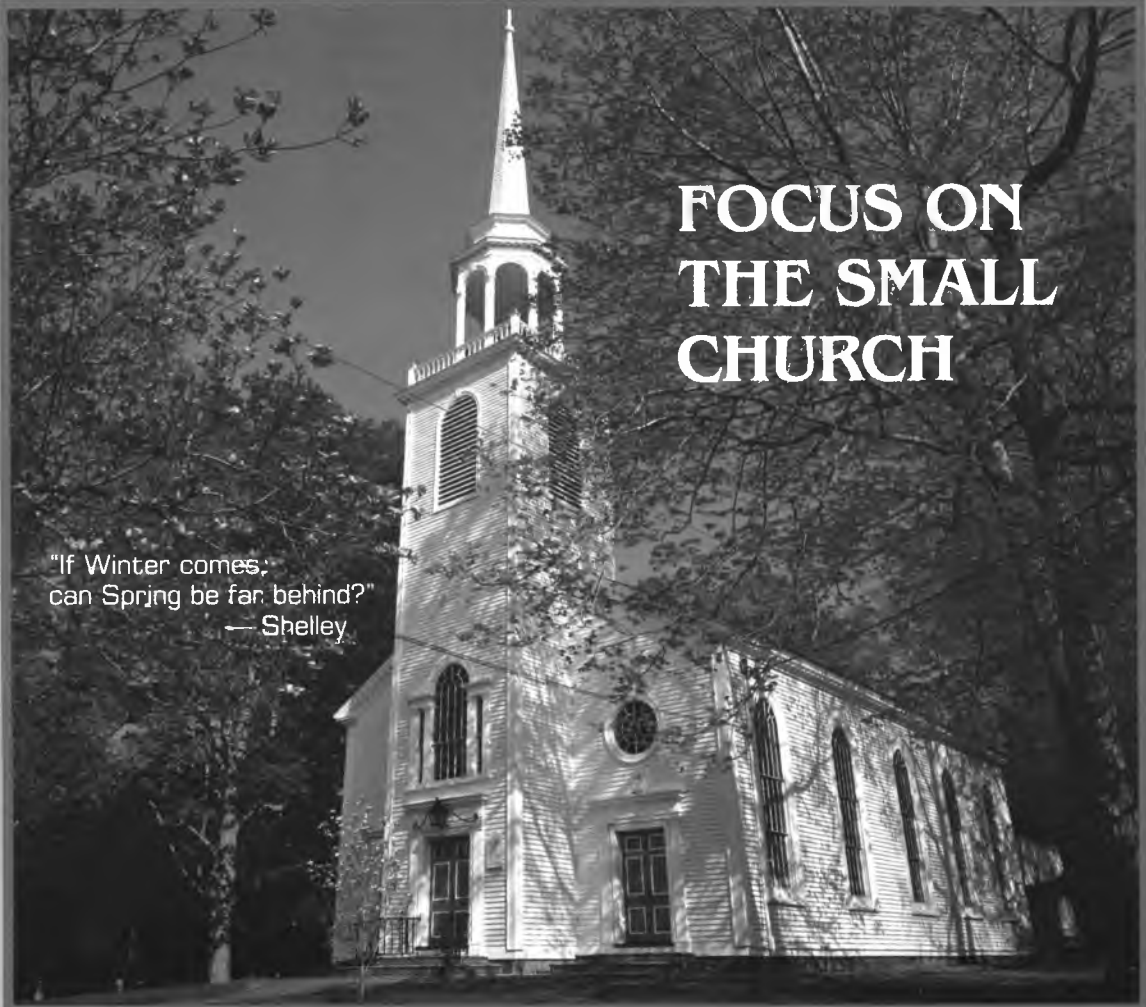


DECEMBER, JANUARY, FEBRUARY, 1983-84

PREACHER'S MAGAZINE



FOCUS ON THE SMALL CHURCH

"If Winter comes,
can Spring be far behind?"
— Shelley

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suitable for Framing

FINDING TRUTH

A young man walked up to an old philosopher one day and asked, "What do I have to do to find the truth?"

"How badly do you really want to know?" asked the philosopher.

"I *really* desire to know the truth," the young man replied.

"Very well," the philosopher said, "come with me." Together they walked in silence until they reached the ocean. The old man beckoned the young man to go with him into the water. Then, without warning, the old man grabbed the young seeker of truth by the shoulders and shoved him under the water.

The boy kicked and thrashed and sputtered for what seemed like an eternity. Finally he was released, and he popped to the surface, gasping for air.

"You're crazy!" he shouted when he caught his breath. "I asked you to help me find the truth, and you nearly drowned me. What are you trying to do?"

"Teach you a lesson," he replied. "Young man, when you want truth as much as you wanted air—you'll find it."

DAVE GRANT in
The Ultimate Power



Wesley Tracy

THE MINISTER AS CLOWN

by Wesley Tracy

Among the very early anti-Christian graffiti is a crude sketch of Jesus nailed to the Cross, but instead of the noble "thorn-crowned brow" Jesus has the head of an ass.¹ A pagan blasphemy to be sure, yet it reminds us of a profound truth. In the eyes of a self-seeking world Jesus, the Giver, was a fool, a clown—as dumb as a donkey.

Jesus loved others and gave himself for them. He performed only acts of good, not greed. To selfish sinners nothing could have been more clownish. To them Jesus was the joke of all jokes.

As ministers we have many roles—pastor, preacher, evangelist, administrator, priest. But the role of clown or fool belongs to us as much as our own breath. After all, Jesus, the fool, the joke, the clown, is our Pattern. If the title of fool or clown or court jester does not fit us, it may be that we have become hirelings and

Darkness has called unto darkness and disgrace

*Elbows about our windows.*²

The Ringling Brothers clown school reports that an unusual number of clergy enroll for instruction. There could be a sign of hope here. But somehow I doubt it. Cavorting under the "big top" is not the clown role to which we are called. Rather, we are to live right-side-up lives in an upside-down world. Like our Lord we are to be so motivated by godly values that to a mercenary and lustful world we stand out as the joke of jokes.

Writing specifically of certain Christian ministers the apostle Paul said, *We have become a spectacle to the world . . . we are fools for Christ's sake . . . we hunger and*

thirst, we are ill-clad and buffeted and homeless . . . When reviled, we bless; when persecuted, we endure; when slandered, we try to conciliate; we have become . . . as the refuse of the world (1 Cor. 4:9-13, RSV). To the world such ministers must indeed look as ludicrous as unicycle riders with painted faces and polka-dotted overalls.


The medieval clown, the court jester, was at his best when he jabbed and jibbed at the pomp and splendor of the king with satirical arrows. He repeatedly reminded the king that God looks at the heart, not at palaces, armies, or colorful rocks treasured as jewels. The jester was a wise man disguised as a fool. May Viola's words about Feste be appropriate for you and me: "This fellow's wise enough to be a fool."³

Sometimes we ministers are tempted to slip out of our clown suits and into something more comfortable—something like everyone else wears. After all, we are told daily that nice guys finish last and that if we don't look out for "number one," no one else will. We are surrounded by books that tell us we have an obligation to "enjoy." We are coached to repeat after clever hedonists, "Life is an end in itself and pleasure is preferable to pain." But in our quiet moments we know that we must do whatever is necessary to preach the gospel. Even if it means, as Paul said, to be hungry, ill-clad, persecuted, and slandered.

Perhaps the costume that coaxes us most subtly is the temptation to inordinate professionalism. The desire to be treated like the world's professionals can be miles away

from the call to be a clown for Christ's sake. John Piper points out that there is no professional tenderheartedness, no professional panting after God, no professional weeping over sin, no professional cross-bearing. You can't, he notes, "professionalize the love of His appearing without killing it."⁴

Perhaps some of our best minister-clowns are those faithful pastors who give huge chunks of their lives to pastoring small churches. In this issue we salute them and their work. We are not trying to glorify smallness; the best small church is a small and growing church. Some churches are small for the wrong reasons; some for the right reasons. But frequently pastors who take these "challenges" and "opportunities" have a special place in God's parade of clowns. What a clownish idea to spend the best years of your life pastoring in Vici, Okla.; Ainsworth, Neb.; Southampton, England; Monroe, N.C.; Newbury Park, Calif.; or Ava, Mo. In this issue pastors from these communities tell us their own stories.

As we read their articles, and the others on the small church, perhaps our own hearts will also echo the poet's prayer, "God be merciful to me a fool." He is, you know—after all, His own Son pioneered the way for the rest of us "fools." 

NOTES

1. Urban T. Holmes III, *Ministry and Imagination* (New York: Seabury Press, 1976), p. 231.
2. Robert Lowell, "The Plane Tree by the Water" in *Modern American Poetry*, Louis Untermeyer, ed. (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1958), p. 664.
3. *Twelfth Night*, act 3, scene 1.
4. John Piper, "Brothers, We Are Not Professionals," *Leadership*, Summer 1982, p. 32.

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Cover photo: Yes, we know the cover is a spring picture— isn't spring a refreshing thought as you plunge into winter? Photo by: Vernon Sigl

FOCUS ON THE SMALL CHURCH

H. Armstrong Roberts





Jon Johnston

David in Goliath's World

by Jon Johnston

Professor of Sociology, Pepperdine University

Our Colossus Complex

Have you noticed that it's usually the little persons who get put down or kicked around? Some call it "size discrimination"; others refer to it as the "colossus complex."

Take sports. Except for horse racing jockeys and midget wrestlers, small athletes hardly survive—much less star.

Researcher Ralph Keyes concludes that the mere possession of a towering physique means money in the bank. Statuesque people receive higher salaries, occupy more important positions, and wield greater influence.¹

When it comes to people, size counts. And the conscious or unconscious awareness of this fact prompts many to resort to wearing elevator shoes, and purposely exaggerate their height. Basketball programs have become a joke. Even the shortest guy on the team is usually listed at 6 feet.

We Americans typically overestimate the stature of those we most respect. If you doubt this, glance at a crayon picture of people sketched by a kindergarten pupil. Dad, Mom, teacher, and best buddies are given gigantic proportions.

The colossus complex has become an enormous part of our national psyche. As with people, so with other areas of our cultural existence. Kirkpatrick Sale, in his book titled *Human Scale*, lists some indications of our preoccupation with bigness:

In the U.S. there are eleven different sizes of olives. The smallest size is "jumbo."

The U.S. manufactures the largest newspapers in the world. *The New York Times*, the largest of them all, for an average Sunday in November, any November, weighs about ten pounds. It takes 840 acres of Canadian trees to produce one average Sunday's edition, more than enough wood to build 100 three-bedroom ranch houses.

American advertising expresses its most important

messages in superlatives about size: the biggest shopping centers . . . the nation's largest airlines with the world's biggest fleet of widebodies . . . Big Macs, Whoppers, Jumbo Cokes, Green Giant . . . king size, extralarge . . .²

But, the crucial question is: Does our compulsion for bigness stop at the front door of the church? Or have we allowed it to become our virtual reason for existence—our predominant measure of success? Put another way, have we allowed this secular fiction that bigger is always better to cripple us with feelings of worthless inferiority?

Filed Under "Miscellaneous"

The majority of the congregations of all denominations are small. Nevertheless, ecclesiastical opinion is strongly biased in the direction of largeness. Big edifices. Armies of associates. "Dare to top that" programming. Membership rolls and attendance figures that stagger the imagination—enticing church growth analysts to attempt to encapsulate a "bigness" formula.

Meanwhile, the small congregation is almost considered an embarrassment to the Kingdom. Hokey. Out of step. Like a cold sore on the lip of life.

But, the little church isn't ignored completely. It is continually reminded that it, too, can someday become a big church—with harder work, more devotion to the task, and more attention to the "guaranteed" formulas for big growth. Of course there are exceptions, but as a rule, the small congregation is often encouraged to adopt the large church model. And this, for one reason: so that it might someday be in a position to boast about its own size.

The unfortunate truth is that, all too often, people arrive at unfair conclusions about the little church that remains little.

And how about the pastor of the pint-size congregation? Many perceive him as either "on his way up" or "on his way out." Feeling the pressure from such inaccurate concepts, some ministers grope for relief. Unable to



Vernon Sigl

produce the real thing, many settle for the mere illusion of bigness. If nothing else, this illusion pumps up their severely deflated self-image—and even helps quiet criticism.

Playing Make-believe

One of the most frequently employed methods for providing the illusion of bigness is the familiar rally day. Undeniably some rally days result in great dividends for God's kingdom. Momentum and morale increase; new prospects are introduced to the church.

Nevertheless, often the underlying goal of rally day is *numbers for numbers' sake*. And if reached, the numbers are waved like a trophy for all to see. The clarion shout is: "Look what we did. We became big!"

I have to chuckle when I recall a rally day incident of my childhood. It was district contest time, and the pastor in the town nearby was pitted against the "big boys"—whose church attendance dwarfed his by comparison. He fumed a lot, especially when they ribbed him about his chances. He cried "unfair" as he sadly watched any hopes of winning sink into oblivion. And what really added "fat to the fire" was the prize offered to the pastor of the winning church: an all-expense-paid vacation to a highly desirable resort.

The contest lasted 12 weeks, as I recall, and after 10 our friend's church was hundreds behind. Hating the whole idea of contests, bigness, and all the negative attitudes that it engendered, the pastor hesitated to approach God for a miracle.

But still feeling goaded by fellow competitors, and wanting to make a point, this minister decided to take things in his own hands. For a solid week he labored to put his plan into action, so that he could announce it on the next-to-the-last Sunday of the contest. In short he arranged for a TV celebrity who showed cartoons to

children throughout Southern California to make an appearance on the final Sunday.

The plan was for Space Cadet to land his helicopter on a vacant lot and to share a few words with the throngs who would gather—many of whom were parents dragged there by their enthusiastic children. Church ushers would be stationed on the premises, ready to count every human being in the vicinity.

This preacher needed numbers. Big numbers. Guess what. He got them. He not only won the contest, he thoroughly buried his flabbergasted competition. And to the beautiful resort he flew. Justice had been "satisfied."

Other clergy respond to the demand to be (or appear) big by utilizing other tactics. Some are tempted to inflate attendance figures. Like rounding off to the next hundred. Others forget to report at all in "low" months. And some even combine forces with another congregation to have greater numerical clout. All of these suggest desperate attempts to achieve size recognition.

In his foreword to Robert E. Maner's book, titled *Making the Small Church Grow*, William M. Greathouse speaks of the very real possibility of becoming a "beleaguered and bewildered small-church pastor."³

Afflicted by such a condition, it is easy to develop defeating and illusionary tactics. The results will be acute sensitivity that causes defensive aggressiveness, unreal guilt that maximizes stress, and blurred vision that produces an unclear sense of mission. Furthermore, the pastor who possesses any of the above tends to pass them on to his vulnerable laity.

Out of the Soup!

With all of this in mind, how can the pastor of the small church and his laity come to:

- ★ gain a sense of *authentic purpose*—without developing false pride;
- ★ diligently work within the context of their *growth potential*—without becoming a slave to numbers;
- ★ fully appreciate their opportunity for a *unique ministry*—without resenting their "big brothers"?

It is my conviction that the small church must begin developing the right perspective. Facts and situations may look completely different when viewed through an energizing frame of reference. Few could argue with these goals. But, the crucial question is "How?" Consider the following.

God's Scorecard

First, it must be recognized that our Heavenly Father is very concerned about persons as persons. Of course, this is not to say that He does not care about large social bodies, such as nations. Our recall of His tender loving care for Israel is enough to dispel such a notion.

Nevertheless, our Divine Master has always focused on individuals within the masses. I paraphrase the words of my respected friend, Reuben Welch: God sees and loves *you* as *you* are, where *you* are, right now.⁴

Since we experience tailor-made concern and atten-

tion from the Creator of the universe, it seems to matter little to Him whether we assemble in a small, middle-size, or gigantic congregation.

Like His Father, Christ's primary concern was for individuals. The health of their bodies. The quality of their hearts. And it seems only fair to declare that He most often expressed that concern in small groupings—the eyeball-to-eyeball kind. Where such things as smiles, nervous twitches, and wrinkled foreheads are readily detected. Where confrontation is authentic. This can happen in a large social body, but more frequently it occurs in a small group. He declared that wherever and whenever twos and threes are gathered together in His name, He is there. Actually present. So He can be felt and worshiped.

How can we dare minimize the importance of that which He and His Father considered so basic? So essential? So crucial?

Not All That Shabby

In the process of constructing a helpful perspective, a second thought must be fully grasped. *It can be stated, unequivocally, that a small congregation has definite structural and functional advantages over a large one.* In a similar way, anthropologists are quick to point out that a clan is superior to an entire tribe in meeting certain vital needs of a preliterate society.⁵

Although a later chapter focuses on these specific advantages, allow me to illustrate the point.

My cousin, Don Goliher, enjoys recalling memories of his childhood days in a small congregation. That congregation was the only Church of the Nazarene in the coal mining community of Murphysboro, Ill. And it was small. But this congregation had a special penchant for continually monitoring the spiritual condition of each person attending. According to Don, definite signals were released and intercepted in the course of a typical church service.

The congregation was asked to kneel and pray. And, sure enough, the person who sensed that he had fallen from grace, remained upright—sitting there like a “great speckled bird” for all soul surveyors to behold. Not incidentally, the pastor always has the best visual vantage point to do such monitoring. He knelt beside his pulpit and faced his flock.

A “popcorn” testimony session was included in most services. Once again, the members’ devotion was gauged. And the one who remained unresponsive (during the long pause after everyone else had spoken) was suspected of being discouraged, burdened, or on the threshold of backsliding.

The point is this. In a small congregation, like the one described above, there exists the opportunity to lovingly force a readout on everyone’s up-to-date spiritual condition. It is called “accountability.”

As a result, individuals are not hidden behind the crowd. And the difficulty exposed by such monitoring allows the close-knit fellowship to join in the rescue. It can accurately be said that, at its best, the small church

is a kind of *rescue squad*—prepared for emergencies. Carl S. Dudley, in his book titled *Making the Small Church Effective*, aptly describes this rescue-oriented environment:

In a big world, the small church has remained INTIMATE.

In a fast world, the small church has been STEADY. In an expensive world, the small church has remained PLAIN.

In a complex world, the small church has remained SIMPLE.

In a rational world, the small church has kept FEELING.

In a mobile world, the small church has been an ANCHOR.

In an anonymous world, the small church CALLS US BY NAME.⁶

It matters little to the Creator of the universe, who shows us tailor-made concern and attention, whether we assemble in small, middle-size, or gigantic congregations.

Admittedly, the larger congregation has *its own* list of advantages: specialized ministries, a larger work force, more people with multiple talents, more economic resources, and ministers who have the luxury of being able to delegate—freeing up more time for sermon preparation.

All of this implies that the “which is best” question is futile. Small *and* large congregations are *both* better and worse than each other. The point can be emphatically made: small and large churches, alike, should begin recognizing the unique assets of the other.

Pew Packers Anonymous

A final consideration is especially worthy of careful attention, for it gets to the root of our basic motivation.

The primary task of the church, be it small or large, is NOT merely to produce people to fill empty pews. Rather, it IS to offer everyone the love of God in the name of Jesus.

That ministry can only be accomplished when *His* presence is the focal point of attention. When it is seen that it is *He* who is the force for miracles that occur when His disciples are assembled. And to the degree that those disciples are infused with *His* presence, they are able to effectively minister in preaching, teaching, benevolence, and fellowship.

Author Paul Madsen aptly puts it:

Simply to seek for people is selfish. To seek for

people that their lives be enriched and changed is a totally different purpose. Pews can be full, but churches can still be sterile and empty of significance if there is no vision of mission and commitment to that mission.⁷

Seeking numbers for numbers' sake is a form of idolatry. But to desire that individuals will assemble for the purpose of drawing vitality from God is commendable. In fact, it alone prepares the church to fulfill its mission in the world. The acceptance of this basic principle gives the knotty and much-debated question of "seeking numbers" a new perspective.

The question is not: Shall we reach out for people? The Great Commission (Matt. 28:19-20) puts that inquiry to rest. It is clear enough that we must use all means to draw those with a "God-shaped void" in their lives.

To commit ourselves to the goal of remaining small is no answer. Smug, ingrown, exclusive "holy clubs" bring discredit to the Kingdom. Smallness, like bigness, is an idolatrous shrine that far too many bow to. Again, God is not the private possession of either the large mass or the small enclave. He belongs to individuals.

In short, the attempt to grow is consistent with the biblical imperative—but for the specific reason of facilitating the God-man connection. As many as possible must be warmly welcomed into the *koinonia*—the worshiping fellowship of the family of God.⁸ But not to count their heads, test church growth theories, produce a more conspicuous "splash," or advance a preacher's personal aspirations. Rather, *each* new person is to be seen as an infinitely precious individual in God's sight. Not a means to some end. An end. Period.

And, as simple as it may sound, the dominant desire of our hearts must be to hear *each* individual confidently sing—with a heartfelt testimony that rings: "Jesus loves *me*, this I know. For the Bible tells *me* so!"

Personal Recollections

My own childhood was embellished by the influence of eight small congregations in five states. In case you haven't guessed, my dad was a pastor.

There was never a time that I felt deprived, cramped, or embarrassed about being closely identified with a small remnant of God's people. Perhaps I was too tone deaf to the secular value system. Or maybe, back then, even that system didn't make such a big deal over numbers. I stand in humble gratitude for this heritage. And I write about the small church with a sense of deep conviction and appreciation.

Today, while acknowledging the fact that many big churches have much to say in their favor, I choose to identify with a small congregation. Where everyone is called upon to shoulder the load, and where caring is intimate and inclusive. And where individuals, represented by statistics, take an overwhelming precedence over the statistics themselves.

It is churches like those of my childhood and the one to which I presently belong that permeate our land. Much like salt (Matt. 6:13) and light (v. 14). Like cities on hills (vv. 14-16) and miniature "colonies of heaven."

In a society that is plagued with an acute condition of "colossus complex," such congregations may seem unimpressive. But, in reality, their impact is far-reaching and their award is eternal.

I remember one of the last conversations I had with the late Dr. Bill Draper, then president of Point Loma Nazarene College. I asked him: "In this era of 'super' everything, does the small church really count?"

Without hesitation, Bill drew an analogy that warmed my heart. It went something like this:

You know, Jon, Niagara Falls is a tremendous sight! All of those tons of sparkling water gushing over the jagged rocks, and free-falling hundreds of feet in the air. No wonder honeymooners, foreign dignitaries, and about everyone else want to see the awesome sight!

He continued:

But in spite of its beauty, the fact remains that our nation would have a major disaster if it depended on this impressive water supply to meet its needs. Drought would stalk our land.

It's no secret that the greening of America is provided by the thousands of small streams that run softly and quietly—and unnoticed.

His point was clear. The *Niagara Falls-type* church, with its flair for the spectacular, is more likely to command our attention. And often such attention is deserved. But, meanwhile, the unobtrusive *small stream-type* of congregation often goes unnoticed. Or, if noticed, it is minimized. As a result, its minister and members somehow feel lost in the shuffle.

Unfortunately, many overlook the fact that the small church is the virtual "lifeblood" of the Kingdom. And, without a doubt, its clergy deserve to replace any feelings of restlessness and discouragement with ones of assurance and thanksgiving.

Excerpted from *The Smaller Church in a Super Church Era*, Jon Johnston, ed., Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1983.

NOTES

1. Ralph Keyes, *The Height of Your Life* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1980).
2. Kirkpatrick Sale, *Human Scale*, quoted in Bob Benson, *In Quest of the Shared Life* (Nashville: Impact Books, 1981), p. 124.
3. Robert E. Maner, *Making the Small Church Grow* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1982), p. 8.
4. Reuben Welch discusses this point at length in his book titled *We Really Do Need Each Other* (Nashville: Impact, n.d.).
5. Lyle E. Schaller, *The Small Church Is Different!* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1982), p. 144.
6. Refer to article by Donald Golliher, "Evangelical Benefits," *Herald of Holiness*, Aug. 1, 1982, p. 11.
7. Carl S. Dudley, *Making the Small Church Effective* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1978), front cover and p. 176.
8. *Koinonia* is the Greek New Testament word for "fellowship of believers." It implies both *being* together and *doing* (i.e., Kingdom building) together.



John D. Moles

The Pull of the Rural Pastorate

by John D. Moles

Pastor, Highway Church of the Nazarene, Ava, Mo.

From my study window I gaze at a familiar scene. Nestled in the woods of the Ozark hills I can see two rooftops. Though the rest of the homes of my rural community are hidden among the hills, they are projected on the screen of my memory as I recall 26 years of friendly interaction with their occupants. They are my people—the people of my first (and last) pastorate.

Highway Church of the Nazarene is in a rural setting five miles north of Ava, Mo., population 2,700, and about 150 miles north of the Arkansas border. Approximately 30 percent of the attendants at church are from the city. The rest are from the hills, to the end of the trail and beyond.

In September, 1957, District Superintendent Jarrette Aycock presented my name to the board of Highway Church, and I received a unanimous call to be their pastor. This year we received our fourth unanimous four-year recall. Other recalls were favorable, though not unanimous.

A confining experience?

Not at all.

Exciting?

Sometimes.

Fulfilling?

Always.

When we accepted the call to serve, Highway Church was averaging 46 in Sunday School with a church membership of 43. Growth in the past 26 years, though not phenomenal, has been consistent and steady. This year our Sunday School average was 187; membership 210.

What has helped me to pastor successfully in a rural area? I have no secrets and few guidelines that I could pass on to others, but two verses of scripture have been my anchor over the years:

“Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God; who also hath made us *able ministers of the new testament*; not of the letter, but of the spirit; for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life” (2 Corinthians 3:5-6, italics added).

This promises me He can make me an able minister of the New Testament in whatever setting He places me—rural, small town, large city, home mission, foreign mission.

Four things, in particular, have contributed to a satisfying tenure in this rural setting and have kept me serving God and man here.

Time to Pray

Someone has said, “We must pray without ceasing or we will cease without praying.” The New Testament Church was born in a prayer meeting and will survive only with prayer. Away from sirens, roaring engines, honking motorists, and screeching tires, I avail myself of daily solitude and tranquility. What a rare privilege it is to walk through the woods and pray while a choir of birds sing their anthems. Or to kneel by a log at the side of a rippling stream and let God talk to me. I cannot recall an altar service being interrupted by loud and alarming sounds from the outside. What a beautiful setting and a

John Moles is minister of a rural church that has grown from 43 to 210 during his 26-year pastorate.



Strix Pix

rare blessing for any pastor to have such an environment in which to commune with the Heavenly Father. Jesus often sought such surroundings and solitude while He was here on earth.

Slower Pace

The rural setting with its slower pace of life presents the pastor with a golden opportunity for personal soul winning. Let me illustrate. An unsaved couple purchased a pair of mules for the sport of pulling a wagon, plowing gardens, and riding. One day I asked the husband if he would plow my garden with his mules. He jumped at the chance. He arrived with his wife. When the garden was plowed, I bragged on their mules and on the fine job he had done. My wife invited them to stay for lunch. After the meal we witnessed to them, and on the following Sunday morning both knelt at the altar of the church. We had previously tried on numerous occasions to break down the wall of resistance that seemed to exist between us. But on that day the slow pace of our lives provided the time needed to crumble that wall.

This story is not an isolated case. We have introduced people to Christ at broiler houses, hay barns, gravel pits, sawmills, milk barns, silos, and under shade trees. The rural life-style in its own unique way lays the foundation for close relationships between pastor and people and opens the doors of opportunity to share the gospel of Christ.

Involvement

The rural pastorate provides excellent opportunity for the church to assist people who have needs. Highway Church has been involved with the needs of its community. A farmer had to be admitted to the hospital for a sinus operation during hay season. A group of farmers from the church pulled onto his farm with mowers, hay-balers, rakes, and hay trucks and had his hay in the barn before the anesthetic could wear off.

A broiler house burned to the ground. A group of my men got together for what "Ozarkians" call a "barn raising." In four days the building was erected and the roof was on.

We've had "woodchuck days" for families who were out of wood with no means to secure any. Men from the church brought chain saws, splitting mauls, and four-wheel-drive pickups. In a few hours they had hauled, cut, and stacked enough wood to get the family through the winter. These projects are carried out, of course, without remuneration. The people of the community believe in the church not only for their spiritual needs, but for help when trouble comes.

Interest

The rural pastorate allows me to pursue my two favorite hobbies: quail hunting and horseback riding. I live in the heart of "quail country," and I like not only the sport but the meat. It becomes a temptation for me during the season to spend every day (except Sunday) walking the hills with my dog and gun. Though I try to limit the sport to one day a week, there is always someone looking for a hunting partner, who calls the preacher. In a rural community everybody knows everybody—and his dog.

I never ride my horse for pleasure during the working hours of my parish, but about sundown when my farmers are out of the field and the factory workers have punched their time clocks at the end of the day, I find great pleasure in heading for the hills on my mount. Carefully disciplined participation in my hobbies has enhanced rather than hindered my ministry. As a consequence I have never heard one negative word in all these years from the church or community about my personal hobbies. I can preach more effectively to my congregation on discipline and dedication because I have practiced the same.

May God use us to His glory wherever we serve and make us "able ministers of the new testament." 



The Costas

I Pastor a Small Town

by Felix Vigil

Pastor, Church of the Nazarene, Vici, Okla.

Small towns are nothing more than expanded families. Everyone is related to, or the relation of, someone who is related to . . . so, when you deal with any given family, you deal, in a sense, with the entire community.

Understand, if you will, that I pastor a small town and a church, not necessarily a small-town church. To understand that is the beginning of wisdom in dealing with the small-town philosophy of life.

Aside from the aspect of family ties, there is what I call "the community kinship," which means everyone is in some way related because he is part of the community. Peter J. Surrey, in his book *The Small Town Church*, tells of a fictitious town named Bypass, Mich. He describes the people in this way: "The society of Bypass, Michigan, can best be described as highly stratified, individualistic, work oriented . . . and hidden. To a large extent the natives understand the main traditions and forces

that hold their town together, but it is open to question as to how well the residents know the more subtle workings of the community."

This last consideration is one of the puzzles that could drive the most searching sociologist crazy. But small towns are closed societies, and only as a minister becomes part of that society will he find his pastorate rewarding. He cannot last long or be successful without understanding the philosophy of the small town and without being involved in the small town's life.

A Bivocational Pastor?

This business of involving himself in every aspect of the community can turn into work in a hurry. Small-town churches don't usually pay living salaries unless the minister happens to be single and follows a strict vegetarian diet. Out of necessity, the pastor in a small town works a second job.

A small boy was heard explaining to his friend, "Oh, my dad doesn't work. He's a pastor."

Well, the truth is many of us work not only as pastor, but also as painter, carpenter, and salesman. You name a job and some pastor has performed it in order to make ends meet. In laymen's terminology such a pastor is "bivocational." How does this affect the pastor's ministry? In some instances another vocation can be beneficial to his/her ministry, because so often in Small Town, U.S.A., a person's value is measured by how much work he/she is able to handle.

In my first pastorate I was encouraged to work outside the church. To my surprise I found that being a hard worker was a very visible plus in my ministry. People of the community could see the minister wasn't just a soft-handed saint who didn't know the meaning of toil. He was someone they could sit next to in the coffee shop and share their daily lives with.

One individual spoke for the townspeople when he said, "We hold down two or three jobs. A minister needs to feel what we feel, so he can preach from where we are in our lives." A work ethic is something that cannot be overlooked.

People do a lot of pastor watching in a small town.

Pastoral Time Paranoia is a terrible illness of the mind, but in some instances we could say it is a warranted illness. When the symptoms begin to appear, people make comments such as: "Is your car broken down? I didn't see it leave all day," or "You must be real busy in your study. You haven't visited me all week."

If the symptoms persist, the natural instinct is to take extra-strength Tylenol (preferably from a tampered-with bottle), but that would not cure the disease.

In a small town people have more time to observe the pastor, and everyone knows who he is. If he is a hard worker, they can look all they want and still praise God for the strength He gives. A bivocational pastor should choose a job that is flexible enough to allow him time off when pastoral duties warrant it.

One-upmanship vs. Obedience

Pastors sometimes play a friendly game of one-upmanship. You've never played it? Well, it goes something like this:

Bill: How are things going in Small Town church?

Fred: Oh, wonderful. We had 45 in Sunday School.

Bill: Well, our attendance in City Church is really going sky high. We had 600.

Fred: You know, our plans for expanding our rest room facilities are coming along well.

Bill: Yes, I know what you mean. The finances for our new family center are rolling right along too.

Fred: (In a serious tone) You know, the Lord is so good to us. He's really working in my life. How about yours?

Does this type of conversation sound familiar? Now I know we should always be prayed up about our value systems, but when those annual reports start coming across the desk and the numbers we put down look like Cheerios, a minister tends to ask himself, "What have I done this year?"

But the question should not be, What have I done this year in numbers reported? but, How many lives were affected by my ministry as I was faithful and obedient to what God called and enabled me to do?

One-upmanship is a wonderful game for those who feel the need for it, but for the small-town pastor it can be very difficult to come out the winner.

Tiny but Tough

Written on the front of my five-year-old boy's T-shirt are the words "Tiny but Tough." Why is it sometimes assumed little churches are failing churches? I have been guilty myself of making the comment, "Why doesn't the small-town church just close its doors and become part of the larger-town church?"

What we are really saying is that the Body of Christ can never be complete with a small number of people. How many people does it take to compose the ministering Body of Christ? I am not talking about programs or choirs, but of the Body of Christ as Kingdom work in a particular area. Do 5, 6, 10, 12, or 500 compose a church?

One of the first major tasks for a pastor in a small town is to work his way into the community by helping them to see he is there not only as Christ's representative but as a part of the working Body of Christ. Too often the people of the community consider the pastor to be the sole ministering force. He ministers and they are ministered to. The minister needs to move the congregation and the community to the realization that all in the church compose the Body of Christ at work in the community. We may be tiny in numbers, but as Christ's, we're tough.

Change?

The pastor who sees the need for change in the small-town church may soon find that trying to imple-

ment change can be a fate worse than death. If a minister wants to change his hairstyle, he should change it. But if he wants to move the clock from the side of the sanctuary to the back, he'd better get ready for a special board meeting.

Change is not easy for the small-town church. Whoever said, "We've always done it this way," and "It's always been like this," was surely a member of a small-town church. "Change it" will not often be heard except

Some pastors measure success in the small-town pastorate by how many changes they can make before they get voted out.

in reference to sheets or diapers. Extra caution must be used to change anything about the program, organization, or objects that are a part of the church.

Pastors must understand that much of what happens and appears in the church is tied either to tradition or memory. The organ may be three octaves off, but the church will keep it because it was given in memory of Aunt Gladys. Brother Jim may not be able to carry a tune, but for 30 years he has been faithful in song leading.

Some pastors measure success in the small-town pastorate by how many changes they can make before they get voted out. I would rather believe that for the most part changes will occur as needs arise, and the pastor who enters the church with the thought of changing everything overnight will find himself gone in the morning. Time and patience are the keys to change in properties, organizations, program, and especially in people.

Who Is Your Church Boss?

In a district meeting of church boards and pastors, Dr. Les Parrott spoke on the relationship between the pastor and his board. He pointed out that one individual usually dominates the church board.

After the meeting I said, "I thought Christ was to be the Head of the Church." Well, we decided it is true that Christ is the Head of the Church, but the church boss is second in command.

A minister will find that small towns may lack many things, but they generally have an abundant supply of strong personalities with a strong sense of Christian duty.

If a pastor is not the church boss, one layman will stand out as lay leader. This, I believe, is a positive force that usually becomes the pastor's ally. If the pastor will form an alliance with the strong personalities in his church instead of feeling threatened by their power, he

will find them helpful in nearly anything he wishes to accomplish. But woe to the pastor who becomes the enemy of the church boss. It would be better for him that he were made chaplain in the lock ward of the local insane asylum.

We must set aside personality and power struggles and allow the true Head of the Church to help the pastoral leader with the second in command.

To Grow or Not to Grow?

One of the most familiar stories in Scripture is the one about the Tower of Babel found in the 11th chapter of Genesis. Verse 4, "So that we may make a name for ourselves" (NIV), reminds us of pastors whose motivation is to climb the tower of success. Pastors are called to be used of God, not to be successes. We can easily fall into the idea that in order to be a success, we must be well known; and in order to be well known, our churches must grow sensationally. Does a church have to grow to be a success?


I spoke recently with a pastor who felt the pressures of the unproductive times that come to the small-town church. He was struggling with, "What is the purpose of the church in this community? It seems everyone in the community is already churchied, and there are no real prospects." If the small church is Christ's Body, then its business should be that of showing Christ in His fullness to its community by its faith and works.

Can ministries that are nonproductive in the sense of adding to the number of people be Christlike ministries? How about youth ministries, senior adult ministries, children's ministries, helping widows and widowers cope with life after losing a spouse, or a Welcome Wagon program that incorporates new people into the community?

New or innovative programs can be valuable in a small community. We cannot allow the church to believe that a ministry that does not affect hundreds is not a viable ministry.

Success is finding and meeting the needs of people. Our Lord proved that. Laying down one's life gives true meaning and purpose to ministry. To grow or not to grow is not the question.

Success in the small-town church requires strength, wisdom, and a willingness to serve. I can say honestly there are no better people than those in the small towns across America. My church is filled with goodhearted country Christians. They know how to work and play, but most of all they know how to watch and pray.

We are not called to break attendance records but to be obedient. Your annual reports may not win you any district awards, but you can be assured if you have been faithful to the Head of the Church, you will hear the greatest words ever to be spoken to one of God's children, "Well done, good and faithful servant. . . . enter into your reward" (cf. Matt. 25:21, 23, RSV). 



Norm Shoemaker

What Are We Besides SMALL?

by Norm Shoemaker

Pastor, Conejo Valley Church of the Nazarene, Newbury Park, Calif.

The aphorism, As a man thinketh in his heart so is he, not only embraces the whole of a man's being, but is so comprehensive as to reach out to every condition and circumstance of his life."¹ This oft-quoted, and sometimes misquoted, lead line from James Allen's classic essay *As a Man Thinketh*, has for decades focused attention on a dynamic principle of personal health and wholeness.

Those of us who share deeply and profoundly in the "inner journey" of people know that an overwhelming number fail to maximize their God-intended potential because of the debilitating influence of low self-esteem. This predicament not only affects individuals but also impacts those social structures they populate . . . in this case, the church . . . and more specifically, the *small* church. So critical is this factor in church life today that Lyle Schaller, a respected church-watcher, pointedly states in a recent publication, "If there is something approaching a universal beginning point for small churches seeking to plan for tomorrow, it is **STRENGTHENING THE SELF-IMAGE.**"²

You and I know by personal experience and reputation about those infamous small churches where "carnal-mindedness," "no commitment," "disobedience," and "divisive influences" have decimated the best efforts of pastor and people. For such, there is only one cure—a good dose of judgment, repentance, and restoration. But what about the large number of small congregations leavened with loving, devoted, sacrificial people?—a church body described typically in annual

reports as "one of God's best"—a caring, committed community, living under a gloomy cloud of false guilt and defeat because "if we were all that we should be we wouldn't be *small*." I'm referring to the church that doesn't have a problem of the heart, but a problem of the eyes. The smaller church desperately needs a "new way of seeing"—seeing its value, worth, and belonging place in the kingdom of God. It is to this smaller church, loved by God (He made so many), that I offer these thoughtful suggestions.

1. If the smaller church is to maximize its ministry, then it must define (on the basis of Scripture) its *reason to exist*.

To assume that a church knows its reason to exist is to assume *too much*. Most members can quote the Great Commission but, when translated through their cognitive processes, it comes out "to be like First Church."

During the first year of my pastorate in Thousand Oaks, the leadership team joined me in a six-month, intensive study of "The Nature and Mission of the Church." We researched, shared, debated, wrote individually and corporately "Our Reason to Exist." This time-consuming but tremendously productive effort taught me two things:

First, writing a mission statement is hard work. It is also inspiring, affirming, stretching, convicting, and correcting.

And, secondly, most church leaders have never

thought about the question, "Why should our church exist?"

2. If the smaller church is to maximize its ministry, then church identity and church valuing must be *mission based*.

It seems that most human-type Christian folks tend to base their identities and securities on certain buildings,

The attractiveness of the smaller church is its "full-of-care" sense of community.

certain programs, certain people, or certain styles, but seldom on the Certain Mission. Naturally, fulfilling the mission will necessitate people, program, and physical facility. The heart of the matter is the matter of priorities. May I suggest the following sequence of priorities for the smaller church (or any church, for that matter):

1. PURPOSE
2. PEOPLE
3. PROGRAM
4. PHYSICAL FACILITY

The ever-present temptation of the smaller church is to make self-valuing judgments by comparisons. By comparing its property, its program, its people with the "other church (or churches) in town" or "on the district." A new way of seeing begins when a church justifies its existence on the basis of God's saving purpose, and evaluates itself on the basis of FAITHFULNESS to that purpose as it is tangibly expressed in goals, objectives, and articulated plans.

3. If the smaller church is to maximize its ministry, it must learn to intentionally count its *mission assets*.

When the smaller church and its leaders develop a negative way of seeing, then a problem-based orientation determines their approach to counting. They count problems, barriers, limitations, and inadequacies. They live by an "if only we had" mentality. It is as if their unique advantages DO NOT COUNT, especially those assets which can be mobilized for greater *mission results*. The smaller church not only needs a proper identity base, but it also needs a healthy sense of self-awareness.

Such questions as:

"Why do we exist?"

"What do we have going for us?"

"How can we maximize what we have going for us?"

help to shape a new way of seeing.

Now, let's look at how all of this can be practicalized and particularized in the planning processes of the local

church. We will apply these three questions to two vital mission dimensions: worship and evangelism.

WORSHIP: "Why do we exist?" (Defining the mission)

"It is the purpose of this church to CELEBRATE, as the people of God, new life in Jesus Christ."

"What do we have going for us?" (Counting the assets)

The apostle Paul reminded the Ephesian church that "we who believe are carefully joined together with Christ" (Eph. 2:21, TLB). One of the distinct assets of the smaller church is the fact that it is CARE-FULLY joined together . . . like a family. "Everyone knows everyone." As a result, when the family gathers, people are more naturally drawn into participation. Like it or not, their very presence in worship demands involvement.

Secondly, group functioning in the smaller church is less complex, both functionally and logistically.

A third asset of the smaller church is the high degree of "shared life" between the pastor and people. Simply stated, "They are better known to each other."

"How can we maximize what we have going for us?" (Maximizing our assets)

The smaller church will probably not attract worshipers with their "super choir," "terrific orchestra," "fabulous pianist," or, to be perfectly honest, their "great preacher." But the smaller church can have glorious CELEBRATIONS, when Spirit-directed leadership is applied to creative formats, allowing maximum people participation.

A few "for examples:"

- . . . If you have portable seating, so much the better. Use the flexibility to structure the seating arrangement around the design of each celebration.
- . . . Use an overhead projector to feed the congregation the words to scripture songs and hymns. (Everyone can see and read the words in the smaller church.)
- . . . Work with soloists and musical specials to make their participation a unique moment of personal ministry.
- . . . Interview worshipers, using a timely question to help establish the focus for the worship celebration.
- . . . Facilitate prayer times for personal involvement—praying in pairs, in cluster groups, by topics, with worshipers contributing their "prayer phrases."
- . . . During the sermon, stop to allow worshipers the opportunity to illustrate, from their own personal experience, the point being communicated. (In the smaller church, you don't have to worry about getting a microphone to them.)

And the list goes on and on. The point is this: Because of the sense of relational community innate to the smaller church, make worship a "celebration of participation." It takes work to be creative. It takes thorough planning and people preparation to make it meaningful,

but it can HAPPEN. And when it does, people are genuinely lifted, and God is praised.

EVANGELISM: "Why does this church exist?" (Defining the mission)

"It is the purpose of this church to COMMUNICATE the good news about new life in Jesus Christ to our community."

"What do we have going for us?" (Counting the assets)

The attractiveness of the smaller church is its full-of-care sense of community. Caring, in the smaller church, tends to be less formalized and more immediate. As a result, it is experienced with a greater sense of authenticity and sincerity.

"How can we maximize what we have going for us?" (Maximizing the advantage)

Generally, the smaller church will not attract people by the diversity of its ministry or the exceptional quality of its program (although what is done must be done as well as possible). In order for the smaller church to maximize its outreach assets, the focus of evangelism must be intentional and relational. Committed members of the fellowship should be taught how to intentionally identify, cultivate, evangelize, and disciple their sphere of influence (relatives, neighbors, and work associates). They

must be convinced that their circle of influence is a personal stewardship responsibility, entrusted to them by God. This strategy does not trust its evangelistic effort to public advertising and an occasional poster blitz in neighborhood store windows. Relational evangelism teaches people how to purposefully penetrate their existing network of relationships. So, characteristic of the smaller church, evangelism remains full of care.

As the smaller church defines its MISSION, counts its ASSETS, and mobilizes those assets for MAXIMUM advantage, often something traumatic begins to happen . . . GROWTH. And growth means change. People love progress but resist change, for change means loss—loss of identity, loss of relationship, loss of community. Frankly, to the smaller church, growth often feels threatening. But for the church that is learning to base its identity on faithfulness to "the mission," the risk of change becomes an opportunity of faith. There has always been something contagious about obedience that risks its all in order to be faithful to its mission, especially when its mission is the GREAT COMMISSION. In the economy of God, there is no such thing as "small"—just FAITH-FUL!



NOTES

1. James Allen, *As a Man Thinketh* (Old Tappan, N.J.: Fleming H. Revell Co., n.d.), p. 9.
2. Lyle E. Schaller, *The Small Church Is Different!* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1982), p. 58.

BEST BOOKS ON THE SMALL CHURCH

Making the Small Church Grow, Robert E. Maner. (Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City) \$2.95

The Small Town Church, Peter J. Surrey. (Abingdon Press) \$4.95

The Small Church Is Different! Lyle E. Schaller. (Abingdon Press) \$6.95

Small Churches Are the Right Size, David R. Ray. (Seabury Press) \$7.95

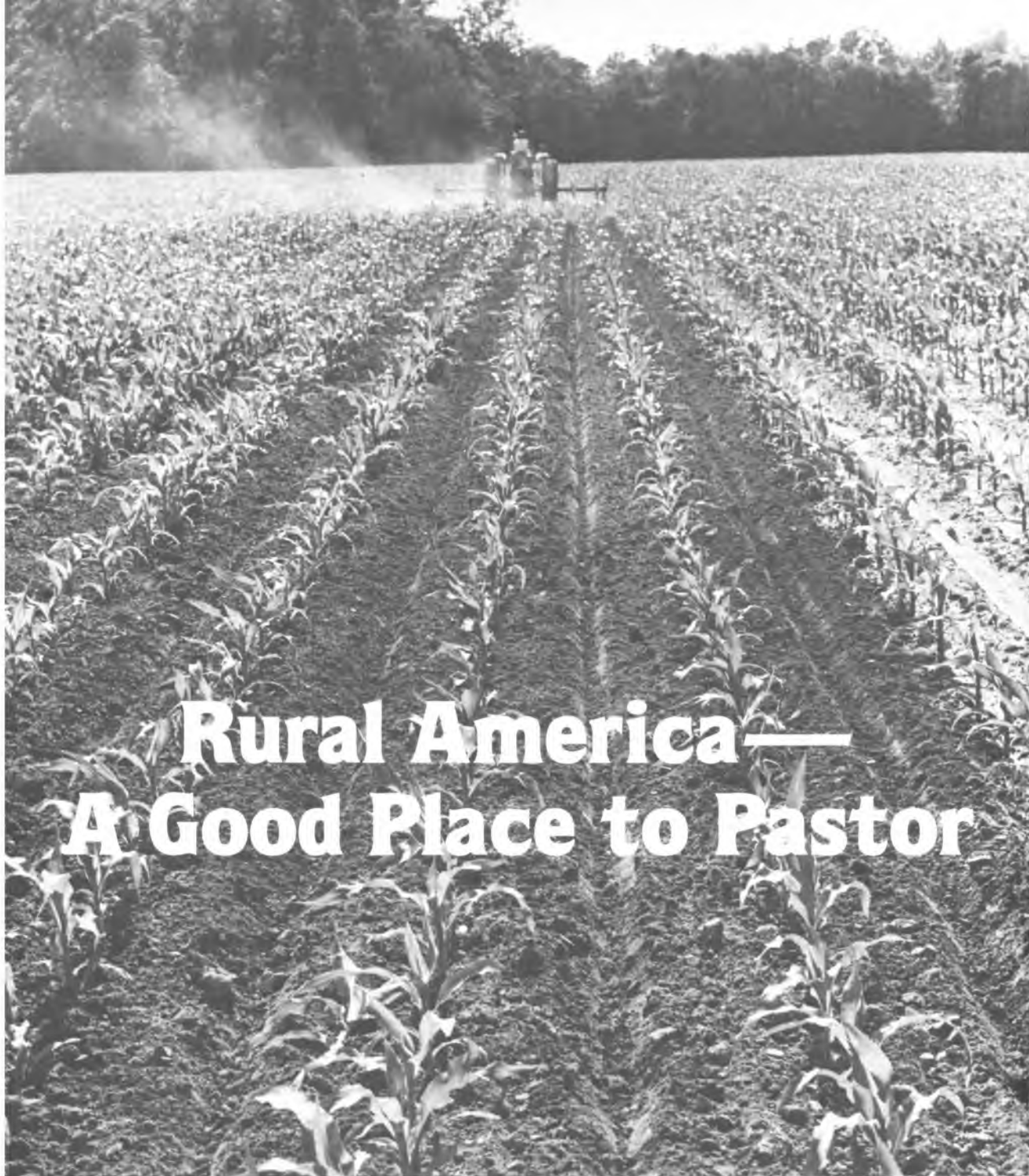
Preaching and Worship in the Small Church, William H. Willimon and Robert L. Wilson. (Abingdon Press) \$4.95

Making the Small Church Effective, Carl S. Dudley. (Abingdon Press) \$5.95

The Birth, Care, and Feeding of a Local Church (Revised Edition), Donald J. MacNair. (Baker Book House) \$4.95

The Smaller Church in a Super Church Era, Jon Johnston, ed. (Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City)

Available from your publishing house



Daniel Hiebert

Rural America— A Good Place to Pastor

by Harlan V. Heap

Pastor, Church of the Nazarene, Ainsworth, Neb.

I came to Ainsworth, Neb., from a city of 350,000 which had a hectic, competitive life-style. I pastored one of six Nazarene churches in the community—three in the immediate area and three in surrounding suburbs.

Our large church building was, in fact, too large, with seating capacity for 450. Only 125 to 150 attended. It was somewhat demoralizing to the congregation—an “albatross around the neck.”

During this pastorate I made several hunting trips into north central Nebraska, and on these excursions was often asked to preach on Sundays. The local congregation got to know me and called me to be their pastor at a time when the church had had no shepherd for six months.

The church membership at Ainsworth was around 125 in a church building that seats about 175. More than

half the attendance came from varying distances in the country. There was a marked difference between pastoring here and in a large city where the builder had visions of ministering to thousands—a vision that never materialized.

Our present community is about 2,200 in population. It is a farming-ranching area. Vast cattle ranches and spreads of corn, using center pivot or gravity flow irrigation systems, comprise a community much different from the one I previously pastored.

I felt immediate relief from the competitive spirit and the constant rat race of city life. Accepting the challenge, I did not slacken my pace in the transplant from city to rural church. It was refreshing to take on this small-town church, though its constituency was no smaller than that of the church I had left.

One of my professors once said: "It is a shame when a church feels the need to leave the inner city to move out into the suburbs, because who will minister to those people when the church closes its doors?" Just as the inner city is neglected when the churches flee to the suburbs, so the rural area is often neglected.

Several pastors were called to come to this community before I came. They looked it over and decided it was "too far away from everything." It was rural America—too far removed from life as they would like to have it. They declined the opportunity.

People in the "unwanted" rural churches of America are good, loving people who are hungering for shepherds to love and care for them. Though the sparse population and low economic conditions preclude ministries often attempted by the suburban church, the people are open and receptive to the pastor. Generally, people in small communities will accept a pastor's visit to their homes more readily than in the large city. They need loving, caring, nurturing pastors, and they respond favorably to that type of ministry.

Secondly, the minister needs to make himself known in the homes of the people. Break down barriers showing them you have the concern of your congregation and community on your heart. They will react warmly if you help with their work and show them you are not afraid to get dirty or to do menial tasks.

The rural church I have been privileged to pastor had loving, caring pastors before I came, who shared in the heartbeat of the church by proper discipling and shepherding. The people, therefore, have learned to look to the church with great expectancy for their spiritual as well as their social needs.

We trim our life-style so that it is compatible with those of our fold. We found it easy to adapt to this way of living and were aware of the rigors of ranching. We quickly let the people know we liked it and that we felt right at home with them. They reciprocated by sharing their meats, eggs, milk, produce, and their love. Perhaps this was the key to our acceptance. No matter where God calls us, we will serve—bloom where we are!

I set an example for my people by giving regular tithes

and offerings, and contributing to the building fund. God has blessed, enabling the church to pay its budgets every year. This year we remodeled our fellowship hall.

These country people were holding Bible studies and small-group meetings in the outlying areas when I came. They minister to each other—Nazarenes as well as other Christians. Thus, we were able to win some to the Lord as they were brought into the influence of the church. Several families brought in through these means were nurtured and their faith strengthened.

I have attended their Bible studies, but I do not deter them from doing their own thing in their own way. They have done well. I watch for any indication of danger and am ready to "put out any fires" of misdirected zeal. I

As far as we know, more persons have been called to the ministry from the small church in Ainsworth than from any other church in Nebraska

have a part in selection of materials and books for study guides used along with the Bible and am often asked, "What is the church's position and doctrine?" These lay studies have built a solidarity into the church.

Monthly carry-in fellowship dinners strengthen the camaraderie of the church. What a good time of drawing together, getting better acquainted, mingling the warmth of love and uniting in a family fellowship! Fellowship times are necessary for the church situation where people are scattered over a wide area. Some families live 30 to 50 miles away. They come to church when not haying, calving, planting, or harvesting.

A pastor needs to plan the church calendar around their life-style, but he cannot let their life-style keep the church from carrying out its mission. For example, our evangelist was scheduled to arrive after calving, before planting in spring, after haying, and before harvest in the fall. The pastor is expected to make such allowances so they can attend and be active participants. The sooner a pastor gets in the swing of their life-style, the better off he will be. If the church's program interferes with their ranching, I have to roll with the punches. They know as well as I that they have to take care of themselves and their livelihood, or the church will go down the drain. My being low-key about contesting their priorities has made it easier for everyone.

When calving season arrives, the rancher spends most of his time tending his herd. Sometimes marriage relationships are strained and couples need counseling. In these stressful times I make myself available for support. I have done more counseling in this setting than any other in my 31 years of pastoral ministry. My avail-

(Continued on page 60)

“Small-plex” can be a fatal disease

CURING THE SMALL-CHURCH COMPLEX

by Donald P. Mentch
Pastor, Southampton, England

I'm not the doctor come to tell you about the disease of "small-plex." Rather I am the patient about to bore you by telling you of my ailment.

What is a small church? I could be cynical (realistic?) and ask if many of our churches are large enough to be considered small churches. Some are perhaps just large Bible study groups. The senior adult Sunday School class in my home church was larger than the Southampton church which is mostly composed of senior citizens. A synagogue could not be formed unless there were at least 10 men. Lyle E. Schaller suggests that if a church averages fewer than 45 members a Sunday, it should be considered small. Some small churches need an even more diminutive label.

What is a small-church complex? It sounds like a disease—Small-plex. I would suggest the small-church complex is all those factors and the resultant consequences of those factors that keep a church small. Some of those factors are good and some are bad.

One might ask whether a factor can be considered good if it prevents a church from growing, but the small church has several qualities which might cause us to ask whether or not we want to cure small-plex.

Have you ever heard it said in a small church that large churches are impersonal, that it is nice to be in a church where we know everybody? In a small church everybody is known and anyone not there is missed. One of my members did not make it out to either service one Sunday, which was unusual for her. I phoned her home after the evening service and spoke to her sister who was visiting from Birmingham where she attended a large church of several hundred members. She could

not get over the fact that the pastor had actually phoned! In a small church there is that intimate atmosphere that can be lost in a large church.

Peter Wagner (*Your Church Can Grow*, p. 85) says that small churches are big enough to meet some people's needs, but other people require large churches to meet their needs. Some people feel more secure in a small church. They need to sense that they are an intimate part of the whole social unit. They feel uncomfortable when they look around and see a lot of strange faces. People like to feel they are needed. But some people like the action of a large church. Some people like to be rather anonymous and do not like a fuss made over them. But whether a church is large or small, it should be growing.

If it is true that a church should be growing, then it is necessary that the small-church complex be removed. But is it possible? Many small churches have advanced cases of small-plex.

What are some of the symptoms of the small-church complex? One symptom we face in Southampton is the absence of nuclei. It seems to me a nucleus of some type is necessary to build a cell or group around. My congregation is almost 100 percent elderly. Thus, it is hard to attract younger people. My people certainly expected me to attract youth when I first went there ("Youth attracts youth," they prayed). But I have found it difficult to (1) attract them, (2) hold them, and (3) blend them into the fellowship itself ("Pensioners do not attract youth," I say). The people who have come and stayed are other senior citizens. Small churches cannot easily cater to the wide variety of age-groups and other cate-

gories. A pastor cannot easily serve as a nucleus, for he is pulled in many directions.

Another telltale sign of small-plex is that the pastor often does everything. He is expected to lead all the activities. They say, "The pastor is the best person to do it," as he pulls out his hair! I do not need to explain here that a pastor can spread himself too thinly and cover no area well. A recent study on church growth says that the pastor is only responsible for 6 percent of a church's growth. If *only* the pastor is at work, then church growth will be slow.

But I believe that the primary symptom of small-plex is the despairing attitude of the pastor and people of the church. How many of our small churches have prayed for years and have worked for years and have seen little fruit for their efforts? How many have begun to believe that growth is impossible? How many become content with the status quo? "We are just one little happy family," they say. How many have said, "It cannot be done!" Many pastors have gone into a new situation with high hopes and strong faith, believing that God was going to do a good work. But they preached and prayed and visited and worked, yet saw little fruit for their efforts. They continued to preach and pray and visit and work, but without a spirit of expectancy, without faith that anything would happen. The faith, will, and good attitude of the pastor and people have been broken.

A further symptom can be noted in the congregation that has had very few visitors over the years. They can forget the social graces of relating to new people. They usually fall into the errors of either cold-shouldering them or warmly smothering them when they do come. They can feel very uncomfortable relating to strangers. There may not be a willingness to cultivate new friends or to allow some of the close ties to loosen in order to include others.

Another symptom of small-plex is the "greener grass" excuse. "If we had a better building, a different pastor, or a decent song leader, then we could grow." It can become very easy not to ask, "What can we do with what we have?"

And in a small church it is easy for the pastor to begin to doubt whether his church is the most suitable or helpful for some people. Is it good for a younger person to attend a church composed mostly of senior adults? Isn't it better for a young family to attend a larger church where the children and parents will find fellowship with others of their own age?

Ministerial burnout may be related to the small complex. I believe that small-plex can be a *fatal disease* for pastors. I wonder how many ministers have left the ministry because they were infected with this disease, or how many continue on though fatally smitten. If the church does not grow, even if it has not grown for years, the pastor can take this personally. Should he? He says to himself, "If I were the kind of pastor and Christian I should be, the church would grow. If I had prayed more or obeyed more or sacrificed more, the church would have grown." Alas, he concludes that he is unfit for the ministry. He tries to do so much and feels so much responsibility, but sees so few results, that his spirit is broken and he gives up. Another victim of the deadly small-church complex.

Now, is it possible to remove the small-church com-

plex? Is it possible to set churches free to grow? If it is, we may need to change our *modus operandi*. Let me suggest some medications that may tend to heal small-plex.


The first medication is to put the members of the congregation to work. Of course, this is easier said than done. I have noticed that small churches have a lot of confidence in the power of prayer. It is far easier to pray for rain than to water the garden. How many times have the people prayed for God to send people in or have asked Him to go door-to-door and touch hearts? They pray for the pastor's "contacts," but do not realize that they should have "contacts" also.

One way or another the church members must be put to work. This might mean the pastor's refusing point-blank to take on tasks that others can do. This possibly means the pastor allowing others to do what they want to do even if it is something he wants to do himself. It also means that the church should work at those things it has the ability and work force to cope with. In Southampton, our drop-in coffee morning has been run by the members, and it has been a good halfway house in meeting new people. It has been by the ones and twos, but it has helped people to get acquainted in an informal setting. This helps to turn the eyes of the church outward.

A second medication, and one which would call for a radical redeployment of personnel and finances, is team ministry. Would it be possible to send two ministers into what is a "make or break" situation for a definite period of time? Team ministry certainly has biblical precedent, at least in the area of church planting and the building up of a work. Jesus sent men out two by two. Paul traveled with a team of men. A strong church can get along with one minister far easier than a weak church. Two ministers could work together and be an encouragement one to the other and to the church. This could be for a period as short as several weeks or as long as a few years, depending on the local situation. Lay people moving to an area to help in the work of a church could serve on a ministry team as well. Either of these approaches might facilitate the development of important nuclei in a church and thus give something to build around.

The third medication is to improve the attitude of pastor and people. The two previous ideas, if successful, would go far in improving the attitude of the church. A team ministry would bring in new blood and vision, and two ministers would be less likely to sink into the morass than one.

There must be input from outside the church itself to help keep the faith and attitude of the church expectant, strong, and hopeful. This is where district, zone, and local church get-togethers and events are invaluable. Not only must there be love within a church, there must be love on the district between churches. Small churches need the edifying gifts, support, and fellowship of other churches.

It has been said that a person can survive longer alone on a deserted island if he knows that there is at least one person somewhere who loves him and cares for him. I am sure that this is also true for the small church. Left alone, it could die a slow death. 



Kenneth E. Crow

3 Things I Would Tell My Son if He Were the Pastor of a Small Church

by Kenneth E. Crow

Professor of Sociology, Mid-America Nazarene College

I care a lot about my sons. If one of them were the pastor of a small church, I would want to do everything I could to strengthen the effectiveness of his ministry. Among other things, I would direct him toward church research.

I have recently completed a study of church growth in Nazarene churches during the '70s.¹ Reviewing the literature and examining that representative sample of congregations improved in many ways my understanding of congregational life in small churches. Based on that understanding, there are three things I would want to tell my son.

1. CONSERVING CONVERTS IS ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT TO GROWTH IN SMALL CHURCHES

There is a strong correlation between the rate of additions by professions of faith and losses by removals.

That is, the tendency is for congregations which add members by profession of faith to also remove members by official board action. This failure to conserve converts is a pattern for congregations of all sizes. However, it is among small churches that the tendency is strongest.

The most obvious explanation for this correlation is that it is a result of concealing losses by waiting to record them until they are offset by gains. If this explanation is adequate, the correlation should be strongest within a single year. It is, however, very weak in any one year and becomes strong only over a longer period of time. The relationship evidently involves more than mere record-keeping practices.

Dean M. Kelley, in *Why Conservative Churches Are Growing*, argues that strictness causes growth.² According to his hypothesis, if your church is serious



Janet Anderson

enough about membership to expel unworthy members this year, you will reap the results of that seriousness in future years. Churches which are most rigorous in their requirements for membership will be most attractive to potential members. Removals cause later additions by profession of faith. Undoubtedly, he is partially correct. However, in the Church of the Nazarene it is evident that something more is involved.

Another factor might be a tendency to shallowness in your efforts to make disciples. If you invest your energies in evangelism and bring new converts into the official membership of the church, you might fail to recognize their need for the discipleship training which would produce spiritual maturity. You could transfer your efforts too quickly to other potential converts. Missing the attention you had been giving, the immature might drift off and eventually be removed from the membership.

You should be able to serve new Christians better and to help your church grow by expanding your ministry to new members.

A more serious problem is the possibility that some of these losses would be a result of congregational exclusiveness. It may have been easier to allow people into the official membership than it was to integrate them into the group. There may have been some unwillingness within the congregation to allow new members into the close fellowship of the group. To the extent that this is a problem, dealing with it will allow your church to grow. New members will not be squeezed out.

This problem may be caused in part by a fear within

your members that growth in membership will cause them to lose real advantages, such as those discussed below. You can help them in this regard by dealing directly with the dilemma of growth in small congregations. If evangelism is effective, the church won't be small any longer.

The advantages of small congregations are often casually dismissed by those of us who are concerned about church growth. They will not be as easily dismissed by some of your people. They know, at least intuitively, that there are some real strengths to small groups which are seriously threatened within large groups.

You don't have the option of disobeying the Great Commission.³ You must make disciples. However, you can lead your people to other possibilities as you help them deal with this problem.

One option is to plant new congregations as your evangelism results in new members. Both congregations would have the strengths of the small group. This was apparently the most common pattern in the New Testament Church.

A second possibility would be to preserve the small-group strengths by organizing the congregation to include strong small groups. John Wesley's class meetings are an example of this option.

2. RECOGNIZE AND BUILD ON THE ADVANTAGES OF THE SMALL CHURCH

One of the advantages of small groups is greater

accountability.⁴ In small groups people are more likely to know what others are doing. They are also more able to spend enough time together to know when problems are developing.

One measure of this accountability is the consistency of attendance of members. In some denominations members who attend only one church service a week or less are easily tolerated. In most evangelical churches a more rigorous expectation that members would attend Sunday School, Sunday morning worship, and Sunday evening worship most Sundays has been normal. Furthermore, we expect to have new Christians who have not yet joined the church, as well as visiting potential converts, attending on an average Sunday. Therefore, we would expect to have an average attendance greater than the official membership.

In fact, in the average congregation of under 75 members the attendance is more than 100 percent of the membership. On the average, larger congregations are less rigorous. Rigorous larger congregations and tolerant small congregations demonstrate that factors other than size are also involved. However, there is an evident tendency for congregation size to affect relationships.

Close fellowship is another advantage of small congregations.⁵ This helps explain the tendency for higher levels of participation found in small churches. Members know each other better and are, therefore, more likely to miss spontaneously anyone who is absent. Structured programs to contact absentees are rarely as effective as natural, caring relationships. Remind your people of this advantage.

Small groups also have the advantage of allowing a higher proportion of their members to have responsibilities within the group.⁶ It is not just that members check up on each other and that they know each other very well. They also are more dependent on each member to keep the work done. Decisions are more likely to involve consensus. Work is shared in a family style rather than in a bureaucratic model. When someone misses a service, their job is not done.

Shared responsibility, therefore, is another explanation of the tendency for a higher proportion of small church members to attend on an average Sunday. Among those potential members who need a place to serve this characteristic is a definite advantage. Capitalize on it.

These advantages have their own problems. Accountability may become petty. Close fellowship may result in negative cliques. Responsibilities may become so many that members are worn out.

It is important to recognize these structural tendencies of small groups. Guard against their negative potential. Build on them to the benefit of your people and the church.

3. MORALE IS AN IMPORTANT FACTOR FOR YOU AND YOUR PEOPLE

You are a part of the team! In fact, the New Testament image is stronger than that. You are an essential part of the Body of Christ.⁷ Your congregation is an important part of the whole Church as surely as is any other. No congregation is enough on its own. The Church is all of us, serving where God has placed us, using our particular strengths and weaknesses.


You will sometimes forget this, Son, and be tempted to think that your contribution doesn't count. There will be ample reason for your confusion. In a society where family income is often used as an important indicator of status and worth, you will have a very low income. In a denomination where "success" is indicated by selection to important boards and assemblies, small-church pastors are rarely chosen. Even when a conference on small congregations is scheduled, your speaker will be a "successful" pastor from a larger church. In spite of such reward system indications as these, you are an essential part of the Body of Christ.

Your people also need a boost in morale. Most congregations are your size. And it is not only most Nazarene or evangelical congregations which are small. Lyle Schaller recently said half of all Protestant congregations on the North American continent average less than 75 in attendance at the principal weekly worship service. He wrote, "The normal size for a Protestant congregation on the North American continent is one that has fewer than forty people at worship on the typical Sunday morning."⁸

The media fascination with the superchurch promotes a sense of inferiority in the smaller church. This affects church growth. Researchers have recently found that member satisfaction with worship and program is the greatest single influence on church growth or decline.⁹ If your people feel inferior in comparison to superchurches, they are more likely to become dissatisfied with your worship and program. When this happens, the people who trust them are unlikely to be attracted to the church.

God has called you. In obedience to Him, you have accepted the responsibilities of pastoring a small congregation. There are advantages to small groups. Recognize them. Build on them. As you make your people aware of these advantages, they will regain their morale and begin to bring people in.

Help your people deal with the implications of obedience to the Great Commission. They must reach out to the lost. You can help them structure the congregation to bring people in without losing the advantages of the small congregation.

Since most of the churches are small, most of the "good" pastors serve small congregations. Serve in your congregation with the assurance that God has called you to minister to His people there. 

NOTES

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2. Dean M. Kelley, *Why Conservative Churches Are Growing* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1977), pp. 176-79.

3. Matthew 28:18-20.

4. H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills, *From Max Weber* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1946), p. 316.

5. Ernst Troeltsch, *The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches* trans. Olive Wyon (New York: Macmillan, 1931), p. 331.

6. Kurt H. Wolff, *The Sociology of Georg Simmel* (New York: The Free Press, 1950), pp. 87-90.

7. Romans 12.

8. Lyle E. Schaller, *The Small Church Is Different* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1982), pp. 9-11.

9. Wade Clark Roof, Dean R. Hoge, John E. Dybie, and C. Kirk Hadaway, "Factors Producing Growth or Decline in United Presbyterian Congregations," in *Understanding Church Growth and Decline*, Dean R. Hoge and David A. Roozen, eds. (New York: Pilgrim Press, 1979), pp. 212-13.

IDENTIFICATION— Leadership Style for the Small-Church Pastor

by Mike Jackson
Pastor, Church of the Nazarene, Monroe, N.C.

Very early in the morning my wife and I sat in the hospital room and heard the pediatrician's numbing words, "I'm sorry, Mike, Cheryl, we did all we could."

Adam, our seven-month-old son, was gone. It happened so suddenly. The impact was devastating. We wept and prayed with Dr. Taylor. Many of our church family were there to comfort us. They shared our pain. A fellow pastor, Alan, arrived as we left for home; and seeing his face, we knew he was grieving with us.

The darkness of grief had engulfed us for several hours by the time Carol arrived, but when she entered our kitchen, a remarkable healing began. She walked in with arms outstretched, hugged us both, and said, "I know what you are going through."

Carol did know. It had been less than a year since she lost her husband by a tragic death. She was 39 years old—a vibrant, growing Christian, a warm and caring mother, my wife's aunt, and our good friend. We stood with her at Christmastime as they buried her husband. Now she totally identified with our grief and pain and empty-heartedness.

There were many who cared for and loved us that day. The people of our church family were incredibly good to us, showing us how much we need one another in the Body of Christ. But Carol's ministry to us was unique because of her ability to identify with us.

Identification is the leadership style that Jesus models for pastors. By identification we mean the ability to sit where the people sit, to see through their eyes, to walk in their shoes, to be one of them—feeling their needs, identifying with their struggles, sharing their hopes and dreams. This is how Jesus impacted men and turned a world upside down. And we who have been called of God as pastor/leaders to carry on His mission should

follow His example of leadership by identification.

Three significant passages in Hebrews speak to us about Jesus' absolute identification with us in fulfillment of His mission (*italics added*):

"Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity . . . he had to be *made like his brothers in every way*, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God . . . Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted" (2:14, 17-18, NIV).

"For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, *just as we are*—yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need" (4:15-16, NIV).

"Every high priest is selected from among men and is appointed to represent them in matters related to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. He is able to deal gently with those who are ignorant and are going astray, *since he himself is subject to weakness*" (5:1-2, NIV).

He was *among* the people, not lording it over them, but as one who served. He frequented their gathering places telling stories in the language of the streets, speaking in forms and imagery which were relevant. He lived on the level of the common man. The proof of His leadership was apparent: *People followed Him*.

The only context from which I can speak is as pastor of an emerging small church. While leadership is essential in every movement, it is critical in the development

and growth of the small church where the pastor not only becomes the focal point of leadership, but he sets the leadership and ministry style of the congregation.

A man's leadership style will affect every aspect of his approach to ministry. We will address three aspects: intercession, preaching, and pastoral care.

The Ministry of Intercession

As Hebrews continues to reflect upon the high-priestly ministry of Jesus, His role as intercessor comes to the forefront. Because He was tempted, He is able to help us in temptation (2:18, NIV). He ushers us in to the

Without identification the pastor's preaching, teaching, and discipling will lack authority

throne of grace where we can find mercy (4:16, NIV). He represents us in matters related to God (5:1, NIV). And Hebrews 7:24-25 tells us that "he has a permanent priesthood . . . [and] is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them" (NIV). An intercessor needs to know the people for whom he is praying and to be familiar with their needs. The author of the Hebrews tells us that Jesus is that kind of priest for us.

We pastor/leaders have a priestly ministry. It is ours to bring our people and their needs to the throne of grace in intercession. To do this we must be in touch with them, and that means *identification*. Perhaps the most difficult part of the early days of a new pastorate is praying for people you do not yet know. It's hard to be specific apart from identification.

Our priestly ministry carries over into public worship as we stand between God and our people during the pastoral prayer. We can bring God and people together because we have walked with them both.

The Ministry of the Word

The pastor's preaching, teaching, and discipling are authoritative to the people only as he has identified with them. Dr. Millard Reed, in *The Pastor as Theologian*, identifies the authority bases on which we tend to build our ministries. He suggests that the only authentic basis of authority is the Cross, the symbol of self-giving, relationship-seeking, need-serving LOVE. When we pastors enter into the world of our people and carry their burdens, feel their hurts, share their joys and sorrows, we become persons of authority with them and no one can speak to them like we can! Our authority results from our relationship with them.

Jesus spoke to the people as one with authority. His words were impressive and powerful, not so much for their newness (much of what He taught was good Old Testament exegesis), but because they touched people at the very nerve centers of their daily living. He knew their condition and needs and was able to bring the Word of God into their world on their level.

One of the greatest compliments I receive as a pro-

claimer is when teenagers take notes of my messages, or when new Christians and veteran saints come to me and say, "You are preaching the truth in ways that I can understand . . . even my kids are able to pay attention to the sermon!" That is the whole point of speaking. Identification is basic to effective communication.

The Ministry of Pastoral Care

Pastoral care enters a new and deeper level of existence when the pastor assumes the posture of his Master: "I am *among* you as one who *serves*." Counseling can mean entering into the struggles of a marriage that is crumbling and sharing the emotional pains of rejection and failure. It can mean not always having all the answers . . . struggling with "whys" and "what ifs" during the process of grief. But when our people know we have lived in that same world, they are more free to be open concerning their inner doubts and fears. Because we have walked through their crumbling world with them, they will listen to our counsel. Our young son's death and the separation we experienced have served as a springboard to healing for members of our constituency.

Our loss taught us tremendous truths about the ministry of presence, the process and stages of grief, and the reality of hope. But most of all it opened up a realm of ministry that can only be shared in the fellowship of the bereaved. When I say to a grieving family, "I know how you feel," they are touched, and healing begins. When I tell a couple about to separate how traumatic, how tragic separation really is, they listen.

One of the most moving accounts of Jesus' earthly ministry is John's portrait of the Savior at the grave site of Lazarus. The words "Jesus wept" speak volumes of truth. The crowd recognized it: "Behold, how he loved him." They were drawn to this Man . . . and followed Him. He led them because He loved them . . . not as a crowd, but as individuals . . . not *in absoluto*, but in particular. And love that does not identify with its object in every way is far removed from the *agape* of God who became one of us in His only begotten Son.

What does the leadership style of "identification" say to us about the nature and task of pastoral ministry, especially as it relates to the small-church pastor? By what will this pastor be characterized?

1. This pastor will spend time with his people: visiting, working, playing, going out to eat, cooking out with, counseling them. These tasks will be the joy and driving force of his life and ministry.
2. This pastor will listen to his people. He will know their pulse and temperature. He will be in touch with their condition. Because he listens, he will know how to pray for them, how to preach to them, and how to care for them.
3. This pastor will lead his people. The proof of his leadership will be in their following. They will follow because they know he loves and understands them. In his life they see the Christ of the Cross, who became one of us so that He might lead us "out of darkness into his wonderful light" (1 Peter 2:9, NIV).

During the early days of a home mission church which we planted, a young woman wrote a letter which expressed the significance of identification. Perhaps it was

(Continued on page 27)

Pastors Can Be Fulfilled in Small Churches Too

by E. W. Pannier

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

Fulfillment" began late on a Saturday afternoon as my family and I approached the small town (population 3,200) which I had been called to pastor. Fran looked at me as we reached the city limits and said, "I wonder what God has for us in this city." In the months and years that followed, we discovered to our delight just what God had in mind. It proved to be the fulfillment of everything I had visualized the ministry could be.

My first service the following morning was with a group of 35 people, nearly all from four devoted and determined families. They had struggled together in getting the congregation established in a community not especially congenial toward an evangelical church. They had strained their resources to buy a small lot and a dismantled church building, then moved it 60 miles to assemble it over the protests of neighbors. When finished, it could shelter a capacity crowd of 75 people. In spite of the difficulties, I sensed not a tinge of self-pity from these people. Rather, there was a sense of joyful



pride which made us immediately happy to be a part of them. That happiness was no passing illusion. It was still there five years later when I was asked to pastor another church. We left in tears.

Their experiences had welded them together in such unity that as I spoke to them the following morning, it was as if I addressed a single person. As I look back on that never-to-be-forgotten Sunday, I realize that I was experiencing a sense of community which we all consciously or unconsciously yearn for. There was something beautiful in that little body of believers—a closeness and intimacy which made worshiping the most natural thing to do.

In the years that followed, I pastored larger congregations, but I have never again been able to capture that complete sense of oneness in Christ that was ours in that small congregation.

It would be unreasonable to say their small size produced this unity. A small group is perhaps even more vulnerable to the forces that destroy than are larger churches. Nevertheless, the smaller body offers possibilities of community and warmth to a degree not possible in a larger body, simply because it is small. Such a congregation places relationships high in a scale of values. It is important to them that each is able to call the others by name. They are most conscious of individual rights and privileges and carry a personal sense of responsibility for the progress and unity of the group.

When the Church of the Saviour in Washington, D.C., grew to 110 members, they considered it a crisis and decided to divide into six smaller groups. They sensed that they had lost the intimacy of their earlier days and believed recovery of it was necessary for the life and vitality of the congregation.

The pastor, Gordon Cosby, had served as a chaplain during the Second World War. A vision of a living church was brought to him one night while on duty on the battlefield. Seven of the men who had been entrusted to him were assigned to infiltrate the enemy lines, observe what they could, and return before sunup. All through the night Cosby waited and prayed, and when one after another they all returned, there was such a reunion as he had never before experienced. Elizabeth O'Conner describes the incident in these words: "The night for him became a parable of the church when she authentically gathers. A group of people who know they are bound over to the power of death stumble on a treasure, and that treasure is Christ; miracle of miracles, doors open that were closed, gates of bronze are broken down. The words spill out as they try to tell one another what happened, and how it happened, and of the presence that was there."¹

In describing the incident, Cosby writes: "We were drawing easily on the tremendous capacity for intimacy that is in each of us. . . . We had that sense of community that we all yearn for."²

It is precisely this sense of closeness that accounts for much of the delight of ministering in a smaller church,

and, paradoxically, it is this same factor which makes the small church grow larger. The society in which we live is becoming increasingly impersonal. After a week of meaningless relationships in large offices, factories, and shops where thousands are employed, and where value is defined in terms of production only, men and women long for a sense of acceptance, recognition, personal value, and love. They want to belong and to feel needed. For many of them the large church fails to meet their deep needs. The often heard remark, "We really like a small church," is more than a statement of superficial prejudice, it is the verbalizing of a deep spiritual and psychological need.

The ancient Jews discovered this secret. Their synagogues, devoting themselves to the personal care and instruction of the people, were far more significant in their day than the great Temple had ever been. It appears that in the early part of the first century, there was one synagogue for every 100 members. As soon as there were 10 new prospects, another was formed.

The earliest Christians, too, met in house churches. The greatest gain in the strength of the Church was during these days when Christianity was nurtured in small groups of Christians meeting and encouraging one another in the faith. Of equal significance is the fact that all of the reformation movements within the Christian Church began in smaller groups. The Waldensians, Lollards, Hussites, Quakers, and Wesley's class meetings were all sustained by the fellowship of like-minded believers in small gatherings. W. Curry Mavis states, "For some reason God has often chosen smaller groups through which to demonstrate His power."³

Such fellowships of friends are referred to by sociologists as "primary groups." The people in them have a deep appreciation and love for each other. They are accepted for what they are, and there is little need for pretension and airs. Every person is needed and, when absent, knows that he or she will be missed. It is a place where the individual cannot be anonymous. W. Curry Mavis states, "It is probable that some of the new converts were held loyal, during the early stages of their adhesion, as much by the ties of brotherhood as by the tie of devotion to the unseen Lord."⁴ It is this atmosphere of genuine and hearty fellowship which provides a climate for spiritual growth. Jesus emphasized the significance of the few when He said, "Wherever two or three people have come together in my name, I am there, right among them!"⁵

The man who is fortunate enough to pastor a congregation of people such as these, is blessed indeed. He finds preaching always a delight. The late Dr. C. A. Gibson would often say of that small congregation, "They pull the preach right out of you!"

The small church has some built-in advantages which, as a rule, are not available to the larger churches. Lyle Schaller makes observations which bear this out. "The small church is tough."⁶ It can usually survive disasters that would destroy larger groups.

"The small church is usually built around the ministry of the laity."⁷ The decision-making process is not dominated by the clergy and paid staff. It is this atmosphere which makes it conducive for the pastor to have an equipping ministry. A far greater percentage of those called to the ministry are from small churches.

"The small church is a volunteer organization."⁸ Choir directors, musicians, maintenance workers, youth workers, and even janitors, are lay members who serve without pay or title. To watch a shy or retiring person bloom into a skilled worker in the Kingdom is a joy indeed.

"The small church cares more for people than for performance."⁹ It is not only the fact that there is high tolerance for lack of perfection, but there is also the recognition that God uses those of mediocre talents and makes of them great blessings.

"The small church has a different system for . . . financial support."¹⁰ Members contribute in response to the immediate needs. They are able to comprehend the simplified budget required and are more prone to feel a personal obligation as the needs are presented. As a result, they have a greater sense of personal involvement.

"The small church is intergenerational."¹¹ Little children, teens, and young adults all associate comfortably with those much older and with each other. There is an unhindered flow of love from one age extreme to the other.


"The small church is relational."¹² People are not categorized by their abilities or their offices. They are thought of in terms of interpersonal relationships—the relationship of life rather than the function of the church.

And finally, "the small church has a place for everyone."¹³ The single adults, the handicapped, the retarded, the elderly, and the little children are all accepted and find appreciation from the others.

All this may sound glowing. But a word of caution is needed lest all First Church pastors resign and rush to Podunk Center. There are snares and problems, too. It must be remembered that the small church lacks denominational and community status. The pastor who accepts such a charge is often considered as failing by

his peers in the ministry and even by the congregation to which he has come. To step "down" from a larger to a smaller assignment immediately raises the thought in some, "I wonder where he failed in his former church?" or, "Why are we always saddled with the poorest ministers just because we're small?" In a prayer meeting of my early ministry, in a church where only six adults could be found, a layman studied me and then said, "We're weighing you, brother, we're weighing you."

Quite often the small church is beset by poor morale, limited finances, failure of vision, and lack of enthusiasm. All of these tend to produce a psychological-social atmosphere which is characterized by discouragement and frustration.

If the pastor is one who determines success by numbers and finances, he will find the pressure devastating and will probably resign before giving God an opportunity to work. We cannot rate the quality of our ministry on a tally sheet, since we are all called to different tasks. Some plant and some reap and the planters are rarely the reapers. The day of judgment will reveal the quality of work each has invested in God's kingdom. Obedience must be our only motivation. Churning on the inside and wondering whether or not we are succeeding will only guarantee us failure. Success is measured by a quiet heart before the Lord, and when life is done we can be assured of the Great Shepherd's greeting, "Well done, good servant! . . . you have been faithful . . ." ¹⁴ 

NOTES


1. Terry C. Muck, ed., *Leadership, a Practical Journal for Church Leaders* (Carol Stream, Ill., 1981), p. 58
2. Ibid.
3. W. Curry Mavis, *Advancing the Smaller Local Church* (Winona Lake, Ind., 1957), p. 16.
4. Ibid., p. 23.
5. Matthew 18:20, Phillips.
6. Lyle Schaller, *The Smaller Church Is Different* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1982), p. 28.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid., p. 29
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid., p. 30.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid., p. 31.
13. Ibid., p. 33.
14. Luke 19:17, RSV

IDENTIFICATION—

(Continued from page 24)

because we were starting a family (a two-year-old and one on the way) as were most of the families in that small group. Perhaps it was because we were the same age, or from the same area of the country, or raised in similar religious backgrounds. Whatever the point of identification, Cookie recognized the need for such a leader in the church:

"I was having devotions and praying for our church, and the thought occurred to me to tell you that you have helped me with my spiritual needs. God promises to provide . . . and He has through your ministry. From what I understand from getting to know the others, we are all in a growing period where *we need the guidance and leadership of a minister to whom we relate and who we feel understands our needs.*

That's the kind of leader we all need. And that's the kind of Savior Jesus is. May our pastoral leadership be a reflection of Him who became one of us so that we might have abundant life and share it with others. 



Wilbur M. Brannon

THE PERSONAL GROWTH OF THE SMALL-CHURCH PASTOR

by Wilbur M. Brannon
Director of Pastoral Ministries, Kansas City

I have felt the joys and frustrations of pastoring small churches. In my first church, my head was reeling with the unearned authority and the awesome responsibility of organizational leadership. I was scared and nervous. How was I supposed to act, leading board meetings? I was also organizing the Sunday School, the missionary society, and the young people's society for the first time. I wasn't sure if the members could tell how unsure I really was. I tried to hide my insecurities, but when I was facing my first baptismal service, I could hide it no longer.

"Phil," I asked, "would you do something for me?"

He responded with a quizzical look and a shrug of his shoulders, "Well, I guess so. What do you want me to do?"

"You know," I hesitated and continued slowly, "we're having the baptismal service this afternoon, and I've never baptized anyone. Would you go with me and let me practice on you?"

He laughed and "screwed his courage to the sticking place," and we pulled it off without a hitch.

My predecessor was a much-loved and experienced minister. He was respected in the community and gave the church visibility and acceptability in the little town. He left some good patterns to follow. The pressure was on to visit in the hospital regularly. In fact, there was little excuse not to visit *all* my people at least twice a year. Some of the businessmen expected me to check in on them almost every day!

Even though my predecessor's strengths were putting some rather rigorous demands on me, I began to see clearly some of the relational aspects of ministry that make the pastor important to people. Human nature has not changed. What people longed for then is still a crying need today. People want to be loved. And a pastor who loves his people cannot ignore them.

Personal Growth and Relationships

Personal growth took place as I learned how to relate to the problems of my people. I admit that some of my pastoral calls were less important to me than to others, but they meant something special to the ones on whom I called. That is what makes it a ministry. Calling refocused my perspective on the total work of pastoring. I was less inclined to become absorbed in my personal problems. As I offered healing I was myself healed. As I gave encouragement I was encouraged. I did not feel so lonely in my struggles when I listened to the struggles of my people. Often I was blessed by learning how

they were facing trouble triumphantly. Their faith strengthened mine.

A relationship ministry does not come cheap but offers rich rewards. I found myself growing with my people. Their needs drove me to prayer. I needed wisdom from the Lord to minister to them effectively. I needed insights to apply biblical truth to the issues my people were facing and identify with them where they were living. My personal involvement with the lives of my people and my communion with God were the two indispensable halves of my relationship ministry without which my intellectual preparation in biblical study would have been inconsequential. The quest to know God and my people forced me to stretch myself constantly.

Personal Growth and Depression

Taking relationships seriously makes us vulnerable to disappointments. We have seen good and great persons fall. It leaves us cold, literally shaking in our faith. We ask questions like, "If he was living a double life and having such success, what is there in what we are doing anyway? Is there anything to it, really? I'm conscientious, living right, and where does it get me? I'm getting nowhere!"

But those are the wrong questions! Those questions sound like some Bible characters. If we read them again, God might say something we need to hear. Let's get God into our "self-talk." He often tries to interrupt, but we are talking so fast He doesn't have a chance to get a word in edgewise.

The way lay persons disappoint us affects our faith, too. Unchristian attitudes and actions have a way of invading the arena where faith operates. It can drastically reduce faith's response. Faith can become nothing more than a word when it should be a dynamic reality within us.

After a series of such disappointments the temptation is to fall victim to the "Elijah syndrome." We feel like escaping from people. We are depressed and sluggish . . . even empty. The prophet who had put out a great amount of energy when outrunning Ahab's chariot finds himself completely exhausted mentally, emotionally, spiritually, as well as physically.

After this nap (and some nourishment) under the juniper tree, Elijah reminds God how dedicated he is. It stings when he feels no appreciation from the people or even from God. Then he exposes his feelings of being indispensable to the Lord when he complains, "I, even I only, am left." Naturally, he was reacting emotionally to a partial view of the facts. God

tells the prophet that there are at least 7,000 others He can count on. These feelings of indispensability have a way of leading to feeling mistreated, even to paranoia. Elijah said to God, "They seek my life, to take it away." Isn't it interesting the way we project our difficulties onto circumstances and people?

As I said earlier, we need to let God in on our "self-talk." That is not like hearing voices. It is the constant dialogue that goes on in our thought processes. God wants to get into what is going on inside us and help us monitor ourselves. If we do not let God help us listen to ourselves, we may never detect we are losing touch with who we are. Denying our feelings could quickly lead to dullness and deadness. We are responsible to know ourselves.

Our faith affects the attitudes of our people; therefore, it is essential to keep it intact. That means we will struggle to keep it alive. Our faith is constantly being challenged. We could settle for playing religious games as paid professionals, but we would lose the integrity of our faith. If our ministry is reduced to merely doing a job, then we can forget about being effective. We may even get caught in the unsuspecting traps of insidious temptations. That's the unadvertised price of dutifully performing a perfunctory service when the love and joy have run out. Faith, having been challenged, has compromised.

We must not ignore the need for spiritual renewal by being constantly filled with the Spirit (Eph. 5:18). We must learn, as Elijah did, that nothing will offset depression like communing with God. He will show us the way toward maturity through our disappointments.

Personal Growth and Ministry

What is ministry anyway? That's a question we must ask. Is it just a way to make a living? Obviously we cannot minister without living, but what's our priority in living? Is it: How much can we arrange to *get*? Or is it: How can we *give* our best that others may live? Can we believe that the law of giving and receiving is irrevocable? Trust it. It is amazing how God does take care of us when we simply give ourselves away for others without thinking about what or how much we will get out of it.

The nature and purpose of ministry means we need to ask some basic questions. Why am I here? Am I here to build a big church for ecclesiastical recognition? Or am I here to learn my community and love the people who live around me? Is ministry an activity centered in programs or one focused on people? We can become so results oriented, so program oriented that we forget our main reason for ministry is developing people.

When I've seen Robert Schuller, Oral Roberts, or Don Wellman, Jesus keeps coming back to me as the ever-contemporary Model for ministry. I may never become a "superstar" pastor (whatever that means) and never pastor a "superchurch" (which could mean anything over 1,000). That may not even be important to God for me. But one thing is certain and important to me: Jesus is with me and wants to work through me for an effective, growing ministry.

SENT . . . SEEK . . . SAVE . . . SERVE! These are key concepts that keep recurring in the life and ministry of Jesus. It was important to Him that the disciples knew who SENT Him. That the things He was doing were not ego trips. He was not deluded by megalomania. He was on mission. He was in search! He was SEEKING persons lost in confusion, despair, depression, guilt, social oppression, and physical deprivation. He knew if He could somehow find them and reach them, He could draw them into the light of self-awareness and God-consciousness. Coming to know God's intent and the resources available through Him, there would come new hope and new life. SAVED! Oh, glorious thought! What a wonderful

reality! A miracle made possible because He was willing to SERVE.

He was constantly laying down His life for His friends (cf. John 15:13). He did not wait for the Cross to do that. It was a life-style with Him that simply would not flinch at the Cross. The Cross symbolizes the Godforsakenness we feel at times while serving! We assume God is "there," but often feel He is not. He seems so far away and disinterested. And we feel so lonely in our journeying. But He *is* there all the time. It is through the cross we endure and grow.

Personal Growth and Church Growth

Stress is real when trying to meet our role expectations. We want our church to grow. But when our church is not growing as we would like, we do not have to relinquish our desire to grow personally. In fact, if we seek out the causes and sort out the possible solutions, the process can be an integral part of our personal growth. Developing strategies for meeting difficult situations can be intentional steps in developing as persons. We can grow through problem solving.

As a pastor is persistent in his quest for growth, he will not only see new dimensions in his own life expanding, but new growth potentials for his church will become noticeable as well. Often the church will show unanticipated growth as a by-product of his own personal renewal.

However, I know the feeling of giving it everything I have and still not being able to bring that glowing report at the end of the year to the presiding officer. That year we lost 56 in our Sunday School because of families moving out of town. We had to take a loss of 10 for the year's average over the previous year. I felt like saying, "Well, what's the use anyway? If nobody else cares, why should I?" It's easy to drift into self-pity or indifference and become stagnant with an ingrown smallness. But we are on mission to reach the lost. The whole community is our parish!

Just because we have had a bad year or a series of disappointments in the work of the Lord is no reason to feel burned out or that we were mistaken about our call to the ministry. My father used to tell me, "Son, get that word *discouragement* out of your vocabulary. The temptation to discouragement is from the devil as much as the temptation to any other sin."

Rev. James Adams went to St. Louis, Mich. (whoever heard of St. Louis in Michigan?). Population: about 4,500. Church membership of 73 with a Sunday School that averaged 75. He led his church in a relocation project with the purchase of a nice acreage near the edge of town. The first three years he was there the church dropped to a fantastic 65! Disappointed? Probably. Give up? Not on your life! He carried on his building project, erecting the new church and a new parsonage. Attendance began to climb: 100, 112, 119. Then a drop to 109.

He got a call to a larger church, but his commitment was to more than a church. It was to a parish, an entire community. He stayed and built the second phase, enlarging the sanctuary and adding Sunday School space. The next year he dropped to 100 in Sunday School attendance, but went to 150 in morning worship. Then 155, 165, 179. Another chance to move to a larger church. He turned it down. He would not be discouraged where he was. There were times when he wondered how long he might stay. But he would not make a change just because it appeared to be an "advancement." He made his present assignment the place to advance.

After being in that little town nearly 17 years, he has been averaging near 180 in attendance and often having more than 225. He has just completed the third and final phase in his church building master plan.

Some would say that it will level off now. But he could have said that at any level reached during his 17 years there. In fact, we have thousands of churches running 75 in which the men-

(Continued on page 32)



Lyle Pointer

Developing Objectives for the Local Church

by Lyle Pointer

Pastor, First Church of the Nazarene, San Jose, Calif.

H. Armstrong Roberts



After 102 years the *Chicago Daily News* went out of business. For more than a century that great daily paper had reported the flow of history. No paper had known a more illustrious career, but in February, 1978, this great newspaper gasped and died.

Keyes Beech, a 30-year veteran and Pulitzer prize-winning writer for this great newspaper, was interviewed by David Brinkley on February 21, 1978. He was asked the specific question, "Why did the *Chicago Daily News* die?" Without hesitancy, the famed reporter replied, "We died because we lost our sense of mission. We were existing, but we did not know where we wanted to go."

A statement of mission is needed in the local church, just as any organization must know its purpose for existing. Evidence supports this observation: Not everyone knows or agrees upon the purposes of the church. While there are numerous programs that people assign to the church, not all activities are purposeful. Fewer still are effective.

Why should a church draw up a statement of purpose?

1. Not everyone agrees on the purposes of the church.
2. Planning can best be done with a consensus on the mission of the church.
3. Wise decisions can be made when priorities have been established.
4. When the pastor knows the preferences of his church constituency, he can make profitable use of his time.
5. The probability of success heightens when church workers know what should be achieved.
 - a. Morale and unity inevitably improve.
 - b. Energies and strengths are fused together.

How does a church establish its statement of mission?

The leaders in the congregation start that process by

inventorying four influential factors. This research can use these questions:

1. What does God want to do through our church?
2. What strengths and opportunities do we possess as a local congregation?
3. What needs and expectations are present in our church and community?
4. How is the past level of performance apt to affect our future?

One pastor led his church board to formulate a statement of mission in this way:

"We ate and prayed together," he said. "I asked them questions: 'What would you like to see happen in our church? What do you and your family need most? What opportunities does this church possess? What should take place to make this a great church? What are the strengths of our church?'"

In the monthly church board meetings they spent one-half hour in Bible study on passages such as: Matthew 16; 28; John 17; Acts 2; 1 Thessalonians 1—2; 2 Corinthians 9. "The scripture began to shape our thinking about what God wished to do among us," the pastor observed.

"We found the Word bringing us together," reported one member of the board. As a part of the board meetings they broke into small groups. They brainstormed, "What is the main business (mission) of the church?" Church board members answered that question. Twenty-one ideas were submitted by 12 people. The pastor commented, "I condensed the 21 responses into 14 statements. I rewrote them to read as objectives."

Meeting with the board again, the pastor suggested that some of the statements might be goals, rather than objectives.¹ Obviously, some statements said about the same thing as others. Another portion of the statements suggested program, rather than clarifying the mission of the church.

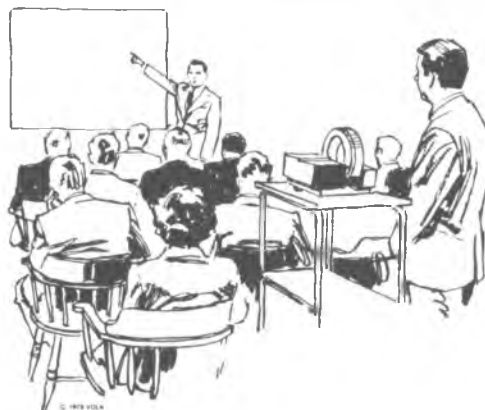
So the task became to agree on three objectives. Again the board divided into small groups. They talked. Statements were evaluated, some eliminated. It was difficult—only three objectives per group.

The pastor explained the process, "I took the agreed-on statements from each of the small groups. I set one day aside to pray over them. They all had agreed on six basic areas. I rewrote them. I reduced them to five objectives."

During all these processes the work of the church board was kept before the people. In the morning worship services people prayed for the board. In the newsletter the church attenders were informed as to the progress.

At the fall church board retreat, the pastor presented the five statements. Board members and their spouses read them. They revised one objective, then adopted the objectives. "We had agreed on what God wanted us to do!"

After establishing the primary tasks of the local church, the *next step is to set specific goals* or mea-



suring devices for achieving the overall objectives. Goals provide evaluative tools for the church.

The church and its work in the spiritual realm is not above critique or beyond evaluation. It has been said that many things cannot be measured, such as love or spiritual growth. There is truth and also fallacy in that opinion. While there may not be objective yardsticks that can be stood up alongside a person, still there are means by which an observer can make quantitative assessments. For example, an adoring husband may whisper to his wife, "I love you more than ever before." He has determined that his love has increased. Christians are heard to say, "I am growing in my relationship with God." We may easily make such observations about recent converts. They begin to assume the ethical principles of Christ. They straighten out wrongs from their past. They testify to telling the truth where before they would have lied to be spared the consequences or embarrassment. These remarks verify the responsibility of determining qualitative gains.

When results are agreed upon, people have the capability to decide if they reached, surpassed, or fell short of their objectives. It is possible to dovetail the twofold nature of the church: one foot in heaven and the other on earth. Both divine mandates and human goals can be achieved through heavenly enabling and manly endeavor. For example, the Bible makes it clear: God desires to see His Church grow and its members mature through service. He attempts to meet human needs, while at the same time He wants His adherents to increase. He has made mankind so that personal fulfillment is possible along with the accomplishment of divine purposes.

How do goals work in the church?

Objective or mission statements answer why we do things. Goals tell us what to do and by what time. Plans, on the other hand, define how things get done. Therefore, let us set some goals:

- To begin a new Sunday School class for young adults the week after Easter.
- To get Bill and Sallie Franklin attending three Sundays out of the month by October.

1. What is the difference between goals and objectives? Goals are measurable quantities, e.g., "to add three people to a Sunday School class enrollment." Objectives are overall purposes, e.g., "to grow our church numerically and spiritually."

- To make two prospective membership calls per week for 45 weeks this year.
- To improve the fellowship climate by the end of the church year so that members and regular attenders are regularly expressing appreciation for their church.

Obviously, plans are necessary so that goals can be met. To begin a new Sunday School class requires at least a teacher, a nucleus of members, and a prospect list. All goals must translate into work. People are recruited, job assignments are agreed upon, target dates are calendarized. Plans are made up of just such mundane and essential ingredients.

What kinds of obstacles will I face as I lead my church toward goal setting?

People may feel the process of establishing measurable goals to be excessively painful. Differences of opinion will arise. People will defend their pet interests and oppose any ideas that may alter their security. All input is to be cherished and encouraged. People in the church may want more to be heard than heeded in the goal-setting process.

Others will fear the obvious attempts to produce change. Goals require that people stretch, accommodate, and modify their comfortable patterns of behavior. Change in the church never comes cheaply. People will resist.

People feel that writing down future goals somehow minimizes the value of present positive experiences. Others feel that goal setting is an indictment upon the past ministries. They see the past as successful, while any statement regarding the future seems to diminish the sacred past. Whenever possible, goals should be projected as an extension of the present and the past.

Goals can be viewed with suspect because some say management techniques and spirituality should never mix. Those who advance this objection, or some form of it, may be wishing the church would operate on a spontaneous and emotive basis. Some would fear God would be boxed in and thus hampered from working freely, especially if organization appears to be too tight.

With these possible dangers should I still try to set goals?

The advantages of goal setting far outweigh the po-

tential pitfalls. When goals are established, people pull together. Harmony and unity surface. Morale climbs. The congregation grows in self-esteem. The church acquires a special identity. Performance improves. Achievements are made. Successes can be celebrated. Leadership pulls together in the same direction. Clarifying goals maximizes the strengths of the church.

A man in my congregation came to give me some unsought advice. He said, "I would do everything you are doing plus . . ." and he mentioned his special interest. I responded, "I believe your interest is very important. Our church needs your involvement, but that cannot be a priority for me." While he pushed his point, I could smile with confidence since the church leadership and I had hammered out the most essential matters. And I engaged myself wholeheartedly in achieving those agreed-upon purposes.


As the church board where I pastored was tediously working their way through a statement of purpose and goal setting, I asked myself, "Should I take the time this process requires?" After all, the Sunday School attendance had declined an average of 61 people in the three previous years. That meant over 100 people had already been lost.

Another question crept from my belt to my brain: "What if these people come up with the 'wrong' goals?" Then I realized I was really saying, "What if they disagree with my hopes?"

A further doubt came to mind, "Suppose after taking all this precious time, they won't pay the price to see these dreams fulfilled?"

Patience arrived in answer to my prayer. Courage visited me occasionally. The painful procedure proved productive. For example, one goal, doubling the worship service attendance, was achieved 15 months ahead of schedule!

Gains are made with goals.

When a pastor joins with his church leaders to agree upon God's direction for the local church, God is free to work mightily among them. The very process of coming to agreement strengthens the working relationship between a pastor and his people. Goals and plans are potential spiritual victories. As goals are reached through purposeful planning, the church celebrates the joy of accomplishment. God delights in His people working together productively. 

PERSONAL GROWTH


(Continued from page 29)

tality is, "We are about as big as we will ever be in this community."

Pastoring isn't a duty to Rev. Adams. He has a genuine interest in people. "I don't think of the ministry as a profession," he says, "it is a calling. It is something that I want to do and something that I have to do."

A part of the reason for Pastor Adam's long tenure is explained in his church directory: "The St. Louis Church of the Nazarene in a community church in spirit, who welcomes all to

love, worship, and fellowship with us in the Spirit of Jesus Christ. We are a community, a part of a large community (the Church), dwelling, loving, serving in a wonderful community, Gratiot County, Michigan."

Pastor Adams has committed himself to pastoring more than a group that meets at the church address. He senses a divine commission to pastor a parish. As a result he has earned a place among the leaders of his town. He accepted a commitment not merely to 73 Nazarenes, but to 12,000 people (in my county). That is a challenge big enough for any pastor of a small church. With such a vision kept alive, the pastor grows and the church follows. 

Nazarene

UPDATE

UPDATE EDITOR, NINA BEEGLE, PASTORAL MINISTRIES

A SMALL CHURCH CAN BE EXCITING

Shortly after graduating from Trevecca Nazarene College in 1961, Bob Mitchell became pastor of the Erin church on the Tennessee District. One of two Nazarene churches in a county of 8,000 population, Erin had a congregation of 46 members with a Sunday School average of 36. That year \$3,300 was raised for all purposes by Erin Nazarenes.

Twenty-two years later Bob Mitchell reports a membership of 172, a Sunday School averaging 123, and a morning worship attendance of 155 for the year. In 1982-83 church giving reached an all-time high of \$100,000!

Erin church was organized as an independent holiness congregation in 1898. In 1906 it affiliated with J. O. McClurkan's Nashville-based Pentecostal Mission and in 1911 it voted to become a Nazarene church. That year General Superintendent Phineas F. Bresee conducted the Clarksville district assembly at Erin, returning in 1913 for another memorable assembly that old-timers still talk about.



by General Superintendent
William M. Greathouse

For almost 80 years Erin was a "good" small church, faithfully supporting the denominational interests but hovering in the 40s, 50s, and 60s in membership and attendance.

Then it happened, in 1978. Pastor Mitchell was gripped, as he puts it, with "a vital concern." Challenging his people to accept as their mandate the words of Jesus, "As the Father hath sent me, so send I you," Mitchell was able to communicate to the church a new sense of mission. The congregation, practically to a person, committed themselves to a ministry of prayer, community visitation, and joyful giving. Every fifth Sunday became Family Evangelism Sunday with a slogan, "Every Family Bring a Family." In four years 14 new families have been brought into the fold. And each fall homecoming day is Home Missions Sunday.

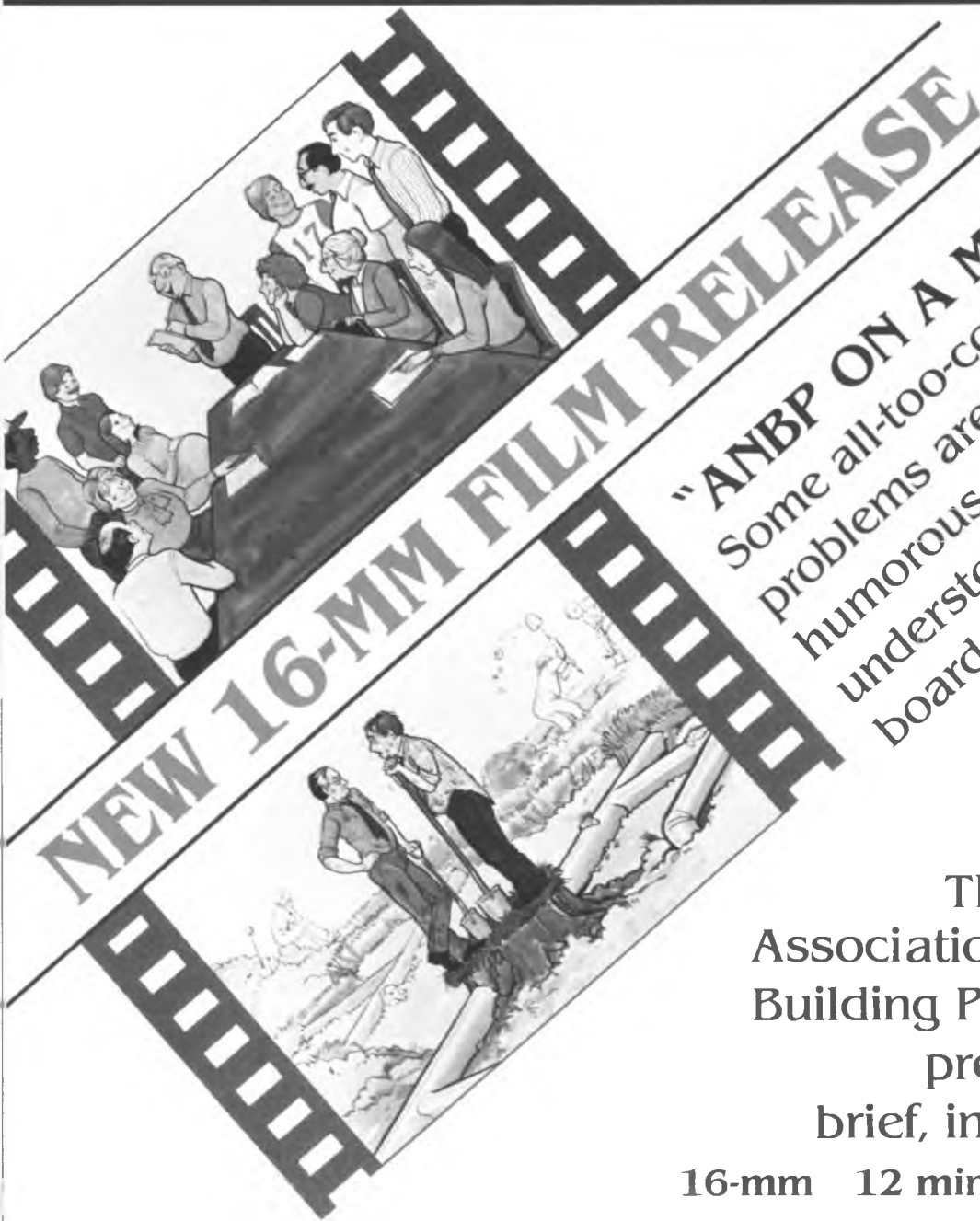
As property and building expansion became inevitable in 1979, pastor and people entered into a compact to (1) raise all monies for future expansion "up front," affirming that God could help them raise the cash as easily as to pay off a mortgage and (2) invest \$1.00 in home missions for every dollar spent on capital improvements.

With new Nazarenes being added each year (34 in 1979, 24 in 1980, 24 in 1981, 16 in 1982, and 20 in 1983) a Sunday School annex was built, the sanctuary was refurbished and enlarged, and parking lots were added to accommodate the growth. Meanwhile they gave \$14,000 in 1981 for the new church in Savannah and \$15,200 in 1982 to the Black inner-city congregation in Memphis.

As their seventy-fifth anniversary gift to the denomination, Erin Nazarenes have assumed full responsibility for starting a new church in Pulaski and to this end have pledged \$50,000 to be paid by the 1984 Tennessee district assembly!

When I asked Bob Mitchell his secret he said, "Staying has no substitute!" Can you blame him for planning to retire from Erin?

Who says a small church can't be exciting?



"ANBP ON A MISSION"
Some all-too-common building problems are dealt with in a humorous manner, easily understood by church boards and planners.



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A newspaper for church leaders who want to keep up with the growing edge.

It's a bimonthly tabloid containing stories of events great and small, and of people well-known and heretofore largely unknown. It's the story of what's happening on the church planting scene; the ethnic/urban mission scene; the church building scene.

It gives helpful information about trends in population movements and demographics. It informs you of new developments on the local, district, and general church scene. Editorials; graphs; pictures; human interest stories make up the pages of *Mission ALERT*.

WHO RECEIVES *MISSION ALERT*?

It is presently sent to all Nazarene pastors, local NWMS presidents, district superintendents, evangelists, and members of District Advisory Boards, Home Mission Boards, and Boards of Church Properties.

Names can be added to the mailing list by special request to the office of Church Extension Ministries. Copies in quantity may be requested.

A growing number of denominational leaders outside the Church of the Nazarene have requested copies of *Mission ALERT*.

HOW CAN *MISSION ALERT* BE USED?

Pastors can distribute it to all key leaders in the church.

Missionary presidents can use it as a home missions resource for study and promotion at missionary meetings.

District superintendents and members of district boards can use it as a motivational aid and informational piece in planning new church planting.

Every Nazarene will enjoy reading the stories of what is happening across the U.S.A. and Canada in churches large and small, new and old.



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OFFERING**

Sunday, January 29, 1984

MORE EFFECTIVE

COMMUNITY RELATIONS

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

“Every church is involved in Community Relations . . . good, or bad.”

For good community relations we need to recognize the five basic steps in applied community relations (as outlined by Wilbur J. Peak, *Lesly's Public Relations Handbook*).

STEP 1: PLANNING

- Both church and community should see tangible results from a community relations program.
- In planning any kind of action, avoid anything that might be taken as condescending.



STEP 2: ORGANIZATION

- Organization begins at the top, but it need not stay there. Spread the participation around.
- Determine assignments.
- The nature of the program should suggest what formal structure it requires.
- Under no circumstances should a person in charge turn away from a program or its committees. He or she remains the essential catalyst for the program's success.



STEP 3: ACTION

- Community Relations is action oriented
- Criteria for activities:
 - creating something needed that didn't exist before.
 - eliminating something that causes a problem.



- developing means for self-determination.
- broadening use of something that exists to include the “have nots.”
- tutoring, counseling, training.
- sharing equipment, facilities, professional services.
- reconstituting, repairing, dressing-up.
- promotion of a community outside its confines.
- activating others.



STEP 4: COMMUNICATION

- In community relations, publicity and promotion are tools in support of an action program, not substitutes for it.
- A simple test for written communication used in programs is: Is the program being described one that readers/viewers can react favorably to without additional prompting? In short, does the program stand on its own two feet?
- Recognition for community relations work is not only desirable for a church but for the community itself. It shows that something can be and is being done for the community. It may encourage others to participate.



STEP 5: EVALUATION

- Surveys before and after help to determine the nature and effectiveness of your program's influence.
- Evaluation interprets the data and records you have collected and draws lessons, conclusions, and new courses of action from them.
- Identify weak spots and note what changes might have strengthened them. Do this while the program is fresh in your mind.

“Remember . . . no matter what size the congregation, it’s the little things that can and do add up to something big for God and His kingdom.”

Is There Hidden Giving Power in Your Church?

Seated in YOUR congregation on any Sunday morning may be "hidden giving power," people whose giveable assets are unknown even to them . . . because they think only in terms of cash gifts. But they actually can give more, can give through plans which provide them with additional income, plans which help them make use of government-approved tax benefits, plans that can solve their money management worries, and plans that can bring lifetime satisfaction as they have a greater part in helping fulfill the Great Commission. It can all happen through the HORIZONS Planned Giving Programs, helping congregations discover their own giving power.

Hidden Planned Givers may be . . .

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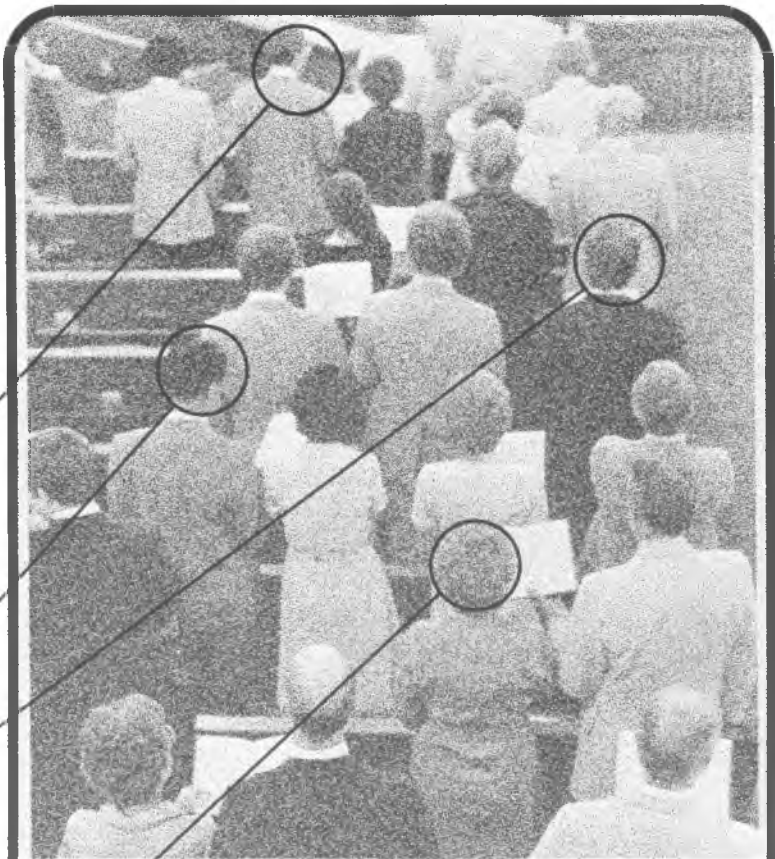
people who have few if any heirs, who need to know God can use their resources to enlarge their heavenly family ●

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horizons
INVESTORS

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Kansas City, MO 64131

IN CANADA:
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Executive Board
P.O. Box 30080, Station "B"
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T2M 4N7



horizons **PLANNED GIVING PROGRAMS**

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THE PREACHER'S MAGAZINE

The editorial advisory board for this issue of the *Preacher's Magazine* is comprised of members of the Association of Nazarene Sociologists in Religion (ANSR) who were assembled in Kansas City for their second annual meeting at the time this issue was in the planning stage. The editorial team "cashed in" on the research they conducted this year in preparation for writing the book *The Smaller Church*, being released for our 75th anniversary celebration.

The astute counsel of the ANSR has given direction for what we hope will make this edition on "The Small Church" a relevant and viable offering.



WESLEY TRACY
Editor
The Preacher's Magazine



NINA BEEGLE
Assistant Editor
The Preacher's Magazine



The editorial advisory board from left to right:
Dale Jones (statistician), Bill M. Sullivan (director of Evangelism Ministries), Kenneth Crow, Ron Benefiel, Dick Stellway (seated), Jon Johnston, and Charles Gailey.
Not pictured: John Hawthorne, Harold Curl.

Future issues of the magazine will feature:

- Missions
- Evangelism
- The Minister's Wife
- Volunteerism

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KEYNOTE SPEAKER AT ALL CONFERENCES

of a SM CONFERENCES

- 1. Evangelism and the Bible
- 2. Dynamics of Discipling
- 3. Evangelizing Through Our "Extended Families"
- 4. Evangelism Possibilities for the Small Church (0-100 members)

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Don Wellman
Jerry Lambert
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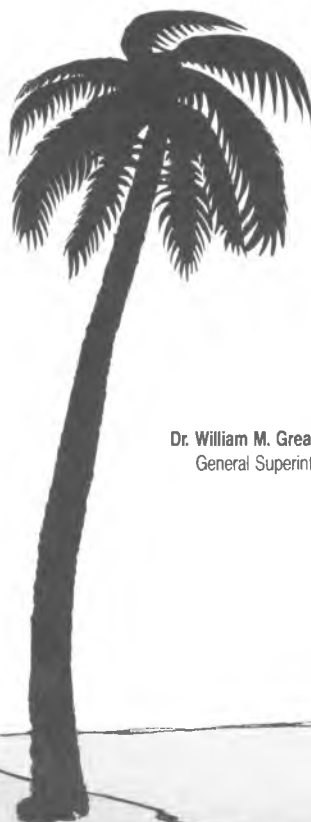
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Dr. Charles H. Strickland
General Superintendent



- 1. How to Make an Altar Call and Counsel Seekers
- 2. How to Plan and Conduct the Evangelistic Service
- 3. How to Plan for Revival in the Local Church
- 4. How to Train the Laity for Personal Evangelism
- 5. How to Use Church Growth Concepts for Evangelism
- 6. How to Use Music in the Evangelistic Service
- 7. How Self-esteem Affects Personal Witnessing
- 8. Discipleship: The Goal of Evangelism
- 9. Bible Exposition on Conference Themes
- 10. Pensions and Benefits Services Workshop
- 11. Conserving the Converts
- 12. The Church Planter: A Functional Apostle in New Works Evangelism
- 13. How to Start New Works in a Non-English-Speaking Culture
- 14. The Family: A Fertile Field for Evangelism
- 15. Evangelism Through Home Bible Studies
- 16. Ideas for Evangelism in the Local Church
- 17. Multiplying New Works Among English-Speaking Ethnic
- 18. A Thousand New Works Through Local Mission Action
- 19. The Role of the Associate Minister in Public Evangelism
- 20. Evangelism in the Medium Size Church (101-250)
- 21. Evangelism in the Large Church (251 and up)
- 22. Videonet: A Bold Step Toward Innovative Communication
- 23. The Role of the Associate Minister in Personal Evangelism
- 24. Evangelism Through Children's Ministries
- 25. Evangelism Through Adult Ministries
- 26. Evangelism Through Youth Ministries
- 27. Evangelism Through Sunday School Outreach
- 28. Buildings That Help Us Evangelize



Dr. William M. Greathouse
General Superintendent





THE SHEPHERD'S LIFE

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

LEADERSHIP • INSPIRATION • FULFILLMENT • ENRICHMENT

WHY SHOULD I BE INVOLVED IN CONTINUING EDUCATION?

In a recent meeting of the Society for the Advancement of Continuing Education for Ministry (SACEM), Dr. Martin Marty told of the struggle his church board had over allowing their pastor to do advanced studies. The reaction of many was, "We like our pastor the way he is; why does he need more school?"

A member of the board, an anesthesiologist, replied, "Our pastor graduated from theological school the same year I finished medical school. If I treated you only with what I learned in medical school, you'd die!"

Marty's illustration is a poignant example of a sobering fact: the man or woman who relies on formal education for a lifetime of professional excellence will inevitably fall short before retirement. As the minister grows older, the need for maintaining freshness becomes more acute. The last 20 years of ministry, instead of being the most productive are often the most despairing for the man who has not stayed current professionally.

It has been my observation that many receive excellent formal training and have enough knowledge and charisma to get by for a while; but inevitably youthful vigor is sapped and others with up-to-date preparation move in to take places of leadership.

This need not be so! Phillips Brooks says, "The noblest ministers in the church are those older men who have kept the

freshness of their youth." The wisdom of the years and current preparation are an appealing combination.

Continuing education for the minister occurs following college, seminary, and ordination. It won't guarantee a bigger, better church, but it will assure a more productive ministry where he is.

Every minister needs to be involved in an intentional continuing education program. The intentionality is motivated by a commitment to improve a weakness, to understand trends, and by a desire to stay a "step ahead." In unintentional efforts the motivation is often to simply plug a gap or "keep one's head above water."

Your involvement may take the form of work toward an advanced degree, but that isn't always the case. Nonacademic education often enables one to explore a broader range of categories than a specified degree program. The important issue is involvement that inspires personal and professional growth.

A good place to start is with needs assessment. There are certain agencies that assist ministers in this task from a scientific standpoint; but simply attacking felt needs is a good starting point.

Pastoral Ministries can help. We have information pieces to aid pastors and church boards. We are committed to helping our pastors be successful in their life's calling. □



VideoNet
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VIDEONET is the newest, most up-to-date means of communication from the Office of Pastoral Ministries to pastors. It is a 60-minute videotape, full of ideas, suggestions, information, and possible answers to needs being felt by those on the "front lines." VIDEONET will be an idea starter and a training tool for pastors.

VIDEONET is "information through demonstration." Programs center not only on "telling" but also "showing" in creative ways poignant truths about today's church.

VIDEONET premieres on September 15. Both Beta and VHS programs are

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"Greeters and Ushers"

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"Personal Grooming for the Pastor"

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A RATIONALE FOR A COUNSELOR NETWORK FOR MINISTERS

Pastoral Ministries serves in the Division of Church Growth for a reason. It was purposefully and providentially placed there by the Commission on Restructure, taking the place of the former Department of Education and Ministry.

An essential element in the profile of a Nazarene minister includes the responsibility to "do the work of an evangelist" (2 Timothy 4:5). There is little else a pastor can do in fulfilling his ministry unless there is first a love for Christ so supreme that he is moved to persuade persons to believe in Christ. The evangelistic motive must be at the heart of the pastor's commitment to lead his church to make a redemptive impact on the surrounding community. He who loves his people sufficiently will involve them in accomplishing their Christian mission. Love yearns for the best in others and finds ways to help them express it in the best possible ways.

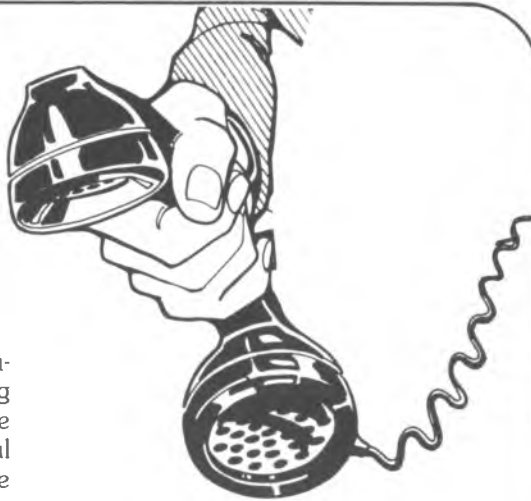
Pastoral Ministries is committed to mission. The tension between mission and maintenance is real and must be creative. The church can be involved in a maintenance ministry without growing, but a church cannot continue its growth without maintenance. For a local church to

stay alive it must have a strong educational program and an inspiring music ministry. New converts will be nurtured in their faith by the careful instruction of the church and will be lifted Godward in new experiences of worship through inspiring music. Obviously, there are other important ministries that support the evangelistic mission as well.

Pastoral Ministries is also interested in supporting the church's ministers. Morale among our ministers is one of the most important issues we must address if the mission is to be carried out effectively. One of the directions we are taking in this regard is the development of a pilot project to see what effect confidential counseling services will have on our ministers and their families. Admittedly, this is a maintenance ministry, but at the same time the issue of morale is directly related to church growth. If a minister can feel good about himself, his ministry, and his church, he will be better able to lead his church in a growing mode than if he is frustrated with unresolved issues because he feels he has no one he can turn to.

Two areas have been chosen in which to develop models. Tremendous support has come from both pastors and district superintendents. The effort was initiated by the Board of General Superintendents and the Department of Church Growth of the General Board approved model formation. This gen-

LET'S COMMUNICATE!



eral approval expresses a desire to effectively meet the needs of our ministers and their families.

The idea of using a toll-free "800" number is receiving wide acceptance. This gives immediate access to a listening and caring person. If anonymity is desired, the person calling will not have to give his or her name. The professional on the other end of the line will be skilled in referring the caller to the appropriate resource, if necessary. Confidentiality is guaranteed and this priority cannot be compromised under any circumstances. A coordinating committee is entrusted with identifying personnel resources and making their availability known with their credentials and professional background.

The various services inherent in this project are being limited to these two areas for one year. After a complete evaluation is made, recommendations will be offered to the Board of General Superintendents and the Department of Church Growth for any follow-up strategy that is feasible.

Please pray for us as we embark on this new ministry to ministers. The needs are there. To find an effective way to meet those needs is our objective. The church really does care! Pastor, you are our greatest asset . . . and God's, too. It is a privilege to be a minister of the gospel of the grace of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, and to offer it to one another. □



The **PASTORAL CLINIC** on pages 48-49 of this issue contains material that can be the basis for discussion between two or more pastors. Let this be a "jumping off place" for intimate sharing and praying together. □

"PASTORAL MINISTRIES TO OFFER WORKSHOPS AT EVANGELISM CONFERENCES"

Pastoral Ministries will be taking an active role in the upcoming Evangelism Conferences.

Rev. Keith Wright of Kansas City First Church of the Nazarene will be leading two workshops titled "The Role of the Associate Minister in Public Evangelism."

Rev. Wright served San Diego First and Bethany First churches as associate minister for 10 years before becoming a senior pastor.

Pastoral Ministries Coordinator David Wilson will present a workshop titled "VIDEO-NET: A Bold Step Toward Innovative Communication." The workshop is geared toward introducing a new method of continuing education to pastors via video. □

REVISED EDITION OF HANDBOOK ON THE MINISTRY NOW AVAILABLE!!

If you are involved in DIRECTED STUDY (formerly known as the Home Study Course) for ministerial training or if you are on the District Board of Ministerial Studies, you will want to secure a copy of the Revised Edition of the HANDBOOK ON THE MINISTRY. Obtain yours by writing to the Nazarene Publishing House today!

OOPS!! In the new updated Deaconess program a reading book has been omitted. Be sure and read THE KNEELING CHRISTIAN by an unknown Christian. This is found in year one, course No. 512a. □

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

1983-84—The Year of the Diamond Jubilee

December, January, February

January 3-5, 1984

January 17-19, 1984

January 24-26, 1984

February 20-24, 1984

SUMMER, 1984

May 28—June 1, 1984

"How to Live a Holy Life" Enduring Word Series
Sunday School Lessons

Conference on Evangelism—Phoenix

Conference on Evangelism—Fort Worth

Conference on Evangelism—Tampa

NIROGA, Florida

WILCON II, College Campuses

NIROGA, California

1984-85—The Year of Church growth

Goal—75,000 New Nazarenes

August 27—September 2, 1984

September 10-15, 1984

September 17-21, 1984

October 1-5, 1984

October 1984

February 18-22, 1985

June 20-22, 1985

June 23-28, 1985

August 26—September 1, 1985

September 9-14, 1985

September 16-20, 1985

September 30—October 4, 1985

October 14-18, 1985

Youth Week

NIROGA, Glorieta, New Mexico

NIROGA, Ridgecrest, North Carolina

NIROGA, Adirondacks

European Military Personnel Retreat

NIROGA, Florida

General Conventions, Anaheim

General Assembly, Anaheim

Youth Week

NIROGA, Glorieta, New Mexico

NIROGA, Ridgecrest, North Carolina

NIROGA, Adirondacks

NIROGA, Canadian Rockies



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

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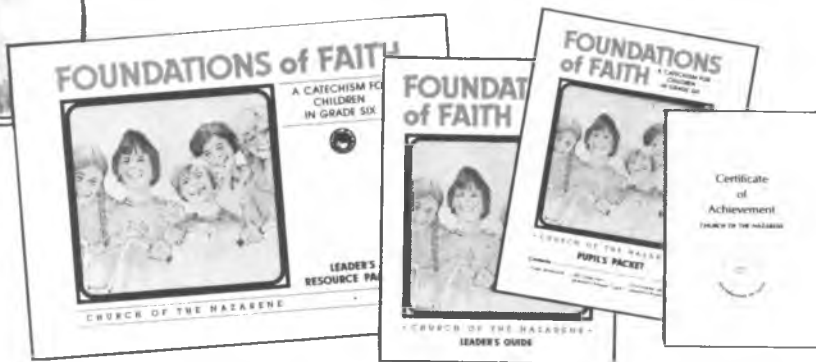
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Notes on the Relationship of the Small-church Pastor and Denominational Leaders

by Bill Sullivan and David Holtz

What can be said about the relationship of the pastor of a smaller church to denominational leaders? There certainly is a relationship. We hear, see, and feel the implications of it. A relationship implies "connection" or "state of affairs existing between two parties."

Fundamental to this relationship is *our common commitment to the church* through which we serve Jesus. Our assignments differ, and both pastor and leader need to be comfortable with their respective positions of service.

Certainly *doctrinal fidelity* is a settled issue. Neither of us can function with a theology that has not become real to us. We must be confident that our theology grows out of our commitment to the Bible as the Word of God and that it is reflective of our present Spirit-directed understanding.

The denominational leader needs to be assured that pastors *function within the perimeter of its governmental structure*. Our organization, at each of its levels, is open to innovation. We have much room for creativity, but until such time as individual ideas are adopted by the General Assembly, denominational leaders will rightly expect our loyalty in governmental matters.

At the local, district, and denominational levels, *ethical conformity becomes a portion of the cement that holds us all together*. We have high expectations of one another, and rightly so. Ethical conformity helps us develop a working relationship and enables us to remain focused toward our common objective.

What are some of the expectations the pastor of a smaller church has of his denominational leaders?

We expect *leadership*. It is frustrating to flounder. It is comforting to have someone we can look to with

confidence when we find ourselves in unfamiliar waters.

John Wimber had defined a leader as an individual who has people following him. We respond to leaders who captivate our interest. We are motivated by those leaders who sit down beside us and let us know that they believe in us and that the sun will rise tomorrow, and assure us that we will greet the morning together. Because the vast majority of our churches are small in size and possess minimal resources, we expect from our denomination a variety of services. At the denominational level we accomplish major projects such as publications, advertising, developing promotional programs, pension plans, clergy placement, etc. To some degree we can be involved through our active participation in various councils and committees, but basically we look to denominational organizations for resources and leadership in these areas.

Similarly, the prayer power and financial support of smaller churches helps undergird the denomination in providing *joint ministries*. The smaller church looks to the denomination to facilitate the impacting of world mission areas for Christ by aggressive evangelism, compassionate ministries, and the development and sustaining of educational institutions.

We appreciate the *identity* that our denomination makes possible for us. It is vital to our need for belonging and to our self-esteem that we have a niche to fit into. It is especially important that we possess this identity in the eyes of our communities. Denominational affiliation enables us to be more than just a church at Second and Hickory Streets. We can be a specific, particular church with a distinctive label.

Finally, as pastors of small


churches, we long for *understanding* from our denominational leaders.

We need to know that the particular setting, conditions, and circumstances our church faces are appreciated. Please don't expect us all to function the same. Some of us face internal conflicts that prohibit uniformity in achievement. The socioeconomic profile of the community, along with changing conditions such as unemployment and catastrophic events, affect the progress of our churches. Some of us face situations with limited leadership resources that must be considered as our ministry is evaluated.

Part of the understanding we need from our leaders is that they be *aware* of who we are, what we are about, where we want to go, and how we seek to achieve our dreams. We need to be able to count on their experience and insights as resources for ministry. But all of this requires a special sensitivity on their part.

The relationship between pastor and denominational leaders demands a considered investment of energy. But the results will be rewarding. Neither can reach the objectives alone. We are interdependent on each other.

Our relationship exists in the way we work together toward a common objective. This relationship is regulated by the expectations we hold for each other. As these expectations are satisfied, a mutual appreciation and harmonious atmosphere is generated. This feeds denominational morale which in turn produces energy for development and growth.

Pastors of smaller churches and denominational leaders should work together in such a way that God's kingdom can be built, the denomination developed, and pastors fulfilled in their personal ministry. 

PASTORAL CARE IN THE SMALL CHURCH

by Ben LeMaster

Pastor, First Church of the Nazarene, Santa Maria, Calif.

Even in the small church the pastor will find the demands for pastoral care to be many and varied. People victimized by divorce, alcohol, drugs, crime, and sexual perversion will find their way to his door. Of course, the more typical problems of senior citizens, young marrieds, and teens must be dealt with as well. New Christians must be nurtured, families in financial jams assisted, and the sick must be ministered unto. How shall this task be approached?

The Pastor's Attitude

The attitude of the pastor toward the challenge of pastoral care should be that of Christ. Jesus' attitude can be summarized with these three words: attention, acceptance, and affection.

Jesus was attentive to the needs of the people, as illustrated in Matt. 8:1-3 (TLB). The leper said to Jesus, "If you want to, you can heal me." Jesus' answer was "I want to." This is the attitude of God—I want to help you. It is imperative that our attitude be the same.

Jesus demonstrated acceptance not of the sin, but always of the sinner. When the young woman was caught in the act of adultery, He silenced the crowd, who would have stoned her to death, when He asked the one without sin to throw the first stone, John 8:7. To the girl He said, "I don't condemn you either; don't do this anymore" (v. 11, paraphrased). We must accept people as Jesus did; not their sin, but as persons with great potential and value.

The word *affection* is really the heart attitude of love. Jesus demonstrated this by the love He continually showed to the individuals whose lives were shattered and could be healed by His love. We too can love the people whose lives are shattered by demonstrating both by word and deed our love for them.

We must never demonstrate attitudes from the pulpit or in private that are not in accord with those of Jesus. A pastor's mind must be guarded diligently against negative attitudes. There is nothing more devastating to a church than negative attitudes from the pastor.

The Pastor's Communication Skills

Regarding the pastor's communication, two areas are important. One is in interpersonal relationships. We must be sincere and honest in our interpersonal relationships. People are aware when there is even a shade of the opposite in the pastor's demeanor. They are aware, also, of any disinterest in what they are trying to communicate. The other area of importance is preaching. We, as a church, have our doctrine, our theology, and our creeds, and our people should know them; however, the main focus of a pastor's preaching ministry should be on the needs and problems of his congregation.

When a man's wife is ill, or his son is on drugs, or his daughter is a lesbian, creeds or theology or doctrine, unless clearly interpreted, are not enough to sustain him. He needs the supporting promises of God like those found in Isa. 41:10: "Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness"; and Prov. 3:5-6: "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths." The Bible, being more than a book, communicates the eternal promises of God to help us.

A Bible-oriented preacher speaks with authority because he is speaking what God said. Jesus said,


"Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away" (Matt. 24:35). Since they will not pass away, that makes them eternal, and God is "watching over [His] word to perform it" (Jer. 1:12b, RSV). The most important factor in our preaching is to make the Bible real and alive to the people in the pews. For this to be done, the preacher should never doubt the Word of God. He must believe it with all his heart!

The Pastor's Availability

The pastor must be available. It is easy, if we allow it, to get frustrated with the magnitude of pastoral demands. Some guidelines can be very helpful in keeping a proper balance between ministering effectively, and a ministry of frustration.

Daily physical needs should be given proper priority: (1) sufficient rest and physical exercise; (2) a well-balanced diet; (3) exercise according to your age and needs; (4) a day off consistently; and (5) a hobby that is restful and does not consume your energies. Of highest priority are the pastor's daily spiritual needs. I would say the Number One priority is: Read your Bible to feed your own mind and heart. Secondly, have a purposeful prayer time. Thirdly, read good books.

I know it is not a simple task to find time for prayer, Bible reading, study, and at the same time to be available for every request. Prioritizing is a key function. You don't have to umpire the church softball game, but you do have to be available if someone has a wreck or cancer. If your people can never find you in their times of stress, you will miss your greatest opportunities.

These three factors are important: (1) have a positive attitude; (2) communicate the Word of God; and (3) be available. 

SHOULD PASTORAL DEMANDS CHANGE WITH THE TIMES?

by J. K. Warrick

*Pastor, Springdale Church of the Nazarene
Cincinnati*

When we speak of the pastoral ministry, our minds tend to run in many directions. How we, or members of our constituency, perceive the ministry provides the mind-set out of which we minister. These perceptions seem to be forever changing.

The following advertisement appeared in the June 16, 1875, issue of the *Milwaukee Sentinel*:

WANTED—A rector for St. James' Church, Milwaukee, Wisconsin. He must possess all Christian graces and a few worldly ones; must have such tact and disposition as will enable him to side with all parties in the parish on all points, giving offense to none; should possess a will of his own, but agree with all the vestry; must be socially inclined and of dignified manners—affable to all, neither running after the wealthy nor turning his back upon the poor; a man of high-low church tendencies preferred.

Must be willing to preach first-class sermons and do first-class work at second-class compensation—salary should not be so much of an object as the desire to be a zealous laborer in the vineyard; should be able to convince all that they are miserable sinners without giving offense.

Each sermon must be short, but complete in

itself—full of old-fashioned theology in modern dress—deep, but polished, and free from the eloquence peculiar to newly graduated theologians; should be young enough to be enthusiastic, but possess judgment of one of ripe years and experience.

He only who possesses the above qualifications need apply. To such a one will be given steady employment for a term of years.¹

**Who is this suave “executive”
dubbed minister, charged with the
congregation’s gross national prod-
uct?**

Word has not reached us as to their success in finding a pastor!

Francis Buechner adds to our confusion with these three views of a minister:

1. A minister is a nice guy. He'll take a drink if you offer him one, and when it comes to racy stories, he

can tell a few right along with the best of them. He preaches a good sermon, but he's not one of these religious fanatics who thinks he's got to say a prayer every time he pays a call. When it comes to raising money, he's nobody's fool and has all the rich, old ladies eating out of his hand. He has bridged the generation gap by introducing things like a rock group at the eleven o'clock service and what he calls rap sessions on subjects like drugs and sex instead of Sunday School. At the same time he admits privately that though the kids have a lot going for them, he wishes they'd cut their hair. He's big on things like civil rights, peace, and encounter groups. He sends his children to private school. He makes people feel comfortable in his presence by showing them that he's got his feet on the ground like everybody else. He reassures them that religion is something you should take seriously but not go overboard with.

2. **A minister has his head in the clouds** which is just where a man should have it whose mind is on higher things. His morals are unimpeachable, and if you should ever happen to use bad language in his presence, you apologize. He has a lovely sense of humor and gets a kick out of it every time you ask him if he can't do something about all this rainy weather we've been having. He keeps things like sex, politics, race, and alcoholism out of his sermons. His specialty is religion, and he's wise enough to leave other

matters to people who know what they're talking about.

3. **A minister is as much an anachronism** as an alchemist or chimney sweep. Like Tiffany glass or the Queen of England, he is a camp figure whose function is primarily decorative. Although their various perspectives are admittedly limited, Maharishis, Communists, atheists, homosexuals, drug addicts, and the like are all to be listened to for their special insights. The perspective of the minister, on the other hand, is so hopelessly distorted and biased that there is no point in listening to them unless you happen to share it.²

If this were not enough, G. Curtis Jones adds more fuel to the fire.

An influential layman said of his former minister, Burt's trouble was he would not make up his mind between being a professional golfer or a preacher.

Who is this suave "executive" dubbed minister charged with the congregation's gross national product?

Who is this "mousy occupant of the manse" whose long face, thin neck, and clericals silhouette him servant of God's church, or who is his more aggressive counterpart clad in jeans, boots, leather jacket, with flowing mane and crash helmet, poised on a motorcycle?

(Continued on page 53)

H. Armstrong Roberts



The empty seats in the sanctuary were a constant reminder of what had happened.

PASTORING A WOUNDED CHURCH

Name Withheld

Without warning or announcement, the church was thrown into turmoil as the pastor vacated the parsonage. His reason—to organize an independent church which would be meeting less than four miles away. Approximately half the congregation followed him.

Eight weeks later I arrived on the scene to pastor the remaining wounded members. I had no idea at that early beginning just how deep the hurt had gone. I was sitting across the table from a promising young man of the church who had been very active in outreach ministry. I struggled to hear his comment in the din of a noisy restaurant. "I'm sorry, I didn't catch your last comment," I remarked.

"Oh," he replied with a somewhat distant look on his face, "I just said, 'I liked **him**, too.'"

He went on to tell me how much he had loved the former pastor. I could tell that the young man had all but given up on his church, pastors in general, and yes, possibly even God. What gripped me was the fact that he was voicing the feelings and sentiments of a large portion of this wounded congregation.

I readily got involved in what I hoped would be the immediate rebuilding of a church that had, literally overnight, dropped from nearly 1,000 in attendance to about 450. In all my years of pastoral ministry, I had never been challenged like this. I began to assess the damage, to take inventory of who remained, and to see what was available to work with. I did not doubt for a moment that God had led me there, but I never imagined the adjustments that my wounded church would require.

The congregation was affected in several ways. **Emotionally**, there was hurt and disappointment over the loss of their pastor. Feelings of anger, hatred, bitterness, and resentment were expressed. Some persons were poised to lash out at someone in retaliation. Grudges developed that would not easily disappear. All were aware of added responsibilities that would be placed upon them resulting in fatigue. Many would react negatively to unrelated situations which normally would not have bothered them.

Psychologically, the people were embarrassed. How can we ever recover? What will the neighbors think? It was difficult to explain such a tremendous decrease in attendance. How would it look in the district bulletin—which would circulate across the entire denomination.

The empty seats in the sanctuary were a constant reminder of what had happened—representative of the friends who had left. There was the unending question of why it had to happen. Needless to say, the people who remain following a church split suffer from the sad emptiness of the sanctuary on that first Sunday afterward. Be it 3 or 30 families, vacancies are left where once sat pillars of the church—board members, Sunday School teachers, bus pastors, choir members. Granted, this affects the congregation more than the new pastor, yet the knowledge of what used to be tends to be ever present. The psychological impact in this case would be felt for months and even years to come.

Financially, there was a tremendous loss—but the bills were the same. And yet, determination to overcome was exhibited.

Spiritually, the climate was very poor indeed. There was a lack of trust in each other and yet an amazing desire to be together. The lack of faith in the new pastor—any pastor—was obvious. The children and teens were confused; the adults were skeptical.

I am convinced that there are many ways a church can be hurt, but none seem so tragic as when the Body of Christ is torn in two by strong contrary persuasions. Whether the congregation is large or small, the dissection of the whole is as painful as the dismemberment of a physical body. It is only under the care of the most skilled surgeon that healing can begin. It also takes much patience during recovery to restore normal functioning.

So, calling upon the Great Physician and depending upon His guidance through recovery, we began to redirect the focus of the church. A wounded church can function only with renewed direction. It was vital that we start afresh and anew and go forward from the present, not from where they had been. Spiritual renewal was a must! It was important that we become people-oriented. We placed emphasis on the disciplined life, discipling, and other "body building" programs that would be at the heart of our new direction. We purposely moved away from being *numbers conscious* to being *people conscious*. I refrained from talking about the problem publicly, and when approached privately I tried to put it in the best possible light.

Because much of the congregational response was tempered to the way I was responding, I had to prepare

myself anew both emotionally and spiritually for every service. My preaching had to become a real pastoral message. I centered on a positive, biblically based message to challenge them to leave each service believing that the future was bright.

The wounded congregation cannot be pushed. Time must be allowed for people to recover from the trauma. I noticed during this time many of the people would react to a small issue as if it were a crisis. The pastor

Satan fiercely attacks the wounded and keeps attacking long after the major crisis is over.

must remain calm and show no promise of panic, no matter how critical an issue might seem. Satan fiercely attacks the wounded and keeps attacking long after the major crisis is over.

Thank God, the split brought out the best in many of the people. With newly directed ministries, and new families beginning to come into the church, healing began to take place. Many who had never been involved before began to get involved, and the past was receiving less and less attention. Emphasis was placed on missions; we have given more for missions than ever in the history of the church, including involvement in a Work and Witness project. The scars on the wounded congregation were beginning to heal, and the Body was functioning again!

There is no way of knowing how long this congregation will be affected by their crisis. Tragically, there are those who may be lost forever as the result of a church split. But in some ways, I believe the church will be stronger than ever. At times a cautious attitude comes through, yet there is a commitment to the task. The emotional level of the church improved rather quickly; psychologically, we will bear the scars longer. Financially, we have recovered totally and are stronger than ever before. Spiritually, God is working miracles! There is healing; people have gotten into Bible studies and discipling in a way that has given us greater depth than ever expected. We have helped to organize a Korean church; we've begun a Spanish ministry; and our "alive and well" congregation is growing every year. God has helped us to pick up the pieces and continue as a growing, New Testament church.

Recently, a young lady who has been attending our church for about two months asked me, "Pastor, do you know a church in this area that suffered a split recently?" She was shocked when I told her she was attending it. Praise God for healing and progress.

Wounds. We all experience them. Often they are self-inflicted and accompanied by guilt, yet often they result from unfortunate happenings, seemingly beyond our control. Nonetheless, we all bear the pain—that is an everyday occurrence in life. In the case of the wounded church, scars can become stepping-stones to greater days. I pray that no church ever has to go through an experience like ours, but I can assure you that the wounded church can live again—and love again!

HOW A SHEET I

I pastor a small congregation in northwest New Mexico. In accordance with our church policy we have a recall vote every year (to determine whether the people want me to stay or not). This vote is a yes or no vote, and this year it consisted of 27 votes yes and 1 no vote.

Personally, I felt like people weren't as honest and/or open with me about my ministry as they might be if they could write down comments and suggestions without my knowing who they were. Also, I wasn't satisfied with just a yes vote. I knew (and know) there was room for

PASTORAL EVALUATION

Please be thinking about the following questions, but wait to fill out this sheet until you are instructed to do so.

1. I would like to hear a message about _____.
2. I would like to hear more messages on the subject(s) of:
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
3. One problem (or weak point) I see in your ministry is: _____
4. Something that I'd like to see you and/or the church do differently is _____

5. Types of progress I would like to see this church make (in the next year to year and a half) include: _____

Ways I can help (in seeing this progress happen) are: _____

6. I have seen progress in the church within the last three to four years.

_____ yes _____ no

(If yes) The progress I've seen is: _____

7. Something that I appreciate about your ministry is: _____

Other comments: _____

PASTORAL EVALUATION IMPROVED MY MINISTRY

by David W. Waltner

Pastor, Church of the Nazarene, Aztec, N.M.

improvement; therefore I was prompted to make up a "Pastoral Evaluation Sheet" so I could get congregational feedback and know where *they* thought I could improve. I have attempted to develop my ministry accordingly.

I was pleasantly pleased (and at times surprised) as I read the congregation's responses, and I feel each response was beneficial.

I told the congregation I would not go around talking about their responses, and I haven't. But I am sharing the following with you in the hope that your ministry will benefit from a Pastoral Evaluation Sheet as mine has.

The Pastoral Evaluation Sheet consisted of seven questions as follows:

My questions

Answers from the congregation

My responses, or actions I implemented, or changes I made in my ministry.

I asked that the sheet be filled out following the sermon on the need for good communication between pastor and people. Here are the answers received:

1. I would like to hear a message about:

Answers: Hellfire and damnation

End times, Prophecy

Tribulation and the Second Coming

Sanctification

Heaven

You're doing very good on your sermons.

The Holy Spirit

Acts 10: cleansing

My Response: To say the least these answers gave me some preaching topics, and I have attempted to give attention to them as well as the responses to the second question.

2. I would like to hear more messages on the subject(s) of:

Answers: The day of judgment

How to accept and what to do about teen problems

If Christ were here today, what would His attitude be?

Moral questions facing teenagers and biblical answers

Faith

We all need messages on everything in the Bible.

Faith and the joy of Christianity

Guiding children with love

Problems of our day (sexual, moral)

Marriage (good ones)

What stand should we take as Christians on political issues?

Christ's love

What will heaven be like?

Love—faithfulness—the family and the church

What the Bible says about getting married

All your sermons are O.K. and good.

Faith and miracles

More sermons instead of talks—Bible based

Faith—love—what *God* expects (not man)

My Response: These are good ideas for topical sermons, and I've used many of them with good response from the people.

3. One problem (or weak point) I see in your ministry is:

Answers: Your ministry is a blessing . . . never heard a young man preach as well as you do . . . stay close to God.

A little shy—but experience will overcome that.

Too much criticism of the church . . . instead of lifting up the church as a whole.

Lack of communication with people . . . doing things without the people's or board's approval.

Never find you alone or time to discuss confidential problems.

Too much emphasis on what's wrong with the church . . . not enough positive leading.

Not sure of yourself . . . need to gain self-confidence.

My Response: I've tried to be more open with the people, sharing personal goals and hopes for the church. Also, I've let the people know of my availability for counseling and lately have had many counseling opportunities. I've tried to be positive without losing sight of what God wants the church to be (which often involved criticism for what we're not). We're also attempting to

I've tried to be positive without losing sight of what God wants the church to be (which often involves criticism for what we're not).

have each family in the church come to our home for Sunday dinner to get to know them better.

4. Something I'd like to see you and/or the church do differently is:

Answers: Close services with a hymn.
Have committee chairpersons for organization.
Keep enthusiastic attitudes.
Open services differently . . . stress missionary needs.
Spend money to improve what we have instead of building new buildings.
Continue doing things differently . . . so people will get out of their ruts.
Get people more involved with the church . . . have more things for people to do.
Take a more positive outlook.
We want and need real Bible study.
We need to change our attitudes about praising God.

My Response: I've tried to make the church services a vital worship experience for all who come. Also, we have more detailed organization in the church structure than ever before.

5. Types of progress I'd like to see this church make (in the next year to year and a half) include:

Answers: More reverence toward the Spirit of God in church.
Better facilities for classrooms and fellowship.
More music in openings.
Complete building program with classrooms.
More activities for young people and teens.
Building—addition.
Get back to being a friendly church.

Ways I can help in seeing this progress happen are:
Answers here were generally the same. They consisted of: Praying more, working harder, and giving more.

My Response: I've tried to involve the people in reaching the church's goals so the people can say the progress is their own (not the preacher's).

6. I've seen progress within the church in the last 3-4 years.

10 yes 3 no (1—not much)

If "yes" the progress I've seen is:

New members are an encouragement.
Your poise in the pulpit and handling people.
Church is more stable in most areas.
Concern for the individual . . . more personal effort.
Building is moving ahead.
People taken into the church with strong convictions.

Progress has all been backwards.

The final question was for my personal benefit.

7. Something I appreciate about your ministry is:

Answers: Sincere in messages.

Good attitude.
Preach what God lays on your heart.
Truthfulness in admitting problems.
Your ministry is good—learn by experience.
Sense of humor . . . you talk and visit without preaching.
Ability to accept and understand feelings of others.
You're getting better. I enjoy your services.
Good sermons.
Variety—you try to touch every aspect of life in your ministry.
Honesty—your preaching is never watered down.
Your involvement with young people and teens.
Your honesty and openness.
Speaking clearly so we understand.
Your understanding.

My Response: I was pleasantly surprised with all of these words of encouragement.

Other Comments: Learning great!

Neatness improved.
I think you're doing a pretty good job.
Chalene's a sincere, dedicated wife. I appreciate her and her encouragement to me.

Thanks to Chalene and you for your help.

The Pastoral Evaluation Sheet has given me challenge, help, direction, and encouragement in my ministry. May it be beneficial to yours.

Is Visitation an Option?

by Homer J. Adams

President, Trevecca Nazarene College, Nashville

Someone has said that if one considers the news of world happenings and does not have a measure of anxiety, he should have his TV set examined! Similarly if a pastor does not like to visit and avoids this responsibility, he should have his priorities examined. Lucy in "Peanuts" said, "I love mankind; it's people I can't stand!" There is enough truth in this to cause discomfort. A pastor is in the people business, and there is no way he can handle all his relationships from the pulpit.

"A pastor who visits" is frequently expressed as the heart cry and longing of church members. The role of pastoral visitation in these changing times is often discussed, and sometimes the discussion becomes a debate. With husbands and wives working different schedules, members scattered 20 and 30 miles from the church, and many apartment complexes discouraging visitors, it is not easy to visit. But a great many church members think their pastors do not visit enough.

The concept of pastoral visitation is a noble one, for it bespeaks compassion. A pastor who visits his flock regularly and with solicitude has a shepherd's heart and a perception that people are important. He also has a decent measure of initiative and self-discipline, for it is easier not to visit than to visit.

There are at least two categories of calls—those a pastor makes to members and attenders of his church and their families; and calls to those who have no connection with his church.

The first type of call is to encourage, show pastoral interest and concern, and determine if there is specific spiritual need.


Calls on people not under the ministry of the church are mainly evangelistic. The pastor invites people to Sunday School, revival services, or regular worship. A family new to the neighborhood, as well as that family not attending church, are prime targets. Outreach calls should encourage rather than take the place of visitation that ought to be done by laymen in the church.

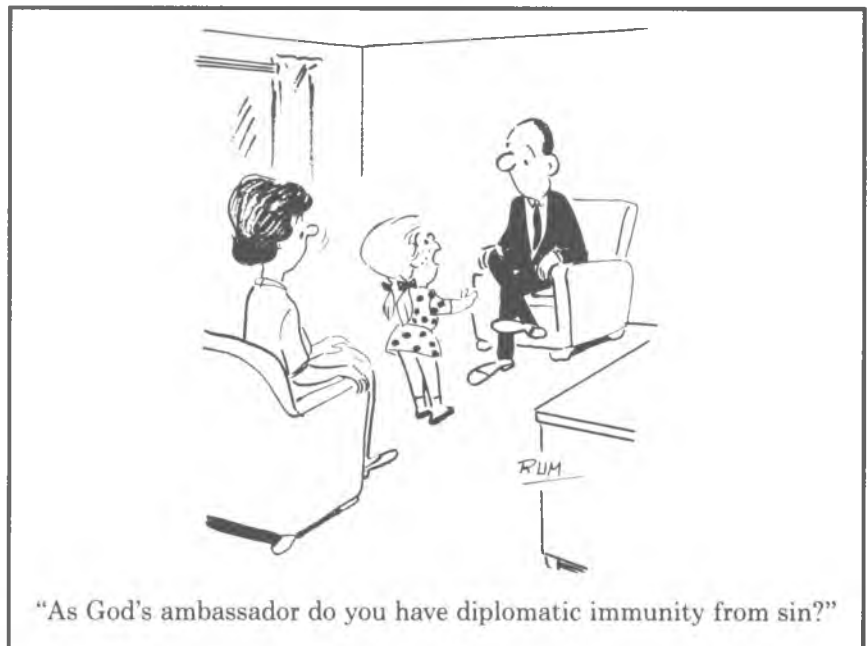
Any pastor worth his salt will visit his people when they are in the hospital or at times of heavy burden or sorrow. The elderly and shut-ins also have special need of pastoral attention. Making calls when there is no tragedy or trauma is difficult as the pastor must choose between visiting on the one hand and sermon preparation or dealing with administrative duties on the other.

Some pastors and writers hold that pastoral visitation, other than

hospital calling, is a thing of the past. It is extremely doubtful that support for this view will be widespread among church members. Rather there is a hunger for personal communication with the minister.

Think of the benefit of a 10-minute visit in a home, particularly where there are children, when the preacher reads from God's Word and prays for members of the family. Problems, such as the difficulty of finding the appropriate time, the blaring TV set, and the challenge of getting the family together in the home can be overcome. One creative pastor does not rely on visits in the home but meets his parishioners for lunch. Some days he eats three lunches—salads all the way!

To visit or not to visit—that is the question. Many would hold that it is equivalent to the issue to minister or not to minister. Think about it. 





Clarence L. Bence

IN THE MIDDLE IS NOT GOOD ENOUGH

by Clarence L. Bence

Associate Professor of Religion, Marion College, Marion, Ind.

In many ways, Wesley offers a moderating position between two poles in Christian thought. His loyalty to the Anglican church placed him midway between Roman Catholic and Protestant traditions of worship. His careful balance of faith and works kept him away from the legalists on the one hand and the antinomians on the other. His societies and class meetings within the larger structure of the Church of England allowed him to identify with both denominational and sectarian concepts of the church at the same time.

Wesley's doctrine of salvation also demonstrates his middle-of-the-road position. He rejected the extremes held by both Pelagius and Augustine, theologians of the Early Church. Pelagius, it is said, viewed salvation as primarily a human endeavor; one gained eternal life by developing the divine spark that was present in every person at birth. This potential for salvation was certainly a gift of grace (Pelagius was no secular humanist!). But since it was given to all as a part of their humanity, eternal life was largely dependent on one's own efforts and performances in living up to the possibilities one possessed. For Pelagius, SALVATION WAS AN ACHIEVEMENT TO BE ATTAINED.

Augustine, the great church father, reacted strongly to the view and stressed the total helplessness (depravity) of all persons to contribute anything to their own redemption. Salvation was God's work alone, and He not only chose those whom He would save but also caused them to come to the place of trust in Jesus Christ. The power and desire to become a child of God was His gift, offered only to those whom He elected. All others remained eternally lost in their sins, either because God did not choose to save them, or, worse yet, He predestined them to damnation for His ultimate glory. For Augustinians, believers never decide for themselves to follow Jesus; conversion is simply the awareness that one has been elected from all eternity. In this view, SALVATION IS A REALITY TO BE ACKNOWLEDGED.

Wesley spoke out against both of these positions. In "The Doctrine of Original Sin," he argued that there is no natural goodness in human beings. Because of the Fall, we are all born in sin, with no innate ability to improve our desperate condition. Salvation only comes when in

repentance we despair of saving ourselves and turn to God for divine assistance through the work of Jesus Christ on our behalf. As for Augustine's emphasis on the passive nature of humans in the salvation process, one need only consult "Predestination Calmly Considered," in which Wesley not-so-calmly attacked those who made persons programmed puppets in God's sovereign drama of redemption. Wesley wanted a Christianity that proclaimed the inability of a sinner to save him/herself, but offered that sinner the freedom to act responsively in accepting or rejecting the good news of Jesus Christ.

It appears rather simple at this point. Wesley stands in the middle and views salvation as a joint endeavor by both God and humans. God provides the grace, human beings make the decision, and conversion results. But the issue is a little more complicated. The question now becomes, "Who acts first in this cooperative venture between God and sinner? Does God respond to our first steps toward Him and reward us with His saving grace? Or does God reach out to us and we respond to what He has already done on our behalf?" Those who see God as the One who responds to human initiative are called semi-Pelagians. For them, SALVATION IS A REWARD TO BE EARNED. On the other hand, those who see persons as responding in faith to the divine initiative are known as semi-Augustinians. They would assert that SALVATION IS A GIFT TO BE RECEIVED.

"Aren't we splitting hairs?" you say. In a sense, yes. But this fine line separates Protestant and Catholic theology. It is the tendency of Roman Catholics to present a semi-Pelagian view of salvation, in which grace is rewarded to those who act first. When an infant is baptized (the human act), original sin is washed away (the divine response). When one goes to Mass (the human act), grace is given in the sacrament of Holy Communion (the divine response). In such a view salvation is merited. An informed Catholic would never suggest that he or she is saved by human works alone. It is God's grace that saves; but God's grace is conditioned upon the individual starting the process of salvation. God rewards the individual's sincere efforts to gain eternal life.

Does any of that sound familiar? How many times have you heard it suggested that God is waiting for the

(Continued on page 60)

ARE YOU READY FOR THE HARVEST?

by D. W. Hildie
Evangelist, Church of the Nazarene

Once upon a time there was a farmer who borrowed money for seed and machinery with which to plant his crop. He then faithfully prepared the soil. The rains came and the crop flourished, but his efforts were less than successful, for he had made no preparation for the harvest!

The revival is to the church what the harvest is to the farmer, and if the results are to be successful, full attention must be given to every phase of producing the "crop."

I have been disturbed in my ministry of evangelism as I visit churches in which little attention is given to what we will do with seekers when they arrive at the altar. Such basic items as having a sufficient supply of disposable tissues should not need even to be mentioned, yet that lack occasionally represents a minor inconvenience.

By far the greatest lack I encounter is that all too often there are insufficient altar workers. I have visited too many churches in which seekers made their way to the place of prayer and the pastor, the pastor's wife, and I were the only ones to pray and counsel with them. This is a sad situation, for not only are new people given inadequate prayer support, but the "saints" of the church are missing one of the greatest of blessings. The blessing which the seeker receives when he finally touches God for his needs more often than not "spills over" until victory at the altar is shared by all those around. As I recollect the church of my boyhood days, the altar service was very often the high point of the

service, and well it should be.

It is my feeling that people are not disinterested nor lazy, but I find that many of them feel insecure about dealing with people at an altar. They don't really know what is expected of them, and they feel unprepared to counsel those with questions to be answered. What can we, or should we, expect of a corps of altar workers? How can we build their confidence in giving spiritual guidance to seekers?

First, let's examine the question of whom we should include in our corps of altar workers. There may be some within the congregation whom we would prefer not to work around our altars. Those who have a preference for garlic sandwiches before a service should be tactfully steered away from altar work, as well as those of a contrary theological persuasion. They may be good, sincere people, but too often their zeal in proclaiming the superiority of their own experience can become confusing to a new Christian.

How then are we to get a staff of altar workers? The danger in asking for volunteers lies in drawing in some with personality peculiarities or such as are described in the previous paragraph. It has been my experience that the pastor does well to choose from the congregation a group of people representing both sexes and varying ages (teenagers can become towers of strength in dealing with other teens). Having personally approached this selected group, the pastor invites them to attend a class for the ministry of altar work. In many city-wide evangelistic

crusades where such classes are offered, it has been true that one of the greatest benefits of the entire crusade was that church folk were schooled in dealing with seekers. Some who may previously have been reluctant to assume this kind of responsibility feel more adequate and are anxious to try after training.

Assuming we now have some folk who have agreed to take a training course, what kind of instruction ought we to give? The Billy Graham Evangelistic Association as well as others engaged in this type of evangelistic activity have extensive curricula with which to train their prospective personal workers. However, we should bear in mind that such a group of workers come from many different theological backgrounds, whereas we are thinking only of our own congregation. Unless the pastor wishes to give the type of training available through these interdenominational groups, a less extensive program would be just as satisfactory.

Opinions differ as to just what place altar workers should occupy and how they should operate, and while I am about to set forth my own opinions, you pastors will be working with these same folk long after I'm gone, and you should adapt your altar training to fit your own concept of efficiency. Here are my suggestions:

1. I like to have those who will work around the altar come to the place of prayer as the seekers come. I liked very much the system which I saw used by one pastor. He



Thomas E. Saner

Prayer is the primary responsibility of the altar worker

can pray intelligently with you, just what specifically are you asking that God do for you?" It is better not to attempt to pray aloud until the evangelist or the pastor has concluded the altar invitation. After I have prayed, I urge the seeker to lead out in oral prayer. If I sense that the prayer is too general (i.e., he is asking God to help him to be a better person, etc.), I suggest that he join me in the prayer of the penitent.

Occasionally someone says he does not know how to pray. In that case the seeker should be instructed to pray after you, at which point you will line out a penitent's prayer in short phrases.

Pastors may want to add to these suggestions. Some will wish to deal extensively with some of the questions that surface at the altar, or instruct would-be altar workers to call for the pastor or the evangelist if they run into difficulties. These suggestions are intended merely as attempts to help the revival fulfill its total ministry.

Beyond the Altar, What?

While few of us would admit it, many of us act as though we believe "getting them to the altar" solves all their problems! Our own experiences should remind us that in most cases the altar is but the beginning. We are hearing a new term in the church: "discipling" or "making disciples." This means that beyond the altar a system of instruction is employed in which, either on a one-to-one basis or in group sessions, problems of the Christian life and Bible study are earnestly considered. Without this kind of careful conservation of the fruit, our evangelism efforts can be lost.

Most publishing houses list in their catalogs materials for evangelism and discipling. These should be ordered in quantity well before scheduled revival meetings.

Then take by faith the coming harvest.

had a corps of altar workers all signed up and ready for service. As soon as a seeker came to the place of prayer, this pastor would nod to one of his altar workers—the one whom he deemed best suited to deal with that seeker. He used teenagers as well as mature men and women of the congregation. As they came to the altar thus, there were some side benefits to be achieved:

a. The seeker kneeling at that altar probably never felt so "all alone"—particularly if he is new to the church. Another human presence helps to take away that feeling of strangeness and permits the seeker to concentrate on his or her spiritual conquest and the prayer of penitence or commitment.

b. When the seeker completes his prayer and has met with God, he will look across the altar into the face of the one who has been praying with him, and there a very precious bond is established. The friend at the altar may well be the one the new convert looks to for further guidance in the Christian way. I

have seen that take place many, many times.

When the altar worker comes to pray with the seeker, I prefer that he or she come to the inside of the altar so no room is taken up that may be needed for another seeker, not at the rear where they are not in a position for prayer to be heard. Some people feel if they simply kneel around the front benches of the church, this is all that is necessary. It is true that such a group can help to build an atmosphere of prayer, but it does not take the place of the personal touch of one kneeling in front and praying directly for the penitent seeker.

In my opinion the primary place of an altar worker in a church is not quite the same as that of a counselor working in a city-wide crusade. The primary responsibility is that of prayer.

If I do not know the individual with whom I am about to pray, I ask for his first name. Then I usually address a question something like this: "I want to help you to pray. So that I

THE 1983 SOCIAL SECURITY REFORM

SOCIAL SECURITY COVERAGE:

Beginning January 1, 1984, non-profit organizations, including local churches, will no longer be exempt from paying Social Security taxes on lay employees and will automatically become participants in the FICA program. This means that churches must withhold 6.7 percent of each lay employee's wages and must pay an additional 7 percent out of church funds. These funds, along with any *income taxes* withheld from lay employees, must be sent to the IRS on proper forms for deposit on a timely basis. All salaries paid and amounts withheld will be reported each quarter on Form 941 rather than Form 941E. All W-2s issued at the end of 1984 for lay employees would indicate "wages for FICA and FICA taxes withheld."

Ministerial employees of the local church are still exempt from FICA taxes but will continue to pay Social Security taxes under the self-employment rate.

SOCIAL SECURITY RATE INCREASES:

The rates are going up. The following charts explain the projected rates through 1990. As indicated, to offset some of the increase, a tax credit of 2.7 percent for ministers will be provided in 1984. With the tax credit, the effective rate will be 11.3 percent for the minister. Currently, ministers are paying 9.35 percent.

THE FINANCIAL IMPACT FOR CHURCHES:

For most church treasurers, there will be an increase in bookkeeping and in the number of forms to be filed with the IRS. For those churches with lay employees, whether full-time or part-time, the local church's operating budget will be directly affected. In 1984, there will be an immediate increase of 7 percent of salaries which the local church must pay to the IRS for lay employees. On the other side, lay employees will have 6.7 percent less take-home pay and therefore will not be receiving the same salary as had been originally intended by the local congregation. To offset these factors, the local church will have to plan carefully in their budgeting process.

Ministerial employees of the local church will be affected since the "self-employment" Social Security tax rate will also increase. Many churches reimburse the minister in full for his Social Security taxes. With the rate increase, these churches will need to plan appropriately in their local budget for adequate funds to continue this policy.

Perhaps the greatest financial planning will need to be done by those churches who are operating schools and day-care facilities and consequently have many staff members on the payroll.

CLASSIFICATION OF EMPLOYEES:

Since legal and tax obligations differ for the lay and ministerial employee, it is very important that an accurate classification of each employee is made. Some employees who are considered to perform ministerial functions by the church board are actually lay employees by IRS definitions.

Most churches will have at least one employee, the pastor. This is usually a ministerial employee, since most pastors are either ordained or are a district-licensed minister. However, if a pastor holds another license, his technical status with the IRS may be that of a lay employee.

Many churches have additional paid employees, such as secretaries and janitors. Usually, these are clearly lay employees. However, staff associates need to be carefully distinguished. Those staff associates who are ordained or who are district-licensed ministers are ministerial employees as long as they are performing ministerial functions. Those staff members who are not so licensed but have other credentials are probably lay employees in the eyes of the IRS.

If there is a question with regard to employment classification, you will want to consult the IRS guidelines, your tax consultants, and denominational policy.

[The information contained in this article is of a general nature. It is not offered as specific legal or tax "advice." Each church and individual should evaluate his own unique situation in consultation with personal legal and tax advisors.]

FICA TAX RATE

Year	Employer Tax	Employee Tax
1983	6.70%	6.70%
1984	7.00	6.70
1985	7.05	7.05
1986	7.15	7.15
1987	7.15	7.15
1988	7.51	7.51
1989	7.51	7.51
1990	7.65	7.65

SELF-EMPLOYMENT TAX RATE

Year	Tax Rate	Tax Credit	Net Tax Rate
1983	9.35%	—	9.35%
1984	14.00	2.70%	11.30
1985	14.10	2.30	11.80
1986	14.30	2.00	12.30
1987	14.30	2.00	12.30
1988	15.02	2.00	13.02
1989	15.02	2.00	13.02
1990	15.30	?	?

FEED MY LAMBS— NOT THE GIRAFFES

by Morris Chalfant

Pastor, Norwood Church of the Nazarene, Cincinnati

At a church conference one young preacher became weary of listening to theological jargon. He rose and gave the assembled clerics an example of their usage.

"And when Adam and Eve were thrust out of the Garden of Eden, Eve turned to Adam and asked, 'Oh, what is to become of us now?' And Adam replied, 'We are about to undergo an abrupt socioeconomic change.'"

In an issue of *Time* the religion editor judged it newsworthy to comment on the extent to which Protestant scholars have developed a high-hat vocabulary. With gentle sarcasm he remarks that "no theologian today worth his doctorate would dare talk of preaching or teaching—the fashionable forms are kerygma and dache."

Sometimes the juiceless jargon of the professional theologians is made cumbersome and obscure not by direct borrowings from the Greek or German but by mouthfuls of syllables that make something less than sense unless they are forthwith reduced to simpler terms.

It was said of our Lord that "the common people heard Him gladly." It is in the suds of everyday speech that the starch of irrelevance must be washed out of the preacher's language. All the mighty evangelists down through the centuries have been men who expounded the Scriptures and yet have set forth Christ in a simple, direct, straightforward manner.

Augustine once said, "A wooden key is not so beautiful as a golden one, but if it can open the door when the golden one cannot, it is far more useful." Luther added, "No one can be a good preacher to the people who is not willing to preach in a manner that seems childish and coarse to some."

John Wesley knew that being simple was not the

same as the careless blurting of lazy minds. He wrote all his sermons out, then read them to the maid. All the words she couldn't understand he eliminated.

Some of the supposedly religious leaders of today seem to look down on the simplicity of designing sermons to help people. They appear to believe that a sermon should be an utterance upon some sociological or even political question. At times it is as though the minister conceived of himself as a kind of assistant to Congress. Get a bill through Congress and the world is in good shape—that is the notion. There are also ministers who have gotten a little beyond sociology and now regard themselves as theologians and are probing deeply into the mysteries of the universe. But where does this leave the poor souls who sit in the congregation?

When Karl Barth, the famous theologian, visited the United States, he was questioned by a group of young theological students.

One student asked Barth to put in capsule form his definition of the Christian faith.

The student expected a long statement filled with theological terms with which he could disagree and engage Barth in further intellectual discussion.

The Swiss theologian was quiet for a few moments as he reflected on his definition of the Christian faith. Then he said, "I learned it at my mother's knee. Yes, if I had to sum up Christianity, I think it would be what my mother taught me." Then he said, "Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so."

The student had no more questions.

No man likes to ask himself or his associates after attending church, "What in the world did the preacher mean?" Or, "Now, what does that have to do with me?"

But a congregation's lack of response to sermons is not usually because the people are dumb. More likely it

Simplicity in preaching is not the same as blurting unplanned incoherencies or cluttering the gospel with worn-out clichés of *Christianese*

is because the preacher uses biblical and theological jargon. Who can enjoy a sermon if he must use a dictionary or a theological glossary?

But many educated preachers have difficulty expressing themselves in “street language.” In fact, for some it takes years to learn how to explain the great ideas of the faith in words that the average man uses when discussing simpler things. But the preacher must make the transition from his book lingo, or he will be spitting into the wind, as his ponderous prattle flies back at him, rejected by his puzzled congregation.

To effectively communicate the unsearchable riches of God’s truth is still our main task.

An 11-year-old girl had heard her adult friends talk much about the brilliant new minister. After hearing him preach a wonderfully clear sermon for the first time, she made a profound observation: “Daddy, that preacher is not so smart. I understood every word he said.” What happened? The preacher was not only brilliant but also wise. He had followed the example of Jesus. He had preached in a language that all could understand. He had preached with power.

By simplicity I mean clarity of thought and expression—the ability to tell others what one has seen and felt himself until they see and feel it for themselves. Fog is good for lima beans. They prosper in its clammy dampness. But fog has little to offer men. It has been determined by scientific experiment that a bank of fog 3 feet thick, 6 feet high, and 100 feet long contains less than one-seventh of a glassful of water. One cannot slake his thirst with fog; he cannot even bathe in it. There is only one thing to do with fog, and that is to keep out of it. There was no “fog” about the gospel when Christ and Paul presented it.

As Principal James Denny used to say to young preachers in his homiletics lectures, “The preacher who

shoots above the heads of his listeners does not thereby prove he has better ammunition. He only proves that he does not know how to aim.”

It is my personal conviction that preaching a sermon is intended to help people live in a difficult and complicated world. I have often needed help myself, and I still need it. Thank God I have been able to get it through preaching. So, when I stand up in a pulpit the desire of my heart is to be of some help to others, in the name of Christ.

In all our preaching let us be simple, plain, much to the point, and deeply in earnest. Let us ever remember that Jesus said, “FEED MY LAMBS”—NOT THE GI-RAFFES. Some preachers I have observed have the instinct of aviators—they announce a text, taxi for a short distance, then they take off from the earth and disappear into the clouds. After that only the din of exploding gas is heard, signifying that they are flying high, very high above the heads of their hearers. A sermon, rightly, is not a meteor but a sun. Its true test is, Can it make something grow?

When George Fox was seeking spiritual guidance, he walked seven miles to talk to a clergyman who had a reputation for being helpful, “but I found him but like an empty, hollow cask.” The problem with preaching is that so often people come seeking the water of life, only to find an empty cask. Thank God, sometimes they find water—when the preacher with simplicity and authority proclaims Jesus Christ.

My appeal is for simple, easy communication, not for superficial study or shallow preaching. Dig deep, but don’t come up dry. Use your professional tools at home, but take the inspired Word into the pulpit. With God’s help, make your sermons profoundly simple and simply profound.



A Case Study for Theological Reflection and Discussion

There's No Such Thing as a Free Lunch

by Ray S. Anderson

Professor, Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, Calif.

Pastor Norman Carlson stared out of his study and wondered if what he saw had any relation to reality. In his line of vision was the church sign, positioned near the street so that it could be seen from passing automobiles. Printed in bold, slightly ornate letters, was the name of the church, Trinity Lutheran Church. Below, in a more modern script was inscribed, "A Healing Church for a Hurting World."

It had been his idea to have the words put on the sign, and now as he waited for the church council meeting to begin, he said to himself, half aloud, "After tonight, that may no longer be possible to say of our church."

Trinity Lutheran had been a typical urban parish in a large midwestern city when Norman Carlson came as pastor five years ago. Its Scandinavian ethos was reflected more in the traditional food served at the frequent church socials than in the listing of names in the church directory. The 830 (baptized) members of the church included approximately 600 adult members, of which only about 350 attended regularly. While the church was located in an area of the city that included a significant black population, there was only a sprinkling of black persons who attended the services, and none were mem-

bers. From the nearby state university, Trinity drew a few students and very few staff, although Dr. Bill Robertson, dean of students, was a member of the church and served on the church council.

During the first three years of Norman Carlson's ministry there was very little change in the church's constituency, even though he had innovated some new forms of ministry. At a church council meeting near the end of that third year, Carla Abrahamson, a deaconess, had remarked, "I think our church is losing its identity as a Lutheran church and its focus as a congregation. We have several task forces on community issues, but no longer a weekly Bible study meeting in the church."

It was at that meeting that Pastor Carlson first shared his vision for the free clinic. In response to Carla's expressed concern, he had said, "We must not assume that the ministry of the church is for its own sake. The gospel is the ministry of enfleshing the divine Word. Too often the church has taken the Word which became flesh and made it only a Word without flesh."

The vision which he then went on to share centered on a strategic ministry to the university student population, which was heavily concentrated in an area to the north

between the church and the campus, and to the transient and economically deprived area to the east of the church.

"There is a critical need for low-cost medical care and psychological counseling," he went on to explain. "I have discussed the situation with Bill Robertson, and he has agreed to head up a task force to develop a free clinic to provide medical and psychological counseling services without charge to those in need."

Bill Robertson spoke up immediately at the same meeting and said, "We could remodel the former parsonage which is in the block just east of the church to provide a facility for the clinic. It is not really needed for youth meetings any longer since we built the new educational wing. The clinic could be staffed by volunteers from the university as well as from members of the church with professional training."

Within three months of that council meeting, the church voted enthusiastically to undertake the project. A Commission for Community Service was formed by the church council to direct the project, with Bill Robertson named as the administrative coordinator.

As Norm Carlson reflected upon the past two years of operation, it

seemed to him that it had been a worthwhile project, even though there had been many problems. It had cost the church much more to maintain than he had originally thought. A full-time director with two staff members had been hired to provide administrative and staff support for the volunteer clinical staff. The church council had diverted over \$15,000 a year from its world mission budget to the project. Financial support from the university and interested individuals represented only about one-third of the total cost.

More serious was the discovery by the church council that some of the medical staff had been known to prescribe contraceptive pills for teenage unmarried girls, and that there were reports that some had even been counseled to secure abortions.

All of this came to a head at the last meeting of the council, which was evenly divided over the issue of continuing to sponsor the free clinic.

"I won't deny that the clinic is providing some helpful service," conceded Carla Abrahamson, "but there is little reconciliation to Jesus Christ involved. How many members have we seen join our church through this ministry?"

Bill Robertson responded hesitantly, "I'm not sure this is the proper way to evaluate the results of our mission, even though I could point out several people who are now part of our fellowship because they found help through the clinic. I hope that what we are doing is at least an important aspect of being a servant of Jesus Christ. I can't explain it in theological terms, but it seems to me that such service is a way of keeping Jesus in touch with people who can't stay in touch with Him."

At the end of the nearly two hours of debate over a motion to suspend the church's support of the free clinic, Pastor Carlson had given what many had reported to be an ultimatum. "If Trinity Lutheran is not willing to risk its own life for the sake of those who have been hurt by life, then I will have to reevaluate my own position as the pastor."

Bill Robertson moved that the issue be tabled until the next meeting. The council supported the motion

unanimously, and the meeting promptly adjourned.

Now, as he thought back on what he had said, Norm Carlson wondered if it really had been an ultimatum. "Am I really that sure that what we are doing is an imperative of the gospel?" he wondered. He remembered one council member arguing against the free clinic by saying, "There is no such thing as a free lunch. When people receive something for which they are not expected to pay, at least by expressing their interest and support of the church that provided it, it's merely cheap grace."


Norm was startled out of his concentration on the church sign by a knock at the study door. It was Bill Robertson.

"The council is ready to meet with you, Pastor," he said. "I hope you can lead us out of this impasse."

1. What action would you take or recommend in this situation?

2. What would be your immediate objectives? What would be your longer-range objectives?

3. What underlying theological assumptions or presuppositions determined your response?

4. State your own theology for the role of the church as servant in the world, incorporating a statement on the way in which Jesus Christ has "presence" through the meeting of human need. 

I hate being a pastor's wife. If my husband would leave the ministry, I would rejoice," Betty confided as we discussed our common roles. I recoiled at the resentment in her words, but I understood her feelings perfectly.

I feel that every pastor's wife has a God-ordained role in her husband's ministry, equally as sanctified as her husband's. An attitude like Betty's robs the pastor's mate of joy. It can also ruin the pastor's effectiveness.

Living on a pastor's salary is the most difficult part of being married to a pastor. Unfortunately, it carries over into many other areas besides finances. My husband earns approximately \$10,000 yearly. Additional benefits amount to \$5,000. Out of his \$10,000 cash in hand, we make do for ourselves and three children. Thankfully, we don't pay any taxes because his salary is too low to fit into a tax bracket.

How do I manage? Food stamps enable me to stretch our food budget. I hate this, for we have periodic eligibility reviews for our food stamp status which wastes valuable time out of a busy schedule. It is also embarrassing to answer the questions that come up at these eligibility reviews.

Recently, in the grocery store I heard someone denouncing food stamp customers who wear designer clothes. She could have been talking about me. A member of our congregation gave me some clothes. They were expensive garments, and they fit me perfectly. I plead guilty to the charge of shopping in designer clothes while using food stamps, but I'd gladly give up food stamps if there was an alternative.

My children have part-time jobs in high school and college. My high schoolers qualify for free lunches,

HUBBY'S SALARY— BLESSING OR CURSE?

Anonymous



Harold M. Lambert

and my one child in college gets the maximum financial aid allowed. I am grateful for this, for he couldn't get an education otherwise. This also limits the schools he could choose from. My secret ambition for one of my daughters was that she could make the school gymnastics team because she is good at it and enjoys the sport. Her job prevented this.

My social life suffers too. Our church recently planned a family outing to a Christian concert. We declined attending, for the admission price was too steep for us. I cringed inside when I overheard a chance remark about the pastor not attending a church function.

We haven't had a vacation in a number of years. Another family from the church visited us recently, full of excitement over a planned skiing trip in a section of the country we used to live in.

I saw the hurt on my daughter's face when the family said, "Why don't you join us? It will be fun." She misses the snow and cold weather she enjoyed in our former location, but she knew why their invitation demanded a refusal. Visits to relatives are the only form of vacation we can take, and those seldom. Vacations are a luxury that some pastor's families can't afford.

A recent orthodontic exam confirmed the need for braces on my youngest child. I hate to think of four years of monthly payments ahead. New eyeglasses, also necessary, are difficult to acquire on our budget. Professionals used to treat clergy families at reduced rates, but they are a vanishing lot.

Major purchases are difficult. Our final car payment was two months ago. I hoped to use the amount of that payment toward my child's braces, but the car shows need of major repairs. Our payment money

may have to spread out between repair bills or another car instead. I wonder how I will manage.

Married couples should pursue joint interests, we are told. Financial limitations hinder the things my husband and I enjoy together. Our marriage is good, but I feel a bit more diversion for the two of us would make it much better.

My children know the results of financial limitations on their lives. Their peers in the church with fathers in other professions don't have the monetary woes that we do. I don't feel this shows them the love that the church proclaims firsthand, but I feel fortunate they aren't rebellious or resentful against the church.

I don't feel confident that our financial situation will improve much. My husband's salary doesn't increase as much as the yearly inflation rate. There is the possibility of further cutback in financial aid to students. This affects my family directly, and my husband will not be able to complete his graduate theological studies as contemplated.

My husband asked me recently how I felt about his seeking other employment. I discouraged him. Why? I know, and he does too, that he has a calling from God to do what he must. He doesn't like being at the mercy of the church for his salary any more than I do.

Every year my husband must justify his need of a raise before our committee that reviews salaries and budgets. Every year the members gripe about the higher costs of everything and warn him that they do need to consider our members' financial needs before they raise his salary and the budget anymore. Who on the committee would want to work for an employer with an attitude like that? None, I suspect.

Why don't I work? I have sought employment. My education consists of a college degree and some graduate work. This makes employers shun me for entry level positions. Another liability is ministers' reputations for frequent moves. I am hard to place in the job market for these reasons.

Another reason I don't work is that my husband and I feel my teens need me at home. They are responsible kids, but I want to greet them when they get home from school each day. I feel a job for me would cut into the time I can give my children. Time slips away so fast from a mother of growing children, and I feel my time is worth more to them in their formative years than more money.

A job would also interfere with the ways my husband and I enable each other to function. My husband shares counseling with me. I heard him tell someone, "Call my wife. I can't see you Wednesday at that time, but she is as competent as I am." My heart rejoiced at having a husband who respected my abilities in the Lord. The woman did come to me, and I had the privilege of shouldering her burden and praying for her while my husband was out of town.

Engaged couples appreciate it when we counsel them together. The biblical order for mates comes alive as he and I testify to the practical ways it strengthens our marriage. A job for me might cut off this part of our lives together.

I value the things money can't buy more than the things it can. So, for me, a job is not an alternative escape from the financial pressures of an inadequate salary. My situation is not unique.

It would be easy to be like Betty, resentful and hating the pressure of


financial needs experienced by so many pastor's wives. How do I cope with this part of my life? Wise shopping, careful budgeting, and a disciplined prayer life enable me to cope.

A sense of worth in the Lord helps too. Economic status is no gauge of anyone's value. Prov. 31:10 says a virtuous woman is worth more than rubies. Also, 1 Tim. 5:17 prices elders that rule well worthy of double honor. I have to periodically remind myself of these two verses whenever financial woes tempt me to despair.

There are other compensations. I rejoice each time my husband's ministry is praised. His fruit is partially borne out of my prayers and my faithful acceptance of my role as his helpmeet. This gives me a sense of peace when balancing the checkbook.

Lastly, I view the financial part of my life as a challenge instead of a curse. I have taught myself to paint, do simple clothing alterations and repairs, and other things that help to make do with what I have. The financial challenge I live with tapped into my thirst for knowledge forcing me to libraries to seek help with projects I need to do. Perhaps with more financial resources my intellectual growth would stagnate!

Pastor's mate, like you, I yearn for more consideration for our practical needs from the congregation my husband serves. Our financial plights may never change, but we must consider the compensations money won't buy. We do hold within our hands the keys to contentment in the Lord, no matter how much our husbands earn. Our attitudes make our lot in life a blessing or a curse.

Let's choose blessing and the greater rewards that are eternal, for in due season we will reap. 

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'Twas the Night Before Monday Or Missing Saints

by Clarence Killion
Dinuba, Calif.

'Twas the night before Monday,
And at the church house,
Not a creature was stirring,
Not even a louse.

Lights out, doors locked,
Offering counted with care,
In hopes enough funds
Soon would be there.

Our pets were nestled
All snug in their beds,
While hopes of good sleep
Filled all of our heads.

And wife in her nightie
And I in mine too,
Had settled our brains
To sleep the night through.

When deep in my mind
There arose such a clatter,
My wife said, "Hubby,
What now is the matter?"

Well, back to the church
My mind flew in a flash,
And hopes of good sleep
Came down with a crash.

Where was Hensen, and Vincent,
and Mary and Terry?
And Tony, and Phoney,
and Gary and Harry?

For high hopes in attendance
Had gone by the wall.
Now dash away, dash away,
Dash away all.

Some to the mountains
And some to the game,
Some to the Baptists
With excuses so lame.

I knew in a moment
'Twas the work of Old Nick
Taking folk from my church
With all kinds of tricks.

Well, verses of scripture
That went through my head
Told me, with faith
I had little to dread.

Still I tossed and I turned
In my sleepless plight,
And prayed, "God, bless those dear members
On this Sunday night!"



PASTORAL DEMANDS

(Continued from page 36)

Whatever the sex, circumstance, locale or denomination, there are some who see the preacher as a kind of spiritual prostitute, exchanging concern and compassion for cash.

Others view this mysterious person not only as a parasite, but also as a terribly presumptuous individual having the audacity to proclaim truth, to declare the acceptable year of the Lord, insisting life has direction and purpose.

Still others turn to the pastor as if he were running an ecclesiastical cafeteria, periodically partaking of what they need without price and frequently without gratitude.

One layman sees the pastor as "that devoted, dedicated Christian who bridges the gap in his generation so that the past and the future are connected."

Still another knowledgeable, sensitive Christian wrote: "The preacher is to lead the flock in seeking the truth; truth about God's love and forgiveness, yes. But also the truth about ourselves and our social problems."

The late Karl Barth envisioned the preacher holding up the Bible in one hand and the morning newspaper in the other! Thus, the perceptive soul is able to bring ancient truths to bear upon contemporary issues.

Once the paragon of integrity and affection, like many public servants today the minister has inherited difficult problems, some of his own making, others emanating from spinoffs in a complex, sensual, apathetic society.³

We may not agree with all the comments of these authors, but we will surely agree that the ideas and concepts clustered around the pastoral ministry are that diverse! Add to that the materialism, secular humanism, hedonism, and a host of other lethal "isms" of this age, and we must conclude that our task as pastors isn't getting any easier.

In these days when theories rise and fall so quickly, in these pressure-packed times, you and I have for one reason or another landed in the pastoral ministry.

I concede that our world is changing. I further concede that the pastor of today may need to acquire the skills of administration, counseling, and leadership training. With these additional demands do we now perceive the central thrust of ministry to be in these areas?

In his little book *The Wounded Healer*, Henri Nouwen asks the question, "What does it mean to minister in our contemporary society?"⁴ What, indeed? There certainly appears to be a subtle shifting of ministerial emphases and priorities, but I remain convinced that Mr. and Mrs. John Q. Public who sit in the pew week after week wish it weren't so. I believe we have been sold "a bill of goods."

Nouwen further treats this subject in the devotional

book *The Way of the Heart*, where he writes of the "Compulsive Minister":

Our society is not a community radiant with the love of Christ, but a dangerous network of domination and manipulation in which we can easily get entangled and lose our souls. The basic question is whether we ministers of Jesus Christ have not already been so deeply molded by the seductive powers of our dark world that we have become blind to our own and other people's fatal state and have lost the power and motivation to swim for our lives.

Just look for a moment at our daily routine. In general we are very busy people. We have many meetings to attend, many visits to make, many services to lead. Our calendars are filled with appointments, our days and weeks filled with engagements, and our years filled with plans and projects. There is seldom a period in which we do not know what to do, and we move through life in such a distracted way that we do not even take the time and rest to wonder if any of the

A pastor is not the simpleton Hollywood has depicted. He is probably the most aware person in the community.

things we think, say, or do are worth thinking, saying, or doing. We simply go along with the many "musts" and "oughts" that have been handed on to us, and we live with them as if they were authentic translations of the gospel of our Lord. People must be motivated to come to church, youth must be entertained, money must be raised, and above all everyone must be happy. Moreover, we ought to be on good terms with the church and civil authorities; we ought to be liked or at least respected by a fair majority of our parishioners; we ought to move up in the ranks according to schedule; and we ought to have enough vacation and salary to live a comfortable life. Thus we are busy people just like all other busy people, rewarded with the rewards which are rewarded to busy people!

All this is simply to suggest how horrendously secular our ministerial lives tend to be.

Pastors are angry at their leaders for not leading and at their followers for not following. They are angry at those who do not come to church for not coming and angry at those who do come for coming without enthusiasm. They are angry at their families who make them feel guilty, and angry at themselves for not being who they want to be. This is not an open, blatant, roaring anger but an anger hidden behind the smooth word, the smiling face, and the polite handshake. It is a frozen anger, an anger which settles into

*a biting resentment and slowly paralyzes a generous heart. If there is anything that makes the ministry look grim and dull, it is this dark, insidious anger in the servants of Christ.*⁵

Harsh words? Maybe. Or tragically close to the real thing. The question still needs to be answered: "What does it mean to minister in our contemporary society?"

A good working philosophy for the pastoral ministry can be reduced to three words: pray, preach, and pastor.

PRAY

The Church of the Nazarene *Manual*, paragraph 401.4, concludes with this brief but dynamic truth, "He must be an example in prayer."

In recent months I have found myself more and more at the end of my wits regarding situations in my congregation. I think, as never before, I have come to see the tremendous importance of my prayer life. I cannot; God can! It's as simple as that. "Not by might, nor by power,

There is a subtle shifting of ministerial emphases and priorities, but I am convinced that Mr. and Mrs. John Q. Public in the pew wish it weren't so.

but by my spirit" (Zech. 4:6). "This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting" (Mark 9:29).

My very survival rests on my commitment to a life of prayer. I do not know about your personal struggles, but I know that prayer is the answer to my own personal needs. God does answer prayer. He ministers directly to my soul in the place of prayer. He speaks peace to me in restlessness; He gives strength in my weakness; He makes me bold when I would be fearful.

I would recommend today that every pastor read Richard Foster's books, *The Celebration of Discipline* and *The Discipline of Simplicity*. Andrew Murray's little book *Helps to Intercession* is an excellent stimulant to prayer. Henri J. M. Nouwen's *The Way of the Heart* will profit all of us.

The pastor must pray regularly, fervently, honestly, in simplicity, humbly, devotedly. There is no substitute for the discipline of prayer in the life of the pastor. Revival and renewal begin in the closet of prayer, not in the hype of advertising. My people want to believe that I have been walking and talking to the living God before I speak to them. My first priority then is to pray.

PREACH

Preaching has always been my first love. I cannot remember a time in my life when I doubted God's call in my life to preach. I live to preach. I preach to live.

Jess Moody, the great Southern Baptist preacher, says of preaching: "Every minister should make a pulpit a miniature Calvary where he dies a little for his people . . . sometimes a battle between leather lungs and wooden ears. It is a sad sight to see a congregation, like a storm-tossed schooner, blow out of the sanctuary in a mad rush to beat the Methodists to the cafeteria. Then one little lady comes to the minister and drones, ' . . . enjoyed your little talk.'"⁶

G. Curtis Jones says: "Preaching is more than an attractive and persuasive arrangement of words. It is total life, commitment, and communication—proclaiming and practicing the Good News. It is passing around one's perforated heart for others to see and handle! Years of constant scrutiny and exposure take their toll, but it is still the most courageous and satisfying task in the world."⁷

I'm not sure that I have a philosophy of preaching, but there are some things about my preaching I do know.

I know that I love the study of the Word of God.

I know that I believe that the Word of God is the highest authority known in this dispensation.

I know the Bible is about reality . . . man, sin, death, life, suffering, hell, heaven, beginnings and endings, the in betweens and in the midst of.

I know that the Bible speaks to man's predicament.

I know I believe in salvation as the Bible teaches it.

I know I believe in the Bible more than I believe in psychology.

I know that I believe the Bible has the answer to every problem man faces.

As I think about this, I know why I love to preach . . . preaching is the high calling to introduce God in Christ to mankind. I sincerely believe our people are weary of our much sharing and want to know if we can preach!! Preach with authority! Preach with vigor! Preach with unction! Preach with all our hearts! Preach with our lives! Preach as if all depended upon our preaching! Preach to inform! Preach for decisions! Preach for victory! Preach . . . preach . . . preach . . . preach!! Our world needs to hear the thunder in the pulpit this Sunday morning! Our world needs to hear of grace and glory this Sunday morning! Our world needs God—and how shall they hear unless they have a preacher?

A minister friend of a leading church in the Midwest met his board. The first thing they said to him was, "There are three things we want you to know. First, we don't want a psychologist for a pastor. Second, we don't want a man intent on pursuing a Ph.D. Third, we want someone who will preach the Bible to us." In the context of their past experience that made a great deal of sense. I cannot help but feel there are many other search committees and boards out there who feel the same.

Stan Seifert is in heaven today, but he almost missed it! He attended a little interdenominational church in

Evandale. He had cancer. He was active in the little church. One of my men asked if I would go with him to visit the man. I asked Stan if he was saved. In all the sermons he'd heard, no one had told him how. He was saved on that Wednesday afternoon and the following Wednesday he was in heaven.

The second priority then is PREACHING.

PASTOR

I never thought I wanted to be a pastor. Too confining. Too limiting. Too burdensome. I wanted to preach. But God has given me an unbelievable love for pastoring. A pastor is a shepherd . . . like the Good Shepherd!

A pastor is:

A community sponge who soaks in problems.

A man or woman with the heart of a lamb and the hide of a rhinoceros.

Not the simpleton Hollywood has depicted him to be.

Probably the most aware person in the community. He lives with the Bible, great books, and human heart-break.

Some of the greatest evidences of courage I have witnessed have been manifested by these men who march to the sound of a different drummer. I wish I were more like most of them. I have seen many of them crucified because of their courage to rebuke institutionalized evil.

If Hollywood wants some real drama, I can personally tell them some great stories about gospel gump-tion.⁸

On a more serious note, Dr. Eugene L. Stowe, in his book *The Ministry of Shepherding*, quotes Dr. Lewis Corlett, "... so to live in the conscious presence of the Holy Spirit that his contacts with people would be a touch of heaven."⁹ The people I see from day to day are hurting, broken people. Many of them are prominent in our local church, and yet they struggle along, frustrated in their faith.

A pastor knows much about his people. I share some horrible secrets with members of my congregation. I sometimes cry for them when I am alone. I weep because they cannot believe God for their particular problems. Sometimes my heart hurts so much I think it will break. Somehow, I think they know that.

A pastor is available to his people. The telephone is one of my greatest trials. Sometimes its ringing is like the sound of fingernails on a chalkboard. It knows nothing of a "decent hour." I know that behind most of the calls is some voice with some problem. There are times when I'm so "soaked" I want to "croak"! But people need someone to talk to, someone to listen, someone who will pray.

A pastor is a pattern to his people. I am growing in the Lord. I believe in spiritual growth. Recently one of my greatest friends cornered me following a service. "I just

want to tell you how much God has done in your life. The other night in the board meeting you had every right to respond. You didn't. There was a time when you would have. I appreciate that you are growing!"

Another prayed on a Wednesday night, "Lord, we thank You for the change in our pastor!" And here I thought I was so good all along!

One night during a tough time in our church I turned the service over to our minister of music and went to the altar. When I had prayed and looked up, I found a great crowd of board members and friends weeping with me and holding me up. I am human. I hurt. I cry. I tell them when God does something special for me or when I gain victory along the way. They say it helps them. I know they help me, and I want to help them.

A pastor loves his people. Each time I face our congregation, I fight back a surge of emotion. I call them "my people" under my breath when no one else can hear. I know they are God's people, but in a sense they are mine. I cannot express how I love them . . . all of

Our people are weary of our much sharing and want to know if we can preach—with authority—with unction—for decisions—for victory!

them. One of them hurt me deeply. I was tempted to think all kinds of things about that person. But I prayed and fasted until God gave me a special love for him. Last Sunday night, after having been so critical of me, he now offered to pay for radio time for me to preach to more people. I would have loved him anyway, but God made it easier and better.

For months I had prayed for, counseled with, and preached to a certain couple. Things actually went from bad to worse. They argued. They fought. They separated. They talked of divorce. They despaired of hope. I prayed. Others prayed. I preached hope and healing; wholeness and holiness; forgiveness and togetherness. I pastored. I loved them both and refused to take sides. It was Friday when the long-awaited call came. They wanted one more session. Two hours out of a busy Saturday. Nothing!

Sunday she was in the choir. He slipped into the service late. I preached. When the invitation was given, he came forward, and she joined him. He's back home today!

The first ministers were the twelve disciples. There is no evidence that Jesus chose them because they were brighter or nicer than other people. In fact the New Testament record suggests that they were continually missing the point, jockeying for position and, when the chips were down, interested in nothing so much as saving their own skins. Their sole qualification seems to

His lackluster resumé would never get beyond
the church secretary's wastebasket, but . . .

Unlikely American Hero

by Joseph Bayly

It isn't likely he could serve on the board of most churches because he was a single, young adult.

It isn't likely he'd be asked to speak at a liberated Christian women's conference because all of his disciples were men.

It isn't likely he'd be asked to speak at a men's retreat because he cried publicly.

It isn't likely he'd pass most evangelism training courses because he adhered to no soul-winning formula and approached each person differently.

It isn't likely he could be the pastor of most churches because he said that people who remarry after divorce (except for marital unfaithfulness) are guilty of adultery.

It isn't likely he'd be asked to supply many pulpits because he often just told stories. And they were short.

It isn't likely he'd prepare Christian education materials because a lot of his stories were open-ended.

It isn't likely he could serve on a

Christian college faculty because it was rumored he drank wine.

It isn't likely he'd be asked to teach at a seminary because he had no earned doctorate, and he spent most of his time in practical work with his students.

It isn't likely he could serve on the board of a Christian institution or organization because he was poor.

It isn't likely he could preserve a reputation for leadership because he regularly took time out for rest and washed the feet of his followers.

It isn't likely he could be a counselor because he reinforced people's sense of sin, was directive, and turned from those who didn't respond.

It isn't likely he could run an electronic church because he told a rich man to give away his money to the poor, not to support his own ministry.

It isn't likely he could fill in at a youth conflicts seminar because he stood up to his parents when he was 12, appealing to a higher re-

sponsibility, and refused to obey his mother when he was in his early 30s.

It isn't likely he could fill in at most other seminars because he defined success in nonmaterial terms.

It isn't likely he'd be used as an example of dying, because in his last hours he felt alienated from God the Father.

It isn't likely his opinion would be sought or heeded because he spoke of his followers in terms of a "little flock" and "two or three," warned against times when all men speak well of believers, and said that they should expect to be persecuted.

It isn't likely he'd expect people to come into church buildings; he'd probably be preaching in Central Park or the Boston Commons.

. . . If Jesus were here today.

Poor church, poor world.

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PASTORAL DEMANDS

(Continued from page 55)

have been their initial willingness to rise to their feet when Jesus said, "Follow me." As St. Paul put it later, "God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise" (1 Corinthians 1:27, RSV).

When Jesus sent the twelve out into the world, his instructions were simple. He told them to preach the kingdom of God and to heal (Luke 9:2), with the implication that to do either right was in effect to do both. Fortunately for the world in general and the church in particular, the ability to do them is not dependent on either moral character or I.Q. To do them in the name of Christ is to be a minister. In the name of Christ not to do them is to be a bad joke.¹⁰

The demands upon a pastor are still the same. Pray. Preach. Pastor. It's not all as complicated as the devil wants us to believe. It is God's Church; and when we pray, preach, and pastor, He does the rest.

NOTES

1. G. Curtis Jones, *The Naked Shepherd* (Waco, Tex.: Word Books, 1979), p. 6. Used by permission.
2. Frederick Buechner, *Wishful Thinking* (New York: Harper & Row, 1973), pp. 61-62. Used by permission.
3. Jones, pp. 13-15. Used by permission.
4. Henri J. M. Nouwen, *The Wounded Healer* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Co., 1972), cover.
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SERMON ILLUSTRATIONS



Prayer Spans Generations

George McCluskey, great-grandfather of James C. Dobson, in the final decades of his life invested the hour from eleven to twelve o'clock daily in intercessory prayer for his children. However, he was not only asking God to bless his children; he extended his request to generations not yet born.

Toward the end of his life, the old man announced that God had made a very unusual promise to him. He was given the assurance that every member of four generations of his family would be Christians, including those yet to be born. He then died, and the promise became part of the spiritual heritage passed on to those in George McCluskey's bloodline.

Dobson, who represents the fourth generation, states: "McCluskey and his wife were ministers and charter members in their denomination. They brought two daughters into the world, both of whom married ministers of that same denomination. They produced a boy and four girls, one of whom became my mother. The girls all married ministers and the boy also became one. My cousin H. B. London and I were roommates in college. During the first semester of our sophomore year London announced that God had called him to be a minister in (you guessed it) the same denomination as his great-grandfather. And believe me, I began to get very nervous!"

Dobson represents the first, though not the only, member of four generations who has not felt specifically "called" into the ministry, though he has countless times talked about the gospel of Jesus Christ and its relation to family life.

"Though my great-grandfather is long dead," says Dobson, "he still provides the richest source of inspiration for me. It staggers the mind to realize that the prayers of this one man, spoken more than 50 years ago, reach across four generations of time and influence developments in my life today. That is the power of prayer and the source of my life and optimism."

—James C. Dobson, *Straight Talk to Men and Their Wives* (Word Books, 1980).

A Weather Vane or the Cross?

Over the spires of many New England churches there is frequently to be seen

a bit of decoration which whispers perverse suggestions to the imagination. It is the weather vane. No doubt it came to be used on church spires as a protest against Catholicism and the association of the Cross with the Catholic church, and also as a piece of practical service to the community to show which way the wind was blowing. But the weather vane over the church might often take on a true and deep symbolism as the outward and physical sign of an inward and spiritual disgrace, and accommodation to prevailing winds. It pictures the frequent surrender of the moral absolutism of the Cross for the pliant opportunism of the weather vane.

—Halford E. Luccock in *Living a Thousand Lives*. Quoted from *Jesus and the American Mind* (Abingdon Press, 1930).

Freedom in Worship

I recall the experience in visiting a large cathedral in Europe. Our tour group entered very quietly and seriously, and I suppose quite piously. These stately, Gothic structures call one to reverence. There were several persons at different places who knelt in prayer. Suddenly we heard a little boy shouting, running toward the chancel with his mother chasing him—no doubt embarrassed by his outburst, but having difficulty catching up with him. The comment of our guide concerning the incident was unforgettable: "There is probably more worship in the gleeful shouting of that child than in all the solemn prayers being made."

—John Thompson, *Pulpit Digest*, May/June, 1983.

Holy Calling

When I was in seminary, James Dittes presented his research on possible psychological reasons for why people go into the ministry. According to Dittes, as children many pastors were what he calls "little adults." The "little adult" is the child who is always the classroom monitor when the teacher leaves the room, the school patrol boy or girl, the child who enforces adult values. The "little adult" may be respected or even admired by other children, but rarely will this child be popular. Dittes's thesis is that "little adults" are attracted to the pastoral ministry. As pastors, they now enforce God's values among wayward adults just as they enforced adult values upon wayward children.

One student, on hearing this, blurted out: "You've just demolished my call to the ministry. I thought God called me. You're telling me that my 'call' was little more than my reaction to other people?"

"Has God stopped calling ministers through other people?" asked Dittes.

—William H. Willimon, *Quarterly Review*, Summer, 1983.

Emptying the Sea

Augustine, once puzzled by the doctrine of the Trinity, fell asleep and dreamed that he was walking along the seashore when he came upon a child who had made a hole in the sand and was running back and forth between the hole and the edge of the ocean, carrying water to the hole.

"What are you trying to do?" asked Augustine.

"Oh, nothing much," replied the child. "I'm only trying to empty the sea into this hole."

A thought struck Augustine with the suddenness of lightning. What he had been trying to do was even more absurd. Standing on the shore of time, he had been trying to crowd the eternal and infinite God into his small and finite mind.

—Chevis F. Horne, *Proclaim*, July, August, September, 1983.

Love Your Nearest Neighbor

"Some marriages are motivated by mere lust," Luther once said. "But mere lust is felt even by fleas and lice. Love begins when we wish to serve others."

"Of course the Christian should love his wife," Luther declared. "He is supposed to love his neighbor, and since his wife is his nearest neighbor, she should be his deepest love. And she should also be his dearest friend."

—William J. Petersen, *Eternity*, June, 1983.

Found Out!

I remember a man with whom I visited in the hospital. I hadn't met him before—and he left the day after my visit. As we were talking, he pointed to the Gideon Bible on the windowsill and said, "I've always wanted to read that." I asked him why he hadn't. He said, "I'm afraid I'll find out something about myself I don't want to know!"

—Sarah Ewing, *Pulpit Digest*, June, 1983.



TODAY'S BOOKS for TODAY'S PREACHER

Your Church: A Dynamic Community

By Arleon L. Kelley (Westminster Press, paperback, 120 pp., \$5.95)

The church's role is undergoing constant change. Constant change in the community alerts the present church to evaluate and update organizational skills.

Arleon Kelley takes a theological approach, mixing religious order and organizational skill in fostering ideas for a more successful church organization in your community.

One of the questions asked is, "Do you see signs of progress in your congregation and community?" As he quotes, "Christian people are not always conscious of the church as a human community" (p. 9, c. 1). "The mission of the church, whether local or universal, is not just to nurture religious values and faith, but to work to actualize these values by participating in God's ongoing creative process, by manifesting wholeness, and by serving the entire human community" (p. 14, c. 1).

The book outlines a detailed and structured plan to help the present and future church meet human needs through basic organizational skills. Using actual case studies, you will be able to visualize and compare the present state of your church and community. Once your church discovers its role and potential in its given community, the possibility of wholeness, which the author says is lacking today, will begin to blossom and become more evident. Your church can become a more creative organization with the challenges of this book.

—Douglas A. Maxson

Activating the Passive Church

By Lyle E. Schaller (Abingdon, 1981, paperback, 159 pp., \$5.95)

Without attempting to plead his case, Schaller gives the causes for passivity in the church. As he describes church situations in graphic detail, each chapter gives candid shots of a local church and then offers cures.

While dealing with principles that apply in the area of church growth, or the lack of it, the author is quick to admit the Holy Spirit can bring life to any situation.

This is the best book that Schaller has written, deserving to be read by ministers and laymen.

—Joseph D. Biscoe

Memo to a Weary Sunday School

By Teacher David McCarthy (Judson Press, 1978, paperback, 95 pp., \$3.95)

This is good stuff! It is down to earth, and that is probably what makes it so readable. Everyone who has ever taught will see him/herself somewhere in these pages . . . and draw inspiration to continue in the challenging task of teaching the Bible. Every church ought to have several of these around as emergency medical aid for discouraged teachers, and as a boost to the rest.

—Gene Van Note

Preaching and Worship in the Small Church

By William H. Willimon and Robert L. Wilson (Abingdon, paperback, 126 pp., \$4.95)

In recent months I have been reading any book or article that I could find pertaining to this activity called worship. Such writings are rare; indeed, almost impossible to find. While this is unfortunately true, the church continues to suffer under a prevailing ignorance concerning what worship actually is and how true worshipers are authenticated.

This precise study should be read by every open-minded church administrator, by every pastor representing a large church, and most assuredly by every pastor and local church leader. The words "preaching" and "small" are not the key words in this title; "worship" is. Worship is the emphasis, and there has been no area of church life that is so important yet has been so thoughtlessly neglected. There rests the need for this thought-provoking book to find its way into your reading agenda.

Willimon and Wilson make comment in many areas that may not be in accord to everyone's liking. The need is to read over those things that cannot be assimilated into our system and honestly grapple with the major analyses that are dealt with. The fact is evident that the authors believe worship to be an area needing emphasis within the church today. They minimize the postulate that bigness is best and forcefully prove that "the very smallness of the small church can be seen as a distinct advantage for preaching and worship."

As a handbook that considers the place of worship in nearly every possible area of church life, the suggestions for "how to worship creatively" are laced through each

chapter. Changing the perception of smallness as limited, extricating illusions of denominational sameness as a priority, and dealing with varied enactments such as administering the sacraments, weddings, funerals, and preaching within a worship context are given commentary.

A. W. Tozer wrote in 1948, "I wonder if there was ever a time when true spiritual worship was at a lower ebb. To great sections of the church the art of worship has been lost entirely, and in its place has come that strange and foreign thing called the 'program.' This word has been borrowed from the stage and applied with sad wisdom to the type of public service which now passes for worship among us." The need to consider new concepts of worship is even more important today than 35 years ago and must be given its rightful place. Willimon and Wilson will help you begin such a journey of worship renewal!

—H. Paul Huddle

A Musician's Guide to Church Music

By Joy E. Lawrence and John A. Ferguson (Pilgrim Press, 1981, \$16.95)

This book is a comprehensive, well-written, easily read and understood resource for the experienced musician in a full-time position as well as for choir directors, soloists, choir members, and aspiring musicians or students of music.

It is obvious that Lawrence and Ferguson are not proponents of music that titillates the emotions and centers on the human element of Christianity but rather of that which

teaches and strengthens theology and doctrine by a proper emphasis and understanding of the power and majesty of God and His Word.

Chapters related to working within the church, the musician's role as a leader in worship, and many of the suggestions given for beginning and implementing a program for adult choirs, youth choirs, children's choirs, handbell choirs, and to establishing an ongoing music educational program, offer great benefits to church music directors and musicians at every level.

This book is a must for ministers who are concerned about the current tendency toward substitution of frothy, bubbly entertainment for a rich heritage of beautiful, spiritually powerful music, and might well be required reading for those not so inclined.


For music directors who have not had the benefit of a college degree and, more specifically, a music history class, Lawrence and Ferguson give a concise, basic, historical background of music and its role in worship. They attempt to correct some mistaken concepts about "liturgical" and "nonliturgical" by discussing how music is used in each of these forms.

The foreword, introduction, and first two chapters are good reading for ministers of music and musicians of any church or denomination. A succinct discussion is given on: What is a minister? What are the qualifications of a church musician? What is worship? and How can music lighten or detract from our worship?

The authors write from a background of serving in Lutheran

churches. Conclusions drawn are taken from surveys by and in Lutheran churches. Space given to masses, canticles, and motets would have little meaning for most musicians oriented to evangelical worship. But only part of a chapter is taken up in defining and listing these. A quick study and perusal of these texts could serve to lift our sights to better lyrical content in our "gospel songs."

It can only help a church's music program, especially in those situations where the congregational songs are chosen five minutes before the service, and the special music is rehearsed for the first time while people are arriving for worship. And particularly in those situations where no thought is given to the theology, doctrine, or philosophy contained in the lyrics, to say nothing of the grammar: "I feel good," "Ain't no power on earth," "I keep fallin' in love with Him," "Jesus got ahold o' my life, and He won't let me go," "Aren't you gettin' just a bit tired of foolin' around?" et cetera.

—Randal L. Beegle 

Management—A Biblical Approach

By Myron Rush (Victor Books, 1983, paperback, 236 pp., \$7.95)

An excellent "primer" in organizational management for leaders in the church. Using applied, practical, and sound fundamentals of management, the author immediately provides handles for biblical administration of God's people. This book would be opened almost daily by a beginning pastor.


—Gordon Wetmore

Rural America—

(Continued from page 17)

ability to them in crisis times, even on my day off, is warmly acknowledged.

These folk like country-style music and have annual country music festivals. The guitar takes precedence over classical church music, and they are free and informal in their worship. They respond well to testimonies in the morning service and the open altar for prayer. It is wonderful to have a spiritual atmosphere where people express complete liberty and obedience to the will of God in worship services.

A small-town ministry need not be feared. It may be one of the most rewarding experiences of your ministry. Let yourself be wrapped up in the lives of the people, and let the people wrap themselves around you. 

MIDDLE . . . NOT GOOD ENOUGH


(Continued from page 42)

sinner to make a move toward Him? How many times has divine forgiveness been promised in holiness churches, if we will first slip out of our seats, come forward, confess our sins, and meet any number of other preconditions to salvation? How many times have we been told that "we have to surrender all" to Jesus *before* He will come in His sanctifying power? This is not to question the necessity of human action in the salvation event, nor is it questioning the sincerity of those who have made such appeals. It does, however, point out a dangerous trend in some of our thinking and suggests a subtle but significant shift back toward a works-righteousness in our understanding of conversion and sanctification.

Wesley was clearly a semi-Augustinian. He even declared himself to be "within a hair's breath of Calvinism!" He declared that salvation *always* started with God and, at any point on the path to glory, it was God who was there first, offering the free gift of His grace to humanity and enabling that person to respond. The sinner's duty was not to meet certain requirements *before* God would act, but rather to respond in simple faith and receive the grace freely offered in Christ. God does not withhold His forgiveness until we repent—Wesley's doctrine of the unlimited atonement declares that "Jesus paid it all" 2,000 years ago and that forgiveness is already ours if we will but receive it by faith.

God is not watching sinners flounder around in their depraved state, hoping that somehow a few will get their act together and come to Him. Wesley's doctrine of prevenient grace declares that God is even now active through His Spirit in the life of the sinner, drawing him or her to the point of repentance and faith.

Entire sanctification is not some moment when carnal Christians finally "shape up" and consecrate their all to God and thus obligate the Holy Spirit to cleanse them. Wesley's doctrine of Christian perfection teaches that when the Spirit comes in His fullness, it is our reasonable service to present ourselves in love to Him and others. God offers His grace to us freely. We may accept or reject that gift. But our action is always the response to God's first step toward us.

As followers of Wesley, we have correctly chosen a middle course between the distortions of both Pelagius and Augustine. But it is not enough to settle for some vague view that speaks of divine/human cooperation. We must be thoroughly Wesleyan and preserve the fine distinction of our semi-Augustinian theology, always giving the priority to the work of God in salvation. Let us work out our own salvation confidently, remembering that we can do so only because it is first God who works in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure (Phil. 2:12-13). 

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NEW TESTAMENT WORD STUDIES

by Ralph Earle

HEBREWS

Without Descent (7:3)

This is one word in Greek, *agen-ealogētos* (only here in NT). It is compounded of *a-negative* and the verb *genealogeo* (found in NT only in v. 6), "to trace ancestry." So it clearly means "without genealogy" (NASB, NIV)—that is, without a recorded pedigree. We should not assume, as some have wrongly done, that Melchizedek was without human ancestry. The same should be said about the added description: "having neither beginning of days, nor end of life." It means that the dates of his birth and death are unknown.

Made like (7:3)

The verb *aphōmoioō* (only here in NT) is in the form of a perfect passive participle. The idea seems to be that Melchizedek was like the Son of God in the timelessness of his priesthood: He had no predecessor or successor. J. Schneider says that in the perfect tense, as here, the verb means "to be like" (TDNT, 5:198).

Carnal (7:16)

The Greek adjective *sarkinos* comes from the noun *sarx*, "flesh." The English word "carnal" (KJV) comes from the Latin word for flesh. But it has taken on a largely pejorative sense, so that it does not fit here, where we are dealing with a matter of "physical requirement" (NASB), or "as to his ancestry" (NIV). Jesus came from the tribe of Judah and so did not meet the requirement of being a physical descendant of Levi (v. 14.) Rather, He was a priest in the order of Melchizedek.

Endless (7:16)

The Greek adjective *akatalytos*

(only here in NT) is compounded of *a-negative* and the verb *katalyō*, "destroy." So it means "indestructible" (NASB, NIV).

Repent (7:21)

Today we normally use the word "repent" for feeling remorse for sin or some misdeed. The Greek verb here is *metamelomai*, which usually has that sense. But George Wesley Buchanan points out that this "is formed from the preposition 'after' and the verb 'to care,' 'be anxious about,' 'take thought.' This word, then, means to have an 'after thought' or an 'after care,' to give the matter a second thought." Buchanan concludes: "The claim of both Ps. 110 and the author is that God made a firm decision about this and he would never give it a second thought. It could not come up for reconsideration" (*To the Hebrews*, Anchor Bible, p. 127). Probably the best translation here is "will not change his mind" (NIV; cf. NASB).

Testament (7:22)

This is the first of 17 times that the word *diathēkē* occurs in Hebrews. In the KJV it is translated "covenant" 11 times and "testament" 6 times.

But this is unfortunate. In his monumental commentary on the Greek text of *Hebrews*, B. F. Westcott writes: "There is not the least trace of the meaning 'testament' in the Greek Old Scriptures [the Septuagint], and the idea of a 'testament' was indeed foreign to the Jews till the time of the Herods" (p. 299).

The ordinary Greek word for "covenant" was *synthēkē*, which does not occur in the New Testament. This indicates an agreement made between two or more parties. The reason the sacred writers chose *diathēkē* is clear: *Synthēkē* was used for a covenant made between

equals, but God's covenant with mankind is a unilateral agreement: God dictates the terms.

For a further treatment of *diathēkē*, see the discussion at Hebrews 9:16-17 and Galatians 3:15.


Surety (7:22)

The word is *engyos* (only here in NT). Jesus is the divine "Guarantee." Preisker suggests that He is the "Guarantor" of the promises of God. He writes: "With his life, death and ascension Jesus has given us the assurance . . . that the beginning of the saving work of God will necessarily be followed by its completion" (TDNT, 2:239).

To the Uttermost (7:25)

The Greek phrase *eis to panteles* occurs (in the NT) only here and in Luke 13:11 ("at all"). Westcott says that it means "completely, wholly, to the uttermost" (p. 191). The NIV has "completely," whereas the NASB has "forever." Delling notes that outside the Bible the word *panteles* means "complete," and the phrase signifies "completely" (TDNT, 8:66-67). But he combines the two ideas of the NIV and NASB in this interesting observation: "The One who saves 'for ever' . . . is also, however, the One who saves 'altogether,' so that the saying about the 'totality' of the saving work can hardly be expounded in only a single direction" (p. 67).

Consecrated (7:28)

The Greek has *teteleiōmenon*, the perfect passive participle of the verb *teleiōō*, "complete" or "perfect." So the correct translation is "made perfect" (NASB, NIV). Jesus is "perfect" in contrast to the Levitical priests who were "weak" (NASB, NIV). 

SERMON OUTLINES



THE REASONS, RUDIMENTS, AND RESULTS OF HOLINESS

Scripture: 1 Pet. 3:13-17

Text: "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear" (v. 15).

Introduction

The mild voice of reason finds no response from the fool who is swayed by passion. Neither does the voice appeal to the man who has lost his mind.

While there is nothing in the Christian religion that is contrary to reason, yet there are many things above and beyond reason. We are chin-deep in mysteries all around us. Salvation is not the only thing we cannot fully comprehend. Really, no one can understand how a goose can eat green grass and produce eggs, and a sheep can eat the same grass and produce wool, and a black cow can eat the same grass and give white milk.

Let me call your attention to the three Rs in the wonderful experience of holiness:

I. THE REASON FOR HOLINESS

1. God commands holiness (Lev. 11:44; 1 Pet. 1:15-16; Matt. 5:8).
2. God wills our holiness (1 Thess. 4:3-4).
3. The Lord promises holiness of heart and life (2 Cor. 7:1; Matt. 5:8).
4. Jesus died that we might be holy (John 17:17; Eph. 5:25-27).

II. THE RUDIMENTS OF HOLINESS

The word *rudiment* means the elements or first principles of a subject. In other words, we are to deal with the constituent elements of the experience of holiness.

1. God is the Originating Cause of holiness (Eph. 1:4; Jude 1).

2. Jesus is the Meritorious Cause of holiness (Heb. 13:12, 14; 1 John 1:7).
3. The Holy Spirit is the Efficient Cause of holiness (Rom. 15:16; Acts 2:38-39).
4. The Bible is the Instrumental Cause of our holiness (John 17:17).
5. Faith is the Conditional Cause of our holiness (Acts 26:18). We may express it in what has been termed a shortcut to theology:
*God thought it,
Jesus bought it,
The Word taught it,
The soul sought it,
Faith wrought it,
The devil fought it,
But I've got it.*

III. THE RESULTS OF HOLINESS

Yes, what does the experience of holiness do for the person who obtains it?

1. The experience of holiness coordinates, unifies, and simplifies the soul. Holiness makes a person one with his higher and better self. The experience collects and gathers all the powers and faculties of the individual and trends them in the same direction. The mind, the heart, and the will all work in perfect harmony. The inward sin principle in the believer will become a single mind for God (Jas. 1:8; 4:8; Gal. 5:17).
2. The experience of holiness brings unification to the people of God (1 Cor. 12:13; John 17:21). The experience of holiness is both subjective and objective.
3. The coming of the Spirit in fullness brings divine power (Acts 1:8).
4. Heart holiness fully prepares

one for heaven (Heb. 12:14; Psalm 24).

Conclusion

Truly this blessed experience prepares us for this life and the life that is to come. Amid the struggles and disappointments of this life, this experience will keep us. James Nicholson expressed this truth so beautifully when he said:

*Lord Jesus, I long to be perfectly whole;
I want Thee forever to live in my soul.
Break down every idol, cast out every
foe.*

*Now wash me and I shall be whiter than
snow.*

—W. B. Walker
Bethany, Okla.

LEARN OF, LEAN ON, LOOK FOR

Introduction: We might call these three short phrases "Christ's threefold invitation to a waiting, weary, and wandering world."

I. Learn of me—Matt. 11:29

- A. Song—"More About Jesus," No. 122 in *Worship in Song*
- B. To learn of Christ we must take His yoke. Webster defines a yoke as: "A piece of wood by which two work animals are joined together for the purpose of work." Hence it denotes servitude or intimate association.
- C. When we accept His yoke, He gives us:
 1. A great *promise*—"Ye shall find rest unto your souls."
 2. A great *plan*—"Those things . . . ye have . . . learned" (Phil. 4:7-9).
 3. A great *paradise*—The promise here means also the final rest of our soul.

II. Lean on me—Matt. 11:28; Ps. 55:22; Deut. 33:27

- A. Song—"Leaning on the Everlasting Arms," No. 446 in *Worship in Song*
- B. A modern chorus says that we are "Learning to Lean"
 1. "Learning to Lean" indicates our weakness and need for depending on His strength.
 2. "Learning to Lean" means that you must have faith in Him.
 3. "Learning to Lean" says that He really cares for you—Matt. 18:11.

III. Look for me—Luke 21:28

Christians should live with their feet on the ground and their eyes toward the skies.

When Christ says, "Look for Me," it should cause us to do three things:

- A. Have *hope* beyond this world—1 Thess. 4:18
- B. Be *diligent* in our Christian walk—2 Peter 3:8-14
- C. Be *introspective* of our life—Hebrews 10:25

Conclusion:

In a world of uncertainty, we really need to:

- Learn of Him
- Lean on Him
- Look for Him

—Duane Yoesel
Westminster, Colo.

THE CHRIST WHO IS ABLE

Text: "He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Heb. 7:25).

There are many false gods. A different type of Buddha was found in China. A sleeping deity. There, lying on his side, with calm face, closed eyes, and head resting upon his hand, was a gilded wooden figure, 30 feet long. But he did nothing for his worshipers. He slept

while the world went on. How different this Buddha is from our Christ who "ever liveth to make intercession" for us.

WHAT IS CHRIST ABLE TO DO TODAY?

I. Christ Is Able to Save the Most Hopeless Backslider

The proof is found in the word "uttermost" which means to save completely, fully, absolutely, and perfectly.

Three Means Christ Uses to Reach a Backslider:

- A. By purposely spoiling each Christian for the world.
- B. By precious memories. An old hymn states, "What peaceful hours I once enjoyed, / How sweet their mem'ry still." (Luke 15:18)
- C. By personal contacts. God sent Nathan to David.

II. Christ Is Able to Save from the Consequences of Sin

Take a second look at the strong word "uttermost." Recall how God accomplished this in the life of John Newton, who wrote "Amazing Grace."

III. Christ Is Able to Save Us from Sinning

When any scripture is interpreted to condone sin, you may rest assured it has been wrested from its proper meaning; for such an interpretation would irreconcilably contradict the general teaching of the Scriptures. See Rom. 3:23; Matt. 1:21; 1 John 3:7-10. A sinning Christian is as contradictory as a truthful liar or a healthy invalid. Christ's uttermost salvation saves us from sinning, and we keep saved as long as we obey God.

IV. Christ Is Able to Keep Us Saved All the Time

The marginal reading in the KJV is "evermore" for the word "uttermost." The NASB states "He is able to save forever [*italics mine*] those who draw

near to God through Him."

Dr. W. B. Godbey testified, "I was saved as a young child on my mother's lap. For 80 years I walked with God and never once lost His grace out of my heart." This is a far cry from this up and down, in and out, off and on again kind of religion that some people have.

V. Christ Is Able to Cleanse from All Sin

The word "uttermost" means fully and completely. "... he can save fully and completely" (Heb. 7:25, Phillips).

Peter said, referring to the baptism of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost, that their hearts were purified by faith (Acts 15:9). There is great power in the fire of the Lord, for it burned the sacrifice of Elijah, plus the wood, stones, dust, and water (1 Kings 18:38); yet some say God is not able to purify our hearts.

VI. Christ Is Able to Save the Worst of Sinners

Proof again is in the powerful expression "to the uttermost." Christ can save the "down and outer" and the "up and outer." John Wesley at one time could have been regarded as an "up and outer" (Romans 3:23). He was a child of the manse, graduate of Oxford, theologically trained for the Anglican ministry, prolific in labors. Yet he experienced a gnawing uncertainty concerning his spiritual standing. God was faithful! A Moravian Christian in Georgia faced him with the truth. Later on May 24, 1738, he attended church on Aldersgate Street. Out of that service he testified, "I felt that I did trust Christ, CHRIST ALONE, for salvation." He felt his heart strangely warmed.

Yes, Jesus is able to save, sanctify, and keep today because of His perpetual intercession for us.

—Jack Seberry

New Port Richey, Fla. 



THE ARK ROCKER

END OF QUOTATION . . .

A semi-well-known teacher in the holiness movement, something of a twit, actually, has a weird view of heaven. It came to him in a dream, he says, after the Labor Day picnic sponsored by the congregation he attends.

He got to the gate and there, just ahead of him about 50 yards and off to the left a bit, sat an old fellow reading aloud from a large book. The book appeared to be one of thousands that weighed down three large wagons. One other wagon stood empty, farther to the left, and yet another was just arriving, full, propelled by some mysterious and invisible force. He listened carefully, he says, and discovered that the old boy was reading with an awful lisp and a bit of southwestern drawl, nasal and bold. And some of the stuff he read was plain stupid.

Well, he had to rouse somebody to the gate for they weren't expecting him—yet. But the guardian was pleasant enough, so the teacher asked him what the whole scene was about, especially since there should be no lisps or drawls, not even the signs of age shown by that old fellow reading, in heaven. Not in a perfect heaven. "And," said he to the guardian, "I didn't think they allowed such balderdash to be spoken here either." He says that none of it was nasty and some of it was even a bit clever, but most of it was pious trivia coated with pomposity. And always with that lisp. He won't repeat any of it "out of self-respect," he says.

Finally, he says, he got up the nerve to ask what was going on here. And he was told. The old fellow reading was "Uncle Bud" Robinson.

It seems that when he arrived in heaven 40 years ago, Bud was asked to participate in a most kind and merciful scheme, and he consented—though a bit slowly. "Uncle Bud," they had said to him, "do you see those two wagons loaded with books? Well, those are things you have been quoted as having said, most of them claiming authenticity by including some imitation of your unfortunate speech impediment. (You must know how the Lord yearns to take that burden from you!) The drawl—well, that's a toss-up. But anyway, these quotations continue to embarrass us up here, and only you can help us to resolve the problem.

"The folks who are saying that you said these things are, for the most part honest, decent, well-meaning

folks—even holiness preachers. Giving you credit for someone else's idea—even their own—is the only wrong thing they ever did. Surely we cannot deny them the joys of eternal heaven for that one misdeed.

"So, we've decided—with your permission, of course—not to heal you of your lisp for a while, and to let you keep your drawl. You'll continue to age, but slowly, for this deed of mercy must be done in the actual "Uncle Bud" flesh. And what we want you to do is to read all of these things out loud, so that you really do say them, as has already been attested by those fine holiness folk on earth. And when you've read them all, it will keep lots of fine people from being liars, and we can let them in here when their time comes. We'll put you here by the gate so that this stuff doesn't pollute the city. And, of course, you understand that we understand that you *really* didn't generate all of this stuff'n nonsense yourself. You are already forgiven. It's your erstwhile fans that we're worried about now."

Reluctantly, Uncle Bud agreed. And since then, two additional wagonloads of lisped lunacy—and an occasional sparkler—have arrived. Much to Bro. Robinson's relief, the flow has almost ceased entirely now, though he has much reading yet to do.

Well, the professor's dream must be taken with the proverbial grain of salt. But it has its point, does it not?

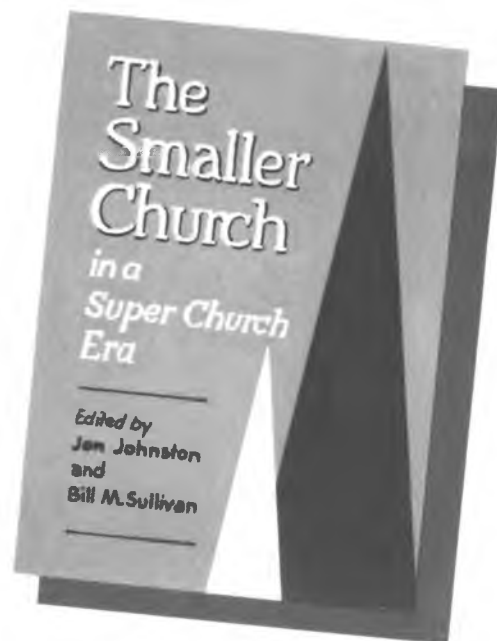
It seems sometimes that we've contracted "quotitis" to the level of the epidemic. And especially bad is this business of putting things in folks' mouths that they did not say and then leaving them to carry the burden of disproof.

You doubtless have your own examples of these Bogus Quotations. "Boquos," we might call them. Usually they are put in the mouth of some Poobah either to demonstrate the unattractiveness of his/her character, or to give the placer the sense of authority that comes from intimate acquaintance with the great, or to avoid accepting responsibility for one's own stupidities, or to validate one's own ideas, or even to cause mischief. Quite often, these "Boquos" are but a form, a very subtle form, of making an oath.

And as I recollect, our Lord had some words to say about that.

The Ark Rocker

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