to modern culture. The things that threatened the pioneering settlers have their psychological counterparts in our modern civilization. They are a bit more subtle because they are less apparent, but no less real.

1. **PHYSICAL ISOLATION**—With the advent of the computer, man's reduction to a number has magnified a millionfold from the good old days of the simple industrialized mass society. Civic clubs, social and community groups, and even religious organizations and activities seldom reach the deep cravings and inner hunger for the fellowship people seek. We are lonely creatures in a busy and crowding world! But we are probably jostling next to someone just as lonely.
2. **THE PHYSICAL DANGERS**—The nuclear freeze debate raises the consciousness level of an emotional insecurity and fear that is worldwide.
3. **MORAL INSENSITIVITY** and confusion are just as real today as ever, but their crudities have been outfitted in a different garb. This generation is left with what Walter Lippmann calls "a grudging endurance of a series of unsanctified compulsions."

These contemporaries of ours are so divided by loneliness, so threatened by fear, and so confused morally, we've got to tell them the Good News and show them how good it is by the way it is working in our lives . . . and all for their benefit!

Unchurched Believers

Gallup, commissioned by Rev. Robert Schuller, interviewed 1,509 scientifically selected American adults. The result of the poll was that "the unchurched are overwhelmingly 'believers' and it is not a loss of faith, in most cases, that has caused people to become unchurched." The key reasons the unchurched aren't in church are: other activities that conflict with time of church (33 percent), specific problems with the church, its teaching or members (30 percent), growing up (27 percent), and moving to a new community and not finding a new church (26 percent).

The key activities that tend to conflict with church are sports, recreation, and social events (72 percent), and work (33 percent).

We might ask, "What would bring the unchurched into the Body of Christ?" That is the evangelistic question.

Nazarene

Update

UPDATE EDITOR, NINA BEEGLE, PASTORAL MINISTRIES

EVANGELISM IN THE LOCAL CHURCH

Evangelism is confronting people with the redemption provided through Jesus Christ and persuading them to seek and know Christ as Savior. Of course, it goes further than that in guiding them into entire sanctification and ultimately through life, and into the kingdom of heaven.

But if the first step doesn't occur, the rest cannot follow. Also the converse is true; if a local church can bring them to Christ it should be able to lead them on.

Like an engine is built to run, like an airplane is built to fly, so the church is constructed to evangelize. The Christ who came to seek and save those who are lost assigned that same task to His Church.

Evangelism *must* happen in the local church. The primary person in this is the pastor. Every pastor must be determined to lead his church into active evangelism. When he does this, he will have the forces of God on his side. Unless such an intense purpose and unswerving determination is in



by General Superintendent
V. H. Lewis

the pastor, dull, deadening lassitude will bring the church to a standstill.

I believe that wherever I have seen a pastor determined, realizing God called him to preach for this purpose and bringing all forces to bear on this prime directive, souls were won to Christ and added to the church.

A sad and tragic report was given by a pastor at one of my district assemblies last year. He had pastored the church for 10 years. The tenth year back the record showed no one by profession of faith or transfer had joined the church. The dismal report was repeated for every year of the 10 with the exception of the fifth when two joined the church. The reporting pastor said they had a good year and God had blessed. Had they? Did He?

I really believe that such a 10-year failure occurred because the pastor was willing to settle for it. Oh, he would have been glad for a great revival, for growth. But he did not care enough to pay the price in leadership, in program, prayer, preaching, in bringing all forces and potential to bear on the one great reason for the church to exist.

That church was operating in the negative, for during those 10 years the relentless time and life had taken souls into eternity who might have been saved.

There are some who read this who will judge this as too hard. But, brethren, we are in the world's greatest crisis of all time. This is our day to bring revival and salvation to the needy. This is the day for strong men who will admit the awesome, strategic importance of the pastor and will face the challenge of evangelism.

The Church of the Nazarene by its very structure places great reliance upon its preachers. Our *Manual* states this: "The perpetuity and the efficiency of the Church of the Nazarene depend largely upon the spiritual qualifications, the character, and the manner of life of its ministers" (paragraph 401).

The church believes, really believes, that with a Bible, a pulpit, and God's anointing, you as His representative can and will evangelize.

This is an asset to you. It "pushes" you toward an ever increasing effectiveness. It urges you on into conquest. Such is life's appeal and your attractiveness to people.

Walk the high road. Accept the challenge. Be all out for evangelism. God will see you to victory.

A complimentary subscription to the *Preacher's Magazine* is sent to all ministers in the Church of the Nazarene from the Nazarene Publishing House.

YEAR OF CHURCH GROWTH

SEPTEMBER 1, 1984—AUGUST 31, 1985

PEOPLE REACHING PEOPLE

75,000 NEW NAZARENES
750,000 NAZARENES
WORLDWIDE

**PEOPLE
REACHING
PEOPLE**

PEOPLE'S CLAR BOOK FOR THE YEAR OF CHURCH GROWTH
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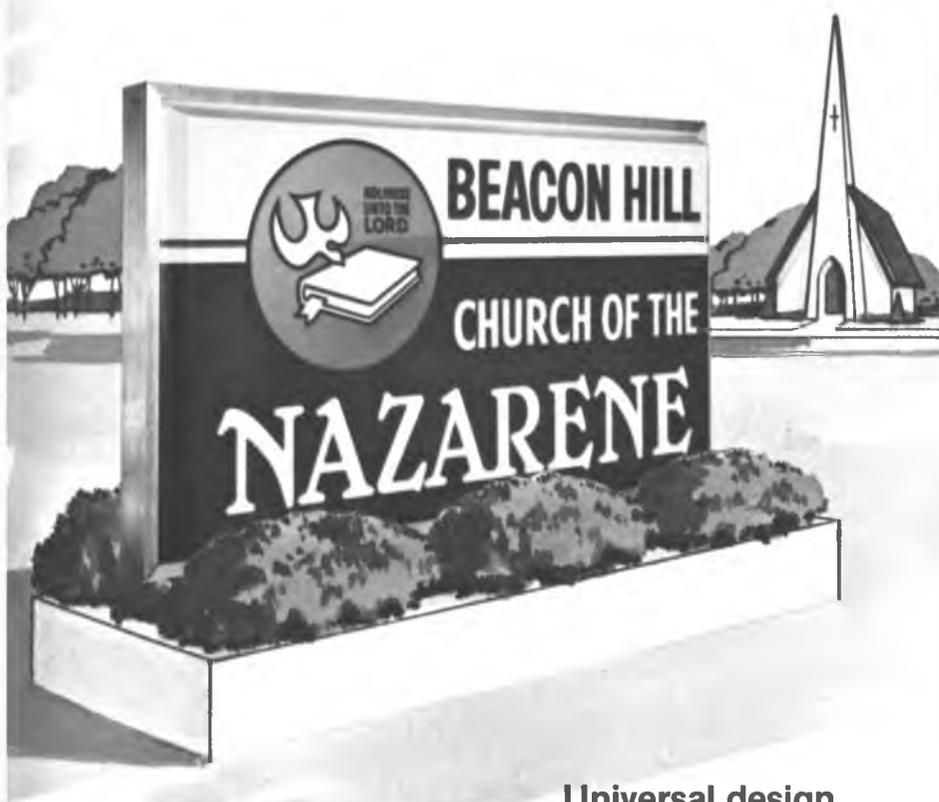
More available from your district superintendent or from the

Division of Church Growth, Kansas City

Pastor,
Dates and activities are outlined in your *People Reaching People* booklet. Have you appointed your local planning committee?

Identify Your Church... NEW Invite Your Community... Church of the Nazarene Outdoor Signs

ILLUMINATED LAWN SIGN



Universal design

ideally adaptable to the architectural theme of your church

- Extends a 24-hour-a-day identification and invitation to your community
- Virtually unbreakable polycarbonate faces are lettered in fade- and blister-resistant enamels
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- Aluminum frame may be easily drilled to accommodate desired mounting. Pole mounting optional

SIZE: 3 feet high by 5 feet wide. **SI-396** **\$475.00**
 Maximum imprint, 16 letters With center pole mounting .. **\$530.00**
 and spaces

Plus transportation from Akron, Ohio .

NOTE: Planter illustrates one of many settings for this sign.
 Not included with purchase.

For details on ordering these two signs, see special order form in our latest *Supplies and Equipment* catalog.

Prices subject to change without notice • Allow six to eight weeks for delivery

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Reach those who travel after dark with a sign that may be seen both day and night

- Rust-resistant, heavy 20-gauge aluminum die-cut into an attractive, contemporary style
- "Codit" reflective material 100 times brighter than white paint, durable as enamel.
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- Appropriate for church property, highway, junctions, and local city streets

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 Ministry of Your Church*

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Express your
appreciation
this
Christmas
season . . .



To: *Evangelist*
From: *Your Church*

Evangelism Ministries asks that you remember the evangelists and song evangelists who held service in your church this past year with a Christmas gift of \$25.00 or more.

Let us express our appreciation this Christmas season. Evangelists' and song evangelists' addresses may be obtained from the *Preacher's Magazine* or by calling Evangelism Ministries at (800) 821-2154.

Remember to put this important item on your November church board agenda.

"I'd give more to my church if I thought I could afford it."

Mrs. Peters has inherited some stocks and would like to put them to work for the cause of Christ. But, with living costs rising, she also could use more income herself.

What should she do?

Arrange a Gift Annuity with the Church of the Nazarene! It will pay her a guaranteed regular income for life, and it will benefit her church. Find out more about this double-blessing gift plan. Just use the coupon below to request our free booklet. No obligation.



**Life Income Gifts Services
CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE
6401 The Paseo
Kansas City, MO 64131
Attn: Robert Hempel**

**In Canada:
Church of the Nazarene
Executive Board
Box 30080, Station B
Calgary, Alberta, Canada
T2M 4N7**

Rev. Hempel: Please send me a free copy of
"Giving Through Gift Annuities."

Rev.
Mr. _____
Mrs. _____
Miss _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Birthdate _____ Tel. _____

Birthdate of Spouse _____

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



A COMPLETE RADIO/TELEVISION/ CABLE TV PACKAGE

The set of four "Welcome" stories is available for radio, television and cable TV. The radio spots are 60 seconds in length. The television and cable TV spots are 30 seconds long. *All spots can be localized to include the name of the church, its address, and phone number.*

The Media Information Kit contains an audio-cassette of the radio advertisements and storyboards depicting each of the commercials.

All materials are ready for immediate use on your local radio or television station and cable TV system.

A DIRECT MAIL AND VISITATION CAMPAIGN

For those churches interested in direct mail pieces and leave-behinds for calling programs, Media Services has produced four brochures, each telling about one of the stories in the "Welcome" campaign.

These brochures can be used to give a positive identity for the Church of the Nazarene among new members of the community and for neighborhood or hospital visitation. They can be handed out separately or as a package of four.

On the back of each brochure is a place for the church to print its name, address, phone number, and the times of services.

The brochures can be ordered in various quantities. A free sample is included in your Media Kit.



**BEGIN YOUR
OUTREACH EFFORT
TODAY. CONTACT
MEDIA SERVICES
FOR A FREE MEDIA
INFORMATION KIT!**

MAIL TO: Media Services
CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE
6401 The Paseo
Kansas City, MO 64131

- YES! . . . I'm interested in more information. Please contact me.
- NO . . . I'm not interested in additional information at this time. However, please keep my name on your mailing list.
- Please send me _____ copy(s) of the *Church Communications Sourcebook* at \$29.95 each.

CHURCH: _____

ADDRESS/PO. BOX: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

CONTACT: _____

TELEPHONE: () _____

**WELCOME
TO THE CHURCH OF
THE NAZARENE**
OUR CHURCH CAN BE YOUR HOME

PASTORS . . .

stimulate your people's world evangelism vision.

THE GIFT OF LOVE

An exceptional film on stewardship, evangelism, church growth. Chuck Bradley, typical church member, gains exciting new insight and commitment. He and his wife find God's love, His compassion for unreached people, and the real reason for giving, loving, and caring.
FR-131 Rental \$15.00

TO MAKE A MIRACLE

The inspiring story of God working on various fields—and our part in His work. Contains actual testimonies of people whose lives have been transformed. Original score by Paul Mickelson. Color, 32½ minutes.
FR-120 Rental \$25.00

THEY CRY IN THE NIGHT

The vivid, spellbinding story of pioneer missionary Harmon Schmelzenbach's trek into northern Swaziland, and his successful struggle to plant the Church of the Nazarene on the veldts of Africa. Color, 50 minutes.
FR-134 Freewill Offering

TO WIPE THE TEAR

The ministry of medical missions in the Church of the Nazarene and missionary Dr. Orpha Speicher's 40 years of service and sacrifice. Building a 105-bed hospital from an 8-room mud-wall schoolhouse is but one facet of this remarkable lady's ministry. Color, 35 minutes.
FR-128 \$25.00

Use one of these audiovisuals

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Box 527, Kansas City, MO 64111

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YOUR district to reach its goal

O send out
thy light
and thy truth:
let them
lead
me..."

(Psalm 43:3)

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inspiration of the
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are well worth the
cost."

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your magazine. It
has helped me in
my Christian walk
with Jesus this
year."

Palo Alto, California

1984 DISTRICT CAMPAIGN SCHEDULE FOR . . .

SEPTEMBER

Nebraska
New England

OCTOBER

Akron
Arizona
Canada Atlantic
Illinois
Intermountain
Joplin
Maine
Michigan
North Central Ohio
Northwest
Oregon Pacific
Philadelphia
Washington

NOVEMBER

Canada Pacific
Georgia
Hawaii
Los Angeles
Pittsburgh

"The *Herald* is one
of the finest
Christian
magazines that I
have had the
pleasure of reading
in a long time."

Bedford, Texas

"I sure do love, and
enjoy so much,
your *Herald of
Holiness* magazine.
It's one of the
greatest and I pray
it always will be."

Oxford, Michigan

THE YEAR OF THE BUILDING 84-85



"DOUBLING ALABASTER"



NAZARENE WORLD MISSION SOCIETY • WORLD MISSION DIVISION • CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE

Litho in U.S.A.

DOUBLE ALABASTER

"The Year of the Building" is the Alabaster theme for 1984-85. Join in doubling efforts, concern, and impact in the world by doubling your

Alabaster Offering

The church international is growing. Last year in world mission areas 13,848 new full and probationary members joined the Church of the Nazarene. New churches, schools and other buildings will be needed.

Alabaster will provide much-needed buildings on new fields.

Alabaster provides for buildings all over the world: buildings for teaching and worship, buildings for helping healing, and the preserving of life.

Double giving will help to reduce overseas capital debts.

Double giving may not make you wealthy, but it will make you rich in joy.

This Alabaster bulletin insert is available from the Nazarene Publishing House, P.O. Box 527, Kansas City, Missouri 64141.

Church of the Nazarene CERTIFICATES

CREATED TO SERVE
THE NEED OF THREE
VERY SIGNIFICANT
OCCASIONS

**DEDICATION
BAPTISM
MEMBERSHIP**



Handsomely lithographed on a beautiful Hopper Skytone parchment with Church of the Nazarene emblem on front. Artistically printed inside are appropriate verses from the Holy Bible and special certificate form with space for name of person and church, place, date, and pastor's signature. 5½ x 8½". Matching envelope.

CT-163 Dedication • **CT-164** Baptism • **CT-165** Membership
Package of 10 for **\$2.50**

Church of the Nazarene GUEST BOOK

Every church should have a guest book. And this one, custom-made for Nazarene churches, can fulfill a very vital role in making visitors feel welcome.

Dignity and quality describes this book throughout. Topping each page is a liturgical design and a friendly "We Welcome You—Today You Are One of Us" message, with space below for date, name, address, home church. Heavy, white stock provides a fine writing surface. Padded simulated-leather binding is gold-stamped with art lettering and Church of the Nazarene emblem. Corners are rounded; edges quilted. 9 x 12". Boxed.



R-1144BI Brown (1,000 names)
R-1144RI Red (1,000 names) Each, **\$14.00**

For other style CERTIFICATES and GUEST BOOKS, consult our latest Supplies/Equipment Catalog. Free upon request.

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THE SHEPHERD'S **LIFE**

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

LEADERSHIP • INSPIRATION • FULFILLMENT • ENRICHMENT

A CALL TO PRAYER FOR THE YEAR OF CHURCH GROWTH

To become 750,000 strong in membership
And reach 75,000 new Nazarenes
And start 1,000 new works
We must pray the Lord of the Harvest
For a net increase of 174 active ministers in Canada/U.S.A.

VideoNet

NEW SERIES—PASTORAL TRAINING FOR LAY LEADERS

The month of September marks the first anniversary of pastor's VIDEONET. We're excited about how the program has developed these past 12 months and hope you've had a chance to watch at least one program. If you did, you probably are considering a subscription.

"VIDEONET" is just the beginning. By now you've heard of the series currently in process that will help the pastor in his development of local lay leaders. This series shows the commitment of Pastoral Ministries and the Division of Church Growth to video ministries as a means of disseminating vital training information to the local churches.

Make use of these helpful video tools. Order from the Nazarene Publishing House.

WORSHIP SERVICE RESOURCES

When you receive your "Pastor's Program Planner" this fall pay careful attention to an introductory section of specially designed worship helps for the pastor. Last March, a committee of pastors met in Kansas City to construct detailed materials to assist in the planning of the Sunday worship services. These will be mailed separate from the "Planner" around October 31, 1984.

Worship and preaching helps will be a regular feature of future "Pastor's Program Planners." Let us know what you think of this information and how you use it.



Pastor's Program Planner—
Practical Helps Added



"Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth."

(2 Timothy 2:15)

THE "APPROVED WORKMAN"— SOMETHING NEW IN CONTINUING EDUCATION

January 1, 1985, will mark a turning point in the efforts of the Church of the Nazarene to provide continuing education for ministers. Presently, Pastoral Ministries offers an Advanced Ministerial Studies (AMS) certificate for the completion of ten Continuing Education Units (CEUs) in general fields related to the practice of ministry. These credits can be earned through directed study courses available through Pastoral Ministries, general church offerings, planned district meetings, and through approved seminars and workshops on a Nazarene college campus or in a minister's home area.

The new development in continuing education for ministers will become known as the "Approved Workman" program with scriptural reference to 2 Timothy 2:15. It will begin January 1 as an expansion of the Directed Studies program. To receive an Approved Workman certificate, a minister is required to complete five CEUs in one of 14 specified areas of ministry including Administration, Preaching, Christian Education, Pastoral Care, Holiness Theology, Evangelism, Biblical Studies, Contemporary Theological Issues, the Pastor's Personal and Devotional Development, Worship, Lay Development, Church Planting, Urban Ministries, and Ministry to Ethnicans.

Five CEUs represent 50 clock-hours and can be earned in the areas of study listed above. New

directed study courses are being developed and classes are being organized on general, regional, and district levels. When a minister completes 10 of the 14 specified categories, an "Approved Workman's" plaque will be awarded at the appropriate district assembly.

Those wanting to complete work on an AMS certificate must do so by January 1, 1985. After that date, AMS CEUs currently on record will be converted to credits in the appropriate area in the Approved Workman program.

For further information, write Pastoral Ministries for the brochure entitled "The Approved Workman Program: Continuing Education for Ministers in the Church of the Nazarene."

DIRECTED STUDIES CHANGES:

HOW WE GOT OUR BIBLE, by Ralph Earle has been relocated in the Course of Study from 111.2a to 121a.

111.2a is GETTING TO KNOW YOUR BIBLE, by Julia Rippy Boone (Broadman)

134a is INDUCTIVE PREACHING, by Ralph L. Lewis with Gregg Lewis (Crossway)



During the General Board meeting in February a monumental decision was made that potentially will benefit all ministers and their families. The program known as "CONET" was reviewed and unanimously approved.

We've been telling you about CONET, and for the last five months this program has been a reality. It has received tremendous support from pastors and district superintendents and has all the

possibilities of being a long-lasting, need-meeting arm of the church.

A pilot project has been established in two areas known as CONET North and CONET South. CONET North includes districts in the states of Illinois, Michigan, Indiana, and Wisconsin, while CONET South involves the three districts in Florida.

An "800" number called "Heartline," located in Nashville, is available for crisis problems and referrals. The referral network has been carefully chosen and is composed of professional Christian counselors as well as professionals from the medical and legal fields.

CONET also includes consultation services for help in handling difficult situations such as conflict management. Continuing education, a third component, is an emphasis that will enrich ministers and enhance their professional skills.

At present the CONET model is operative only in the two regions mentioned above. It will be evaluated periodically, and if it has met the objectives it is designed to meet, a proposal will be submitted to the Board of General Superintendents and the Department of Church Growth for possible expansion into other regions of Canada and the U.S.A.

Pray that CONET will be used by God to aid and encourage our ministerial work force.

The case study for group discussion is on page 44.

The Pastoral Clinic can be a sharpening device for the pastor's counseling ability and technique. Call a fellow pastor or pastors and discuss over lunch "The Case of the Unwanted Mother."

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

1984-85—The Year of Church growth

| | |
|------------------------------|---|
| August 27—September 2, 1984 | Youth Week |
| September | A Call to Prayer for a Year of Church Growth |
| September 10-15, 1984 | NIROGA, Glorieta, New Mexico |
| September 17-21, 1984 | NIROGA, Ridgecrest, North Carolina |
| October 1-5, 1984 | NIROGA, Adirondacks |
| October 1984 | European Military Personnel Retreat |
| February 18-22, 1985 | NIROGA, Florida |
| June 20-22, 1985 | General Conventions, Anaheim |
| June 23-28, 1985 | General Assembly, Anaheim |
| August 26—September 1, 1985 | Youth Week |
| September 9-14, 1985 | NIROGA, Glorieta, New Mexico |
| September 16-20, 1985 | NIROGA, Ridgecrest, North Carolina |
| September 30—October 4, 1985 | NIROGA, Adirondacks |
| October 14-18, 1985 | NIROGA, Canadian Rockies |

A NAZARENE FAMILY PORTRAIT

Nazarenes in the U.S. and Canada worship every Sunday in at least 26 languages representing at least 49 cultures.



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CAMBODIAN

**Pastor, you belong in
this picture—**

1. Look around your community for ethnic groups your church can minister to.
2. Offer your building as a home for an ethnic congregation.
3. Start a Language Outreach Bible class.
4. Let us know what help you need.



HISPANIC



NAVAJO



AMERICAN BLACK



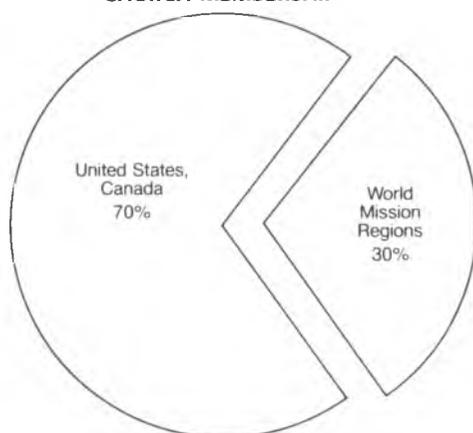
NATIVE
AMERICAN

For more ideas on reaching new people groups, write to

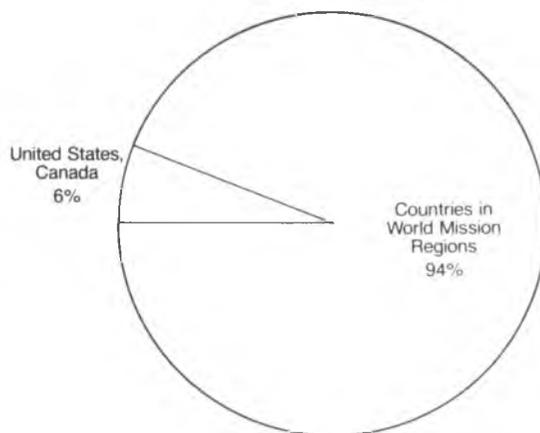
*Church Extension Ministries,
6401 The Paseo, Kansas City, MO 64131
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MISSIONS AT A GLANCE

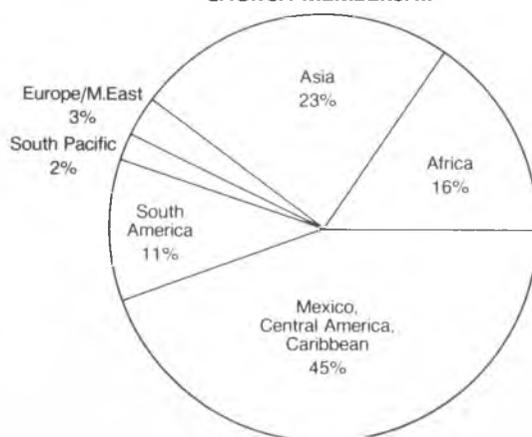
**1983
NAZARENE
CHURCH MEMBERSHIP**



**1983
WORLD POPULATION**



**1983
WORLD MISSION
CHURCH MEMBERSHIP**



OUTSTANDING GAINS IN COUNTRIES WITH LARGER MEMBERSHIP

| Country | Gain | Percent | Country | Gain | Percent |
|--------------------|-------|---------|---------|-------|---------|
| Dominican Republic | 2,624 | 243% | Peru | 2,871 | 39% |
| Guatemala | 5,258 | 57% | Haiti | 9,560 | 33% |
| Bolivia | 1,715 | 43% | India | 731 | 24% |
| Taiwan | 239 | 20% | Korea | 3,499 | 13% |

OUTSTANDING GAINS IN COUNTRIES WITH SMALLER MEMBERSHIP

| Country | Gain | % | Country | Gain | % | Country | Gain | % |
|------------------|------|--------|------------------|------|------|-----------------------|------|------|
| Colombia | 307 | 1,203% | Hong Kong | 67 | 176% | El Salvador | 791 | 160% |
| Ecuador | 242 | 159% | Windward Islands | 154 | 145% | Indonesia | 254 | 144% |
| Costa Rica | 729 | 126% | Netherlands | 155 | 111% | Honduras | 173 | 110% |
| Samoa | 116 | 94% | Portugal | 123 | 70% | Nigeria | 902 | 66% |
| Bahamas | 281 | 50% | Holy Land | 9 | 47% | Belize | 352 | 42% |
| Brazil | 858 | 42% | Middle European | 297 | 40% | Denmark | 12 | 35% |
| Puerto Rico | 508 | 34% | Panama | 121 | 29% | New Zealand | 101 | 27% |
| Papua New Guinea | 467 | 27% | Malawi | -610 | 23% | Leeward & Virgin Isl. | 84 | 22% |

THE PREACHER'S MAGAZINE

Serving on the editorial advisory board for this issue on "Pastoral Evangelism" were six pastors (Duane Yoesel not pictured) from Denver area Churches of the Nazarene. The editors are grateful for their counsel and their contributions to this issue.

The advisory boards give their time, without pay, to help us decide what needs to be said on the themes. We are seldom, if ever, able to include all we'd like to, but we hope every pastor will find something helpful in these pages.



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

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 An adequate budget for evangelism at the beginning of each church year is imperative for each congregation
 A revival savings account is useful in building toward adequate support for the evangelist.

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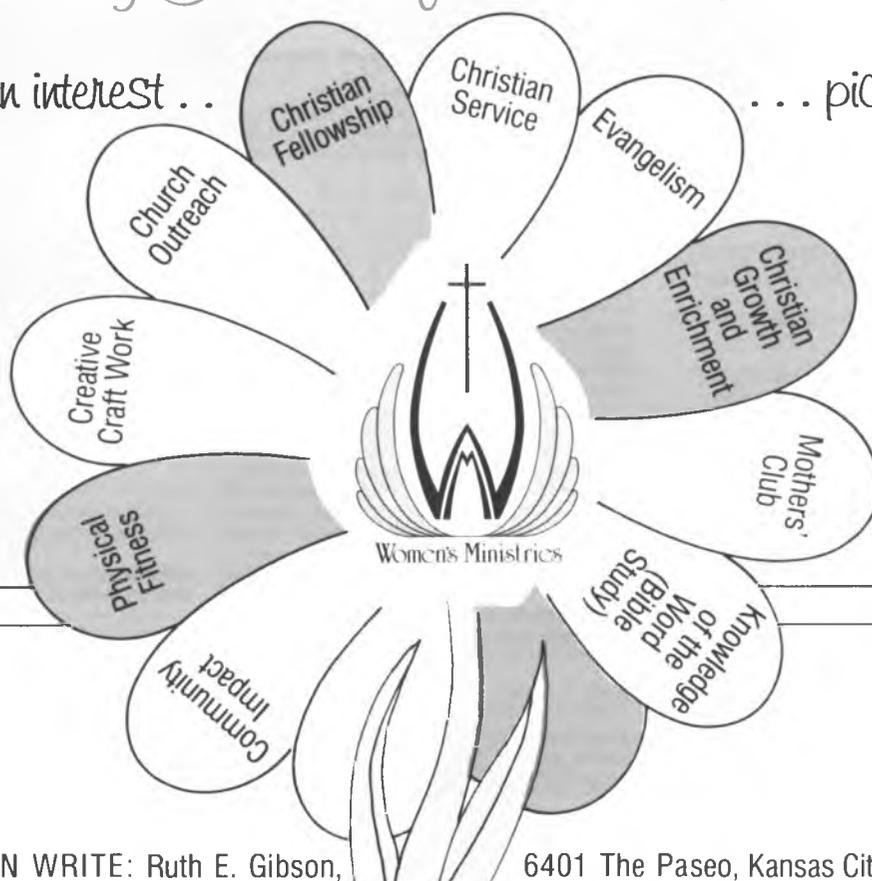
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The Nazarene Archives

*The time is coming
when the memory of
our people will be only
as good as our
historical record.*



EMMA IRICK,
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her most recent sermon
in 1980 at age 92.

The Nazarene Archives is the corporate memory of our denomination; the major resource for historical studies in the Church of the Nazarene. It is not simply heaps of dead letters having no relevance to the present. Those "dead letters" represent the lives of Nazarene men and women. They tell the story of "our people." If some part of our past is not in the historical record, it will be forever lost to the generations to follow.

The Nazarene Archives is looking for materials to fill gaps in these historical records. Correspondence and photographs from Nazarene mission fields are a primary concern. We are also interested in material from the pre-Nazarene groups that united to form the present church; in audio recordings of old Nazarene evangelists and pastors; materials from early Nazarene rescue homes, orphanages, and home missions work, and in sermon manuscripts and photographs from Nazarene ministers during our first and middle decades (1900-50).

Several Nazarene colleges have begun their own archives to preserve the historic materials of their schools and regions. They are particularly interested in anything that would tell about their founding years and development.

It is not possible for the Nazarene Archives to canvass forgotten attics, basements, and storerooms of our international body. The church is dependent on the interest and support of its people for this task if the memory of our Lord's work in and through the Church of the Nazarene is to remain with our children. Your help can make a difference.

Steven D. Cooley,
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**THE MASTER'S
PLAN** FOR
MAKING
DISCIPLES

Perhaps we should admit our lack of an enthusiastic support in some places for "revivals" as a program. Our avoidance of responsibility for them has probably been the result of an upward mobility of our people (pastors included), which makes us more conscious of keeping our respectability. But even more importantly, our theological tradition has not made it easy for us to admit the need for revival. It has been difficult for us to admit the need for forgiveness without in some serious way reflecting on the validity of our experience of entire sanctification. There seems to be dawning of a new day in this regard, however.

Pastors have the leadership responsibility to take the advance steps in spiritual vulnerability, showing the way to revival. One of the prerequisites for spiritual renewal within the Body is honesty with oneself and discreetly sharing that honesty with others.

Paul S. Rees once said, "We must cease to make ourselves the clearinghouse for life's decisions and begin to listen to God; we must let the Holy Spirit of God show us those dishonesties that we call petty, those trespasses on the rights of others that we make light of, those feelings of resentment and bitterness that we try to justify, and those careless if not brutal handlings of other people's reputations that we have grown to enjoy. We've babied ourselves and coddled our sins too long. And we are inadequate to face the demands of life, conscience, and the perversity of selfishness. We must seek the face of God to gain His favor."

Fellowship and Service

God's strategy of evangelism demands the penetration of your church's whole world, the mobilization of a growing Spirit-filled nucleus within your church, and the utilization of every right method of sharing the good news of Jesus Christ.

A sanctuary is important because the church that is fulfilling its evangelistic mission needs a secure place for rejoicing and renewal.

Nevertheless, many of us have no idea of the fear many unchurched people have of coming to the house of God. The "closed corporation" mentality, a sort of Christian isolationism, has become a constant barrier to evangelism. On the other hand, many Christians have been so afraid of being contaminated by worldliness that they have avoided any social contacts with the unconverted. As a result, they have no natural bridges for evangelism. What witnessing they do is usu-

ally artificial and forced rather than the spontaneous outgrowth of genuine friendship. We must encourage our people to build bridges of friendship with the unchurched that they might ultimately share the gospel with them.

We must evangelize not only by the reality of our fellowship but also by the compassion of our service.

This means that when we "preach not ourselves but Jesus Christ as Lord" we also present "ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake." We bear in mind that men are not only lost, bad, and sinful; they are also lonely, bewildered, and suffering. We witness to our Lord not only when we tell of His wonderful works, but when we strip ourselves as He did, and take a towel as He did, and wash dirty feet, as He did. And if our service is not a kind of superiority, then the cup of cold water or the washing of dirty feet may open the door of the heart to hear about the cross. (Leighton Ford, *The Christian Persuader* [Harper & Row, 1966], p. 75.)

We must see the ministries of the Church escaping from behind the confining walls and going where people are—into homes and offices and factories, to the seashores and lakes and mountains where life is lived day to day.

But even fellowship and service cannot stand alone. Samuel Shoemaker summarized it like this:

I cannot, by being good, tell men of Jesus' atoning death and resurrection, nor of my faith in His divinity. The emphasis is too much on me and too little on Him. Our lives must be made as consistent as we can make them with our faith; but our faith, if we are Christians, is vastly greater than our lives. That is why the "word" of witness is so important (Ford, p. 78).

It goes without saying that the pastor takes the lead by proclaiming "a word from the Lord" from the pulpit. And as a part of his equipping ministry he assumes responsibility for the training of his people in personal evangelism and by setting a visitation schedule appropriate for his situation.

The pastor must demonstrate ways in which the unchurched may be reached. He must be willing to face failure in the attempt and not be defeated by such failure. He should become acquainted with a variety of methods and help his people find the way that best fits each personality. Even if he does not sense that he has the gift of evangelism, he will encourage his people to follow through if they see their pastor taking the lead. It is the privilege and duty of every member of Christ's Body to joyfully share the reality of a living faith in Jesus Christ.



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PREACHING FROM MATTHEW 16:26-27

Six preachers responded to our appeal for sermons on this text.

WILL IT BE WORTH IT ALL ON PAYDAY?

by Kenneth Culbertson, Pastor
South Hills Church of the Nazarene
Bethel Park, Pa.

Purpose: To convince men to invest in Jesus Christ.

Introduction: While in seminary I anxiously awaited my upcoming marriage. My anxiety was due not only to the normal young man's expectations, but also to the fact that I was nearly penniless. I was deeply concerned about my financial situation and willing to consider any honest means to remedy it. MANPOWER seemed to be the answer. I awoke at the crack of dawn—or was it before it cracked? I took a bus downtown to Manpower headquarters. There I waited with a motley assortment of men, feeling very much out of place. A job came in on the phone line.

I thought it wise to purchase a pair of work gloves since my new job was to tear apart a fire-gutted bowling al-

DECISIONS—DECLARATIONS— DESTINIES

by J. V. Morsch, District
Superintendent, Central Florida
Church of the Nazarene

Sermon Theme: Develop inferentially the inescapable considerations and provisions of Christ's atonement.

Introduction: Comment on the difference between *living* and *existing*.

Give background and relationship of the context to text.

The text includes life's greatest exchanges that have to do with a *decision*—a *declaration*—and a *destiny*.

I. A Decision Is Sought—v. 26a:
"What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul?" (NIV).

A. Every man has a soul.

B. What have you gained if you could acquire the world?

1. By the test of its nature—what?

JESUS, THE MASTER ECONOMIST

by Virgil P. Applegate, Pastor
First Church of the Nazarene
Middletown, Ohio

Introduction: One of the most frequent topics of conversation in this contemporary age is the economy of our country, on either the national or personal level. To be knowledgeable of this current subject in this affluent society, we are prone to seek information from sources that do not enlighten us. The facts and figures only add to our confusion. Let us turn to the Word of God, which has a wealth of information about economic values. In His preaching and teaching, Jesus used descriptive language and effective techniques. His parables were filled with economic issues. He used impressionable epigrams—phrases that speak to the heart of the matter. In our text, Jesus used several key words relating to individual and spiritual economy: "save," "lose," "profited," "gain," "ex-

26 FOR WHAT IS A MAN PROFITED, IF HE SHALL GAIN THE WHOLE WORLD, AND LOSE HIS OWN SOUL? OR WHAT SHALL A MAN GIVE IN EXCHANGE FOR HIS SOUL?

27 FOR THE SON OF MAN SHALL COME IN THE GLORY OF HIS FATHER WITH HIS ANGELS; AND THEN HE SHALL REWARD EVERY MAN ACCORDING TO HIS WORKS.

WHAT CAN YOU LOSE?

*by L. D. Buckingham, Pastor
The Wesleyan Church
Moncton, New Brunswick*

Sermon Purpose: To help mankind recognize the value of the soul and thus make salvation our highest priority.

Introduction: "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" This is the most solemn, soul-searching question ever asked by Jesus. He wanted to shock man into seeing what was his most important and only real possession. The two key words in the text are *world* and *soul*. The question is an appeal to man's sense of reason and logic, his sense of responsibility and justice, as well as to his conscience. In order to calculate the profit in an exchange one must determine the value of that which is to be traded.

- I. Value of the World
 - A. Value is determined by the value

THE PRICELESS SOUL

*by Calvin B. Oyler, Evangelist
Church of the Nazarene*

Sermon Proposition: The text expresses forcefully the value of one soul, or life. It implies the desperate need for every person to consider carefully his priorities. The speaker hopes his message based on this solemn text will move those who listen to give their hearts and lives to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Introduction: Who despises living in a nice house? Which of us would find driving a new car unpleasant? Do we not all enjoy fine foods and clothes when and if we have them? Let us confess it: We would like to get our share of satisfaction while living in this world. But . . .

- I. A Person May Obtain Many Earthly Goals and Possessions and Lose His Soul!
 - A. The pursuit of mammon will rob you of the time belonging to God, and

GOD'S BALANCES

*by Lyle W. Curtis, Pastor
First Church of the Nazarene
Lawrence, Kans.*

Pre-Message Scripture Reading: Daniel 5:17-28

Sermon Proposition: The conduct and attitudes of our life are subject to God's approval.

Introduction: Belshazzar was a great and powerful king in the height of his glory with no thought that he was being weighed in God's balances. Belshazzar was weighed in God's balance.

Humble Daniel, who knew the true and living God, was called to declare God's judgment. "Tonight, Belshazzar, you have been weighed in the balances and are found wanting."

He failed to learn from example (Nebuchadnezzar).

He failed to humble himself before God.

ley. The Manpower executive cheerfully explained that the cost of the gloves would be deducted from my day's pay. Eight hours later I wearily hitched a ride back to my denominational headquarters where I was already late for my normal custodial job. I was exhausted and hungry, so I ran across the street for a decent meal. By the time I deducted the cost of the gloves, the cost of the junk-food lunch on the job, the cost of the evening meal, and the cost of the lost time at work, I began to doubt if my investment had been worth it. Only the thought made it seem worthwhile—I had done it for love.

I'm sure you have a similarly amusing story about a questionable investment of time, energy, money, or some other precious commodity.

However, it's really not amusing, really not something to be trifled with when we talk about the soul life of an individual. The investment has eternal consequences. It must be made wisely. I believe there is guidance for us in this passage, for here we see:

I. The Tremendous Worth of the Soul (Life)

A. The world's cynical estimate of life is all around us.

1. The '60s tune "Is That All There Is?"

2. The Supreme Court ruling on abortion

3. Man's inhumanity to man

Many and sharp are the numerous ills,

Interwoven in our frame;

More poignant still we make ourselves,

Regret, remorse, and shame;

And man's heaven-erected face

The smiles of love adorn;

Man's inhumanity to man,

Makes countless thousands mourn.

—Robert Burns

B. God's estimate of the worth of the soul is very different.

1. "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10:10).

2. Cf. parable of lost sheep.

3. Cf. Nicodemus's importance to Jesus.

4. Cf. Jesus' reason for setting His face toward Jerusalem.

II. The Relative Worthlessness of the World

A. Originally worth a great deal—Gen. 1:1, 31

B. Its value depreciated by sin—Rom. 5:12, NASB

2. By the test of its utility—what?

3. By the test of its continuance—what?

C. What have you lost when you lose your soul?

1. By the test of subtraction—the animal is left.

2. By the test of purpose—it is the soul that achieves.

3. By the test of endurance—the soul is eternal.

Illustration: Milan Cathedral and inscriptions over the doors.

D. The soul is of eternal worth yet often forgotten.

1. Forgotten in education for the mind

2. Forgotten in enterprises for the body

Illustration: Tribe of Indians waiting for souls to catch up with bodies.

E. Some of the world's greatest judges have decided there is no profit in the text's propositions.

1. Abraham left all to follow God to a new country.

2. Moses left Egypt's palaces for Israel's tents.

3. Solomon decided the world is vanity.

4. Paul counted his past life as dung.

5. Christ rejected the comfort and power that life in the world offered.

F. In life's most important exchange, please consider, "What shall I do with my soul?"

II. A Declaration Is Served—v. 26b: "Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul?" (NIV).

A. It is possible for a soul to be lost.

B. Note—Jesus did not ask what will a man "take."

1. We know that answer very well.

—fading honor

—few dollars

—fleeting comfort

—false promises

—fleshly excursions

C. He did ask what a man will "give."

1. The question can mean there is no price that a man can bring that will recover a soul already lost.

2. The question can mean that there is no price that man can bring that equals the price Christ has already paid.

D. Christ has paid what man cannot.

E. In life's most important ex-

changed," to enable us to place our sense of values in proper perspective.

Throughout the Gospels, Jesus used descriptive language regarding those economic issues of intrinsic value. He talked about true treasures: "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Matt. 6:19-21).

Jesus talked about spiritual prosperity: for example, in Luke 12:16-21, we read of a prosperous farmer who thought much about greater barns and more earthly gain but gave very little attention to the spiritual side of life. Jesus called this man a fool because of his ignorance of spiritual values, and he was held accountable for his deeds and actions.

Let us notice the teachings of Jesus regarding spiritual economy, as recorded in our text:

I. The Master Economist Wants Us to CONSIDER the Real Issues

"For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matt. 16:26).

This is a masterful question: Think of the possibility of gaining the whole world; then think of the possibility of losing life.

A. The impossibility of gaining the whole world

Gaining the whole world is beyond my imagination; no one could gain the whole world. It would be foolish to think that you could win the world. Yet history teaches us that there were those individuals who sought to gain the whole world: Alexander the Great conquered one country after another. It has been recorded that when Alexander reached the banks of the Indian Ocean, he wept because he had no more worlds to conquer. We read of Napoleon, emperor of France, who conquered Europe and set his heart on England and Russia, but Napoleon met his Waterloo.

B. The temporary state of the world

Even if you could gain the world, you could not retain it forever. Jesus gives us graphic illustrations in relation to that which is temporal in contrast to that which is eternal. He speaks of the brevity of life and the necessity of seeking that which is changeless and

of other things in comparison. Jesus could have portrayed the worthlessness of this world by asking the question, "What is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose his health?" What sane person would sell his body to be warped, deformed, twisted, and racked with pain in exchange for possession of all the world?

Jesus could have asked, "What is a man profited if he gain the whole world and lose his own *mind*?" What value would possessions be to one locked in an insane asylum unable to enjoy any of its benefits? Thank God for a sound mind. It's worth more than the world to me.

We all would wholeheartedly agree that the mind and body are more valuable than the world. If this be true of that which lasts for such a brief time, how much more so for that which lasts forever—the soul.

B. Value is determined by whether property truly can be owned and whether a clear title to it can be obtained. T. DeWitt Talmage, a great preacher of the past, suggests we ask this question, one that would be asked by any responsible person purchasing real estate. Can a clear title be obtained? In purchasing a home, one makes certain that the title is clear, that there aren't so many legal heirs and entanglements that the title can't be freed.

Suppose you owned the world. Everything in it was at your disposal. You were king without even the fear of a rival. Do you really own it? It is certain that one day a ghostly monster will come and introduce himself. "My name is Death. I have a mortgage on this property. It's time for you to move." You argue, "I own it. I bought it, and I'm not moving." Death is deaf. He walks right in. He kicks you off the property. So, do you really own it? No property of the world can truly be owned. If you die today, the house you own will be the property of another tomorrow.

So you trade your soul in exchange for the world and go to an eternal hell; but then you didn't really own the world. That's poor business. You lose everything.

Most likely we would not purchase something that could not be insured. There is not an insurance agent in the world who would insure a burning house. You give your soul to gain the world, but you can't keep it. The Bible says in 2 Pet. 3:10, "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away

time is the most valuable thing any of us has. For instance, when a man engages in unnecessary labor on the Lord's day and fails to worship and feed his soul, it always results in damage to his spiritual well-being. O Lord, "teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom" (Ps. 90:12).

B. The preoccupation with acquiring worldly things and goals may hinder the development and use of talents for God. Oh that Christians, especially young people, would see the tremendous impact they could make for Christ, and set out to develop God-given talents until they are sharp skills, seldom equaled by those of the world, and *never* surpassed by the world! Our Lord and King deserves our best!

C. The obsession for possessions may blind you to your financial accountability to God.

D. The Lord will not countenance such disposition of time, talent, and treasure. The parable of the rich fool, recorded in Luke 12:16-21, is a grave and impressive illustration of the consequences of choosing worldly gain instead of spiritual life. The rich farmer was blessed with beautiful crops because of the goodness of God, yet he counted the gain as self-earned and owned. He did not regard God or his fellowman, but thought only of himself. Jesus said he was a fool. Harper's Lexicon reveals the original meaning of this word "fool" was "foam or froth." Could it be that Jesus was saying, "THOU MADMAN!"—foaming and frothing at the mouth! And so is every man today who lives for himself and is not rich toward God. Insane! Without reason! "Headless, witless," says *Young's Concordance*.

He was a fool for the following reasons: *First*, a soul does not feed on earthly fare. A life consists not in eating and drinking, but in "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost" (Rom. 14:17). *Second*, that which a man has in this life is not his but God's; and passing through the restricted gate of death, all is left behind! *Again*, he completely forgot the Giver, who gives to all men liberally, and upbraideth not. Farmers, of all persons, would be quite aware of the Lord's role in producing a harvest. There is little man can do, except to plant the seed and cut the weeds. God gives the increase.

Last, his lonely, helpless soul, once past the place of death, would be quickly claimed by horrid hosts of hell.

I. God's Balances Determine *Values*

A. What is profit and important? (Brief description of materialism in our day.)

B. What is weighing? (Comparing value and standards.)

C. What can I exchange? (The price I will pay.) (Sometimes I cannot afford what I want, therefore I have to do without it. This is what is valuable to me.)

II. God's Balances Determine *Reward*

A. Christ comes in the glory of the Father. (The recognition that the "rewarder" is mighty and glorious and to be feared [stood in awe of].)

B. Christ establishes the reward and the values thereof.

III. God's Balances Determine *Our Efforts*

(Reward in relationship to our efforts. Justified by faith that works [cf. James 2:18].)

A. Our efforts are determined by our trust in God.

B. Our efforts are determined by our concern for others.

C. Our efforts are determined by our commitment.

Conclusion: God's Balance Determines *Our Cost*. (Preceding verses, Matt. 16:24-25.)

Have we lost our lives in Him? When my values and my profit is eternal, I will establish my heart right before God.

Illustration: Brief story of a man who rejected the truth; that the soul will live forever.

Would you give your life to Jesus tonight that you might be found safe in Him?

Invitation Hymn: "Is Thy Heart Right with God?" 

Notes

C. Its value compared—1 John 2:15-17

D. Yet how many foolishly invest in the world to the detriment of the soul!

1. Fred Smith, executive vice-president of the Gruen Watch Company, while speaking at a morning service in his church, said: "The good things in life have to be paid for in advance, while the evil things we do are paid for, generally, on the installment plan."

2. Recently the collector of internal revenue received a check for \$5,000 and a brief note from a businessman. It read: "Please find enclosed \$5,000 that I owe on my past income tax. I am sending it to you because I haven't been able to sleep. If I can't sleep now, I will send you the balance of it." (Both illustrations from C. Roy Angell's *The Price Tags of Life* [Nashville: Broadman Press, 1959].)

E. Not the least bit humorous to realize that one could gain the whole world and have made a bad investment, for: "Behold, all souls are Mine; the soul of the father as well as the soul of the son is Mine. The soul who sins will die" (Ezek. 18:4, NASB).

III. The Accounting of the Son

A. A Fair Accounting

1. Jesus has shown us by His life and death the comparative worth of the soul and the world.

2. Cf. Luke 4:5-12.

3. Cf. the context of our text—Jesus would not bypass the Cross for any reason.

4. Jesus invested His life that we might have life and forever settle the question of comparative worth.

B. A Just Accounting

1. Cf. v. 15—"Who do you say I am?" (NIV, italics added).

2. Cf. v. 24—"If any one wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me" (NASB).

3. He "will then recompense every man according to his deeds" (v. 27, NASB).

Conclusion: When I was in the ninth grade, all in my class were given an imaginary \$1,000 to invest in the stock market as a learning experience. We were to keep track of profits and losses for a given period. A friend's father had information concerning an upcoming stock split in a certain company. Because of this advance warning, my friend was able to double his investment.

Jesus Christ has given us advance warning. He has settled the question

(Continued on page 57)

change, please consider, "What shall I give for my soul?"

III. A Destiny Is Sealed—v. 27b: "And then he will reward each person according to what he has done" (NIV).

A. Every man makes his own decision for the destiny of his own soul.

B. He is coming again.

C. Potentially everyone has been redeemed.

1. By His grace we are offered His promise—His pardon—His power.

D. It is ours to accept or reject, and this decision determines destiny.

1. This decision affects what we become in life.

2. This decision determines our eternal reward.

E. In life's most important exchange, please consider, "What shall I benefit by accepting?"

Conclusion:

A. Those who decide to "play safe" lose their soul within themselves. Those who take Calvary's offer find their soul secure in Christ.

Illustration: Spirits of air, water, earth, and fire finding a place to hide man's soul. Satan made the decision to hide it in man's body.

B. In life's most important exchange, by accepting Calvary's offer, please consider this as we open the altar.

1. What will He do with me now?

- He will forgive your sins.
- He will make life worthwhile.

2. What will He do with me then? (Matt. 10:32).

- The confessing of Christ here means the confession by Christ there.
- The denial of Christ here means the denial by Christ there.

C. Accept Christ in the greatest exchange of life's benefits *now* and *then*. In an evangelistic setting, the altar call really begins at the beginning of the sermon.

The Altar Call: An effective invitation is so important. It deserves your very best.

A. This invitation must start in the heart of the preacher. If you have it in your deepest soul to convince people of this great exchange, you will somehow know how to do it. The Holy Spirit will help you (John 7:17).

B. Prayerfully have the sermon lead to this ultimate purpose.

permanent. Life is short at the very longest; it is like a vapor, a shadow that flees away, and the flight of an eagle. Fame, popularity, and recognition soon pass away. One should not give himself to such a temporary matter.

C. The world fails to satisfy

Gaining the world would not guarantee genuine happiness. Jesus said, "A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth" (Luke 12:15). Solomon was the playboy of the eastern world, but he summed up life as vanity. Real happiness is found in a person. Man was made by God, and a person cannot be happy until a right relationship with God is established. Losing the world means finding Christ, and when you consider the real issue and count the cost, you are making a wise investment. Lose self to find Christ.

II. The Master Economist Wants Us to EXAMINE Our Holdings

A. The worth of a soul

It is difficult to determine the true worth of God's greatest masterpiece—the human soul. It has been referred to as a priceless possession. You cannot put a price tag on the value of a human soul. Jesus taught that one soul is worth more than the wealth of the world. This is beyond human understanding: one person, any person, living anywhere, has more worth than the entire world system.

Yet the masses of this world are bartering their souls for a mess of pottage, a glass of wine. "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world" (1 John 2:16). What does it profit? Where is the profit when life is spent? What does the world profit when a man outlives his pleasures—when his energy is spent? Influenced by the present-day materialistic interpretation of life, we tend to calculate a man's wealth instead of his worth. Your soul's salvation is of incalculable value.

B. The immense capacities of the soul

Human beings are the crown of God's creation, capable of relationship and fellowship with the Lord. The soul of man is not satisfied with the beggarly things of this world. We are destined for bigger and better things. God has created in each of us a longing and a desire to become more like Him, to rise above the earthly and reach for the heavenly.

C. The immortality of the soul

Every person who is born into this world shall live forever. The Bible is

very clear at this point. Every person will live either with God or away from God, depending upon that person's choice. Our eternal destiny is determined in this choice. It is heaven or hell for the choosing. All a man acquires of earthly character belongs to the body, and remains with the mortal at its passing; but the soul of man is immortal.

III. The Master Economist Wants Us to INVEST Our Lives

In order to do this wisely, we must consider the matter of profit and loss. Profit is a business term that affects the care of our lives. Profit is a motive that is primarily expression, "What's in it for me?" Jesus had a word to say about profit. He showed us that aside from this mad rush for profit and gain, for knowledge, for power and prestige, there is something that is of utmost importance—the realization of salvation and the development of life. We look at the words recorded in Mark for renewed emphasis, "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (8:36-37). The scripture has an example in the apostle Paul to validate this great spiritual truth. He expressed it himself in this autobiographical section of Philippians: "But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ" (3:7-8).

A. We understand that there is some profit that is really loss.

Paul discovered that all he had worked for and all the privileges he had in life were not really profits when judged by the standard of God's Spirit and God's will for his life.

The real problem with these things is that they often promote pride, a pride that can lead to a fall. Paul had many things to boast of: the pride of family, the pride of faith, the pride of achievement, the pride of morality . . . yet Paul fully realized we can have all of these many assets appearing in the plus column of our lives, but if we have not Christ we are in the minus column.

B. There is a loss that really is profit.

Paul had a great pride in all his attainments, all those things that he counted profit, until one day on the road to Damascus he discovered the greatest profit—faith in Jesus Christ

with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." You sell your soul, miss heaven, and go into utter darkness without help, and you lose your world as well. That's poor business.

C. Value is determined by satisfaction property has brought to others. Let's think back to real estate. An agent has my interests at heart. He advises, "Pastor, don't buy that house. The people who lived in it didn't like it. It's not well arranged. It is uncomfortable and inconvenient. The house has changed hands 10 times in 10 years." I would not buy the house.

I ask you, How satisfying has the world been to those who have only the world? At the pinnacle of his success, John DeLorean, the former automobile magnate, said, "I do not have peace." This assessment repeats itself without exception for every individual of worth, power, and fame who does not know God. We are told that the highest rate of suicide is in what is considered to be the paradise of the world, Hawaii. The most miserable people I know are those living for this world. Lose the world and you really lose nothing, because you never really had it in the first place.

II. Value of the Soul

A. Value is determined by the price paid for the soul. If man could make a purchase with his billions, it would never begin to match the supreme price—a life. Not just a life, but the life of the Greatest who has ever existed. God paid for our soul with His most valuable possession. What would be important and valuable enough to any of us that we would give one of our children in exchange for it? Nothing in this world! Yet, the soul was so valuable to Him that He gave His best.

B. Value is determined by the place prepared for the soul. John 14:2-3 says, "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." Someone says heaven is not so much going somewhere as it is being something. It is quite difficult to be something without having somewhere to be.

Heaven is a real place. No one can adequately describe it. We know heaven will be a place of beauty, splendor, peace, and satisfaction beyond anything ever experienced in this world. There is a city in which there are

(Continued on page 57)

Many Bible students, including John Wesley and Henry Alford, claim the scripture to read: "This night they require thy soul." One well-known scholar states, "The indefiniteness of the pronoun is impressive—who are 'they?'" W. B. Godbey asserts "they" are demons, whose job it is to precipitate the souls of men into hell. And so the rich farmer was dragged by imps of hell into the regions of the damned.

II. A Person Cannot Trade Anything He Has or Is for His Soul

A. There is no currency of any kind available to barter for the soul. All three of the synoptic Gospels record this lesson, and in all three instances Christ is quoted as saying the "whole world" would not be sufficient to redeem the soul! This expression "whole world" may well imply the totality of all values in the universe. One writer believes the words to include all intellectual attainments, all monetary and material attainments, all sensual fulfillments, all power positions, and on and on. While no man has ever tapped this kind of possession, Christ says even if it were possible it would not redeem even a single soul or life!

Job received this counsel from a would-be friend: "Because there is wrath, beware lest he take thee away with his stroke: then a great ransom cannot deliver thee. Will he esteem thy riches? No, not gold, nor all the forces of strength" (36:18-19).

B. Ps. 49:6-7: "They that trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches; none of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him."

Earthly gains properly belong to God, and the possessor is only a steward. After King David challenged the people to give a good offering to build the Temple, and they responded generously, he prayed: "Who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? For all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee" (1 Chron. 29:14).

III. When Christ Comes Again, He Will Decide Which Ones Have Saved Their Souls

A. This decision clearly is not made by any man. "The Son of man shall . . . reward every man."

B. Christ will base His decision on our daily living and attitude.

Henry Alford suggests the word "works" is really singular, and refers to a man's work "as a whole: his *habit of action*." Rather, that the saved condi-

C. Create an appeal to the lost; assuring victory in Christ; with honest and sincere investigation that is clear and to the point; alive, positively pointed toward a divine response saturated in an atmosphere of prayer and conviction.

D. Open the altar with intercessory prayer for the spiritual needs. During this time while the people wait with bowed heads, the preacher can ask for those who are moved toward God to raise their hands asking for remembrance in the prayer. The organ or piano is usually playing softly a very familiar preselected invitation hymn at this time.

E. At the end of the prayer the congregation is asked to stand as the choir begins to sing this same invitation hymn. The congregation may join in with the choir. Music is an all-important part of the appeal.

F. The invitation must be directed by the Spirit. The preacher must be sensitive and open to His leadership. God never fails His children. This is God's business (Luke 19:10). The length of the invitation is in the will of God.

G. Because of the deep, everlasting consequences involved in the altar call, it is well to realize the preacher's tremendous responsibility! Timidity, hesitancy, lack of confidence and conviction can defeat an invitation. Create an atmosphere in which *everyone* makes a declaration to move closer to God in definite salvation or growing grace at the altar or in the pew. Close the service with everyone participating in prayer or respect for the altar call.

Notes

as Savior. This becomes the most important decision of all for any person. It is a rich and rewarding investment.

Conclusion: What do you profit by the acceptance of Christ? You gain a new set of values, a new position, a new fellowship, a new hope. These securities are very important as we focus on verse 27 of our text: "For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works." He is the Son of Man by virtue of His incarnation; but in His essential being He is God, equal with the Father, the Godhead. Then He shall reward every man according to his work as a whole. The award will be proportioned in infinite justice and mercy to the whole scope and meaning of each man's earthly life. He bids us to look forward to that great day and to estimate things in reference to the coming judgment. The glory of the world seems at present very great and magnificent and overpowering. But when we look at these earthly things in light of eternity and the judgment, they shrink into nothingness. The sublime illustration is presented by the Lord himself, who acquired nothing early, who gave up everything He had that men esteem and call gain, but who gained the eternal treasure of tested spiritual character, perfected Sonship. I ask you, Which is to be first, possessions or spiritual character?

Invitation: Christ wants to meet you right where you are . . . only Jesus can change your life and give you something worth living for. He can satisfy every longing and desire of your soul.

You have nothing to lose and everything to gain when you turn your life over to Jesus . . . don't waste your life on material gain; give yourself to the highest.

The choice is yours; no one can make it for you . . . choose Jesus and live, reject Him and you have lost everything that is worthwhile in this life and the world to come.

(Balance scale) Put the world and all earthly possessions on one side of the scale and place your immortal soul on the other side, and the worth of your soul will tip the scale. It is a priceless possession.

tion of a soul is a life-style consistent with Christ's teachings: "The Son of man shall . . . reward every man according to his works"—the living out of his faith in everyday life.

Paul tells the Romans that God will reward every man according to his deeds, and then explains deeds in the following words: "Patient continuance in well doing seek[ing] for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life" (2:6-7).

Conclusion: Years ago I pastored a precious saint named John Kirk. He had not always been a Christian. For 40 years his wife prayed for him. At the age of 72 God "got a hook in his jaw" while a young man was singing "The Love of God." His salvation was miraculous and complete. He was delivered from tobacco after 66 years of smoking. More than once he said to me, "Oh, that I had given my heart to God many years ago." I was by his bed holding his hand when he died. As the doctor pulled the sheet over his face, dear Mother Kirk looked at me and said, "Praise the Lord, Brother Oyler, he's made it in!"

Dear friends, let's make it in! Let's make it in!

Song: "Just as I Am" 

Notes

An Evangelistic Sermon

COME RUNNING WITH A BUCKET

by Wesley Tracy

Text: The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. . . . So all the generations from Abraham to David were fourteen generations, and from David to the deportation to Babylon fourteen generations, and from the deportation to Babylon to the Christ fourteen generations (Matt. 1:1, 17, RSV).

What a boring way to start a book! Doesn't Matthew know anything about the narrative hook, that device whereby the writer snags the reader almost against his will? Doesn't Matthew know that genealogies—those dreary “begat lists”—are the most skipped passages by Bible readers? Does he think we want to mess with any list of 42 generations?

But while a genealogy may be boring and eminently “skippable” to us, to the Jewish mind it is the natural place to begin. “Check this fellow’s pedigree,” they would say. “Let’s shake his family tree and see what might fall out.” Perhaps they put as much store in purity of lineage as Hitler & Co. did. In Jesus’ time, Barclay says, if a man’s lineage showed the slightest admixture of foreign blood, he lost his right to be called a Jew and a member of the people of God.

To be a priest one could not simply testify that Jehovah has called him to the priesthood. Oh, no. The first

thing the Levitical Board of Orders and Relations demanded was that the candidate produce an unbroken pedigree tracing his lineage all the way back to Aaron, the granddaddy of the priesthood. If the candidate could not produce it, he was given the same salutation that Charlie the would-be Starkist tuna gets. “Sorry, Charlie—you don’t qualify.” Further, if any priest fell in love and wanted to get married (or if he wanted to get married for any other reason), he had to go before the “Board of Orders and Relations” and present a pure Jewish pedigree of his fiancée for at least five generations. We see in the Book of Ezra, for example, would-be priests dismissed from office on charges of polluted pedigrees.

To put this in perspective, if we had the same practice, a preacher might have to produce a pure pedigree all the way back to Paul. His fiancée would have to produce a spotless genealogy back to John Wesley.

Herod the Great, being part Edomite, had the pedigree registers in Jerusalem destroyed so no candidate for king could oust him on the basis of a purer pedigree.

I have said all of that to say this—It was of utmost importance who Jesus claimed to be. It was so important that the 42 generations of Jesus were listed in 3 sets of 14 so you could memorize them easily. What? Oh, my, in New Testament times a Jewish Christian would not think of witnessing to one of his countrymen without being able to recite Jesus' genealogy—would he? Had Campus Crusade existed then at Jerusalem University, they would have had to have five spiritual laws, and one of them would have been: "Jesus Christ is the Son of David and Abraham"—and these 40 other folk.

A number of important truths are taught, implied, and inferred in this credential statement of Jesus Christ. But I want to focus our attention on the one thing that I think is most remarkable, marvelous, and even outrageous. That is, that in Jesus' very own credential statement—published right out there for the whole world to see—five women appear:

- Tamar, v. 3
- Rahab, v. 5
- Ruth, v. 5
- Bathsheba, v. 6
- Mary, v. 16

In those days nobody, I mean nobody, would dare put women in his official credential statement. Like Gentiles and slaves, they had no legal rights and no social status. The devout Jew every day at the morning prayer lifted his bearded face toward heaven and thanked God for three things:

1. That he was not a Gentile
2. That he was not a slave
3. That he was not a *woman*

But not only did Jesus claim five women—look at who they are. Mary we can understand—but the other four?

I should deal with Tamar here since she is mentioned first, but I'm going to put her last and hope I run out of time and don't have to talk about her infamous exploits. I don't know how to talk about her claim to fame in polite company.

So let's go to someone more honorable—

I. Rahab the Harlot of Jericho

You remember that the Israelite spies who were scouting out Jericho took refuge in her place of business. Why they were there I don't know. I know that some squeaky clean evangelicals have tried to promote Rahab from harlot to honorable innkeeper, but their efforts have been largely fruitless.

Remember the *sign*. Rahab said something like this, "When your people take our city, please spare my family." They told her to hang a red cord in her window. Some have tried to say that the red cord is some oblique, obscure symbol of redemption, but it is more likely that this red cord in the harlot's window is the origin of what is called today the red-light district. Can it be that right here in Jesus' genealogy is Rahab the mother of the red-light district? What was Jesus thinking about!

II. Ruth the Moabitess

Ruth is mentioned in verse 5. Like Rahab she is not even a Hebrew. But she is not just a Gentile—she is the *worst possible kind of Gentile*. She is a Moabitess. Remember the origins of the Moabites—read it in Genesis 19. There you have a drunken father, Lot, in incestuous relationship with incontinent daughters and whelping a despised race—the Moabites. This foul origin gave the Jews spitting rights. On any sidewalk, on any street, on any path where a Jew met a Moabite, he would hiss through his teeth and spit at the despaired descendant of sensual sin.

They were so infamous the Old Testament says they are not even to be allowed in church. In Deut. 23:3 we find this law: "*No . . . Moabite shall enter the assembly of the Lord; even to the tenth generation none belonging to them shall enter the assembly of the Lord for ever*" (RSV).

That means, in terms of a rough comparison, that if back at the time when Columbus discovered America one of your ancestors had been a Moabite, even today you would not be allowed to set foot inside the church.

Then there's Ruth herself. We know some very good things about her. But sometimes she was far from exemplary in her character. She wrote the book (with Naomi's help) on how to trap a husband. Remember the law in those days was that any two people caught sharing the same blanket had to get married—whether anything immoral had transpired or not. Here goes Ruth after rich Boaz (one of two kinsmen with *levirate* marriage responsibility to her). He is worn-out and tired after working in the harvest field all day. They didn't go home at night. They camped out in the fields where they were working. About midnight Ruth slips in and lies down at his feet and pulls his blanket over her. About five o'clock in the morning he wakes up and there's Ruth grinning coyly. Trapped? I'll say.

But Ruth the trickster, the despised Moabitess, is listed in Jesus' own credential statement. Outrageous indeed! What was He thinking about?

III. Then There's Bathsheba

Bathsheba baited David and then yielded to his sinful seduction, and didn't seem to grieve too much over David's murder of her husband Uriah—after all, it's nicer to be queen than a sergeant's wife. After a child had been conceived as a result of their lawless liaison, David arranged for poor Uriah to become a war casualty. And Bathsheba seemed to be happy as a canary-snapping cat about the whole thing. How could Jesus claim such a woman! But she is right here in His credential statement.

IV. Tamar

I'm glad I'm about out of time. Of Tamar's nefarious escapades let me simply say that she had a husband named *Er*—but the Lord slew him. She had a husband named *Onan* and the Lord slew him. She really wanted a husband named *Shelah* but was denied him. She resorted to harlotry to solve her family and economic problems. And unlike Paul Harvey I'm *not* going to tell you the *rest* of the story. Read it in Genesis 38.

There you have them: Tamar, Bathsheba, Ruth, and

Rahab. As William Barclay says, If you had ransacked the Old Testament, you could not find four more unlikely people ever to appear in the Savior's credential statement. But of them all Jesus said, "They are My own."

V. So What?

We come now to the *so what* section of the sermon.

What is Jesus saying to us? Jesus is saying that with the inbreaking of the kingdom of God upon history some old barriers are coming down:

1. The barrier between *male and female* is coming down. By including five women He announces that women are just as precious in His sight as any man ever was—and that both men and women are equally important to His purposes. This may seem insignificant to you, but then it was indeed "news" and in some places in our world this good news is still needed.

2. Further, Jesus is proclaiming that the *old barriers between Jew and Gentile so precious to the Jews are coming down*. Divine favor, *salvation*, is *by grace*, not *race*.

3. The barrier between *saint and sinner is coming down*. This is an announcement that both the blatant lawbreaker and the self-righteous law keeper can only find salvation by *grace* and *grace* alone. The old idea that a code keeper can earn his salvation and be better than other sinners perishes forever before the holiness and grace of God.

VI. What Does This Mean to Me?

1. It means that my race is no plus or minus so far as God is concerned. In God's sight, being a white Anglo-Saxon gives me not one hint of an advantage over the simplest person in the jungles of South America. But my race gives me no disadvantage in comparison to any other son or daughter of Adam or Abraham.

2. It means that my gender is no testimony to my personal and eternal worth.

3. It also means my past failures and sins need not be final, and that my past self-righteous strivings cannot buy my salvation.

Now reducing this whole study down to one application, one truth that you can tuck in your heart and live by, I come to this:

Most of all it means that—if Jesus claimed those four sinfully notorious women as His own (not on the sly) in His public credential statement, there can be no *possible* reason to think that He will reject you!

If He claims a Moabite—oh, wretched, incestuous clan; if He claims Rahab of red-light fame; if He claims Bathsheba, that heartless adulteress; if He claims Tamar, is there a shred of evidence that He will reject you? No! No—a thousand times No!

You see, this is one reason why all this is in your Bible—Jesus is announcing to you that all the broken memories, all the wrong decisions you can't undo, all the heartaches, all the wickedness—in short, all the sins of all the past can be put under the redeeming Blood, and you can be a child of the King. He wants to adopt you. All your sins of all your past have not weakened His Calvary love for you.

Don't let fear or guilt or pride or a broken heart keep you away from Him. Your sins make you feel guilty and

ashamed. They make you want to shun His presence, but that's when you need Him most. He assures us of His love through His teaching, through His example, through His preaching, through His precepts, through His invitations, and even through His genealogy.

If He claimed sinners like Rahab, Ruth, Bathsheba, and Tamar, He will accept your repentant and contrite heart. These four women have not exhausted His mercy. There's grace and mercy aplenty for you. He will say of you what He said of each of these women: "You are one of Mine."

You can come to Him just as you are—and He will set you free.

Nancy Spiegelberg expressed it this way in a poem:
Lord, I crawled

Across the barrenness to You

With my empty cup

Uncertain in asking any small drop of refreshment.

If only I had known You better,

I would have come running with a bucket.

(From *Decision* magazine. Used by permission.)

Too long you have borne the guilt and pain of sin. Come and let Him forgive and redeem you. There is no question, there is no doubt, that He will accept and forgive and redeem you too.

Jesus, the Savior, will *accept* you just as you are, but He will *not* leave you just as you are. He will liberate you from the guilt and power of sin. The fountain of grace is overflowing—come running with a bucket. 

Notes on the Sermon

The Origins of the Sermon

I used to lecture on the genealogy of Matthew 1 to my freshman Bible class at Mid-America Nazarene College. I later derived a sermon from those lecture notes.

My principle commentary source is William Barclay's well-known work *The Daily Study Bible* (Matthew, vol. 1). This work is cited in the sermon, and the subpoints in section V are taken directly from Barclay's comments.

After I had worked with Matthew 1 several times, I heard Dr. Paul Merritt Bassett preach from the passage. As I recall, his sermon gave primary stress to the Tamar incident. I'm in debt to him, for his excellent sermon helped me refine my own work on this passage. Not very original? True. Without Barclay, Bassett, and 95 eager college freshmen who dared me to make the Bible interesting, this sermon may never have been preached.

Delivery of the Sermon

The sermon has been preached three times in the last four months. It has been well received and several have come to the altar. Each time I preached from a manuscript. When preaching on such delicate subject matter, care must be taken to state things precisely—not offending the canons of good taste. It is no time for ad libs or free and easy extemporaneous speech. The canon of "appropriateness" tells us this is not a sermon for children's church. It's better delivered to the adult congregation while the children are in children's church.

Theological Concerns

Care must be taken not to just tell interesting stories (or dull ones either) in a sermon like this. The gospel, the *kerygma*, must be proclaimed. Thus sin, confession, repentance, adoption, faith, and redemption are pointedly stressed in the conclusion of the sermon. Without the kerygmatic conclusion, the sermon could be a mere sentimental journey.

The Case of the Unwanted Mother

Mrs. Hall, a lady in her 40s, had been in and out of the mental hospital for years. Her case had everyone puzzled. Each time she was granted a leave to go home she would return in a few days in a seriously disturbed condition. In the hospital she had proven herself over and over again to be ready for dismissal. But evidently there was something at home that kept her upset—something with which she could not cope.

Mrs. Hall wanted to be home; she longed for it more than anything. She wanted so much to be a mother to Ronnie, her seven-year-old son. Ronnie was a bright, energetic boy who needed his mother, too.

Her husband, Mr. Hall, gave every evidence of devotion to his wife. He visited her regularly, sent presents, and wrote now and then.

When questioned why she had trouble staying home on her leave she would only say, "I don't know. I only wish I did know!"

The mystery began to unveil itself about the time Mr. Hall took his vacation. He prevailed again upon the doctor to give his wife another leave of absence—to come home with him and Ronnie.

"I'll be home to help out and see that everything goes all right," he said.

Pastor Hudson, a friend of the family, heard that Mrs. Hall would soon return home again. Wanting to help all he could, the pastor called the hospital and talked with the psychiatrist. The two agreed that Rev. Hudson should visit Mr. and Mrs. Hall shortly after she was released. "I wish you could determine," said the psychiatrist, "what prevents her from staying with her family. There's no reason why she shouldn't be able to live at home." With this encour-

agement, Pastor Hudson made it a point to greet her shortly after she arrived home with her husband and son. After a brief visit the pastor suggested that if she started to feel upset, Mr. Hall should bring her to the parsonage first before taking her to the hospital.

"I want to help keep her out of the hospital this time," Pastor Hudson explained to the husband.

Just four days later they brought her over to the parsonage, disturbed, unable to express herself. Pastor Hudson took the husband to one side and began to explore just what had happened. At length he asked, "Why do you think she should be back in the hospital?"

"I can't have her scaring Ronnie like she does," answered Mr. Hall.

"Scaring Ronnie?"

"Yes, when she gets one of her spells he gets scared and I don't like it. I don't think it's good for him to be scared like that, do you?"

"Perhaps not," said the pastor. "But you must talk in front of him about his mother, or he wouldn't be scared. You know as well as I do that she loves him and wouldn't think of hurting him."

Mr. Hall did not answer.

The pastor then suggested that Mrs. Hall stay with them for a few days.

"We think so much of your wife, and we would be happy to have her with us. Perhaps she will quiet down and not have to go back to the hospital."

Mr. Hall agreed to the suggestion. Since it was satisfactory with Mrs. Hall, the husband returned home.

An hour or so later Mrs. Hall began to relax. Then the pastor's wife put her to bed where she slept for 12 hours!

Since she had done very little

sleeping since leaving the hospital, she was exhausted. When she awakened she was bright and cheerful, much like her old self again. Then the pastor began to talk things over with her. When the subject of Ronnie's fear arose she said, "I believe they unconsciously put him up to it. They don't try to explain anything to the child. They talk too much in front of him. My husband means well, but he listens to his sister too much."

"Listens to his sister?" the pastor inquired.

"Yes," she continued. "You see, she helps take care of Ronnie when I am in the hospital. She has no children of her own, so she wants to keep Ronnie. I heard something on the extension phone, something I wasn't supposed to hear. They were talking about my being home, and my sister-in-law said I was crazy—that's all there was to it—that the sooner my husband made up his mind to leave me in the hospital, the happier everyone would be—that it wasn't good for Ronnie to have me coming home because I upset him and everyone else."

This explained volumes. Mrs. Hall's family all considered her "crazy." Her husband was being influenced by his sister who, possibly sincerely, thought she should have the boy. Naturally Mrs. Hall was breaking, because she had no way to change their attitude toward her sanity. This threatened her entire future and even her son's acceptance of her as his mother. She was convinced that they really didn't want her.

CHOOSE AN ENDING

One of the following endings is the “true life” outcome of this situation. Which is the real ending?

Ending One

Rev. Hudson recognized a common problem for those who have been treated in mental hospitals and who have recovered sufficiently to return home. Mrs. Hall was ready to come home, but her family could not forget her symptoms.

A few days later Pastor and Mrs. Hudson invited Mrs. Hall and her son, Ronnie, to go with them on a few days' outing with the young people of their church. Mrs. Hall helped with the cooking. It was a perfect time for her son to renew his confidence in his mother. And how Mrs. Hall feasted on the attention of her son!

After the camping trip Mrs. Hall and Ronnie went home. Since the pastor and his wife had displayed confidence in her, Mr. Hall found it easier to trust her too. He no longer threatened her with “returning” or with close scrutiny of all that she did. Ronnie came to depend on his mother. Having her son's confidence, she also had more faith in herself. Since Mrs. Hall had found Jesus Christ as her Savior a few months previously, she was able to trust God to deliver her from her fears and to help her further.

A month later upon seeing Mr. Hall Pastor Hudson asked, “Well, when are you going to let your wife come and visit us again?”

Mr. Hall began to smile and said, “Oh, I don't know. Ronnie won't let her out of his sight now. He won't even eat my cookin' anymore!”

Mrs. Hall was discharged from the hospital three months later. Every day she gained more confidence. Her dream of being a mother and wife literally came true!

Ending Two

Rev. Hudson realized that the husband and sister were parts of the problem, not the solution. Since he was a confrontational counselor he decided to talk with each of the parties concerned.

First he explained to Mrs. Hall that her husband and sister were behaving somewhat predictably. They were nevertheless, he explained, turning the child against her because they couldn't cope with her illness.

Next Hudson spoke to the husband. He confronted Mr. Hall directly with what he was doing wrong. He expected Mr. Hall to see the plain truth readily. But instead Hall became defensive and accused the pastor of meddling and gossiping about his sister.

Hudson then met with Mr. Hall's sister. He told her that she was breaking up her brother's family. “I don't think you are doing it on purpose,” he said, “but I think if you examine your motives you might be surprised.” Hudson knew her to be a bit of a conniver in church affairs about which he had confronted her before. The sister was offended and left the area, taking an attractive job offer in Chicago.

Pastor Hudson talked with Ronnie as well, assuring him that no matter what his father and aunt might say he should love and trust his mother.

Six years later no member of the family attends Rev. Hudson's church. Mrs. Hall continues a pattern of periodic hospitalization.

Ending Three

Rev. Hudson believed that the Bible has the answer for everything. He didn't believe much in counselors. He told Mr. Hall that his wife's problem was *spiritual*, not mental. He should take her out of the hospital for good.

Hudson told Mrs. Hall the same thing. “You are wasting your time in that hospital,” he told her. “You are getting worse instead of better. Your real need is to come clean with God.” Willing to try anything she agreed to attend next week's revival and “obey the Lord.”

On Tuesday night she went to the altar, but made no headway. She went again on Thursday night, prayed frantically and fervently, but still left mired in uncertainties. She came to the altar again on Sunday night while the crowd sang “Almost Persuaded.” As she prayed she became wild-eyed and desperate. “God's dealing with her,” the preacher proclaimed as she lay groaning at the altar. “Say that final yes to Him.”

Mr. Hall took her home. She was nearly out of control. She sat up nearly all night on the porch swing. Part of the time she sang softly, mostly she stared into the darkness. Mr. Hall took her back to the hospital the next day.

Five years later Mrs. Hall is confined to a state institution. She has made no progress. She never comes home anymore. Mr. Hall divorced her last year and married another woman. Ronnie now lives with his aunt. No one hears of the first Mrs. Hall anymore except those who hear Rev. Hudson's sermon in which he uses her as an illustration of a soul saying a final no to God who finally gives her over to a “reprobate mind.”

For Reflection and Discussion

1. Choose the ending you think is the true-life ending. Explain your answer to the group.
2. How would the Bible, theology, or any other resource of the Christian faith inform your action if you were in Rev. Hudson's place?
3. If you were in Rev. Hudson's place, how would you handle the case? What would your objective be? That is, what outcome would you aim for?
4. By what actions would you proceed?
5. Write your own ending—the way you think things would turn out if you were the pastor in this case.

(“Ending one” is the true-life ending.)

THE CHIVALRY OF THANKSGIVING

by David A. MacLennan

And David longed, and said, Oh that one would give me drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem, which is by the gate! And the three mighty men brake through the host of the Philistines, and drew water out of the well of Bethlehem, that was by the gate, and took it, and brought it to David: nevertheless he would not drink thereof, but poured it out unto the Lord. And he said, Be it far from me, O Lord, that I should do this: is not this the blood of the men that went in jeopardy of their lives? therefore he would not drink it. These things did these three mighty men (2 Sam. 23:15-17).

Some 3,000 years before Alexandre Dumas immortalized in romantic novels the exploits of the Three Musketeers, there was a trio of gallant Hebrew warriors in the service of King David known as “the Three.” Their deeds were celebrated in the annals of ancient chivalry. Who they were we do not know. The name of one has come down to us, Eleazar ded dodo. Nothing is known of them except the fragmentary tale in the 23rd chapter of 2 Samuel. Upon them was conferred the Hebrew “Order of Merit”: for they were sportsmen and adventurous warriors. They won undying fame in connection with a strange service rendered to their leader and king. David, in the midst of his war with the Philistines, was homesick. At the close of a long, hard day he longed for a drink of water out of the well on his father’s farm: “Oh, for a drink of water from the well in Bethlehem by the gate!”

You may know the feeling. Perhaps this morning you indulged the nostalgia that grown-up men and women experience. The coffee or the bread does not taste quite the same as it did when you were a child. In reality the coffee and the bread and the other things have not changed except for the better. You have changed. You and David. Jaded taste has replaced the old exhilaration in simple things. Of course this craving for a refreshing drink from the old well was the symbol of a deep and inner craving for the innocence and faith of yesterday. To be back on the hillside there, tending the sheep, singing, “The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want!” To go from the sheepfold to the battlefield and vanquish the giant! To recapture the grandeur of the coronation!

Once Rupert Brooke sat in a Berlin café and cried out for simple joys and familiar scenes:

*Ah God! to see the branches stir
Across the moon at Grantchester!
To smell the thrilling sweet and rotten,
Unforgettable, unforgotten
River smell, and hear the breeze
Sobbing in the little trees.*

And he asks concerning the deeper things that seem to have been lost to him:

*Say, is there Beauty to find?
And Certainty? And Quiet Kind?
Deep meadows yet, for to forget
The lies, and truths, and pain? . . .*

“O for a drink of water from the well in Bethlehem by the gate!”

But the three mighty men heard the cry of their king and leaped to answer it. The rest of the story follows as you know it. On this Thanksgiving Sunday let me hold it up to you as a picture of the Chivalry of Thanksgiving.

Those three comrades in arms did a brave thing because they loved their king. Their journey was under cover of night, through the enemies’ lines until they reached Bethlehem and the old well. There by the gate it was. As noiselessly as they could they crawled until they reached the wellside. Down into the well’s cool heart the bucket was lowered. Up again—and away. They broke through the lines again and reached the king with their precious gift. It was a chivalrous thing to do. You could not have paid them to do what they did. But then you never can purchase the choicest things of life. As Charles Reynolds Brown put it:

The choicest things in life are never purchased—a woman’s kiss of affection, the fine uncalculating friendship which one man cherishes for another, the devoted self-sacrifice of a mother, the lifeblood of a patriot poured out for his country—these great values in life are never bought and sold as if they were meat and potatoes. They are freely given away by the generous souls who have them to offer.

But the shining act of chivalry was yet to come. When they gave David the jug of water he would not drink it. You almost see the astonishment on the flushed faces of the three mighty men. “This is the water he wanted; he might drink it now that we’ve brought it to him.” But

We can drink all the draughts from the well of God without a second thought . . . or like David we can lift them up until their sacramental significance shines through

no! David's insight was clear. The water would choke him if he drank it. As the light fell on it it seemed to redden like the wine of the sacrament.

"Be it far from me, O Lord, that I should do this: is not this the blood of the men that went in jeopardy of their lives? therefore he would not drink it."

David was not ungrateful. Far from it! He saw that there are some values in life too sacred to be used for mere self-gratification. There is a *chivalry of thanksgiving*.

Let us walk around this truth.

I. Unearned Values

In the first place, the chivalry of thanksgiving makes clear that a large part of life is composed of values we have not earned. They are part of our legacy from our predecessors. These values we call our heritage. Strictly speaking, a heritage is a portion allotted to an individual or community. It comes from the past. The good and the great of the ages are the true creditors of the race. What they leave us is the true "unearned increment." I would not glorify the past indiscriminately, but I would celebrate those institutions and faiths and ideals that we take for granted. For as another has said, "The plain fact is that the biggest part of our lives is our heritage. . . . By long and patient process of aspiring, thinking, trying, daring, and sacrificing, mankind has accumulated a cultural inheritance!"

Again and again, the pioneers in realms of government, science, social relationships, and religion have gone "in jeopardy of their lives" to bring us purer water to refresh and liberate our spirits. "Ye are bought with a price." To saunter through life as if everything we possess belongs to us "in fee simple" is to be inwardly impoverished. That is why so many think lightly of the waste of patrimony, which has been so characteristic of our turbulent and profligate era. There are some things of the past that need to be left behind. There are customs and traditions that impede mankind's progress.

But there are other things like "the principles of Jeus, the power of applied science, the idea of democracy" we escape from only at our peril. "Be it far from me, O Lord, that I should do this: is not this the blood of the men that went in jeopardy of their lives?"

II. Recognition of Values

Again, such recognition of the value of things should awaken within us humility and thanksgiving. I suspect that when David held the water up to the light and realized what it stood for, he was moved to profound humility and thanksgiving. Humility is the mark of the discerning mind. It is the response of the appreciative soul. Pride rules our wills for the simple reason that we con-

centrate our attention upon the things we have done.

Humility is the garden in which the forget-me-nots of thanksgiving grow. When you encounter a man or woman who is grateful for the tradition of the home, the old-fashioned fidelities of family life; for basic moral convictions like courage, self-sacrifice, decency; for the Christian tradition of faith and life, you do not find a person who is arrogant and self-complacent. Rather you meet men and women who are humbly grateful for the great movement of thought and life that enrich and liberate the present.

It is not pious rhetoric to say, "We Thine unworthy servants do give Thee most *humble* and hearty thanks for all Thy goodness and loving-kindness to us and to all men." Freely we have received.

You cannot choose your heritage. But you can choose your attitude toward it. We can drink all the draughts from the well of God without a second thought as to what they signify. Or like David we can lift them up until their sacramental significance shines through them, transfiguring our heritage and transforming us.

Nor may our thanksgiving be restricted to the inheritance from the past. Here in the present many of the comforts we enjoy come to us at great cost, not infrequently at too great a cost in human lives. The mining industry, deep-sea fishery, space exploration, a thousand occupations and industries that minister to our daily comfort and convenience, are carried on at peril of men's lives.

John Woolman, the Quaker apostle, once wrote:

"The oppression of the slaves which I have seen in several journeys southward on this continent, and the report of their treatment in the West Indies, have deeply affected me, and a care to live in the spirit of peace and minister no just cause of offense to my fellow creatures, having from time to time livingly relived in my mind, I have for some years past declined to gratify my palate with those sugars." And he said, "Be it far from me, O Lord, that I should do this: is not this the blood of the men that went in jeopardy of their lives?"

III. Response to Values

Humble gratitude, however, is not the end of the chivalry of thanksgiving. It is not enough to recognize with true humility that we are heirs of spiritual riches. Nowhere in the Bible will you find any defense for a merely passive sentiment of thanksgiving. The chivalry of thanksgiving is always expressed in determined and enthusiastic action. "Freely ye have received, *freely give*." "We ought to lay down our lives for the brethren because Christ first laid down his life for us." You will recall easily the 11th chapter of Hebrews in which the writer carves out of the illustrious names of the past

(Continued on page 62)

REPROVING MEN FOR THEIR SINS

by Donald W. Wood
Central Wesleyan College, Central, S.C.

But then there are other works, wherein we cannot please Christ but by denying ourselves, as in bearing and forbearing, reprov[ing] men for their sins . . ."

This solemn reminder from John Wesley's Covenant Service pamphlet of 1780 stands in stark contrast to current practice in the Church. Having been rescued from legalism, blue laws, and Puritanism, the contemporary Christian treads dangerously close to antinomianism, laissez-faire individualism, and hedonism. Where does the balanced pathway of grace lie with both its compassion and its discipline? How shall the Christian community be directed along the trail of a common life expressed in brotherly concern? These are social and psychological questions as well as theological questions. Precisely because they are theological matters they are significant questions, and because they are social and psychological issues they are also spiritual issues.

John Wesley with his concern for biblical faith that is expressed in the common life of God's people wrote, spoke, and practiced the particular demonstration of love known as reprov[ing] one's brother. An illustration of this practice was the institution of the class meeting.

Class meetings were begun as Wesley sensed the necessity for correcting and encouraging Christian behavior among the people in Methodist societies. To be sure, some classes degenerated into censoriousness and dogmatism on trivial practices, but Wesley would reprove and, if necessary, remove class leaders who manifested such faults. Furthermore, he never wavered in his belief that the classes were a vital means to an improved Christian life. He understood that all believers need reproof from time to time, and he also understood that such correction needs to be given within an overall framework of support and encouragement. The individual is called to a common life, a body life.

While Wesley realized that only God could know another's heart, he also recognized that a class leader with Christian love and common sense could discern the life and practice of a fellow believer. To those who believed that he should be more cautious about the matter of leaders examining the members of the classes, Wesley wrote in March of 1747,

I now saw, more clearly than ever, that this [examination] might be done, and without much difficulty, supposing only two things: First, courage and steadiness in the examiner. Secondly, common sense and common honesty in the Leader of each class . . . The question is not concerning the heart, but the life . . . Where then is there need of any miraculous discernment in order to purge one of these societies? (*Works*, 2:48).

Insistence about the class meeting examination is found in both the *Journal* and in various pamphlets. In addition, even a casual reader of Wesley's personal correspondence discovers his willingness to reprove his family and friends for faults and to receive such admonition with a Christian spirit. Warnings of the dangers of riches, strong drink, pride, and slothfulness frequent his letters as do admissions of error. Throughout the correspondence there is a strong undercurrent of mutual con-

cern for the best interests of others. The heavenly vision while calling for the best is yet patient with somewhat less than that.

The most enlightening and comprehensive statements of Wesley's view of the Christian's duty of reproof are to be found in his sermons. There are two sermons that touch on this responsibility in a minor way, and there are two other sermons that have this as their principal message. His sermon "The Wilderness State" mentions as a sin of omission the failure of believers to reprove. Hear what Wesley says:

Another sin of omission, which frequently brings the soul of a believer into darkness, is the neglect of what was so strongly enjoined, even under the Jewish dispensation: "Thou shalt, in anywise, rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him: Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart." Now, if we do hate our brother in our heart, if we do not rebuke him when we see him in a fault, but suffer sin upon him, this will soon bring leanness into our own soul; seeing hereby we are partakers of his sin. By neglecting to reprove our neighbour, we make his sin our own: We become accountable for it to God: We saw his danger, and gave him no warning . . . (*Works*, 6:81).

In his sermon "On Family Religion," Wesley preaches that men are accountable for the behavior of their households. He declares that they should restrain them by persuasion and by example. He instructs husbands not to strike their wives and then goes on to say, "If evil can ever be overcome; it must be overcome by good . . . whatever is done should be done with mildness; nay, indeed, with kindness too" (*Works*, 7:80). Here one can sense the atmosphere Wesley intends should surround the reprov[ing] of one's neighbor. Note both the words and the context. Evil is overcome only by good. The topic is family relationships. The application of the principle in the particular and fundamental relationship of the family carries over into the general and advanced community of the believers. Correction in each instance presumes prior binding commit-

(Continued on page 62)



Donald W. Wood

CASH OR CHARGE?

by Gay L. Leonard

Scene: A cashier's desk in a large department store. A large crowd huddles around the one clerk. A lady customer is holding several items she is waiting to buy. She keeps checking her watch and tapping her foot impatiently.

Customer (*to an innocent bystander*): Do you believe this? Fifteen people to be waited on and only one clerk. You'd think they'd get some help up here. (*To another customer*): I've got two kids waiting in the car. They're probably crawling out the windows and laying on the horn by now. . . . Oh, now that does it. (*She elbows her way up to the clerk.*) Miss, I've been standing in line here for 10 minutes. You're waiting on people who walked up here after I did.

Clerk (*never looks up during the scene*): Do you have a number?

Customer: What number?

Clerk (*continues working*): Three ninety-eight. Plus tax. That will be 4 dollars and 14 cents. Cash or charge?

Customer (*raps on counter*): Miss, what number?

Clerk: Far end of the counter. Take a number to be waited on.

Customer: Where does it say that? Where does it say take a number?

Clerk: Number 86.

Customer (*pushing back up to the clerk, holding her number*): Miss, do you know there's no sign anywhere around here saying you have to take a number?

Clerk: Will this be all? Cash or charge?

Customer: Miss, do you hear what

I'm telling you? I didn't even know you had to have a number. Now I've wasted a lot of time. I've been here waiting. Can't you take me next?

Clerk: Do you have a number?

Customer: I do now. But I didn't know I had to have it 15 minutes ago.

Clerk: What's your number?

Customer: Ninety-two.

Clerk (*calls out*): Number 87.

Customer (*to no one in particular*): This ought to be reported. This ought to be reported to someone. There's no sign saying take a number. All they need is just a sign. Big red letters. TAKE—A—NUMBER—PLEASE. I would have taken one if I had known.

(*She paces and mutters to herself for the next few minutes.*)

Clerk: Ninety-two.

Customer: That's me. Here I am.

Clerk: Will this be all?

Customer: Yes, this is all. This is all I wanted to buy 25 minutes ago.

Clerk: Cash or charge?

Customer: Cash. Well, check. I'll write a check.

Clerk: Two sixty-five. Ten ninety-eight. Five fifteen. Plus tax. That's 19 dollars and 53 cents. (*She takes the check from the customer and turns it over to write on it.*) Address?

Customer: It's on the check.

Clerk: Home phone?

Customer: It's on the check. Look. Turn the check over. See? That's printed on the front of the check.

Clerk: Is this your correct address and phone?

Customer: Yes. Of course it is.

Clerk: Driver's license and two IDs, please. No social security cards, no school IDs.

Customer: I'm not in school. (*She hands the clerk some identification. The clerk shoves them back.*)

Clerk: No gasoline credit cards.

Customer: Why don't you tell me what you *will* take?

Clerk: BankAmericard, Master Card, American Express.

Customer: You'll have to settle for Sears.

Clerk: I'll have to have this approved by the manager. Mr. Thompson. Check, please.

(*A gray-haired man walks over and initials the check.*)

Customer: Sir, do you know there's no sign here saying take a number. I waited in line 15 minutes before I knew you needed a number. Big red letters. It ought to be right here. TAKE—A—NUMBER—PLEASE. I would have done it if I had known.

Manager (*just looks at the customer. To the clerk*): Place of employment.

Clerk: Place of employment.

Customer: I don't work.

Clerk: Husband's employment.

(*There is a long pause.*)

Customer: He's a minister.

Clerk (*looks up for the first time*): You're a minister's wife? . . . Name and location of business.

(*Another pause. Then the customer smiles kindly.*)

Customer: Why don't I just pay cash for this? That would be so much simpler.

THE TAX “END” AND THE ETHICAL “MEANS”

by Paul D. Fitzgerald, *Ch.F.C., C.L.U.*

Administrative Assistant for Pensions and Benefits Services, Church of the Nazarene

As a Ch.F.C., C.L.U. employed by Pensions and Benefits Services, I have had the opportunity to respond to many tax questions from pastors, local church treasurers, district superintendents, and others. While each personal situation is unique, most are fairly well spelled out in the Tax Code and its regulations. Often the questions deal with how the minister's or lay employee's compensation can be restructured for the purpose of saving tax dollars for both the employee and the church. The “means” for accomplishing such an objective are clearly and legally provided for in the Tax Code. It can be accomplished through the use of tax-free employee benefits and professional expense reimbursement procedures. In short, there is an ethical “means” provided by the Tax Code to accomplish the tax purpose in mind. One must remember that tax avoidance is not the same as tax evasion.

Recently, a *new question* on how to save taxes has been asked. It has a clear affirmative tax basis but has serious ethical questions regarding the “means” used to accomplish the tax “end.” The question is this:

“My church is planning to give me a raise, and the board wants to know if they could just consider the raise as part of my tithe? It would be their decision and therefore they would ‘understand’ why I didn't pay tithe from that point forward. In my case, it would save me income taxes and Social Security taxes. Can this be done legally?”

The answer has at least two parts. Perhaps such an arrangement could be “legally” accomplished as far as the Tax Code is concerned, if carefully structured. Since the minister does not legally owe a tithe to the church, then the church employer would not be forgiving any debt owed by not receiving it. If the minister had any choice in the matter—to either receive the raise or to forgo the increase, then the funds would no doubt be considered taxable income under the principle of constructive receipt. However, the church board could uni-

laterally act to not give an increase (some may be well practiced in this) and then simply not be concerned when their pastor pays little or no tithe. Yes, supposedly it could be structured legally. This is unfortunate!

The second part of the answer to the question deals with the fact that the tax “end” in mind may not be ethically justified by any legally structured “means” to accomplish it. Compromising one's leadership role in the area of being an example in the worship and stewardship of giving for the cause of saving a few or many tax dollars is only asking for misunderstanding, confusion, and complacency. Such a contrived strategy may save tax dollars, but it takes advantage of the unique role of the minister or church employee, since it would not be a strategy that would be available to any layman in the church.

While it may seem very reasonable to this year's board, what about next year, or several years hence? Then all that may be known about the plan is “Did you know the pastor doesn't even tithe?” Even if such a policy was changed later, a serious question could still hang over the congregation for years: “I wonder: Does he or doesn't he? Should I or should I not?” It all reminds me of the story of the Sunday School teacher who, when asked about tithing, said he didn't tithe, but then he didn't charge the church \$100 per hour for his teaching either!

One questioner suggested that it was a young financial genius on his board who suggested it and who would probably think it was foolish not to do it. However, in this situation, as attractive as such a tax reduction might seem, the “end” simply does not justify the “means,” since without a doubt this “means” would dull the effectiveness of spiritual leadership. 

The information contained in this article is of a general nature. It is not offered as specific legal or “tax advice.” Each church and individual should evaluate its own unique situation in consultation with personal, legal, and tax advisors.

A Meditation for Worldwide Communion Sunday

MAN IS THE MINNOW

by J. D. Eppinga

"For we know in part" (1 Cor. 13:9)

Perhaps Carlyle in *Sartor Resartus* said it best: "To the minnow every cranny and pebble and quality and accident of its little native creek may have become familiar. But does the minnow understand the ocean tides and periodic currents, the trade winds and monsoons and moon's eclipses, by all of which the condition of its little creek is regulated and may—from time to time—be quite upset and reversed? Such a minnow is man; his creek this planet Earth; his ocean the immeasurable all, his monsoons and periodic currents, the mysterious course of Providence through aeons of aeons."

I have gone to seminary. Let me take a moment to reveal to you how little I know. Let me choose as a subject "The Origin of Evil." Certainly this pertains to my field. It is a topic, however, that contains some deep and unanswerable problems. Evil emanates from Satan. But who made Satan? I may not say that God is the origin of evil; the Bible tells me that (James 1:13). When it comes to this subject, therefore, I can ultimately only shrug my shoulders and admit ignorance.

Or take something quite different—like a funeral. This, too, is in my line. Why was this person taken and not that person over there? Why did this individual, so needed by others, get called away from earth? What, precisely, happens to the soul at the moment of its severance from the body? Can the departed see us? The questions I am asked when death has made a visit are varied and perplexing and beyond the reaches of my knowledge.

We could continue in this vein, but I think we have said enough. The point is plain. The minnow is man. We see in a mirror dimly. We know in part.

But wait. If we know in part, if we know only a little, then it follows that we do know something. It may not be much, yet something is always more than nothing. What, then, is that "little" that we know, that which Paul knew after his conversion had shrunk his head?

To find an answer, we must turn to the letter Paul wrote to the Roman Christians of years ago. Now I know that the Book of Romans seems a very formidable document. For the reader to conquer this book, he must divide it. Doing this, we discover three divisions, whose listing represents, in fact, the sum of Paul's little knowledge.

The first section of Romans deals with the subject of the sinfulness of man. Discarding his plume of pedigree entirely, Paul says in Rom. 3:22-23 that "there is no distinction; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (NASB).

The second part of the book deals with the topic of salvation. In the fifth chapter, the sixth verse, he writes, "While we

were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly" (NASB). And in the marvelous eighth chapter, he writes, in the first verse, "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (NASB).

The third part of Paul's letter to the Roman Christians deals with the life of thankfulness and service to God that Christians must live in their gratitude for salvation. In the opening verses of the 12th chapter he says, "I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect" (NASB).

Here was the sum total of the knowledge of Paul. Years later, two men were to write a catechism in Heidelberg, Germany. In composing it, Ursinus and Olevianus followed this schema of the Book of Romans (Sin, Salvation, Service). "What three things must you know?" they wrote. Their answer was: "*First, how great my sins and misery are; the second, how I am delivered from all my sins and misery; the third, how I am to be thankful to God for such deliverance.*"

I remember the time I attended a service of worship in a state penitentiary. The men filed in with expressions revealing something less than enthusiasm. Their faces fell even lower when the chaplain, a somewhat scholarly looking gentleman, told them that he was going to reveal to them the full extent of his great knowledge. The captive audience brightened considerably, however, when the speaker revealed the fact that this would take less than five minutes. The clergyman thereupon proceeded to tell them all he knew; namely, that they were sinners and needed a Savior, and that they should live lives in accordance with His wishes and desires.

The sum and substance of Paul's knowledge was the same. It was but little. Yet the little he knew was, in fact, a lot; enough to live on; enough to die on. A little knowledge, Alexander Pope said, is a dangerous thing. But the "little knowledge" that was Paul's is a blessed thing. It may not be much, but it is enough. And because it is enough it is a lot. It is enough for hundreds of millions of Christians around the world to know as they come to the Lord's table on this worldwide Communion Sunday. 

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EQUIPPING LAYPERSONS . . .

(Continued from page 23)

were not rich men; they were only fishermen. They obviously had decided to make fishing their lifetime occupation. Yet when Jesus challenged them to follow Him, they didn't ask questions, they simply followed: "At once they left their nets and followed."

Trainable

How trainable is that layperson? How coachable is he? This is the discipline that either makes or breaks the disciple. The best disciple is ready to learn more and more about his faith and how to share it. Jesus calls him "blessed." "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness" (Matt. 5:6, NIV).

A person I am currently discipling has recently completed an eight-week course adopted from Evangelism Explosion. He had to memorize 15 scriptures, eight illustrations, and a 30-minute presentation of the gospel. I also take him with me every time I call on first-time visitors. This man has decided to be coachable.

About a year ago, another trainee and I were knocking on doors and inviting people to church about nine o'clock in the evening. We were going to go home after we knocked on one more door. At that door the odors of smoke and beer billowed out. We invited the people to church, and to our amazement they invited us inside. The apartment reeked with smoke, and empty beer cans were balanced on top of everything. After about two hours, a 16-year-old alcoholic and a 31-year-old disillusioned lady knelt over the stack of beer cans on the coffee table and accepted Christ. They did! At that point my trainee learned the real value of his training as well as sharing Christ. Our disciples need to be trainable, not in the sense that you train seals or dogs, but in the sense of being eagerly coachable.

Reproducible

Daniel Webster once said, "If we work on marble, it will perish. If we work on brass, time will efface it. If we rear temples, they will crumble into dust. But if we work on immortal minds; as we imbue them with principles, with the just fear of God and love of our fellowman, we will engrave on those tablets something that will brighten all eternity."

Have you ever noticed that Jesus didn't say, "Therefore go and make converts of all nations"? Instead, He said, "Therefore go and make disciples . . ." (Matt. 28:19, NIV). Conversion implies an initial turning to Christ, while a disciple has accepted Christ and reproduces Christ in others. That's why Jesus wants us to make disciples—to reproduce until every nation is full of disciples.

Let's use my church as an example. If every member won a person to Christ every six months and taught that person to share Christ, and that person won another to Christ every six months, in one year our church of 400 would grow to 1,600. If this process continued for two years, our church would overflow at 6,400 people. This is how Christ wants His Church to multiply. It is not enough to add or to divide. We must multiply—reproduce.

The evangelist's job isn't over when he completes his training. It has just begun. He must pour his life into others that they might someday do the same. It's a bit like a story about two men in a foxhole. Surrounded by the enemy, John said, "Sam, we're completely surrounded by the enemy; they're everywhere!" Sam replied, "Good! Let's not let a single one of them get away!" A disciple does not let his convert "get away" until he too is a disciple.

Desire to be used of God in multiplication evangelism, choose to be pure, plan to succeed in your ministry, and trust Him to accomplish it through you. "The one who calls you is faithful and he will do it" (1 Thess. 5:24, NIV).



Then there are the preachers who read every word of their sermons—and blame the dozing congregation for being "spiritually ill-prepared for worship."

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WISE WORDS FROM AN EXPERIENCED SHEPHERD

by Edward F. Cox
Chaplain, Mount Vernon Nazarene College

Jacob knew about sheep. It is instructive and inspiring to hear and see a man who is unquestionably competent at his work. Jacob was a shepherd and a good one. Success and prosperity during his years with Laban attested to that. On numerous occasions his knowledge of sheep reveals itself, but now I am thinking of a special bit of expertise concerning sheep that calls for our attention.

After an absence of many years he was on his way back to his homeland with family, servants, flocks, and herds when he met his brother, Esau. The meeting was more friendly than Jacob could have hoped. Esau graciously offered to travel with him, his armed men serving as an escort. This offer Jacob declined, explaining that the flocks must not be overdriven lest they die.

Jacob knew the difference between the furious pace of horsemen and the deliberate plodding of sheep. Esau would be hurrying to get home, and the sheep, some with lambs and some still heavy with young, would never be able to keep up. The experienced shepherd knew what to expect and so he said, "Thank you, brother, but no. We will proceed at our own speed."

It was not that Jacob was indifferent to progress on the journey. He intended that each sundown find them nearer journey's end, but when they reached their destination he wanted them all to be there. Meantime the sheep would not be allowed to meander about at their own initiative but would be led forward at the pace they could safely go.

This bit of counsel is not inappropriate for modern-day shep-

herds. Now I speak of those shepherds called pastors and of sheep with only half as many legs as those of Jacob's flock. The sheep must not be overdriven for even one day, or all the flock will die.

Are the sheep (people) of our flocks (congregations) sometimes overdriven? I think so. It may be by an overly eager pastor who is fairly well convinced that sheep are a lazy lot, anyway. What the slothful creatures need are some vigorous yells and strong whacks with the rod to get them to pick up their heels and move along. For a while it seems to work. They certainly are on the move, but when the destination is reached there is amazement at two points, how quickly he got there and how few he brought with him.

Jacob was especially concerned for the young, and well he might be. The lambs could easily be excited. Dashing wildly about they might harm themselves. The wise shepherd is mindful of the lambs. He does not demand performance with no regard for the immaturity of those from whom he demands it. If we don't take care of the lambs there will soon be no flock. Cared for wisely they will grow and become strong, but for a while patient leading is necessary. I have heard more than one wise pastor advise care against pushing young converts too rapidly into places of responsibility with which they are not ready to cope. More time is needed and a slower pace will reach the goal more surely.

Jacob knew that he didn't have to complete the journey that day. There would be another day and hopefully another. Somehow he felt that God

was overseeing the whole endeavor. They didn't really need armed men on horseback. The One who had brought them thus far on the way was still there, and frenzied, extraordinary measures were not needed. There would be times when they needed to stop and rest. There would be times when the sheep must pause for water and refreshment. It never has been easy to go slowly or to wait. It doesn't get easier when the goal is almost in sight, but the experienced shepherd knows about time. He has heard the Lord's "Wait" and in faith accepts it.

We are tempted to suspect that when the shepherd overdrives the sheep, it may be that he himself is overdriven. He feels a basic insecurity that compels him to push and press for things to go faster. Alas, he is a stranger to the green pastures and still waters of our Great Shepherd. We can never really know the motivation of another person, but we do know our own motivation better than anyone else. When we feel ourselves being driven and consequently impelled to drive others, we should at least pause to consider if it all comes from a desire to do God's will and seek His glory, or if perhaps personal ambition is a significant factor.

Across the centuries comes the counsel of the experienced shepherd. People are not sheep, but there are more similarities than we might think. It is Jesus, the Master Teacher, who often used the analogy pointing out the likenesses. As undershepherds we are to keep the welfare of the flock of God ever before us. They are not to be overdriven, lest they die. 

LET'S HEAR IT FOR THE PERIODIC SENTENCE

by Wesley Tracy

God has a communication problem. Frequently it soars to its most cacophonous pitch, with all the “scritch” value of a fingernail-scratched chalkboard, in the discordant rhetoric of those of who inhabit pulpits at 11:15 Sunday mornings. God wants to speak to the folks through our sermons. But we clutter up the simple gospel, distort obvious meanings with rambling sentences and fuzzy thinking, and make paying attention a real challenge.

In the editorial of the previous issue I addressed one dimension of sermon style. But I ran out of room. Therefore the creation of a new standing feature called “Preaching Point” sounded good to me. In each issue some particular point on preaching will be addressed. This time I want to write about another aspect of sermon style—the periodic sentence.

The periodic sentence helps us help God with His communication problem. It helps hold attention, builds suspense, aids persuasion, and helps emphasize the dramatic parts of the sermon.

What Is a Periodic Sentence?

Andrew Blackwood observes that these days it is easy for a person to graduate from college and never hear of the periodic sentence. He asserts nevertheless, “The mastery of the periodic sentence affords . . . conclusive proof of a man’s education and culture.”¹

A periodic sentence is “a sentence in which ideas hang in the air like girders until all interconnections are locked by the final word.”² Here is an example from Phillips Brooks’s sermon at Abraham Lincoln’s funeral: “*Solemnly, in the sight of God, I charge this murder where it belongs, on slavery.*”

Examine the sentence. Indeed all the ideas hang in the air like girders until the final word. The sentence is incomplete in terms of meaning and grammar until the last word locks it in with force.

Look at another example from the same sermon:

“I bid you . . . to write it on the doorposts of your mourning houses, to teach it to your wondering children, to give it to the history of these times, that all times to come may hate and dread the sin that killed our noblest president.”

Notice here how Brooks used the periodic sentence to emphasize a *dramatic* point. In the following example he combines the periodic sentence with anaphoric phrasing (*anaphora* is the device of beginning a series of clauses, phrases, or sentences the same way):

“By all the goodness that there was in him; by all the love we had for him; by all the sorrow that has burdened down this desolate and dreadful week—I charge this murder where it belongs, on slavery.”

Some say that the United States is an independent nation today because of the periodic sentence. Fearing that England would enter the Civil War on the side of the Confederacy, Lincoln informally commissioned a preacher, Henry Ward Beecher, to make a series of pro-Union speeches in England. Beecher spoke in the “textile cities” that depended on Southern cotton to keep the mills going. The crowds booed, hissed, threw things, and carried blood-red placards. Yet Beecher was heard and heeded. The only way he succeeded was by delivering his speeches in periodic sentences. You see, even if you are going to boo and hiss, you have to wait until you have heard every last word of the sentence before

you can know what you are booing and hissing about. In this way the periodic sentence is a persuasion device.

The Bible itself contains many examples of periodic sentences:

“The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone” (Luke 20:17, NIV).

“Though you soar aloft like the eagle, though your nest is set among the stars, thence I will bring you down” (Obad. 4, RSV).

“She who was queen among the provinces has now become a slave” (Lam. 1:1, NIV).

Sometimes the Bible writers doubly accent the last phrase or word of a periodic sentence by ending it with a sensitive parallelism.

Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, (here the periodic sentence is complete, but Paul adds a poetic, parallel for emphasis and beauty) or a tinkling cymbal (1 Cor. 13:1).

Read this periodic masterpiece from Habakkuk. Read it aloud, slowly and with meaning, and see for yourself how the periodic sentence can hold attention, build suspense, and emphasize a dramatic truth.

*Though the fig tree do not blossom,
nor fruit be on the vines,
the produce of the olive fail
and the fields yield no food,
the flock be cut off from the fold
and there be no herd in the stalls,
yet I will rejoice in the Lord, (and now the
parallel emphasis to clinch it)*

I will joy in the God of my salvation (3:17-18, RSV).

As you begin to practice writing periodic sentences, you will discover that it is difficult to make everything hinge on the very last word. Though the “pure” periodic sentence does this, it is acceptable to add a touch of periodicity by making the meaning and grammar come together in the last clause or phrase instead of the very last word.

English speakers tend to drone on in the subject-verb-object format. This we get from the French influence on the language (now you know another reason why A.D. 1066 is important). But we also need to borrow from the Latin, Greek, and German influences on our language and learn the art of using the periodic sentence. Though this is important in written discourse, it is even more important in oral discourse. Learning to use this device can be one step toward helping God with His communication problem on Sundays.

Last Sunday night I listened to Charles Shaver preach at Kansas City First Church. He preached for 42 minutes—and managed to keep our attention very well (I mean I’ve heard 20-minute sermons that were longer). He demonstrated several preaching skills in order to do that. One that I noticed right away was the repeated use of periodic sentences. Several people came to the altar too. Isn’t that refreshing?

NOTES

1. Andrew Blackwood, *The Preparation of Sermons* (Nashville: Abingdon Press), 182.

2. Sheridan Baker, *The Complete Stylist*, 2nd edition (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1972), 112.

SERMON OUTLINES



SERMON OUTLINES

by Art Fish

“LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY”

(Part I)

Scripture: Luke 11:16

Text: John 9:31: “We know that God does not hear sinners; but if any one is God-fearing, and does His will, He hears him” (NASB).”

A. Sin in our lives

Ps. 66:18—“If I regard *wickedness in my heart*, the Lord will not hear” (italics added).

B. “You do not have because you *do not ask*” (James 4:2*b*, italics added). Failure to ask; attempt to have by every method but asking God.

C. “You ask and do not receive, because you ask with *wrong motives*” (James 4:3*a*, italics added). Why do we pray?

1. Life easier, more comfortable.
2. Recognition, prestige, etc.
3. To God be the glory? Right motive is for *God to be glorified* by His answering our prayer. John 14:13; 1 Cor. 10:31.

D. Spiritually lean. James 1:6-7—“doubter”; must believe, believe, believe.

E. Responsibility of being a scripturally correct husband/wife, father/mother. 1 Pet. 3:7.

The true test of a professing marriage partner is his relationship behind closed doors in the home. 1 Tim. 5:8.

F. God’s will?

2 Cor. 12:8—Paul prayed three times for removal of his “thorn”; it didn’t happen. When we meet all other criteria, *we will want His will*. “And this is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything *according to His will*, He hears us” (1 John 5:14, italics added).

G. “Meanest people in the world are in the church.” Why? We should expect it from the world, but when we find it in the church it makes it twice as bad. The church *is* love, forgiveness, patience, kindness, etc., in Him. Mark 11:25—“Whenever you stand praying, *forgive*” (italics added). Matt. 5:23-24.

“God help us to *quit* being mean, unforgiving, slanderous, etc., that when we pray, You will hear us and be glorified, both by answering our prayers and our being like Your Son in Christian love; Amen.”

“LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY”

(Part II)

Why our prayers are heard and answered:

A. “According to His will” (1 John 5:14-15).

What is God’s will?

1. Salvation—2 Pet. 3:9; 1 Tim. 2:4
2. Sanctification—1 Thess. 4:3; Heb. 10:10
3. Heaven—1 John 2:17
4. Suffering—1 Pet. 3:17; 4:19
5. Companionship—Heb. 13:5
6. Thanksgiving—1 Thess. 5:18
7. To pray—1 Tim. 2:8

B. Abide in Him (communion, not petition); “My words abide in you” (draw life/bear fruit, vine and branches)—John 15:7.

“In My name”—John 14:13-14; 16:23-24

1. Authority as Lord
2. Submission to Lordship
3. Utter dependence
4. Willing to renounce anything displeasing to Him

Righteous Living—1 Pet. 3:12; Prov. 15:8, 29

Saul/Samuel—1 Sam. 28:15, 18

C. Praying in the Holy Spirit—Jude 20

D. All to His glory—1 Cor. 10:31

1. Edify Him and His church

E. Humility—Luke 18:10-14; Matt. 6:4-6

“Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,” says the Lord of hosts” (Zech. 4:6).

“With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible” (Matt. 19:26).

F. Believe/Faith

Matt. 21:22: “. . . everything . . . believing . . .”

Matt. 9:29: blind—“according to your faith”

Mark 9:23: “All things are possible . . . believe.”

Mark 11:24: “. . . believe that you have received them . . .”

Luke 17:6: “. . . faith like a mustard seed . . . mulberry tree . . . uprooted and planted in the sea”

James 1:6: “. . . ask in faith without any doubting . . .”

James 5:15: “. . . prayer offered in faith will restore . . . sick . . .”

G. Persistence

Matt. 7:7: “. . . ask . . . seek . . . knock . . .”

Luke 18:1: “. . . at all times . . . pray and not lose heart.”

Rom. 12:12: “devoted to prayer”

1 Thess. 3:10: “. . . night and day keep praying most earnestly . . .”

Col. 4:12: “Epaphras . . . laboring earnestly for you in his prayers . . .”

Intensity of our desire and increase our faith—not overcoming reluctance in God. Praying through.

The best and nicest people in the world are in the church, our church. I thank God for the church, our church, Pleasant View Church of the Nazarene.

*All scriptures quoted from *New American Standard Bible*.

I thank God for you, Pastor!
Praise the Lord—He hears us.

“LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY” (Part III)

Priority Praying

Text: Luke 11:16

I. Praying for others:

A. All men (family, friends), especially rulers. 1 Tim. 2:1-4.

Christianity can best be shared when leaders/rulers are in accord with gospel message.

B. Church leaders—“Brethren, pray for us” (1 Thess. 5:25).

Why? Swift to criticize, slow to pray.

Prayerless lips have forfeited their right to grouse about defective leadership, even as prayerless hearts have lost the capacity to appreciate sound leadership.

C. Pray for laborers—“... harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few” (Matt. 9:37).

Do we share the Lord’s compassion for mankind “like sheep without a shepherd” (v. 36)?

D. The unsaved—Rom. 10:1

E. Believers to be sanctified—Acts 8:5-8, 14-15—Philip, Peter, and John

For therein is the victory!
Luke 11:13; Acts 9:17—Saul

F. Holy lives—us and others

As we pray for others we ourselves will enjoy “the Spirit-filled life.”

2 Cor. 13:7: “... do no wrong ... do what is right ...”

1 Pet. 3:1-2: “... won without a word ... behavior ...” (husband/wife)

Eph. 3:14-19: “... strengthened with power ... Christ may dwell in your hearts ... rooted and grounded in love ... filled up to all the fulness of God.”

Phil. 1:9-11: “Love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment ... approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless ... filled with the fruit of righteousness ... to the glory and praise of God.”

1 Thess. 3:12-13: “Increase and abound in love for one another ... establish your hearts unblamable in holiness ...”

1 Thess. 5:23: “... sanctify you entirely ...”

Col. 1:10: “... walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.”

G. The gospel’s progress—2 Thess. 3:1-2

Apathy of prayerless Christians can be a greater barrier than the activity of persecuting enemies. Col. 4:2-4.

II. Prayer for ourselves:

A. God’s will—Luke 22:42—Jesus, our Example

B. Faith—Luke 17:5—Apostles, our example

C. Wisdom—James 1:5—To know and do the right thing.

D. Keep from evil—Matt. 26:41; Mark 14:38; Luke 22:40

Result: Matt. 26:56 “... all ... fled.”

E. Our enemies—1 Pet. 3:17—“It is better, if God should will it so, that you suffer for doing what is right rather than for doing what is wrong.”

F. Persecutors—Matt. 5:44—“Love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you.”

Luke 6:28: “... bless/curse ... pray/mistreat ...”

Luke 23:34: “Father, forgive them.” Jesus, our Example

Acts 7:60: “Lord, do not hold this sin against them!” Stephen

Love inspires prayer, and prayer increases love. You will not long resent the one for whom you pray.

God help us to pray as we ought, for others’ success in Christian living; and ourselves to be all that He wants us to be. Amen.

There is possibility, sad enough, that we cease to pray for certain people.

1 John 5:16-17

Jer. 7:16; 14:11

(Scriptures quoted from *New American Standard Bible*.)

“LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY” (Part IV)

Scripture: Luke 11:16

I. “Praying in the Holy Spirit ...” (Jude 20)

A. Eph. 6:18—“Pray at all times in the Spirit ...”

Prayer is not a part of the armor, verses 10-17, but result and effect of.

B. Rom. 8:26-27

1. Admit weakness. “... we do not know how to pray as we should ...”

2. “... groanings ...” however we pray; word, desires, “groans,” sighs, tears; it is the Spirit that presents it to God in an understandable way.

3. The Spirit knows us and our problems; He also knows the Father’s will for us.

C. What the Spirit is—John 14:17, “truth”; 15:26; 16:13

D. Why it is good to pray in Him: Rom. 18:14—“... Led by the Spirit ... sons of God”

Acts 13:52—“... filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.”

John 16:13—“... guide ... whatever He hears, He will speak ... disclose ... what is to come.”

John 14:26—“... teach ... bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.”

John 6:63—“It is the Spirit who gives life ...”

John 14:16—“... Helper [Comforter] ...”

Gal. 5:22-23; Eph. 5:9; Phil. 1:11—“Fruit ...”

James 3:17—“... wisdom ... pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering ...”

Rom. 15:6; 1 Pet. 1:2; John 17:17—“... sanctifying ...”

(Scriptures quoted from *New American Standard Bible*.)

THE SPIRIT OF LIFE

Scripture: Rom. 8:1-16

Text: Rom. 8:6. “For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.”

I. Spirit of Life Sets You Free (v. 2)

A. Spirit of life frees you from death’s hold

1. Physical death

2. Spiritual death

B. Spirit of life gives you life

1. Physical life initiates from God.

2. Spiritual life initiates from God.

II. Spirit of Life Brings Peace (v. 6)

A. Temporary peace

B. Eternal peace

III. Spirit of Life Makes You a Child of God (vv. 13-14)

A. Spirit of Satan destroys man’s relationship to God

B. Spirit of life destroys man’s relationship to Satan

1. Man set free from hell

2. Man set free to heavenly home

—Derl Keefer

Culbertson

(Continued from page 38)

of the best investment by investing himself.

Will you invest yourself in Him? Will you seek Him as your Savior and Lord? It will be worth it on payday!

Hymn of Invitation: "I Gave My Life for Thee"

Buckingham

(Continued from page 39)

jasper walls, pearly gates, ivory palaces, golden streets, and a river clear as crystal running through its midst. The Lamb of God lights that world with glory and splendor, and there is no night there. Rev. 21:4 says, "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away." For God to have prepared for the soul something beyond anything ever known, experienced, or comprehended in this world, would be some indication of the value He places on that soul.

It is said that no Rolls Royce ever made has ended in a junkyard. Obviously, the car is of such high quality that it lasts a long, long time. This quality is what makes it one of the most valuable cars in the world. What makes gold, diamonds, and other jewels so valuable? Their longevity is certainly a major factor. Then how valuable must be that which lasts for all eternity. Is it any wonder that Jesus

asks such an all-important question, "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" (Matt. 16:26). When the moon has turned to blood, the stars have fallen from the skies, and this earth has burned to ashes, you will still be somewhere. This makes your soul your only eternal and most valuable possession. Don't lose it!

C. Value is determined by the pleasure enjoyed when the lost soul is found. Many glorious events could be a cause for celebration. I suppose when war ceases and peace begins, it would be a time for the greatest celebration. However, the Bible cites great celebration on two occasions—the prodigal's coming home and the angels' rejoicing in heaven over the lost being found. Nothing else that has ever happened in history, no matter how wonderful or how great, has ever caused the angels to rejoice in heaven. To God the soul is so valuable that its salvation is more important than worlds like this. *Lose your soul and you lose everything, because it is the only thing you ever really had.*

Jesus' primary purpose was to seek and to save those who are lost. In being found by Him you receive what everyone most intensely desires anyway. The Bible says, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 5:1). In Colossians we read of the "peace of God" ruling our hearts (3:15). This peace provides the ultimate in life here and in the hereafter. In living by His principles, we will never

be robbed of this peace. The devil can't take it away and God won't.

Conclusion:

A. *What is our greatest loss?*

—Lose your job if you must, but don't lose your soul.

—Lose your friends, if necessary, but not your soul.

—Lose your money, if that is what it takes to be a Christian, but not your soul.

—Lose your physical life if that's what it costs to follow Jesus. That, too, will be lost someday, in spite of our efforts to save it.

B. *What is God's greatest loss?* A child with his clothes is entrusted to a servant's care. Upon the parents' return, it would be a poor excuse for the servant to say, "Sir, here are all the child's clothes, neat and clean, but the child is lost. Would the clothes be satisfactory?" Someday we will stand before God. Will we say, "Lord, here is my body. I was very grateful for it. I took good care of it. In no way did I neglect its comfort. But my soul is lost"? Would this be acceptable? No more so than your servant's returning to you with your child's clothes instead of your child.

Let us not lose that which is the most important to God, ourselves, and others . . . our souls.

Closing Hymn: "Just as I Am"

I would invite people forward to the altar, pointing out that there are trained counselors who will simply and clearly show them how the lost can be found. I would keep reiterating the most persuasive points of the message during the invitation.



"Fred noted your mention of sin this morning and thinks he'd like a second opinion."



TODAY'S BOOKS for TODAY'S PREACHER

THE ULTIMATE POWER

By Dave Grant (Fleming H. Revell Co., 1983, \$9.95)

The material for this book is taken primarily from Dave Grant's seminars entitled "The Maximum Performer" that he has taught for the past 10 years.

It deals with the impact of love and of fear and with who we are and what we do. It provides tools and insights for establishing richer, more rewarding relationships.

It is made up of four units: "How Love Overcomes the Power of Fear," "When Love Takes Charge," "Making Love Work," and "Where Love Can Take Us."

I particularly liked the chapter "Making Love a Habit" because it deals with how we dehumanize each other. "People are not turkeys, or ding-a-lings, or flakes; they are human beings just like we are. We dehumanize in order to justify our failure to relate." Out of our sense of inadequacy we use negative labels to rationalize our inability to relate to others.

This is an excellent book for ministers—full of good illustrations, sermon material, and counseling guidance.

—Jerry L. DeMetre

THE COMMUNICATOR'S COMMENTARY

Vol. 3—Luke

By Lloyd Ogilvie, General Editor; Bruce Larson, Commentator (Word Books, hardback, 307 pp., \$19.95)

I've just had my first look at volume 3 of *The Communicator's Commentary*, authored by Bruce Larson. While no one has accused Larson of heavy biblical scholarship lately he has been rightly credited with better-than-average communication skills.

He brings these skills to bear in writing about the Gospel of Luke. His mix of quotations and allusions reveal a breadth of sources that work toward relevance and usability. In his six pages (large type) of comments on Luke 3:1-20, he refers to or quotes the following: the *Reader's Digest* Sweepstakes, Marshall McLuhan, Henry David Tho-

reau, Micah, the Revolutionary War, Garibaldi, Peter Drucker, a sermon of his own called "Holy Horticulture," St. Francis, Schweitzer, Father Dameu, D. L. Moody, Charles G. Finney, the Pharisees, an old army buddy, Thomas Carlyle, Samuel Coleridge, James Stewart (the preacher), a story about St. Peter and George Morrison, Martin Luther, Isaiah, Abraham, T. S. Eliot, and Henry Drummond, who once told a group of college students: "I beseech you to seek the kingdom of God first or not at all. I promise you a miserable time if you seek it second."

This volume is a delightful tool when used along with a critical commentary.

—David Knaile

THE COMMUNICATOR'S COMMENTARY

Acts

By Lloyd J. Ogilvie (Word Books, 1983, \$19.95)

Preaching a biblical series is one of the best ways to plan sermonic material. In this latest contribution Dr. Ogilvie, the master craftsman, demonstrates his method of sermonic development. This series on Acts is filled with contemporary applications that are personal and practical.

His emphasis on the Holy Spirit gives the holiness preacher some valuable material that is fresh and based on solid exegesis for the most part; however, he does not espouse the "second blessing" as a norm for spiritual experience. He has a charismatic orientation but is consistent and clear to say, "I have tried not to make a law out of my own experience by thinking everyone is either in the same need I was in, or that the Lord will deal with him or her in only the same way."

Throughout his book Dr. Ogilvie keeps asking what meaning the particular happening has to us and the ones to whom we communicate. He is identifying with us as communicators and at the same time with the hearers whose needs are not much different from our own.

He draws illustrations from his own

life and experience, which makes each section come alive. His approach involves us with the Holy Spirit as communicators of the Word and our responsibility to involve our people with the Holy Spirit. God wants to do something significant in us and through us as preachers. A study of the Book of Acts with this volume close at hand could dramatically effect one's approach to biblical, Spirit-filled preaching to precipitate revival in his church.

—Wilbur W. Brannon

THE WESTMINSTER DICTIONARY OF CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY

By Gordon S. Wakefield (Westminster, hardback, 1983, \$20.95)

The Westminster Dictionary of Christian Spirituality gives to the reader concise definitions of terms, descriptions of events, concepts, and persons. It has articles on religious and theological issues in Christian spirituality offered by a team of more than 150 scholars.

The *Dictionary* is ecumenical in nature with a wide range in contribution: Anglicans, Roman Catholics, Baptists, Presbyterians, Quakers, Methodists, Lutherans, and others.

The major strengths of the *Dictionary* are: (1) the articles are nondogmatic and scholarly. (2) It sheds new light on the ways in which women and men have responded to God in prayer and living. (3) It has value for many different people, not just students and scholars.

The major weakness of the *Dictionary* is its size. A one-volume dictionary tends to be limited in scope compared to multi-volume dictionaries.

The *Dictionary* should be useful for seminary and college courses in spirituality.

—Barth Smith
Olathe, Kans.

A REASONABLE FAITH

By Anthony Campolo (Word Books, 1983, hardback, \$8.95)

The cover jacket of the book is right on target with its statement, "A *Reasonable Faith* is 'must' reading. It will help

the person who wants to believe in God but whose secular conditioning prevents him. It will support the Christian college student who is confused. Above all, it will reinforce every Christian who really wants to think about his faith and communicate it more effectively." To this I would add, it will provide an excellent frame of reference for the pastor who is trying to understand the secular world in which he ministers and the creeping or perhaps rampant secularism in the local church.

The strength of the book might simultaneously also be a weakness, depending on the background of the reader. Campolo does a fine job of discussing and defining secularism. This is done from sociological as well as theological and philosophical perspectives. His use of the primary sources is accurate without being boring. At the same time it is quite possible that some will find it difficult to handle the depth at which the material is presented. On the other hand, this should not discourage the thoughtful pastor who feels the need, and we all should, of checking the tide of secularism in his society.

Every pastor who reads and studies on a weekly basis will want to read this book.

—W. Stephen Gunter
Bethany, Okla.

CHRIST, THE ETERNAL SON

By A. W. Tozer, ed. by Gerald B. Smith (Christian Publications, 1982, paperback, \$3.25)

This is the ninth volume of Dr. Tozer's sermons edited by Gerald B. Smith, the previous eight now known as *The Tozer Pulpit*.

A longtime pastor in The Christian and Missionary Alliance and editor of *The Alliance Weekly*, Dr. Tozer died in 1963. His simple style of exposition with vivid illustration and exhortation are preserved in the 10 sermons of this 136-page paperback, based on John 1:1, 4, 6a, 7b, 11, 14, and John 3:9, 14b-15, 16, 17.

Dr. Tozer's approach to profound revelation is seen in his words, "We will walk along the broad seashore of God and pick up a shell here and a shell there, holding each up to the light to admire its beauty" (p. 14). His often repeated philosophy of life, "Everything is wrong until Jesus makes it right," is illustrated as Dr. Tozer tiptoes through the 25 incomparable words of John 3:16, when he writes that "the living God became flesh and eternity walked into man's mind." When Christ went to the Cross, God "dumped all of that vast, seething, boiling, filthy and slimy mass

of human sin and degradation on the soul of His Son and then backed away."

Notably, Dr. Tozer observes that God's acts of creation were not the first of His activity; thus, everything is recent, everything is temporal, and everything is transient.

Here is a delightful evening of reading for the busy pastor or teacher, who would like to relax with some easy, but profound sermon ideas to incubate through the night.

—Wayne E. Caldwell
Marion, Ind.

BAKER'S BIBLE STUDY GUIDE

By Derek Prime (Baker Book House, 264 pp., \$8.95)

This book is a combination of two previously published works, *Questions on the Christian Faith* and *Bible Guidelines*. It has a question and answer format with biblical references to support each answer.

The first half deals with the perplexing questions of life: What is Chris-

tianity? Why have the Ten Commandments if you cannot obey them? What will happen at the judgment? The second half deals with the Seven Deadly Sins (haven't heard those preached in a long time), the Fruit of the Spirit, and Commitment to Christ.

It is an excellent preaching resource. Its topics and subtopics can provide years of sermon material.

However, the book is designed for Bible study, youth groups, and discussion groups. I question this intended use. I showed the book to an adult Sunday School teacher and she said it is cumbersome to use. Used by itself, it would become boring. A variety of teaching methods would have to be used.

Another problem is its limited viewpoint. Scripture is used to support doctrines at variance with a Wesleyan-Arminian stand. These would include interpretations on perseverance, election, and sanctification.

—Thomas J. Purchase
Waterville, Vt.

THE PREACHER'S EXCHANGE

FOR SALE: (Package only) \$50.00. *Works of Fletcher* (4 vols.); *Clayce's Christian Theology*; R. Watson, *Theological Institutes* (2 vols.); old sheepskin binding, binding broken at hinges, good internal condition; J. Miley, *Systematic Theology, Vol. 2*: cloth, binding broken at hinges, good internal condition; Ralston, *Elements of Divinity*: poor condition. Contact David L. Hall, The Grantham Church, Grantham, PA 17027.

FOR SALE: Volume 5 of *Clarke's Commentary* (Matthew—Acts). Excellent condition. \$5.00, postage paid. Write to: Rev. J. F. Lint, Rte. 1, Box 14-1-B, Culloden, WV 25510.

FOR SALE: Books of all kinds. Send stamped, self-addressed envelope for list, to S. E. Nothstine, R. 4, Box 242-3, Mocksville, NC 27028.

FOR SALE: Full set of *Pulpit Commentaries* with the index volume. Good condition. \$275.00 plus cost of transportation. Contact C. L. Frederickson, 1130 1st Ave., Ottawa, IL 61350.

FOR SALE: One copy of *Peter Cartwright, the Backwoods Preacher*, copyright 1856. One copy of *An Alarm to Unconverted Sinners, in a Serious Treatise*, by Mr. Joseph Allein, copyright 1816.

One complete set of 30 (3" x 4") real leather books entitled *The Holy Bible Containing the Old and New Testaments: Translated out of the Original Tongues*. Published by Little Leather Library Corp. of N.Y. No copyright date available; professionally appraised at \$120. Contact: Pastor R. Van

Donkelaar, 5243 Dryden Rd., Dryden, MI 48428, phone (313) 796-2157.

WANTED: Old *Manuals* of the Church of the Nazarene dated before 1923. I also need a 1932 *Manual*. State your price. Contact Rev. Jim Norcross, 4855 Bailey Rd. N.E., Keizer, OR 97303.

WANTED: Church of the Nazarene *Manuals*—any before 1968. Call collect (216) 339-3770, or write: Rev. Lee Randolph, Rte. 4, Box 4491, New Philadelphia, OH 44663.

WANTED: 1. *Insights into Holiness*

2. *Further Insights into Holiness* and older used books published by the Gospel Trumpet Co., Anderson, Ind. Write to Paul E. Voss, First Church of God, 100 Grove St., Peebles, OH 45660.

WANTED: *Emmanuel*, by P. F. Bresee, and old copies of the *American Holiness Journal*. Write to: Rev. Larry Stover, Box 302, St. Bernice, IN 47875.

WANTED: Good used commentaries. I am interested in sets and single volumes. Please mail your lists (with prices) to: Rev. Donald R. Sanders, Jr., Mid-America Nazarene College, Box 145, Olathe, KS 66061.

WANTED: Used books: *Introduction to Christian Theology*, by Wiley and Culbertson; *Christianity Through the Ages*, by Latourette; *Christian Holiness in Scripture, in History, and in Life*, by Turner; *Steps to the Sermon*, by Brown, Clinard, and Northcutt; *Words on Target*, by Nichols. Send list and price of books to Rev. Raymond Daniels, 901 E. 4th St., Kinsley, KS 67547.

OLD TESTAMENT WORD STUDIES

by Harvey E. Finley



YAHVEH—REDEEMER, Part II

Yahveh-Redeemer Speaks to Those in Captivity

This study directs attention on Isaiah 40—66, which is not only a distillation of significant even sublime “theological” emphases but also a depositum of newer, profounder revelation. It is in these chapters that “Redeemer” and “Savior” occur with divine names already discussed such as *Yahveh*, *Yahveh Sebaoth*, and *Qedosh Yisrael*. Isaiah 40—66, especially 40—55, address the nearing termination of the Babylonian Captivity, ca. 540-538 B.C. In these chapters the prophet used the Exodus from Egypt as a metaphor to speak comfortingly and encouragingly to those whose patience for deliverance had waned and whose spirits languished.

Go’el of Past. Continuing to Be Israel’s Go’el.—In a proclamation of salvation (43:1-21) *Yahveh-Go’el* affirmed that it was He who had created and established Israel as His people in the Exodus from Egypt (v. 1a, b), a most striking incident of His acting as “Redeemer” (*Go’el*). They therefore as His people, called by His name (v. 7), would be able to pass through rivers and not drown (v. 2a, b), walk through fire and not be burned (v. 2c), for He, *Go’el* of the first Exodus, would do in their behalf as great or even greater things in bringing them out of the land of Babylon back to their promised homeland. Further, *Yahveh*, acting as *Go’el* in their present and future, declared His intention to bring down Babylon and to make its inhabitants fugitives (v. 14).

Go’el to Use Cyrus to Effect Deliverance.—In another proclamation of deliverance (44:24-28), *Yahveh* identifies himself as “your *Go’el*” (v. 24). He again speaks of having formed Israel and of being the Creator of all things (ibid.) He states He is the One who confounds devotees and specialists in the art of Babylonian religions so that they speak nothing but nonsense and foolishness

(v. 25), whereas by contrast He confirms and performs the messages His servants proclaim (v. 26a). All this emphasizes that messages of His servants are true; their word is: Jerusalem and Judah’s cities will be reinhabited; the Temple foundation will be laid; Cyrus will be His instrument (shepherd) in accomplishing these objectives (vv. 26-28). *Yahveh-Go’el* was thus affirming that He will accomplish His purpose through the political power and military might of one whose sun at that time had barely risen above the international horizon (cf. also 45:11-13).

Go’el Urges Obedience in Conjunction with Departure.—Isaiah 48:17-20 is an “exhortation to obedience” unit. It is introduced by: Thus says *Yahveh*, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel.” Thus the *Go’el* role is emphasized as the special activity of *Yahveh* who is also the Holy One of Israel. The nearly synonymous use of these three names shows clearly that deity, holiness, and redemption are inextricably intertwined within the divine nature and purpose. The exhortation to obedience, to follow as the *Go’el* leads and to give heed to His commandments (vv. 17c, 18a), given at this time was crucial. It would be in obedience that the expectation *Go’el* had for His people would be realized (vv. 18b-19). This was evidently a subtle reminder that history need not repeat itself in their generation and later. The prophet also urges them to go forth from their captivity with shouting and singing, declaring that *Yahveh* has acted as *Go’el* (v. 20). He reminds them that *Yahveh* as *Go’el* mercifully provided water from the rock for His people during their wilderness travel after leaving Egypt (v. 21); *Yahveh* as *Go’el* will do the same and even more for them. He will remove obstacles, provide water for the thirsty, and change the barren desert into a garden of luxuriant vegetation (48:21; 41:17-20; cf. 35:1-2, 6-7).

Yahveh Go’el Comforts Zion.—In another unit of comfort and encouragement (Isa. 49:14-26), *Yahveh* their *Go’el*,

taking notice of Zion’s discouragement (v. 14), gives assurance that He has not forsaken nor forgotten them (v. 16). He then promises a change, a new day: Zion’s inhabitants will not only return to her city, but they also will have the status of royalty and be treated like a king (vv. 22-23). Every would-be oppressor will be defeated and taken away captive (vv. 25-26).

Yahveh Go’el Endorses the Servant.—In 49:1-7, one of several Servant passages, *Yahveh* identifies himself again as *Go’el* and *Qedosh* (“the Holy One,” v. 7). There is indicated in this identification a most significant and close relationship between *Yahveh Go’el Yisrael* = *Qedosh* (“*Yahveh*, Redeemer of Israel equals or is the same as their Holy One”) and the One to be His servant. The Servant is commissioned to bring Israel to *Yahveh* (v. 5), in effect to raise up and restore them to the place *Yahveh* has intended (v. 6). Further, He is to be a light to the nations to the end that *Yahveh*’s salvation (*yeshu’ah*) will be taken to the far corners of the earth (v. 6). Thus *Yahveh* as *Go’el* calls and commissions His *’ebed* (“Servant”) to be the One who will be the immediate means whereby His salvation will reach the ends of the earth.

Yahveh-Go’el’s Berith Shalom (“Covenant of Peace”).—Another unit of promise and assurance, 54:1-17, addresses the barrenness and desolation of the city of Jerusalem and of the land (vv. 1-2) with the comforting message that they will again inhabit and multiply in their land (v. 3). Further, there is a reminder of their former disgrace (v. 4) and of being for some time under wrath (vv. 7a, 8a). This, however, has changed inasmuch as *Yahveh*’s continual mercy (*based*) toward them and now evident subsequent to the time of wrath will be manifested in their being “gathered up” in order to begin the new age with their *Go’el*, the time of the *berith shalom* (“covenant of peace”; vv. 9 and 10, esp. v. 10b).



NEW TESTAMENT WORD STUDIES

by Ralph Earle

Hebrews

Ordained (5:1)

Kathistemi literally means "set down" or "bring down" (to a place). Then it came to be used most generally in the sense of "appoint." Westcott says that it is "the ordinary word for authoritative appointment to an office" (*Hebrews*, p. 118). Since "ordained" (KJV) now has a technical usage, probably "appointed" (NASB, NIV) is better.

Have Compassion On (5:2)

The verb *metriopatheo* (only here in NT) means "to hold one's passions or emotions in restraint; hence, to bear gently with, feel gently towards" (Abbott-Smith, *Lexicon*, p. 289). "Deal gently with" (NASB, NIV) best communicates the exact thought.

In That He Feared (5:7)

The Greek has the noun *eulabeia* (only here and 12:28). In secular Greek usage this word does commonly have the idea of fear or anxiety. But it also was used in the sense of piety, or reverent awe of God. Bultmann argues for both meanings as valid (TDNT, 2:751-54). He does say that in the Septuagint of Prov. 28:14 it means "religious awe." So we find in recent versions: "for his godly fear" (RSV); "because of His piety" (NASB); "because of his reverent submission" (NIV).

Westcott makes these comments: "*Eulabeia* marks that careful and watchful reverence which pays regard to every circumstance in that with which it has to deal. It may therefore degenerate into a timid and unworthy anxiety (Jos. *Antt.* vi. 2, 179); but more commonly it expresses reverent and thoughtful shrinking from over boldness. . . .

Here the word in its noblest sense is singularly appropriate. Prayer is heard as it is 'according to God's will' (1 John v. 14f), and Christ by His *eulabeia* perfectly realized that submission which is obedience on one side and fellowship on the other" (*Hebrews*, p. 127).

Author (5:9)

Aitios is an adjective meaning "causative of" or "responsible for" (Abbott-Smith, pp. 14-15). In the NT it is used only as a substantive (like a noun). It means "cause" or "source" (NASB, NIV).

Called (5:10)

The verb is *prosagoreuo* (only here in NT). It means "call, name, designate." The last of these three is used in the RSV, NASB, and NIV. Westcott says that the verb "expresses the formal and solemn ascription of the title [high priest] to Him to whom it belongs" (p. 130).

Hard to Be Uttered (5:11)

This is all one word in Greek, the compound adjective *dysermeneutos* (only here in NT). The prefix *dys* has the idea of "difficult." The rest of the word is based on the verb *hermeneuo* "explain" or "interpret" (cf. *hermeneutics*). So, "hard to explain" (RSV, NASB, NIV) is the correct translation here.

For the Time (5:12)

This could be taken as meaning "for the time being." But the Greek literally says, "because of the time" (*dia ton chronon*). The true meaning obviously is "by this time" (RSV, NASB, NIV)—that is, after such a long time as Christians.

The First Principles (5:12)

The Greek is *ta stoicheia tes ar-*

ches. The noun *stoicheion* (sing.) probably means "one of a series" (*stoichos*). Plutarch uses it for "an elementary sound or letter of the alphabet" and Aristotle for "the elements or rudiments of knowledge" (Abbott-Smith, p. 418). That is clearly its meaning here.

Delling writes: "If letters are the basis of speech and their knowledge that of instruction, *stoicheion* can soon come to mean 'what is basic or primary' . . . or the 'elementary details' . . ." (TDNT, 7:679). He goes on to say: "The meaning in Hb. 5:12 is clearly 'first principles' with a slightly derogatory nuance: *ta stoicheia*, 'mere rudiments,' 'ABC.' The idea of first principles is strengthened, or brought to expression, by *tesarches*" (p. 687). The whole expression literally means the "elements of the beginning" (NASB margin).

Strong Meat (5:12, 14)

The Greek is *stereas trophe* (v. 12, gen. case) and *sterea trophe* (v. 14, nom. case). The adjective *stereos* (-a, -on) means "hard, firm, solid." *Trophe* comes from the verb *trepho*, "feed." So the correct translation here is "solid food" (RSV, NASB, NIV). The KJV often uses "meat" for all food, which could mislead the modern reader.

Of Full Age (5:14)

This is one word in Greek, the genitive plural of the adjective *teleios*, which comes from the noun *telos*, "end." So it means "having reached its end, finished, mature . . ." (Abbott-Smith, p. 442). All are agreed that here it means "the mature" (RSV, NASB, NIV). Babies drink milk, but mature persons eat solid food.

CHIVALRY OF THANKSGIVING

(Continued from page 47)

what has been fittingly called "The Westminster Abbey of the Scriptures." But after the roll call he does not ask for new songs of gratitude for the past. He does not commission his people to erect new and greater monuments. He challenges them to build on, not only to uphold worthy traditions bequeathed to them but also to make new ones!

"Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us." "We cannot be grateful descendants of great crusaders for God if our religion, like our spinning wheels, is to be more of a relic to admire than a means of active service to humanity." Our churches must be more than symbols of an ancient faith. Religion has its roots in the long past; but it is vastly more than an antique. It is a power through which we recover moral greatness and spiritual quality. Down in Plymouth churchyard where the Pilgrims are buried, there is this line on the tombstone of the first governor, William Bradford: "What our fathers with so much difficulty secured do not basely relinquish."

Are we concerned about maintaining and expanding the idea of democracy? Do we display any of the cour-

age and fortitude of our fathers' religion? Do we sacrifice to maintain the glory of His cause? Do we put heart and soul into the cultivation of a vigorous church life in our community? Do we have a vivid sense of God's presence to guide and guard our lives?

Recently a student who had been somewhat wild and reckless, unappreciative of the high traditions of the service, set at a table in a biological laboratory. He was looking through a microscope at a tiny globule of protoplasm. Suddenly he stood up. "I see it now," he cried. "I am a single link between the generations before me and those who may come after. I will not be a rotten link in that chain!" This also is the chivalry of thanksgiving.

O God, the Source of all good gifts, we thank You for the heritage which has come to us from the noble dead, whose quest of truth has lighted the path in which we walk, whose quest of beauty has enriched the world in which we live, whose quest of goodness has ennobled the soul of the race, and whose quest of You has made life significant forever. Accept us, Most Holy God, as we pledge ourselves to You, our reasonable service, to live not for ourselves but for our brothers, and for You, to count ourselves rich not in what we keep but in what we share, and to strive to live in fellowship of spirit with Jesus Christ our Lord: Amen.

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REPROVING MEN

(Continued from page 48)

ment to another's welfare. As such, it is a manifestation of grace.

The two sermons devoted primarily to this matter are "The Duty of Reproving Our Neighbor" and "The Cure of Evil Speaking." The first sermon is based on Lev. 19:17; the second, on Matt. 18:15-17. They consider the questions of what, whom, and how Christians are to reprove one another.

In responding to the question of what Christians ought to reprove, Wesley is careful to distinguish biblical injunctions from personal convictions. Those practices clearly called sinful by Scripture are what should be reproved. He specifically lists cursing, drunkenness, and profaning the Lord's Day. If a believer sees a brother commit undeniable sin, he should take the earliest opportunity of going to admonish him. Wesley goes on to say in his remarks on the Matthew 18 passage: "O that all you who bear the reproach of Christ, who are in derision called Methodists, would set an example to the Christian world, so called, in this one instance!" (*Works*, 6:123). A little later he writes, "Let this be the distinguishing mark of a Methodist: 'He censures no man behind his back'" (*ibid.*). In other words, following the biblical pattern of reproof will be a great corrective to the usual sin of gossip. To speak *to* rather than *about* a person is God's way.

The second question is whom are we to reprove. Mention has already been made of the duty for reprovng one's own household. However, Wesley's broad answer to the query of *whom* is "everyone that has a soul to be saved" (*Works*, 6:301). Thus he includes unbelievers as well as believers.

Without reproof sinners will not be stirred, and Christians will grow lax. Indeed, Wesley asserts, "I have never heard or read of any considerable revival of religion which was not attended with a spirit of reprovng . . . for what is faith, unless it worketh by love?" (*ibid.*, p. 303).

The above quotation leads naturally into the third question: How are we to reprove? Wesley's reply addresses both the inward attitude and the outward manner, but it is simply stated as "in love." Specific inward states that Wesley thinks appropriate for effective reproof are as follows: (1) a spirit of prayerfulness; (2) a spirit of love, for love begets love; (3) a spirit of humility, pointing out that which is good in the neighbor; (4) a spirit of meekness, knowing that anger and pride do not produce true holiness. As can be seen from these suggestions, the reprovng that Wesley approves is as far from legalism as it is from antinomianism. As to the outward manner, he recommends that one offer a frank and earnest expression of goodwill, that one be sensitive to the moment, and that one be patient if amended behavior is not immediately forthcoming. In the message entitled "The Cure of Evil Speaking," he advises,

Avoid every thing in look, gesture, word, and tone of voice, that savors of pride or self-sufficiency. Studiously avoid every thing magisterial or dogmatical, every thing that looks like arrogance or assuming . . . And yet this sweetness need not hinder your speaking in the most serious and solemn manner (*Works*, 6:117).

By reprovng men for their sins, Wesley sought for perfection of love and improvement of life. There is no place for a dogmatic or arrogant spirit in such a quest, but it is equally certain that neither is there place for neglect or indifference toward sinful behaviors.

May God direct His Church in the purging that brings forth more fruit!



CLERGY QUIZ

- Which of these religious journals celebrates its 100th year of publication in 1984?
 - The Christian Century*
 - The Preacher's Magazine*
 - The Arminian Magazine*
 - The Evangelical Quarterly*
 - Which of the following does not belong in this list?
 - C. K. Barrett
 - F. F. Bruce
 - Emil Brunner
 - William Barclay
 - The primary message of which of the following books is that the treachery of Edom will act like a boomerang?
 - Amos*
 - Obadiah*
 - Zephaniah*
 - Ezra*
 - Between Two Worlds* is a recent book by:
 - A. M. Hunter on *New Testament theology*
 - Billy Graham on *the minister's vocation*
 - John Stott on *preaching*
 - Robert Schuller on *self-esteem*
 - "Who is a God like unto thee . . . he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities" is from:
 - 1 Cor. 14:15
 - Hos. 6:6-7
 - 1 John 2:10
 - Mic. 7:18-19
 - Which of the following British divines was not a contemporary of John Wesley?
 - Richard Challoner
 - Philip Doddridge
 - Richard Rolle
 - Adam Clarke
 - If you were reading an article about the *Cure d' Ars*, you would be reading which of the following?
 - about Jean-Baptiste-Marie Vianney
 - an article on the cure of souls
 - an article about St. Philomena
 - an article about cinematography
 - If Meister Eckhart came to speak at your church, which of the following would definitely *not* be his topic?
 - The Fact of Original Sin*
 - Asceticism for Fun and Prophet*
 - Social Justice*
 - Effective Prayer*
 - A and B
 - C and B
 - If you made a speech about Rastafarianism, you would be speaking about
 - A 20th-century Jamaican religious movement that honors Haile Selassie as divine.
 - The teachings of Proctus, the Greek philosopher who lived 500 years before Christ.
 - The doctrines St. John Climacus taught in the book "The Ladder of Divine Ascent."
 - If a preacher starts a sermon with a series of questions or analogies, proceeds with examples, stories, quotations, and concrete experiences on the theme, and in the end leads to the biblical conclusion, he or she is:
 - preaching **inductively**, which fits the modern mind-set.
 - preaching **deductively**, which fits the classical rather than the modern mind-set.
 - preaching **intuitively** from forensic patterns of thought.
 - How many Protestants are there in Roman Catholic Italy?
 - 13
 - 1,300
 - 13,000,000
 - 350,000
 - If you dropped in on a conference and saw that the agenda called for Rollo May, Paul Tournier, and Howard Clinebell, what would the conference be about?
 - carpentry
 - sexology
 - counseling
 - hermeneutics
 - The first American Islamic college has recently opened in:
 - Decatur, Ga.
 - Portland, Oreg.
 - Kansas City, Kans.
 - Chicago
 - Finders Keepers* is the title of?
 - A Broadway musical on the problems of marriage
 - A book on personal and small-group evangelism by Dee Brestin
 - An old saying made famous by Lily Langtry
 - A Billy Graham film on discipleship
 - According to recent studies in America, being an only child:
 - makes a woman a poorer risk for marriage and makes a man a better risk.
 - makes a woman a better risk and a man a poor risk.
 - makes persons of either sex poor marriage risks.
 - Which of the following does not belong in this list?
 - James M. Burns
 - Peter Drucker
 - Marlene Wilson
 - Michael Maccoby
 - Douglas McGregor
 - Rosemary Reuther
- Answers
 1—A; 2—C; 3—B; 4—C; 5—D; 6—C; 7—A; 8—E; 9—A; 10—A; 11—D; 12—C; 13—D; 14—B; 15—A; 16—F
- Rating your score:
 16 correct—you are not playing enough golf
 13-15 correct—you are playing enough golf
 8-12 correct—you are playing too much golf (try fishing)
 0-7 correct—tear out this page and burn it before anyone sees it.



THE ARK ROCKER

CHEAPER GRACE

In 1937 Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the German theologian who was later killed by the Nazis, published a book titled *The Cost of Discipleship* in which he spoke about “cheap grace.” Cheap grace is a corruption of Luther’s doctrine of justification by grace through faith, in which the great reformer’s insight is greatly misused.

We sometimes call it antinomianism. “Love God and do as you please,” is a popular catchphrase. Since we are saved by grace, it doesn’t finally matter how we live. Bonhoeffer, a devout Lutheran, called this “cheap grace.” True discipleship, he insisted, is indeed costly.

Today we Wesleyans have developed our own brand of cheap grace. But whereas the Lutheran brand of it, described by Bonhoeffer, was a distortion of the doctrine of *justification*, our Wesleyan variety is a corruption of the doctrine of *sanctification*.

It works like this: “Since I am sanctified, freed from sin, pure in heart, none of my actions and attitudes can be considered sinful.” Under the cloak of such an inverted assumption, all kinds of unethical behavior is able to masquerade as a normal part of the sanctified life.

The definition of *sin* that is sometimes called the “Wesleyan” one (even though it was only one of the ways in which Wesley spoke of sin), namely “the voluntary transgression of the *known* law of God,” can easily be corrupted into an excuse for bad ethics, both personal and social. “My motive was good; I did not *know* I was doing wrong.” Such claims, valid enough within the proper context, can easily be used to promote cheap grace. Many unchristlike actions, including all kinds of injustices, can be “swept under the rug” by a misuse of Wesley’s definition. It is easy to forget that we are greatly responsible for our *not knowing*. The absence of light can become an excuse for not seeking light.

A pastor friend of mine was crushed when in his presence a “fellow Christian” did an evil thing. When my friend lamented it to a church leader, with the obser-

vation that such behavior was sin, he was told: “No, my brother, it was not sin, it was just his humanity.”

But it was sin. By all biblical and Wesleyan standards it was sin. Specifically, it was a willful violation of the ninth commandment. To pass it off as mere “humanity” is to traffic in cheap grace. Worse still, even those who engage in such “Wesleyan Watergate” cover-ups, when dealing with specific instances involving themselves or their friends, will themselves usually call it sin from the pulpit when preaching to the masses. Such double standards make cheap grace even cheaper.

But that’s how “sanctified cheap grace” works. If you catch me in an unchristian action or attitude, I’ll insist that it was only a mistake, only my humanity. But if I find you guilty of the same thing, I’ll call it sin.

Cheap grace thrives also in those complex realms where “societal sin” or “structural evil” abound. We do not sin to ourselves. Sin is not merely individual; it is also *interpersonal* and *suprapersonal*, a driving force inherent in the institutions of society. Individual goodwill seems to accomplish little against all those forces that inexorably dictate to individuals a certain pattern of conduct; the state, the party, business, custom, fashion, public opinion, ideology, and even the institutional church.

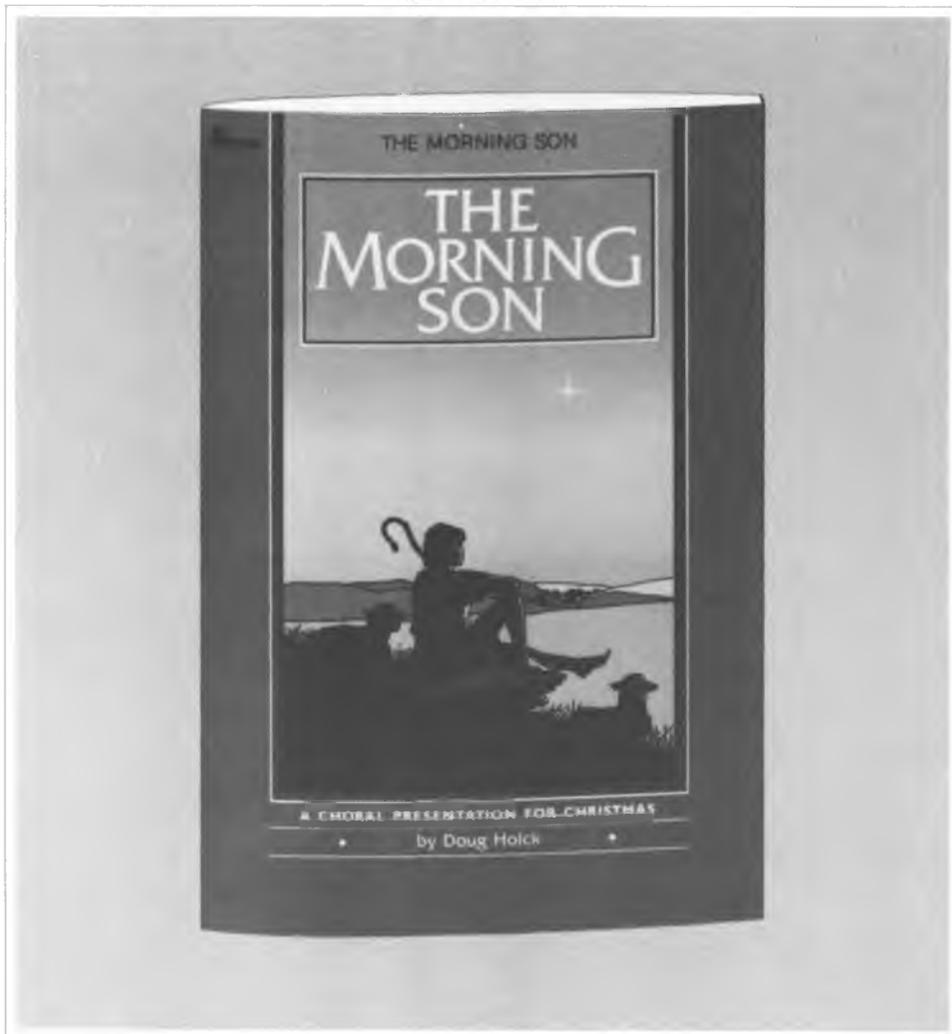
One who tries to do something about it is frequently ignored or thrown aside. Few possess the courage or the strength to take the risk. Most do not even see the need to do so. When persons are hurt by suprapersonal institutions—even the church—and we remain silent, pretending that all is well, that is cheap grace. It is “sanctified antinomianism.”

Sanctification is distorted and corrupted when used as a cover-up for poor ethics, either personal or social. Bonhoeffer calls us to remember Paul’s words in Rom. 12:2, that we are to *prove* what the will of God is. Discipleship is demanding. Grace is *free*, but it is not *cheap*!

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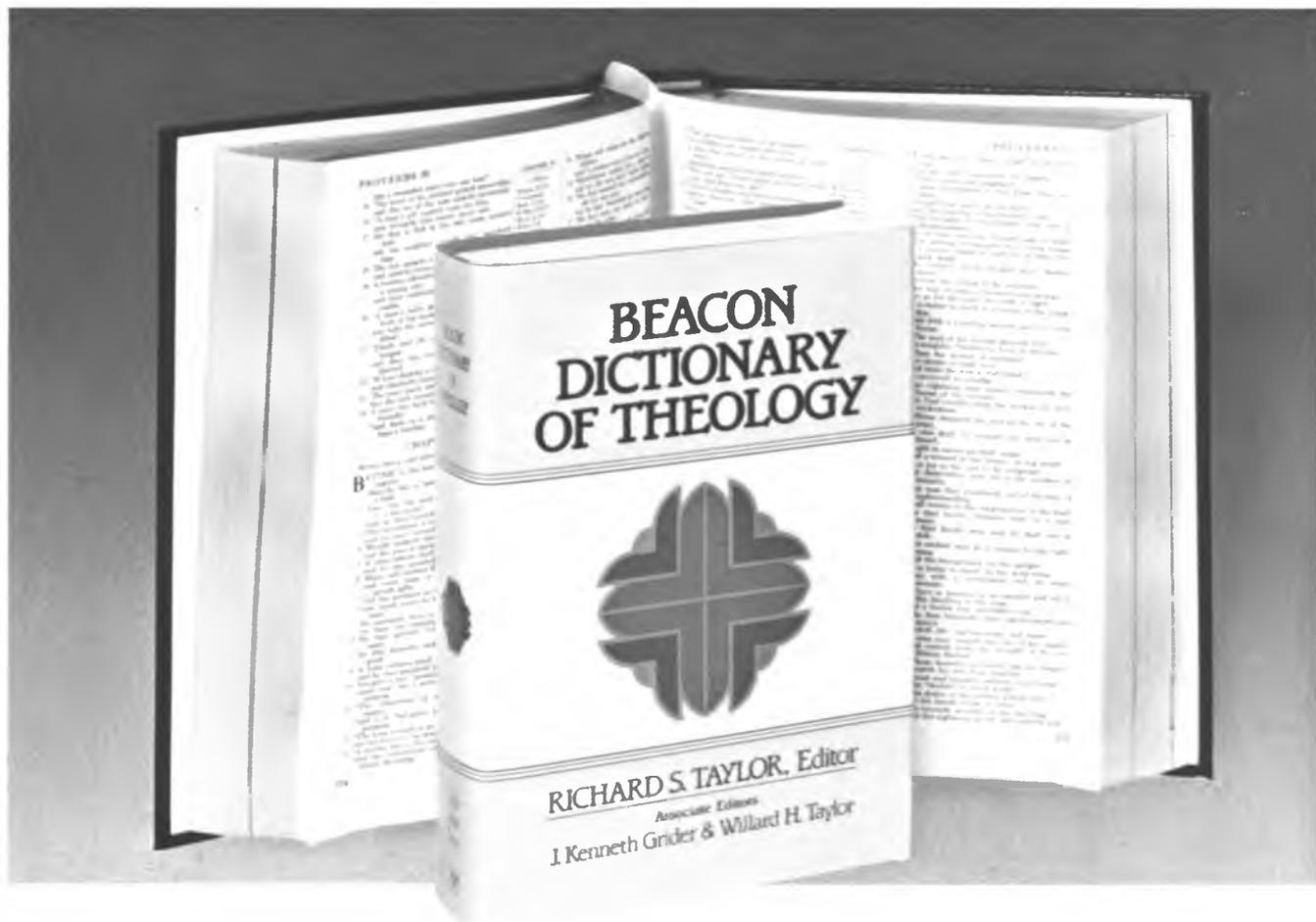
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