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# THE PREACHER'S MAGAZINE



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# suitable for Framing

A thought starter from a poet with unlikely, irreverent, but penetrating theology.

## IN PLACE OF A CURSE

At the next vacancy for God, if I am elected,  
I shall forgive last the delicately wounded  
who, having been slugged no harder than anyone else,  
never got up again, neither to fight back,  
nor to finger their jaws in painful admiration.

They who are wholly broken, and they in whom  
mercy is understanding, I shall embrace at once  
and lead to pillows in heaven. But they who are  
the meek by trade, baiting the best of their betters  
with the extortions of a mock-helplessness

I shall take last to love, and never wholly.  
Let them all into heaven—I shall abolish hell—  
but let it be read over them as they enter:  
“Beware the calculations of the meek, who gambled  
nothing,  
gave nothing, and could never receive enough.”

—John Ciardi

From: *Today's Poets: American and British Poets Since 1930*. Charles  
Scribner's and Sons, Publisher.

# THE PREACHER'S MAGAZINE

Proclaiming Christian Holiness

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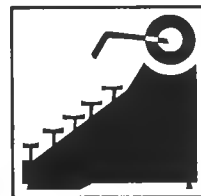
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Cover Photo: Willard Taylor, formerly Nazarene Seminary dean, teaches on the Mount of Beatitudes by the Sea of Galilee. Photo by Wesley Tracy.

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Litho in U.S.A.



by  
Wesley  
Tracy

## WILLARD'S WISE WORDS



**F**or a man who likes to push words around, I have a bad case of "paralyzed pen." I've been trying to find the appropriate words to pay tribute to my friend Willard Taylor, but my words are too feeble to match the subject. Even with the help of the cover photo which I took of Willard teaching us on the Mount of Beatitudes, I can't say nearly all I feel about this good and great man.

Let me just say that he was my friend—a true friend. You know that if you are in a position to "help" or "shove a few favors" a certain way you attract a certain type of "friend." But that wasn't the kind of friend Willard was. He and Jeanne repeatedly befriended Bettye and me when there was nothing in it for them.

At this writing, Willard has been gone some 12 weeks. During this period I have made time to read all of Willard's books. Of course, I couldn't read all the articles, Sunday school lessons, and the like which he wrote, but I did read *The Story of Our Saviour, And He Taught Them Saying*, Willard's part of *Beacon Bible Commentary* (Ephesians), *Exploring Our Christian Faith*, and *God, Man, and Salvation*. Also, I was able to get the then unpublished manuscript of Willard's *Beacon Bible Expositions* (Galatians and Ephesians).

Willard was not a "cute" writer, no flamboyant allegorizer of the trivial or peripheral. He wrote straightforwardly about ultimate concerns considering that his reader was serious about the things of God. Let me share some of the passages I underlined in Willard's works.

"The ministry of the Church must rest upon the sense of being on a special mission for God. If it does not, there is the possibility and probability of defection."

☆ ☆ ☆

"Being a 'God-sent messenger' is what ministry is all about. Getting the message through, at whatever personal cost, without compromise, and with unshakeable confidence in God's Word is the task resting upon the ministry."

☆ ☆ ☆

"Authority in ministry arises out of the unforgettable consciousness that one has been addressed by God and called into ministry. No person, be he ever so clever with words and ideas, can long survive the onslaughts of the Adversary against his proclamation if deep in his soul there is lacking a pulsating assurance that God has given

him *the good news* of all history to share with every needy sinner."

☆ ☆ ☆

"Immature Christians are like boats tossed uncontrollably on the waves and swinging about violently in a storm. The task of ministers is to lay a heavy hand on the rudder of the church, to hold it steady, and to provide doctrinal ballast through a faithful preaching and teaching ministry."

☆ ☆ ☆

"The Church is *His body*—His hands, feet, mouth—indeed, His very existence now in the world. Christ has designed that His followers be Him to needy men."

☆ ☆ ☆

"A growing church is one in which each member is experientially sound, evangelistically active, and doctrinally informed."

☆ ☆ ☆

"The Church is thus a saved and a saving community. She is a new order in society, not living aloof from the world, but living with a consciousness of her redemption and with a passion to share that redemption with those outside (John 17:14-16, 21)."

☆ ☆ ☆

"The Church is the evidence that salvation through Christ is happening."

☆ ☆ ☆

"Jesus bore the destiny of the people of God alone. When Jesus Christ climbed toward Golgotha, He alone was the people of God. He bore the whole weight of God's work for this world."

☆ ☆ ☆

"In forgiveness God does not exact payment for our failures to walk in the path He laid out for us. Rather, He remembers them no more."

☆ ☆ ☆

"The Word of God can fashion worlds, and that is glorious. But there is more. The creation of a spiritually new son through the announcement of forgiveness exceeds our comprehension. It is sheer miracle."

☆ ☆ ☆

"No greater day will ever dawn for the sinner than the day when God stands over his spiritually lifeless form and calls him into a whole new existence, free from the guilt and power of sin."

☆ ☆ ☆

"God has moved into our wretched lives to redeem them that we might have fellowship with Him and to tell all the world the greatness of His love and grace."

☆ ☆ ☆

"Several aspects of the invitation of Christ to the perfect life are noteworthy.

**"First,** for the disciples this call was not optional. Jesus commands His followers to be perfect. . . .

**"Second,** God is the Standard or Guide for this perfection: 'even as your Father . . . is perfect. . . .'

**"third,** perfection consists in a state of love. . . .

**"Fourth,** perfection of love results from the sanctifying work of the Spirit."

☆ ☆ ☆

"Christ not only controls the shape and form of the Church, but is also her identification. If Christ is not present in her life, the Church does not belong to Him."

☆ ☆ ☆

"Not only is there a specific time when the Holy Spirit comes to fill the heart, cleansing it and endowing it with love; there is also the moment-by-moment filling as the Christian lives in close relationship with the Spirit."

☆ ☆ ☆

"Christianity is the good news of the liberation of the human heart, through the Spirit of Christ, from all the forces that seek to enslave it. Thus, any interpretation of the Christian faith that tries to bind it to rules and regulations, as if these can bring salvation, must be steadfastly resisted. True freedom comes through trustful and obedient response to the loving Father. This is the bed-rock truth about salvation. It has been said that the New Testament does not say, 'You shall know the rules, and by them you shall be bound,' but 'You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.'"

☆ ☆ ☆

"When we were sinful, stubborn, rebellious, and careless, God kept wooing us. We too must be prepared to deal patiently and gently with others."

☆ ☆ ☆

"God's love would easily degenerate into unsaving sentimentality if His righteousness did not cause Him to be unfailingly antagonistic to sin."

☆ ☆ ☆

"You cannot reap love and friendship out of greed and stinginess."

☆ ☆ ☆

"As angles equal to a third angle are equal to each other, so men reconciled to God are reconciled to each other."

☆ ☆ ☆

"The Master would countenance no attitude which permitted a man to stand before God and declare, 'What a good boy am I.'"

☆ ☆ ☆

"The Resurrection is a daybreak, bathing the whole panorama of . . . life with meaning. . . . It was the greatest news ever to break upon benighted mankind."

☆ ☆ ☆

"At the place of human need Christ dwells, and those who are His servants live and love there too."

☆ ☆ ☆

"A son of God is a son of God! There are no second-class citizens in the Church of Jesus Christ! Racial prejudice, social division, sexual inequality are intolerable in the community of believers."

☆ ☆ ☆

"The call to the Kingdom is primary since everything of value for mankind hinges on it."

☆ ☆ ☆

"Jesus made it clear that admission into the Kingdom comes only to the man who strips himself of all his pride, his sinful self-sufficiency, and his self-righteousness."

☆ ☆ ☆

"Many good Christians suffer from serious ailments, but no preaching, such as we sometimes hear from alleged faith-healers, should be allowed to impose guilt upon them. Sickness is not sin. False guilt adds psychological pain to the physical pain they already endure."

☆ ☆ ☆

"The 'tree' points to Christ's triumph over every attempt of man to save himself."

☆ ☆ ☆

"Grace means that God favors with forgiveness, newness of life, and cleansing all who come to Him by faith in Christ."

☆ ☆ ☆

"Sinful men find it difficult to bring themselves under the authoritative truth of the gospel. Thus, the biggest temptation is to seek to modify it to conform to their human weaknesses."

☆ ☆ ☆

"When a man feels that the whole of life lies in the security which things bring, he is likely to pursue them with his whole heart."

☆ ☆ ☆

"Heaven will be the place of infinite harmony, where all the elect from the four corners of earth whom the Son of Man will draw together will live in consummate peace with the Prince of Peace (Luke 13:29). That future Kingdom will be a city, a social order, whose citizens will enjoy the presence of their Lord eternally and have rich fellowship with each other in the spiritual bonds of holy love. What a time that will be when we join in fellowship with the saints of all ages—Isaiah, Paul, Peter, John, Luther, Wesley, and those from our own generation who have preceded us to that distant shore!"



Translations of the Bible used by permission in this issue are noted as follows:

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Quotations cited NASB are from the *New American Standard Bible*, © The Lockman Foundation, 1960, 1962, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975.

Quotations cited NEB are from the *New English Bible*, © The Delegates of the Oxford University Press and The Syndics of the Cambridge University Press, 1961, 1970.

Quotations not cited with a special designation are from the King James Version of the Bible.

## MATTHEW: GOOD NEWS TO AND FOR THE CHURCH

by Wayne McCown and Merrily Anderson

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**T**he gospel according to Matthew was quoted more extensively by the Early Church Fathers than any other. Its position as the first book in the New Testament testifies to its revered position by those who organized the canon. Because of this esteem and its frequent use in the liturgy of the Church, Matthew has been called "the ecclesiastical Gospel."<sup>1</sup> This name is appropriate, for only in Matthew do we find the word *church* (*ecclesia*) on the lips of Jesus (16:18; 18:17). Matthew, writing to and for the Early Church, provides us today with rich resources for our preaching to today's church.

### I. STRUCTURE

The structure of Matthew may account for its early ecclesiastical influence and use: It describes the events surrounding Jesus and records His teachings in a complete, clear, and orderly manner.

The author has arranged his material into five main divisions. Each division is introduced by a narrative section describing certain events surrounding Jesus' ministry, followed by a discourse section containing related teachings.

Each division ends with an identifiable formula, generally translated, "And it happened when Jesus had finished these sayings . . ." (7:28; 11:1; 13:53; 19:1; 26:1, author's translation). This formula serves as a literary transition between divisions and provides continuity within the Gospel as a whole.

Framing the whole, then, are an introduction containing genealogy of Jesus and the infancy narrative (cc. 1—2), and the climactic account of Jesus' passion and resurrection (cc. 26—28).

This structure is visualized in the following outline.<sup>2</sup>

*Intro: Jesus' Genealogy and Infancy*, cc. 1—2

I. *Discipleship*, cc. 3—7

A. Narrative—Preparation for and the beginning of Jesus' ministry, cc. 3—4

B. Discourse—The Sermon on the Mount, cc. 5—7

II. *Apostleship*, cc. 8—10

A. Narrative—Jesus' healing and teaching ministry, 8:1—9:34.

B. Discourse—The disciples' mission, 9:35—10:42.

III. *Hidden Revelation*, 11:1—13:52

A. Narrative—Opposition to Jesus, cc. 11—12

B. Discourse—The Kingdom Parables, 13:1—52

IV. *The Church*, 13:53—18:35

A. Narrative—Miracles and the Messiah's suffering, 13:53—17:23

B. Discourse—Church administration, 17:24—18:35

V. *The Judgment*, cc. 19—25

A. Narrative—Judean ministry and Jerusalem, cc. 19—22

B. Discourse—The condemnation of the Pharisees and teachings on eschatology, cc. 23—25

*Conclusion: Jesus' Passion and Resurrection*, cc. 26—28

Matthew's structure is not strictly chronological, nor is it biographical (as we understand that genre). Rather, the Evangelist's purpose was to communicate, as thoroughly as possible, significant aspects of the life, character, and teachings of Jesus. Both narrative and discourse serve that overall purpose.

### II. CHARACTERISTICS

Just as Matthew's orderly structure sets his Gospel apart from the others, so do several other characteristics. These include his use of the Old Testament, messianic emphasis, universal outlook, eschatological interest, and specific teachings about the Church.

### A. Use of the Old Testament

The numerous quotes and allusions to the Old Testament, many more than are found in any other New Testament book, constitute one of the chief characteristics of Matthew. The connection between Christianity and Judaism is underscored by more than 60 quotations from the Old Testament. Interestingly, most follow the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Old Testament). Some flow naturally from the narrative without special introduction; others are introduced by various formulae. A distinct (special) group, though, are preceded by variations of the specific formula "that it might be fulfilled"; these quotes are used in support of the claim that Jesus is the Messiah (1:23; 2:6, 15, 18; 4:15-16; 8:17; 12:18-21; 13:35; 21:4-5; 26:56; 27:9-10).

### B. Messianic Emphasis

Although all the New Testament writers attest to Jesus as the Christ, Matthew pays special attention to the events in the life of Jesus which took place in fulfillment of messianic prophecy. This Gospel, indeed, can be viewed as a polemic, designed to answer the many thorny questions put forth by those who challenged the Church's claim that Jesus is the expected Messiah and the End of the Law.

### C. Jewish Characteristics vs. a Universal Outlook

The extensive use of the Old Testament and the stress of Jesus as Messiah seem to indicate that Matthew was writing for a Jewish Christian community. And there are other Jewish aspects, which distinguish the Gospel of Matthew. The genealogy of Jesus is traced back to Abraham and arranged in traditional rabbinic fashion (1:1 ff.). Jesus is quoted as affirming the validity of the Law, including even the smallest letter (5:18). His disciples are expected to fast, to keep the Sabbath, and to continue to bring offerings (6:16 ff.; 24:20; 5:23-24). The scribes and Pharisees are said to occupy the seat of Moses, and it is urged that their instructions be followed (23:2-3). Jesus even states, in Matthew, that He has been sent only to the "lost sheep of the house of Israel" (15:24). Moreover, He instructs His disciples to avoid Gentiles, and to take His message only to those same lost sheep (10:5-6).

However, in the context of such an exclusively Jewish outlook, Matthew surprisingly points to the universal character of Christianity. The worldwide mission of the Church receives eloquent testimony both at the opening and the close of the Gospel. The first who came to pay homage to the newly born Messiah are Gentiles, Magi from the East (2:1 ff.). And when Herod's decree to kill all male infants threatens Jesus, He is taken to Egypt, a Gentile land, for safety (2:13 ff., NIV). In the concluding verses of the Gospel, Jesus issues the Great Commission, "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations" (28:19). The narrow doorway of Judaism is here flung wide open. While Judaism represented the Old Israel, Christianity is "seen as the New Israel, unbounded by the restricted environment out of which it emerged."<sup>3</sup>

### D. Apocalyptic Eschatology

Another characteristic of Matthew is his eschatological interest. The length of Matthew's main apocalyptic section (cc. 24–25) is much greater than the parallel passages in Mark and Luke. Three parables unique to Matthew concern the end of the age: the Tares Among the Wheat (13:24-30), the Workers in the Vineyard (20:1-16), and the Ten Virgins (25:1-13). Matthew also gives a strong eschatological emphasis to several parables paralleled in the other gospels. An example is the apocalyptic ending on the Parable of the Wedding Feast (22:1-14; compare Luke's emphasis, Luke 14:15-24).

The climax of this apocalyptic eschatology is Matthew's graphic depiction of the Last Judgment (25:31-46). Those who have not practiced the teachings of Jesus regarding love and compassion for the poor and helpless, says Matthew, will be cast into the "eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels" (NIV). Those who have practiced righteousness will inherit the Kingdom and eternal life.

### E. The “Ecclesiastical” Gospel

Matthew's interest in the Church has been mentioned previously. The uniqueness of his concern becomes apparent when one realizes that his is the only Gospel that reports any specific Christological teachings about the Church. The Greek word *ecclesia* ("church," "congregation") appears twice, but only in this Gospel (16:18; 18:17). In the first passage, the Evangelist quotes Jesus as saying, "You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church" (NIV). In the second, Matthew records Jesus' teachings about discipline within the Church.

In Matthew, the Church is not just an ideal reality, but a group of living, breathing people who have chosen to worship Jesus and follow His teachings. Even the smallest church, two or three gathered together in Jesus' name, is assured of His presence (18:20). *(continued on page 57)*

[illegible]

# Preaching on Christian Perfection from Matthew

**F**or over 50 years I have listened to holiness sermons. Most of the texts were taken from Acts and Paul's Epistles. Some preachers reached on to Hebrews (12:14) and the General Epistles (1 Pet. 1:15-16; 1 John) and even Revelation (22:11).

Seldom have I heard a holiness sermon based on the Synoptic Gospels, except perhaps the words of John the Baptist. "He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire" (Matt. 3:11, NIV)\*—that is, with a fiery, cleansing baptism with the Holy Spirit.

It has seemed to us that if the distinctive doctrine of Wesleyan theology is important there ought to be something said about it in the Synoptic Gospels, which comprise over one-third of the entire New Testament. We believe there is.

A man who did not believe in the deity of Jesus, the Blood Atonement, or the New Birth, made this statement: "The Sermon on the Mount—that's my religion." This man had read the Sermon on the Mount very casually, not carefully. It is our conviction that no person can really live the Sermon on the Mount without the experience of entire sanctification. For the sanctified life is the Christ life.

In his excellent book *The Christ of the Mount*, E. Stanley Jones says, "The greatest need of modern Christianity is the rediscovery of the Sermon on the Mount as the only practical way to live."<sup>1</sup> He goes on to say: "We must now cease to embalm it. We must embody it."<sup>2</sup> So we want to look at what this "greatest sermon ever preached" has to say on the subject of Christian Perfection.

The sermon begins with the Beatitudes (Matt. 5:3-12). The first word in each case is "Blessed." Some would like to translate this as "Happy." Even

John Wesley did so. But the Greek word *makarios* goes deeper and higher than this. Aristotle used it for divine blessedness in contrast to human happiness. We can be "blessed" when we don't feel "happy!" Happiness too often depends on happenstance. But blessedness depends on God's presence.

William Fitch has written a very helpful book on the Beatitudes. After pointing out parallels between them and the life of Christ, he observes: "The Beatitudes are therefore in a very real sense our Lord's own autobiography."<sup>3</sup> With regard to their significance for us, he says, "Here are the blessings of the life that is 'hid with Christ in God.'"<sup>4</sup>

The Beatitudes may be thought of as steps into the kingdom of God and stages in that Kingdom. Let's look at them that way.

**The first beatitude** (v. 3) says, "Blessed are the poor in spirit"—that is, those who recognize their spiritual poverty. Edgar Goodspeed paraphrases it this way: "Blessed are those who feel their spiritual need." This is the first step we must take.

Fitch puts it this way: "Poverty of spirit is essentially the dethronement of pride."<sup>5</sup> He goes on to say that "pride is the very essence of sin. Pride is the sin of an exaggerated individualism, the sin of the usurper claiming a throne that is not his own, the sin that fills the universe with only an ego, the sin of dethroning God from His rightful sovereignty."<sup>6</sup>

Arthur Pink writes: "To be 'poor in spirit' is to realize that I have nothing, am nothing, and can do nothing, and have need of all things. Poverty of spirit is a consciousness of my emptiness . . . It issues



by Ralph Earle

*Distinguished Professor Emeritus,  
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from the painful discovery that all my righteousnesses are as filthy rags."<sup>7</sup>

To "the poor in spirit" the promise is given: "for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." We cannot get help from God until we file bankruptcy papers in the bank of heaven. As long as we think we are self-sufficient, our case is hopeless.

**The second beatitude** (v. 4) says, "Blessed are those who mourn." When one realizes that he has no spiritual assets that would make him acceptable to God, he will mourn. Martyn Lloyd-Jones writes: "As I confront God and His holiness, and contemplate the life that I am meant to live, I see *myself*, my utter helplessness and hopelessness."<sup>8</sup>

To those who mourn the promise is given: "for they will be comforted." There is no greater comfort than the inner assurance that our sins have been forgiven, the old record erased, and we are now a child of God.

**The third beatitude** (v. 5) begins: "Blessed are the meek." Meekness is not a matter of striking a pious pose. Rather, meekness is "a calm acquiescence in whatsoever is His will concerning us."<sup>9</sup> Fitch puts it this way: "Meekness is yieldedness to God, submissiveness to His will, preparedness to accept whatever He may give, and readiness to take the lowest place."<sup>10</sup> When we actually realize that everything good in us comes only from God, it *will* make us meek.

To the meek the promise is given: "for they will inherit the earth." Not the Alexanders and Napoleons, the Mussolinis and Hitlers, but the meek. Those who are willing to be nothing, so that God will be everything in their lives, find that "in Christ" they inherit all things.

E. Stanley Jones puts it beautifully: "When I walked out into the world the morning after I made my self-surrender I thought I had never before seen the world: the trees clapped their hands and all nature was atingle with joy and beauty. For the first time I knew that the earth was mine."<sup>11</sup>

**The fourth beatitude reads:** "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled."

One of the early signs of life in a normal baby is hunger. So the one who has truly been born again will hunger and thirst after righteousness.

What does "righteousness" mean here? Martyn Lloyd-Jones says that "righteousness here includes not only justification but sanctification also. In other words, the desire for righteousness, the act of hungering and thirsting for it, means ultimately the

desire to be free from sin in all its forms and in its every manifestation."<sup>12</sup> He goes on to say: "To hunger and thirst after righteousness is to desire to be free from self in all its horrible manifestations, in all its forms."<sup>13</sup> On the positive side he observes: "To hunger and thirst after righteousness is nothing but the longing to be positively holy. . . . The man who hungers and thirsts after righteousness is the man who wants to exemplify the Beatitudes in his daily life. He is a man who wants to show the fruit of the Spirit in his every action and in the whole of his life and activity."<sup>14</sup>

To those who hunger and thirst after righteousness the promise is given: "for they will be filled." The Greek verb is *chortazo*, which comes from *chortos*, "grass." The picture is that of cattle or sheep eating grass until they are full. Then they lie down. So the verb may be translated "they will be satisfied." Fitch observes: "Fullness is God's answer to the emptiness of man's heart."<sup>15</sup>

This fourth beatitude has real significance as a text for holiness preaching. We have observed some people seeking the experience of entire sanctification for a considerable time, without being satisfied. Perhaps the problem was simply this: They did not really *hunger* and *thirst* after holiness. If they had, they would have been filled with the Spirit and their hearts satisfied.

**The fifth beatitude** (v. 7) is: "Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy."

After we have been shown such wonderful divine mercy as is described in the first four beatitudes, certainly we should be merciful to others. But E. Stanley Jones warns us: "Most righteous people are not merciful toward the failings and shortcomings of others . . . Righteousness unmodified by mercy is a hard, unlovely, Pharisaical, sour-visaged thing."<sup>16</sup> We need inner righteousness, not just the outward righteousness of the Pharisees. A righteousness that is not merciful is not true righteousness at all. And yet we have all seen too much of this in so-called "holiness circles." To be holy is to be Godlike, and God is merciful. If He were not, we would have no hope.

The most vivid illustration of how unreasonable it is to refuse to forgive others is presented in the Parable of the Unmerciful Servant (18:23-35). A servant owed his master \$10 million. When he begged for mercy, his master cancelled the entire debt. On his way out, this servant found a fellow servant who owed him \$20.00. Grabbing him by the neck, he began to choke him. Disregarding the debtor's pleas, he threw the poor man into prison. When the master heard all this, he summoned the first servant and administered proper punishment.

Why did Jesus mention such a ridiculous, impossible debt as \$10 million? To enforce the immeasurable greatness of our debt of sin which God mercifully cancels completely when we accept Jesus Christ as our Savior. Yet some professing Christians will go out and refuse to forgive some little thing that was said or done to them that hurt their feelings. We must be "merciful" if we expect to get to heaven.

**The sixth beatitude** (v. 8) pronounces a blessing on “the pure in heart.” What does this expression mean?

The great Danish philosopher, Kierkegaard, put it very succinctly: “Purity of heart is to will one intention.” It means a full submission of our will—desiring just one thing: that His will be done always and in every way. To have a divided will is to have an impure heart.

A classic definition of heart purity is that given by John Wesley. We quote it in full:

“The pure in heart” are they whose hearts God hath “purified even as He is pure”; who are purified through faith in the blood of Jesus, from every unholy affection; who, being “cleansed from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, perfect holiness in the” loving “fear of God.” They are, through the power of His grace, purified from pride, by the deepest poverty of spirit; from anger, from every unkind or turbulent passion, by meekness and gentleness; from every desire but to please and enjoy God, to know and love Him more and more, by that hunger and thirst after righteousness which now engrosses their whole soul: so that now they love the Lord their God with all their heart, and with all their soul and mind and strength.<sup>17</sup>

The language here may seem a bit extreme, as in some of Wesley’s hymns. But the father of Wesleyanism has portrayed the ideal of a pure heart in a way that should challenge all of us. Rather than obliterate some of the lines, we should face the challenge of living in the center of God’s will for us.

The promise given to the pure in heart is that “they will see God.” Too often this is interpreted as meaning that one has to be sanctified holy in order to get to heaven. But every one who is walking in all the light he has at the time of his death or the Second Coming will surely go to heaven.

The real meaning is that the pure in heart will see God here and now, as well as in the hereafter. Sin is like dust in the eyes: It beclouds the vision and distorts the view. We need to have our hearts cleansed from “all sin” (1 John 1:7, NIV margin) if we are to see God clearly day by day, as we need to do.

**The seventh beatitude** (v. 9) reads: “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God.”

James 3:17 says: “But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving . . .” That is the order here in the sixth and seventh Beatitudes. Purity of heart is a necessary condition for perfect peace within. But we must show it in being “peacemakers,” not troublemakers.

The King James Version says “the children of God.” But the Greek says “sons of God.” When there is no article in the Greek it emphasizes kind or character. Peacemakers will be called God’s sons because they act like Him. In Eastern thinking “son of” means “having the nature of.”

**The eighth beatitude** (v. 10) pronounces a blessedness on those who are “persecuted because of righteousness.” Some self-made martyrs complain of being persecuted for righteousness’ sake when it is really for their own foolishness’ sake. We need to be very honest at this point!

The Beatitudes, we note again, are an autobiography of Christ. They should be increasingly an authentic biography of us as “Christians”—bearing His name and professing to be His followers. We need to follow Him not only in doctrine, but in experience. To live out these Beatitudes is to be truly Christlike and worthy of being called a Christian. We do well to read them over frequently, with prayer and concern that we may be among God’s “blessed” ones because we meet the conditions Jesus laid down.

In Matthew 5:20 we have some very significant words of Jesus: “For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.” The righteousness of the Pharisees was outward, ceremonial, legalistic; the righteousness that Jesus requires is inward, moral, spiritual. It is a righteousness of *inner attitude*, not just of *outer action*. Some people say, “I’m glad I’m under grace, not under law.” But Jesus actually demands a higher righteousness than that of the Mosaic law. We must guard not only our actions but our attitudes, not only our words but our thoughts.

What Jesus is describing and prescribing is spelled out in verses 21-48. In six paragraphs he delineates this higher righteousness by illustrating it in six areas: (1) Murder (vv. 21-26); (2) Adultery (vv. 27-30); (3) Divorce (vv. 31-32); (4) Oaths (vv. 33-37); (5) Retaliation (vv. 38-42); (6) Love of Neighbor (vv. 43-48). Then he climaxed it all by saying: “Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect” (v. 48).

### Six Characteristics of Christian Perfection

In the light of this last verse we might preach on “Six Characteristics of Christian Perfection.”

These six characteristics of Christian Perfection are: (1) Peaceableness (vv. 21-26); (2) Purity (vv. 27-30); (3) Harmony (vv. 31-32); (4) Honesty (vv. 33-37); (5) Kindness (vv. 38-42); (6) Love (vv. 43-48). We want to note each of these in succession.

#### I. PEACEABLENESS (vv. 21-26)

The sixth commandment said, “Do not murder.” But Jesus went farther in His demand: “Do not be angry with your brother.” The first involved action; the second involved attitude.

E. Stanley Jones finds here a principle governing this whole section (5:21-48). He puts it this way: “Reverence for personality is the basis of Jesus’ teaching in regard to our duties to man.”<sup>18</sup> He also says, “Jesus had a passion for man,” and tells this incident: General Booth stood before Queen Victoria, who asked him what she might do for him. The founder and head of the Salvation Army replied: “Your Majesty, some people’s passion is money, and some people’s passion is fame, but my passion has been men.”<sup>19</sup> That is the true spirit of Christ.

Some people might object to Jones' use of the phrase "reverence for personality." But we must remember that "man" was made in the image of God—both Adam and Eve (Genesis 1:27). Though that image has been horribly marred, some aspects of it (such as moral responsibility) still remain. People are not to be treated as animals.

## II. PURITY (vv. 27-30)

The seventh commandment said, "Do not commit adultery." But again Jesus went a long step farther. He declared that any man "who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart" (v. 28).

This is a hard saying. With all the pornography around us these days, how can a man keep his thoughts clean? It is very important that we tell young men, especially, that a sudden arousal of sex desire because of a seductive confrontation does not constitute sin. It is only as we harbor the bad thoughts and begin to relish them that we become guilty. The old saying is still true today: "You can't keep birds from flying over your head, but you can keep them from building nests in your hair." E. Stanley Jones helpfully writes: "Thoughts of sin become sinful thoughts only when they are held and harbored."<sup>20</sup> Joseph Smith once said that the devil will perch on one shoulder and whisper evil thoughts in our ear, and then move over to the other shoulder and tell us we have sinned and might as well quit trying to be a Christian.

## III. HARMONY (vv. 31-32)

Jesus came down hard on divorce—allowed only in the case of "marital unfaithfulness." The shocking epidemic of divorce today only reveals how far America has gone from God.

But it is not enough to avoid divorce. As Christians, we must have harmony in our homes. Christian love must find some way of bringing this about.

It is claimed that the formation of a pearl begins with some such irritation as a grain of sand inside the shell of an oyster. To counteract the pain the oyster covers the annoying speck with a fluid that hardens into a pearl. We must cover our irritations—which are bound to come—with love, until they become precious pearls.

## IV. HONESTY (vv. 33-37)

Here we have the emphasis on reverence for truth. We should not have to swear that we are telling the truth; we should simply tell the truth!

One day we heard a young boy excitedly telling his older sister something. She probably looked incredulous, for I heard him say emphatically over and over: "Honest to God, Josey, I'm telling you the truth." That didn't necessarily make it true!

E. Stanley Jones says of Jesus: "He knew that oaths were of no use—a good man would not need one, and a bad man would not heed one. He brushed them aside, for he knew that nothing extraneous will produce truth if a man is not inwardly truthful."<sup>21</sup>

Actually, the practice of requiring a witness to

swear in court that he is telling the truth creates a double standard. If he tells a falsehood under oath, he can be legally punished for perjury. But if he is not under oath he can tell all the lies he wants to. God has no such double standard. We are to tell the truth all the time.

## V. KINDNESS (vv. 38-42)

Again Jesus quoted the Mosaic law. This time it was: "An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth." But Jesus commanded: "Do not resist an evil person."

We may wonder why the divine law allowed retaliation. But the whole purpose was to put restrictions on it. But again Jesus went farther. E. Stanley Jones says: "The Jewish law *limited* revenge; Jesus abolished it."<sup>22</sup> He also writes: "The legal system would restrain the deed; Jesus would constrain the doer. Law touches the surface, love touches the center; one is retributive, the other is redemptive."<sup>23</sup>

## VI. LOVE (vv. 43-48)

The Mosaic law did say, "Love your neighbor"; but it did not say, "Hate your enemy." In any case, Jesus countered with the command: "Love your enemies." The quickest way to get rid of an enemy is to love him.

But loving one's enemy is not natural; it is supernatural. Only God, who is love (1 John 4:8, 16), can implant such love in our hearts by His Holy Spirit.

Deshazer was in a plane that bombed Japan in the Second World War and was shot down. His captors punished him relentlessly, until he hated them. In solitary confinement he became desperate for something to read and pulled out of his bag a Bible his mother had given him. Reading the Word brought him to Christ. When repatriated, he studied in seminary to go back and preach redemptive love to his enemies who had hated him. That is perfect love.



## NOTES

\*All scripture references in this article are from the *New International Version*.

1. E. Stanley Jones, *The Christ of the Mount* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1931), p. 14.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 17.

3. William Fitch, *The Beatitudes of Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1961), p. 6.

4. *Ibid.*

5. *Ibid.*, p. 24.

6. *Ibid.*

7. Arthur W. Pink, *An Exposition of the Sermon on the Mount* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1951), p. 17.

8. D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Studies in the Sermon on the Mount* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1959), 1:58.

9. John Wesley, *Sermons on Several Occasions*, First series (London: Epworth Press, 1944), p. 202.

10. Fitch, p. 49.

11. Jones, p. 70.

12. Lloyd-Jones, p. 77.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 79.

14. *Ibid.*

15. Fitch, p. 66.

16. Jones, pp. 72-73.

17. Wesley, p. 218.

18. Jones, p. 132.

19. *Ibid.*, p. 135.

20. *Ibid.*, p. 149.

21. *Ibid.*, pp. 159-60.

22. *Ibid.*, p. 171.

23. *Ibid.*

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# Preaching on Matthew's Teachings About Discipleship

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**P**robably more sermons have been preached from the Gospel of Matthew than from any other book in the Bible. Part of this is due to its length, to its position as the connecting link between the Testaments, and to its status as the "best seller" even in the second century A.D. Part of it is due to its preservation of so much of Jesus' teachings; the book is structured around a kind of "second Pentateuch," five extended discourses of Jesus (5:1—7:29; 9:35—11:1; 13:1-53; 18:1-35; 24:1—25:46), each being followed by "when Jesus had finished these words"<sup>1</sup> or an equivalent expression.

Beyond these factors, a major part of Matthew's homiletical popularity is due to the author's pastoral concerns, which are as pertinent in the 20th century as they were in the first. Apparently he wrote at a time when the church had become mixed in membership with both genuine converts and nominal believers; when many disciples' lives were not different from those of the heathen; when the church was often powerless to meet the human needs which surrounded it or the challenges of a satanic world which threatened to overwhelm it.<sup>2</sup> To speak to the church in such a time, Matthew set forth the whole truth about discipleship as his Master had taught it. Pastors identify with his concerns, and they find not only every conceivable topic about discipleship, but also ideally sized and structured paragraphs to serve as texts.

We will first seek to define discipleship. Then we will look at discipleship as Matthew paints it. Hopefully, in studying the abbreviated analysis of the book beside an open Bible, the pastor will find suggestions for intriguing topics, for tying together passages which provide startling light on each other, and for developing series of sermons on discipleship that will speak to the church which finds itself again in the age of Matthew.

## Meaning of Discipleship

While discipleship is now a term considered inseparably characteristic of Christianity, it originated

in the schools of the ancient Greek philosophers. At first it always referred to a continuing personal relationship between a teacher and a student. Later it was broadened to include the formal dependence one thinker might have on another who had lived centuries before him. The element in the relationship which bound teacher and disciples together was the teacher's ideas. The ideas provided the core around which a school of thought developed, and these intellectual concepts were perpetuated by the "disciples" after the teacher's death.

There is no real parallel to "disciple" in the Old Testament. The Greek word for disciple does not appear in the accepted manuscripts of the Septuagint. This appears to be due to the Hebrew understanding that God himself was the source of revelation. There was no need for the teacher-disciple relationship in terms of developing a school of thought and perpetuating a teacher's ideas. But in later Judaism, under the influence of Greek culture, a parallel relationship developed between the rabbis and the *talmidim*, the beginning or apprentice rabbis. A *talmid* would attach himself to a recognized rabbi and study the Torah under his guidance. This was a temporary relationship, to be continued only until the beginner could himself achieve status with the community of faith. The Torah itself, God's eternal law, was the determining factor in the relationship, not the ideas of the teacher.

Christian discipleship in the New Testament reflects a significant reshaping of the concept. The central factor is again a continuing personal relationship between the disciple and the teacher, but this relationship is more radical than was ever thought of by philosopher or rabbi. The disciple's association with Jesus is a personal attachment "which shapes the whole life of the disciple, and which in its details leaves no doubt as to who is deploying the formative power."<sup>3</sup> In the four Gospels, Jesus is pictured as calling His disciples, determining the conditions of discipleship. It is not an idea or even the eternal Torah which is the con-



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trolling factor of the relationship, but the person of Jesus himself. As a result, the disciple's response is in terms of faith and obedience. The disciple is not one who is learning in the ordinary sense, neither is he one who challenges or discusses what Jesus is saying so as to give his own opinion; rather he accepts Jesus' word in terms of the will and puts it into practice. Furthermore, he never outgrows his status—Jesus continues as the teacher and he as the disciple.

In the New Testament, the verb "follow" (*akoloutheo*) is used extensively in a manner synonymous to discipleship. The disciple is one who follows his Lord. Since Jesus was constantly on the move, this meant for His disciples a total abandonment of all else to go with Him. As disciples, they were expected to suffer with Him and to give themselves to a life of service just as He did. The radical difference between the disciples of the philosophers and rabbis and those of Jesus becomes even more apparent following Jesus' death and resurrection. When He ascended into heaven, He did not instruct His disciples to convene to discuss His ideas. They were rather to bear witness concerning Him, for to them He was still the living Lord in the midst of His Church.

It is interesting to observe that while the radical concept of discipleship was retained throughout the New Testament age, the *term* was not extensively used after Jewish influence waned. "Disciple" and the synonymous use of "follow" appear only in the four Gospels and the Book of Acts, except for two uses of "follow" in the Revelation. This was apparently due to the spread of the Church into the Greek world, where there was too much danger of Christianity being misunderstood as just another philosophy (cf. Acts 17:16-34). So the term "disciples" was gradually replaced by "church" (the called-out ones) or "saints" (the separated ones or holy ones), and the concept of discipleship was expressed by such terms as Paul's "in Christ," growing in grace and knowledge, becoming "living sacrifices," serving as "ambassadors of Christ."

### Discipleship in Matthew

The Gospel of Matthew is one of our main sources for understanding discipleship. Only the Gospel of John uses the noun "disciple" more frequently. But Matthew uses the synonymous expression "to follow" most frequently. He is the only writer who uses the verb "to be" or "to make disciples," and

the only one to refer to the Twelve as "twelve disciples" (10:1; 11:1).

### The Conditions of Discipleship

Conditions of discipleship are introduced by both John the Baptist (3:2) and Jesus (4:17) when they indicate that the entrance to discipleship is by way of repentance. Repentance is of course a change in one's thinking, a complete turning around in one's views and attitudes, and John emphasizes this by calling for evidence—"fruit in keeping with repentance" (3:8). Jesus, in His first great discourse, the Sermon on the Mount, emphasizes the stringency of the entrance by speaking of a narrow or small gate, a narrow way which "leads to life" but which only a few find (7:13-14). He later indicated that discipleship was for those who had radical spiritual needs and who acknowledged such (9:12), and called for a radical conversion to produce disciples who were childlike in trust and receptiveness (18:1-4; 19:13-15).

The conditions are further defined as involving the following of Jesus. Peter and Andrew leave their nets and James and John their boat, abandoning their former life to be with the new teacher (4:18-22).<sup>4</sup> Jesus later makes it clear that following takes precedence over the need for shelter and responsibilities to parents (8:18-22). It involves the denial of self, the taking up of a personal cross—the risk of life itself (16:21-26). It involves the surrender of every competing value, loyalty, or interest so that the disciple is occupied only with following Him (19:16-30). In Jesus' second discourse, His instructions to the Twelve as He sends them on their first mission, He deals at length with the radical cost of following Him—being delivered up to courts, scourgings in synagogues, betrayal by family, hatred from all (10:16-42).

The conditions include criteria for determining faithfulness. One measure of greatness in a disciple is his keeping and teaching of the commandments (5:19). In fact, the righteousness of a disciple must exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees (5:20; cf. the implications of this in 5:21-44). Jesus goes so far as to demand a perfection of love (5:45-48; cf. 7:12; 22:34-40) and a perfection of discipleship in terms of choice and commitment (19:16-30). He declares that the wise man is the one who hears His words and does them, thus building his life upon a sure foundation (7:24-28; cf. hearing and understanding His words, 13:16-17, 23). Disciples are to make other disciples by "teaching them to observe all that" Jesus has said (28:20). Disciples will be judged on the basis of their own words (12:37), but practice is more important than profession (21:28-32), and judgment ultimately will be based on deeds (16:27).

It is interesting that the full understanding of the demands of discipleship came to Jesus' followers in stages. The radical nature of discipleship is indicated from the very beginning, but it comes through to the developing disciple with increasing clarity at various points in his pilgrimage.

Matthew's stringent conditions for discipleship

and the works-oriented criteria by which faithfulness was to be judged appear to be alien to salvation by grace alone. However, he recognizes the gracious origin of discipleship—Jesus tells the Twelve, “freely you received, freely give” (10:8). But apparently the doctrine of salvation by grace had been abused by Matthew’s fellow-Christians to the point that conversion was no longer radical, producing those who followed Christ at any cost. So he puts the emphasis on the conditions of entry, the costs of pursuit, and the criteria of faithfulness.

### The Characteristics of Discipleship

Jesus begins His first great discourse with a description of His disciples. They are “the poor in spirit,” “those who mourn,” “the gentle” or meek, “those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,” “the merciful,” “the pure,” “the peacemakers,” “those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness” (5:3-12). There is implied in this a characteristic of dependence, even vulnerability, which shows up repeatedly in many ways. Disciples are “little ones” (10:42) who believe in Him (18:6) and who have angelic intercessors in heaven (18:10), “babes” to whom the Father has revealed things hidden from the wise and intelligent (11:25; 13:11, 16-17; cf. the conversion to childlikeness, 18:1-4; 19:13-15). Disciples find greatness in filling the role of servants (20:25-28; 23:6-12), and serve as yoke-bearers and learners (11:29).

Disciples are also people with a mission. They “are the salt of the earth” (5:13), “the light of the world” (5:14-16). They are to go preaching, healing, raising the dead, cleansing the lepers, casting out the demons (10:5-15). They are to acknowledge Jesus’ Messiahship and have in their control the keys to the Kingdom (16:15-19). They are to preach the gospel of the Kingdom to the whole world (24:14), making disciples of all the nations (28:19).

### The Contingencies of Discipleship

Even the conditions of discipleship reveal contingent elements in man’s response to this relationship. There is also the wide gate/broad way which leads to destruction, and many find it (7:13-14). There is the disciple who wanted to put other loyalties first before following Jesus (8:21-22), the potential disciple who turned away grieving because he considered the cost too great (19:16-22). The measure of littleness also is revealed in him who breaks the commandments and influences others to do so (5:19). There is the foolish man who does not hear and do but builds upon the sand (7:24-28). There are the hard soil, the shallow soil, the pre-occupied soil (13:19-22). And judgment speaks of condemnation for failure as well as a crown for faithfulness.

Matthew stresses the contingency of discipleship. On the one hand, he identifies faith as the key to miracles (8:5-13) and to moving mountains (17:20; 21:21). On the other hand, he quotes Jesus’ use of the term “little-faith” with His disciples (five of the six times it appears in the New Testament—6:30; 8:26; 14:31; 16:8; 17:20). And he notes their power-

lessness to satisfy the hungry (14:16-17; 15:32-34), to triumph over the elements (14:24-31), to cope with human tragedy (17:16-20).

Matthew feels so keenly the contingency of discipleship that under the Spirit’s direction he interprets the lost sheep not as an unconverted sinner (cf. Luke’s interpretation, also under the Spirit’s guidance, Luke 15:4-7) but as a straying disciple (18:12; cf. 18:6, 10, 14-15). Even forgiveness which has been granted and appropriated can be forfeited if the forgiven disciple is guilty of an unforgiving spirit (18:23-35, esp. v. 35).<sup>5</sup> One even makes it to the wedding feast and is expelled because he does not have on a wedding garment (22:11-14). But the element of contingency is not all negative. While the stubborn disciple may have to be excommunicated from the fellowship (18:15-20), the lost disciple may be found (18:13-14), and even the faithless Twelve who forsake their Lord may be restored (26:31-32).

In Jesus’ last great discourse, the Olivet Discourse on last things, the element of contingency is dominant. There is danger of disciples being misled (24:4-5, 11, 24), giving way to fear (24:6), falling away and developing hatred between brethren (24:10), growing cold in love (24:12), indulging in self-centeredness and self-service with the consequences of final lostness (24:48-51), failing to keep ready (25:1-13), practicing poor stewardship (25:18, 24-30), overlooking opportunities to serve those little ones (the least of the brethren, 25:41-46). But there also await the full benefits of discipleship for him who “endures to the end” (24:13), is “on the alert” (24:42), carries out his Master’s instructions (10:45-47), is ready however long the wait may be (25:1-13), exercises good stewardship (25:14-30), like his Master loves others indiscriminately and thus serves the little ones without even knowing the significance of what he does (25:31-46).

**M**atthew’s strong emphasis on the conditions and contingencies of discipleship should not obscure the joys of discipleship. In fact, it was because of his heartbreak over the tragedy of seeing the glory of true discipleship lost that he spoke so strongly. To make clear the rigors of discipleship is to enhance its attractiveness. Could it be that much of the church’s diluted quality and weakness of service is due to sermonically avoidance of the rugged aspects of following Jesus?



### NOTES

1. All scriptural quotations are from the *New American Standard Bible* (NASB).

2. R. E. O. White, *The Mind of Matthew* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1979), esp. pp. 34-47. The author of this very helpful introduction calls Matthew “a manual of church discipline” (p. 2), and gives a whole chapter to “A Manual for the Church” (pp. 48-60).

3. K. H. Rengstorf in Gerhard Kittel, ed., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1967), 4:441.

4. A different word is used for Jesus’ call of the disciples, literally “Come after me” (4:19). But the standard *akoloutho* or “follow” is used of the disciples’ response (4:20, 22).

5. White, *The Mind of Matthew*, pp. 101, 150. See the chapters on “The Church and the Future: Judgment” (pp. 90-104) and “On Being a Disciple” (pp. 139-54). The author, principal of the Scottish Baptist College in Glasgow, provides a devastating response to the theory of unconditional eternal security.

# MATTHEW, PROCLAIMER OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

**T**he authority of Jesus gives substance to the requirements of the law. Armed with the belief that Jesus was the Son of God, the Savior of mankind, and the dispenser of the Holy Spirit, Matthew sets his thoughts of righteousness on the clear and intentional teaching of Jesus. He uses them as an authoritative call to the Church to live up to its potential in Christ.

## **Matthew, His Purpose and Audience**

Matthew reveals a unique grasp both of the life and teaching of Jesus, and the needs of the Early Church. He portrays Jesus as the Messiah, demonstrating his messianic ministry in word and deed.

The central message of Matthew is the righteousness of Jesus and its demand on those who enter the Kingdom. This ringing demand is not only to know but to do the will of God.

The language of Matthew, his reference to Jewish practice and law, makes it clear that he is not only a Jew himself, but writing to Jews within the new Christian Church rooted in and strongly influenced by Judaism.

It is essential that we give some thought to the Jewish concept of God and His law. To the Jew, the knowledge of God is not a store of facts about God, but a relationship, a covenant with the living God. God is not an object; He is a person who has spoken to man in His law. He is One to whom man is accountable, and One who is to be worshipped. Thus, not only are words important but actions as well.

In other religions, gods, heroes, priests are holy; to the Bible, not only God but the whole community is holy (Num. 16:3). "Ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, a holy people" (Exod. 19:6, author's translation), was the reason for Israel's election, the meaning of its distinction. What obtains between

man and God is no mere submission to His power or dependence upon His mercy. The plea is not to obey what He wills, but to do what He is. It is not said: Ye shall be full of awe for I am holy, but: "Ye shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy" (Lev. 19:2).<sup>1</sup>

There is no such holiness unless there is the blending of the knowledge of God with the deeds of man. God may have given His law to be obeyed, but also to teach man God's intention for him in practical living.

To reduce Judaism to Law is to limit it to legal behaviorism; to reduce it to inwardness is to make it spiritualism. "By inwardness alone we do not come close to God. The purest intentions, the finest sense of devotion, the noblest spiritual aspirations are fatuous when not realized in action. Spiritualism is a way for angels, not for man."<sup>2</sup>

This concept of the law of God is in Matthew's mind as he tries to call the Early Church back from too great a sense of freedom to what he believes to be a more balanced righteousness.

We know that versions of Christianity had arisen in which orthodoxy of belief, or intensity of emotional experience, pride of spiritual knowledge, even confidence in some link with the Christian pioneers, had come to possess greater importance than transformed character and holiness of life. Matthew was aware of this. There were those who thought that personal goodness, simple rectitude of conduct, purity of heart, truthfulness of speech, fairness of mind, uprightness and kindness, have little to do with religious experience. There were even those (Matthew recalls that Jesus said so) who not only relax the commandments of God for themselves but teach others to do so, causing them to stumble.

"To Matthew's mind this was a gross misrepresentation of the Master and of the gospel, and the root cause of the sad condition of the Church. Christians seemed to have forgotten that the highest end of all their faith, experience, and profession is right living."<sup>3</sup> It is Matthew's purpose to call the Church back to a clear view of personal responsibility for actions.

The Church is not a group of people simply with privileges, but a people with a task. Matthew would not let them forget that they were called to be a part of the Kingdom. They were God's people. They were



by Jim Tracy,

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to love His righteousness, and seek it as hungry to be holy, this search that would end in right living. Their task was not only to obey the commands of the Law, but to live out the righteousness of Christ being a new people, and by this newness calling all nations to God and godliness.

Matthew ends his gospel with Jesus' saying, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I will be with you always, to the very end of the age" (Matt. 28:18-20, NIV). This lived-out Godlikeness Matthew views as righteousness (Matt. 6:33).

### **Matthew, His Message of Righteousness**

The crucial question to Matthew and his audience was the same as voiced by Micah years earlier, "What does the Lord require of you . . .?" (Mic. 6:8).

To the Jew much of that answer had to center in the statements of the Law. Matthew carefully shows us that Jesus the Messiah holds the Law in high regard. Right living is going to center in obedience to the authority of God's commands, so Matthew uses his Gospel narrative to highlight Christ's attitudes toward the Law. He does this by the words and actions of Jesus which he includes or excludes as compared to the others' Gospels. He also shows Jesus teaching clearly the principles of God's law, making it clear that He is not abolishing the Law but fulfilling it even where there seems to be differences between His teaching and the traditions of the Jews.

In his book *The Mind of Matthew*, R. E. O. White says Matthew carefully describes Christ's attitude to the Law. "By innumerable small touches, he shows Jesus blameless before the law, and careful to expound the true legal position when he was accused. When the disciples are accused of breaking the sabbath by reaping corn, Matthew adds to Mark's story Jesus' words about the legal right of the priests to place need above ritual. Similarly in Matthew, Jesus meets the challenge about eating with sinners not only with the analogy of the physician, but first with a quotation from the scripture setting mercy above ritual."<sup>4</sup>

Another interesting insight is the first recorded saying of Jesus in each of the Gospels. In Matthew, it is His response to John the Baptist at the time of His baptism. He is recorded as saying, "Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness" (Matt. 3:15, NIV). In Mark, He first speaks about repentance; in Luke He responds to His mother as they have looked for Him on their trip home from the Temple; and in John He first speaks in calling His first disciples.

Only Matthew includes the statements of chapter 5:17-19, which are perhaps the strongest statements of all about the demands of righteousness as revealed in the law of God. Matthew colors his narrative further by things which he omits that are included by the other Gospel writers, certainly things which might show Christ holding a lesser respect for the Law or the Temple. "Matthew avoids

the impression that Jesus threatened the Temple, or swore on oath; and he omits Mark's comment that Jesus abrogated all food laws, as well as the statement that Jesus was 'numbered with the transgressors.' Matthew does not record, as Luke does, that Jesus was once accused of eating with unwashed hands, although he does retain the reply which Jesus made (Luke 11:38; Matthew 23:25)."<sup>5</sup>

The teachings of Jesus concerning the law are also strengthened by what Matthew adds to such statements as the golden rule, recorded in Luke 6:31, and to the record of the question concerning the great commandment. Matthew records Jesus as saying on these occasions, "For this sums up the law and the prophets" (Matt. 7:12, NIV), and "all the law and the prophets hang on these two commandments" (Matt. 22:40, NIV).

Righteousness is not, however, stressed only in the upholding of the Law but in the positive teachings of Jesus. Righteousness, that is right living, is rooted in a right relationship with God. Before righteousness can be expressed it must be. Jesus states that the righteousness of which he speaks cannot be pretentious—it must exceed that, it must be a quality of spirit sought and found in God. Inner desire must be stirred. Spiritual value must be established. One must hunger and thirst to be holy, but he must do so in the full expectation of being filled with spiritual satisfaction.

Note these sayings of Jesus which Matthew records. "So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well" (Matt. 6:31-33, NIV). "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled" (Matt. 5:6, NIV).

"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven" (Matt. 7:21, NIV).

This inward regard for God expressed in a love for righteousness and a willingness to pursue spiritual values above all else is the margin Jesus speaks of requiring in Matt. 5:20, "For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven" (NIV).

Perhaps Jesus' statement in Matt. 22:37-39 makes his kind of righteousness more clearly understood than any other statement. "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself'" (NIV). Clearly Jesus places love above the Law—not to the exclusion of it, but as the fulfillment of it. *Righteousness would thus be the lived-out expression of love.*

### **Matthew, His Message for Today**

Arthur Pink says, "Healthy Christianity can only be maintained where the balance is properly pre-



served between a faithful exposition of the holy law of God and a pressing of its claims upon the conscience, and by tenderly preaching the Gospel and applying its balm to stricken hearts. Where the former predominates to the virtual exclusion of the latter, self-righteous pharisaism is fostered; and where the proclamation of the Gospel ousts the requirement of the law, antinomian licentiousness is engendered.”<sup>6</sup>

It is clear that Christianity is being greatly influenced by humanistic philosophy today. We are far from the extreme of legalism, but have swung too far to the extreme of antinomian licentiousness. It is imperative that we today hear the call of Matthew to a balance of love and obedience.

We must rediscover the fact that we are not the center of the universe. That God’s holiness and honor are of more importance than our pride and pleasure. He may offer us an abundant life; but it is not an abundance of things to enjoy or thrills to experience, but an abundance of His love and righteousness.

Humanistic society may speak of kindness and helpfulness. It may lay emphasis upon the needs of mankind and his resources to rise to the occasion to supply them, but its influence is also toward indulgence and permissiveness. We of the Church have not escaped this tendency toward personal ease and permissiveness.

I believe that Matthew can lead sincere Christians to an unqualified source of authority. Though the Bible as we have it was only in the making in Matthew’s day, the Scriptures, the Law and the Prophets, were his guide. The Bible must again become our genuine source of authority or we will be led farther and farther from our course of righteousness.

In Christianity today there is a fascinating newness of self-expression, perhaps a refreshing newness of praise to Christ; but one danger lingers close to this new wave of Christian expression which we must carefully recognize. That is the danger of allowing our “experience” to become the authority of what is genuine righteousness. Experience is the obvious result of a chosen faith, but it must be brought into line with scriptural righteousness or it is nothing more than “a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal.”

The pampered members of the North American church may need nothing quite as much as a pulpit call for the lived-out love-righteousness of Matthew’s Gospel.

Matthew, preach it again to us today.

### SUGGESTED SERMON THEMES

#### Matthew 5:13-20 “Righteousness that exceeds.”

**Introduction:** Christ and a quality of life as portrayed in the Beatitudes.

A model of humble, peaceful determined commitment to godliness.

#### I. Righteousness Is to Be Corrective and Contagious

Christ illustrates this by two examples:

- A. You are the salt of the earth (v. 13).
- B. You are the light of the world (v. 14).

#### II. Righteousness Can Lose Its Effectiveness.

This the Pharisees had proved.

- A. They had lost their savor. (Self-righteous rather than compassionate)
- B. They had put a bushel over their light. (Hemmed it in by traditions and rules)

#### III. Righteousness Is a Blend of Faith and Works.

- A. Do deeds that honor God (v. 16).
- B. Practicing and teaching go together (v. 19). (Jas. 2:14-26) “Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do” (Jas. 2:18, NIV).

**Conclusion:** Righteousness is only contagious when it is a blend of genuine “being” and genuine “doing.”

#### Matthew 5:6 “Hunger and Thirst and Living.”

**Introduction:** Confusion arises in man’s faith when he is not clear on the sinfulness of sin. As one person said, “The person who has been raised in the church and abstained from the evil of the world, has to tell what God did for his father instead of telling what God did for him.” This, of course, misses the deep sense of righteousness.

#### I. Righteousness Has Its Beginning in Heeding the Message of Jesus, Matt. 4:17.

- A. Motivation—freedom from guilt
- B. Forgiveness and peace

#### II. Righteousness Reaches Its Deeper Meaning in Christian Holiness.

- A. False motivations of seeking
  1. Seeking for an easier way
  2. As an escape from problems of the sin nature
  3. Seeking as a means of discipline preached by the church
- B. True motivation of seeking
  1. Christ’s words, v. 6—The desire to be holy.

#### III. Righteousness Is the Equipping for Living.

- A. Making you salt and
- B. Light in the world.

**Conclusion:** Only proper seeking can end in filling, and only filling can equip for serving God in the beauty of holiness.

*Other suggestions:*

1. The Tyranny of Desire (Matt. 6:25-33).
2. Talk Isn’t Enough (Matt. 7:15-23).
3. Do What God Is (Matt. 5:48).



### NOTES

1. Abraham Joshua Heschel, *God in Search of Man: A Philosophy of Judaism* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1977), p. 289.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 340.
3. R. E. O. White, *The Mind of Matthew* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1979), p. 62.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 76.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 77.
6. Arthur W. Pink, *An Exposition of the Sermon on the Mount* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1959), p. 55.

# Preaching from th

My friend *Willard Taylor* wrote many things—books, commentaries, articles, scholarly papers, lectures, and sermons. He did not live to see his last book, *Beacon Bible Expo-*

*sitions* on Galatians and Ephesians. It came off the press about a week after his untimely death.

This article, however, was his last writing project. He died

with this unfinished article still in the typewriter. He died in his chair surrounded by books he was using as resources for this piece. Of special significance was the last line he ever wrote.

*The Editor*

Let a preacher employ the word “parable,” and immediately the listener’s mind is flooded with unforgettable pictures from the New Testament: a farmer marching across a field scattering seed, an unashamed man pounding on a neighbor’s door in the dark of the night, a woman exasperatedly searching her house for a lost coin, and numerous other scenes. We Christians have been nurtured on these pictures because they are part of the biblical record of the preaching of Jesus.

It has been stated, and correctly so, that parabolic preaching is Jesus’ art. Of course, the rabbis before and during Jesus’ day used parables in their ministry, but no one perfected and employed this method of presenting the truth more effectively than Jesus. Parables are the most characteristic aspect of His ministry. Approximately one-third of His recorded teaching involves parables.

At one point in his Gospel, Mark notes, “With many such parables he spoke the word to them, as they were able to hear it; he did not speak to them without a parable” (4:33-34, RSV).

It would not be an error in interpretation to conclude that to know the parables of Jesus is to know

the heart of His message. A preacher, therefore, who desires that his people understand who Jesus is and the essence of His message, would do well to devote serious attention to the interpretation of these enchanting stories.

## Principles of Interpretation

If we concede that true proclamation includes sound interpretation of the Word, it would be wise for us preachers to establish the principles by which we will interpret the parables.

1. *The history of interpretation.* Wisdom dictates that the search for the valid principles of interpretation should include a survey of the history of interpretation. In other words, What principles have guided the interpretation of the parables during the history of the Church?

A. M. Hunter, in his concise yet insightful monograph entitled *Interpreting the Parables*, gives a brief history which is divided into three periods. The first period embraces the centuries from the Apostolic Age through the Middle Ages. During this era the controlling principles for interpreting the parables was allegory. “To allegorize or not to allegorize, that was the question during this period.” Allegory assumes that the

people, things, and happenings in a story have hidden meanings and the interpreter must ferret out those meanings and state them for the hearers.

Influenced apparently by Greek practice, some of the great teachers of this period—Irenaeus, Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, and Augustine—were amazingly adept at allegorization.

For example, the incomparable Origen declared, “What we have to do is to transform the sensible Gospel into a spiritual one. . . . Our whole energy is to be directed to the effort to penetrate to the deep things of the meaning of the Gospel.” Note how he allegorizes “The Good Samaritan.”

*The man who fell among thieves is Adam. As Jerusalem represents heaven, so Jericho, to which the traveller journeyed, is the world. The robbers are man’s enemies, the devil and his minions. The priest stands for the Law, the Levite for the prophets. The good Samaritan is Christ himself. The beast on which the wounded man was set, is Christ’s body which bears the fallen Adam. The inn is the Church; the two pence, the Father and the Son; and the Samaritan’s promise to come again, Christ’s Second Advent.<sup>1</sup>*

# ngdom Parables



by Willard H. Taylor

Augustine treats this parable even more flamboyantly. He says

*that the wounded traveller is fallen man, half alive in his knowledge of God and half dead in his slavery to sin; the binding up of his wounds signifies Christ's restraint of sin; the pouring in of oil and wine, the comfort of good hope and the exhortation to spirited work. The innkeeper, dropping his incognito, is revealed as the Apostle Paul; and the two pence turn out to be the two commandments of love.*<sup>2</sup>

Not all the teachers of this period favored the allegorical method. The leaders of the school which has been identified with Antioch of Syria—Theodore of Mopsuestia and John Chrysostom—insisted that one must interpret the elements in the parables that are urgent and essential and not waste time on all the details. The central truth of a parable must be unearthed and declared and the rest of the story should not consume a person's time. Despite the protest of the Antiochene school to allegorization, that mode of interpretation prevailed.

The second period delimited by Hunter is the Renaissance and Reformation. Here we discover a

movement away from the esoteric and bizarre to an attempt to express the plain and obvious meaning of the Scripture.

Luther characterized the middle-centuries allegorists as "clerical jugglers performing monkey tricks." He did not abandon allegory entirely, for he tended to find his doctrine of *sola fide* everywhere in the parables.

Calvin, on the other hand, the great interpreter of Scripture that he was, considered the allegories of the Fathers "idle fooleries" and sought himself to go "arrow-straight for the natural meaning of a parable" and to put it down in one short, clear sentence.

For example, in dealing with the "Unjust Steward" (Luke 16:1-13), Calvin writes: "How stupid it is to want to interpret it in every detail! Christ simply meant that the children of this world are more diligent in their concern for their own fleeting interests than the sons of light for their eternal well-being."

Numerous scholars of this period, both Protestant and Catholic, were influenced by Reformation approach, but each one had his particular emphasis with respect to the meaning of the kingdom of God as expressed in the parables.

The third period is the modern one. In 1841, R. C. Trench, an Anglican archbishop, published his famous *Notes on the Parables*, which is still in print today. He insists on seeking the main point of a parable; but the details, which are ancillary to the main idea, are squeezed to yield thoughts which remind one of the interpretations of the Early Fathers.

A. B. Bruce's *Parabolic Teaching of Christ*, released in 1882, emphasizes the need of the interpreter to seek the one idea in each story. However, Bruce's theological commitment leads him to conceive the kingdom of God in liberal terms, as a Divine Commonwealth to be gradually established here on earth.

As far as the progress of parabolic hermeneutics is concerned, the important person during this time is a German by the name of Adolf Julicher, who published in 1888-89 a two-volume work on the parables, *Die Gleichnisreden Jesu*, in which he sounded the death knell of the allegorizing of the parables.

Parables are similitudes, not allegories. Each one has one point of comparison or likeness. One must concentrate on this point and consider the rest of the story as narrative or dramatic machin-

## Poor exegesis can lead to sermonic monstrosities.

ery. Being the liberal he was, Julicher assumed that the one point of each parable was a general moral point. He did not relate the truth of the parables to the central teaching of the Gospels and the rest of the New Testament having to do with the atoning work of Christ.

However, the value of his work has to do with drawing commentators away from excessive allegorical modes of interpretation and leading them to finding more realistic and wholistic ways of dealing with these stories.

A very important name in the modern period is C. H. Dodd, whose little book *The Parables of the Kingdom* cut new ground in explicating the parables. Dodd argued against Julicher's moralizing method but agreed with him that the typical parable presents one single point of comparison.

However, he declared that the parables must be interpreted in their historical setting. One should not try to modernize them and attempt to place upon them some current moral idea. The setting of the parables is the message of Jesus which has to do with the realized presence of the kingdom of God. That thought must govern their interpretation, according to Dodd.

This outstanding teacher won his day and competent interpreters today give serious attention to understanding the life-situation in which the stories were told. Of special importance was the full message of Jesus as found in the Gospels.

Since the publication of Dodd's work in 1935, the field of parable study has been in constant fermentation. Numerous studies have been made recommending various modes of interpretation. Space will not permit even a brief reference to the leading ones.

### 2. Principles of Interpretation.

Poor exegesis will often lead to fallacies regarding the Gospel, but also in some cases create sermonic monstrosities. It is imperative, therefore, that we be guided by valid hermeneutical principles.

(a) **Seek for the single truth in the parable.** Build your message around it, drawing upon the elements of the story and any comments on the parable by Jesus or by the writer of the Gospel. Each story has some subsidiary truths, but they are bound to the controlling truth. The best homiletical style emphasizes one major idea and its ramifications rather than two or three separate thoughts.

(b) **Contextual study is absolutely necessary.** Both the immediate context and the wider context of the particular Gospel in which the parable is found, as well as parallel recordings in other Gospels must be studied. However, *Sitz im Leben*, that is, the life-situation of Jesus himself and the Early Church should be explored. Who is this Man Jesus? Why does He preach this way? What is the Gospel writer intending to say to his readers through the recording of the parable in this particular setting?

These are all highly relevant interpretative questions because they open up preaching possibilities for our day. Below we will be dealing with the content of the message of the Kingdom which is informative of this phase of the interpretative process.

(c) A corollary of the previous principle is the need to **interpret the parables Christologically**. All that Jesus said and did was to the end of revealing himself to His hearers. We have been reminded again and again that the parables are challenges thrown out to men to respond to Jesus, that is to say,

to render a judgment concerning Him. Even when Jesus leads with a reference to the kingdom of God, He is introducing something about himself to which there must be a response.

The parables do not express general moral truths, such as, "It pays to be good, to work hard, to love your neighbor." Goodness and love are defined in the Christian faith by the nature of Christ and our relationship to Him. Our concepts of human goodness and love fall far short of the divine demand. Thus the call is to surrender to life in the Kingdom which turns out to be much more radical than we expected.

(d) **The rule of the end stress must be followed, too.** By this is meant that the spotlight generally falls on the last element in a parable. For example, in the parable of the leaven (Matt. 13:33) the emphasis seems to be upon the clause "till it was all leavened" (RSV). Or, in the parable of "Wise and Foolish Maidens" the concluding word is an exhortation: "Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour" (Matt. 25:13, RSV).

**T**he quotation of Matt. 25:13 was the last line Willard Taylor ever wrote. The hand-written notes which I found at his desk indicated that Willard was going to proceed by giving specific ideas on preaching from the Kingdom parables in Matthew chapter 13. We will never know now what insights he would have shared. Doubtless they would have helped us preach better. But it is simply up to us now—each one of us can complete this unfinished article by applying the principles Willard cited above to our own preaching on the Kingdom parables of Matthew.



### NOTES

1. A. M. Hunter, *Interpreting The Parables* (Naperville, Ill.: SCM Book Club, 1960), pp. 25-26.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 27.

# Preaching on Matthew's Understanding of the Church

**O**ne-third of the books of the New Testament do not even use the familiar word *ekklesia* (usually translated "church" and from which ecclesiology is derived) even once. Matthew's Gospel is the only Gospel to use the word (he uses it only in 16:18 and 18:17). Matthew records it in Jesus' response to Peter's confession of the Messiahship, while interestingly 1 and 2 Peter do not use the word.

It is even more striking to find Matthew using the word when we understand that he operates from a strong Jewish background and writes for a largely Jewish audience. We are immediately warned by this contrast that we must not read later understandings of the word *church* back into the mouth of Jesus.

The primary question that faces both the exegete and the preacher, then, is: What did Jesus mean when He used *ekklesia*? How did the rest of Matthew's Gospel enrich our understanding of the concept? The secondary—but equally important question is: How are these multifaceted concepts to be proclaimed and implemented in the 20th century if we are to be true to Jesus and live under the authority of the Word? To these two important, and difficult, questions this article is addressed.

## I. Exegesis

Since the exegetical question always precedes proclamation, it will be necessary to immerse ourselves in Matthew 16 and 18 to gain primary information in preparation for preaching.

### A. The Context

Matthew 16 (along with the parallels in the other Synoptics) presents the central event in the ministry of Jesus. Jesus has been teaching and preaching

throughout the land of Palestine. Opposition has been rising and the crowds have been increasing. The question of the essential nature of the ministry and message of Jesus must be faced. Jesus forces that question with His question: "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" (v. 13—NASB will be used throughout the article).

In all three of the Synoptics, Peter is the spokesman who responds that Jesus is indeed the Christ—the Messiah. In each of the Synoptics Jesus requests the disciples to withhold this information from the public. Each of the Synoptics then records the attempt of Jesus to reinterpret the nature of the Messianic mission in terms of suffering and rejection and death. Matthew and Mark record the remonstrance of Peter (showing his incomplete understanding) and the sharp rebuke of Jesus: "Get behind Me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to Me; for you are not setting your mind on God's interests, but man's" (16:23).

Jesus then makes the clarion call of cross-bearing for genuine disciples (16:24 f.). The demands of the Kingdom are total. Life must be lost for the Kingdom's sake in order to find it.

Matthew 17 records the Transfiguration, the heal-

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ing of the epileptic boy, and the tax-payment issue. Chapter 18 records the teachings of Jesus on rank in the kingdom of heaven, on the severity of penalty for those who cause stumbling, on the search for the 100th sheep, on the function of the *ekklesia* in rescuing the one who sins, and on the nature of forgiveness (using the unmerciful slave as an illustration).

The Gospels quickly move from this pivotal event of the Great Confession to the Triumphal Entry and the Cross and the Resurrection. The context of the usage of *ekklesia*, then, is the heart of the gospel's understanding of the mission and message of Jesus. It is impossible to avoid this message without emasculating the gospel.

### **B. *ekklesia*: History of the Word**

Many writers have moved from the derivation of the Greek word *ekklesia* to define the church as the "called out ones." The word *church*, however, comes from the Greek word *kuriakon*—which means "belonging to the Lord" as in the Lord's Supper or the Lord's Day.

Since Matthew writes in a Jewish milieu, the Septuagint (Greek Old Testament) usage of *ekklesia* is significant. *Ekklesia* appears in the LXX about 100 times. In nearly every case it is used to translate *qahal*. The primary meaning of *qahal* is assembly or congregation. The distinctive usages of the Old Testament indicate that the special meaning of *qahal* is derived from the God who calls Israel together. The *qahal Jahweh* is the congregation or assembly of the Lord (Deut. 23:2 ff.; 1 Chron. 28:8; Neh. 13:1; and Mic. 2:5). It is quickly apparent that the congregation of the Lord is an equivalent to the "people of God" (a phrase that appears nearly 1,500 times in the Old Testament). It should be noted that *qahal* is also translated in the LXX by *sunagoge* (from which our word "synagogue" is derived). The primary meaning of *sunagoge* is also assembly or gathering together.

The primary meaning of the word *ekklesia* for Jesus (as Matthew records it) lies in the God who assembles His people for His purposes. Jesus is teaching His disciples the meaning of Messiahship (with special reference to suffering) and speaks of "His *ekklesia*"—His gathering of obedient disciples for Kingdom purposes.

### **C. The Great Confession**

As chapter 16 opens, the Pharisees and Sadducees are asking for specific proof of the ministry of Jesus. Jesus responds that they can read the weather signs and predict the weather of the following day, but they have misread the miracles as signs of the imminent Kingdom. So Jesus confronts His disciples with their understanding of His ministry among them.

The question Jesus poses to the disciples is more pointed in Matthew than in either Mark or Luke. He says: "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" (v. 13). It is almost a leading question. After the disciples have noted the varied responses of the crowds, Jesus restates the question directly: "But who do you say that I am?" (v. 15). It is Peter

who is the spokesman for the disciples. Each of the Synoptics records his answer differently: Luke: "The Christ of God" (9:20); Mark: "Thou art the Christ" (8:29); and Matthew: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Matthew records the most complete definition and thus sharpens the contrast with the misunderstanding which follows in verses 21 and following.

How difficult it was for the disciples (both ancient and modern) to understand the true nature of Messiahship!

### **D. The Divine Revelation**

In 11:25 f., Jesus had announced His ministry to the weary and heavy-laden—to the gentle and humble. In the language of prayer He had praised God for hiding truths from the intelligent and wise and revealing them to babes. In verse 17 Peter clearly falls into that category—revelation has come to this vociferous babe.

The blessing of Peter pronounced by Jesus is recorded only here in Matthew. Peter's comprehension of Jesus' Messiahship can come to him only by divine revelation. "Flesh and blood"—mere men—cannot arrive at this understanding unaided. "My Father who is in heaven" is the only source of such insight.

Jesus now grants a new name to Simon Barjonas—the name Peter. There is no evidence in either Greek or Aramaic that anyone was called Peter prior to Christian times. There is evidence—from Abram onward—that names indicative of character were given. Now the fisherman who is one of the Father's "babes" is designated as "rock." What a contrast!

Immediately Jesus says: "And upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades shall not overpower it" (v. 18). Reams of material have been written about this passage—often with hidden agendas—both political and ecclesiastical.

Attention is usually directed to the word play between the new name granted to Peter and the word *rock*. The similarity is visible both in Aramaic and in Greek. The major concern, however, is not in the relationship of the words, but in the significance of this statement of Jesus. The idea of building upon a rock had already been introduced at the conclusion of the Sermon on the Mount. Even before that, Isaiah (51:1 f.) had compared the new Israel to a rock. It was already a familiar idea.

Five major positions on the meaning of the "rock" upon which Jesus will build His Church are apparent in the history of interpretation. One group of commentators simply discard the passage as inconsistent with the teachings and understanding of Jesus and refuse to deal with it or ascribe it to the Early Church. A second group (the traditional Roman Catholic position) holds that Peter is the rock and the authority granted to him is transferred to his successors exclusively. Augustine and Luther represent the third group who understand that Christ himself is the rock upon which the Church will be built. Chrysostom and Calvin represent the fourth group and maintain that the rock on which Christ will build His Church is the faith of the confession



which Peter has just made in the previous verses. Oscar Cullmann in more recent years has argued that the passage obviously points to Peter as the rock. Not Peter in some official capacity, but Peter as the confessor in spite of his personal qualifications (so very visible in the misunderstanding section which follows). Peter did play an outstanding role in the Early Church, although clearly not an exclusive role.

Alan Richardson summarizes the commissioning of Peter well: "Christ's choice of Peter as the foundation-stone of his Church is as mysterious and as real as God's election of Israel: Peter is chosen, is disobedient, but remains the chosen instrument of God's will; despite his failing and failures he fulfills the purpose for which he and his fellow-witnesses were 'chosen before of God'" (Acts 10:41). (Alan Richardson, *An Introduction to the Theology of the New Testament* [New York: Harper and Row, 1958], p. 310.)

### E. My Church (*ekklesia*)

The remainder of verse 18 speaks of the indestructibility of the assembly of God which will be built upon this rock. Even the gates of Hades will not be able to overpower the congregation which Jesus will build.

The crucial exegetical question here is: What is "my church" to which Jesus refers? The Jewish background of *ekklesia* has already taught us that it refers to the group of obedient disciples which God calls to himself. Jesus now calls disciples to follow Him in total commitment: "If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take

up his cross, and follow Me" (24). The Church is indeed the "people of God."

What are some of the clues from other sections of Matthew that will aid us in understanding what Jesus meant when he referred to "My people of God"? The concept is visible throughout the Gospel in much the same way as the concept of the Atonement is definitively treated in Romans without using the word *cross*.

In Matt. 13:41, Jesus speaks of "the kingdom of the Son of Man." The idea reflects the Danielic idea of the kingdom of God growing out of a rock from the mountainside (Dan. 2:34 f., 44 f.).

In Matt. 12:28 Jesus announces the coming kingdom of God by the exorcism of demons. His answer to the doubts of the disciples of John the Baptist in 11:4 f. reinforces the idea that the Kingdom has already broken into the present in His ministry. The final words of chapter 16 reflect the same idea.

The Kingdom parables add additional insight into the essential nature of the "new" people of God that Jesus is creating. The new covenant language of the Last Supper radicalizes the definition. The total commitment language of the second half of chapter 16 also emphasizes the radical discipleship.

The new people of God—the *ekklesia* of Jesus—is founded by the suffering Messiah. Jesus not only introduces the suffering idea, but calls His people to the same method of victory. The power is so great that the gates of Hades cannot triumph over it.

The resurrected Messiah consummates the Kingdom and leads His people to that final triumph depicted in so many of the Kingdom parables.

The confines of this article do not permit full

treatment of the Kingdom theme. Eldon Ladd's *Jesus and the Kingdom* (titled *The Presence of the Future* in the revised edition) delineates this material in very helpful manner. The headings of the chapter on the Kingdom and the Church will serve to point the directions of his study: The Church is not the Kingdom; The Kingdom creates the Church; the Church witnesses to the Kingdom; the Church is the instrument of the Kingdom; the Church: The Custodian of the Kingdom (George Eldon Ladd, *Jesus and the Kingdom* [Waco: Word Books, 1964], pp. 258-73).

#### F. The Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven

The conclusion to this dramatic pronouncement of Jesus is found in 16:19. The trusting confessor, Peter, is given the keys to the kingdom of heaven. Again discussion has swirled about the meaning of the passage. "Keys" are an extension of the metaphor of a building built upon a rock (cf. the closing illustration of the Sermon on the Mount in 7:24 f.). The concepts of "binding" and "loosing" are rabbinic technical terms referring to administrative and legislative authority. Actions or things which are bound are prohibited and actions or things which are permitted are loosed. The obedient and faithful confessor is like a great scribe or rabbi who will make decisions based on the teachings of Jesus in the coming Kingdom.

In 18:15-18 the authority to forbid or permit is granted to the disciples who are a part of the local *ekklesia* in order to solve problems arising in the treatment of a brother who sins. This second appearance of the word *ekklesia* clearly indicates that the authority granted to Peter in 16:19 is not exclusive.

The partial understanding of the nature of the Messiahship (partial understandings can be very dangerous) is reflected when Peter rebukes Jesus for speaking of suffering and rejection and death and resurrection (16:21 f.). Now Jesus designates the "babe" confessor as "Satan." His rebuke is a scandal—a stumbling block to Jesus, for Peter has been evaluating from a human point of view.

The passage in chapter 16 concludes with the call to decisive and radical discipleship. The announcement of the coming Kingdom is powerful. The arrival of the Kingdom is so near that "some of those who are standing here . . . shall not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom" (16:28).

## II. Theological Affirmations

The indispensable step from exegesis to preaching is the enunciation of the theological affirmations. To that step we now turn.

The Church is the new people of God created by the call of the Messiah. The Messiah who calls the assembly into existence is a suffering Servant who himself suffered, was killed, and was raised from the dead. The new people of God are called to a radical discipleship—of denial and cross-bearing, of redemptive suffering.

Peter, as a result of divine revelation, received an understanding of the nature of the Messiah he followed and became the foundation of the new people

of God as a primary witness to the suffering and resurrection of Jesus. As a confessor he shared in the legislative decision-making of the Kingdom (the "keys" of the kingdom). That same function is passed to other members of the new people of God in 18:15 ff.

The full-robed definition of the new people of God must draw upon the whole Kingdom teaching of Jesus. The Kingdom begun in the life and ministry of Jesus proceeds through His followers to the grand finale designed by God when "the kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He will reign forever and ever" (Rev. 11:15).

## III. Suggestions for Proclamation

Several major directions for sermons immediately become visible.

The **first** area is an enriched understanding of the nature of the Christ who calls the Church into existence by His message and modeling. The failure to clearly understand the Christ of the Church is responsible for much of the halfhearted discipleship today. As in Jesus' day, "folk theology" obscured the real Messiah and many people failed to recognize and follow Him. The contrast between the ideas of the multitudes and the confession of Peter, and the contrast between the inadequate concept of the Great Confession and the Suffering Servant teachings provide the basic material for a powerful message on the Christ of the Church.

A **second** area of proclamation centers around an enriched understanding of the true nature of the Church. One sermon should grow out of the Old Testament roots of the idea of the people of God—the assembly of Jahweh. Another message should highlight the life of the people of God as they follow the great Model and Pattern—Jesus himself. Yet another message should emphasize the content of the new people of God growing out of the rich kingdom of heaven material in Matthew.

A **third** area for preaching which demands attention is the nature of the individual members of the new people of God. One message could flow from the pattern lived out by Jesus and be called "The Model and the Replicas." Another sermon should highlight the radical nature of discipleship in the new *ekklesia*. A clearer understanding of the nature of the authentic people of God will draw people to give their lives for such a Savior and His people. Yet another sermon should present the function of leadership flowing from the fallible and emotional Peter the confessor to the legislative binding and loosing in the name of Jesus.

A **fourth** area for preaching might grow out of the hindrances to the Kingdom from inadequate understanding. Peter's attempt to deter Christ from the necessary redemptive suffering is a pungent illustration of such an attitude.

In all of your preaching, the enriched understanding of the new people of God should inform and inspire and challenge. Let the Scripture inform your people, and your people will be forced to evaluate their life-styles as members of the Kingdom Church as Jesus presented it.





**A devotional Lenten consideration of the person and work of our Lord.**

# **MATTHEW LOOKS AT THE SON OF GOD**

by Paul Merritt Bassett

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**T**he marvelous wealth of meaning in the titles borne by Jesus in Matthew's Gospel has fascinated thinking believers since at least the second century. And while there have been few agreements as to which of the titles holds preeminence, the consensus holds that one title or another contains the clue to Matthew's understanding of our Lord.

"Lord," "Messiah," "Son of David," "Son of Man," "Son of Abraham," and "Son of God," these are the principle titles used by the First Gospel. And they fell explosively on the ears of the generation to whom Matthew originally wrote. It may be that some of them had seen and heard "that Galilean." Many of them would have known folks who had. So Jesus "as He was" was still a fresh memory. The squaring of the titles with the "real history," still relatively recent, would excite the believer and appall the pious Jew—and mean very little to the pagan.

We've grown used to them, of course. So they do not generally strike the sparks of reflection in us that they did then. But their richness remains, and especially during the Lenten and Easter seasons they can serve as means of devout consideration of the person and work of our Lord. They can deepen our acquaintance with Him. So let's look at one of them through the eyes of Matthew. Let's listen to him tell us of Jesus "the Son of God."

One of the earliest places that this title, Son of

God, appears in Matthew's Gospel is in the account of Jesus' baptism by John (3:17): "This is my beloved (or only) Son; upon him my favor rests."\* If all we knew of this incident were these words and the fact that there was a baptizer and a baptizee, we would assume that they referred to the baptizer, for the baptism of John was a "baptism unto repentance."

But the great celestial declaration that we are in the presence of the Son of God applies to the One baptized. Matthew has just shown us a picture of John telling the smug religious establishment that being sons of Abraham is not enough. There lies beyond the range of genetic or even covenantal advantage quite another kingdom. There, sonship is based upon obedience to the Father, obedience in good works (vv. 8, 10) and in spiritual purity (vv. 11-12), an obedience that is not merely self-preservative (v. 7).

Matthew fascinates us here, for he began his account by telling us precisely that Jesus is the son of Abraham (1:1). To be able to say, "I am a son of Abraham" was to be able to claim all of the promises of covenant—and marvelous they are. But here was a true son of Abraham seeking baptism, a baptism unto repentance.

Jesus' demand that He be baptized left John thoroughly puzzled (v. 14), but in compliance with

the will of the Father, he performs the rite. The Son of God did not need baptism unto repentance except in obedience to the Father's command, but no son of Abraham has right to his ancestry without it. Could it be that Matthew is saying something like this to the Church: "Unless you let Christ identify with you, son of Abraham, and in perfect obedience to the Father abjure self-preservation and ego-protection, you cannot truly know that He is the Son of the Father God"? Could it be that our knowing Him as Son of God in some way depends upon our receiving Him as a true son of Abraham, one who identifies so profoundly with Abraham's seed that He also accepts on himself their sinfulness? Could it be that in order for Him to be known as Son of God, we too, as John, must allow Him to align himself with those in need of repentance and cleansing; that, in fact, we must "help" Him do so, as it were, just as John administered "baptism of repentance" to Him?

In chapter 4, Matthew again looks at Jesus as Son of God. This time he reports the temptation of our Lord as He begins His ministry. Two of the temptations are cast in the form, "If You are the Son of God . . ." The third is not put in that form for the obvious reason that if the devil should say, "If you are the Son of God fall down and worship me," he would be caught up in a clear self-contradiction.

After Jesus commands John that He should be baptized, as puzzling as that is, a simple command from Him that some stones be made bread seems small enough. And after all, He was hungry. Hungry, like a son of Abraham. Why not test the declaration heard at the baptism: "You are the Son of God"?

The answer which Jesus gives is an answer befitting a true son of Abraham. He cites the Word. And as for proving that He is Son of God . . . only His obedience demonstrates that, a demonstration open to any true son of Abraham. Furthermore, His response to the second temptation warns us away from ever calling upon Him to prove that He is the Son of God. Such calls smack of tempting God. Again, it will be His obedience that will speak of His sonship, and that is proof enough.

The next time Matthew talks of Jesus by way of the title Son of God is in 8:28-34, and here again, the actual title is called out by evil beings, by demons. "What have we to do with you, Son of God?" Here, the devils possessed two wretches in the countryside belonging to Gadara, on the southeast side of Galilee. They recognized Him and testified to His power and authority. His obedience had already told them who He was, and His words confirmed it. What a powerful verse, v. 32: "He said to them, 'Get out,' and out they got."

But there is irony here, too. Here was an obvious demonstration of divine power, but it highlights the truth, sad truth, in the words of the old saw, "better the devil you know." Folks would rather put up with dangerous lunacy than with divine power that threatens their livelihood and grants clarity of mind to those whom society has declared crazy. How many times in its history has the Church held on to

some obviously detrimental practice—or corrupted structure—and asked her Lord, who is right there doing miracles in setting straight the minds of His people, to take a walk because He is rocking the establishment boat.

And there is further irony, too, for so far, not one single human being has declared Him to be Son of God—so far, in Matthew's perspective, only the Holy Spirit and the demons have confessed it. What do you suppose that means?

Jesus' usual title for himself in His public ministry, as Matthew hears Him, is "Son of Man." This is probably Matthew's way of saying that the title "Son of God" is a confessional title, that it may be spoken only by those recognizing His divine authority as authority over them, or by the Godhead itself. Of course, recognizing Him as Son of God obviously does not save us, for even the demons believe that much. What more, then, is required?

We begin to see the "what more" as Matthew tells us of the death of John the Baptizer and watches Jesus on what someone has called the "dark road to triumph." His first miracle after John's death is the feeding of the five thousand, and it is in the succeeding miracle that we again hear Him confessed as "Son of God." It is the account of Jesus' walking on the water (14:22-33).

This particular miracle may be seen as a triumph over nature. It is at least that. But surely a nature-miracle alone would not evoke the unique response of those in the boat: "You are surely the Son of God."

In Matthew's Gospel, it is at this point that Simon Peter becomes a principal of the story. In fact, it is he who will a bit later make the great confession upon which the Church depends, but that is to rush our story. Here, Peter is tired and wet, and scared. He had been fed with the five thousand and he had heard Jesus refute the legalists and counsel the people. And he had been specially called by the Lord to be a disciple. So he recognized that there was something very special about the character of Jesus. So now, tired and wet and scared, Peter tries to use what he suspects is true to make the best of a bad situation. His question is guarded enough. It is not, "If You are the Son of God." It is only, "Lord, if that's You . . ." "Lord, given who You seem to be . . ." "Lord, if that's You, show me Your reality by way of the impossible. Prove Your reality to me by fulfilling my desire for a very personal miracle." Peter wanted to believe, but only on the basis of his own conditions for believing, only under terms that he himself prescribed. Such terms were insufficient, of course, for while the Lord bid him come and he actually did begin to walk on the water, he became afraid and began to sink. And so it always is with our terms. Even when the Lord meets them, as He did Peter's, we still cannot trust Him because our terms are so egocentric and born of our insecurity. Peter saw the wind, and feared.

But there is a deeper irony in Matthew's account. The confession, "You are surely the Son of God," comes in the face of the fact that Peter did not complete his walk on the water. Instead, in spite of his

fear and his egocentricity, when he cried out, "Lord, save me!" Jesus immediately stretched out His hand and grabbed hold of him—and asked him why he had doubted. Then he entered the boat with Jesus, and the wind ceased. It is in the face of Peter's weakness and lack of faith, as well as the calming of the sea, that those in the boat said what they said. But the context was also one of mercy and rescue when Peter failed his own test. It was a confession of Jesus' divine Sonship in the context of human frailty and doubt and in the context of divine forgiveness. At the center of Matthew's story is divine forgiveness, not merely the divine power over nature. And in the presence of such forgiveness, the church's confession is, "Such power and mercy must surely be that of the Son of God."

In chapter 16, we find a parallel confession by Simon Peter. Again, the confession comes following a clear demonstration of doubt or lack of faith—even in the fact of another great miracle. This time, there was a feeding of four thousand (15:32-39); then, instead of something as obviously fearsome as a storm on Galilee, there were simply some words of warning from Jesus about continually testing Jesus, and thus the Father; about demanding that Divinity meet the demands of proof laid down by humanity. (Do you see the parallel in 16:1 with the earlier demand of Simon Peter?) Jesus called that attitude the "leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees" (v. 6).

The hungry disciples did not understand what He was getting at—couldn't put two and two together, the great meal and the warning about pharisaic leaven. It wasn't simply a matter of the head. They had not taken the feeding of the multitude into their faith. And such is the human context of the greatest of all confessions that Jesus is the Son of God, as Matthew views it.

The story is familiar. We need not recount its details (16:13-20). Matthew's point is clear enough. The one true answer to who Jesus is can be made only as the Father in heaven reveals it. The Spirit knows it, the devil knows it, the demons know it because of who they are. We cannot know it naturally. It is not part of our natal intellectual or emotional equipment. Only the Father can reveal it to us. And when it comes from Him, it comes straight and true, clear and demanding decision. "Who do you say that I am?" And we may be sure that when we are faced with the question the Father is prepared to reveal to us the Great Response: "You are the Messiah, the Son of the Living God."

The grandest response we can give out of our natural equipment is something like that of Simon Peter on the earlier occasion: "If You are who You seem to be . . ." And then we may call on Him for some demonstration of His divinity on our terms. But Matthew would have us know that even in the muck of human doubt and faithlessness, even where the real significance of great miracles has been lost on us, there still comes the revelation of who our Companion of the Way really is. And He is no less than the Son of God himself—not just a forerunner, such as John the Baptizer; not a mighty

wonder-working prophet, such as Elijah; not even a prophet of such insight and hope as Jeremiah (v. 14). Unaided by grace, our best thoughts might turn to such as these to describe Him, but He is more, infinitely more. Matthew would confess it.

Now Matthew notes that Jesus, confessed as Son of the living God, turns His face toward Jerusalem and suffering and death. And to what the disciples, even the one who had confessed Him to be the Son of God, could not grasp—to resurrection.

So now in the context of imminent suffering, Matthew, having shown us that Peter does not understand the depth of his own confession, turns to tell us that the Father himself again reaffirms the divine Sonship of Jesus (17:1-8). This time, the confession comes with an instruction. In the face of Peter's impulse to see to it that the moment is properly recognized by due ceremony, the "voice from the cloud" speaks: "This is my beloved (or only) Son. I am well-pleased with Him. Listen to Him" (v. 5).

At least this time Peter is not trying to manage the situation to his own ends. He does have enough sense to know that it's time to worship. But now he hears an instruction that reminds us of the moment of Jesus' baptism. The only way to authentic worship of Christ is obedience. Even the recognition of His divine Sonship in pious worship established out of our own perceptions is insufficient. He must be obeyed. That's the only way to authentic recognition of His Lordship. "Hear Him!" And Matthew's was a timely word to the Church, for from its beginnings it has wrestled with the temptation to listen to itself worshipping; with the temptation to believe that if only it could respond well to His presence by something that it thought of on the spot, then all would be well. But the voice has ever said, "Hear Him!"

But how "hear Him"? In his final considerations of the title Son of God, Matthew turns to those who would want Jesus to announce it of himself and then to one who confesses it barely realizing what he says.

Caiaphas, the high priest, surely one who should have discerned who Jesus truly was, has called the scribes and elders together as a jury, a jury to try Jesus on the strength of testimony from false witnesses (26:57-68). What splendid piety he mouths: "I adjure You by the living God . . ." he says to Jesus. Even the devil was not so bold as this. Could it be that only mankind is so foolish as to be so bold? "I adjure You . . . tell us if You are the Messiah, the Son of God" (v. 63).

Here the demand is that Jesus testify of himself to those who have already decided that His testimony is untrue. Of course, in a way, Caiaphas and the rest of them have already answered their own demand. They know precisely who Jesus is—that He is the Christ, the Son of the living God. But they will not confess it directly. "You have already said it yourselves," Jesus replies (v. 64). And it is precisely in their refusal to confess and in their perverse demand that Jesus say it of himself that the heinousness of their character is seen by Matthew. To

(continued on page 34)



# Viewing the Multiple Staff as a Team

by Clair A. Budd

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**T**eam ministry" is a phrase that is often used to describe the nature of the church's multiple staff interactions. What are the criteria for determining if a multiple staff functions as a team? Are there any?—Or do we apply the phrase to ourselves because it presents an image we like?

Here are some suggested criteria for determining the presence of "team-ness" in your multiple staff. If these traits do not exist, your "team ministry" may be more facade than fact.

## 1. DO YOU HAVE FREQUENT, REGULAR TEAM MEETINGS?

Anyone who follows sports knows that successful teams have a comprehensive game plan. Every member of the team must know the game plan, and know how they fit into that plan. Team meetings develop this overall game plan (NOTE: The factors of regularity and intentionality are very important for team meetings). For the church's staff, these meetings are a combination "pregame" and "halftime" huddles, because they

are continually developing their plan, then evaluating it and revising it as needed.

Every team needs to work on the mechanics of "What are we trying to accomplish?" . . . "How are we going to accomplish it?" . . . "Who is responsible for what?" But an additional reason for team meetings is the development of "team spirit." To accomplish this, some church staff meetings will need to be devotional and/or fellowship times.

## 2. IS THE "SENIOR PASTOR" VIEWED AS THE TEAM CAPTAIN?

Sometimes, because of particular measures of polity, we mistakenly perceive the *pastor* to be the coach, while the *associates* wait for him to call the plays.

More in keeping with the team ministry concept (and I believe with New Testament understandings of the Church as a body) is the view of the pastor as the motivator/coordinator of his co-workers, the team captain. This view at least implies that the game plan has already been worked out by

the coach (Christ). Team meetings should include Bible study and prayer so that the team, as equals under Christ, may apprehend that plan. The captain (pastor) then leads the team in implementing the game plan as the whole team has determined its application in the immediate, local context.

**3. ARE DECISIONS MADE BY THE TEAM?** This obviously hinges on the previous point. Two related kinds of decisions should be included here: those that have major impact on the game plan, and those regarding the roles of individual team members.

To illustrate the first, imagine the confused game plan when a minister of education plans a Saturday educational workshop for the same weekend a major musical event is to be performed by combined choirs. Personnel and schedules find themselves in conflict and tension for congregation and staff is the natural result. Though this example is extreme, it indicates the need for the staff, as a team, to develop a compre-

hensive game plan, then negotiate how it is to be worked out.

Team members' roles also require some negotiation. When a new area of responsibility for a staff member develops, the team should decide who will bear it. Consideration must be given to current work loads. If team ministry is more than facade, roles and responsibilities will not be casually assigned, nor carelessly dodged.

#### **4. ARE TEAM MEMBERS EQUIPPED FOR THEIR ROLES?**

The most common failure in this regard is for a team member to be given a responsibility without the authority needed to carry it out. Much time and effectiveness is lost when team members must seek approval for details that have minor impact on the overall game plan.

#### **5. DOES COMPENSATION BUILD TEAM SPIRIT?**

Most of us know what "free agent" salaries have done to destroy the team spirit of some baseball teams. But, on the other hand, I would be wrong to argue that all members of the church staff team should receive equal compensation.

Factors such as training and experience should have a bearing on salaries, as should the greater responsibility of various members of the team. However, large gaps between the compensation of the team captain and the rest of the team, or between various other members of the team, fail to verify the reality of a team approach to ministry, and tend to damage team spirit. Such gaps may show up in salary structure, or in the type of housing arrangement, or in the provision of certain benefits

**If team ministry is more than facade, roles and responsibilities will not be casually assigned, nor carelessly dodged.**

for one member of the team that are not provided (in greater or lesser amounts) for other members.

The *method* of compensation may be as significant to team spirit as the *amount* of compensation. Imagine how ridiculous it would be for the captain of a football squad to distribute salary checks to his teammates. Yet this practice occasionally surfaces in the church's multiple staff. Just as ridiculous, but unfortunately more common in the church than this practice, is the procedure of the team captain determining or negotiating compensation for his teammates. To develop and maintain true team ministry, each member of the church staff should have direct access to the church's finance committee for salary review and negotiation. (Let everyone deal with the front office.)

#### **6. IS LOYALTY A VITAL REALITY?**

Loyalty is often understood to be the duty of staff members to the senior pastor. And that is proper. However, if we are to take the team ministry con-

cept seriously, loyalty needs to become a complex, multidirectional reality.

That reality will seldom exist where loyalty is demanded. Mutual loyalty will develop where it is *given*. Unfortunately, the usual reaction when we feel we are not receiving loyalty is to draw back and demand that it be given. Such a situation calls for remembering the familiar words: "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

Think in terms of a baseball team. On a ball hit to the infield, the catcher runs down the baseline to provide a "backup" in case of error. He is not trying to "upstage" the first baseman; he is there to aid the team's effort. In like manner, every member of the church's multiple staff should be a "backup" for their co-workers when needed.

This article does not defend the validity of the team model for multiple staff ministry. Rather, the model is assumed to be valid, and the preceding criteria were discussed on that basis. Perhaps your staff needs to question that assumption on biblical or theological/philosophical grounds. Certainly, your staff needs to interact on the various criteria mentioned, their validity, and their impact on your interactions together.

If you accept the assumption that the multiple staff should be viewed as a team, you have one final question to consider: "If we are the team, where does the rest of the congregation fit into this model?" If "team-ness" is a quality you and other members of your staff desire, working through these questions and issues together just might help you become a team!



### **Friend Indeed**

The pastor of the local church was not exactly popular. Then one Sunday he announced: "The Lord has told me that He has work for me elsewhere. The Lord Jesus has told me the time has come for me to move to another parish." Whereupon the congregation rose spontaneously and sang, "What a friend we have in Jesus."—*Church News Service*

# PUBLIC EVANGELISM AND THE INVITATION TO PRAYER

by Michael B. Ross

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**A** recent development in the use of the altar for public prayer has had at least two different effects on the church. Frequently, pastors are now including in their worship services what is commonly called the “open altar.” During the Sunday morning pastoral prayer, many worshipers are kneeling to offer varied forms of prayer. Some pray for forgiveness, while others seek to be healed. Many approach the altar to express gratitude for special blessings.

One result of the “open altar” has been the expansion of the altar’s use and purpose. Fortunately, in many churches the altar is no longer restricted to the use of a few with certain prayers. There has been a broadening in an understanding of the value of public prayer.

However, coupled with this positive effect, some believe there also has been an adverse impact. A vital part of most holiness churches’ outreach is the evangelistic sermon followed by an invitation to pray. Whether he is a pastor or an evangelist in a revival meeting, a minister often realizes that many who have listened to his sermon need and want to pray.

So vital to public evangelism has been the invitation to prayer (or the altar call), that some fear that its distinction is being “swallowed up” by the more versatile “open altar.”

But these two uses of the altar are not contradictory, and can be complementary. Their purposes are unique but yet supportive. Effective evangelistic altar calls can be retained. However, it is important

to note the purposes, methods, and even dangers of the evangelistic altar call in order to preserve its uniqueness.

Both the prominence and the effectiveness of the evangelistic altar call should be credited, in part, to more than its being a convenient method. While methods are employed in issuing and accepting a public invitation to prayer, the altar call is more than a cultural reaction or a social fad.

Prayer is often the natural response to hearing the gospel of Christ—natural in the sense that the nature of the gospel creates the necessity of a response. Hopefully, the response is not one of denial or rejection, but one of acceptance and prayer.

The gospel confronts the listener to such a degree that an immediate reply is effected. This is not to suggest that the impact of the kerygma is short-lived, but neither is it delayed. When the written Word is preached, the Living Word is present. One’s encounter with the Resurrected Lord always includes the element of “now.” To deny an expression of this urgency contradicts the gospel’s essence, and it can result in frustration to the listener.

## **The Purposes of the Evangelistic Altar Call**

The value of the altar call is due to its reinforcement and expression of biblical principles concerning the Church as the Body of Christ. When one responds to a call to prayer in a worship service, not only is there an immediate divine response to his obedience, there is also a strengthening of the foundation of the Church’s purpose and mission.

### 1. "The Body of Christ"—1 Cor. 12:27.

Very few functions of the organized church can as effectively illustrate the biblical description of the Church as the Body of Christ as the public altar call. While ultimate responsibility to God is an individual matter, the New Testament supports, not nullifies, Israel's historical understanding of the people of God. There remains in the New Covenant an emphasis on the corporality of the children of God.

When the congregation gathers to pray for one who responds in faith to the gospel, there is a confirmation of the communal concept that is essential to meaningful Christian worship and fellowship.

### 2. "Speaking the truth in love"—Eph. 4:15.

In the context of Ephesians 4, Paul's reference to "speaking the truth in love" is an appeal to more than the expression of personal opinion. Paul is establishing the value of mutual obligation. Each member of the church is indebted to all others to reflect an honesty of life. The church cannot function properly when it is saturated with deception and discrepancy. One should not claim more than he actually has, nor should his life fall short of his claim.

Church altars often serve as a meeting ground where the congregation can align life-style with confession. To pray for self and others at a public altar is one of many ways to speak the truth in love.

### 3. "If two of you shall agree"—Matt. 18:19.

The source of faith is God, but His grace employs varied and multiple channels through which He may give that faith. One of these is the "buddy system" of prayer. Private prayer has its unique purpose, but it cannot serve as a substitute for group prayer. To pray alone is to seek; to pray together is to agree.

Many who kneel at church altars with a weakened personal trust are able to believe with an accumulated faith drawn from those who pray nearby.

### 4. "God is no respecter of persons"—Acts 10:34.

Peter's declaration at the house of Cornelius was a milestone for him and the Church. His witness to the equality of God's people affirms the worth of each individual in the Church. A disproportional secular emphasis on beauty, intelligence, and success has indicated to many that they are of less value than others.

The gospel refutes such a standard of appraisal, and the altar call gives the Church one of its best opportunities to negate its effect. The individual who has experienced deliverance from sin while being surrounded and supported by the congregation in prayer begins to realize his worth and importance to Christ and His Church.

### 5. "To cleanse us from all unrighteousness"—1 John 1:9.

Often there is benefit in the expression of that which has been suppressed or denied. In the presence of Christ and with the atmosphere of public supportive prayer, many find it possible to be cleansed of feelings and attitudes that eventually would have destroyed them.

There is usually no merit either in a disorderly prayer session or in a full public revelation of sins. But there is health and wholeness for those who are able and willing to release in prayer and emotion that which has blocked spiritual growth. Such a catharsis might not be possible in solitude, but it often comes readily for those who are the focal point of the effectual fervent prayers of righteous men and women.

## Elements of an Effective Altar Call

The primary element of an effective invitation to public prayer is the minister's full confidence in the gospel of Christ. The impact an altar call has on a congregation should not be credited to mere methods or style, but to the gospel of Christ—the power of God unto salvation. But methods are not unimportant.

The value of the methods employed by the minister who is inviting members of the congregation to an altar for prayer is determined by their reflection of the tenets of salvation. God will not honor techniques that stand in direct conflict with the gospel's purpose. The Good News includes redemption of mankind, the opportunities available within the free will of man, and the beauty of creation designed in the image of God. Methods of manipulation and coercion which include or manufacture dehumanization and embarrassment have no place in an evangelistic altar service. Both the congregation and God will honor a minister who maintains a spirit of respect and brotherhood.

1. Each invitation to an altar should be coupled with a **clarity of the invitation's purpose** and target. Confusion can result in hesitation which could form a pattern of reluctance and disobedience.

Regardless of how narrow or broad the scope of the call to prayer may be, the minister should explain carefully and kindly to the congregation his intentions and instructions.

2. Most invitations to prayer that result in great response are offered by ministers who **reflect an expectancy of favorable results**. The minister can generate hope and obedience by indicating his belief that the congregation will respond to his evangelistic sermon.

With references to expected responses and through sincere planning for favorable results, a minister can project to the congregation that accepting the invitation to prayer is natural and wise.

A fear of personal embarrassment keeps many preachers from speaking positively of expected responses to the invitation. But a belief in the gospel's impact liberates the minister to anticipate a general obedience.

3. Effective altar calls should include the minister's **positive response to those who have answered the call to pray**. To ignore 10 who have obediently come forward by pronouncing a long negative admonishment to 1 or 2 who did not respond is to establish a foundation of negativism and discouragement.

Many who come to the altar are anticipating the

*(continued on page 37)*

# Come Alive, Mr. Wesley

by J. Kenneth Grider

*Professor of Theology, Nazarene Theological Seminary*

**C**ome alive, Mr. Wesley, if you can and if you dare, and spend yourself for this our burgeoning 20th century in some such way as you did for the awakened 18th century.

You we need, with your warmed heart. We do right well with the heart that pulsates and that to surgeons has a soft and velvety touch. If it hesitates or becomes erratic in its pulsing, we ream it out or bypass its plumbing or otherwise mend it. If it is no good at all, we sometimes cut it out and put in a slightly used one of someone who has just met with what you did in 1791. With all your interest in medicine as an amateur physician (I didn't call you a quack!) and as the author of an encyclopedia on health, you would marvel at what doctors are doing just now in that regard.

What we need you for is to demonstrate what the warmed heart is like and what life can be like once a person has one. We profit much by the salvific influences of Billy Graham. We also have sundry others, of course. Their hearts have been warmed, and they are doing right well for us in these times when science is king and when we are also strangely captured by its opposite: such matters as astrology and TM.

Many theologians, no less, have also had their Aldersgate—including the one who lived in Basel, and who now enjoys life where he can hear music almost as good as Mozart's without the need of stereo. I have to say, too, that we have men and women with warmed hearts in government, including a born-again U.S.A. president. They are in education, industry, whatever.

You were the genius, though, Mr. Wesley, because your heart was warmed in a time when the warmed heart was not fashionable, and because you showed us what life can be like when lived out with that kind of fire at its center. Without it people could get drunk for a half-penny and dead drunk for a penny, and often did. Or else they could posit the bare existence of a removed deity altogether unromanticized, in Lockian or Humian fashion, whom one did not pray to because it was no use.

With the warmed heart, you did not have any better sense than to get up at about 4:00 a.m. for sustained audience with Almighty. With the warmed heart, you preached often at 5:00 a.m.—unless all the books are wrong, and it was at the more decent hour of 5:00 p.m.

With the warmed heart, you and your brother gave songs to your fellows—songs that distill the faith's piety and that have hope in them (the hope we need in big songfuls just now as we seek to ward off nuclear accident and nuclear war).

You we need, too, Mr. Wesley, to model the kind of life-related concerns that it has pleased God to give us evangelicals these days, including social concerns. You would be pleased, Sir, with the distance we have traveled in this direction since what we call the Chicago Declaration, agreed to a few years ago. Even Billy Graham, our counterpart of your friend George Whitefield, is with us heart and soul in this interest—although he dragged his feet, on this, early in his now-widely-acclaimed ministry.

But we think of you—you and Wilberforce and others—placarding on the plane of human history what human life is to be like. Only five-feet-five, you stood tall to speak to the miners and the millers there on the hillside near Bristol and at other places, the world outside the churches becoming your parish. You stood tall when dapper Beau Nash tried but failed to match his wit with yours at Bath, when you were tak-



ing your faith to the streets of an Epicurean city whose people needed to wash and come forth clean.

Perhaps you would not know of one of your early Methodists named William Booth. He entrusted himself and his faith to the streets of your London a few long and slow generations after your time. A whole army of workers enlisted with this pawnbroker in spilling out their substance in what we now call the inner city. Ah, but you would be proud of the pace they have set for all the rest of us in their devotion to the least and the lost of this well-peopled world of ours which has so many unpeople in it whose sighs and cries, from way down there at the bottom of society, are almost audible to the rest of us just now.

Booth did not bother very much with theology. And the hundreds of thousands who now disciple him and his Christ are still apt to slight it. No theological seminaries are fostered by them, for example. But you know, from yon Denmark we got ourselves a kind of theology that quite suits the interests which you and Booth had. Existential theology we sometimes call it—when we are not afraid that that adjective will be misunderstood. If we are, we might call it experiential or life-related theology.

It comes from a sorrisome figure who sometimes allowed himself to be called Søren Kierkegaard. He had one or two problems himself, and he championed other people whose mouths tend to turn down at the corners.

This brand of theology is not

keen about calm reasonings that give regard to things—in themselves—supposed to be prototypical of things as they are. It is interested in people; in individual people. It is interested in their anxieties: their sense of estrangement from God, their sense of inadequacy, their guilt, dreads, sin. Especially their sin.

This brand of theology is interested in what Jane is to do now that John is dead and she must rear three that are John's in these grand and awful times. It is interested, as Jesus was, in truth as a true way of living out one's life, instead of merely in truth as what obtains when a person's statements agree with eternal principles of correctness.

Kierkegaard we credit for the life-related way in which many of us evangelical Christians tend to look at things these days. But it is only that it belonged to him to say things that have newly jarred us. He talked about doing theology, but did not do very much of it—excusable perhaps because he wrote books all the time and died in his early 40s.

You yourself *did* theology along with all your writing and your riding of horses. At that old foundry, and at other motley places, you tied the faith into life as it is actually lived by people who are in debt and hungry and who tend to stuff themselves with straw. You did not know what the inner city was, or the central city.

But you made the faith experiential and practical. You applied it to your own life, and to the lives of the common folk who heard you so gladly. You knew that the

faith is no good if it is not good for something.

You were an Oxford graduate and you taught Greek and argumentation at Oxford's Lincoln College. You had your own rooms in the college, and you could have stayed right there all your life. Besides Greek, you knew Hebrew, Latin, German, French, Italian, Spanish and a few other tongues besides the ones often used against you by bishops and other beautiful people.

You knew your history of doctrine, and all that classical area which men (yes, and a few women) now go into at Oxford when they read "Greats." But you rented out your quarters in the quadrangle, bought yourself a good horse, and you rode and you rode and you wrote and you preached until no life was left in you.

So that is another reason why we need you, Mr. Wesley, these days. We need a person of your stripe who will model the faith; who will *do* theology; who will lead the way, out from our cloistered sanctuaries and our carpeted offices to where hollowed-out people are indeed filled with straw, but can be filled with all the fullness of Jesus Christ if only the church will care.

Come alive, then, Mr. Wesley. We need your warmed heart and we need your modeling of experiential, authentic faith.

If you cannot come alive, however . . . but if, from where you are, you can plug for us and pray for us, do that. Then, if we cannot have you, perhaps we will be given the likes of you.



## I Thee Wed

I was preparing a new wedding ceremony for my son and his bride-to-be. I dictated 1 Corinthians 13 to be followed by 1 John 4:16-18. The latter speaks eloquently of God's love and our response. My secretary overlooked the "1" before John and typed the same verses from John's Gospel: "Jesus said to her, 'Go, call your husband, and come here.' The woman answered him, 'I have no husband.' Jesus said to her, 'You are right in saying, 'I have no husband'; for you have had five husbands, and he whom you now have is not your husband'" (RSV). Fortunately the correction was made, and the service proceeded as planned.—James L. Stoner in *The Disciple*

# What in the “Word” Is Discipling?

by Lyle Pointer

**T**wo pastors over lunch: “What’s the most exciting thing happening in your church?”

“Unquestionably it is our discipling ministry. God is doing tremendous things. You can’t imagine the enthusiasm being stirred by this new program.”

“What do you mean by a discipling ministry?”

“You know. You know what discipling is, don’t you?”

“I guess what I mean is, what do *you* mean by discipling?”

At least 10 separate usages attach themselves to the word *discipling*. (1) Perhaps the most technical, and the least used, definition comes from church growth catalyst, Donald McGavran. McGavran uses discipling to refer to the conversion of groups of people. People with common characteristics, interests, or backgrounds come to Christ because of social and religious influences.

(2) Some employ discipling as a catch-all or a blanket term. All the ministries of a local church

constitute discipling. One minister said, “Everything we do from Cradle Roll to weddings and funerals is discipling.” Discipling, in this sense, is an equivalent for the word *ministry*.

(3) Discipling also substitutes for the word *evangelism*. The persuasive influence of a Christian upon an unbeliever defines discipling. This explanation oversimplifies the definition, however.

Some call discipling (4) the contacts prior to a person’s decision to accept Christ.

Others would insist (5) discipling is the decision of the unbeliever to serve God. In other words, when an unbeliever becomes a believer, a Christian has effectively disciplined that person.

(6) The follow-up process is called “discipling.” Differences of opinion surface as to length of time. Follow-up can last for a few weeks (usually until certain Bible lessons are completed), months, a year, or three years (because Jesus took that length of time).

(7) Others maintain that dis-

cipling (the follow-up process) is accomplished when the person joins the church or leads someone else to Christ.

(8) Still others argue, “Discipling lasts a lifetime. Christians must never stop growing.” In this case, discipling is synonymous with maturing.

(9) Training people in personal evangelism is thought to be discipling, too. Matt. 28:19-20 gives support to this concept. Teaching Christians how to effectively evangelize an unbeliever constituted much of Jesus’ ministry to His disciples.

(10) Developing people to be leaders in the church is also called discipling. Pastors program events to enhance the ability of the laity to administer and to coordinate various ministries of the local church.

Beyond the definition of discipling, the process of how a person is disciplined has various expressions, too. For some, a disciple is one who completes a prescribed curriculum. The cur-

Nazarene

## Update

UPDATE EDITOR, SUSAN DOWNS, PASTORAL MINISTRIES

## PREACHING FROM MATTHEW

The Gospel of Matthew exalts Jesus Christ as the Messiah King of the Jews. He identifies Jesus as "the son of David, the son of Abraham" in his careful genealogy. From this standpoint, Matthew devotes more space to the teachings and miracles of Christ, and thus makes his account a rich gold mine of sermon material.

The following is a simple outline for sermon study: Introduction—1:1–4:12; the Galilean Ministry—4:12–18:35; the Climax in Judea—chapters 19–28.

Matthew systematically groups our Lord's Galilean ministry into three categories: His teachings—chapters 5–7; His miracles—chapters 8–10; reactions to our Lord's ministry—chapters 11–18. It is interesting to note that each of these categories is divided into tens.

Ten subjects are suggested in the Sermon on the Mount: the Beatitudes (5:3-16); moral standards (5:17-48); religious motives (6:1-18); materialism (6:19-24);

temporal cares (6:25-34); social (7:1-6); encouragements (7:7-11); the law in one sentence (7:12); the alternatives (7:13-14); final warnings (7:15-27).

Ten miracles are grouped in chapters 8–10: the leper (8:1-4); the centurion's servant (8:5-13); Peter's wife's mother (8:14-15); stilling the storm (8:23-27); the demoniacs (8:28-34); palsy cured (9:1-8); the woman (9:18-22); the ruler's daughter raised (9:23-26); two blind men (9:27-31); the dumb demoniac (9:32-34).

Ten reactions to our Lord's ministry are listed intermingled with incidental episodes in chapters 11–18. Included in this category is another interesting source of preaching material in the parables of the Kingdom listed in chapter 13. Seven parables are given which describe the reaction to the Kingdom.

The climax begins in chapter 19:1 when "Jesus departed from Galilee." His closing ministry can be summed up in three episodes:

1) His public presentation—chapters 19–25. This involves His journey and entry into the city of Jerusalem and the clashes which followed. It also includes the rich material found in our Lord's eschatological discourse in chapters 24 and 25.

2) The events surrounding His crucifixion—chapters 26–27. What a rich source of sermon texts can be found in these climactic verses.

3) The resurrection and commission—chapter 28. Here we observe the victory of our Lord and His Great Commission to the Church.

May this beautiful Gospel speak to our people through His ministering servants.



By General Superintendent  
Charles H. Strickland

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

# CELEBRATE CHRISTIAN HOLINESS

One of the most important ingredients of successful ministry is long- and short-range planning. The following general church events, with their dates, are provided by the Pastoral Ministries for your convenience in coordinating the local and district church calendar into your total program. We want to help you "Celebrate Christian Holiness." The events and programs should support the theme or be useful in attaining the purpose. We want to assist you in your ministry. Call on us.

## 1981-82—The Year of the Layman

	REGIONAL CHRISTIAN LIFE CONFERENCES
March 1-2, 1982	Mid-America Region
March 3-4, 1982	Eastern Canada Region
March 4-5, 1982	Eastern Region
March 8-9, 1982	Mount Vernon Region
March 11-12, 1982	Olivet Region
March 16-17, 1982	Canada West Region
March 18-19, 1982	Northwest Region
March 22-23, 1982	Point Loma Region
March 25-26, 1982	Bethany Region
March 29-30, 1982	Trevecca Region
May 31—June 4, 1982	NIROGA, Asilomar, California
July 6-11, 1982	International Lay Retreat, Toronto
August 10-12, 1982	Nazarene Multiple Staff Association Conference—MANC
August 17-22, 1982	Green Lake '82-Campus/Career Youth Event, Green Lake, Wisconsin

## 1982-83—The Year of the Young

August 30—September 5, 1982	Youth Week
September 13-18, 1982	NIROGA, Glorieta, New Mexico
September 20-24, 1982	NIROGA, Ridgecrest, North Carolina
September 27—October 1, 1982	NIROGA, Schroon Lake, New England
October, 1982	European Military Personnel Retreat
December 13-15, 1982	Evangelists' Conference
January—May, 1983	Simultaneous Revivals
February 21-25, 1983	NIROGA, Lake Yale, Florida
May 30—June 3, 1983	NIROGA, California
May 30—June 7, 1983	NIROGA, Hawaii
June 13-16, 1983	Faith and Learning Conference—ONC
June 20-26, 1983	World Youth Conference, Oaxtepec, Mexico

## 1983-84—The Year of the Diamond Jubilee

August 29—September 4, 1983	Youth Week
September 12-17, 1983	NIROGA, Glorieta, New Mexico
September 19-23, 1983	NIROGA, Ridgecrest, North Carolina
September 26-30, 1983	NIROGA, Adirondacks
October 9-16, 1983	Diamond Jubilee Week
October 10-14, 1983	NIROGA, Canadian Rockies
October, 1983 (Tentative)	Chaplains' Retreat
October, 1983	European Military Personnel Retreat
December 12-14, 1983	Evangelists' Conference
December, January, February	"How to Live a Holy Life" Enduring Word Series Sunday School Lessons
January 3-5, 1984	Conference on Evangelism—Phoenix
January 17-19, 1984	Conference on Evangelism—Fort Worth
February 20-24, 1984	NIROGA, Florida
SUMMER, 1984	WILCON II, College Campuses
May 28—June 1, 1984	NIROGA, California

## 1984-85—The Year of Church Growth

Goal—75,000 New Nazarenes	
August 27—September 2, 1984	Youth Week
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
December 10-12, 1984	Evangelists' Conference
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



8,809 Nazarenes, and many more church friends and contacts moved from the vicinity of their local church last year. It's a big job keeping up with our mobile society. We need your help. Pastors are asked to report moving members or friends to Evangelism Ministries. We will contact the Nazarene pastor nearest the new location, then forward the results of his calls to the originating pastor as we receive them.

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- Out-of-town friends or relatives who do not have a church home.
- Friends or relatives who are confined to hospitals or other institutions in another city.

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—Paul G. Cunningham, Senior Pastor  
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# MORE EFFECTIVE FILMSTRIPS

*(Prepared for your Media Resources Notebook by Media Services)*

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Effective use of the filmstrip boils down, as it does with just about every medium, to one's ingenuity in maximizing:

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- 3) The accompanying content (pre- and post-presentation discussion) which makes the program relevant and meaningful to that particular audience

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# USING THE FILMSTRIP?

## ● Preview & Preparation

Always preview any media you plan to use!

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Is the subject presented at a level suitable for your particular audience? Is it technically well produced?

Does it encourage participation & critical thinking as opposed to "passive absorption" of facts?

Recognize the organization, key words/phrases, key frames. Plan on how to best tie it in with your subject.

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Raise questions about topic to be covered.

Prepare study guides.

Ask audience to be prepared to raise questions.

## ● Participation During Showing

Make helpful comments.

Inject questions.

## ● follow-up

Address questions raised.

Clarify unclear points.

Clinch learning through verbalization & appreciation.



# ENTERING VENEZUELA IN 1982 . . .



**CHURCH-WIDE OFFERING**  
**AUGUST 15, 1982**  
**GOAL: \$200,000**

The General Board of the Church of the Nazarene voted in February, 1981, to open work in Venezuela, the last Spanish-speaking country in this hemisphere for the Church of the Nazarene to enter. Target date for entry is fall, 1982.

A church-wide offering will be taken August 15, 1982, sponsored by the Nazarene World Mission Society, for property in Venezuela.

The William Porters, veteran Nazarene missionaries, have been appointed to go as missionaries to Venezuela in spearheading this new work.



Rev. and Mrs. William Porter

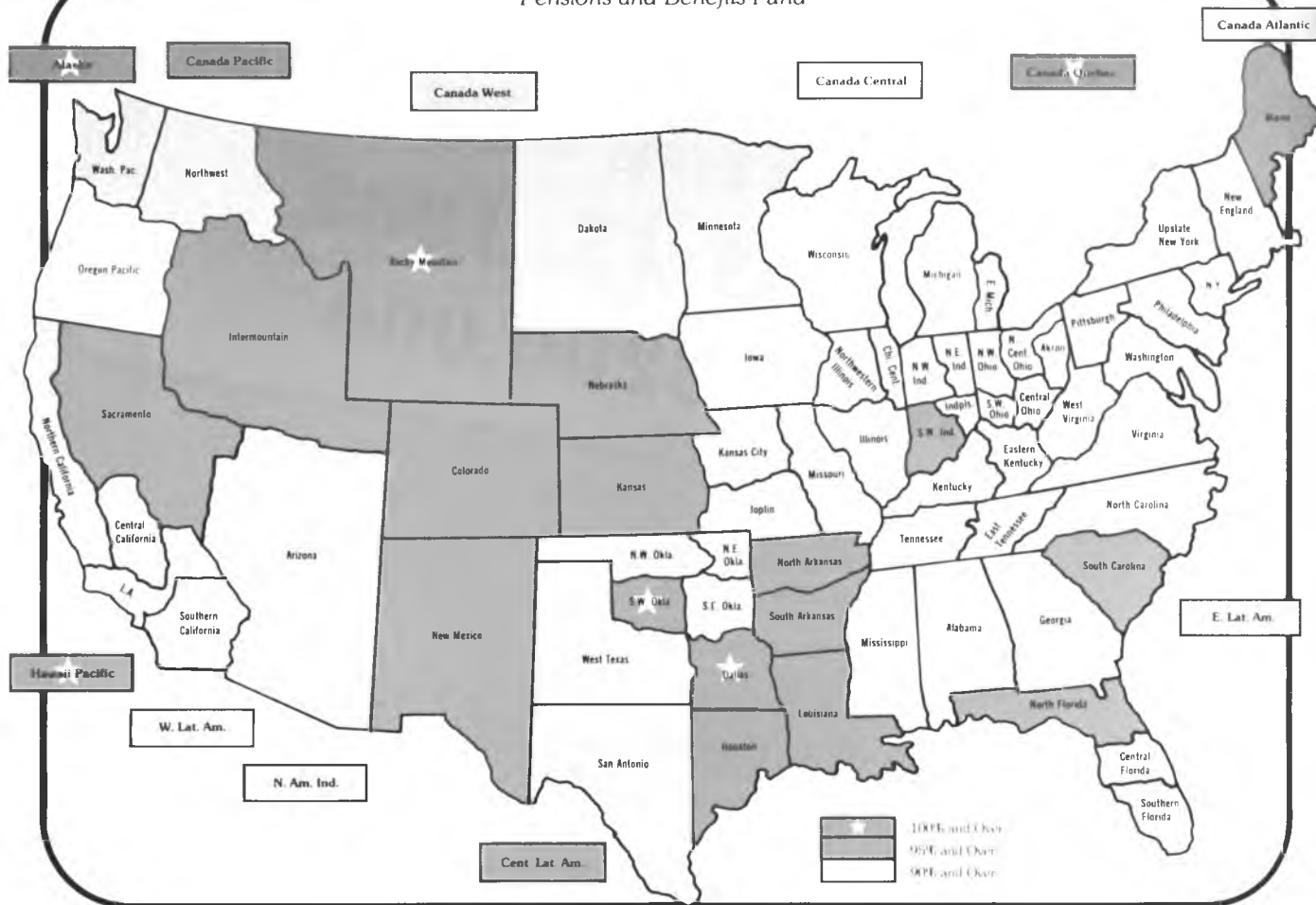
## CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE

# 1980-81 DISTRICT RECORD

## for payment of the Pensions and Benefits Fund

### 1981 District Record Summary

*Pensions and Benefits Fund*



Annual premiums for Basic Group Term Life Insurance for ministers are paid by Pensions and Benefits Services. Coverage for ordained ministers is \$1,500. Coverage for district-licensed ministers is \$1,000. Increased coverage is automatic to all enrolled ministers for the 1981-82 assembly year if their district paid 90 percent or more of their official Pensions and Benefits Fund during the 1980-81 assembly year.

“Double Coverage” is earned by the district having paid 90 percent or more of its Fund. “Triple

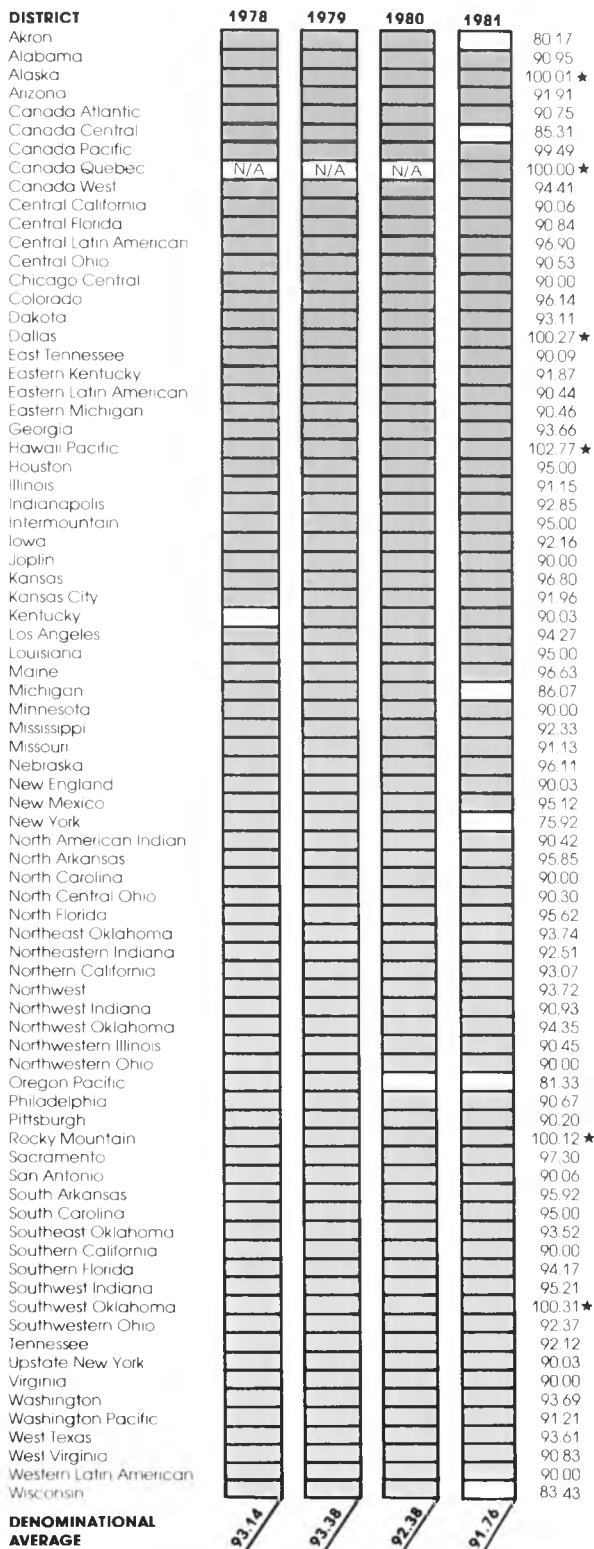
Coverage” is earned by the district having paid 95 percent or more of its Fund. “Double-Double Coverage” is earned by the district having paid 100 percent or more of its Fund. (Maximum coverage for enrolled ministers age 70 and over is \$3,000.) All coverages include an additional amount in case of accidental death. Pensions and Benefits Services is able to offer this valuable coverage through the continued faithfulness and cooperation of local congregations, pastors, and districts.

# DISTRICT PERCENTAGE

★Hawaii Pacific	102.77
★Southwest Oklahoma	100.31
★Dallas	100.27
★Rocky Mountain	100.12
★Alaska	100.01
★Canada Quebec	100.00
Canada Pacific	99.49
Sacramento	97.30
Central Latin American	96.90
Kansas	96.80
Maine	96.63
Colorado	96.14
Nebraska	96.11
South Arkansas	95.92
North Arkansas	95.85
North Florida	95.62
Southwest Indiana	95.21
New Mexico	95.12
Houston	95.00
Intermountain	95.00
Louisiana	95.00
South Carolina	95.00
Canada West	94.41
Northwest Oklahoma	94.35
Los Angeles	94.27
Southern Florida	94.17
Northeast Oklahoma	93.74
Northwest	93.72
Washington	93.69
Georgia	93.66
West Texas	93.61
Southeast Oklahoma	93.52
Dakota	93.11
Northern California	93.07
Indianapolis	92.85
Northeastern Indiana	92.51
Southwestern Ohio	92.37
Mississippi	92.33
Iowa	92.16
Tennessee	92.12
Kansas City	91.96
Arizona	91.91
Eastern Kentucky	91.87
Washington Pacific	91.21
Illinois	91.15
Missouri	91.13
Alabama	90.95
Northwest Indiana	90.93
Central Florida	90.84
West Virginia	90.83
Canada Atlantic	90.75
Philadelphia	90.67
Central Ohio	90.53
Eastern Michigan	90.46
Northwestern Illinois	90.45
Eastern Latin American	90.44
North American Indian	90.42
North Central Ohio	90.30
Pittsburgh	90.20
East Tennessee	90.09
Central California	90.06
San Antonio	90.06
Kentucky	90.03
New England	90.03
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Minnesota	90.00
North Carolina	90.00
Northwestern Ohio	90.00
Southern California	90.00
Virginia	90.00
Western Latin American	90.00
Michigan	86.07
Canada Central	85.31
Wisconsin	83.43
Oregon Pacific	81.33
Akron	80.17
New York	75.92
<b>DENOMINATIONAL AVERAGE</b>	<b>91.76</b>

# DENOMINATIONAL AND DISTRICT PAYMENT RECORD

The shaded spaces indicate each year the district paid 90 percent or more of its Pensions and Benefits Fund.



# A Page for Your Notebook

## Facts About Nazarene Mission

**THE CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE** is at work in 64 countries outside of Canada, Great Britain, and the United States.

Within these countries there are 105 districts; 77 of these districts have national district superintendents; 10 of the 105 districts are now Regular Districts; several others plan to become Regular Districts within the next few years.

**THE TEN REGULAR DISTRICTS** are Guatemala Northeast, Peru North, Puerto Rico, Japan, Mexico South, Republic of South Africa European, Swaziland North, Korea Central, Argentina Central, Belize.

A Regular District is fully self-supporting and self-governing, following Manual requirements.

**OVERSEAS DISTRICTS** last year reported 179,954 members and 283,075 enrolled in Sunday School.

More than 2,000 local pastors ministered to the 2,000+ organized churches and 3,000 or more preaching points. Many churches maintain from 2 to 7 preaching points in communities around their local organized body. Eventually some of these missions will develop into organized churches.

**THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC** reports 60 organized churches in six years. Their membership is now above 2,100 members. In March, 1981, Rev. Marcos Hatchett became their first Dominican district superintendent.

**THERE ARE THREE NAZARENE HOSPITALS** on mission fields: the Raleigh Fitkin Memorial Hospital in Swaziland, the Reynolds Memorial Hospital in India, and the Nazarene Hospital in Papua New Guinea. Nazarene doctors and nurses still work in the hospital in Acornhoek, Republic of South Africa, now called Tintswalo. Formerly a Nazarene hospital, it was taken over by the Republic of South Africa government when the area around Acornhoek became a national homeland.

**RECENT WORD FROM THE MIDDLE EAST** reports two churches and a Nazarene day school are now operating again in Beirut, Lebanon. Nazarene churches, suffering from loss of fleeing members and pastors, and from damage from shells during the civil war, are having to begin all over again to build congregations.

Churches and day schools in Jordan are operating normally.

There are no Nazarene missionaries in Jordan, Lebanon, or Syria. Two Nazarene couples are living in Israel.

**WORD CONTINUES TO TRICKLE OUT OF MAINLAND CHINA** that there are many Christians who held fast their faith in God during the difficult years. Officially registered churches are full at each worship service, even though those who attend must register to do so. It is recommended that tourists going to China not attempt to contact individual Chinese Christians. Foreign visitors contacting an individual can bring that person under suspicion by the government. . . . Some tourists have reported seeing a church in Peking which bore a sign "Church of the Nazarene." This is an error. Former missionaries to China tell us that we never had a Church of the Nazarene in Peking. In fact, we never had a church anywhere in China with the ornate structural design of the church building which has been photographed in Peking.

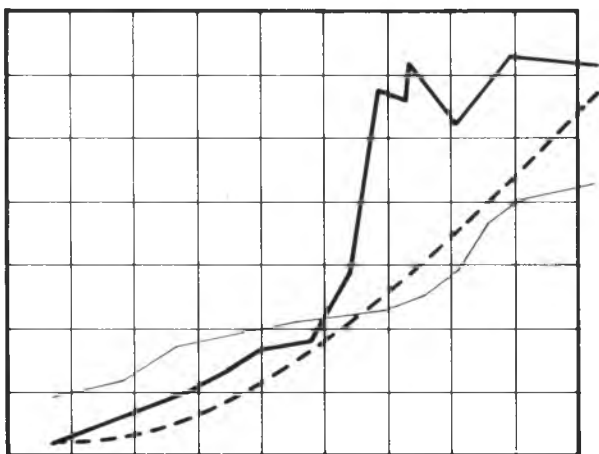
**MISSIONARY SPEAKERS ARE AVAILABLE** for services in local churches. Contact your district superintendent, and/or your district NWMS president to find out when speakers will be on your district. Or write the Deputation Secretary at the Division of World Mission, 6401 The Paseo, Kansas City, MO 64131. Other mission field speakers you might find interesting to your church: missionary children in nearby Nazarene colleges; students who have been overseas on summer ministries; retired missionaries; students from mission fields studying in the U.S., Britain, Canada, or your country.

From  
Him,  
Through  
Him,



To Him.

Easter Offering for World Evangelism  
Church of the Nazarene



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inflation

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Mrs. \_\_\_\_\_  
Miss \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone (       ) \_\_\_\_\_

Birth Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Month Day Year

# *Simultaneous Revival Schedule 1983*

<b>DATE</b>	<b>DISTRICTS</b>
January 4-9	Southern California, San Antonio, Southern Florida
January 11-16	Los Angeles, Houston, Central Florida, Guyana, Trinidad, Barbados, Jamaica, Leeward Islands, Belize, Bahamas
January 18-23	Central California, Sacramento, Louisiana, North Florida, South Carolina
January 25-30	Northern California, Dallas
February 1-6	West Texas, Southeast Oklahoma, Georgia
February 8-13	Intermountain, Southwest Oklahoma, Alabama
February 15-20	Oregon Pacific, Northwest Oklahoma, Mississippi
February 22-27	Washington Pacific, North Arkansas, Tennessee
March 1-6	Northwest, Joplin, Kansas City, Kentucky, Washington
March 8-13	Rocky Mountain, East Tennessee, Eastern Kentucky
March 15-20	Dakota, Missouri, North Carolina, Virginia
March 22-27	Nebraska, Illinois, West Virginia, Philadelphia
March 29—April 3	Kansas, Northeast Oklahoma, Southwest Indiana
April 5-10	Colorado, Indianapolis, Southwestern Ohio
April 12-17	New Mexico, Northeastern Indiana, Central Ohio
April 19-24	Eastern Michigan, Northwestern Ohio, North Central Ohio
April 26—May 1	Arizona, Michigan, Akron
May 3-8	Northwestern Illinois, Northwest Indiana, Pittsburgh
May 10-15	Wisconsin, Chicago Central, Upstate New York
May 17-22	Minnesota, New York, New England, Maine
May 24-29	Iowa

*All Canadian districts are scheduled for the month of March.*

*South Arkansas had previously scheduled simultaneous revivals for October 1-6.*

*Alaska, Hawaii, North American Indian, Eastern Latin American, and Western Latin American Districts, and any World Mission districts not mentioned above will be at dates of their own choosing. (Location does not require sequencing.)*

*Central Latin District has scheduled Simultaneous Revivals for June 5-12.*



4 PRACTICAL REASONS why  
your church should use . . .

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<b>R-164</b> LEDGER SHEETS (For Local, District, General, etc., Budgets) . . . . .	(Package of 25) <b>\$1.75</b>
<b>R-151</b> MONTHLY REPORT FORMS (13 Each of Summary, Expenditures, Budget Progress Form) . . . . .	(1 Package of 39) <b>\$1.75</b>
<b>R-168</b> INDIVIDUAL GIVING RECORD SHEETS . . . . .	(Package of 25) <b>\$1.25</b>
<b>R-169</b> DIVIDERS . . . . .	(Set of 8) <b>\$1.75</b>
<b>R-149</b> THREE-RING BINDER . . . . .	<b>\$4.95</b>

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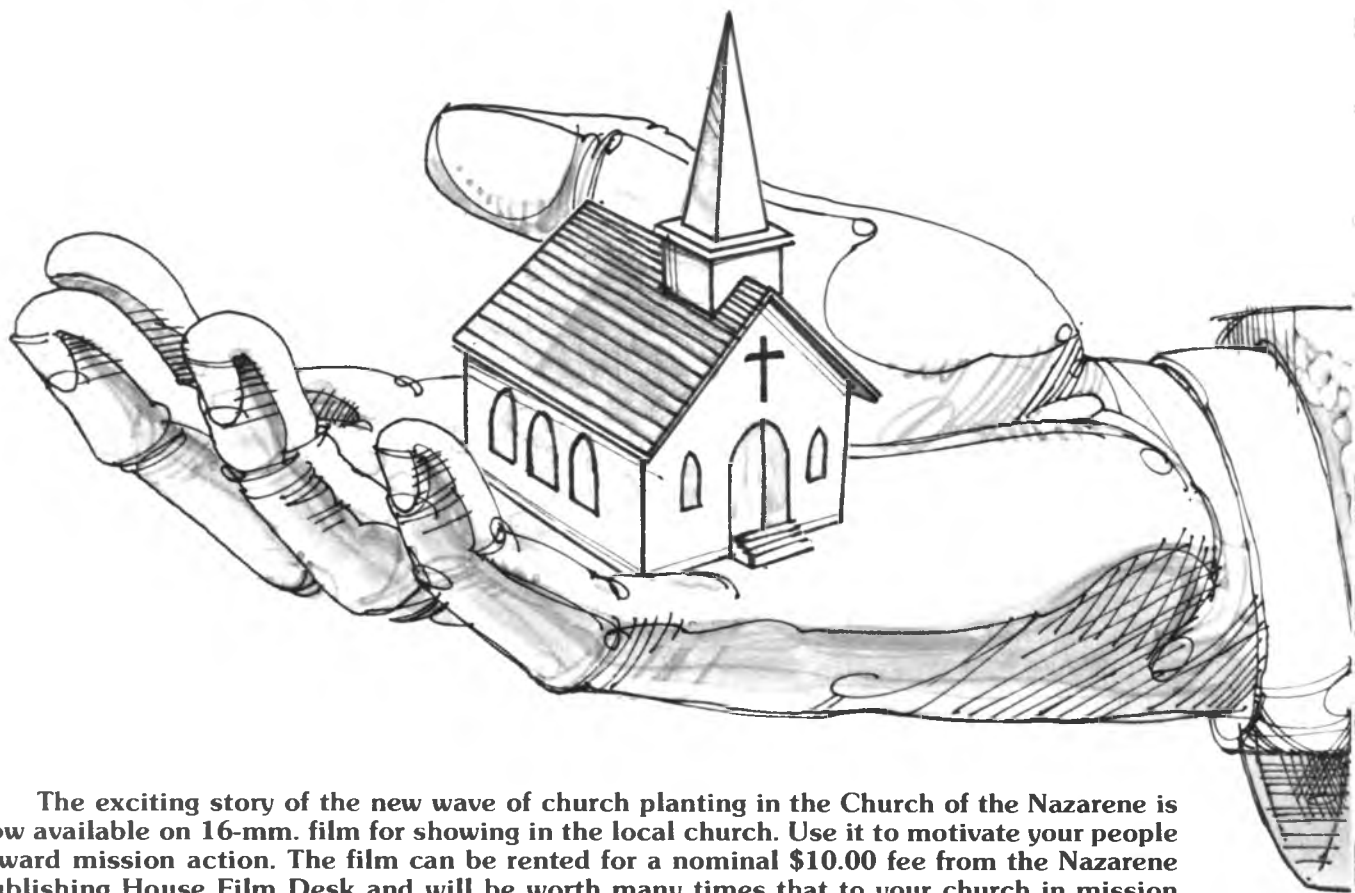
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The exciting story of the new wave of church planting in the Church of the Nazarene is now available on 16-mm. film for showing in the local church. Use it to motivate your people toward mission action. The film can be rented for a nominal \$10.00 fee from the Nazarene Publishing House Film Desk and will be worth many times that to your church in mission commitment alone. A mission action extension kit helps you put the film's message into immediate action. Don't miss this opportunity.

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Date \_\_\_\_\_

Yes, I would like my members to see this new film "A Church for Tomorrow" (FR-145) at one of the following dates of showing: **RENTAL \$10.00**

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**CHECK** or **MONEY ORDER** ENCLOSED \$ \_\_\_\_\_ **CHARGE** (30-day) **TO:** ☐ Church \_\_\_\_\_ (other) Account \_\_\_\_\_

**SEND TO:** \_\_\_\_\_ **BILL TO:** \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_



# Adult Sunday

## June 20

### HIGHLIGHT 9 ADULT MINISTRIES

1. SUNDAY SCHOOL
2. MARRIAGE & FAMILY LIFE
3. SENIOR ADULTS
4. SINGLE ADULTS
5. WOMEN'S MINISTRIES
6. CRADLE ROLL PARENTS
7. LAY MINISTRIES
8. SERVICE PERSONNEL
9. SMALL-GROUP BIBLE STUDIES



**Alive and Walking in the Spirit Galatians 5:25**

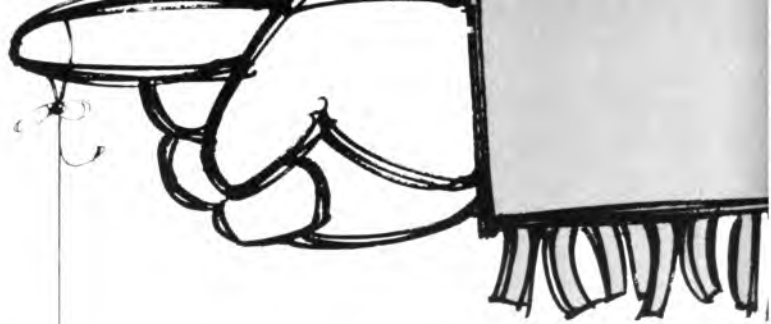
# ***In Everything***



## ***Let Him Be a Servant!***

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- Course of Ministerial Studies
- Nazarene Multiple Staff Association
- Continuing Education for Ministers
- Chaplaincy
- Support System for Ministers
- The Preacher's Magazine



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An important CHILDREN'S WEEKDAY MINISTRY for your Church!

**CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES**  
Division of **CHRISTIAN LIFE AND SUNDAY SCHOOL**

# A SIGN FOR THE TIMES

## **The Holiness college:**

- 1. Makes duty a joy and joy a duty.**
- 2. Proposes to be strong in a world of sin and temptation, alert in the presence of opportunity, and open-eared to the call of God and conscience for service or sacrifice.**
- 3. Is loyal to principle at the cost of popularity. Honors no one because he is rich; despises no one because he is poor.**
- 4. Is simple in her tastes, quiet in her dress, pure in her speech, and temperate in her pastimes.**
- 5. Is a companion with great books and with saints of all centuries.**
- 6. Fears nothing but sin, hates nothing but hypocrisy, envies nothing but a clean life, and covets nothing but character.**
- 7. Is energetic, but not fussy.**
- 8. When her last race is run and her service is complete, she will face the dissolution of her campus with inner peace, knowing that her work will abide.\***

*\*Taken from an address by Dr. Samuel Young at the Fourth Educational Conference, Department of Education, Church of the Nazarene, Bethany, Oklahoma, October 7, 1953. It is his adaptation from an unknown author.*

Mark R. Moore, Secretary  
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Begin Your **NEW ASSEMBLY YEAR**  
with the . . .

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A systematic method of recording information necessary to *complete your district report* at the end of the church year.

**Other Features**—Monthly Expenditure Reports, Membership and Subscription Record—*identical to the "Annual Report of Pastor" form*. Also includes calendars; sheets for recording children dedicated, funerals, marriages, baptisms, names and addresses; and summary of year's activities.

All material comes in a quality, Dura-plus vinyl, six-ring binder with handy storage pocket in back. Pocket size, 7¾" x 5½" x 7/8"; ½" rings with "push open" button at end. Includes sheet lifters. Takes 7¼" x 4¼", six ring fillers.

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- Grow in knowledge and understanding of the Bible?
- Nurture each other in personal and spiritual relationships?

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The editorial team is supported by the wise counsel of a rotating editorial advisory board. Each issue of the *Preacher's Magazine* accents a theme. An advisory board of persons with experience and expertise on the subject is recruited to tell the editor and his staff what needs to be said about the accented theme.

Serving without pay, the editorial board, pictured here, helped us put together this issue on "Preaching from the Book of Matthew."



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Biblical Scholar in  
Residence,  
Nazarene Theologic  
Seminary



**LEON SKINNER**  
Pastor  
Olathe Westside Chu  
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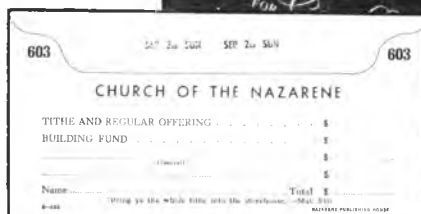
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# Spring-Easter

## Sunday School Attendance Campaign

### A. Theme: "Get Excited—Tell **EVERYBODY**"

### B. Attendance emphasis involves six Sundays

February 28 (first Sunday of Lent—Preview, Publicity)

1. March 7—Kickoff
  - a. **EVERYBODY** present
  - b. **EVERYBODY** involved
  - c. **EVERYBODY** get excited
2. March 14—**EVERYBODY** Bring Somebody
3. March 21—"Mary and Martha" Sunday  
Bring friends to God's house and then take them to your home for a meal.
4. March 28—Children's Day  
Every child proclaim Him King through special musical presentations, programs, recitations.
5. April 4—HOSANNA Sunday (Palm Sunday)  
**EVERYBODY** rejoice, **EVERYBODY** present  
(to hail Him, to proclaim Him)
6. April 11—Easter  
**EVERYBODY** celebrate His resurrection.



### C. Resources (available to pastors in late January)

1. Song sheet (4-page folder)  
Titles: "Get All Excited—Tell Everybody"  
"Hosanna"  
"He Lives"  
"Let All the People Praise Thee"
2. Poster—Mary, excited face, running to tell everybody
3. Letter—printed and signed "pastor," and letterhead for further use
4. Responsibility card
5. Banner

**D. Note:** Combined opening services are suggested during this campaign for rally, spirit, and special emphases.



***They like it!***

***Sure they do!***

**ALDRSGATE VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL**  
***"Something for Everyone!"***

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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  
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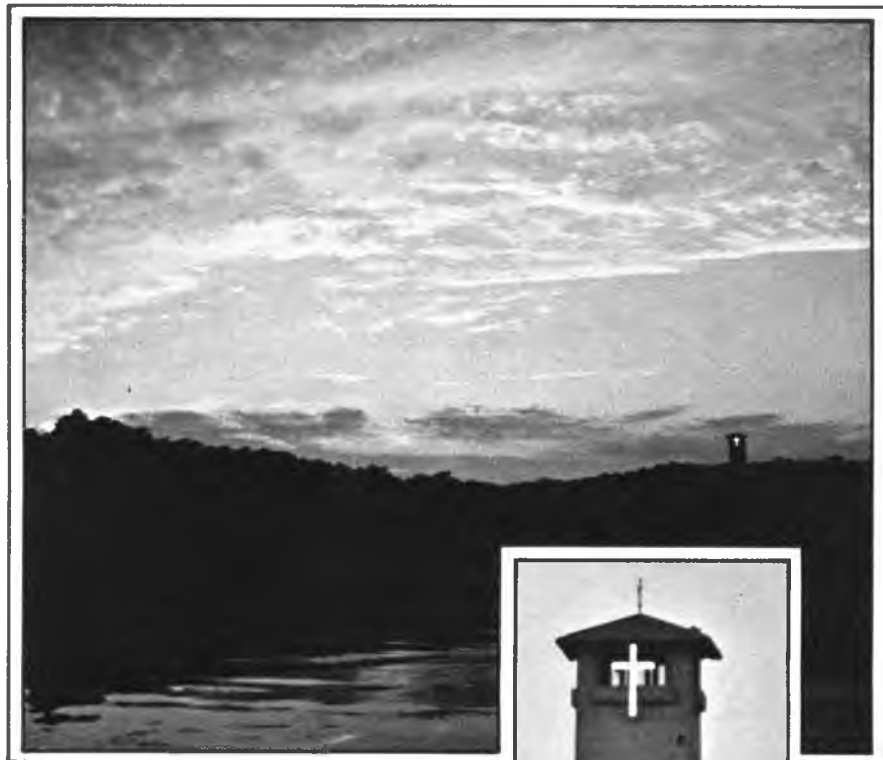
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—Hansen



## August 17-22, 1982

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**Dr. Cecil Paul**  
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**Dr. Stephen Manley**  
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**Dr. Jerald Johnson**  
Speaker



**Dr. John A. Knight**  
Speaker



**Rev. Gary Henecke**  
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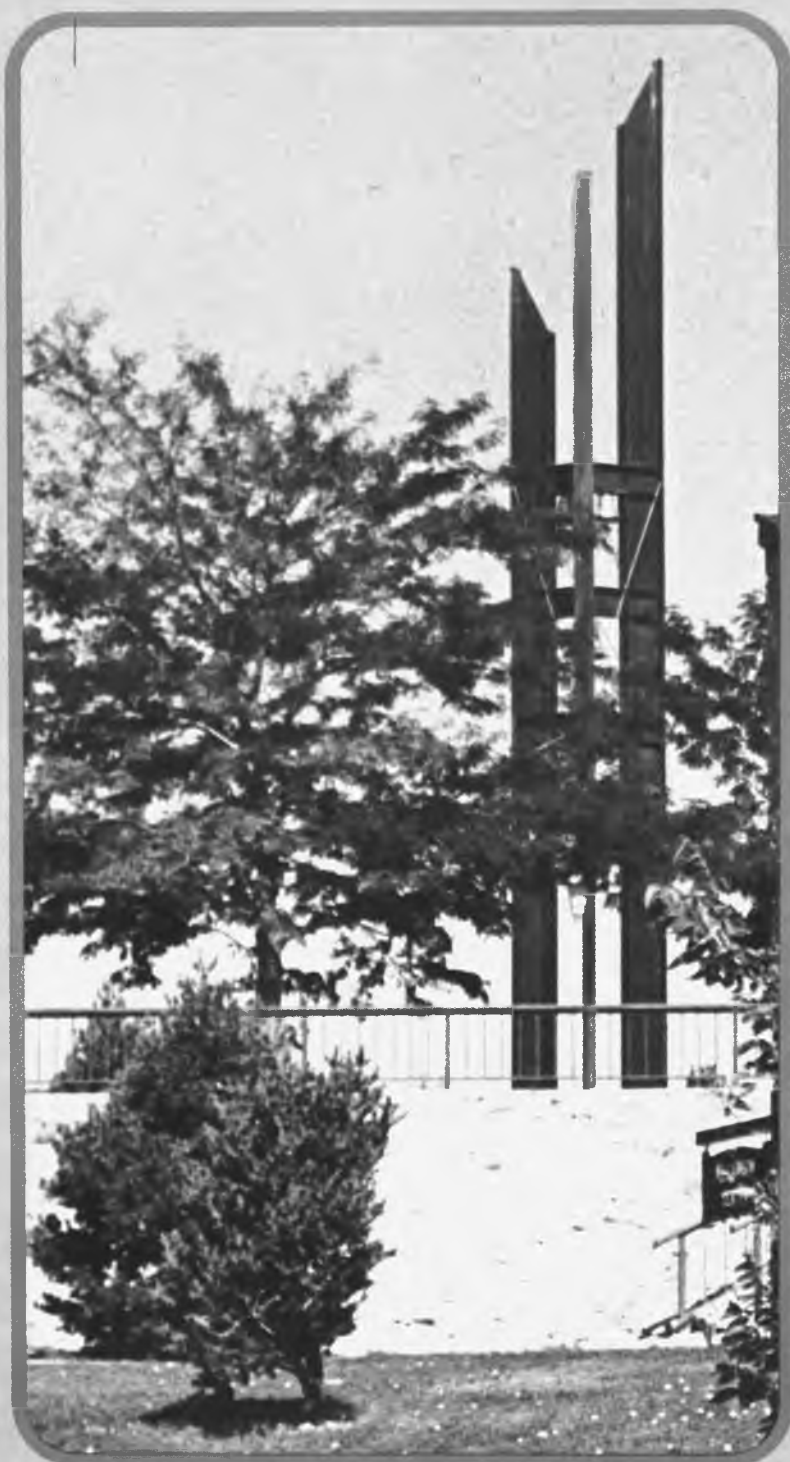
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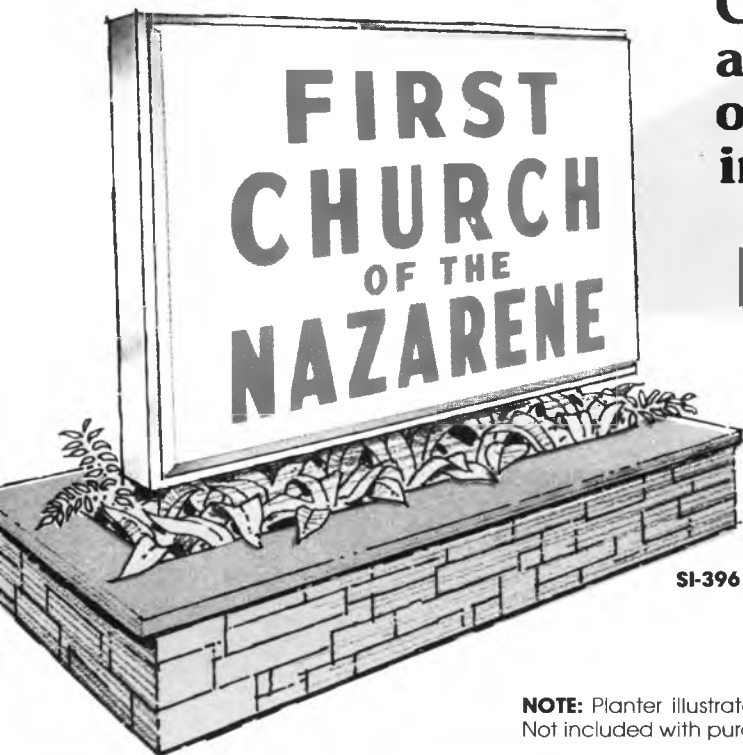
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riculum may be a six-week course to a three-year theological and biblical study. The disciple graduates from the classroom upon mastery of the established course requirements.

Discipling is also thought to take place when one person spiritually cultivates another person—"one on one." This interpersonal relationship may consist of a prescribed course of study. Or it might be a very dynamic and flexible approach to spiritual concerns. The latter approach to discipling may very well be described as counseling.

Others insist discipling involves a group process, usually involving some form of Bible study. The groups may consist of 3 to 15 persons, although some leaders purport to minister to 30 to 50 persons at one time. The larger groups would seem to fit with teaching in a classroom situation, whereas the small group of 15 or less would allow group dynamics to have a greater influence in the lives of the participants.

Considering these definitions and differing viewpoints, what in the Word is discipling? In this article, it is not claimed that all of the New Testament has been distilled to form an authorized standard for the word *discipling*. But an overview of the Gospel of Matthew offers insights into the process by which Jesus disciplined the Twelve.

### **1. Jesus' relationship with His disciples produced character.**

Christ's method and message always centered on people. He helped them to understand themselves and what they were to do. He affirmed positive character qualities in His disciples. He did not hesitate to point out growing weaknesses that inevitably resulted in spiritual impotency and problems one with another.

Nathaniel is an example. Upon being introduced to Nathaniel, Jesus complimented him on his openness and integrity, saying, "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile" (John 1:47). Jesus shaped Nathaniel's self-concept, affirming this attribute.

Jesus developed character in these men. He, then, expected certain results. The intended out-

come was based on who the man was in character and attitude.

### **2. Jesus taught the Kingdom to His disciples.**

Jesus was a transparent person with His followers. While some of the happenings in His life occurred in solitude (e.g., the wilderness temptation), Jesus shared those experiences with the Twelve.

Discipleship is commonly thought to be Bible study. Discipleship is the study of the Word—the person of Jesus. Jesus spent very little time teaching His men the Old Testament. His teaching about the New Covenant came out of His life.

Jesus taught the principles of

## **What in the "Word" Is Discipling?**

life in the new Kingdom. These principles were later illustrated in the actual life experiences of Jesus and His disciples as they ate, worshipped, and mingled with the religious leaders, commoners, and governmental authorities.

There was little question in the minds of the disciples as to what it meant to love one's enemies, to seek the Kingdom first, or to build on rock instead of sand. His teaching was plain to Christ's followers, because He lived what He preached.

Nevertheless, some of the lectures and parables of Jesus were obscure to the disciples. They asked repeatedly about their meaning. Invariably, the explanation included a penetrating application to the inner life. Explanation and application appear to be a necessary, continual, and major role in the discipling process.

Jesus checked the disciples to test their understanding. He would ask them questions. When they exhibited openness to God's Spirit, Jesus commended them.

### **3. Jesus taught His disciples through relational experiences.**

He made sure they were party to His encounters with unbeliev-

ers. Jesus exposed the disciples to the world. He did not move them out of it. They were not secluded or protected.

Nor did Jesus attempt to protect His disciples from the cancerous church leaders of the day. He defended His followers. He did not leave His men without aid. But neither did He build fences to gatekeep them from the realities of conflict.

Jesus' relationship with the disciples was a mixture of scolding and complimenting. He called them men of little faith. Then He commended Simon Peter for correctly discerning who He (Jesus) was. He seemed to know when to prod and when to praise.

The dynamics of relationships continue as they do in the saga of all friends. Jesus disclosed himself to the Twelve. That disclosure was followed by demands of commitment. Jesus gave himself, but asked all of each man. This happened in a natural, normal sequence of interpersonal involvements.

Jesus ministered to the whole person. Christ gave attention to the emotional well-being of disciples. He knew how they were feeling. Being sensitive to their fears, Jesus calmed His followers.

Jesus then confronted His men with the subject of the Cross, because He would not hide from them the severity of the situation. He was preparing them for the sudden jolt they would feel when He died. He dealt so candidly because of His love for them.

In the setting of worship and communion, Jesus placed this heavy load of information upon them. He knew the burden of His death could only be carried as the heart responded in love, admiration, obedience. God would sustain the disciples whose security would be severely shaken.

The results of the intimate relationship with Jesus can be observed in the disciples' readiness to assume and to execute the command of Jesus: to make disciples of every person. They were convinced the relationship with Jesus was adequate for them. They would tackle any task for Him.

#### 4. Transferring Leadership to the disciples.

After knowing His disciples for a relatively short time, Jesus informed them of the need for leadership. His endeavor of starting a spiritual movement was likened to the harvesting of grain. Reapers were needed.

With the first assignment He gave them, He transferred authority to them in order to carry out the job. He made clear what they were to do. They had directions as to where they were to go, to whom they would minister, how they would conduct themselves, and what the message was. Jesus explained the purpose of the mission. He especially prepared them for resistance. Jesus was thorough in His training.

Jesus delegated responsibility for many aspects of His ministry.

He called upon His disciples to help Him in working with the crowds, particularly at the times of feeding the multitudes. The contrived evangelistic event, called the Triumphal Entry, reveals how Jesus again used His disciples. Jesus' close association with Peter, James, and John reflects His intentional plans to shift the load of leadership responsibility.

Jesus allowed His men to experience failure as well as to taste success. While He was on the Mount of Transfiguration, the nine obscure disciples tried out their God-given ministry. It was a fiasco. Jesus expressed annoyance at their spiritual inability. He thought they should have been men of faith by this time.

Jesus gradually turned over the reins of leadership. As He did, He

reminded the disciples repeatedly of the purpose they were to accomplish. The last words of Christ before His ascension, as recorded by Matthew, contain the summation of purpose and priority. Disciple-making, by going, baptizing, and teaching all people, summarized the great goal of God. The task was theirs to fulfill. Jesus seemed to believe the training was complete. The men were prepared and confident. He left them to finish the job—bringing men to God.

In conclusion, our thinking, our feelings, our particular interests and prejudices must conform to God's Word. Our definition and ministry of discipling can be guided by these four biblical criteria: character development, Kingdom-content, interpersonal relationships, shifted leadership responsibilities.



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## MATTHEW LOOKS AT THE SON OF GOD *(continued from page 25)*

have Christ say just who He is so that we can then deny it—there is scarcely a worse evil. But is this not something of what happens when we ask Him for guidance and then refuse it because it does not come from sources which suit us? There is bleak tragedy here. Again, Jesus is being asked to demonstrate His divinity on terms that suit mere humanity, and asked to demonstrate it so that it may be denied. Here is the parallel to the treachery of Herod who wanted the magi to tell him where the Babe was found so that he could slay it, though his pretense was worship.

And at the Crucifixion, these religious leaders accuse Him of saying that He was the Son of God, and like the devil in the wilderness fling Scripture at Him—Ps. 22:8 (Matt. 27:39-44). Again, their demand is that He prove His divinity in ways that would satisfy them without changing them. But He will be Son of God in any saving way to no human being until that person confesses it for himself. And it will change that life. All other confessions of Him are confessions that condemn their confessors.

"If you are the Son of God, come down from the Cross." How tragic this demand. For it is precisely His staying there that makes His Sonship our salvation. They are asking Him to forsake the very act that makes His divine sonship effective for humanity. Peter had suggested something of the same thing and our Lord had bluntly told him just how diabolic such a scheme was (16:22-23). From the Godward side, His sonship depended upon His

obedience to the will of the Father, and this suffering and death were the will of the Father (26:39). From the manward side, His sonship has its effect through that suffering and death. To demand that He do *anything* in our way is to ask Him to deny himself. Rather, it is ours to accept and to believe in His way. It is ours to confess Him in such ways that He remains free from denying himself.

**A**nd that brings us to Matthew's last use of the title Son of God. The centurion had seen death before. And if he was typical of his culture he believed that it was just one of those things that we should accept because we are human, because we are "natural." But here was one at whose death nature seemed to rebel. It did not quietly and inscrutably, and with the usual efficiency, accept this one.

How deeply the centurion understood what he said, we cannot know. But we know that he was not here a man asking that things be proven just to suit himself. And he certainly had asked nothing of Jesus; least of all had he asked Him to deny himself. Nor had he asked Jesus to tell him who He was. All he seems to have known was what was going on around the cross and the upheaval of nature.

And here Matthew leaves matters with the title Son of God. It is a title testified to by the Spirit himself, recognized by demons, and revealed to human beings. It is confessed by humans either on the way to salvation or in self-condemning perversity which seeks to act as if it had not confessed. And now this centurion—who raises with his confession the haunting question, under what conditions will I be found confessing, "Truly, this is the Son of God"?

\*Scripture quotations in this article are the author's own translation.

**"That Jesus did not really rise from the dead  
and could not do so is assumed as self-evident  
reality for 20th-century humanity."**

# The Resurrection of Jesus, 20th Century and Scientific

by Streeter S. Stuart

*Professor of Greek and New Testament  
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In *Trajectories through Early Christianity*, Professor Helmut Koester of Harvard writes of resurrection as "a mythological metaphor for God's victory over the powers of unrighteousness." Of Jesus' resurrection specifically he says, "After his death several of his disciples had visions of Jesus which convinced them that he was alive."<sup>1</sup> This position in regard to resurrection generally, and the resurrection of Jesus in particular, is fairly typical of the modern theologian and biblical critic writing from a 20th-century existential background. It is a position which stands behind almost everything one reads today in such writing. That Jesus did not really rise from the dead and could not do so is assumed as self-evident reality for 20th-century humanity.

Daniel Patte, in his introductory monograph, *What Is Structural Exegesis?* takes what he terms a "fundamentalist" interpretation of the Bible to task for its "obscurantism" (i.e. its exegetical methods ignore modern culture) at exactly this point of resurrection:

The fundamentalist interpreter, unlike the biblical scholar, refuses to comply with the demands of historiography. He affirms that a religious reading of the Bible is the only valid one. Yet, paradoxically, such an attitude is intended to protect the "historicity" of the Bible. For instance, the fundamentalist interpreter as exegete affirms, against the historian, the historicity of the virgin birth and of the empty tomb. Why? Because he abides by the

modern historical conviction which can be summarized in the phrase: *if it is historical it is true*, even more than does the historian . . . Jesus' resurrection is a cornerstone of his faith. Consequently the empty tomb must be a historical fact . . . This obscurantist attitude can be termed "historicism" since it absolutizes the modern historical conviction in its very attempt to dismiss it.

When combined with a conviction about the literal inspiration of the Bible, such historicism leads, nevertheless, to a hermeneutic which is accepted as meaningful by a sizeable section of our society . . .<sup>2</sup>

We need not debate here a precise definition of "fundamentalist." What is significant for our purposes is the clear cultural or academic prejudice which leads to the suggestion that a real "historian," one who is truly in touch with modern culture, could not possibly affirm a literal virgin birth or resurrection. And yet Patte is struck by the fact that so many people do believe that the virgin birth and resurrection of Jesus really occurred. Obviously then, according to Patte, that sizeable section of our society which believes in this way must be ignoring the demands of true history and thus ignoring as well the demands of modern culture. But is that really the case? Are all those who accept the resurrection of Jesus as real history truly so far removed from modern culture that they merit the designation "obscurantist"? Is the evangelical affirmation of the historical Resurrection simply the result of blind

fundamentalist faith? Could it be that a resolute denial of the resurrection of Jesus is itself "obscurantist"?

Although Rudolph Bultmann is dead, it seems that his thoroughgoing skepticism regarding the resurrection of Jesus (and other miracles) is still very much alive. This skepticism still weighs heavily in the thinking of many theologians and biblical scholars. Such a skepticism or cultural "preunderstanding" was stated most succinctly by Bultmann in his well known article entitled "New Testament and Mythology," which is included in the book *Kerygma and Myth*:

*Man's knowledge and mastery of the world have advanced to such an extent through science and technology that it is no longer possible for anyone seriously to hold the New Testament view of the world—in fact, there is no one who does . . .*

**"I am one 'twentieth-century scientist' who not only sees nothing impossible about the resurrection of Jesus Christ, but believes its real historical truth to be more important for the destiny of man than any of the achievements of science."**

It is impossible to use electric light and the wireless and to avail ourselves of modern medical and surgical discoveries, and at the same time to believe in the New Testament world of spirits and miracles . . . The New Testament claims that this Jesus of history . . . is at the same time the pre-existent Son of God, and side by side with the historical event of the crucifixion it sets the definitely non-historical event of the resurrection . . . An historical fact which involves a resurrection from the dead is utterly inconceivable . . . The resurrection itself is not an event of past history.<sup>3</sup>

Here is a proper 20th-century cultural conclusion about the resurrection of Jesus, as Bultmann and others see it. The problem is that it is not a universal "preunderstanding." I mean, I use electric lights and all kinds of modern conveniences and believe in the literal bodily resurrection of Jesus too. Furthermore, I am aware of a great company of Christians, 20th-century Christians, biblical scholars, theologians, historians, doctors, and scientists who also regard the resurrection of Jesus as historical fact. Have we all become so far removed from the realities of our culture that we really accept that which is unacceptable? Are we culturally blind? Are we all so foolish that we should be pitied for the futility of our faith and hope as Paul indicated in 1 Cor. 15:19?

Some time ago, to be sure that I was not obscuring the modern scientific world in my own affirmation of the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ, I put the above quotation from Bultmann to three scientists of admittedly Christian persuasion and asked them, against such a theological background, and in view of our 20th-century modern world, whether they felt that the resurrection of Jesus, as a real historical event, is an impossibility. Here, through personal correspondence, are their replies.

Walter R. Thorson, formerly professor of physical chemistry at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and now in the same position at the University of Alberta, Canada, writes:

As a physical scientist I have no scientific explanation for the Resurrection, and normal scientific experience suggests that it is certainly an unexpected outcome. But there is no way in which I can investigate the event as a physical event; it can neither be repeated nor imitated in the laboratory. Therefore I am next forced back upon the category of "historical fact" as the factuality accessible to me. It appears to me that—apart from its sheer "incredibility" as a human event—the resurrection of Jesus is one of the best attested facts of history. Finally, of course, my attitude to the Resurrection is really determined by the basic beliefs and commitments of my life. I am one "20th-century scientist" who not only sees nothing impossible about the resurrection of Jesus Christ, but believes its real historical truth to be more important for the destiny of man than any of the achievements of science, glorious as these are.

L. Wayne Swenson, professor of physics at Oregon State University, has recently supervised a nuclear research program in a new field of meson physics at Los Alamos, N.M. He says:

At present it is beyond science to construct a proof that life can be restored after death, nor is it possible for science to prove that it cannot be. Lacking what may be called scientific proof as a physicist persuaded of the validity of the Bible's claim that Christ was resurrected from the grave, my reasoning is as follows: Observation of nature and the study of natural physical laws persuade me of the necessity of including God's creative active role in the inception of the intelligent life form we call man which is endowed with an immortal soul. God's creative activity is, of course, also evidenced in the natural environment of the universe which surrounds us. If we admit initial life to be the unique act of the will of God, it is a small thing for God to restore life, once interrupted, to the body of man. Certainly it is no more difficult to reconcile with the scientific point of view than any of the New Testament or present-day miracles.

Finally, Paul R. Schimmel, professor of biochemistry and biophysics at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, responds as follows:

Speaking strictly as a scientist, and setting aside the question of religious beliefs, I believe that the resurrection of Jesus is a possibility. Cer-

tainly much of what we take for granted in our modern world would be regarded two or three centuries ago as impossible or "miraculous." Although we view and understand the world in a far different way than did our ancestors of biblical times, there remain innumerable questions and phenomena for science to explore. With this in mind, I can well imagine that several centuries from now new laws will have been discovered which will make the resurrection of Jesus quite plausible, from a scientific standpoint.

Here we have impressive testimony from three highly reputable 20th-century scientists that the resurrection of Jesus is not only conceivable but indeed very much acceptable as an event of past history. We would not be so naive as to assert that this testimony proves that Jesus rose from the dead. Nor do we fail to realize that it would be possible to produce an equally impressive lineup of scientific opinion that would deny the bodily resurrection of Jesus as Bultmann has done.

But that position of nonacceptance should not in itself obscure the reality that many people have accepted and do accept the resurrection of Jesus as fact, and many of those, like the three scientists, who presently do accept it as fact are as thoroughly scientific and modern as one can be.

Can we really accuse these scientists of being cultural obscurantists or of lacking proper cultural orientation? It seems unfair and even unacademic for the critic to charge the 20th-century believer

with complete ignorance of the demands of his culture. The realities of this world are not obscure to us who hold to the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ. We are not living in a cultural vacuum. Indeed, what seems to have happened is that many critics have so closed their own minds to that body of scientific-scholarly opinion which *affirms* the historicity of the Resurrection that their own exegesis has become obscurantist and no longer hermeneutically acceptable to many 20th-century men and women.

The resurrection of Jesus in the 20th-century is not to be relegated simply to the mentality of blind fundamentalism, real or imagined. The resurrection of Jesus is accepted as fact by many people who may not be writing articles for existential theologians, but nonetheless it is accepted by many who are culturally elite. The failure of the critic to account for this acceptance on some basis other than fundamentalist exegesis or obscurantist historicism exposes the shallowness of the critic's own position.

We affirm that which is obvious in the above: the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ as historical fact is 20th-century, scientific, and holding. And in the resurrection of Jesus we continue to hope for our own resurrection and eternal life.



1. James M. Robinson and Helmut Koester. *Trajectories through Early Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971), pp. 223 f.

2. Daniel Patte. *What Is Structural Exegesis?* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976), p. 7.

3. Rudolph Bultmann. "New Testament and Mythology," in *Kerygma and Myth*, edited by Hans Werner Bartsch (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1961), pp. 4 ff.

## PUBLIC EVANGELISM AND THE INVITATION TO PRAYER

(continued from page 29)

church's surprise and joy over their obedience. However, when those who have knelt for prayer are ignored while the minister continues to lament over the unresponsiveness of others, they may become discouraged and question the real importance of their decision.

The celebration of the church over one who has experienced by faith the grace of God will in itself generate an atmosphere of obedience in which others may decide to pray.

### A Warning About Successful Altar Calls

Effective altar calls are of value to the life and growth of any church. Hope and morale grow when a congregation regularly witnesses others kneeling at the church's altar in response to evangelistic sermons.

But there are two risks that must be faced when a church experiences numerous successful altar calls.

1. Basic to all evangelistic sermons is the call to

obedience. To follow Christ is to walk with Him daily—accepting and obeying His word.

A public prayer can result in faith and grace for that daily walk, but it also can become a substitute and serve as a rationalization for disobedience.

The benefit and beauty of the victorious altar service cannot be used to replace the command of Christ for holy living. Feeling good does not exceed the witness of obedience, and a sense of relief does not release one from the criterion of Christ-likeness.

2. Much of the value of an evangelistic altar call is lost when the congregation refuses or is not given an opportunity to gather and pray with those who have responded. The nearness of the children of God strengthens and encourages those who have obeyed the Spirit's call to public prayer. Whether to pray aloud or silently, both the trained and the inexperienced should endorse the evangelistic altar call by kneeling and praying with those who respond to the invitation.

The evangelistic altar call is an extension of the Good News that Jesus Christ has been crucified and resurrected. He now sits at the right hand of the Father, and all men who labor and are heavy laden are invited to come boldly to the throne of grace and to receive rest. May the altars in holiness churches always be used for the purpose of accepting that invitation.





# PASTORAL CARE AND NEED-ORIENTED PREACHING

by LeBron Fairbanks

*Professor of Pastoral Theology, European Nazarene Bible College*

**H**istorically, "Practical Theology" or "Pastoral Theology" has included at least three major aspects of Christian ministry: (1) communicating the gospel of Jesus Christ; (2) organizing the church for its work; (3) and caring for the souls of its members. This article will focus upon the third aspect of pastoral theology.

Consistent need-oriented preaching provides the most effective way (though not the only way) by which a pastor cares for the souls of his people. The minister must, therefore, be sensitive to the felt needs of his parishioners. He must also develop a strategy for an expanded pastoral care ministry in the congregation through his preaching.

**I.** What is "need-oriented" preaching? What is "pastoral care," and how is it related to pastoral counseling?

Wayne Oates states:

"The pastor, regardless of his training, does not enjoy the privilege of electing whether or not he will counsel with his people . . . His choice is not between counseling or not counseling, but between counseling in a disciplined and skilled way, and counseling in an undisciplined and unskilled way."

Pastoral counseling is usually viewed as a one-to-one encounter between a pastor and a parishioner where specific counseling techniques are used. Pastoral counseling deals primarily with conflict and guilt which hinder the development of a growing, satisfying relationship with God, with others, and with oneself. The counseling process aims to help a person increase his or her ability to love God, his neighbor, or himself more fully.

For many people the word "God" is an empty symbol. They have no personal relationship with Him, and they are unable to really hear the Good News of the gospel. Pastoral counseling becomes a way of giving new meaning to the word "God" and of communicating the Good News to such persons. It is a means of helping them discover a more meaningful life.

Spiritual growth is an essential objective in pastoral counseling. Counseling is, thus, an invaluable method for implementing the basic purpose of the church. However, the traditional counseling approach of pastoral ministry—the one-to-one encounter—places limitations upon the minister that must be acknowledged.

There is the limitation of *time*. A sensitive pastor who takes seriously his total pastoral responsibilities does not have the time to spend in a great number of one-to-one encounters.

There is the lack of *expertise*. A pastor in a normal ministerial training program is not trained sufficiently to deal with many of the deep-seated psychological problems encountered in today's society. To make up for this, he should develop skills in short-term counseling and referrals.

There is the limitation of *relationships*. The closeness between pastor and parishioner, and the perception of the minister as a representative of God, prevents some guilt-ridden people from seeking help from the pastor.

Pastoral counseling, then, must function in the setting and context of pastoral care, which is the more general "caring" ministry of the pastor. It includes counseling, but is not limited to it.

There are four great traditions of pastoral care—healing, sustaining, guiding, and reconciling.



Through these four functions, the ministry of Jesus is projected through the person and work of the Christian pastor. Pastoral care is bringing the healing, sustaining, guiding, and reconciling resources of God to bear on human need.

The scope of pastoral care in the local church is broad. It includes instructional care (such as premarriage guidance), hospital care (comforting the sick), shut-in care (serving those who cannot attend the worship services), and bereavement care (standing with a family through the loss of a loved one, or through a divorce of a son or daughter). Though not limited to it, pastoral care comes into play most often in times of physical, emotional, or spiritual crises.

Intensively personal concerns relating to death and dying, grief suffering, emotional illness, infidelity, life and/or vocational uncertainties, a sense of futility and meaninglessness of life, loneliness, guilt, marriage and family distress, physical suffering, and loss of self esteem, are illustrative of the needs brought to the worship services by parishioners.

Pastoral care, understood from this perspective, will be translated into pastoral concern in the pulpit expressed through consistent biblically based need-oriented messages. Because of the limitations of time, lack of expertise, and personal relationships, a strong need-oriented pulpit ministry can vastly strengthen the caring/counseling dimension of pastoral ministry. Whenever a congregation gathers, whatever its size, the need for help is present. Preaching is therefore, an avenue of ministry. It is the pastor caring for his people.

One pastor wrote, "Without words, I could hear them speak (as they sat in the pews) 'Preacher, do you understand my problem?' 'Preacher, are there any spiritual resources that could renew my life?' 'Preacher, if you are a man of God, speak to me of His love and grace and truth that I may experience them and live.'"

Another minister said, "All preaching is preaching to personal needs, if it is really preaching and not the delivery of an essay or a general address to nobody in particular." True preaching is not a generalization, nor is it a monologue, it is always directed to the needs of the worshippers.

It was said of Harry Emerson Fosdick, former pastor of Riverside Church in New York City, "The greatness of his preaching lies in the fact that each person in the congregation thinks he is preaching to him or her."

**II. How, then, does a pastor develop an effective pastoral-care, need-oriented preaching ministry?**

**A. Maintain a meaningful pastoral visitation program.**

Pastoral calling should be more than merely making friendship calls. Ministers are God's ambassadors to speak for him and the church. A pastor visits his people to learn about or respond to their specific needs. He seeks to assure, encourage, inspire, guide, and direct. It should be his purpose to discover where his people are on their spiritual

pilgrimage, and to help them on their way by showing love and care. Pastoral visitation gives opportunity for parishioners to vent their feelings, whether they be guilty, frustrated, or hostile.

Through pastoral calling the pastor can minister to grief-stricken members. Without assuming the role of a psychologist, much less a psychiatrist, he can render important service to people at such times of great distress.

It is when the people are called on in their homes, visited in the hospital, visited in their places of employment, upheld at the open grave, or consoled in their bewildering moments that the pastor becomes their sympathetic friend. But something else happens in a pastoral visit. The pastor returns from his visitation to his office with new issues to investigate theologically in the reflective house of study.

In the pulpit, the pastor stands on a bridge between his theological reflections in his study and pastoral visitation. Issues and situations with which

**When a pastor's preaching becomes echoes of arid irrelevancies, the preacher may be advertising his neglect of pastoral care.**

the pastor has been confronted throughout the weeks or months are scripturally addressed. Though not speaking at people, he is most specifically speaking to issues which his people are facing. Sermons cannot substitute for dealing with individuals one-on-one, but sermons can strengthen all that transpires in the relationship.

The preacher who is in touch dialogically with his parishioners knows that Christian faith is challenged by many people. For some, the most common religious terms are but meaningless clichés, shibboleths, or ideas from another culture or subculture. Others are faithfully holding on to the traditional concepts but are uncertain about their meaning.

Christians are anxious to hear their pastor preach meaningfully and authoritatively on God's Word and the Bible, about the grace of God, the meaning of prayer, the power of faith, the reality of the Spirit-led life and the Living Christ. Nor should he avoid the big biblical themes such as death, covenant, suffering, heaven, hell, and holiness. His preaching task is to give new content to old concepts.

Phillips Brooks said, "The preacher who is not a pastor grows remote. The pastor who is not a preacher grows petty. Be both, for you cannot really become one unless you are the other."

Pastoral calling must never be viewed as an ap-

pendix to pastoral ministry. Both the personal care of a concerned pastor and the pulpit guidance of a wise preacher are needed. In the minister's day-to-day world the two functions reciprocally support each other.

**B. Prepare the sermon with a specific purpose in mind.**

Sermons are preached to give information, change attitudes, modify behavior. Sermons answer what the pastor believes the Spirit of God wants his people to know, to feel, to do. These three dimensions speak to the intellect, the emotion, the behavior of the parishioner. But it takes careful preparation.

"Brethren," said the former Dean of Princeton Theological Seminary, "your office and mine is to call men forth from the tomb, to make people alive—alive at more points, alive at higher levels, alive in more interesting, worthy, and effective ways."

Think about the last sermon you heard. What was the specific purpose for the sermon? Could the "big truth" of the sermon be identified in one sentence?

Perhaps most sermons are too general, and are presented as information to be received, facts to be known, or knowledge to be shared. The need-oriented preacher seeks to communicate and challenge the congregation to change, not just inform them. Be specific and be definite. Define the purpose. Memorize the "big truth." Know the specific need to which the sermon is addressed. The most difficult, yet the most rewarding part of sermon preparation is defining specifically the what, why, and to whom of the message.

As Donald G. Miller has stated:

"To preach is not merely to stand in a pulpit and speak, no matter how eloquently and effectively; nor even to set forth a theology, no matter how clearly it is stated or how worthy the theology. To preach is to become a part of a dynamic event wherein the living, redeeming God reproduces his act of redemption in a living encounter with men through the preacher."

Seen from this perspective, need-oriented preaching includes proclaiming the evangelistic call, exploring the content of the Christian faith, and confronting as a searching prophet the evil that ensnares and grips persons and society.

**C. Utilize the entire worship service.**

Dynamic preaching is basically pastoral care in the context of worship. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the need-oriented preacher plans the entire worship service as an event, a happening, a dynamic encounter between God and His people.

During the week, the people of God experience hatred, greed, jealousy, strife, conflict, and many other emotions either on the job, in the community, or in the family. On Sundays they need rest for their weary souls. Lift them above the ordinary. Point them beyond the human. Carry them to the fountain of living water. The way the minister stands and proclaims the message of God reflects his authority as an ambassador of God to the people of God.

The call to worship should focus the attention of the congregation upon the Almighty One. It is inexcusable for a pastor to delay consistently the selection of the scripture reading or the hymns until he is on the platform ready for the service to begin.

Plan the pastoral prayer. Begin with adoration and thanksgiving. Include confession and intercession. Present specific needs to God. Include needs for physical healing but don't limit your petitions to such requests.

Preaching is not the sole event in the service. Utilize the entire worship experience as a means of grace where God can break through and touch the hearts and lives of your people. Preaching is basically pastoral care in the context of worship.

**D. Study the Bible through the eyes of a pastor caring for his congregation.**

What does the Scripture say about human needs and human conditions of guilt, forgiveness, relation-

**"The preacher who is not a pastor grows remote. The pastor who is not a preacher grows petty. Be both preacher and pastor, for you cannot really become one unless you are the other."**

ships, loneliness, failure, fellowship, acceptance, alienation, separation, love, envy, bitterness, strife, compassion?

What does the Bible say about the life crises of death and dying, grief, physical pain, emotional illness, marriage and family problems, and distress?

A word of caution is necessary. Belief in the full inspiration of all 66 books of the Bible does not imply that every word, phrase, or verse is inspired separate from its context or its intended use by the writer. The authority of the Bible rests in the Book as a whole, not in disattached and disoriented fragments of it. A correct understanding of a single verse will always be validated by the Bible as a whole.

Pastors concerned with preaching to the needs of the congregation must guard against "proof-texting" and "eisegesis." "Proof-texting" refers to the selection of texts out of context in order to prove a point. "Eisegesis" refers to the reading of "our" meaning into a text rather than "exegeting" the text, i.e., seeking the meaning of the text as it was originally intended. Ministers should never be rightfully accused of "using" a text for personal interpretation out of its biblical context.

Pastors should—must—preach need-oriented messages using sound hermeneutical principles.

The pulpit ministry will degenerate into "hobby-horse riding," "cultural moralizing," and "pseudo-psychologizing," and the authority of Scripture and pastor will deteriorate in the thinking of the congregation if principles of biblical interpretation are not rigorously followed.

With this warning in mind, study the biblical text and passage sufficiently to know the "Word of the Lord" regarding the issues concerning your people. Careful study of the Bible gives the preacher confidence and authority to speak the truth in love to people in need.

**E. Plan ahead for your need-oriented pulpit ministry.**

Organize your files by months, pastoral care themes, and scripture cross referencing system. Establish a sermon calendar for a year in advance, then prepare a sermon file to parallel the schedule of preaching. Of course, the schedule can change. But sermons will have more depth and continuity if planned and prepared over a period of time. This procedure will take time to implement but will be a most rewarding process when utilized.

**III. What are some prerequisites for an effective need-oriented preaching ministry?**

**A.** The first is an attitude of a servant. Pastors are servant/leaders, and stand between and beside their people, not over them. A prophet/priest/pastor model of pastoral ministry is needed with a mental framework of compassion which communicates the message of "I love you," "I need you," "I respect you," "I serve you," "I care for you."

**B.** The second prerequisite is sensitivity to people and their hurts. Use "openers" when talking to

people. Cultivate the ability to ask questions like:

"How do you feel about . . . ?"

"How are things going in your situation?"

"How are things going with you spiritually?"

"You seem tired, or upset, or discouraged."

"I have a feeling you have a burden on your mind."

Related to this sensitivity is an awareness of subtle distress signs such as disturbed children, veiled antagonism between husband and wife, a frantic attempt to keep the conversation on the surface avoiding all in-depth encounters, unusual embarrassment at the minister's call, depression, loss of interest in food, a radical change in their usual behavior, irrational compulsive behavior and guilty avoidance of the pastor.

**C. No prerequisite is greater than the spiritual preparation of the pastor.**

Much time in prayer is needed for the development of need-oriented sermon themes and adequate biblical exegesis. Appropriate timing for preaching the sermon is so important. God's Spirit alone can give the necessary guidance. Even the best prepared sermons can be a total failure unless preachers are spiritually prepared personally. Neither psychology, theology, philosophy, nor homiletics can ever substitute for a personal relationship with God. Other prerequisites include a commitment to preaching as the first priority, a trust relationship between pastor and parishioner.

Frank Laubach has stated, "It doesn't matter how big heaven is, it matters how big the pipe is and whether it is open. The bottleneck is never God, it is always ourselves. There are parishioners in our Sunday services of worship who have isolated themselves from the power and love of God. Their spiritual channels have been blocked. As preachers we are called by God to help them break the log-jam."

What people want to know is whether or not their pastor is really concerned with their needs, whether or not he is the same in life as in the pulpit, in counseling as in the sacrament of Holy Communion, the same in listening to their problems as we are in listening to their joy.

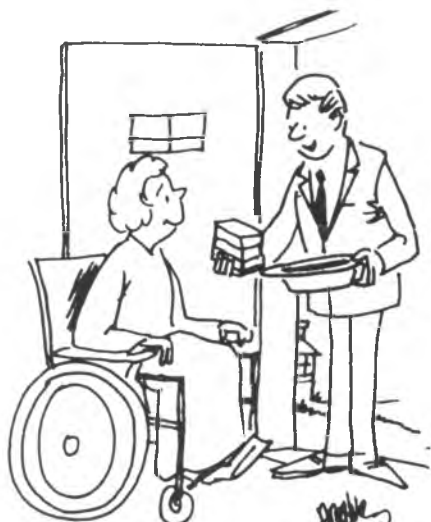
Preachers need a fresh understanding of their calling as a contemporary extension of the Incarnation. When the call of God is experienced anew within lives, then they are bound to become a channel, a mediator of the truth, the love, and the power of God.

As ministers study, write, counsel, or call in the home of a parishioner or step into the pulpit, the following prayer needs to be personalized.

"Search me and know me, O God, and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. Take my words and speak Thou through them. Take my hands and work with them. Take my soul and set it aflame that it may proclaim Thy goodness, Thy power, and Thy love.

"Lord renew in me my calling. May I be faithful to You, and to the people to whom You have called me.

"In Jesus' name, Amen."



*"Here are the taped sermons of our last three services and the collection plate you missed."*

# Needed— Light and Heat

by Leslie Evans

*Pastor, Church of the Nazarene, Sheffield, England*

**W**e may have differing opinions as to what constitutes success in preaching, but however much we try to convince ourselves that faithfulness is more important than success, in our secret hearts we know that real preaching is meant to accomplish something. John the Baptist was an effective preacher, of that there can be no doubt whatsoever. The people thronged to hear him and his ministry produced remarkable results. What was John's secret?

Part of the secret is to be found in the tribute Jesus paid to him. "He was a burning and a shining light" (John 5:35). John Henry Jowett makes the comment:

It is the combination of the two words "burning and shining" which portrays so distinguished a character. If either word be bereaved of the other the character it describes is ineffective. Light without heat! Who has not

met the impotence? Heat without light! Who has not met the terror? It is the fellowship of the two which generates a fruitful power. The two together produce a luminous enthusiasm. It is only when our souls have the double guardianship of light and heat that our life can be said to be safe. If I may so put it, we have the security of incandescence (*The Friend on the Road*, p. 152 f.).

To be effective, our preaching needs this double security of in-

**"There are those who appear to regard preaching as an art form to be admired and appreciated as an end in itself."**

candescence. John possessed the two characteristics vital to any true preaching ministry, and the same balance of heat and light is just as necessary today as it was then. We have all listened to preaching where there was light but very little heat, or where there was a plentiful supply of heat but very little light.

The aim of preaching is to bring men and women into the light of God. This means that we must handle the great themes of Scripture, giving opportunity for the light to fall upon man's sin and need, upon God's love, upon Christ's Cross, upon the indwelling Spirit, and so on. In much modern preaching the light shines so feebly that few souls would be able to find their way home.

The words of James Black are relevant here:

Preach on issues, not on side issues. The world is needy and there are countless souls who come up to church every Sun-

day praying for comfort and direction, as lost men. To offer them a string of cheap epigrams or bloodless moralities is to feed them on stones. I fear nothing so much as the "clever" minister. Amid all life's agonies and sorrows, he is not only a tragic misfit but also a cruel irony. It is the big truths that heal—and it is healing that men need. Some of our smart and flashy sermons are as thoughtlessly cruel as they are impertinent. Get deep down, gentlemen, deep down. You may hurt but you will heal. Handle in God's love the big gracious things that can alone give courage, comfort and hope to the unknown seekers who may never thank you except in their prayers (*The Mystery of Preaching*, pp. 44 f.).

It is our calling to bring men into the healing light of God, and every sermon we preach ought to be examined as to its "light content." There are those who appear to regard preaching as an art form to be admired and appreciated as an end in itself. The church itself can encourage this notion. Preaching becomes an irrelevant self-indulgence if we see it as anything less than that which brings the healing light of God to a dark and troubled world.

But the true preacher needs heat as well as light. I am not appealing for "emotionalism," that should be avoided like the plague. There are preachers who have a maximum content of heat and a minimum content of light. God's truth has to reach head and heart before it can have converting power.

Is it not true that while preaching may lack the penetrating power of light, it may also lack the kindling power of heat? Jeremiah has a word for us: "But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones" (Jeremiah 20:9).

Professor Stuart Blakie, addressing students in Glasgow on the subject of preaching, said: "A preacher is a man with a message, on fire."

The message without the fire is unlikely to kindle other hearts, and it is for this reason that Dr. Campbell Morgan identifies the essential ingredients of all true preaching as "truth, clarity, and

passion." It was not the cold, formal presentation of truth that effected so remarkable a change in 18-century England, a change which renewed the church and reformed society, but the "theology of the warmed heart" experienced and proclaimed by men like Whitefield and Wesley.

**"... some men can say nothing as though it were something; it is a much more common error among modern preachers to say something as though it were nothing."**

Dr. Sangster puts his finger on the same spot. In a moving chapter entitled "Glow over It," he reminds us that some preaching fails because it fails in passion, and that people depart from our services largely unmoved, and they are unmoved because the preacher has been unmoved.

Yet while it is a fact that some men can say nothing as though it were something, it is a much more common error among modern preachers to say something as though it were nothing. A man preaches on the incarnation, but no hint of adoring wonder streams from the pulpit to the pew. If he is inwardly amazed himself at the incredible truth he is announcing, he is highly skillful in concealing it . . . he might be giving a mild weather forecast" (*Power in Preaching*, p. 90).

At all costs we need to maintain this element of heat in our preaching, for passion has a power all of its own.

A noted intellectual at Cambridge University, Dr. Charles Raven, once described a preacher he heard: "The sermon was an

argument puerile, but the man was aflame, radiating a power of loving that filled his simple words with meaning and an atmosphere of worship . . . The scoffer stayed to pray."

That quotation may seem to argue against the balance of light and heat required in our preaching. In fact, it serves to indicate how indispensable warmth and passion are to the preaching situation. The mere informer, the man who is simply the official retailer of spiritual truth, a reciter of great things, really has no place among the ranks of those whose hearts are ablaze with "tidings of great joy."

Changing the metaphor, Kierkegaard points an accusing finger at the church for its lack of enthusiasm and says:

Whereas Christ turned water into wine, the church has succeeded in doing something more difficult, it has turned wine into water.

Such criticism can be applied with equal truth to many who preach the gospel. The thrill and the wonder of it all has long gone and we are raking about among the cold ashes of a fire that once burned.

In his book *The Prophet of the Heart*, Frank Cairns reminds us of the danger we all face as minister of the Word of God:

Ernest Renan began his life, as you will remember, with an almost fierce passion to spend himself for God, and he ended it with a complacent thanks "to whatever gods there be for his pleasant promenade through the nineteenth century." It seems incredible, but, alas, it is possible for preachers to so lose sight of the purpose of their preaching as to make it little else than a pleasant promenade through the fields of literature and the Book of God.

Bunyan tells us of the ecstasy that flooded his soul the day of his conversion. "I was so taken with the love and mercy of God," he says, "that I knew not how to contain myself till I got home. I thought I could have spoken of His love to the very crows that sat upon the ploughed land before me!"


But then Bunyan experienced the voice of the tempter. "You are very hot, but I will cool you! This frame shall not last. Many have been as hot as you for a spurt, but I have quenched their zeal. I will cool you little by little, I shall have you cold before long!"

It comes at last to the question of the preacher's own inner life. Our hearts must be kindled, and stay kindled, if we are to be used of God to kindle other hearts. Whatever other gifts we may possess, nothing, absolutely nothing, can compensate for the absence of the fiery breath of God upon our own hearts. We are better to stay silent than to mouth truths which do not kindle our own souls.

The preaching which lacks warmth also lacks authority and

**"The mere informer, the man who is simply the official retailer of spiritual truth, a reciter of great things, really has no place among the ranks of those whose hearts are ablaze with 'tidings of great joy.'"**

conviction. We may pick every word with a tweezer, carefully polish every phrase, have the support of the finest scholarship, have impeccable doctrine and irreproachable orthodoxy and yet leave our hearers completely unmoved. Light there may have been, but it is like the light of the moon, it is cold light, a light which never can produce life.

John the Baptist possessed this God-given quality—he was a burning and a shining light. And when God has men like that to use, the world will feel the impact of such holy incandescence. 



In the "Preacher's Magazine"  
**50 Years Ago**

#### DON'T BE LOPSIDED

Do not run everything to second coming, nor to divine healing, nor to sanctification, nor to regeneration. Try to be an all-round preacher, symmetrically developed, even, middle-of-the-road, steady, unflinching. Giving each his portion in due season. Thus you will minister to and bless everyone who sits under your ministry. It is a great calling to preach and do it successfully.

—C. E. Cornell  
October, 1931

#### SMOKERS

A reader of the *Chicago Daily News*—a young man, he declares himself to be—says he has found, by compiling statistics, that "ninety-seven of every one hundred men would never marry girls that smoke," and adds, "Girls, if you want a man with good moral character to be your husband, don't smoke."

—C. E. Cornell  
November, 1931

#### THE LIVE WIRE

We found that the term had a physical origin dating back to the early days of the era of electricity, but which lacked proper insulation. A wire which came loose from a building which was on fire, and which had suffered from the fire itself sufficiently to have its metal parts exposed in places and which was now dangling from a post, after having been loosed from the burning building, was called "a live wire," and people were warned not to touch it or to be touched by it.

As so we thought of these matters in relation to preachers and to the habit of speaking of certain of them as "live wires," and we were surprised to discover that in every instance where we had information, the general idea expressed above held with reference to the preachers in question. For in every case they were men of acknowledged ability, and in every case they were men of zeal and industry; but in every case, also, they were men of more or less erratic temperament. They answered pretty well to the analogy of wire which is charged with electricity, but which has thin or broken insulation.

—J. B. Chapman

#### THE MULTIPLIED DUTIES OF THE MODERN PASTOR

Almost every faithful pastor is "rushed" almost to death. The phone rings early in the morning and late at night. To give satisfaction to all, he must answer every demand, social, financial, and spiritual. Facts are, he must be a super man with a physique like an elephant and the strength of an African baboon. He can truthfully sing, "There is no rest for the weary."

—C. E. Cornell  
October, 1931

#### CRUSTY SERMONS

All sermons are bread, but some have more crust than others.

Preaching without preparation is merely a form of deep breathing.

—J. A. Holmes  
November, 1931

# JUSTIFICATION AND BEYOND

by Alex Deasley

*Professor of New Testament, Nazarene Theological Seminary*

**Scripture:** Rom. 5:1-11 (RSV).

## INTRODUCTION

Our previous study of Rom. 3:21-26, which we entitled "The Good News," pointed to justification by grace through faith as the divine solution to the equally divine condemnation of sin, which constitutes "The Bad News." Justification by faith is "Good News" because it enables God to be—in the words of 3:26—"just even while justifying him who has faith in Jesus";\* that is, it enables God to forgive the sinner without underrating sin or cheapening forgiveness.

In the passages which intervene between 3:26 and 5:1, Paul demonstrates two further propositions: First, that since the sinner cannot deserve such justification it is obtainable only on the basis of faith, which implies that it is equally available to Gentiles and Jews since Gentiles can exercise faith as easily as Jews (3:27-31). Second, he shows that such a radical conclusion, far from undermining the Jewish religion, is, in fact, confirmed by it, since Abraham himself was accepted by God on the basis of his faith, not his works (4:1-25). "Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness" (4:3).

The chapter, whose exegetical details do not concern us here, completes itself with the claim that what was true in Abraham's case is true in ours also; the only thing that avails to save is trust in the Lord Jesus "who was put to death for our trespasses and raised for our justification" (4:25).

With this, Paul has rounded out his argument for justification as such by showing not only that it is needed by both Gentile and Jew, but is obtainable by both, and is, indeed, consistent with the abiding principles of the Jewish religion. He is not com-

pletely finished with justification, however. There are some important consequences which flow from justification, and it is to these that he now turns in the fifth chapter.

## I. BACKGROUND CONSIDERATIONS

These focus on the purpose and intent of chapter 5. How does Paul seem to view it in the unfolding argument of the Epistle? The following observations may be made as bearing on this question.

1. Chapter 5 clearly marks a *new departure* in the development of the Epistle. Three features particularly suggest this.

(a) *Grammar and syntax.* The logical "therefore" (5:1); the secondary grammatical construction used in reference to justification ("having been justified"—aorist participle passive) followed by the main verbs ("we have" [5:1]; "we have received" [5:2]) show that the argument for justification is now completed and Paul wishes to move beyond it and build upon it.

(b) *Formal criteria.* Two are noteworthy. First, verse 25 of chapter 4 reads like a concluding formula. This is especially so if, as its rhythm and language suggest, it is part of an early Christian creed. Second, ancient writers sometimes marked off specific sections of their work by use of specific formulae. It is possible that the phrase "through Jesus Christ our Lord" is such a formula, in which case the section, which in any case ends at 8:39 (where the formula is also present), would begin at 5:1.

2. Chapter 5 seems to mark the transition to a *new theme*, or at the very least, a new aspect of the existing theme. This is suggested by two features.

(a) A distinct shift of vocabulary. This is the most compelling argument. Thus in chapters 1-4 words translated "just" or "righteous" in all their forms

occur 30 times, as against only 10 times in chapters 5—8 (9 of these appear in chapter 5). On the other hand terms denoting “life” and “death” as modes or reference to the spiritual state occur regularly in chapters 5—8 but are largely absent from chapters 1—4. This suggests that in chapters 5—8 Paul passes from discussing justification by faith to a consideration of the nature of Christian life.

(b) The accent or characteristic notes of the fifth chapter. These will be elaborated below. Suffice it to say that 5:10 hints at salvation through union with the risen life of Christ; while 5:12-21 deals with sins, not as a series of independent and unrelated events, but as a reigning power which is, however, neutralized by the grace of God in Christ. We may say, therefore, that Paul is now ready to take up what was evidently a common perversion of his teaching of justification by grace alone, namely, that continuance in sin was a matter of indifference. He has glanced at this already (3:5, 7-8); now he is ready to deal with it at length.

3. Chapter 5, and especially verses 1-11, may therefore be regarded as the bridge between chapters 1 to 4 and 6 to 8. This seems to be preferable to binding it with either group or splitting it down the middle. The linguistic evidence summarized in 2(a) above shows links both with what precedes and with what follows. The underlying reason for this is not simply *logical* but *theological*, arising from Paul's understanding of salvation. He cannot say: “Since we are justified we have everything,” because he knows faith-righteousness is more than a legal status; it is a changed moral condition, hence he must proceed to speak of sanctification. Chapter 5 is transitional in showing that sanctification is implied in justification and yet also something beyond it. As Godet expressed it: “Sanctification is more and better than a restrictive and purely negative *condition* of the state of justification once acquired. It is a new state into which it is needful to penetrate and advance, in order thus to gain the complete salvation.”<sup>1</sup>

## II. FROM BACKGROUND TO EXEGESIS

Chapter 5:1-11 seems to fall into fairly clearly defined sections: verses 1-5 and 6-11. It is true that verse 6 is linked to verse 5 by the casual conjunction “for”; however, it is more probable that verse 6 is resumptive of verse 1 (particularly of the reference to being justified by faith) rather than of the specific idea in verse 5, and that the purpose of the resumption is to lay a foundation for verses 9-11. Accordingly we shall take the passage in this way.

### A. *The Blessings Justification Brings* (5:1-5)

These verses are concerned chiefly to spell out the blessings which come in the train of justification. As pointed out above, the reality of justification is the springboard from which the argument begins. The stress lies therefore on the resultant blessings which “we have.”<sup>2</sup> At first sight the three blessings mentioned seem to be peace (v. 1), joy (vv. 2 and 3: “we rejoice”), and love (v. 5). However, closer examination suggests that this is but a

variation of the familiar Pauline trio: faith, hope and love (cf. 1 Thess. 1:3; 1 Cor. 13:13), the difference being that in this passage the emphasis falls on the inner content rather than the outer form of the graces mentioned first. We may consider them in turn.

1. *Peace resulting from faith* (vv. 1-2a). It is not surprising that peace is named first, and not merely because it is the correlative of faith which usually stands first in Paul's listings. Paul's message in the first three chapters of the Epistle is that the sinner stands under the *wrath* of God. “The way of peace they do not know” (3:17). On the day of judgment “for those who do not obey the truth, but obey wickedness, there will be wrath and fury . . . but glory and honor and peace for everyone who does good” (2:8, 10). It follows therefore that the prime consequence of justification is the removal of the wrath, i.e., reconciliation to and peace with God. The medium of this reconciliation is the Lord Jesus Christ “through whom we have received access into this grace in which we stand” (v. 2). In the only other contexts in which Paul uses the noun “access” (Eph. 2:18; 3:12), the idea is of being led into audience with God through Christ, the Intermediary. This is evidently the idea here. It is through the redemption that is in Christ that we are brought near to God (3:24 f.). The perfect tenses of the verbs (“we have obtained,” “we have come to stand”) underline both the pastness of the event as well as its ongoing reality.

2. *Joy resulting from hope* (vv. 2b-4). The key word in these verses grammatically is the twice-repeated verb “we rejoice” (2b, 3). However, the key word in terms of the thought is “hope”: it is the reality of the hope which triggers joy. The essential idea is that authentic faith cannot rest in the present, no matter how great present grace may be; faith finds its ultimate vindication in the future (Rom. 8:24-25). Now there are two ways in which hope produces joy.

(a) *Hope produces joy through future expectation* (v. 2b): specifically of “the glory of God.” This is the symbol of divine perfection (Col. 1:11; Eph. 1:12; 3:16) which lightened Adam's face but was lost at the Fall (Rom. 3:23): Through Christ it is recovered in measure (2 Cor. 4:6; 3:18), and in the age to come will be recovered in its fullness (Rom. 8:18, 29-30; 2 Tim. 2:10). It is this confidence of total redemption from sin in all its effects and consequences which fills the apostle with joy.

(b) *Hope produces joy through present tribulation* (vv. 3-4). Christian hope is not a form of escapism for “we rejoice also in our sufferings” which produce hope. How do sufferings produce hope? Some suggest that it is because suffering is the prelude to the last age and therefore shows that age cannot be very far away. However, that idea does not seem to be uppermost in Paul's mind here. The train of thought seems rather to be that the acceptance of tribulation in faith and submissiveness gives rise to those very qualities which characterize the glory of God, namely patience and testedness. When a man sees these emerge in his own charac-



ter, he is reinforced in the confident hope that one day God's glory will be fully recovered and reproduced in him.

3. *Love resulting from the indwelling Holy Spirit* (5). Love is directly related to hope: "Hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts." The surpassing evidence that hope will not be falsified is the presence of God's love in the hearts of God's people. At its broadest Paul's argument is that the Spirit is the Gift of the age to come (Joel 2:28); and if the Spirit has been given this proves that the age to come has begun and it is only a matter of time before it is consummated. But there is a specific grace which the Spirit imparts to the believer: "the love of God." This may mean "God's love for us" or "our love for God." In favor of the former is the fact that the love of which Paul proceeds to speak is that peculiarly divine love "that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us" (v. 8); and as Barrett aptly observes "it is this—not our love for him—that makes us confident in our hope."<sup>3</sup> In favor of the latter is the reference to ethical qualities in the lives of Christians in verse 4. The probability is that Paul is using the phrase in an umbrellalike fashion to cover both aspects. These then, are the blessings which justification brings and has already brought to the lives of believers. However, this is not all. There is more. Paul turns next to

#### B. *The Blessings to Which Justification Will Lead* (5:6-11)

If there are blessings which come with justification, there are others which lie beyond it: in the phrase which is the keynote of the remainder of the chapter, there is "much more" (9, 15, 17, 20).

Paul begins with a resume of the central truth of justification: namely, that when we could not help ourselves and did not deserve to be helped by anyone else, God came to our rescue (vv. 6-8). Three phrases, grammatically similar in the original in that they are participial, are used to describe the condition of the unjustified, and taken together they constitute a reasonably comprehensive definition of what it means to be a sinner.

(i) "While we were still weak" (6): sin is a state of weakness. Its deceitfulness lies in the fact that, while it holds out the lure of freedom and independence, in fact it ensnares the unwary sinner in its filaments before he realizes he is trapped. The divine grace is shown in that, despite this—rather, because of this, Christ died for the ungodly.

(ii) "While we were yet sinners" (8): sin is a state of wickedness. The exact force of verse 7 is uncertain. Whether there is a distinction between a "righteous man" and a "good man" is debatable: Cranfield suggests the difference is between one who "does no wrong" and one who positively is benevolent and charitable.<sup>4</sup> Barrett on the other hand suggests that verse 7b is a correction by Paul of 7a, but the scribe (Tertius) allowed both the original statement and its intended replacement to stand.<sup>5</sup> However that may be, the general force of the statement is clear: that while possibly someone might lay down his life for a good man, the stupen-

dous quality of God's love is shown in that Christ died for the wicked.

(iii) "While we were enemies" (10): sin is a state of warfare. As P. T. Forsyth was wont to say: "We are not simply wandering children or straying sheep; we are rebels, taken with weapons in our hands." It is this antagonism, in which man's enmity towards God evokes God's just wrath against man, which constitutes the human predicament as it also provides the setting for the manifestation, never equalled or surpassed in human history, of God's gracious intervention for man's salvation.

All of this is the recapitulation of the quintessence of justification; but the recapitulation is not merely for the purpose of repetition. It is to provide a springboard from which to vault upwards to even greater blessings which follow in the train of justification. The basic form of Paul's argument is: since Christ died for you when you were His enemies, what will He not do now that you are His friends? His answer is twofold.

1. *Final Salvation* (9). This is the chief emphasis of the passage: deliverance from the final wrath. It is true that God's wrath is also being revealed in the present (1:18); but fundamentally, wrath is an eschatological concept in Paul, and salvation consists in the assurance of deliverance from it on the Day of Judgment (2:9; cf. 1 Thess. 1:10; 5:9). The future tense ("we shall be saved") is probably to be taken as temporal and intensive (rather than simply logical). The idea then is: since God justified us when we were sinners, He will certainly not refuse us on the last day now that we are righteous.

2. *Full Salvation* (10). There is, however, another blessing besides final salvation which follows in the train of justification: "much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life." What is this further degree of salvation which follows reconciliation? Some commentators take verse 10 to be wholly parallel to verse 9 so that the reference here as there is to final salvation on the last day.<sup>6</sup> However, it is questionable whether this does justice to Paul's meaning. If it is correctly maintained that 5:1-11 is the bridge to a new section of the Epistle; and if that new section is an exposition of the second part of Paul's "text" from Hab. 2:4 ("He who through faith is righteous shall live": 1:17), then the theme to which Paul is now turning is that new kind and quality of life that lies beyond justification. It is significant that in chapter 6 when Paul deals with the Christian's death to sin, he speaks regularly of its sequel in terms of sharing the risen life of Christ. "The death he dies he died to sin, once for all; but the life he lives he lives to God. So you must also consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus" (6:10-11). Sanday and Headlam observe: "No clearer passage can be quoted for distinguishing the spheres of justification and sanctification than this verse . . . —the one an objective fact accomplished without us, the other a change operated within us."<sup>7</sup>

Similarly C. H. Dodd:

If the death of Christ, a single event in history, has had such results, we may rely upon the con-

tinuing power of His life in communion with those whom He loves. The "much more" here has great significance. It shows that, in spite of the emphasis which Paul felt he must lay upon justification (partly because it was at this point that he had to meet opposition), he found the real center of his religion in the new kind of life which followed upon justification. It was life "in Christ," or "in the Spirit"; life in the love of God, as mediated to us by "the Lord the Spirit."<sup>8</sup>

### III. FROM EXEGESIS TO EXPOSITION

It is rarely that a scripture passage can be handled homiletically in only one way. It certainly is not the case with this passage, which abounds with sermonic possibilities. Its overall theme is clearly "Justification and Beyond," but there are many ways in which it can be treated.

1. The entire passage (5:1-11) may be treated as a single unit, yielding a single sermon on some such lines as these.

#### I. THE BLESSINGS THAT COME WITH JUSTIFICATION (5:1-5)

- A. Peace: "we have peace with God" (5:1)
- B. Joy: "we rejoice" (5:2-4)
  - 1. In hope (2)
  - 2. In tribulation: because tribulation leads to hope (3-4)
- C. Love: "God's love has been poured into our hearts" (5)

#### II. THE BLESSINGS THAT FOLLOW JUSTIFICATION (5:6-11)

- A. Final Salvation: "We shall be saved by him from the wrath" (9)
- B. Full Salvation: "We shall be saved by his life" (10)

2. A second possibility would be to divide the passage into two groups of verses: 1-5 and 6-11, and preach a single sermon on each. A glance at each main part of the outline offered above shows that there is ample material in each to make a single sermon.

3. A third possibility would be to construct a further outline on 5:6-10, either as an independent sermon or as an additional sermon within a series of three. The theme would be: "What Sin Is and What God Did to Save Us from It." The outline might be:

- I. SIN IS A STATE OF WEAKNESS FROM WHICH CHRIST LIFTED US (5:6)
- II. SIN IS A STATE OF WICKEDNESS IN WHICH GOD LOVED US (5:7)
- III. SIN IS A STATE OF WARFARE IN WHICH GOD RECONCILED US (5:10-11)

Such a sermon, as emphasizing the helplessness of man and the divine initiative in salvation, is basically concerned with the meaning of justification. It could therefore stand first in a series on "Justification and Beyond" as follows:

Sermon One: *The Meaning of Justification* (5:6-10)

Sermon Two: *The Blessings that Come with Justification* (5:1-5)

Sermon Three: *The Blessings that Follow Justification* (5:6-11)

However, if it were preferred to keep the order of the text, sermons one and two could be reversed.

\*Scripture quotations are the author's own translation.



### NOTES

1. F. Godet. *Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans* (Edinburgh: E. T., 1892), vol. I, 394.

2. It is true that the best attested reading of the main verb in 5:1 is subjunctive, not indicative, giving the meaning "let us have peace with God" or (possibly) "let us continue at peace with God." However the only difference between the two in Greek is the length of the single letter "o," which might easily have been mispronounced by Paul in dictation, or misheard by Tertius in copying. The context strongly favors the indicative since the verbs in the parallel statements are in the indicative: "we have obtained access" (2), "we rejoice" (2, 3). Dr. Bruce Metzger in *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (United Bible Societies, 1975) explains why the UBS Greek New Testament has the indicative in the text although the manuscript evidence favors the subjunctive: "A majority of the Committee judged that internal evidence must here take precedence. Since in this passage it appears that Paul is not exhorting but stating facts ('peace' is the possession of those who have been justified), only the indicative is consonant with the apostle's argument" (5:11).

3. C. K. Barrett, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (New York: Harper and Row, 1957), 105.

4. C. E. B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1975), vol. I, 264 f.

5. Barrett, p. 105.

6. So Cranfield, pp. 265 f. Likewise Barrett, who thinks that the contrast between the two verses is "rhetorical rather than substantial" (p. 108).

7. W. Sanday and A. C. Headlam, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 5th edition, 1902), p. 129.

8. C. H. Dodd, *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans* (Moffatt Commentary, London, 1932), p. 77.



"He said his recovery was a miracle, so he sent the check to the church instead of you!"

# RESIGNATION—FROM THE PASTOR'S WIFE?

by Jayne Schooler

I am a pastor's wife. From the thrilling moment of "I do," a new role emerged. No longer just a visitor that frequented the young minister's congregation, I became his wife.

During our first full-time ministry, my husband and I jumped into the job with the philosophy of total availability. With that ideal in hand, we reached out to our community. Hosting became an almost every night occasion and I gladly attempted almost every job in our growing fellowship. Onto all these tasks, I added a full-time teaching position to supplement our income.

Subtly, quietly, almost without notice, my calling became my heartache. Every waking moment, and sometimes sleeping ones too, bulged with "interruptions." Silent moments escaped us. Family time evaded us. No longer did my home reflect discipline and care, just emergency upkeep. I lost myself, and my happiness, in my preconceived role as a pastor's wife.

Our "total availability" philosophy took its toll. I grew to resent individuals who invaded our privacy. I dreaded evenings away from the rare quietness of the parsonage. Daily demands stole my desire to fulfill God's calling.

Fear of failure invaded my thought life, and guilt for these unspoken feelings consumed my self-confidence. I stood at the back door, ready to call it quits. An answer had to come or a change would have to be made.

I knew that God had not only called my husband into the ministry, but had also called me to serve. Knowing that, and only that during this period of confusion, I could count on God for direction.

I wish I could relate that in an instant God removed those things that were robbing me of His joy; but that wouldn't be realistic. It was over a period of time that God began to structure answers for me. He brought individuals and instruction into my life that helped me develop four personal principles for living. When I ignore these, it doesn't take long for chaos to return.

The initial step that God formulated for my journey into the woman that He wanted me to be involved a conversation with an experienced pastor's wife. Her advice came quietly, but firmly:

"Face honestly how you feel and think. Don't hide your thoughts from yourself, your husband, or God. When those feelings and thoughts are allowed to

surface, then God can enable you to handle them or will relieve the pressure that weighs too heavily." From that advice came principle number one: *Maintain an open channel with my husband and God concerning personal needs, family needs, and spiritual needs, remembering that it is a two-way street.*

Shortly following that discussion with my friend, another woman in our congregation gave me the book *Disciplines of the Beautiful Woman*, by Ann Ortland. As I prayerfully read through that book, I discovered that a lot of my time slipped from me, spent on areas that involved neither my calling nor major responsibilities. With a renewed sense of direction, I sought God to help me put together His priorities for my ministry.

From that emerged such priorities as "contact three new people a week that have visited the church," "write one publishable article per month," and "read to my daughter at least twice a week." My encounter with Mrs. Ortland's book formulated principle number two: *Establish priorities and goals that fall under three main categories: home life, spiritual life, and church life.*

(continued on page 61)

# THE IDEA MART

## Flowers for the Living

In an effort to overcome the all-too-human failing of overlooking the little, but important, things people do week after week in the life of the church, I've developed a moment during the morning worship service when we present "Flowers for the Living."

I use a self-adhesive embroidered rose (#105A, from the Novelty Advertising Company, 1148 Walnut Street, Coshocton, OH 43512, 15c. each in quantities of 250).

I've noticed people wearing their red roses months after they were presented as a badge of honor!

—William L. Poteet  
Union, Missouri

## "Herald of Holiness" Newspaper Insert

We have just placed 13,000 special issues of the *Herald of Holiness* into 13,000 homes in our community of Pocatello, Ida. If statistics are correct, almost 40,000 people received exposure to the message of Christ and an introduction to our church.

It was accomplished by using the *Herald* as a newspaper insert. Our local paper worked with us to route it only into our community.

We inserted a letter (printed locally) in explanation of the gift, including our church's offer to be of service to our community. Total cost of the whole endeavor was less than \$2,500. It is a missionary effort to our community and one we believe to be worthwhile.

—Bill Childs  
Pocatello, Idaho

## Telephone Survey

Every church needs to make some kind of survey to get new prospects. In one city, the pastor was able to get a list of new residents from the Chamber of Commerce who collected information from court records (transfer of properties), and utility

companies. This pastor could then send an invitation to the church, or possibly visit the home personally or send someone available to invite the new family to church. However, this did not help them check on people who had lived in the community for some time.

In some cities, it is difficult to go from door to door to find out if they need the ministry of your church. With the increase of apartment houses and condominiums, it is not easy to gain access to some people. One pastor worked out a plan to make a survey by phone. In his city, he was able to get from the phone company, lists of people in the area near his church. Then church people were organized to devote certain hours to making phone calls. Extra phones were installed in this church so several workers could be used without tying up the regular phone. A list of questions was compiled for the workers to use. Callers attempted to find out if the people were connected with some local church and whether they had needs with which the church could help. Those calling were warned not to preach, and not to argue. The pastor and the Visitation Committee members made follow-up calls with good results.

—Robert S. Wilson  
Myerstown, Pennsylvania

## 50th Anniversary Celebration

It has become quite common to renew wedding vows for the 25th anniversary. Recently I was asked to perform a brief ceremony for a 50th anniversary celebration. Here is the ceremony I used:

In a day when commitment for life is a tentative thing, you stand as a shining light for God's standard of faithfulness.

In a day of marital unfaithfulness, you stand as a strong witness to the integrity of the marriage vows.

In a day of fractured and broken relationships, you stand as a testi-

mony that God is able to bring a marriage through difficult times—victoriously.

You set a worthy example and it is this example that your children are following.

*Husband:* I, (name), express my deepest appreciation for your companionship these 50 years. You have made my life complete. You have stood by my side as a model of a Christian wife and mother. (Wife's name), I am grateful to God for the day you became my wife—for the joy of these 50 years begun that day.

*Wife:* I, (name), express my deepest appreciation for the spiritual leadership you have given in our home. You have been a source of strength and inspiration to me because of your devotion to Christ. (Husband's name), I am grateful to God for the day you became my husband for the joy of these 50 years begun that day.

*Both:* We thank God that our Lord Jesus Christ has given us the grace and strength to fulfill our commitment of 50 years ago.

Prayer at the conclusion of the saying of these vows is appropriate. Special music and perhaps a reading adds to the effectiveness of the event.

—Earl P. Robertson  
Arvada, Colorado

## Groundbreaking Ceremony

Genesis 8:20, "Noah builded an altar unto the Lord." Coming from the ark Noah first directed his thoughts and actions Godward. And God responded—the Scripture says, He "smelled a sweet savour." He was aware of Noah's act and approved.

Genesis 12:7, "Abraham builded an altar unto the Lord." Abraham had come to the promised land, only to find it occupied by Canaanites. To encourage Abraham, God renewed and strengthened His promise by declaring specifically, "Unto thy seed will I give this land." In response, Abraham constructed an altar and worshipped God.

Genesis 26:25, "Isaac builded an altar unto the Lord." God met Isaac and reaffirmed the covenant promises first revealed to Abraham concerning an abundant posterity. The Lord allayed his fears and assured him of continued divine presence. Isaac responded by grateful worship at a freshly built altar.

Exodus 24:4, "Moses builded an altar unto the Lord." Moses recorded in writing the words of the covenant from the Lord. Then early in the morning he built an altar with 12 pillars at the foot of the mountain. The altar represented God, and the 12 pillars stood for the 12 tribes. Here was being enacted an agreement between these people and the Lord.

The building of an altar indicates an act of worship, an act of faith, an act of ratification. (Relate to purposes for building local church.)

#### *Altar Ceremony*

Have a large pile of stones assembled where altar of new church will stand. People file by with prayers and pledges for new church building written on 3 x 5 cards and place them on altar. Pastor leads in prayer, then prayer cards are burned.

#### *Benediction*

O Lord, let our prayers be set before You as incense. And as John saw in his Revelation, let the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascend up before You that our prayers and the work of our hands in building this altar and this church shall be wholly acceptable in Your sight. Amen.

—Donna Fletcher Crow  
Boise, Idaho

### **Things to Be Aware Of in a Building Program**

#### **A. SECURING A BANK LOAN**

1. Be sure of mortgage rate; make sure that there is NO written stipulation for an increase in rate according to the fluctuation of the prime rate. If there is no such stipulation, the interest rate must remain the same.

2. Be sure you understand how long the mortgage agreement is set for. Is it for 15, 20, 30 years?

3. It is advantageous to secure an additional \$5,000 in mortgage money above the cost of your building. This will allow the interest payment to be made on monies used without taking money from local treasury while construction is going on.

#### **B. CONTRACT PROPOSAL**

1. Before signing any agreement proposal, make sure that every detail

of work to be done is spelled out clearly.

2. Be sure you understand where every electrical fixture and outlet is located. How many outlets. How many fixtures.

3. Be sure you understand about outside electrical fixtures—how many and where they are to be located.

4. Be sure you have the proper amount of fixtures BEFORE you begin—or else they will be added to your bill after you realize your need for more.

5. Be sure you understand if there is molding or baseboard included in contract. This may not be included unless you request it.

6. Be sure you spell-out the type of windows—and whether they are tinted or not.

7. Be sure you understand if outside cross mounted on building is part of agreement. Usually cross is shown on prints but not included in price.

8. Understand the length of time the bank has allowed for construction of building. Watch out for delay clauses—they can be costly!

9. Make sure you understand whether there is an escalation cost clause in contract. Don't sign the contract if there is.

10. Make sure what extra fixtures you are getting (such as coatrack, outside pole light, etc.) because they may be shown on drawing but have not been included in price of construction. This is called extra work!

11. Do not sign any pay voucher until the bank's engineer has first inspected the work claim finished by contractor.

12. Make very sure your copy of contract proposal you receive is ex-

actly word for word with contractor's copy.

13. Don't take anything for granted. Word of mouth agreements may be quickly forgotten. Read over your contract proposal and make absolutely sure you know what you are getting.

—Ralph J. Ferrioli  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

### **Youth Service**

The last night of each month in our church is a special Youth Service. By that I mean not just a service for young people, but by young people. The key to it, I find, is to have as many teenagers involved as possible. They do the following things: Lead the singing, two or three lead in prayer, the younger one take up the offering, about three special songs, maybe a few special testimonies from the pulpit, and finally a young person preaches the sermon. If one person isn't able to speak for say 15 minutes, we have two shorter ones with a special in between. I stay on the platform to welcome people, give the announcements, and to let everyone know that the ship still has a captain.

The results are very interesting. It's great to have a break from preaching once a month. While there is not much of an increase in youth attendance, there is a definite increase in adult attendance. The young people involved have grown tremendously. Some have felt a call to the ministry. Some of our best altar services have been after a youth service. One of the families in our church today was saved after a 17-year-old boy had preached the sermon.

—David Taft, Christchurch  
New Zealand



### **Summary of Lessons of History**

*by Charles Beard*

1. Whom the gods would destroy, they first make mad with power.
2. The mills of God grind slowly, yet they grind exceedingly small.
3. The bee fertilizes the flower it robs.
4. When it is dark enough you can see the stars.

by George E. Failing

General Editor,  
The Wesleyan Church

# Reprove Your Brother, or Faithful Wounds

**W**esley's sermon on the "Wilderness State" (*Works*, VI, 77-91) might bring several surprises to the careful reader.

*First*, Wesley admits that "not many" of them who are soundly converted "immediately enter into the rest which remains for the people of God. The greater part of them wander, more or less, out of the good way into which he has brought them." Those who are in this "wilderness state" have a right to the tenderest compassion as well as to enlightenment regarding the nature, the cause, and the cure of "their sickness."

*Second*, Wesley does not regard these Christians as backslidden. Rather they are shorn of their strength through the loss of assurance, the loss of love, the loss of joy, the loss of peace, and the loss of power. If the wanderers continue in the wilderness, however, they may indeed find the glory departed and become "dispossessed of righteousness."

*Third*, when Wesley inquires as to the causes of the "wilderness state," the most obvious cause is

sin, the sin of commission which is willful and presumptuous. In the very hour a person commits a single act of drunkenness or uncleanness, he usually falls and is immediately estranged from God.

But not many, Wesley continues, grossly and presumptuously rebel against God and fall into open transgression. "Much more frequently," he believes, the light of God's favor is lost by sins of omission. These "sins" would be likened to withholding fuel from the fire. God is faithful to reprove our neglect, to warn us by inward checks and "secret notices," before holy influences are withdrawn. In fact, "only a train of

omissions, willfully persisted in, can bring us into utter darkness."

*Fourth*, Wesley's emphasis on "sins of omission" which finally bring us into darkness may surprise those who are familiar only with Wesley's oft-quoted definition of sin as a "willful transgression of a known law of God." No doubt at all that such willful transgression is fraught with high danger, but Wesley reminds us that "not many" Christians fall from grace through the sins of commission. Much more frequently are they in danger because of sins of omission.

"Perhaps no sin of omission more frequently occasions this than the neglect of private prayer, the want whereof cannot be supplied by any other ordinance whatever." Wesley continues: "Nothing can be more plain than that the life of God in the soul does not continue, much less increase, unless we use all opportunities of communing with God, and pouring out our hearts before him. If, therefore we . . . suffer business, company, or any avocation whatever to prevent these

*"By neglecting to reprove our neighbor we make his sin our own."*

secret exercises of the soul, that life will surely decay. And if we long or frequently intermit them, it will gradually die away."

Wesley's emphasis on this point is most timely. (1) It accents what the Holy Spirit has caused holy men to write. For example, in 1 Samuel 12:23 we listen to Samuel as he makes a solemn promise: "God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you." The people had begged Samuel to pray for them, so Samuel not only pledges them to be faithful, but reminds himself that failure to pray for them would be sinful.

(2) Which of us preachers would not have to confess the sin we have so often committed and the sin which we have so seldom admitted or repented of, is the sin of prayerlessness? The sermon we could not really preach; the people we did not really love; the occasion when we were so exacting in "law" and so short in "grace": were not these most often occasioned by the sin of prayerlessness?

*Fifth*, and this shocks me more than any other sin of omission that Wesley lists, is the neglect of reproving a brother who sins. Wesley quotes Leviticus 19:17: "Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart: thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbor, and not suffer sin upon him." Just as faithfulness in reproving sin is a clear manifestation of Christian love, so unfaithfulness in reproof is a sin against our neighbor.

Wesley presses the point. "If we do not rebuke our brother 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 neighbor, we make his sin our own; we become accountable for it to God.* We saw his danger, and gave him no warning. So, if he perish in his iniquity, God may justly require his blood at our hands."

Over and over again in his *Letters*, Wesley faithfully re-proves. For example:

"Beware of voluntary humility; even this may create a snare" (XII, 386).

"If you can guard Brother S. against pride, and the applause of well-meaning people, he will be a happy man and a useful laborer" (XII, 389).

"Abstain from all controversy in public. Indeed, you have not a talent for it. You have an honest heart, but not a clear head" (XII, 240).

"I fear you are greatly wanting in the government of your tongue. You are not exact in relating facts. I have observed it myself. You are apt to amplify, to enlarge a little beyond the truth" (*Works* XIII, 141).

"As to your spirit, I like your confidence in God, and your zeal for the salvation of souls. But I dislike something which has the appearance of pride, of overvaluing yourselves, and undervaluing others, particularly the preachers" (III, 120).

And is not this responsibility of Christian to Christian solemnly affirmed by our Lord?

"If thy brother sin against thee, go, show him his fault between thee and him alone: if he hear

thee, thou has gained thy brother" (Matt. 18:15).

"Take heed to yourselves: if thy brother sin, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him" (Luke 17:3).

The apostle Paul makes similar admonitions.

"Brethren, even if a man be overtaken in any trespass, ye who are spiritual, restore such a one in the spirit of meekness" (Gal. 6:1). Such restoration requires correction as well as compassion.

"If any man obey not our word . . . note that man . . . admonish him as a brother" (2 Thess. 3:14-15).

It is clear to me that sending letters of threat, passing resolutions of condemnations and erecting fences of orthodoxy (correct doctrine) and of orthopraxy (correct conduct) will neither test our spiritual courage nor exhibit Christian love. Person-to-person reproof, with becoming meekness, most faithfully fulfills the second commandment: "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." The old proverb is still true, "Faithful are the wounds of a friend."



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# CHRISTIAN EDUCATION IN THE EARLY CHURCH

by Don Stelting

*Professor of History, Mid-America Nazarene College.*

**F**rom a core of about 100 disciples, the early Christian Church grew at such a remarkable rate that by the end of the third century it threatened the Roman state religion.

That flourishing growth became a reason for the Roman Empire's later toleration, and eventual acceptance, of the Christian Church as the official religion of the empire. In terms of human commitment, the success of the Early Church was purchased at a high cost; but exceptional commitment was characteristic of the early Christians.

Modern Christians have traditionally held that the Church of the early period was worthy of special study. By its accomplishments, the Early Church compels in us a desire to learn the reasons for their successful expansion.

The vitality of the Early Church was not in its organization or possessions, but in its people. It was Christian people who stood firm

in the face of persecution, and who served as evangelists, teachers, and missionaries to advance Christ's kingdom. Education played a significant role in producing these courageous, victorious Christians, and it holds bright promise for the Church today. A brief survey of Christian education in those early days may provide some principles to guide us in our own task.

The Church of the first few centuries developed its educational concepts on the foundation of Hebraic traditions as they existed at the time of Christ.<sup>1</sup> By this time, Jewish education had branched into two main streams.

*The first stream* was education which occurred in the Jewish home. Although children were the focus of the education, adults, also benefited by continued repetition of the lessons.<sup>2</sup> The basics of godly living were included in the daily ritual of family life. "And these words, which I command

thee this day, shall be in thine heart: and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou risest up" (Deut. 6:6-7).

Whether in family worship or in stories of great men in the history of the nation, Jewish children learned scriptural precepts of God's activity in human life. Scripture memorization was an unquestioned part of the learning process.<sup>3</sup> It was in the Jewish home that children were introduced to the meaning of religious holidays; parents were to explain to their children the importance of each observance.<sup>4</sup>

*The second stream* was the synagogue.<sup>5</sup> On the Sabbath the people would hear preaching and teaching from the Old Testament, and on the other six days of the week Jewish children from 5 to 10 years of age received a basic education in the synagogue school. Although reading, writing,



and arithmetic were studied, learning scripture was considered most important. Whole blocks of biblical material would be committed to memory, for in scripture was the foundation of the Jewish culture.

Several characteristics of this Jewish system which were carried into the educational practices of the Early Church are considered important yet today. High on the list must be Christian education in the home. At home, teaching became practice. In the home, Christianity unified. Another important characteristic was the use of Scripture. The center of Jewish education was God, and since God had revealed himself in Scripture, its use was vital as the basis for truth and knowledge. Committed to memory, Scripture was readily at hand. This had a profound effect upon each person.

Another characteristic of Jewish education deserves our notice: the Jewish nation wanted everyone to be educated.<sup>6</sup> In their eyes the strength of Judaism rested in the ability of every man to train his children in the ways of God.

As the Church moved from Palestine into the Greek-speaking world, change took place. The Church made converts to Christianity who did not have the same religious base as Jewish converts. Gentile Christians in the areas beyond Palestine were constantly confronted by pagan teachings not encountered by Christian Jews in the Holy Land. Lord's Day observation replaced the Jewish Sabbath, but Christian worship filled the same educational function as worship in the synagogue. Jewish holidays were replaced by distinctively Christian celebrations which, in several instances, still fulfill an educational role in the Church. Just as the home was important to Jewish religious education at the time of Christ, the home was vitally important to the Church during the next two centuries.

Formal education in the Early Church was not for children alone. New converts of any age were placed in catechumenal schools in preparation for bap-

tism.<sup>7</sup> By implication it may be observed that the Early Church believed that more than simple profession was required for full admission into church membership. Besides testing the genuineness of conversion and the depth of commitment of the new believer, the church placed a minimum limit on the knowledge and understanding of the candidate. The

**Religious education was important to the early Christians, it is indispensable today.**

period of preparation extended for two or three years.

Candidates were originally placed in the first of three grades in the schools and were labeled "hearers."<sup>8</sup> This term was used because the student was allowed to attend the reading of Scripture and the sermons of the congregation. At this stage they were given instruction in fundamental doctrines and Christian living. By conduct and expression they had to prove their worthiness to enter the second grade, called "kneelers," since at this point the candidate was allowed to remain in worship services during the time of prayer.

After further instructions and observation, the *catechumen* would enter the third stage, "the chosen" in which they were given intensive training in preparation for baptism.

Although both Jewish and catechumenal schools were based on memorization of material, the rationale was different. For the Jewish student, Scripture was memorized for sessions of discussion. In the catechetical method, used by the Early Church, material was memorized as an answer to a question, with the expectation that each question-answer would produce a foundation upon which later truths could be built.

The catechumenal method implies some of the following factors in curriculum and educational ideals:

1. For each question there was a specific answer. The Church prescribed truth through its teachers.
2. Education in the Early Church was systematic in that it flowed toward a comprehensive view of Christian truth.
3. Education in the Early Church worked toward producing in the student a body of knowledge which would prepare him for a full place in the congregation of believers.
4. Education in the Early Church was evaluative as it examined students and graded them on knowledge, preparedness, and experience rather than on age.

One final observation which may be made about education in the Early Church is that it held a position of the highest order. Education was not optional. The Church considered Christian education necessary for the purity and vitality of the Church.

In addition, the Great Commission demanded every believer to carry the message of salvation into a world that was well educated in sophisticated paganism.

Although the Early Church faced different circumstances and cultures than we do today, the challenge is still the same. It's a challenge that calls us to make an impact on the world in which we live, in the name of the Lord.

#### NOTES

1. For information of Jewish education, see F. E. Bamberger, *History of Jewish Education from 515 B.C.E. to 220 C.E.* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1940). See also: William Barclay, *Educational Ideals in the Ancient World*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1959).

2. C. B. Eavey, *History of Christian Education* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1964), p. 54

3. C. H. Benson, *History of Christian Education* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1953), p. 17

4. *Ibid.*, pp. 19-20

5. There is little agreement among sources concerning ages of students in the synagogue schools. See Bamberger, pp. 67-70; M. J. Price et al., *A Survey of Religious Education* (New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1940), p. 33; and Benson, p. 26

6. Eavey, p. 66

7. *Ibid.*, p. 85

8. Benson, pp. 41-42



# BOOTS

by G. Franklin Allee

*Founder of Northwest Travel and Tours, Inc.*

**T**hey hung out in front of a small older house on Tieton Drive as one left the city limits of Yakima, Wash., and entered the area of apple orchards—just a pair of weathered old boots. I judged them to be about my size, though it never occurred to me to stop and examine them.

An unpainted picket fence enclosed the lot on which the house squatted, and nailed to the gatepost below the boots was a small sign: “W. R. Rice, Shoe Repairing.”

I passed by there often on my way to a large warehouse where I supervised a fruit packing crew. And never did the tempter let me drive by in my Model T Ford without calling the boots and sign to my attention.

“W. R. Rice” . . . It could rightfully have read “Reverend W. R. Rice,” I knew. I had seen him often at the Nazarene Church in Yakima, where he always occupied a front seat, an old fireball retired preacher backing the pastor or evangelist with very audible “Amen,” an occasional “Hallelujah,” and when the preaching got very close, as it often did in those days, “It’s getting rocky up that road!”

To me, a young man who had been converted just three years before, Brother Rice seemed a very old man—in a way youth looks at older people—just a wornout old preacher whose only means of visible support for him and his wife was cobbling—patching and resoling old shoes and boots.

And those boots and that sign bothered me no end!

In my heart was a secret and demanding awareness of a call. God seemed to be speaking to me about the ministry as a life’s work. But every time I gave this serious consideration those boots came before me. If I closed my eyes and thought or prayed about preparing for the ministry those boots and that sign loomed before me, a mountain high problem: Shoe Repairing! What an end for one whose life had been given to ministering the Word! Was that the way God paid off His workers? Was that the earthly reward I might expect if I were to devote my life to the church?

I wanted to make money. I was ambitious. Coming from a long line of poor men, I had no desire to continue that tradition. Those boots spoke to me of the only end, as far as I could see, that a holiness preacher could eventually reach in this life—poverty and obscurity.

Our church was young then. Pastors’ salaries were small—in many cases practically nonexistent. There was no pension plan or prospect of one, and no Social Security. Anyone entering the ministry expected a lifetime of hardship, and a retirement of poverty. And I couldn’t even qualify as a cobbler.

Those boots haunted me as a nemesis from hell. Satan held them before my mind continually, telling me that God never took care of His own, that the church had no sense of obligation, and was never known to show any gratitude.

Eventually, God’s persistent and sweetly inspiring call overcame. Somehow, I knew He would see me through, my family would not suffer seriously. I made a covenant to serve Him in any way He led.

A half century has passed since the last time I turned my eyes apprehensively in the direction of those boots as they swung idly in a cold November wind. During these years God has never let me down.

Oh, sure, there have been hard times, especially during the Depression years—grave problems to confront, heartaches and bitter discouragements, days when I scarcely knew where the next meal for my family was to come, times when our Sunday dinner was a few days late in arriving.

But somehow the Lord had a way of seeing us through, sometimes in such a miraculous way that, even to this day, we rejoice to remember His loving interest in our lives. He has permitted us to serve as pastor of some fine congregations and to have years traveling the country in evangelistic work. He has given me the privilege of writing many articles and Christian stories, of having nearly a dozen books published. He has given me a faithful wife and loving children who have shared the problems

and privileges of the ministry.

When it came time for retirement, another exciting and rewarding door swung open. I began arranging, and sometimes conducting, tours of the Bible lands, a work I found to be a challenging extension of the ministry. In order to help others visit the lands that gave us our Bible, we founded a travel business that—though now I have turned it to younger hands—has been successful beyond our dreams.

I have traveled the world. Those alluring faraway places which I once thought beyond my means to reach, have become mine to see.

As I sit here at my study window and watch the glory of the sunset flame in splendor across the western mountains, I know that God always provides a rest beyond each seemingly insurmountable mountain. The evening of my lifetime is pleasant and free from worry, and my heart is overflowing with gratitude to a wonderful loving God who still pours His blessings into our lives.

And in my closet I keep a pair of boots, not old and weatherbeaten, but well polished and solid, a special assurance to remind me that the Lord does care for His servants, and a reminder that Satan never tells the truth.



## MATTHEW: GOOD NEWS TO AND FOR THE CHURCH

(continued from page 5)

Matthew's concern for the Church is illustrated in his use of the parable of the Lost Sheep. In Luke this parable is part of a trilogy directed toward the Pharisees and teachers of the Law who have been complaining about Jesus' association with outcasts (Luke 15:4-7). Jesus uses the parable to justify the search for a lost sinner and ends the story by describing the greater joy felt in heaven over one sinner who repents than over 99 righteous people who don't need to repent. In Matthew, on the other hand, the parable is directed toward the disciples, and describes one who wanders away from the Church and is lost. Jesus concludes with a declaration that the Heavenly Father is concerned "lest anyone of these little ones be lost" (18:10-14, NIV).

The concluding Great Commission of Matthew (28:19-20) relates two specific functions of the Church. The first is baptizing new believers in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The second is teaching believers all the commands of the Lord. Moreover, in carrying out this mission, the future Church is assured of Jesus' presence to the end of the age.

### III. PURPOSE

Matthew's extensive use of the Old Testament has already been discussed. The suggestion was made that the Gospel may have been designed as a polemic to defend the Church's Messianic claim. Guthrie points to a wider purpose for Matthew's Old Testament emphasis: "His main target is to show Christianity as much more comprehensive than Judaism."<sup>4</sup> Judaism was limited by the very nature of the Law. But Jesus' fulfillment of that Law in the most complete sense has broken the contraction between the Law and life in the Spirit.

The contents of the Book (see the concluding commission) indicate that Matthew also had in view a catechetical need and usage. Much of the Gospel

seems devoted to teaching believers the commands of Jesus, and urging obedience to them.

The Sermon on the Mount presents the most comprehensive and detailed ethical discourse in the entire New Testament. It contains explicit teaching on a number of important, but practical, matters; the makeup and mind-set of Christian character; reconciliation; marriage relationships; oaths; non-retribution and love of enemies; sincerity and simplicity; giving to the needy; prayer and fasting. In this "sermon" (introduced as Jesus' teaching, 5:1), complete dedication of the self to God is described and required. The parable of the housebuilder provides a fitting conclusion: the hearing of Jesus' "words" must be accompanied by attentive, active obedience. Saying "Lord, Lord" is meaningless unless the Lord's teachings are put into practice.

### CONCLUSION

This message is as viable for today's Church as it was for Matthew's. It is our responsibility, as well as our joy, to preach the Good News according to Matthew.



### NOTES

1. The Book of Common Prayer contains more lessons from Matthew than Mark and John together.
2. We are indebted to B. W. Bacon, *Studies in Matthew*, 1930, for the division titles.
3. Donald Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, 1970, p. 23.
4. Guthrie, pp. 25-26.

### SUGGESTED READING

#### OVERVIEW

Guthrie, Donald. *New Testament Introduction*, 1970.

Guthrie provides an excellent treatment of the introductory material; he grapples with many differing scholarly positions from an evangelical viewpoint. The treatment also includes an extensive bibliography on Matthew.

#### COMMENTARIES

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# OLD TESTAMENT WORD STUDIES

by Charles Isbell



1. The key Hebrew root *scq*, is translated "cry out," in most English versions. The first occurrence of the root is in 2:23. There the people of Israel "*cried out* because of their slavery." We are not told to whom they cried out, merely that they reached the point of despair that called forth an oral response. However, the next section pointedly picks up this motif when God informs Moses, "I have heard their *cry*" (3:7, see also v. 9). This comment is striking because, as we noted, the cry of the people was not specifically addressed to God. Even so, God heard, and their deliverance was begun.

Section C. records the next occurrence of our root. There the people respond to the increase in their workload by crying out to the Pharaoh (5:8) rather than to God. Thus a big part of the problem to be solved by God involved the need to turn His own people away from dependence upon the Pharaoh and to teach them that He (Yahweh) was the One to whom they should turn in distress.

It is highly significant, therefore, that Moses should cry out to Yahweh for help with his request in Section C. (8:12). And in that same section, the function of *scq* is broadened to express what will soon happen to the Egyptians as Yahweh strikes their land with the horrible tenth plague. Up to this point in the story, the Israelites had done all the crying. Now the action of Yahweh will force the Egyptians into a situation of despair and they will cry out with a sound unlike any ever heard (11:6). What is predicted in 11:6 is then fulfilled in gruesome detail as noted in 12:30.

The final function of *scq* is yet to be performed. For the first time in the narrative, the people *cry*

out to Yahweh (!) when they see the Egyptians in hot pursuit of them at the Sea (14:10). Then in a great turnaround, Yahweh shortly asks Moses rather sharply, "Why are you *crying out* to me? (14:15) Now is the time to speak, to act, to march to the point of battle."

2. The simple word "midst" (Hebrew *tavekh*) serves as a key in quite a delightful way. Its first appearance in the narrative is to describe the place where baby Moses was placed by his mother seeking to save his life. As 2:3 expresses it, "she placed the child in it [the basket] and put it among the reeds along the bank of the Nile" (NIV). As we saw in an earlier article, a great surprise awaits. When the Pharaoh's daughter happens to find Moses and we think for certain that he is doomed, her compassion compels her to spare a crying child.

In Section B. again the word *midst* occurs. This time it is the place out of which God speaks to Moses, calling him into the business of redemption (note 3:2, 4). But it is Section G. that holds the key for us. Now five times the word *midst* is used (14:16, 22, 23, 27, 29), each time referring to the middle of the Sea of Reeds (most English versions read simply "through the Sea" but the literal wording is "in the midst of the sea").

Here *midst* again holds a surprise meaning. No one had expected a helpless infant to find life from his position in the *midst* of a mass of reeds. No one expected God to speak the mysteries of redemption to an ordinary shepherd from the *midst* of a bush that refuses to be consumed with fire. And no one expects to walk into the middle of a sea and find life either. But that is the great miracle in a nutshell. Where

we expect to find death, God creates life.

Salvation came to Israel in the very *midst* of a sea that had only moments earlier seemed impassable. And note that the Egyptians also received a surprise in in the *midst* of the sea. For when they observed the Israelites cross safely, they plunged in after them without thinking. But when God made a place of life for Israel He made a place of death for Egypt (14:27). As Miriam put it, "Sing to Yahweh, for he is greatly exalted. Horse and rider he has hurled into the sea" (15:21, author's own translation).

3. The final root we shall consider in the exodus narrative is "fear" (Hebrew *yr'*). And once again we have a word that is introduced early in the story, seems insignificant at first, but then proves at the conclusion of the drama to bear the weight of deep meaning. Take a moment to read the nine verses that employ the root *yr'* (1:17, 21; 2:14; 3:6; 9:20, 30; 14:10, 13, 31). A definite pattern develops as the story progresses.

At first, the midwives *feared* God. We don't even know which God they feared (the narrative has not defined Him yet!). But we do know that the Pharaoh was a god and that he was not the object of their fear. And we do see that they prospered because they feared God rather than god. Moses is quite different in 2:14. He *fears* the Pharaoh more than anything else. That is why he flees and that is why he intended to stay away from Egypt forever. Only in the very presence of God would Moses know the proper object of fear (3:6), but even here his reasons add nothing to the major strand of the story line.

We probably should be surprised  
(continued on page 61)



# NEW TESTAMENT WORD STUDIES

by Ralph Earle

## John 5:6-47

### Whole (5:6, 9, 11, 14, 15)

The adjective *hygies*, from which we get "hygiene," is translated (in KJV) "whole" 12 out of the 13 times it occurs in the New Testament. The exception is Titus 2:8 ("sound speech"). As might be expected the word means "healthy, well." It occurs twice in Matthew (12:13; 15:31) and Mark (3:5; 5:34), and once in Luke (6:10), but six times in John (see 7:23), and once each in Acts (4:10) and Titus (2:8). The best contemporary translation of Jesus' question here is: "Do you want to get well?" (NIV; cf. NASB).

### Bed (5:8, 9, 10, 11)

See discussion at Mark 2:4.

### Conveyed Himself Away (5:13)

This is the verb *ekneuo* (only here in NT). It means "turn aside, withdraw" (cf. RSV). The simplest translation is "slipped away" (NASB, NIV).

### Loveth (5:20)

There is a beautiful touch here in the Greek that cannot very well be brought out in English translation. When we are told that God "loved" the world (John 3:16) the verb is *agapao*. This is also the verb that is used when we are told to love God (Matthew 22:37), our neighbor (Matthew 5:43), and our fellow Christians (John 13:34). It means to have a love that seeks the best good of its object, a love of full loyalty. The verb *agapao* occurs 142 times in the New Testament and is always translated "love" (or "beloved," 7 times).

But the verb here is *phileo*, which signifies affectionate love. It is translated "kiss" 3 out of the 22 times it occurs (in NT)—of Ju-

das kissing Jesus (Matthew 26:48; Mark 14:44; Luke 22:47).

Only here is it used to express the relationship within the Trinity. How beautiful to read that the Father has affectionate love for His Son! B. F. Westcott comments: "And so it is through the Son that the personal love of God is extended to believers" (*The Gospel According to St. John*, I, 190). The basis of this statement is John 16:27, where we read that "the Father himself loves"—*philei*, same as in 5:20—"you because you have loved [*phileo*] me." The last clause suggests that we are to have affectionate love, as well as loyalty love, toward God. Emotions do have a part in true religion.

### Quickeneth (5:21)

The verb is *zoopoieo*, which means "make (*poieo*) alive" (*zoos*). Here the best translation is "gives them life" (RSV, NASB, NIV). The verb here signifies "communicating spiritual life" (Alfred Plummer, *The Gospel According to St. John*, p. 137)—that is, to the spiritually dead. In verses 28-29 it is the physically dead who will be resurrected. But in verses 21-26 it is a spiritual resurrection.

### Everlasting (5:24)

See discussion at 3:16.

### Light . . . Light (5:35)

John the Baptist is called a burning and shining "light" (KJV), in whose "light" the people rejoiced for a while. But the first word is *lychnos*, which literally meant an oil-burning "lamp" (usually of clay in NT times), and so should be translated "lamp" (RSV, NASB, NIV).

The second word is *phos*, which is correctly translated

"light." We get our word "photograph" from *photo* (dative case) and *grapho*, "write"—writing by light.

### Shape (5:37)

The Greek word is *eidos*—"that which is seen, appearance, external form" (Abbot-Smith, *Manual Lexicon*, p. 131). It comes from the verb *eidon*, "I saw." So it refers to a visible "form" (RSV, NASB, NIV). God cannot be seen with physical eyes.

### Search (5:39)

The verb is *eraunao*, which means "search, examine" (Abbot-Smith, p. 178). But our problem here is that in the present tense the same second person plural form (*eraunate*) may be either indicative or imperative. We cannot be sure which is intended here.

The KJV takes it as imperative, "Search." But scholars are pretty well agreed that the indicative fits better. Plummer writes: "The context seems to be strongly in favour of the indicative" (p. 142). J. H. Bernard says: "Jesus is not exhorting the Jews here; He is arguing with them, and rebuking them for their stubborn rejection of Him" (*A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. John*, 1:253).

As early as the English Revised Version (NT, 1881) the change was made to the indicative. That wise move has been followed by most versions since. B. F. Westcott comments: "The word *eraunan* describes that minute, intense investigation of the Scripture which issued in the allegorical interpretations of the *Midrash*" (p. 201). He was on the revision committee that adopted "Ye search the Scriptures" (RV,

(continued on page 61)

# SERMON OUTLINES



## ASCENSION TRUTHS— Acts 1:1-12

Text—v. 9

**INTRODUCTION:** “The crowning moment of Jesus’ first advent was His ascension, when God acknowledged His Son by receiving Him back into heaven.” Jesus Christ fulfilled every assignment given to Him by God the Father. He could return and sit triumphantly at the right hand of His Father. Let us allow these Ascension truths to fill our hearts with renewed assurances:

### I. The Ascension of Jesus Is an Introduction to His Availability.”

A. Jesus is an ascended, but ever-present Savior. Arnold Airhart points out that “during the 40 days following the Resurrection, the disciples had already learned that ‘out of sight’ did not mean out of reach.”

1. Our ascended but ever-present Christ belongs not just to the first century, but to all time and eternity.

B. Our ascended but ever-present Christ is the full basis of our anticipation.

1. Anticipation of our future glory. His ascension is the proof that we are destined for heaven, not for the grave.

2. The ascension of Jesus is an anticipation of His return. Acts 1:11. The promise of His return is clearly taught.

3. The ascension of Jesus is an anticipation of *His ultimate victory*.

### II. The Ascension of Jesus Is an Introduction to His Deity and Enthronement.

The ascension of Jesus proved His deity. He demonstrated that He was God’s Son. Jesus was the exalted Son of God who had finished His redeeming work on earth. In His hands He bore the sin-offering for the whole world. It was a celebrated moment when God welcomed Jesus back to His throne of glory.

He ascended into heaven to begin His reign of power. After the humiliation and shame of the Cross and the Triumph of the Resurrection, Jesus took His rightful place beside God the Father. The cloud (v. 9) was a reminder of the glory of God’s eternal presence—like the Shekinah

glory which filled the Temple of God. It’s enough to know that where God is, Christ is there!

### III. The Ascension of Jesus Is an Introduction to His Ministry of Intercession.

Jesus ascended, not to end His work for men, but to continue His work with men in intercession. He intercedes for us. Note Hebrews 4:14-16. Jesus returned to heaven, to sit at the right hand of God. He stands in the presence of God as an Advocate, interceding for us.

### IV. The Ascension of Jesus Is an Introduction to the Ministry of the Holy Spirit (John 14:25-26; 16:7).

A. The Ascension is a conclusion to Jesus’ *earthly* limitations. Up to this point, Jesus had been confined to the *limitations of physical existence*. He dealt with frailties, weaknesses, exhaustions, frustrations, which are a part of human existence.

The Ascension marked the end of all such limitations of the physical existence. As G. Campbell Morgan put it: “The days of limited service were over, the days of unlimited service were about to begin.

“There just had to come a day of dividing when the Jesus of earth finally became the Christ of Heaven!”

B. The ascension of Jesus marked the end of the limitation of time and space. Jesus can be everywhere at the same time, meeting the various needs of His people.

1. Christ is the Savior of all the world by His ascension. He ministers beyond the areas of Bethlehem and Capernaum. He now presents himself in universal terms which all men can understand, whether they be North Americans, Asiatics, or Eskimos. He is more than the Christ of Palestine. He is the Savior of the world.

**CONCLUSION:** Should you and I be content with anything less than full power from the ascended Christ? He calls on the faithfulness of your heart right now where you are to be a partner with Him in the redemption of the world.

He promises to you His abiding love and presence.

He is faithful to minister to and through you from that ascended life

which lies just beyond the tiptoe of our sight and the reach of our fingertips.

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Richard L. Fisher,  
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

## THE NECESSITY OF HOLINESS

**SCRIPTURE:** Heb. 12:12-14.

**TEXT:** “Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord” (v. 14).

**INTRODUCTION:** Peace with man and holiness unto the Lord is God’s standard of the Christian life.

### I. HOLINESS IS NECESSARY FOR GROWTH IN GRACE.

1. Growth in grace is a divine command (Eph. 4:15; 2 Pet. 3:18).

2. There are two errors regarding growth in grace.

(a) Some have thought that growth in grace will remove the innate sin from the heart. Nothing that is impure can be made pure by more growth. Purity does not come by growth, neither in the natural world nor in the spiritual (1 Pet. 2:2-3).

(b) Others believe that after holiness of heart has been received through the baptism with the Spirit, that there is no more growth in grace.

### II. HOLINESS IS NECESSARY FOR CHRISTIAN LIVING.

1. It is the Heavenly Father’s blessed will that His children shall live in victory (2 Cor. 2:14).

2. The Lord commands us to a life of victory (Gal. 5:17).

3. Dr. G. A. McLaughlin tells the

story of the enemy besieging a city. Month after month the city was besieged, but the brave people repelled every attack. By and by, the attackers resorted to treachery. They bribed a young woman to let them in. One dark night she opened the gate and let the enemy in. So inbred sin, on the inside of the unsanctified heart, is a traitor and responds to Satan on the outside.

### III. HOLINESS IS NECESSARY TO PLEASE GOD.

1. Man lost his original holiness in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3:1-4).

2. The Lord has graciously provided for us to be made holy (Mat. 1:21; Heb. 13:12, Eph. 5:25-27; 1 Tim. 2:5).

3. The Lord says we can live holy (Luke 1:73-75).

4. The Lord graciously called us unto holiness (1 Thess. 4:7).

### IV. HOLINESS IS NECESSARY FOR THE ENJOYMENT OF HEAVEN.

1. All nature agrees that God has created everything for harmonious surroundings. He gives to the fish scales and fins so they can swim and live in the water. He has given the birds plumage and hollow bones so they can fly in the air. He has given eyes so that we can see the beauty that is all about us. Holiness is universally admitted to be a necessity for heaven.

2. Holiness is not only a *necessity* for heaven, but it also fits us for the enjoyment of heaven. This is true, for if we were to get to heaven with a sinful nature in us, we would be out of harmony with our surroundings, and therefore would not be happy.

**CONCLUSION:** Let us seek and find pure hearts in the reception of the fullness of the Spirit! With this blessed fullness we can live a full life here below, and be able to enjoy heaven in the future—that glorious hereafter with our Lord, and the redeemed saints forevermore!

*"Peace, blessed peace is filling  
now my soul,*

*Since He pardoned all my sin;  
Love, perfect love, in billows o'er  
me roll,*

*Since He cleans'd my heart with-  
in.*

*Peace, perfect peace! Love, per-  
fect love!*

*Sweeping o'er my soul in heav-  
enly tides!*

*Rest, perfect rest! Joy, perfect joy!  
Is mine since the Holy Ghost  
abides."*

(F. E. Hill)

—W. B. Walker 

## RESIGNATION—FROM THE PASTOR'S WIFE?


(continued from page 49)

Perhaps the next lesson that God helped me to learn should be at the top of the list. It involved a crucial aspect of my thought life—my attitude. One morning as I was reading in Philippians 4 where Paul writes that we are to praise God in anything that is worthy of praise, it struck me that my attitude toward our situation was far from positive.

In my journal I wrote the following: "Today I choose to lay down my negative attitude and pick up the peace of God. I choose today to ask for God's strength in the midst of my need. I choose today to thank God for ALL the interruptions because my time is in His hand. I choose today to thank God for ALL the times that I feel pressured and the sense of panic wells up inside because I know God will sustain me (Psalm 55)."

From that early morning quiet time with the Lord, the third principle came to life: *Make the choice to be positive because of what God is doing and will continue to do in our lives.*

The fourth and final principle that God brought to mind resulted from one afternoon's look at my calendar for the next week. From those few short minutes of time, it became apparent that I just couldn't do everything that I expected myself to do, or that I thought others expected me to do. Therefore, principle number four: *Be realistic about what is possible or not possible to do in a day's time, a week's time, a month's time.*

Now, one year after God began to restructure my life-style to fit what proved best for me, my family, and my church, I have shut the back door of escape. I won't resign. That isn't the solution. Although mountains of "interruptions" still occur, these pressures help me or force me to find a creative solution and to lean a little harder on the God who is still in charge. As I continue to be honest, to set goals, to be positive about my life-style, and to be realistic, peace reigns. 

## OT WORD STUDIES

(continued from page 58)

prised a bit later in Section E. to learn that some of the Pharaoh's officials *fear* the word of Yahweh (9:20). But this surprise is changed when we hear 10 verses later the real truth.

There we have it. Everybody fears something. The midwives, Moses, the Egyptians, everybody except the mighty Pharaoh himself is afraid. But not everybody fears the same object. Section G. addresses this fact and unwinds it characteristically. In 14:10, the people, despite what God had already done for them, *feared* the approaching army of Egypt; they had to be admonished in rather stern fashion, "do not *fear*" (14:13). Finally, however, after all of God's work had been done, the people learned their lesson. "They say . . . they *feared* . . . and they believed" (14:31). Fear has now found its proper object. As one of a later era would state it, "The fear of Yahweh is where wisdom begins" (Prov. 1:7, etc., author's own translation).

Our study of the exodus narrative is now completed. And yet I hope it is only beginning for you.



## NT WORD STUDIES


(continued from page 59)

1881). Today we would say, "You diligently study the Scriptures" (NIV).

### Will Not Come (5:40)

This sounds like a simple future tense of the verb "come." But the Greek uses two verbs, with "come" as an infinitive: "You are unwilling to come to Me" (NASB). In many places the KJV fails to bring this out. The force of what Jesus says is this: "You refuse to come to me" (RSV, NIV).

### Honour (5:41, 44)

The Greek word here has no relation to the verb translated "honor" four times in verse 23. There it is *timao*, from the noun *time* that means "esteem, honor." But here it is the noun *doxa*, which means "glory" (RSV, NASB) or "praise" (NIV). 





# TODAY'S BOOKS for TODAY'S PREACHER

## THE DOUBLE CROSS

By Stephen O. Swanson, Augsburg Publishers, \$3.95.

*The Double Cross*, subtitled "The Seven Deadly Sins and the Seven 'Deadly' Virtues," is an excellent Lenten resource book. It deals with attitudes rather than actions, showing how virtue which is practiced without God's power and presence becomes distorted into sin.

He takes us back to the Bible for our concept of sin and there shows us the remedy for sin.

This book, properly understood, cuts the foundation from under "situation ethics," as well as all religion that is man-made and man-earned.

His chapter on "Covetousness and Contentment" is the most relevant analysis of our modern "thirst for things" I have seen.

The author wants us to exchange the "Double Cross" (our ugly sins and our twisted virtues) for the single cross of Jesus Christ. His answer to our dilemma of deadly sins and deadly virtues is a "live-in Holy Spirit."

This book will enable you to come to a deeper understanding of Jesus' statement: "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he."

—Roy T. Nix

## JONAH: AN EXPOSITION

By R. T. Kendall, Zondervan, paperback, \$5.95, 269 pp.

This book takes on more meaning when one knows the author personally. I have known R. T. Kendall for a number of years, and to know him is to love him. He has convinced me through his life and ministry of his sincerity in his search to find truth and of his commitment to do God's will.

It is obvious in knowing and understanding Dr. Kendall, that he learned through agonizing experiences how to obey God's will. In this, he certainly relates to Jonah. His observation is most accurate as he tells about the character of God when he says, "We see God in His anger, God in

His tenderness . . . We have seen the God who controls nature; the God who answers prayer; the God who uses evil in such a way that we are tempted to justify it . . . And we have seen how God singles out His own and deals with His own as though there were no one else in the world."

Dr. Kendall makes a good case that Jonah parallels the church of today. His is a most interesting comparison. These messages were preached to his congregation at Westminster Chapel. The tremendous awakening and growth of that body of believers would indicate that those taking Kendall's message seriously would also find new courage, hope, and ministry.

Dr. R. T. Kendall arrives at a different theological point of view than most Arminians. If the reader makes allowance for difference of theological concepts, he will find great benefit and much good from this book.

—Mark R. Moore

## NEW TESTAMENT THEOLOGY

By Donald Guthrie, InterVarsity Press, \$24.95.

This book is an education in New Testament Theology. The author, Dr. Donald Guthrie, is already well known as a leading New Testament scholar in the evangelical tradition, his *New Testament Introduction* having been widely used for more than 10 years. In opposition to some of the more radical trends in current New Testament theology, Guthrie adopts a thematic approach, dealing with what he regards as the leading New Testament doctrines: God, Man, Christology, the Mission of Christ, the Holy Spirit, etc. He is able thereby to stress the fundamental unity of New Testament theology. At the same time, he treats each theme in terms of the various New Testament witnesses: The Synoptics, John, Paul, etc.; and is thereby enabled to do justice to the degree of diversity.

In terms of historical theology, the stance of the book is moderately Calvinistic. Thus he favours "eternal security" interpretations of relevant passages, yet affirms the reality of human response, preferring to speak of an element of paradox or tension

in the subject. Even in his section on Sanctification and Perfection, where he opposes any idea of instantaneousness and sinlessness, seeing the latter strictly as a goal, he agrees that the New Testament teaches the possibility of triumph over sin. "The goals are impossibly high, but great stress is laid on the powerful assistance of the Holy Spirit." Even when rejecting a position or interpretation he writes with grace rather than acrimony and overstatement.

This book therefore should be read critically; but it should be read. Its 1,000 pages represent an expository of the theology of the New Testament by one of the best informed, experienced, and fair-minded evangelical interpreters. Every pastor needs to be working constantly in the field of New Testament theology, and the ministerial and seminary student needs to be digging into it ever more deeply. Here is a book for both. It will be a standard work for years to come.

—Alex Deasley

## JUBILATE!

*JUBILATE! Church Music in the Evangelical Tradition*, by Donald Hustad. (Hope Publishers, 368 pp. \$14.95.)

*Jubilate! Church Music in the Evangelical Tradition* is probably the best book available today on establishing a workable philosophy of evangelical church music and worship. The book devotes much attention to historic forms of Christian worship. Hopefully, evangelicals will not only refine their own important traditions, but will consider the universal worship experiences and forms which the church has honored since New Testament times.

The author, himself an evangelical musician, criticizes the use of "revivalist worship" for Sunday morning fare, suggesting that it be reserved for use in evangelistic services.

The book is scholarly, well-documented, and laced with illustrations and practical suggestions—a good resource book and an inspirational piece of reading material.

—Lyndell Leatherman





# CLERGY QUIZ

1. Which of the following has pioneered "Faith Development" theory?  
A. John Piaget                      C. Mary Wilcox  
B. Leighton Ford                  D. James Fowler
2. The Gospel called "the Gospel of the eagle's eye" because of its dauntless, penetrating look into the divine mysteries is:  
A. John                      C. Matthew                  E. Tobit  
B. Luke                      D. Mark
3. Sigmund Freud, the father of psychoanalysis, had how many patients in his counseling career?  
A. 440                      C. 75                      E. 8  
B. 120                      D. 28
4. The only Gospel to speak specifically of "the church" is:  
A. Matthew                      C. Luke  
B. Mark                      D. John
5. The classic book *The Idea of the Holy* was written  
A. In 1945 by Karl Barth  
B. In 1820 by Theodore Parker  
C. In 1923 by Rudolf Otto  
D. In 1262 by Thomas Aquinas
6. The U.S. presidential candidate who declared in an 1858 speech that he favored emancipation but *not* citizenship for the slaves was:  
A. Abraham Lincoln                  C. John C. Calhoun  
B. John C. Freemont                  D. Thomas Hart Benton
7. The classic work about artistic speaking *On the Sublime* was written by  
A. Cicero                      C. Alfred E. Newman  
B. Longinus                      D. Isocrates
8. The translation of the Bible which is far superior to all other versions is:  
A. New American Standard Bible  
B. Today's English Version  
C. New International Version  
D. King James Version  
E. Revised Standard Version  
F. New English Bible
9. Who said it? "Suppose someone invented an instrument, a convenient little talking tube which, say, could be heard over the whole land . . . I wonder if the police would not forbid it, fearing that the whole country would become mentally deranged if it were used."  
A. Mark Twain                      D. John Wesley  
B. Augustine                      E. Samuel Goldwyn  
C. Michael Faraday                  F. Soren Kierkegaard
10. *The Politics of Jesus* was written by  
A. John Yoder                      C. Martyn Lloyd-Jones  
B. Bernard Ramm                  D. Billy Graham
11. Which of the following countries have recently kicked out the Wycliffe Bible Translators?  
A. Mexico and Guatemala                  C. Panama and Ecuador  
B. Madagascar and Kenya                  D. Japan and Korea
12. The president of the Southern Baptist Convention is  
A. Abner McCall                      C. Robert Paines  
B. Findley Edge                      D. Bailey Smith
13. The first complete Bible in the English language was translated by  
A. Coverdale in 1539                  C. John Gutenberg in 1456  
B. John Wycliffe in 1382                  D. William Tyndale in 1535
14. Gideon:  
A. Was called Jerubbaal  
B. Fought the Midianites  
C. His name means "Jehovah's strong hand"  
D. Was from the tribe of Levi  
E. All of the above  
F. A and C but not B and D  
G. A, B, and D but not C  
H. A and B but not C and D
15. The first persons named in 1 Kings and 2 Kings are:  
A. Saul and Jeroboam                  C. Gad and Zimri  
B. David and Ahab                  D. Samuel and Solomon
16. The Gospel which reports seven names for Jesus, seven miracles, seven speeches of Jesus, and seven interviews with Jesus is  
A. Matthew                      C. Luke  
B. Mark                      D. John
17. Brother Lawrence:  
A. Was also known as Nicholas Herman  
B. Joined the Barefoot Carmelites in Paris  
C. Lived in the 17th century  
D. Is known for his ideas on "Practicing the Presence of God"  
E. Was a contemporary of John Bunyan  
F. All of the above  
G. All of the above except B and E  
H. All of the above except C
18. The firm holding the copyright on Handel's "Messiah" successfully sued the publishers of which of the following songs for "melody stealing?"  
A. *The King Is Coming*  
B. *Bridge Over Troubled Water*  
C. *The Little Drummer Boy*  
D. *Yes, We Have No Bananas*



Answers: 1-D; 2-A; 3-E; 4-A; 5-C; 6-A; 7-B; 8-Wouldn't it be nice if there were an answer to this?; 9-F; 10-A; 11-C; 12-D; 13-B; 14-H; 15-B; 16-D; 17-F; 18-D.



# THE ARK ROCKER

## Laymen's Terms

Here's a letter lately received from a layperson that brought me up shorter than an empty offering plate.

Dear Padre,

Let me spout off a bit—say a few words about a few words: “to put it in laymen's terms.” Your time is limited, I know, what with Rotary, Conference Board of Pensions, Preachers' Retreat, staff meetings, and all, so I'll come quickly to the point—and still love you and pray for you and work with you.

“To put it in laymen's terms.” Have you taken a look at what “laymen's terms” are turning out to be these days? To be sure, reverend sir, I and a lot of my fellow pew-warmers don't know page one of the theological glossary. And there are a few of your guild who spout technical terms with such vigor and in such profusion that we suspect that they've gotten the gift. But we're as appreciative of expertise and precision as you all are, so why not take some time and effort to define some of that stuff once in a while? If the terms and ideas help you and your meditations on things spiritual, who's to say that we're too dim to benefit from them?

Of course, there are two sorts of problems here. One is the matter of technical jargon. The other is a patronizing tone that religious leaders use when talking to us lay-folk, or writing to us.

I didn't know whether to giggle, gag, or grieve a month ago when we had that visiting dignitary preach. Remember? He got after us, in his own sweet way, for spiritual ignorance (that should have insulted you as much as us—you've been our pastor for nearly a decade), especially our ignorance of the Bible and of the doctrines of the Church. This was laced through a sermon with the traditional three points: being a good Christian means (a) supporting the Church with time and money; (b) supporting church leadership, especially pastors; (c) paying budgets and praying for missionaries. For each point, he felt obliged to give an illustration that lasted at least five minutes, plus the usual “this, and I'm through” story, which has no other purpose than to encourage us to measure up to the heroic out of a sense of guilt. Not one sentence that took us deeper into the Word, nor even encouragement to dig a bit; not one breath of explanation of those doctrines to which he avowed undying allegiance as being of very high priority—doctrines which “every church member should master in content and in spirit, for they are the very marrow of our faith,” he said.

And your closing prayer was a complete frustration: “Thank you, Lord, for sending your servant our way. He has surely brought out for us the deep and precious things of the Word this morning.”

Please, pastor, don't mistake our ignorance of technical theology and technical Bible-study for ignorance, period. And please don't mistake our loyalty for docility.

You know (here I'm becoming righteously indignant), sometimes I wonder if preachers really want us to know anything but “laymen's terms.” Of course, some of us may not; and I've heard so many of your vocational persuasion trot out their example of the person who “just want(s) it simple.” Those preachers, because of that very attitude, effectively shush those who might encourage them to something different. They've already painted them into a corner, and those laypeople are smart enough to know that it's better to say nothing to such a parson. Indeed, some of us may not want to go any deeper, but that is often because we don't know enough of it to know whether it's good to know or not. And some of your guild seem to be clear enough in saying that we should seek to know only just enough to know that we must trust them for the rest. And then they turn around and condescendingly put everything in “laymen's terms.”

Do you wonder, under these circumstances, that hordes of us go trotting off to certain kinds of seminars and Bible conferences, or just to the “toob” with its high voltage ministries? Some of us want at least the trappings of thinking, and the rest of us have given up and settled for pious schlock that is at least entertaining.

I know you well enough to know that you're not satisfied with this state of affairs—that ignorance, whether imputed or imparted, is not to your liking. So, I ask you, what are you going to do about it?

Still respectfully,  
(Name withheld)

“What're you going to do about it?” For one thing, I'm not going to act as if it's someone else's problem. It's mine! And as a simple starter—I'll have to plan much more extensively and study much more intensively—I'm working on a prayer meeting series entitled “Loving God with All the Mind: Thinking Christianly,” complete with bibliography, outline, and leading questions—and a lot of help from some teachers in the congregation, and Prof. X at the College. (Boy, was he surprised!)

*The Ark Rocker*

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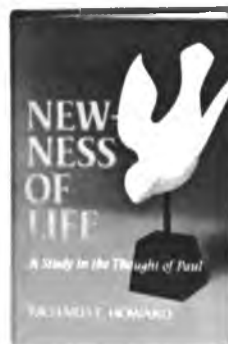
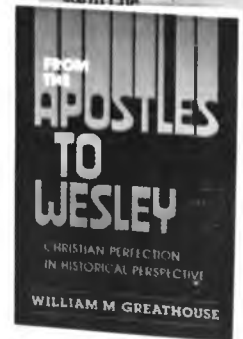
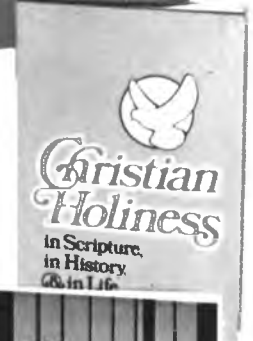
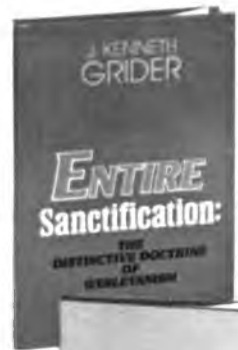
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