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# THE PREACHER'S MAGAZINE



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|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| <b>DIALOGICAL PREACHING .....</b>          | <b>6</b>  |
| <b>JOHN WESLEY AND SCRIPTURE.....</b>      | <b>12</b> |
| <b>CONGREGATIONAL SINGING.....</b>         | <b>30</b> |
| <b>PARSONAGE OR HOUSING ALLOWANCE?....</b> | <b>32</b> |
| <b>A PUBLISHING EVENT .....</b>            | <b>38</b> |
| <b>TEACHING LIKE JESUS .....</b>           | <b>44</b> |

# suitable for Framing

## Wounded Hands

by Charles R. Carey

I beheld a horseman, riding.  
Perhaps the thunder  
Was the crashing of the hooves  
Of His fiery steed,  
And perhaps the lightning  
Was the flashing of His sword.

He wheeled about  
And His sword was held high.  
His eyes were as burning coals,  
And His feet were polished brass.  
And perhaps His garment  
Was the finest white linen and  
Perhaps it was light.

Hooves came crashing down  
And my vision cleared  
And my knees became water.  
His sword came before my face  
And it was a two-edged sword.  
The edge of it was exceedingly fine  
And it seemed as white-hot steel—  
Perhaps it was light.

The horseman said,  
"Take the sword and handle it."  
I said to Him,  
"How can a man touch it and live,  
For the edge of it is exceedingly fine?"  
"Take it," He said,  
"For you are My chosen vessel.  
And My blood will heal your wounds,  
And My Spirit will lift you up,  
And it will not be the end of you,  
But the beginning."

So then,  
Those of us who would take up the sword  
Must gain the handle by way of the blade,  
And thus it is that He will know His own.  
For we shall be like Him.

# GOD IS LOVE AND CHRIST HAS DIED

## Being an Apology to the Not-Yet Sanctified Believers to Whom I Have Preached

by Wesley Tracy

I'm out of filing space in each of my three offices—something has to go. Perhaps those files and files of old sermons is the place to start making space. Going through them, I fling many into the old clothes hamper doubling as a wastebasket. As I peruse the file full of "holiness" sermons reaching back nearly 35 years, I see that I am in debt. I need to apologize to those born-again, walking-in-the-light believers whom I tried to yank on into Canaan.

I do not apologize for preaching the second blessing. I do not think that I was preaching about erroneous fantasy. Far from it—behind all the rhetoric of holiness preachers like me, behind all our confusing attempts to explain it, there is a reality of sanctifying grace. It is taught in the Scriptures and verified by Christian experience.

In spite of all the foibles of the holiness folk, entire sanctification is a gracious reality. There was some religious craziness that went on in some quarters that has taken some "living down." When I was growing up the test of true sanctification championed by the more-heat-than-light zealots was to: "shout, 'Hallelujah' when the clothesline breaks." Then there was the often-told "true" story of the sanctified sister who was serving a fried chicken dinner to the pastor, evangelist, and their assorted family members. They bowed their heads for a boisterous "grace" by the evangelist. At the "Amen" the family cat took a flying leap and landed squarely in the gravy bowl. The saintly hostess burst into ecstatic staccato "Hallelujahs." She passed the test. Of course such silliness would not pass muster today. And in spite of that kind of violence done to the truth of holiness, the reality of the doctrine and the life of holiness persist.

### Apologies Please

But no more stalling—I must get down to apologizing.

First, I apologize to you, the not-yet-sanctified believers to whom I have preached, for trivializing your experience of regeneration, justification, and adoption.

I didn't mean to, but I did. Like a person who builds himself up by putting someone else down, I sometimes enhanced sanctification by unintentionally minimizing justification. What a marvel Christian conversion is! Yet sometimes instead of marveling with you at how God

had delivered you from the guilt and power of sin, I could think of nothing but what you still lacked. Some of you had been delivered from the most enslaving habits, some from the most degrading sins—yet instead of celebrating that with you, I wanted to jerk you on into the "sanctified life."

It seems that I could by my tone of voice and pulpit presence make "This is the will of God, even your sanctification" sound more like a threat than the invitation it is. At times, in my anxiousness to correct what was lacking in your faith, I treated you as though you had no religion at all. Yet your life had already been revolutionized by the blood of Jesus! And I majored in dire warnings about the subversion remaining within and even more dire predictions about what would happen to you if you did not get sanctified "tonight."

Of course remaining sin in the believer's heart is a reality that must not be trivialized. Still, how I wish that I had tried harder to lead you instead of drive you. If I could do it over, I would say to the not-yet-sanctified, "Rejoice, rejoice. God has saved you and created you anew. And since God is love and Christ has died, wonderful things are waiting in the wings—you shall be sanctified through and through."

Second, I apologize for rushing some of you into a premature profession of entire sanctification. I am afraid that I strong-armed some of you into the profession of an experience that you neither understood nor felt a need for. But you, new converts that you were, were tenderhearted and could not resist me when I urged: "You *do* want all that God has for you, *don't you?*" And so you bravely professed a grace that God had not yet prepared you for.

I was not as wise as John Wesley. He taught his people to be quick to seek the blessing but slow to profess it. Instead of rushing them into a profession, Wesley waited on God's sovereign grace. He taught the folk to seek it and expect it at any moment. But he told them not to be discouraged because they had not yet been sanctified wholly. There is no condemnation to the justified, he said, you are not guilty because sin remains in your heart, for though it remains it does not reign. It is yielding to inbred sin that brings condemnation, not its

(Continued on page 4)

# IN THIS ISSUE

## FEATURE ARTICLES

### PREACHING

- 6 Lay Partnership in Preaching..... *John C. Bowling*

### CHURCH ADMINISTRATION

- 10 Publicity Works! ..... *Clint Eastman*

### HOLINESS HERITAGE

- 12 John Wesley and the Wholeness of Scripture ..... *Timothy L. Smith*

### PASTORAL CARE

- 16 Hospital Visitation: A Patient's View ..... *Fred Wenger*  
17 Spiritual Nutrition ..... *Ted Nissen*

### CHURCH GROWTH

- 19 HU Revisited ..... *Donald Hohensee*

### CONTEMPORARY SERMONS

- 24 The Believer's View of the Cross ..... *Milton S. Agnew*

### URBAN MINISTRIES

- 26 Table Talk at the Bledsaws ..... *Nina Beegle*

### CHURCH MUSIC

- 30 Principles for Congregational Singing ..... *Keith Schwanz*

### CHURCH FINANCE

- 32 Parsonage or Housing Allowance? ..... *Dean Wessels*

### WESLEYANA

- 34 A Warm Heart and a Cup of Cold Water ..... *Bob Black*

### THE CHURCH

- 37 The Church Must Have Dreamers ..... *Neil Hightower*

### HOLINESS

- 38 A Publishing Event ..... *J. Kenneth Grider and H. Ray Dunning*

### THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY

- 42 "Stay Where You Are" ..... *David Vardaman*

### CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

- 44 Teaching like Jesus ..... *Gerard Reed*

### PASTORAL CLINIC

- 46 Dying for a Drink ..... *Anderson Spickard and Barbara R. Thompson*

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THE MINISTER'S MATE

48 A Sufficient Salary . . . or Is It? . . . . . *Barbara Bouldrey*

FATHER'S DAY

50 Dad Is Not Bulletproof . . . . . *J. Grant Swank, Jr.*

EVANGELISM

52 Tangled in the Underbrush of Scant Results? . . . . . *J. V. Langford*

REGULAR FEATURES

|   |                                      |    |
|---|--------------------------------------|----|
| Suitable for Framing . . . . . Inside Front Cover | Sermon Outlines . . . . .            | 60 |
| Editorial . . . . . 1                             | Sermon Illustrations . . . . .       | 62 |
| Today's Books for Today's Preacher . . . . . 58   | New Testament Word Studies . . . . . | 63 |
| The Preacher's Exchange . . . . . 59              | The Ark Rocker . . . . .             | 64 |

# THE PREACHER'S MAGAZINE

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## GOD IS LOVE . . .

(Continued from page 1)

mere existence. So he taught the folk to *patiently* seek the blessing and not to profess it until they were sure they had it.

But problems did develop with the "patient seeking" of sanctifying grace. After Wesley died it came to pass that nearly all the Methodists were *seeking* the blessing, but almost no one was receiving it—or so it seemed.

When Methodist doctrine crossed the Atlantic, Yankee ingenuity changed that. No more "patient seeking." Applying the "American way" to the problem, holiness preachers soon came up with what was called "the shorter way to holiness." "This can be streamlined, packaged, and mass produced," they seemed to say. "We can get the Christian population sanctified before lunch." And so these Spirit-filled men and women blazed a glorious trail across the country under the banner "Holiness Now." We are all indebted to them. They did a lot of things right. But in the wake of "the shorter way to holiness" some functional problems developed.

In our eagerness to conquer with our distinctive doctrine, we hustled a lot of people into premature professions of sanctifying grace. The "shorter way" was typically based on a syllogism having to do with the altar sanctifying the gift. How many times preachers like me told the seeker: "The Bible says the altar sanctifies the gift. You believe the Bible, don't you? Well, have you put yourself (complete with the unknown bundle) on the altar? Yes, of course you have. Then take it by faith—it's as automatic as the law of gravity—you put yourself on the altar and just like that God sanctifies you."

If the seeker was still bewildered, he was urged to take it by "dry faith on the authority of God's Word." It would have been more accurate to say, "Take it by dry faith on the authority of our syllogism from which we think God cannot escape."

The main problem with this kind of counsel is that God will not play the game. He will not dispense sanctifying grace just because we concoct a syllogism. Nor will He go ahead and give a believer a gift of grace prematurely just to get coaches like me off the hook. I mean, it is embarrassing when you guarantee that if the seeker pushes certain buttons, God will pay off like a vending machine—and then God declines to dispense.

Many in my generation really thought that God would treat every single person in an exactly uniform way. Meet these conditions—one, two, three—and God dishes out a sanctifying experience. What we tended to forget was God's sovereignty. A group of preachers questioned John Wesley about how God operated in the details of bringing sanctifying grace to the believer. Wesley began his response by reminding the preachers that God is God and therefore will do what He pleases in the manner He pleases. I needed to be reminded of that. I apologize to my hearers of years gone by for my formula-filled equation for getting sanctified.

I also need to apologize to some of you for another error born of failure to take into account God's sovereignty. I taught you what I was taught about taking charge of the situation. You see, in my day we were

taught that if you were determined enough, intense enough, and fervent enough long enough you could get sanctified. We cut our teeth on that humanistic song "I Would Not Be Denied." There is value in persistence, and one is not likely to be sanctified without some of that commodity. But some of my sermons (and a lot of others I've heard) made it sound like a pushy seeker could seize God by the ears and hang on until the Lord came up with the "second blessing." Then we could all join in and triumphantly warble "I Would Not Be Denied."

But of course such a way into "Canaan" is a fantasy. God will not sanctify us just because we made an "A" in assertiveness training. Rather, He will faithfully lead the

**John Wesley did not trivialize the miracle of regeneration. Nor did he shove believers into a premature profession of entire sanctification.**

seeking heart and prepare the regenerated soul for sanctifying grace. And at His time and place the gift is given when the readiness for it comes to pass.

Let us preach holiness and preach it evangelistically. Let us preach it as wrought instantaneously in the consecrated heart by the Spirit of Christ. And at the same time let us honor the sovereignty of God.

By failing to do so, and rushing people into a premature profession of holiness I, and others, have made the path of holiness more complicated. Here is one of the results, I think. Not long ago I was with a group of men who were all distinguished leaders in the holiness movement. They were talking about how they received sanctifying grace. One man shared that he was sanctified after he had been a pastor for several years. He had sincerely professed it for 10 years, he said, before he "really" got the blessing. And in those precious moments of sharing, around the room we went and one by one several more of us shared how we had sincerely professed this grace for some time before we really found the Fountain.

I've heard hundreds of testimonies like that and you have too. We could recount similar testimonies until midnight. And while that would not prove much, your stories and mine might indicate that a lot of folk eventually get sanctified in spite of being pushed into a premature profession of this grace.

But I am still concerned about the believers I hurried into a premature profession. How many never did go on to really discover the deeper life? Could it be that some in immature defensiveness have gone on all these years supposing themselves to possess what they have never had? How many after a while asked, "Is that all there is?" and dropped out of the Christian race?

### Wesley on Seeking Sanctification

To those for whom I have made the pursuit of holiness more illusive, I apologize for not preaching it with more

of John Wesley's wisdom. He did not trivialize the miracle of regeneration. Nor did he shove believers into a premature profession. Here's some of what he had to say to the not-yet-sanctified believers of his day.

In "The First Fruits of the Spirit,"\* Wesley reminded the believers that even though they were not yet sanctified wholly they were nevertheless "in Christ," "justified freely" and "under the direction of . . . the blessed Spirit." Further, they "dwell in Christ and Christ in them. They are ingrafted into him, as branches into the vine." In addition, they "abstain from all works of the flesh," they "walk after the Spirit in their hearts and in their lives," they "exercise themselves day and night to do only the things which please God," and toward their neighbor they "walk in justice, mercy and truth."

Wesley then proceeded to assure the believers that they were under no condemnation (Rom. 8:1) for past sins, present sins (for they weren't committing transgressions), or involuntary infirmities. He boldly assured them that they were under no condemnation for inbred sin, which at that moment still remained. Only yielding to inbred sin would bring condemnation.

Wesley told these Christians to rejoice. "Though thy sins were once more in number than the sand, what is that to thee, now thou art in Christ Jesus?"

Wesley told these sincere converts to "fret not thyself because of ungodliness, though it still remain in thy heart. Repine not, because thou still comest short of the glorious image of God."

Wesley did not minimize the sinfulness of the un-sanctified heart. In fact, he told them that their remaining sin was even more corrupt than they perceived. He urged the believer not to let his "faith fail" when God revealed to him the "depth of inbred sin."

But one of Satan's devices is to discourage the believer at this point, Wesley warned. He wants "to destroy the first work of God in the soul . . . by our expectation of that greater work." "So that we cannot rejoice in what we have, because there is more we have not . . . the more vehement desire we feel in our heart of entire holiness . . . the more are we tempted to think lightly of the present gifts of God, and to undervalue what we have already received." "We may so expect perfect love, as not to use that which is already shed abroad in our hearts."

Wesley told the seeking converts to "fret not," "repine not," and to stop "uselessly tormenting yourself because the time has not fully come." Instead, Wesley advised, "Calmly and quietly wait" for sanctifying grace.

They were not to "wait" by casually drifting along, hoping that God will one day surprise them by making them truly holy. No, not at all. Wesley spelled out for them the way to "wait" for entire sanctification. The believer was to fully devote himself to acts of piety and mercy. The seeking believer was to give himself to intense devotions, vigorous spiritual exercises, and faithful attendance to the means of grace. To devotion the "waiter" was to add acts of service (mercy). He was to "spend and be spent" for others, particularly the poor. He who did not serve others was regarded as not having "a grain of faith," let alone being a candidate for entire sanctification.

These devout, yet still un-sanctified, waiting believers Wesley urged to rejoice. Rejoice because of what God has already done for you. Rejoice because of what He will yet do for you. Rejoice, for "God is love, and Christ has died." Wesley declared, "The Father himself loveth thee! Thou art His child! God will not withhold any good thing from you." "The whole body of sin . . . shall be destroyed. It shall be done! . . . Be of good cheer! . . . Faithful is He that hath promised who also will do it."

"It is thy part," Wesley said to the non-yet-sanctified believers, "patiently to continue in the work of faith, and in the labour of love; and in cheerful peace, in humble confidence, with calm and resigned and yet earnest expectation, to wait till the zeal of the Lord of hosts shall perform this."

"Calmly and quietly wait for it, knowing that it will come." "Wait in peace for that hour, when 'the God of peace shall sanctify thee wholly.'"

Wesley was not teaching gradual sanctification—just respect for God's sovereign grace. Who besides God knows when the heart is ready for sanctifying grace? Wesley told his converts to expect the blessing at every moment, which would be transmitted to them instantaneously by faith "in the twinkling of an eye."

To all those "not-yet-sanctified" believers to whom I preached that stack of holiness sermons now in the wastebasket, I apologize. All I can say is, I wish my sermons to you had contained more of the accent, tone, and spirit of Wesley's wise words to the believers. Next time I hope to discover the "happy medium" between the "too patient seeking" of the early Methodists and the "grab it quickly" fever of my generation. 

\*The quotations from John Wesley in this article are from two of his sermons, "The First Fruits of the Spirit" and "Satan's Devices."

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# LAY PARTNERSHIP IN PREACHING

by John C. Bowling

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Edward L. Thorndike states, "Until it gets into a mind, a word is only puffs of air or streaks of ink." Ultimately, meaning is in minds, not in words. This is true in the everyday affairs of men, and it is true for the preacher who grapples with the assignment of communicating the gospel. According to O. C. Edwards, Jr., the content of the sermon is not only what the preacher says but also all that the congregation hears.

The need to communicate clearly when preaching cannot be overstated. As the comedian Flip Wilson put it, in the inimitable words of the Reverend Leroy, "Preachin' is like shootin' craps: if you don't make your point, it ain't nuthin'." The tragedy is that many preachers have no way of knowing whether they have made their point.

Besides trying to communicate effectively, there is the problem of knowing what to communicate. The message must be a product of both the biblical record and the needs of the congregation.

In the middle 1960s, the faculty of the Institute for Advanced Pastoral Studies began to investigate what they perceived as a communication impasse within the church and between the church and the world. Their studies reveal a communication frustration for clergy and laity alike at the point of preaching.<sup>1</sup>

Reuel Howe, in *Partners in Preaching*, suggests that part of the frustration in preaching stems from images that both clergy and laity have of the preacher and of

preaching. One image is that of the preacher as a performer. He is to appear at least once a week and produce an oratorical masterpiece.

Under the influence of such an image, the sermon becomes a performance and the congregation becomes an audience. The sermon as a performance makes the Word aloof. The congregation that has been reduced to the state of an audience tends to become passive. They expect to be inspired, entertained, and have their thinking done for them.

Preaching can be improved through an active partnership between clergy and laity in the preparation, the presentation, and the evaluation of the sermon.

Through a viable partnership in the preaching process a minister can compensate for a congregation's lack of understanding of biblical and theological language. Through partnership, the minister can assess the needs of the congregation and evaluate to what extent his preaching is meeting those needs.

Lay partnership also provides a way for the layman to express himself. It can help him move from the role of a spectator to that of a participant. This shift can revolutionize preaching.

## *Lay Partnership in Sermon Preparation*

Laymen need to be involved in the preparation of sermons. William Thompson, in his book *A Listener's Guide to Preaching*, says, "It did not occur to the very first Christians to delegate the responsibility for preaching . . . exclusively to one of their members. The entire church shared the responsibility." There are at least three ways to share the responsibility for sermon preparation.

(1) *Use the laity as silent partners in preparation.* A minister can involve his laymen without them being conscious of it.

To do this, a minister must know his people well. When a pastor knows his people, he can better identify their needs and concerns. By being sensitive to the pulse of the congregation, the pastor begins to involve them in his sermon preparation. He can reflect upon his congregation's basic human needs. What needs and aspirations are represented there?

Another way to involve laymen as silent partners is to



John C. Bowling

learn to read the nonverbal messages they provide. If a congregation pays particularly close attention to a message, analyze why. On the other hand, if interest is low, your subject or delivery may need to be evaluated.

(2) *Use the laity as vocal partners in sermon preparation.* A minister can involve his laymen by asking for subjects of interest or areas of need.

A pastor may wish to select a cross section of his congregation to serve as advisers to help isolate needs or define meaningful sermon styles.

A periodic questionnaire asking for specific or open-ended response could be used. The pastor can note the response to certain themes or styles of sermon construction.

(3) *Prepare the congregation for the sermon.* The pastor needs to instruct the congregation on their responsibility to prepare themselves and to be ready to participate as the sermon is delivered.

More specifically, the pastor can involve the congregation by announcing the sermon title and text enough in advance for the people to think and study the passage ahead of time. Specific readings may be suggested to go with the text.

A sermon series has a way of preparing the congregation for the next message. Following the emphases of the church year can serve as a means of preparation.

In these three ways the minister can include the lay-

logical in presentation, but it becomes dialogical in nature.<sup>2</sup>

Lay involvement is enhanced in the monological style by the use of standard techniques of good delivery. The person in the pew involves himself in an interesting and well-delivered message. Good delivery includes: variety of vocal quality; rate, tone, pitch, and volume of speech; the use of meaningful gestures; appropriate illustrations and the use of objects; the use of silence; and the variety of content—prose, poetry, description, and storytelling. All of these help hold the listener's attention, building a sense of mutuality.<sup>3</sup>

(2) *Building partnership by dialogue or cooperative preaching.* While monological preaching is essentially one-way communication, preaching by dialogue strives to create a flow of ideas stemming from both the preacher and the layman. These ideas may or may not be verbalized.

Dialogue is an essential part of any meaningful contact between persons or groups. It is a style of gospel presentation that has been used effectively since Christ's own ministry. "The Gospels are full of dialogue, not long and brilliant homilies."<sup>4</sup> Richard Leliaert, the Roman Catholic scholar, suggests that in the Early Church each person in the assembly was free to contribute his interpretation and understanding of God's Word. He notes that St. Augustine was known to ask questions of

**Which of the four kinds of chancel dialogue do you practice?**

**There are at least four disadvantages in dialogical preaching.**

man in sermon preparation, resulting in a message better suited to a congregation than could be developed otherwise.

#### **Lay Partnership in Sermon Presentation**

Lay partnership in sermon presentation can be considered from two viewpoints.

(1) *Building partnership by monologue.* This involves the development and delivery of an essentially traditional sermon. Ideas flow from pulpit to pew. The minister sets the agenda and controls the content. David E. Babin states, "The single most constant feature of preaching through the years has been its basically monological character."

While the monologue has limitations, it can be effective, and a sense of partnership can be developed, but it must be planned. Recognition of the context for preaching is a place to begin. There are two aspects of this context that enrich a sermon's potential beyond the restrictions of a normal monological presentation.

One of these aspects is the nature of the community in which preaching takes place, and the preacher's relationship to the community. The other is the event at which preaching occurs and how a community experiences that event. If the worshiping community assumes responsibility for the event, when communication is dependent upon mutual interaction, and when the preacher is identified as a member of that community with a stake in its future, the sermon may be mono-

people present if he wanted to impress upon them the importance of what he was saying.

Dialogical or cooperative interaction in the sermon virtually disappeared in the medieval church except in the form of a formal dialogue where there was a planned, structured exchange. This was done primarily for a didactic purpose, indoctrination with the dogma of the church. The spontaneity of the Early Church was replaced with well-orchestrated responses as part of the liturgy.

In 18th and 19th-century America, frontier preaching style gave rise to a return of spontaneity, but it lacked the interaction of dialogue. This American spontaneity was typical with shouts of "Amen" or "Praise the Lord." It is still a part of many traditions today. However, there has not been a return, on a large scale, to the interaction of ideas during the sermon.

Using *dialogue* as an umbrella term, we find a variety of ways to reintroduce meaningful interaction into the sermon presentation.

- The *unfinished or open-ended sermon* emphasizes that every sermon is unfinished until it is applied to life. The minister may conclude a message by saying, "What does this sermon mean to you?" Or he can ask the congregation to live the passage and then share with him their insights of the truth presented.

- The *previous conversation approach* discusses a scripture passage with a select group of parishioners before preaching. The sermon grows out of informal

conversations that reveal interests and needs. As one begins to preach, a point of contact is already established.

• In the *parishioner perspective approach*, the minister presents his main ideas as if he were sitting in the pew. He anticipates questions from the parishioners' perspective and deals with them. As Thor Hall puts it, it forces the preacher "to involve himself with others in the consideration of the deepest levels of existence and meaning." Harry Emerson Fosdick always captured his hearers' attention. Halfway through a sermon, after building an impressive case like a trial lawyer might do, he would often say, "But some of you have not found this to be true in your lives." Then he would restate his main points, raising what he thought might be their objections.

*Clergy-clergy dialogue* and *chancel dialogue* involve two or more persons who converse with each other. Occasionally the dialogue is staged so that one participant speaks from a position among the worshipers. But his location does not alter the fact that he is part of a carefully planned presentation rather than a spontaneous discussion.

The chancel dialogue attempts to motivate the hearer to make an internal response in the light of what he is hearing. It is designed to help the listener identify with a Christian view on a particular topic and to motivate him to further reflection and study before reaching a valid position.

There seem to be four patterns of chancel dialogue: (1) dialogue of support, (2) dialogue of inquiry, (3) dialogue of conflict, and (4) a composite of different patterns.<sup>5</sup>

Dialogue of support is essentially conversational. Participants discuss a passage of Scripture or a theme about which they have similar ideas. The audience iden-

tifies largely with the subject itself rather than the participants.

Dialogue of inquiry poses one participant as a questioner and the other as a resource person. The hearer generally identifies with the questioner, who presumably speaks on behalf of the congregation.

Dialogue of conflict places the participants in opposition to each other or to each other's ideas. Some listeners will identify with the participant who has ideas similar to their own. Others may begin with an open mind and gradually shift toward one participant's view.

A composite dialogue combines these three approaches and may add some other elements.

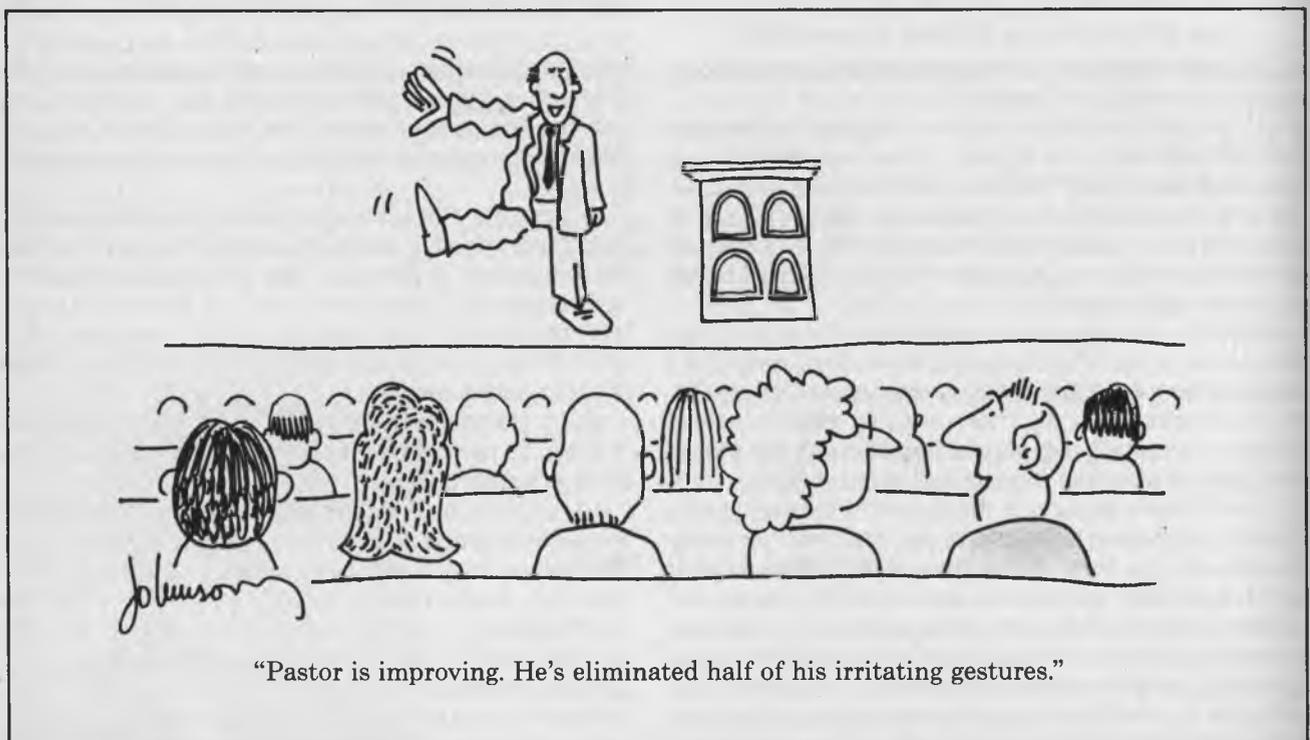
*Clergy-laity dialogue* involves the congregation by inviting their spontaneous questions and comments after a sermon has been presented. It is feedback that takes place in the worship service, and it promotes discussion while ideas are still fresh.

The rationale for congregational dialogue focuses on the corporate nature of the church. This involves the importance of individual response to the gospel, the values of sharing, the significance of interpersonal communion, and the personalization of worship.

Dialogue preaching, whether it be in the chancel or in the congregation, is a forceful and direct way to have lay partnership in the presentation of the sermon.

The advantages of dialogue preaching are many and varied. People are generally more involved in a dialogue homily than in a traditional sermon. Interest is heightened. There is often a variety of ideas expressed, and people are forced to evaluate them in a manner that they don't experience in a monologue. The dialogue method tends to sharpen ideas and to help the listener consider ideas he might not have considered otherwise.

There is also a tendency to deal acutely with people's questions and tensions. The traditional approach does



not ignore problem areas of parishioners' lives, but without some immediate feedback it is difficult to be sure whether or not a sermon is pertinent.

Dialogue preaching builds a feeling of community in the congregation. The influence of peers engaging in a meaningful dialogue has a positive effect.

There are, however, some disadvantages to the use of a dialogue sermon: (1) Not all themes lend themselves to dialogue; (2) It may be hard to keep a dialogue from moving away from the central theme; (3) There is the risk that someone will abuse the privilege of speaking before

**In preaching, God acts through the hearers—not just through the preacher.**

the congregation; and (4) Effective dialogue takes preparation and the ability to think fast and well without a manuscript or extensive notes.

In reflecting on the use of a dialogical approach, Thompson and Bennett write:

Monological preaching has dominated the church's communicative effort for centuries: it has done its work well. As an exclusive method, however, it tends to limit, sometimes even distort the Christian message. Its content may communicate the gospel accurately and movingly, but its method cannot help but emphasize the authority of God, the revelatory nature of His Word, and the passivity of man. Dialogue preaching, by its very nature, communicates the "other side of God." It says that God is in encounter with His people, that He is listening as well as talking. In addition, it involves and demands a personal participation on the part of each individual. It makes people react and respond to the Word and to each other, actively and creatively, enabling them to move toward those relationships of love which are man's highest response to the love of the Lord.<sup>6</sup>

**Lay Partnership in Sermon Evaluation**

Regardless of the style of sermon preparation and delivery a minister may choose, there needs to be a process of evaluation in the preaching task. If this evaluation is done by the pastor alone, one cannot expect it to be as meaningful as it would be if the congregation were also involved.

A feedback group is perhaps the most effective way to involve the laity in evaluating the sermon. A group of six or eight people, representing a cross section of the congregation, could serve as a feedback group. The same group need not serve every time.

The Institute for Advance Pastoral Studies makes four suggestions stemming from their experience with feedback groups:

- (1) The minister should thoroughly prepare the participants for their task; perhaps establishing some criteria to be used for the evaluation.
- (2) The participants should represent a variety of people in terms of age and commitment to the church.
- (3) Some laymen feel more free to discuss if the minister is not present, though they don't mind tape-recording the discussion for him.

- (4) Participants are generally more articulate discussants with practice, but after three or four times, tend to dominate the discussion and thus discourage newcomers.<sup>7</sup>

Verbal responses during and/or after the message can be evaluated by the minister as a means of feedback. Nonverbal cues are also present if the minister is observant.

Some ministers ask one layman to respond to the sermon as a representative of the congregation. This response is given from his seat before the end of the service. Other ministers invite a panel to react similarly.

Written evaluation can be encouraged by having either blank cards or prepared evaluation sheets available.

Merrill R. Abbey, in his book *Preaching to the Contemporary Mind*, states, "To interpret the gospel in the latter half of this century is to communicate in Babel." People often speak different emotional and spiritual languages. Words no longer pass as common coin. From the first Christian generation until now, it has been the preacher's task to understand the people. He must find words and methods adequate to convey the gospel to them.

The most profound thoughts are worthless until they have been understood and applied by the people. The whole purpose of lay partnership in preaching is to involve them in preaching so they will discover divine truth in their own lives.

This partnership between listener and preacher makes it possible for both to conclude with Gustaf Wingren in *The Living Word*: "When the Bible lies open on the preacher's desk and the preparation of the sermon is about to begin, the worshipers have already come in; the passage contains these people since it is God's word to His people." The people are already in the mind of the preacher as well, for they have been in dialogue, and *his* questions concerning the biblical passage are *their* questions.

This common ground between the preacher and parishioner is explained by Clyde Fant: "Preaching is not telling someone what to do; it is a mutual hearing of the word of God, as both speaker and listener stand beneath its truth."

If there is a uniqueness about preaching, it lies in the fact that it is the means of a unique end: the working of God through human relationships. God does not act through the preacher alone, but through the hearers as well. The whole act of preaching, therefore, must include both the preacher and the hearers. Without the participation of both sides there is no preaching. Thus lay partnership in the preparation, the presentation, and the evaluation of the sermon must be encouraged.

**NOTES**

1. Reuel L. Howe, *Partners in Preaching* (New York: Seabury Press, 1967), 20.
2. David E. Babin, *Week In-Week Out*, 50.
3. Webb B. Garrison, *The Preacher and His Audience* (Westwood, N.J.: Fleming H. Revell Co.), 82-83.
4. Brian A. Greet, "Dialogue Preaching" in *The Expository Times* 78 (February, 1967): 150.
5. William D. Thompson and Gordon C. Bennett, *Dialogue Preaching: the Shared Sermon* (Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1969), 39.
6. Thompson and Bennett, *Dialogue*, 72.
7. William D. Thompson, *A Listener's Guide to Preaching* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1966), 106-7.

# PUBLICITY WORKS!

by Clint Eastman

*Mullein Hill Church of the Nazarene, Lakeville, Mass.*

In 1970, I moved to Kent State University in Kent, Ohio, from a small town in Massachusetts for a year's hitch at their graduate school. In those months of turmoil before everything exploded in the famous Kent State shootings, I searched for stability and for a group of Christian friends like I had known at home.

I needed a church.

Kent had many churches. Although I attended one, it didn't satisfy my needs.

Then, I saw some news in the school paper about a church across town. I probably would never have found out about the church if it hadn't been in the newspaper.

I sought out the church and started attending regularly.

The church saved my spiritual life.

It kept me away from the worldly sphere of my classmates. It taught me the Word. It provided many Christian friends. I eventually married a girl I met there on my first visit.

Publicity works!

Publicity helps the church, and it helps the people of the community.

Because most churches can't afford a large amount of paid advertising, they need to learn to write articles and news releases that the papers will print free as news.

As assistant pastor of my home church, I write weekly news releases for our local papers. They've helped our church grow.

It's fun and easy to write news releases. The following guidelines will help you get your church into the news.

## *Neatness Counts*

At a ministers' meeting, the other men expressed their irritation that I

got much more material published in the local newspapers than they did.

"How do you do it?" they wanted to know.

I told them, "It's just luck." Later, I found out the real reason.

Accidentally, I saw a news release that someone else sent to the paper. It was nearly impossible to read because of the erasures and the single-spaced typing.

Neatness counts!

The editors work under pressure. Deadlines must be met. There's always more news than can be printed. If the editor can't easily read a news release, he may put it aside—perhaps for good.

News releases should be neatly typed, double-spaced, with plenty of room on sides and top for editorial work.

Editors don't have time to correct everything, so make sure spelling, grammar, and punctuation are perfect.

## *First Paragraph*

The first paragraph is the most important. Write your article so that all the essential information is in the first paragraph. Be sure to give the church, the event, the address, the day, date, and time. Put who is invited and whether you will be charging anything.

People are busy. When they read an article they may only read the first part. Pack the lead paragraph! A typical, lead-in paragraph may go like this:

"The Nationals" will be in concert at First Church, 101 Main Street, Smithville, on Friday evening, May 2,

7:30 p.m. The public is invited to attend. A freewill offering will be collected.

## *The Inverted Pyramid*

Articles, it has been taught, should follow the "inverted pyramid" style. After the lead-in paragraph, the article should contain back-up information starting with the most important items. It's a top-heavy style with the least significant items toward the bottom.

This style prevails because editors clip articles from the bottom to fit the space allotted on their newspaper pages.

## *Getting in Touch*

How many times have we wanted to call someone but didn't know the number, so we never got in touch? Don't let this happen with your reading audience. I always conclude an article with names of people and their phone numbers so that, if necessary, the readers can call to find out about our church.

The writer of the news release should also put his number at the top of the page in case the editor needs to inquire about some part of the article.

Writers should also get in touch with the news editors of the newspapers. Ask for hints about writing good news releases. Be sure to find out about their news deadlines.

Editors are nice people. If your church establishes a good relationship with them, they'll go out of their way to print your church's news. That can mean more people coming to your church—and to the Lord!

### Writing—Newspaper Style

When the plumbing at my house broke, I called a plumber because he knew how to fix it. When I heard the engine on my car making noise, I pulled into a garage because they know how to fix cars. Every profession has its tools and its guidelines.

When writing news releases, church people should learn to write with the proper style. Use short sentences. Use action verbs. Cut all wording to the bare bones.

It works.

Your articles will be interesting to the editor and to the readers. The editor will print more of your articles. Anyone can learn to write in this sharp, newspaper style. Studying good articles and practicing will help the writer grow proficient.

Newspapers, especially in small towns, like to print names of their residents. Be sure to include names of chairpersons, leaders, organizers, workers—anyone who becomes involved.

### Other Helpful Hints

Resist the temptation to write about things that have already happened. Newspapers want news—information about upcoming events—not history. One exception to this rule can be announcing the names of officers elected at gatherings such as annual meetings.

When referring to people, use their full names—first and last—early in the article. In subsequent references, shorten their names to Mr. such-and-such or Miss such-and-such. Avoid the use of first names alone. Never use nicknames.

Newspapers love pictures. Often a church has a better chance of having an article printed if the writer includes a picture. Most newspapers ask for black-and-white glossies.

Don't forget the small weekly papers when writing news releases. Because they employ small staffs, they welcome releases and often print more of the details than do the larger papers.

A must for all papers: find out deadlines and make sure the releases are in well in advance.

Publicity works!

It will help your church grow.

Start today to prepare neat news releases. People will find your church—and your Lord. 

**Here's how a Nazarene pastor thinks a church board should operate. Compare his ideas with your own.**

## CHURCH BOARD PHILOSOPHY

by William L. Poteet

*Pastor, Melrose, Mass., Church of the Nazarene*

**T**he Church of the Nazarene holds high expectations for those who would serve in leadership roles. The following is a brief summary of these criteria gathered from the Bible, the *Manual*, and from experience.

1. When elected it is assumed that each is in the experience of entire sanctification according to the requirements of the *Manual*: "We direct our local churches to elect as church officers only persons who are clearly in the experience of entire sanctification" (Special Rules, paragraph 38).

2. Each one is expected to attend all meetings of the board and to be on time. It is the individual's responsibility to contact the pastor if illness or other emergency makes their attendance impossible.

3. Each is expected to fulfill the duties and responsibilities commensurate with his office as outlined in the *Manual* and to perform additional tasks as requested by the board.

4. Each is expected to be a leader and an example, which involves faithful attendance at the means of grace (agreed upon when joining the church). One cannot adequately serve the church without attending prayer meeting, Sunday School, morning worship, evening service, and revival meetings. The Spirit of God must operate in and through men. To speak intelligently at the board meeting, it is necessary for one to know, to feel, and to sense the mood and spirit of the whole church. This can be grasped only through faithful attendance.

5. Each must be willing to be a spiritual leader. One is elected not only to serve the church as a leader in business affairs, but most importantly to give direction to the spiritual life of the church. Full consideration should be given to these areas of concern:

a. Each should maintain a consistent daily devotional life.

b. As spiritual leaders, each should be the first to respond to the pastor's call for workers and pray-ers around the altar.

c. Each should be a worthy example of the "standards" of the church.

6. Each should be a storehouse tither. The board makes many financial decisions during the year, spending the consecrated money of consecrated people, many of whom give sacrificially. No one should be a director in the spending of other persons' tithes if he himself is not a storehouse tither.

7. Each is expected to perform as *part of a team*. Each is expected to maintain the integrity of the board.

a. "Little things must not be allowed to divide big people." Ideas, plans, organization, programs, and procedures can be reviewed and discussed pro and con without any individual being attacked as a person, which would bring hurt, strife, or division.

b. Feelings and ideas can be presented as strongly as desired in the meetings, but when a decision is reached by the board, each must help carry out the decision regardless of which way the decision falls. The board must act as a team—all for one and one for all.

c. When an "executive session" is declared, *nothing* that is done or said during that time is to be mentioned to or shared with anyone (husband, wife, relative, or friend) outside the board meeting. Even when not in "executive session," concerns of the board need to be shared through proper channels and not "leaked" or gossiped around the church and community.

"If we do the right things today, the goals of tomorrow will inevitably follow." 

# John Wesley and the Wholeness of Scripture

by Timothy L. Smith

*Professor of History, Johns Hopkins University*

Is a comprehensive biblical hermeneutic available to those who claim to rest their faith in the full inspiration and authority of the Old and New Testaments? Can such a hermeneutic be drawn out of exegesis, and thus reflect accurately the themes that seem to pervade all the varied parts of the Bible? I think the answer to both questions is yes. But more important for this paper, I believe John Wesley thought so too.

Evangelical scholars, like others who study Scripture, have been trained to spend years, and in some cases have spent a lifetime, on one or another section of the Bible. Like their humanist, modernist, or neoorthodox counterparts, they have learned not only to resist the easy harmonization of one text with another but also to doubt whether a hermeneutic useful in comprehending more than, say, Deuteronomy, Isaiah of Jerusalem, John's Gospel, or Paul's Pastorals can be rooted in sound exegesis. For the faith in Scripture evangelical scholars profess, however, this is scarcely enough. Hence our interest in those like Brevard Childs or James A. Sanders who, regardless of their theological or critical preconceptions, have recently been emphasizing the continuing themes in biblical literature: creation and its degradation, the divine presence, covenant and promise, atonement and renewal, the ethic of individual and social righteousness, and the realization of hope, now and in the life everlasting.

John Wesley believed all his life that in his student days at Oxford University he discovered the key to the Scriptures in the Bible itself. The continuing influence of his mother's views, even as he read the writings of Thomas à Kempis, Jeremy Taylor, Henry Scougall, and William Law, nurtured his dawning realization that the living center of every part of inspired Scripture was the call to be holy, and the promise of grace to answer that call.<sup>1</sup> I name this the hermeneutic of holiness. In his earliest surviving sermon, preached in 1725, Wesley declared that the "righteousness" that Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount directed us "to make our first, as well as our Chief Study" implies there, "as in many other places of H[oly] S[cripture], the sum of the Christian religion." The term comprehends "the whole of our Duty both towards God, ourselves & our neighbour." Although, he wrote, this righteousness "may in one sense be said to be ours, as being in some measure owing to our own endeavours, working together with the Holy Spirit of God," yet it is "very justly ascribed to Him and termed His righteousness, since He is the Confirmor & Perfector, as well as the Infusor of it."<sup>2</sup>

Armed with this hermeneutic, Wesley began in 1728 to make the Bible the focus of his study. During the next few

years he and his brother Charles and the students who joined them in the Holy Club buried themselves in the Greek texts while seeking every day in prayer, song, witness, and service to find the "holiness without which no man shall see the Lord." Wesley discovered almost from the outset that wherever the New Testament affirmed the call and promise of sanctity, it was rooted organically in the Old. God's prime purpose in redemption—to renew humankind in His image and redeem nature from the curse brought on it by Adam's fall—gave wholeness to the written Word.<sup>3</sup>

The system of biblical theology that grew out of the use of this hermeneutic wove together in the doctrine of salvation all the strands of Hebrew and Christian religion: creation and the fall; God's election of Israel in covenants of righteousness and love; the promise of a Messiah who would save His people from their sins and renew them in holiness by writing His law in their hearts; the coming of the kingdom of God, both within history and beyond it; the final judgment of Satan and sinners; and the final glory of the saints. The life, death, and resurrection of Christ and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost were the hinge of salvation history precisely because they fulfilled the law and the prophets. Indeed, in all the great body of Wesley's exegetical writing there appears scarcely a trace of the anti-Hebraism that we are now learning to realize permeated Protestant scholarship from Martin Luther to Karl Barth.

This biblical foundation undergirded Wesley's high regard for experience, reason, and Christian tradition. The "Wesleyan Quadrilateral" Albert C. Outler and others posited some time ago seems in historical fact to have been a three-legged stool, resting on the solid foundation of Scripture. Each of the three was an important aid in clarifying or confirming saving truth, but the truth itself, as Wesley put it, stood "on no authority, ancient or modern, but the Scripture." And the same Holy Spirit who originally inspired those writings faithfully illuminated their plain meanings to seeking minds. Neither the doctrine of Christian perfection or any other, he wrote later, "is anything to me, unless it be the doctrine of Christ and his Apostles."<sup>4</sup>

Methodist modernists have appealed for a century to the myth that Wesley grounded his theology in human experience. The experience to which he gave credence, however, was the work of the Holy Spirit in awakening sinners to hope and repentance, in bringing them by faith to the assurance of salvation, and in leading them by grace to holiness of heart and life. In 1749, Wesley spelled out what he had asserted in

the sermon on "Circumcision of the Heart," written five years before Aldersgate: the testimony of the morally transforming experiences of faith could be relied upon because they confirmed what Scripture promised. He repeated many times the substance of what he wrote in 1767: the "witness of the Spirit" was insufficient "to prove a doctrine that is not founded in Scripture"; but when an experience affirmed by this inward witness has been shown to rest upon biblical teaching, he said, the witness may be "properly alleged to confirm it."<sup>5</sup>

The record of the relationship of Wesley's own quest for assurance in 1738 and 1739 to his emerging doctrine of salvation is consistent with this statement. In March of the former year, renewed study of the Greek New Testament convinced him that the Moravian Peter Bohler was correct in declaring that a moment of grace, through faith, brought both the Spirit's assurance of forgiveness and His empowerment to live a righteous life. Wesley preached this evangelical promise of being "born again" for nearly two months before he experienced it at the famous prayer meeting in Aldersgate Street—preached it with such scriptural conviction that he was forbidden to return to several Anglican pulpits. Concerning the days of severe temptation to doubt that followed Aldersgate, he wrote in his *Journal* for Sunday, June 4, "I scarce remember to have opened the New Testament, but upon some great and precious promise. And I saw more than ever, that the Gospel is in truth but one great promise, from the beginning of it to the end."<sup>6</sup>

Fourteen months later, while John and Charles Wesley were assuming leadership of the extensive revival George Whitefield had begun in Bristol and London, their hunger for inward holiness prompted them to think through afresh the repeated commands and promises of Scripture concerning purity of heart and perfect love. They were soon convinced that an array of Old and New Testament passages promised believers "full renewal" in the divine image, and that this deeper work of grace was also accomplished in a moment of supreme assurance and grounded equally upon trust in Christ.<sup>7</sup> John Wesley began preaching these promises of "entire" sanctification about the time Whitefield left for America, in August 1739.<sup>8</sup> He continued to do so to the end of his life without ever, I think, being able to testify he had personally experienced their fulfillment.

Scholars have often noted the pathos of this unrequited search and discussed its implications for the validity of the idea that became at once the keystone of the Methodist doctrine of salvation. But no one, I think, has realized that Wesley's 50 years of remarkably consistent preaching of full deliverance from "inbred sin" and his careful guidance of several thousand persons he believed had found it are incontestable evidence that he rested that doctrine on Scripture, not experience, and certainly not on his own experience. The hymn books he and Charles wrote are filled with poems declaring their faith that God's Word is true, and that every human testimony to the contrary, including that of their own unsatisfied hearts, was untrue.<sup>9</sup>

Wesley's youthful regard for the traditions of Anglican moralism and spirituality and for the teachings of the Early Church was in like fashion sustained by the captivity of his conscience to the "the oracles of God." In November 1738, while pressing his quest of the spiritual joy that he thought should accompany the "righteousness and peace" he had experienced in justification, Wesley was prompted to read the Book of Homilies that Archbishop Thomas Cranmer had prepared nearly 200 years earlier for unlearned Anglican clergymen. He was surprised that the homilies seemed to agree with his new understanding and experience of saving faith. He examined them carefully in the light of Scripture, however, before publishing a condensed version designed to assure reluctant Anglicans that Methodists taught no new doctrine. When one

who wrote him early in 1739 appealed to churchly tradition, Wesley responded gruffly, "If by catholic principles you mean any other than scriptural, they weigh nothing with me. I allow no other rule, whether of faith or practice, than the Holy Scriptures."<sup>10</sup> In 1756 he urged ministers of the Church of England to acquire a "knowledge of the Fathers," because they were "the most authentic commentators on Scripture, as being both nearest the fountain, and eminently endued with that Spirit by whom all Scripture is given." A few years earlier he had written that he revered the Fathers not only because they were themselves ideal Christians but also because they all testified, "what the Scripture promises, I enjoy. Come and see what Christianity has done here, and acknowledge it is of God."<sup>11</sup>

So with the light of reason. Few writers of the 18th century were more scrupulous about the rules of evidence in argument, or more willing than John Wesley to affirm human ability and responsibility to search out the truths revealed in Scripture by sound reasoning. Throughout his lifetime, Wesley followed and taught the Aristotelian principles he had mastered at Oxford. These he digested from Henry Aldrich and published in 1750 in his own *Compendium of Logic*.<sup>12</sup> A "fundamental principle" of the Methodists, he wrote in 1768, in a sharp reply to a distinguished theologian at Cambridge University, is "that to renounce reason is to renounce religion"; for "all irrational religion is false religion."<sup>13</sup> Wesley always thought antinomians undervalued the mind, while rationalists overvalued it. The "excellent use" of reason, he wrote in later life, is to help us understand what the "living oracles" of Scripture

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## For a century modernists have appealed to the myth that Wesley grounded his theology in human experience.

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declare of "the being and attributes of God," of His "method of dealing with the children of men," of the "nature of His various dispensations, of the old and new covenant, [and] of the law and gospel." However, reason can never produce in us "either faith or hope, from which alone love can flow."<sup>14</sup>

Never for a moment after 1728 did Wesley allow intellect to challenge the authority of the Bible. Indeed he thought any intelligent mind would be stimulated by it. He found St. Paul's reasoning powers greater than any thinker he had encountered, ancient or modern, save Jesus Christ. The clarity of thought in Moses and Isaiah, Luke and John, was to him evidence that the Holy Spirit was the author of what they claimed to have seen and heard.<sup>15</sup> He rejoiced, therefore, in the promise that the same Spirit would illuminate the minds of those whose spiritual senses He had awakened and enable them to read Scripture with understanding.<sup>16</sup>

As in its source, so in the forms of its proclamation, Wesley's theology was biblical. He never considered codifying his beliefs in a systematic treatise. The introduction to his *Notes upon the New Testament*, composed in 1755, explains why. The sacred writings standing by themselves, he wrote, comprise "one entire body," a "most solid and precious system of divine truth."<sup>17</sup> Thirty years later he declared that all the inspired writers, "both of the Old Testament and the New," never lose sight of the "nature and design" of their task, namely to give a "clear, consistent, perfect account (that is, as perfect as our weak understandings can receive)" of "the History of God." The result, in "one unbroken, connected chain, from the beginning to the end" of the Scriptures, is the story of how

"life and immortality" are gradually brought to light "by 'Immanuel,' God with us, and his kingdom ruling over all."<sup>18</sup> Accordingly, Wesley's *Notes* were not theological commentaries of the traditional sort at all, but explanations of the sense of each brief passage. So explained, for the benefit of his preachers who did not read Greek and Hebrew, he was content to let the Scriptures, in all their varied literary forms and settings, stand as the Christian's textbook in systematic theology.<sup>19</sup> The forms of his own doctrinal statements, therefore, were various. Wesley was persuaded that his sermons, hymns, public letters, prefaces, and essays, some of them being historical, most didactic, and a few prophetic, would preserve better than a creedal statement the loyalty of the Methodists to the "plain teachings" of Scripture.

With the latter his writings were entirely filled. Throughout his works, which in Oxford and Bicentennial editions will eventually fill 26 volumes, every paragraph, virtually every key sentence, and every line of poetry makes its point in the words of the Bible. Nearly always these were used in harmony with the careful exegetical work he had done upon them, often in company with his brother, during the preceding decades. Time and again, Wesley's sermons consist of expositions of several biblical passages that he thought supported the meaning he found in the principal text, illustrating his view that Scripture interprets Scripture.

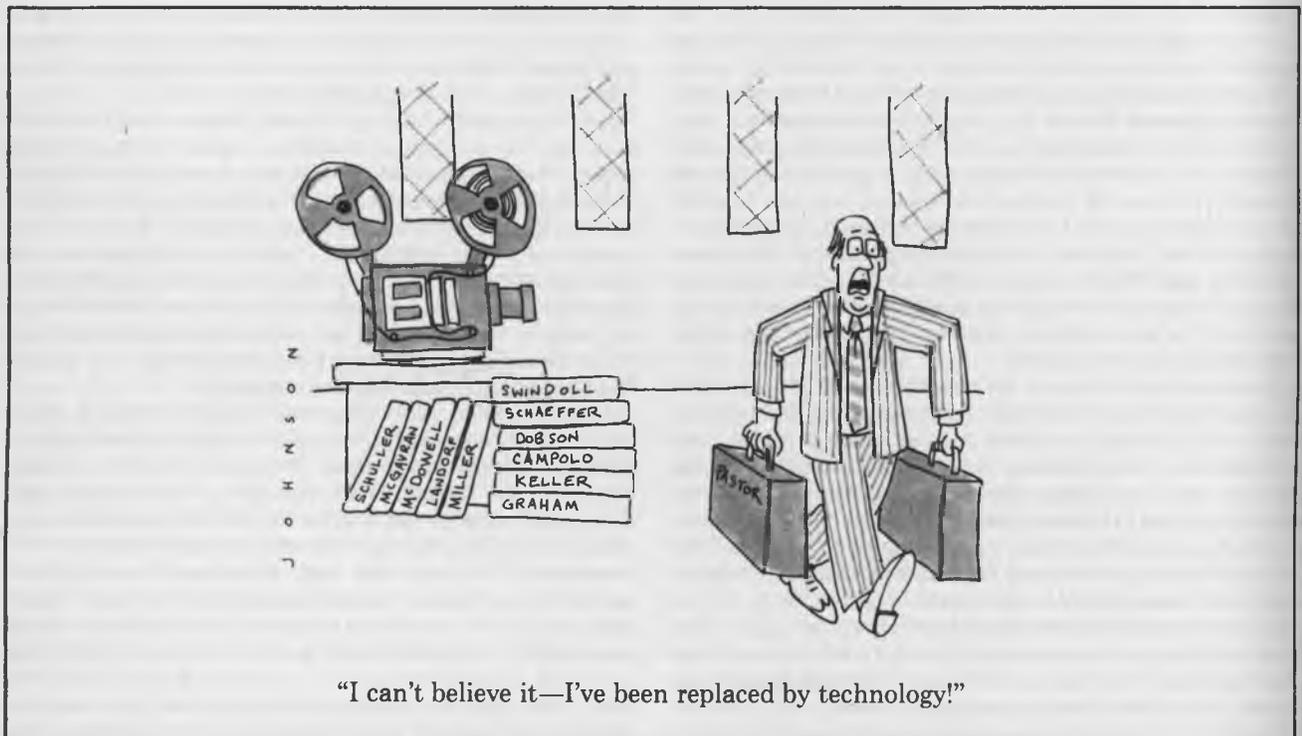
These expositions, however, usually underline the coherent (and in that sense, systematic) structure of the ideas he had discovered to pervade and give wholeness to the Bible: the call to righteousness, the prevenience of grace, and the promise of renewal in holiness through the outpouring of the Spirit. Here was no culturally conditioned choice of a canon within the canon. He believed that Scripture itself consistently affirmed the primacy of these themes. Through them, it unfolded in stages of increasing clarity the character and hallowing purposes of the God of *shalom* and steadfast love. Moses appealed to God's faithful words to the fallen pair in Eden, to Noah, to Abraham, and to Joseph for proof that the essence of His law is *Hesed*. Hosea, Jeremiah, and Nehemiah in turn revitalized Moses' teaching, using his understanding of righteousness to challenge the moral compromises of their con-

temporaries and to promise a better covenant.<sup>20</sup> John the Baptist and Jesus appealed to both Moses and the prophets, and to all those psalms that reinforced their teachings, to proclaim that the kingdom of God, the dispensation of the sanctifying Spirit, was at hand. And St. Paul, using the hermeneutic Wesley adopted as his own, reiterated the central emphasis of all these, notably Jesus.<sup>21</sup>

Again and again, at points where we expect Wesley's biblical exegesis to lay bare some contradiction of Judaism in the New Testament, he affirmed the superiority of the latter covenant by showing how it fulfilled the earlier ones. Jesus is attested the divine Son because He is the image of the God whose faithfulness we encounter at Abraham's Moriah, in Joseph's Egyptian prison, and amidst the fire-wrapped peaks of Sinai. That faithfulness, Wesley with all of Scripture declares, is the ground of human hopes for purity and perfect love. "Real religion," he declared in a sermon first preached repeatedly in 1758, as the great revival of entire sanctification got underway, is a restoration of human beings "by Him that bruises the serpent's head" to "all that the old serpent" deprived them of—not only to the favor but also to "likeness to the image of God." That restoration, Wesley continued, implies "not barely deliverance from sin, but being filled with all the fulness of God." Nothing short of this is the Christian religion, he declared. "If we believe the Bible, who can deny it? Who can doubt it? It runs through the Bible from the beginning to the end in one connected chain." He urged his readers to take nothing less for the Christian religion than "faith that works by love" and produces "all inward and outward holiness." "Be not content with any religion," he cried, "which does not imply the destruction of all works of the devil, that is, of all sin."<sup>22</sup>

How all this worked out in the definition of Wesley's doctrine of salvation I shall now try to explain by reference to three of its cardinal principles: free will and free grace; the establishment of the law by faith; and the promise of the hallowing Spirit. Each was a critical element in his biblical doctrine of Christian holiness.

The teaching of free grace Wesley found everywhere in both the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures; and he thought the



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## Wesley urged ministers to acquire a knowledge of "the Fathers" because they were "the most authentic commentators on Scripture, as being both nearest the fountain, and eminently endued with that Spirit by whom all Scripture is given."

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doctrine of free will was its constant corollary there. Both within and outside God's election of Israel, Moses and the prophets declared that salvation came to all who would believe the promise and endeavor with all their hearts to obey God's law of love. Wesley thought the universality of both law and promise displayed the character of God, who is no respecter of persons.<sup>23</sup> The light that shined on Israel must shine also on humankind. As Jesus put it, God is not willing that any should perish but calls every person to repentance. When utterly fallen human beings experience the presence of awakening grace—the "prevenient" grace that convicts of sin and "goes before" saving faith—they can and therefore must respond freely, repenting of their sins.<sup>24</sup> To Wesley, this was the central proclamation of all those prophets who spoke in God's name from Noah to Ezra. The Jews of Palestine recognized John the Baptist and Jesus as authentic prophets precisely because they also began by calling for repentance and the restoration of the moral law.<sup>25</sup>

Wesley defined the varied dispensations of grace to Gentiles, Jews, and believing Christians not in linear historical categories, as modern "dispensationalists" do, but by reference to the manner in which God dispenses salvation to persons with differing degrees of spiritual understanding. He found evidence of the free gift of grace to Gentiles who had not received the law in Isaiah and Jeremiah and, as St. Paul had earlier, in God's promise that "the blessing of Abraham" would pass upon all peoples.<sup>26</sup> Wesley supposed that Socrates learned directly from the Holy Spirit, as Peter and John did, "we ought to obey God rather than men."<sup>27</sup> Peter's word to the household of Cornelius that "in every nation he who fears God and works righteousness is accepted of him" prompted Wesley, as it later moved John Fletcher, to renounce that section of the Athanasian creed that anathematized all who did not know and call upon the name of Christ to be saved.<sup>28</sup>

This conviction that fallen humanity's exercise of free will was dependent on prevenient grace enabled Wesley to clarify how faith established the law and so made good works possible. By grace alone we are convinced of sin and awakened to seek salvation; through "living faith," likewise the gift of grace, we are made new creatures and enabled to do good works. Again and again he repeated the axiom: No human work is properly called "good" unless it is rooted in the experience of saving faith. Righteousness is not the condition but the consequence of justification, of "being made just."<sup>29</sup>

Wesley sharply rejected the notion that the Mosaic covenant rested salvation upon human righteousness. Only God's covenant with Adam did so, he declared; for only before the Fall was humanity by nature able to keep the law. All subsequent covenants, and especially the one sealed in the blood of Jesus, proclaimed "the righteousness of faith," which St. Paul described as "faith working by love."<sup>30</sup> Wesley took with utter seriousness the declaration of the Epistle to the Hebrews that the patriarchs' experience of such a "living faith"—the same saving trust that made repentant sinners Christians—enabled Enoch to walk with God, Abraham to obey, and Moses to identify himself with the people of God. The Holy Spirit had inspired the fathers of Israel to rest their hope for salvation in God's faithfulness, His steadfast love.<sup>31</sup>

Wesley's lifelong affirmation of the spiritual character of To-

rah stemmed from this conviction of the wholeness of biblical truth. Both testaments proclaimed the saving unity of law and grace. The Old Testament law of righteous love, expressing the nature of God who created humanity in the divine image, embodied the beauty of holiness, on earth as in heaven. The gift by faith of power through the Spirit to keep that law was the fountain of joy in the New. "For the righteousness (or mercy) of God is by faith of Jesus Christ, unto all and upon all them that believe," Wesley cried in the fall of 1739. And what law does such faith establish, he asked? "The great unchangeable law of love, the holy love of God, and of our neighbour."<sup>32</sup>

That the law is life, then, that it is holy, just, and good, indeed, spiritual, as St. Paul explained in chapter seven of the Epistle to the Romans, was entirely clear to Wesley by 1739, when he began preaching in various places his great series of discourses on perfect love, from the Sermon on the Mount. In those teachings, he explained, Jesus had renewed the hallowing power of the Ten Commandments by establishing their "inconceivable purity and spirituality."<sup>33</sup> Always thereafter Wesley found untrue to the New Testament canon what many Christian and Jewish scholars now believe is a libel on ancient Judaism: the notion that Jesus and Paul set forth a new ethical system. The moral law, Wesley declared, "is an incorruptible picture of the High and Holy ONE that inhabiteth eternity. . . . It is the face of God unveiled; God manifested to his creatures as they are able to bear it; manifested to give, and not to destroy, life—that they may see God and live."<sup>34</sup> In 1750 Wesley published this comprehensive doctrine of the law in two sermons—one on "The Original Nature, Property, and Use of the Law" and the other a restatement of an earlier one, "The Law Established Through Faith."<sup>35</sup>

By that time, of course, the evangelical world was coming to realize that resistance to all forms of antinomianism was Wesley's hallmark, as it had been since his student days at Oxford. Two surviving sermons of 1733, "Love of God and Neighbour" and "Circumcision of the Heart," explained fully, from the promise to Moses recorded in Deut. 30:2-9, that grace to love God with all our hearts so as to keep His statutes is humanity's chief need and Jahweh's highest promise.<sup>36</sup> As Moses and Jesus had declared, Wesley never tired of saying: Outward submission to a code of behavior is not enough. Inward obedience to the law of love can only be complete, however, when the "exceeding great and precious promises" of being made "partakers of the divine nature" are fulfilled, and the believer has been given "an eye single to the glory of God."<sup>37</sup> Wesley discovered in 1738 that this full renewal in God's image began in the moment of regeneration. His "Aldersgate sermon" on salvation by faith declared, as he always did thereafter, that the minimal marks of that initial renewal, even a babe in Christ, were freedom from the dominion (though not the presence) of inbred sin, and deliverance from acts of willful transgression.<sup>38</sup>

The Moravians, who had helped Wesley into these convictions, were the first to challenge his preaching that the law might actually be fulfilled in the believer's life. During the summer and fall of the great revival of 1739, they pressed Whitefield's and Wesley's converts not to think themselves truly Christians at all until they experienced the "full assurance" of faith and were free of all doubt and fear. Worse, the London

*(Continued on page 55)*

# HOSPITAL VISITATION: A PATIENT'S VIEW

by Fred Wenger

*Chaplain, State Hospital and Training Center, Parsons, Kans.*

I did hospital calling even before I was ordained in 1961. Along the way I took three years of Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) in two different medical centers. I have done a lot of hospital calling and have supervised other chaplains.

Despite this background, I knew I was lacking in one area. I hadn't been a hospital patient since I was a child and stayed overnight to have my tonsils and adenoids removed. Recently I gave in and subjected myself to the surgeon's knife to have a long-delayed hemorrhoidectomy. I learned things as a patient that will inform my future calling.

1. *There is a huge difference between firsthand and vicarious experience.* I confided in just a few friends concerning my fears and my reluctance to submit myself to the indignities of being a patient. I was scared of "going under" and greatly worried about "war stories" I heard from others who'd had this operation. I had never felt these things so intensely with the hundreds of patients I visited over the years.
2. *I was very appreciative of those who responded sensitively.* Two friends at work were able to let me share my fears and worries before the operation. One minister friend in town really heard me. These three were accepting, active listeners. I thank God for their ministry to me.
3. *A brief prayer before surgery helped immensely.* My own pastor arrived just as I was being transferred out of my bed. I was a little groggy from the shot. It meant a lot to hear him assert himself gently and state, "Let's

have a brief prayer before you go with them." I didn't need him hovering around all day. I did appreciate that brief word of prayer.

4. *My wife's ministry of sensitive presence was beneficial.* As I went into surgery I knew she would be in the waiting room. (I found out later Pastor stayed with her.) When I "came to" she was in the room. She didn't say or do very much. That helped. I slept a lot. It felt great just to know she was there.
5. *The people who let me alone the first day are appreciated.* I was very pleased to have my wife around. My son, daughter, and mother-in-law all made brief appearances. It felt good to know they were touching base with me. I was just too uncomfortable and too sleepy to want to face others that day.
6. *After the first day I was pleased that several remembered me.* Most of the visits outside of family were short. Some called on the phone. It was nice to get some flowers. I enjoyed the cards. All of this would have been wasted on the day of surgery. It was valued during the hospital stay and when I came home.
7. *A couple of people kindly allowed me to tell "My Story."* In my head I knew that many people don't care to listen to the patient's experience. I also learned that most people are very uncomfortable discussing a hemorrhoidectomy. But those two who let me talk did me a great service.

There were also some things worth noting that were not helpful.

1. *The "war stories" caused anxiety.* After all, I had put off this surgery for years. What good would it do to hear how painful others found it? The worst indiscretion was the story of "someone from work who had similar surgery last week and was absolutely miserable."
  2. *Those who "knew just how I felt" were often grossly incorrect.* It frustrates me when someone asks, "How is it going?" and then when I start my explanation, they say, "I know just how you feel." That statement is tended to be kindly, but it stripped me of all my individuality. I trust I will never say it to another person.
  3. *Listeners who interrupted and told their own stories did not minister to my spirit.* It is amazing to me how many did that, some more abruptly than others. One or two even bored me. Though I appreciated the effort they showed in coming to see me, it was not very helpful.
- Did the experience of being the patient help my ministry? I think so. On my very next call I was much more sensitive. The man was facing the window as I arrived. As he turned toward me, I noticed he grimaced. I quickly offered to go to that side of the bed. He smiled appreciatively. I listened, following his conversation carefully. He seemed pleased when I gave feedback that showed I had heard him. I didn't talk about my surgery. He and his wife seemed touched by my prayer. I think they also were glad that I didn't stay very long, since he was in pain and discomfort.

**A pastor and the church should plan on a balanced spiritual diet—unless you want your people living on spiritual junk food.**

# SPIRITUAL NUTRITION

by Ted Nissen

*Pastor, Colonial Presbyterian Church, Kansas City*

**M**ost of us would agree with the statement, "You are what you eat," meaning our physical health and well-being are very dependent upon a good diet. By the same token, I believe that we Christians must have a well-balanced spiritual diet to maintain spiritual health and vitality. Many Christians do not have a clear idea of a proper diet for spiritual growth. Few are disciplined enough to make it through the Bible in a year (if at all!) without some guidance.

With these things in mind I developed a sermon on "Christian Nutrition." I continue to recommend this spiritual diet to my congregation and particularly to couples in premarriage counseling. It has been useful in many respects.

In spiritual things as in the physical realm, a diet influences the whole life-style. The recipe book for a spiritual diet must be the Word of God. I share with you the elements of a well-balanced spiritual diet and the biblical basis for including them.

**Corporate Worship**—Normally this is experienced as we gather on Sunday morning. Something unique happens when the Lord's people gather in the Lord's house on the Lord's Day. God originally designed the Sabbath for worship, rest, and family relationships. Observance was required in the Old Testament. Now we are free to obey or not. If we choose to disobey, we are the losers. What happens in Sunday worship cannot be fully duplicated any other way. "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some" (Heb. 10:25, NKJV).

**Family Worship**—We need to partake of spiritual food together as a family aside from normal church activities, such as: mealtime blessing, reading and discussing together a passage of scripture, times of prayer, discussing of issues and attitudes from a Christian perspective. My wife and I did such things as a couple as well as with the children, but we found our times of devotion together turned out to be rather irregular. Finally, Linda said, unless we have our devotional time together early in the morning we are never going to be regular about it. She was right. We set the alarm most mornings for 6 A.M. I flip on the light and read a chapter from the

Bible, then we snuggle in close and pray together. One morning she leads in prayer first, the next morning I pray first. There is no way to measure what that has meant in our lives. Much more could be said about family worship, but space does not permit. Deut. 6:7 sums it up very well. "You shall teach them [commandments] diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up" (NKJV).

**Small Group**—Things can happen in a small Christian group that don't happen anywhere else. When a handful of Christians meet regularly for prayer, study, and sharing, great experiences of love, support, joy, and learning occur. It can be like a second family. I believe this small-group relationship was the source of great strength and meaning in the Early Church. Somehow this emphasis got lost over the centuries but is now making a comeback. "They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts" (Acts 2:46, NIV).

**Adult Class**—This part of the diet is particularly for larger churches. It provides not only adult education but fellowship and social activities as well. This class normally is held on Sunday morning also. In a large church worship is primarily a time of celebration, but there is not much intimacy. A regular adult class provides the Sunday-by-Sunday relationships that happen automatically in smaller churches, factually a congregation within a congregation. And many times small groups will branch out from a large adult class. "Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:15, NIV).

**Prayer**—Prayer is both speaking to God and listening to God. We can pray alone or corporately, aloud or silently, at work or on the road, at home or in church. Actually, we need to pray in any manner at any time. Robert E. Speer once wrote, "Prayer without work is a dream, but work without prayer is ashes." "Pray constantly" (1 Thess. 5:17, RSV).

**Scripture**—The Westminster Confession describes the Bible as the only infallible rule of faith and practice. It

## Whenever people argue for everyone fitting into one mold they are usually thinking of people fitting into their type of mold.

growth study, but he still hasn't clearly articulated what he means by a homogeneous unit.

This he does in his much larger volume, *Understanding Church Growth*. This was first published in 1970 and was revised in 1980 and still appears under that title.

In the earlier edition he writes, "The *homogeneous unit* is simply a section of society in which all the members have some characteristic in common" (85). He retains this definition intact in the revised edition (95). He goes on to say that a homogeneous unit (or HU in church growth jargon) could be a political unit or subunit, their characteristic then would be that they all live in a certain geographic area. The HU could be a segment of society that shares a culture or a language. It could be a people or a caste. It could be a subunit within a tribe. Thus, the HU concept is an elastic concept, depending on the context in which it is used.

Thus far most people would have little trouble with the homogeneous unit principle. We can easily recognize many of these distinctions in people. McGavran goes on, however, to say, "Men like to become Christians without crossing racial, linguistic or class barriers" (1970:198; 1980:223). Dr. McGavran is now advocating this principle as an evangelistic strategy. He is saying that people prefer to become Christians among their own kind of people. This position is what has stirred controversy.

What is Dr. McGavran advocating? This principle is to be a *tool* for evangelism. It focuses on unbelievers rather than believers. He is saying that unbelievers who are often filled with racial and ethnic pride will not become Christians if they have to cross in addition to the barriers that separate the unbeliever from God the social and cultural barriers of race, language, or class. If these barriers are erected along with the barriers of acknowledging that one is a sinner, that he needs a Savior, that he must repent and believe, then the church will be more effective in keeping people out of it than in letting them in. This is based on the assumption that most people when they are convicted of sin are convicted of sins such as drinking, adultery, swearing, lying, stealing, cheating, idol worship, and other such sins. Dr. McGavran is saying that these barriers are hard enough for the sinner to cross and that the church does not need to add other barriers before a person can be born again and become a part of the family of God. If the church says that in order for a person to be a Christian he must worship with those who are not a part of his kith and kin, then the church will be more effective in keeping people out than in bringing them in.

One can recognize the difficulties involved if in order to be a Christian one needs to worship with those who speak a different language from that used in the home.

The principle is also readily discerned when it comes to pronounced class and racial barriers. It takes no great acumen to see that when marked differences of color, stature, income, cleanliness, and education are present, men understand the Gospel better when expounded by their own kind of people. They prefer to join churches whose members look, talk, and act like themselves (*McGavran 1980:227*).

Dr. McGavran has written more from the cross-cultural missionary perspective, though in the 1980 revised edition he argues that many of these principles are applicable in the American scene. C. Peter Wagner, a disciple of McGavran, develops this principle in regard to the church in North America in his book *Our Kind of People* (1979). Here he argues that the churches that grow best are homogeneous unit churches. He cites "the undeniable fact that most Christian congregations, whether they ought to be or not, are culturally homogeneous. Even in pluralistic societies where different groups of people live closely together and speak mutually intelligible languages, churches seem to develop in 'homogeneous units'" (11). He goes on to argue that the HUP in America applies chiefly at the congregational level rather than at the denominational level. Certain larger churches may function like a denomination with several congregations within them. These separate congregations or fellowship groups are organized along homogeneous unit lines. The church in this instance appears heterogeneous but in actuality is made up of several homogeneous units.

First Church of the Nazarene in Los Angeles is an example of this. It has four distinct congregations that meet in its building and that once a quarter have a combined service of celebration. This church has a Hispanic congregation, a Southeast Asian congregation, a Korean congregation, and an Anglo congregation.

The question that comes to us is, "Is this the way it should be?" How does this square with the Word of God? How does this fit in relation to our understanding of scriptural truths? How is this demonstrated in the life of the early apostles?

Three references of Paul that are often cited as support for the idea that HU congregations are contrary to Scripture are Gal. 3:28; Eph. 2:14; and Col. 3:11. These references state that there is "no distinction," the middle wall of separation has been broken down and "you are all one." Do these passages support the position that HU congregations are contrary to Scripture?

In Gal. 3:28 Paul says, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (NASB). Here Paul is arguing that in Christ mankind is one, for God is no respecter of persons. There is no preferential treatment or standing before God because one was Jew, free, and a male, nor does God despise

## Homogeneous unit churches that seek to exclude people are certainly sinful and need to be redeemed by the grace of God.

one because one is a Greek, a slave, and a female. According to Jewish custom and belief one would have been preferred if he had the former qualities and would had to take a backseat if he did not have those qualities. These separations no longer hold in Christ.

Paul is not arguing that these distinctions are destroyed in being one in Christ but rather that there is unity and equality even with these differences. People do not lose their individuality because they are in Christ. Rather, these very qualities can be used to reflect the beauty of Christ's life within. The Greek does not need to become a Jew to become Christian (as was true of a convert to Jewish religion), the slave could continue to serve his master, and male and female do not need to lose their sexual differences in order to follow Christ. Their oneness in Christ is organic and vital; they, nevertheless, maintain these distinctions. This scripture portion argues that no one is excluded because of belonging to a certain homogeneous unit or that he is a second-class citizen because of belonging to that unit. God accepts everyone, no matter what homogeneous unit he comes from, and He does not require the blurring of their distinctions in order to be acceptable to Him. This portion argues primarily that there are no special advantages in belonging to one HU as compared to another. I do not see it arguing for the destruction of these homogeneous units in order to belong to Christ (see *Beacon Bible Commentary*, 9:68-69; *Clarke's Commentary*, 2:402; *Interpreter's Bible*, 10:519-20; *New International Commentary*, 10:148-49).

In Eph. 2:11-16 Paul is showing the Gentiles what they had been as far as the Jews were concerned: "Called 'Uncircumcision,' . . . separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, . . . strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world" (vv. 11-12, NASB). But now in Christ this no longer holds. He uses the illustration of a dividing wall that has been torn down. In all probability he was referring to the wall that separated Gentiles from the innermost part of Jewish worship. Paul was familiar with that wall at the Jerusalem Temple, for in signs of Greek and Latin it stated, "no man of another race is to proceed within the partition and enclosing wall about the sanctuary; and anyone arrested there will have himself to blame for the penalty of death which will be imposed as a consequence" (*Interpreter's Bible*, 10:655).

Although this wall was still standing in Jerusalem at the time Paul wrote to the Ephesians, he says that in Christ this wall has been torn down. This separation no longer stands. Those far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. Again Paul shows that in Christ people are not excluded because of belonging to one HU or to another. All are brought near. Paul's argument is that both (Gentiles and Jews) are accepted by God. Both

have access to the Father, through the Son and in the Spirit. He in no way argues for the destruction of their Jewish or their Gentile distinctives in order to be in Christ. Christ has destroyed the barrier that kept some people out.

The Gentiles are now fellow citizens with the saints, they belong to God's household. They too are being built upon the foundation of the apostle and prophets. They are part of the growing holy temple in the Lord. In Christ they have been accepted. God recognizes these differences and allows for them, just as any father or mother recognizes and allows for the differences between their children. No wise father or mother presses for uniformity among their children much less would an all-wise Creator and Heavenly Father. These very differences represent a wholesome and enriching variety. God who certainly created many of these distinctions would not now say, "They must be destroyed in order to be My true children in grace" (see *Beacon Bible Commentary*, 9:177-79; *Wesleyan Bible Commentary*, 5:392-96).

Paul in Colossians 3 has been telling the Colossians that they are to set their minds on heavenly things, not earthly. In Christ they have died. They are, therefore, to consider themselves dead to all the evil passions they once lived in. They are also to put to death the sins of the spirit—anger, wrath, slander—and are no longer to be foul-mouthed or liars because they have put off the old self. They are to put on the new self, which God is renewing and re-creating in them. This renewal makes no difference; it works for the Jew as well as the Greek, the barbarian and the Scythian, slave as well as freeman. This renewal is for all people regardless of their HU. They are to be renewed according to the list Paul offers in verses 12-17.

One is only disqualified for salvation because of sin, not because of race, culture, or any other human difference. God accepts all men regardless of their HU. Again Paul does not argue that God intends for a person to totally disregard the HU from which he comes but rather that renewal is to come to that person wherever he is, so he can demonstrate to his HU the transforming grace of God. It is those who know us best to whom we can demonstrate what the grace of God has done. We do not have any special rank or privilege but are to let the grace of God work itself out through us as a demonstration to those about us (see *Beacon Bible Commentary*, 9:415; *New International Commentary*, 11:274-78).

These portions do not argue that the distinctions we know as human beings are completely destroyed in Christ, but rather that as far as God is concerned they are inconsequential to His grace. Not all the works I have cited agree 100 percent with my conclusions. I believe some have been influenced by the universal brotherhood of mankind thinking and egalitarianism being

promoted in recent years until they fail to see the beauty of these distinctions. In their zeal to speak out against discrimination that seeks to exclude certain people, they have failed to recognize normal and natural distinctions in people and between groups of people. Whenever people argue for everyone fitting into one mold they are usually thinking of people fitting into their type of mold. This of necessity would cause some people groups to totally lose their distinctive characteristics, a position I do not see supported in Scripture. The whole argument in Acts 15 is against that position.

Nowhere do we find in the New Testament the argument that people need to go through cultural circumcision in order to be Christians. Rather, it upholds the rights of every race to become Christians among their own people group. This allows them to follow Christ without forfeiting cultural distinctives. Forfeiting these distinctives would cause them to lose their sense of identity with the awareness of who they are and how they fit into the world.

Paul in several places makes reference to the fact that the Christian is now the Body of Christ or the parts of the Body of Christ (Rom. 12:5; 1 Cor. 12:20, 27; Eph. 4:12, 25). In the earlier reference, Eph. 2:15, he says that the two are being made into one new man.

I believe the body will serve as a good illustration of the heterogeneity as well as the homogeneity that is to exist in the church. Certainly we recognize that the body is one, thus homogeneous. Yet within the body are separate parts, each part is distinct from other parts, none lose their separateness just because they belong to the body. They retain their separateness, thus we can say that the body is heterogeneous. Each of those parts maintains its distinctives in order for the body to function as a whole. It maintains its smaller homogeneous units within the larger homogeneous unit. By this I mean that there is a clear distinction between the liver and the kidneys or the liver and the heart. Since the body functions as a whole we do not find a part of the body becoming the liver/kidney or the liver/heart, but each part maintains its distinctives in order for the body to function properly.

Science tells us that our body cells are constantly being replaced except for our brain and nerve cells. Thus, I am a new man from what I was 10 years ago. But in this renewal process liver cells replace liver cells, heart cells replace heart cells, kidney cells replace kidney cells. The body does not make a mistake; it knows where each belongs and the body functions as a unit. How does the white cell in the blood know which new cell to attack as an enemy and which to welcome as a friend? Man still does not understand that mystery but the "body's cells have a nearly infallible sense of *belonging*" (Brand and Yancey, 1981:50)

Brand and Yancey suggest that the secret to membership in the body lies locked away inside each cell nucleus, chemically coiled in a strand of DNA. Once the egg and the sperm join together, they share their inheritance. As this cell grows and multiplies, each of the new cells carries the identical DNA.

Along the way cells specialize, but each carries the entire instruction book of one hundred thousand genes. DNA is estimated to contain instructions that, if written out, would

fill a thousand six hundred-page books. A nerve cell may operate according to instructions from volume four and a kidney cell from volume twenty-five, but both carry the whole compendium . . . DNA provides each cell's sealed credential of membership in the body. Every cell possesses a genetic code so complete that the entire body could be reassembled from information in any one of the body's cells, which forms the basis for speculation about cloning (1981:57).

When we become new creatures in Christ we become spiritual cells of His body. We receive His spiritual DNA code. Thus, as a Christian I can recognize other members of the Body of Christ because the spiritual DNA Christ has given me recognizes their DNA code. We are members of His body. Now as my body does not require all of my cells to be or do one thing, as an amoeba (which are complete in and of themselves), but allows for different cells to carry on different functions, so is it in the Body of Christ. We recognize the different cells (homogeneous units) that make up the vast mosaic of peoples each with a function to fulfill in the Body of Christ. We recognize that these HU are best suited to reach others within them. They are most likely to be built up or recreated by like cells. The body functions as a whole even though it is made up of these many parts.

McGavran and Wagner have advocated that it is much easier to win people to faith and trust in Christ if it does not appear that by becoming a Christian one must leave his own people to join another group of people (a liver cell becoming a kidney cell). Once one has accepted Christ and has received his spiritual DNA code, he will find that there is an acceptance (love) for those once hated in his unconverted condition. It may take some time for this realignment and readjustment of values. One's background or environment may have a strong influence on this. The lives of Peter and Paul are good examples of this.

Peter grew up in Galilee. He lived among Jewish people. His partners were Jews. The synagogue he attended was in all likelihood made up of Jewish fishermen (his homogeneous unit). He grew up as a strict Jew with possibly little contact with non-Jewish people. Paul, by contrast, was born in Tarsus. In those early years he had contact with non-Jewish people in this university town and commercial center. He was exposed to Greek thought, Greek culture, and possibly had some keen friends among the Greeks. Paul was a zealous Jew likewise having taken some of his studies in Jerusalem at Gamaliel's feet. This was their background or environment before coming to Christ.

Both of these men were filled with the Holy Spirit; to use our Wesleyan terms, they were sanctified wholly. For Peter this happened on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4). For Paul it happened three days after he met Christ on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:17). Peter, because of his strict Jewish training and environment, found it hard to mingle with the Gentile congregations, at least as far as Scripture records this for us. God had to give Peter a special revelation even after he was sanctified that he needed to go to the house of Cornelius (Acts 10:9-22). God revealed to him only that he needed to go there to give his testimony, not that he needed to regularly worship with the Gentiles, something much more difficult. Peter went in obedience but with some

fear and reservation. God came and Cornelius was gloriously saved and filled with the Holy Spirit. Peter stayed on for a few days at Cornelius' request but soon returned to Jerusalem. One other reference that we have of Peter mixing with the Gentiles is in Gal. 2:11. There he had been mixing with the Gentile converts freely until some strict Jews arrived, and then he was pulled to the side by them. Paul had to rebuke him sharply on this occasion.

Paul at the time of his Straight Street experience was probably told he was to be minister to the Gentiles (Acts 9:15). If not then, it was revealed to him in a vision on a trip to Jerusalem shortly after this Damascus road experience (Acts 22:17-21). Paul, in contrast to Peter, seemed to have little problem identifying with the Gentile peoples. His missionary practice and principle was "to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might win Jews; . . . to those who are without law, as without law, . . . that I might win those who are without law . . . I have become all things to all men, that I may by all means save some" (1 Cor. 9:20-22, NASB). Paul was able to move freely from Jewish crowd to Gentile and identify with them without losing his own identity. He could worship as easily with a crowd of Corinthian Gentiles as with the believers in Jerusalem.

It would seem to me to be rather on the foolish side to expect that either Paul or Peter would have come to faith in Christ if they had had to become members of a Gentile synagogue. Peter would probably never have made it. Paul by his exposure to Gentile people might have been open to something like that, but even this is highly suspect. It took the infilling of the Holy Spirit before the Lord even approached either one of them with the possibility of a ministry to Gentiles. The distance for Peter was so great that he is known as the apostle to the Jews while Paul who had this earlier exposure became known as the apostle to the Gentiles.

Since it took all of this to launch the work into the Gentile community, should we think people are any different today? (Note the Lord sent Ananias to Saul to pray for him. Ananias was a devout Jew and not a Gentile.) People become Christians more easily among their own people, those with whom they can most easily identify.

How long, then, will we need homogeneous unit churches? The answer seems rather obvious: as long as there are sinners who have racial or ethnic pride. We will need churches that they can identify with and that can most effectively minister the Word of God to them. Churches that are people conscious, that is conscious of those peoples who are yet outside of Christ and what it will take to draw them to Him. We do believe that once a person has submitted himself to Christ there is a much greater chance for God to deal with his ethnic and racial pride that seeks to lock people out.

I for one do not want to concede to the devil and sin all the diversity we find in the present world. The legitimate distinctives different people groups have is so rich and varied that to credit all of this to sin seems to me to give the devil too much glory for what I believe God had a hand in doing. No doubt sin has corrupted some of the beauty of this variety, but it is not beyond redemption. In

fact this is what I see in the Book of Revelation. In 7:9 we read that there was a great multitude standing before the throne from every nation and all tribes and peoples and languages. Even here God takes knowledge of the various homogeneous units from which we all come. I believe it is of significance that God wants groups of people from every imaginable section of humanity to be there to praise Him. I'm sure we'll all praise Him in one heavenly "trade" language that all understand. But on that great praise day in my mind's eye I can see African drummers coming to beat out a song of praise to Him who redeemed them, just as easily as I can see a skilled organist and choir from Europe or North America sing a great anthem of praise. I believe God will still recognize up in heaven the heterogeneity that has been typical for us down here. Our spiritual DNA will then be operating free of any hindrances such as Peter had to struggle to overcome when he was down here.

Homogeneous unit churches that seek to exclude people are certainly sinful and need to be redeemed by the grace of God. Homogeneous unit churches that realize that their greatest evangelistic potential is in reaching a particular people but who exclude none from their worship are to be encouraged in order that on that great praise day peoples from every homogeneous unit will be there to sing their song of praise to the Lord God. These churches to be truly Christian churches will be active in planting churches among every conceivable homogeneous unit of society in order that all people may have a place where they feel comfortable in seeking and worshiping God.

When we plant churches in every people group of this world we are really freeing the Holy Spirit so He can more easily work among people. Just as we do not expect the Holy Spirit to overrule when we flout a law in the natural order of things (such as the law of gravity), should we any less expect Him to overrule if we do not recognize social dynamics at work among a people? He can do His work more easily when we work with these fundamental facts of human existence.

In this paper I have not addressed the subject of nurture and instruction, which is necessary for the Christian to grow. I believe that in conversion and the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit, God will have a basis in which He can work with those who hold wrong divisions within their heart. This includes both those who want to exclude others and those who want to make everyone just like themselves.

Since it appears questionable that God intends the destruction of the distinctives He created and through which He has worked across the years, it behooves us to work with Him in the redemption of mankind wherever they are. If we can reach more of lost mankind by planting many HU churches, let us do so, so people from every nation, language, tongue, and people will praise Him. Let us become conscious of the people groups around us that do not feel comfortable in our existing churches, but who also want to worship God and must be given that opportunity and that right. At this point I do not see a conflict between our Wesleyan understanding of scripture and the planting of homogeneous unit churches. 

# The Believer's View of the Cross

by Colonel Milton S. Agnew  
*The Salvation Army*

**S**tartling! Christ loved *the church* in such a way that, in His love, He was compelled to give himself for it.

But the startling aspect of Eph. 5:25-27 is the object of the sentence, not the subject. "Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it." It is not surprising to hear that Christ loved, or that He gave himself. These are well-known facts, obvious to all. The startling aspect is the compelling force of His love and its far-reaching effects.

But let's go back to the first chapter of the Epistle to get the proper perspective. Here the subject is God the Father. The object again is the church, "us," "the faithful in Christ Jesus" (v. 1). He chose us from before the foundation of the world "that we should be holy and without blame before him" (v. 4).

That, of course, was logical. Having created "the heaven and the earth" (Gen. 1:1), then "every living creature that moveth" (v. 21), God mused in His heart, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness" (v. 26). "So God created man in his own image" (v. 27). And that image was the image of purity, of holiness, of innocence. God desired that one segment of His creation should consist of spiritual beings, like himself, so that from them He might have worship, with them He might have

fellowship, upon them He might shower blessings. Man was that segment of His creation.

Thus man was "chosen."

Paul announces this in the first chapter of Ephesians by declaring that God the Father "hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ" (v. 3). Then, in the verses that follow, he lists many such "blessings": "adoption" in verse 5; "redemption" and "the forgiveness of sins" in verse 7; "wisdom and prudence" in verse 8; "an inheritance" in verse 11; a sealing in verse 13. In the Greek, verses 3 through 14 form one compound, very complex sentence. Translations break this up into several sentences. It would be a real chore to "diagram" and analyze it. But it is impressive that the only independent clause, which can stand alone, is verse 3. Of the "all spiritual blessings," that of holiness is the chief and the most important, the one to which all the others beckon.

The ultimate desire for man is that he be holy. God's will varies for each individual, as to occupation, place of residence, and other temporal matters. But in spiritual matters His is a common, universal will. For the unsaved, "The Lord is . . . not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3:9). And again: "Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto

the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. 2:4). For the children of God His universal will is their "sanctification" (1 Thess. 3:3; Heb. 10:10), is their "transformation" (Rom. 12:2). Thus it is entirely logical that God's supreme blessing to man is that "he should be holy."

Indeed, it had been the center request of our Lord's prayer just before His crucifixion that His people should be "sanctified" (John 17:17). Now "His people" would include the disciples who were with Him that night (vv. 8 and 9), but not "the world." The world must first be saved before it could be sanctified. But His people *would* include other believers of all the centuries. For as specifically as He excluded "the world" He included all who "shall believe on me through their word" (v. 20). What an exciting thought! For this includes us, of the 20th century, us of all languages and nations!

Now in the context of that post-Resurrection conference with His disciples, recorded in the first chapter of Acts, Jesus indicates that this greatest blessing, under the term "the promise of the Father," would come with the baptism of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:4-8). The Spirit, in His fullness would be to the believer the Administrator of this blessing of sanctification (2 Thess. 2:13), even as He would be to the repentant sinner for his new birth (John 3:3-8), for

his justification (1 Cor. 6:11), for his adoption (Gal. 4:6-7).

It should then be no surprise that Paul, in the heart of this letter, declares: "Be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is. . . be filled with the Spirit" (Eph. 5:17-18).

Jesus himself had foreseen this filling as an overflowing, sharing experience comparable to the flow of "rivers of living water" (John 7:38-39). This, John explained to be the occasion of the believer's receiving, or taking to himself as a baptism, the Holy Spirit, who would thus be available after Jesus was glorified. And that time, beginning with Pentecost (Acts 2:2, 4), is now!

The tense of Paul's exhortation is present, the tense of a constant flow—"Be filled." After their initial "sudden" filling of the baptism, believers should seek and expect a continual infilling that they might indeed share "rivers of living waters" with a thirsty world. After all, Christians are to be channels of (the) blessing, not mere reservoirs. Jesus called it "an inner spring always welling up for eternal life" (John 4:14, NEB).

And now back to Christ's gift for the church, as recorded in Eph. 5:25-27. In Rom. 5:6-10 Paul has told us that Christ died for us when we were ungodly, that we might be "saved from wrath through him." But now he reminds us that "Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it." Christ's suffering on the Cross was not just that the world might be saved, that sinners might have their sins forgiven. It was also, and quite as important, that the saved might be sanctified, that their inherited, inbred sin might be cleansed. God's will for the sanctification of His people was made possible only at an eternal cost!

This itself implies a basic truth. The experience of a justified believer is not complete in God's sight. His

sins may be forgiven, but he needs a full sanctification of his sinful nature. This can be achieved only by his trusting for his sanctification the same Savior whom he trusted for his salvation. The plan of atonement very definitely includes both!

The present text presents three specific results that may be expected from Christ having given himself for His church. "That he might sanctify and cleanse it" speaks of the entire sanctification more fully described by Paul in 1 Thess. 5:23: "The very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." "That he might present it to himself a glorious church" speaks of that thrilling future moment in history popularly known as "the Rapture of the Church" and foretold by Paul in 1 Thess. 4:14-17:

For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

(See also 1 Cor. 15:50-54.) WHAT A MOMENT OF HISTORY!

The third purpose of the Cross as related to believers, and marked by the word *that*, speaks of the condition of the church for the present age before the Rapture. "That [in the meantime] it should be holy and without blemish." And that is exactly what is announced in 1:4 regarding God's eternal purpose "that we should be holy and without blame before him in love."

What a thrilling and resounding conclusion to "the purpose of the Cross"!

However, there is one more meaningful piece of information—the type of action involved as expressed here in the Scripture.

The aorist tense in the Greek, depicting an event, is used in the phrases: "Christ . . . gave himself," "That he *might* sanctify and cleanse," and "That he *might* present it to himself a glorious church." This tense marks the crisis nature of the crucifixion of Christ, and of the sanctification and, later, of the glorification of the Church. But then the tense changes to the present in the expression "that it *should* be holy and without blame."

Now scholars declare, "A Greek writer instinctively knew what tense to use in expressing an idea accurately. . . Slight changes of meaning and delicate variations are flashed back and forth in many passages. We have no right whatever to assume that these writers were using such varieties of tense in reckless carelessness" (Dana and Mantey, *Grammar of Greek N.T.*, 194, 208).

So the tense is changed here to the present tense, the tense of continued action, the same tense as used in 1:4 "that we *should* be holy and without blame before him in love." The crisis event of entire sanctification is the required foundation for the fulfillment of God's eternal plans.

To the child of God, Ephesians presents a startling view of the Cross. For Christ gave himself, at a meaningful hour of history, that in an eventful act, the child of God might be sanctified and cleansed and thus might be prepared for the sudden rapture of the Church, and, in the meantime, might consistently "be holy and without blame before him in love."

May God grant to His people a realistic believer's view of the Cross!



"Bible stories are so simple that they are like empty cups for people to fill with their own experience and drink for their own need over and over again, through the years."

—Anne Morrow Lindbergh

# TABLE TALK AT THE BLEDSAWS

by Nina Beegle

**T**he sun casts long shadows as it squeezes its way over the top of tall apartment buildings. Chicago shakes off the blankets of night and goes through its morning ritual. The clank of garbage cans below my window has a stereophonic ring as the sound vibrates through the brick-lined alleys. The El screeches around a curve just a block from my inner-city haven in the parsonage of Northside Church of the Nazarene.

"Down, you dumb dog," yells nine-year-old Cindy, and I know she has taken him for his early morning stroll. The Bledsaw family is in the flow of another busy day.

The Bledsaws are Jim and Lynn and their two daughters, Christy (nearly 16) and Cindy (age 9). After three days in the home of this exemplary family I was deeply impressed that such a strong family unit could emerge from a home where there is so much pressurized activity. I sensed it was not the product of human strength but of practiced, dedicated self-sacrifice. The absence of harsh words or impatient reactions could not have been a company "put-on." It was too real, too natural. Love and respect were a felt presence.

The four nonfamily occupants in the house didn't seem to deter the natural flow of affection and affirmation between family members. Rev. James Bledsaw sets the placid atmosphere with unimposing strength, and Lynn, sweet and steady, is like the undercurrent that moves rocks on the bed of a deep, flowing river.

"This pace you keep," I said to Lynn. "Is it always like this?"

"It has always been fast since we came here to Northside church, but it is increased right now because of Chicago '86, and Jim is so involved in that program, and because we are in revival services right now."

"Do you ever get to eat meals alone as a family? There were 10 at the dinner table last night."

"Our of the seven years we've been here, we've had about five months alone as a family. We have had as many as six summer ministries people living here during summer

months. When young people feel called to inner-city ministry there's no place else for them to land but here. We want to encourage and use them, but it does put a strain on us. Last year I kind of came to the end of my rope, and that's why I'm working at the bank now. I think I could have survived the extra activity and lack of family privacy; it was the financial crunch it put us in that really got to me."

"Lynn, you called this big, stone parsonage your oasis. Does that imply a dislike for inner-city life? Obviously that reference is not to a desertlike situation. This is far from that. Is it like being on a foreign field?"

"When we first moved here, a lot of people came to the door who couldn't speak English, and in that sense it was like another country. It made me feel kind of strange; but now I don't even notice it. My heart is here, doing what the Lord wants me to do—helping my husband do what he feels the Lord calls him to do. When I think of living somewhere else, I can't imagine it."

"Jim has to go out at night sometimes, into what we out-of-towners call the Chicago jungle. Do you have any fears about that, Lynn?"

"It terrified me at first. But one night, about a year after we moved here, he was called out. The husband of a newly converted couple we'd been working with got picked up by the police and locked up for not paying child support. He had some children by another woman he'd lived with before Christ changed his life. He called here at 2:30 A.M. and wanted Jim to let his wife, who was about seven months pregnant, know that he was OK. They lived in a very bad neighborhood, and he didn't want her to worry. It's the kind of neighborhood where people stand around their cars all night, listening to loud music and drinking beer. There are stabbings and things like that. But Jim felt he should go, so while he got dressed I began praying that God would take care of him. I was so scared for him I cried and prayed all the time he was gone."

"When he pulled up in front of the couple's apartment a



Rev. James R. Bledsaw and family. (L. to r.) Christy, age 16; Rev. Bledsaw; Lynette, wife; and Cindy, age 9.

policeman pulled up right behind him and asked him what he was doing. Jim wears his turned-around-collar in situations like that so he'll be easily identified as a clergyman. He explained and the policeman said OK and escorted Jim up the stairs to the third floor, waited for him to deliver his message, and escorted him back to his car.

"Jim came back and told me how God had taken care of him, and I felt sure God had sent an angel in a police uniform. That has been a reminder ever since that He is in charge and can take care of us."

"Jim, are you ever tempted to move your family out to the suburbs?" I asked.

"Tempted, maybe," Jim assured me. "But my family agrees that our work here would be greatly hindered if we moved away."

That could only be seen by observing the activities that center around the fact that the Bledsaws are there—such as someone dropping off bags of clothing, but even more by the effect on the people who know they care enough to be there, to be identified with the Ravenswood community.

A case in point is the incident that marked the beginning of the new Spanish church that worships in Northside church facilities.

A man was brought to the parsonage door, very agitated, seeking help. But Jim couldn't understand a word he said. Lynn had learned some Spanish in high school and college and, recognizing the language, ran and got her Spanish dictionary. They learned he was desperately hungry, and after they fed him they pieced together an amazing story.

In the spring of 1980, Castro made the startling announcement that a boat docked at Muriel on the coast of Cuba, would take people to the U.S. It was an attempt to prove to the world that people were not held in the country against their wills. Roberto Iliano heard it on the radio as he was going down the road in his delivery truck. He called his family, then drove straight to the dock, parked his truck, and walked up to the line where people were signing up. To gain

a boarding pass he had to make a false statement that he was mentally ill and a murderer. It worked.

In the U.S. he was held at Fort Chaffee, Ark. The only way out of such camps is through a sponsor. One day a man of whom he had never heard came and signed Roberto out of Fort Chaffee; however, Roberto learned when they got to Chicago that the man was a homosexual. Roberto refused the man's advances and was promptly dumped. With no place to go, he slept on park benches, in doorways, wherever he could. During the days he tried to find someone who could speak Spanish to let them know he was hungry—but no one understood him. When finally someone did, he was brought to the Bledsaw's door, desperately hungry.

"That was when I determined I would learn at least enough Spanish to be able to understand the people who came to my door needing help," said Jim. Since there was no time in his schedule for such activity, Jim got a do-it-yourself Spanish text, arose an hour earlier each morning, and taught himself to speak Spanish. He now converses freely with the people at Northside who make up the Spanish congregation, which was formed as a result.

In 1968, the year Jim graduated from Olivet Nazarene College, the new executive director of the Department of Home Missions, Dr. Raymond W. Hurn, came and spoke to the students.

"I felt a real response in my heart to his presentation as it related to work among the poor and needy in the cities," Jim says. "Some of us guys went up to him afterward and asked him why the denomination wasn't doing more—why the churches were moving out of the cities and away from masses of hurting people. He really listened to us."

But it was not to the city Jim went after graduation. He continued for more than a year as a supply pastor in the church he had preached in during his senior year. Then he pastored in St. David, a quiet Illinois town of 850. The Sunday School was averaging 24 when they took on the challenge of growth in this farming community. When they left five years later, it was averaging 125.

"We were happy," says Lynn. "It was a wonderful place to live, and we had a great relationship with the people there. Some of them are still our closest friends today. But Jim kept pulling out this map of Chicago and looking at it. He had this strange idea that God was calling him to a different kind of ministry."

Not able to get away from the pull in his heart to minister to the hurting masses of the cities, Jim says, "I felt a real urgency, particularly since so many churches were pulling out, going to the suburbs, and so few were even interested in what was happening to those left behind. I felt if the church was ever going to be affective in the cities, it would have to begin with people who had a special drawing on their hearts to get involved in urban ministry. I felt a responsibility."

Northside Church of the Nazarene had always been a strong church, even though World War II brought great social upheaval and mobility, which resulted in steady losses as, year after year, members moved to the suburbs or were transferred to other cities. Though the church never fully recovered those losses, it was still a strong church in 1977 when the Bledsaws arrived. But the Ravenswood community where it is located, once 100% white, was changing rapidly. It is now about 35% Spanish, 12% Asian, 5% Black, and the rest white. Adding to its tremendous diversity are Pakistani, Chinese, Japanese, East Indian, and a sprinkling of many other nationalities.

"We went through a soul-searching during that transience," says Bledsaw. "We watched 10 Nazarene churches leave, and we determined that we would stay regardless of the cost. The real struggle for Northside was whether they would invest 100% of their resources in building a super-church to replace Chicago First Church or lay themselves out for the different ethnic groups, using precious space and facilities, energy, time, and money to minister to the varied groups who were moving into Ravenswood community."

The validity of Northside's existence is now borne out by the five shifting congregations that worship in its facilities in five languages on Sunday mornings. Besides the English-speaking group, which is a cross-cultural congregation, there is an organized Spanish church, an organized Korean church, an Arabic congregation, and a Cambodian group. Alternating times for Sunday School and worship, beginning at 9 A.M., accommodates some of these groups. Smaller congregations must hold worship services in classrooms.

The Korean church begins Sunday School and worship at 12:30, which requires that the other groups be cleared out by noon. The Koreans are out by 3:00 or 3:30 P.M., and the English-speaking choir meets at 5:00 followed by their evening service. At 7:30 P.M. the Spanish church has evening service, and the building buzzes with activity until 10:00 or 10:30 P.M.

"Sounds like a mad scramble to me," I said to Christy, the Bledsaw's gifted high school junior.

"Actually it's into a routine," she replied, "and any conflicts are miniscule, easily taken care of. It's just that there's no place to grow. Every available inch of space is in use and every room is jam-packed."

On the morning I was to leave, I sat again across the kitchen table from Rev. Bledsaw, and Christy who stayed home from school because sleeping on the couch for several nights had left her with the blahs. Her room was occupied by a guest. Me.

The red-rimmed eyes and the drawn, care-worn features of James Bledsaw told me he needed rest and sleep too. It



Rev. James Bledsaw (*top center*) visits the Lathrop Ministry House, a recent addition to Northside church's outreach ministries. All bivocational, these young people live and work among the people of the low-income, high-crime Lathrop housing project. They are (*l. to r.*) Tami Addington; Lisa Criss; Jan Winfrey; Rev. Bledsaw; Mike Hicks, director of the ministry house; Dan Barnes and Meg Barnes, church planters.

wouldn't take an Einstein to calculate the eroding effects of the life-style of this caring man. His help is required in so many ways by the incessant glacier of needs because of the kinds and variety of ministries he offers: The ethnic groups with so many immediate needs, the compassionate ministries, the Lathrop Ministry House project, and the regular pastoral duties and involvements. Yet he takes time to greet each family member warmly as she arrives from school or work.

How does he do it? I wondered. But I didn't ask him that. I had come to gather information for the Decadal Thrust to the Cities program the denomination was sponsoring, with Chicago as the 1986 target city. I asked him, "Jim what do you hope to see happen to your church through Chicago '86?"

"I really haven't thought that through," he answered, "as far as what might happen here at Northside, and I'm torn between how much to hope for here and not wanting to appear the least bit selfish. I think the primary emphasis of Chicago '86 is the launching of new works, and that is important, and then the strengthening of existing churches.

"But the ministry here is unique. With our food pantry, feeding over 300 families a month, our clothing distribution program, and the different ethnic ministries, it seems impossible to do any more than scratch the surface since I'm the only one available here. The ethnic needs take a big bunch of time. Ladies in the city tend to work, so volunteers are nearly nonexistent. The church is strapped financially, which means we can't hire secretarial help. I get 85 to 95 pieces of mail on my desk every week. I could work 10 hours a week

just reading and answering my correspondence like it should be done. I need an assistant pastor. And a lot of students have felt called to the city, but when they come here, they usually end up on the Lathrop project; they wind up feeling a real call to serve in other than the ministry of Northside Church of the Nazarene.

"If our church could really grow—maybe double, maybe triple—if we could have help some way to enlarge our facilities . . . if we could get help with secretarial services . . . an assistant pastor for a year or two to get us over the hump to where we could grow and pick up his salary . . . these are things that would be fantastic. But I hardly allow myself to think in those terms because I don't want anyone, myself included, set up for disappointment. They are probably a wish list of the impossible dream."

"As I walked through the tenement buildings, Jim, where your Cambodian people are housed, I couldn't help wishing I had a bank account that would allow me to purchase one of those big brick giants. I envisioned giving these industrious people some tools and paint, lowering their rent. I am shocked at the rents their greedy landlords extract from them for those grossly neglected buildings."

"Sure. You know, if we had a building in the Ravenswood area, it could be used for the church planters and people called to urban ministries, and we would still have room for the Cambodians in the same building."

"So you do need your own building?"

"Oh, we need that. And in our own home there are always so many people. If we could just have an apartment building here for people doing urban ministries—the church planters, the weekend team members, the summer ministry kids. As it is now, anyone who feels a call to come to Chicago to minister will be living in our home until they find a job and an apartment. That's just a reality we deal with."

A knock at the door meant it was time for me to go to the airport. My next conversation was with the Lord. "We need some miracles here, Lord. Could You give us some?" A poem came to my mind—one I'd seen several times. It goes like this:

*I said, "Let me walk in the fields."  
He said, "Nay, walk in the town."  
I said, "There are no flowers there."  
He said, "No flowers, but a crown."  
I said, "But the sky is black,  
there is nothing but noise and din."  
But He wept as He sent me back.  
"There is more," He said, "there is sin."*

*I said, "But the air is thick  
and the fogs are veiling the sun."  
He answered, "Yet, hearts are sick  
and souls in the dark undone."  
I said, "I shall miss the light  
and friends will miss me, they say."  
He answered, "Choose tonight  
if I am to miss you or they"*

*I cast one look at the fields,  
then set my face to the town.  
He said, "My child, do you yield?  
Do you leave the flowers for the crown?"  
Then into His hand went mine  
and into my heart came He.  
And I walk in a light Divine  
the path that I feared to see.*

(Author unknown)



## SUBMISSION

by C. Austin Miles

The path that I have trod  
Has bro't me nearer God,  
Tho' oft it led thro' sorrow's gates.  
Tho' not the way I choose,  
In my way I might lose  
The joy that yet for me awaits.

The cross that I must bear,  
If I a crown would wear,  
Is not the cross that I should take.  
But since on me 'tis laid,  
I'll take it unafraid,  
And bear it for the Master's sake.

Submission to the will  
Of Him who guides me still  
Is surety of His love revealed.  
My soul shall rise above  
This world in which I move;  
I conquer only where I yield.

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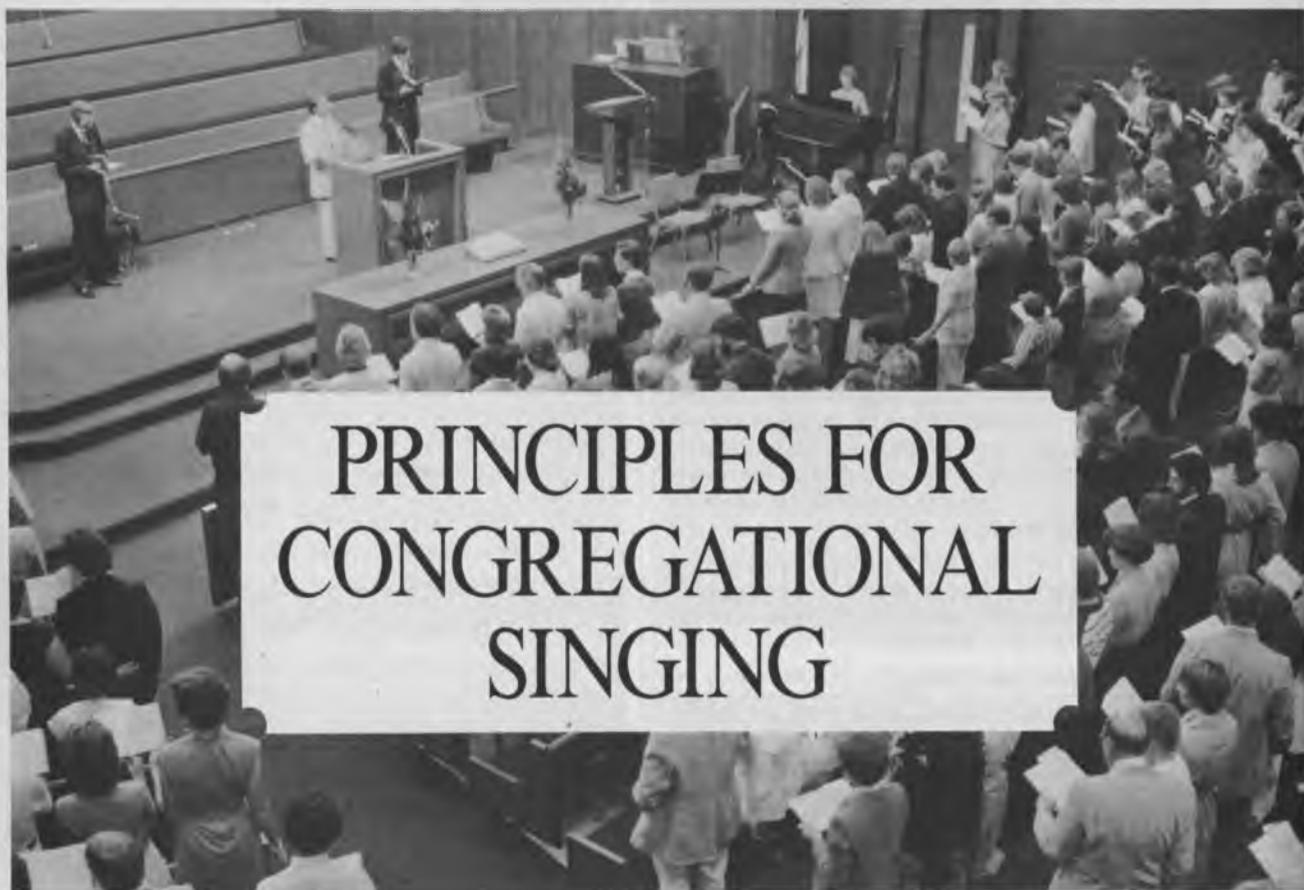
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## CHURCH MUSIC

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Focus on You

by Keith Schwanz

**C**ongregational singing is an indispensable part of any worship service, yet there are some misconceptions about its purpose. Some see congregational singing as merely filling time or as preliminaries—a warm-up for the main event. Others insist that its purpose is to provide variety and that the congregation needs activity. Still others talk of music's power to inspire and to psychologically or emotionally manipulate the congregation.

Given the importance of the Christian's song and our need for greater understanding of its role, the church leader would benefit from a study of this important subject.

Church music is functional. Instead of existing for its own reasons, church music is a tool to be used for spiritual advancement. Eph. 5:19, Col. 3:16, and 1 Cor. 14:15 are often quoted in the context of congregational singing. In these passages, the song God's people sing together is an instrument by which they communicate with God and with each other, and to nurture their own personal spirits.

### SINGING TO GOD

To sing to God is to worship Him. Worship has been defined as "an active response to God whereby we declare His worth."<sup>1</sup> God initiates the relationship and man replies in worship. To merely observe worship is to be separate from action. A true worshiper is active.

### *Congregational Singing Is a Response to God*

Music is one tool used in active worship. The earliest biblical evidence of congregational singing is found in Exodus 15. The Israelites had just seen God provide an escape from Egypt by holding back the waters of the Red Sea so they could cross on dry ground. When their Egyptian pursuers tried to follow them, God released the waters and they perished. In response to this mighty act of God, Moses and the sons of Israel, with Miriam and all the women, raised their song of thanksgiving to the Lord.

Sometimes neglect creeps into this response. Some find it easy to sing familiar hymns out of habit and not out of response to God. Others are overly concerned about what their neighbors think of their singing. Nor does external participation guarantee internal participation.

The response is of the spirit. "God is spirit," Jesus said in John 4:24, "and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth" (NASB). God, the object of our worship, has a spiritual nature. Therefore, our response assumes that form. Worship is also "in truth." This indicates not only that true worship is consistent with God's revealed Word but also that its manifestations are an honest expression of spiritual reality and can be perceived with the intellect.

J. Obert Kempson concludes that "the hymn is not sufficient unto itself in worship. It is a means whereby the individ-

ual can be stimulated and supported in the growth of his faith. The hymn serves the purpose of opening the way for the individual to commune with God." Congregational singing is a physical expression of a spiritual reality. This brings us to the next principle of congregational singing.

#### *Congregational Singing Is an Expression of Spiritual Devotion*

Singing has been an element of renewal throughout church history. From the Reformation to the Moravian pietists, from Wesley's movement to the American revivals, spiritual awakenings have been accompanied by enthusiastic singing. But which is the cause and which is the effect? Does music prompt spiritual renewal?

Evangelical church musicians generally acknowledge that music is used to attract people to a church service, and that the emotional power of music is employed to encourage people in their spiritual progress. These practices, however, are secondary issues, for ultimately only God can change one's spiritual condition. Music facilitates such transformation, but it is never the responsible agent.

Eph. 5:18-19 teaches that a song begins with the filling of the Holy Spirit. God's presence in the spirit of the faithful is the source of music. Donald P. Hustad supports this premise when he notes that "revival periods have been graced and supported by a flowering of new hymns." The atmosphere of spiritual renewal gives birth to songs of faith and praise.

Spirited singing is the result of Spirit-filled people. As believers express their devotion to God, they sing. The worship leader may therefore enhance congregational singing by encouraging personal spiritual growth.

#### *Congregational Singing: an Imperative*

Evangelical Christians believe that the Scriptures are inspired by God and direct him in matters of salvation and holiness. With such a view, the statements concerning singing to the Lord must not be ignored.

Scripture commands that music be used in praise and worship. Psalm 150 insists that God be praised with trumpet, harp, lyre, timbrel, stringed instruments, pipe, and cymbals. The Psalmist concludes, "Let everything that has breath praise the Lord" (Ps. 150:6, NASB). Other phrases used in the Psalms include: "Come before Him with joyful singing" (100:2, NASB); "Let us shout joyfully to Him with psalms" (95:2, NASB); and "Raise a song, strike the timbrel" (81:2, NASB). These are a few of the Scripture passages that charge believers to make music to the Lord.

The phrase "Praise the Lord" has become an expression of praise for contemporary Christians. When people of the Bible said, "Praise the Lord," it was to elicit a response from those hearing the statement.

### **SINGING TO EACH OTHER**

The second thrust of congregational singing is its benefit for fellow worshipers. Paul says in Col. 3:16, "Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs" (NASB). Wisdom is more than knowledge. Knowledge is a collection of facts. Wisdom includes beneficial use of those facts. The knowledge implied in Col. 3:16 is not the final goal. The clause "with all wisdom" moves the principle from just "knowing" to "doing," using wisdom to put knowledge into action. The presence of God, as evidenced in congregational singing, has practical value for the congregation.

#### *We Celebrate Together*

Singing allows people to make spiritual statements together. Even though one's spiritual relationship with God is a personal matter, there is great encouragement to be found in agreement with others concerning spiritual things. Congregational singing allows individuals to remember and explore collectively the great acts of God. Together, they can respond. True corporate worship is evidenced as voices unite in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs.

The Early Church was known because of its unity. Early Christians identified themselves as followers of Christ by their commitment to each other. This unity was demonstrated in their singing. "It was the ancient custom, and it still is with us," said Chrysostom, about the close of the fourth century, "for all to come together and unitedly join in the singing. The young and old, rich and poor, male and female, bond and free, all join in one song. . . . All worldly distinctions here cease and the whole congregation form one general chorus."

The manner of singing is as important as what is sung. The awareness of God's presence is often attributed to the way the congregation sings. If the congregation is "alive unto God," it is evident by their singing. William Reynolds states, "Hymn singing can be great for the local congregation; and the vibrant sound of the congregation singing songs of praise and testimony can do great things for the spirit of the church."

#### *The First Choir*

A delicate tension between the congregation's singing and the singing of choirs has existed throughout church history. Excess in both directions has occurred, and the church has become imbalanced at times.

Due to abuses in congregational singing prior to the sixth century, the church leaders decreed that only clergy and trained lay singers would be allowed to sing in church. Congregational singing may have continued in an informal sense, but after the sixth or seventh centuries, the voices of the people were practically silent. This condition continued until the Reformation, when the priesthood of all believers was seen to include the sphere of congregational singing. Calvin and Knox only allowed congregational singing. Luther used choir singing to augment the congregation's singing.

The congregation is always the first choir. "It is significant that the word 'choir' (choros) referred, in the early church, not to a special group entrusted with certain musical responsibilities, but to the congregation itself."<sup>2</sup>

A group of trained singers can lead the congregation in song, but they must not conduct their ministry as an entity separate from the congregation. Even when the trained singers are the only active members of the congregation, "The choir is still part of that congregation when it moves to its priestly and prophetic functions of singing on behalf of the larger group or singing prophetic musical expositions of texts for the congregation."<sup>3</sup> To ignore this principle will hinder the spiritual life of a congregation.

Donald Hustad says that in the light of Col. 3:16, "The songs we sing 'to one another'—congregational songs of testimony, of instruction, or of exhortation—are far more important than the music which is sung for us by the choir or the soloists."

The rest of the religious community might learn from Black churches. "The distinction between congregation and choir (or ensembles or soloists) is blurred in black worship; for the congregation often sings along with the choir and expresses

*(Continued on page 53)*

# PARSONAGE OR HOUSING ALLOWANCE?

by Dean Wessels

Administrator, Board of Pensions and Benefits USA  
Church of the Nazarene

*"Should we continue to provide a parsonage and utilities or should we change to a cash housing allowance and let our pastor buy his own home?"* Many churches are asking this difficult question, often out of genuine concern for the pastor's dilemma at retirement, when he has no real estate investment built up for a retirement home. The question becomes even more difficult to answer with the shift in the nation's economy and in each local economic situation. While there is *no absolute, authoritative answer*, the following list of advantages and disadvantages, which have become apparent to pastors and churches through actual experience, is offered to stimulate careful thinking and evaluation.

## PRO PARSONAGE AND CON HOUSING ALLOWANCE:

1. In some situations, there really is little choice. The parsonage may be connected to or adjoining the church building with no alternative for selling or renting. Unless used for Sunday School rooms, it remains the pastor's home.

2. Churches owning a parsonage may strengthen their ability to attract the pastoral candidate of their choice who may not be able or willing to buy a home.

3. In some areas, there are no property taxes due on a church-owned parsonage, which may mean less expense is involved.

4. The church handles repairs and maintenance on the parsonage, thus freeing the minister from these time-consuming worries and expenses.

5. Often a parsonage is nicer than what a minister could afford to buy in the community.

6. Making a pastoral change is easier when moving from parsonage to parsonage, since securing temporary quarters is unnecessary for house hunting or waiting for occupancy.

7. When the parsonage is sold, the church loses a traditional and meaningful way of showing love and concern for the parsonage family.

8. Many ministers do not have sufficient funds for a down payment on a home.

9. The church that enters the loan business to give the pastor the down payment often bears the cost of low interest and little or no payment on the principal.

10. The loan situation is hopefully trouble-free, but awkward situations have developed!

11. Many homes appropriate for the minister's needs are out of price range for his salary.

12. Very often the church cannot afford a housing allowance that fully covers all expenses including real estate taxes, fire and casualty insurance, upkeep, etc. It takes constant review and appropriate board action to keep pace with these increasing, inflationary costs.

13. Some pastors do not have the extra time, money, and expertise to handle such a real estate investment, which includes the added responsibility to maintain and repair "his" home.

14. In some locations, real estate can move very slowly, if at all! Adequate housing may not be available for purchase when needed. Also to be considered is

Nazarene

# UPDATE

UPDATE EDITOR, MARK D. MARVIN, PASTORAL MINISTRIES

## REVIVAL NOW

In the December issues of the *Herald of Holiness* the Board of General Superintendents invited 10,000 Nazarenes to become Prayer Partners in behalf of a great spiritual surge in our church. The initial response has been tremendous! Within a week after the first call, hundreds of commitment cards had poured into our office. Both ministers and laypersons in the United States and in other world areas have risen to the challenge of daily intercession for:

1. A mighty outpouring of the Holy Spirit in genuine revival.
2. A renewed personal commitment to Christ and to His Great Commission.
3. A worldwide harvest of souls that will result in New Testament church growth.

We confidently expect that many more than 10,000 of our people will become a part of this prayer partnership. This united intercession is the secret to making the Church of the Nazarene a real spiritual movement rather than just another denomination.

And it all must begin with "genuine revival." We talk a great deal about revival. Our evangelists conduct thousands of revival campaigns each year. But to be honest, we have not often witnessed "genuine revival." Why? There are many possible reasons, but I am convinced that the basic answer lies in words written by J. Edwin Orr in his hymn, "Search Me, O God." The last stanza holds the key:

O, Holy Ghost,  
Revival comes from Thee.  
Send a revival,  
*Start the work in me* (italics added).



by General Superintendent  
Eugene L. Stowe

All of us agree that real revival is a work of the Holy Spirit. But after the petition, "Send a revival," Dr. Orr pinpoints the place where revival begins, "*Start the work in me.*" That's where it has to happen first.

I was in Kansas City for a meeting of the Board of General Superintendents. A number of things needed to be done before the morning session that day, so I decided to skip breakfast. But as I left King Conference Center, I felt a strong impression to go next door to the cafeteria. After I paid for my roll and coffee I started looking for a table. Sitting immediately in front of me was a pastor from another district. The Holy Spirit directed me to join him at his table. I learned that he was attending a seminar sponsored by Pastoral Ministries.

My first question was, "How are things going?" The stock answer from most positive-thinking pastors would be "Great" or "Fantastic." But he replied, "God is doing something unusual in my life." For 15 minutes he shared the good news with me. He had pastored this church for more than 10 years. His record was good—budgets paid, better than average growth. But this year had been disappointing. Finances came hard. People moved away. Lethargy set in. Altar services were few and far between. His morale hit an all-time low.

Finally, in desperation, he asked his church board to give him a few days off so that he could get away by himself and assess the situation. He went on to say, "Those days changed my life!" Alone with God, he began to look at himself. He was saved and sanctified, but something was lacking. After hours of prayer he came into a new, vibrant relationship with God. Revival had begun in him. Since that time he said dramatic changes had taken place in his life. God's Word came alive. There was a fresh enthusiasm for ministry. His preaching had a new element of power. As he shared his experience with his people, they became hungry for personal renewal. Altar services became more frequent. The whole atmosphere of the church changed. "Genuine revival" came.

I listened spellbound as he shared this good news. It was time to go to our board meeting. Before I left I prayed with him and thanked God for the personal renewal he had experienced. My pastor-friend wouldn't leave well enough alone. When I said "Amen" he prayed for me and for my colleagues. He asked God to send personal revival to us and every pastor in our church. I believe that his prayer is being answered. The Lord has given me a fresh touch. Others are witnessing to the same.

How about you, reader-friend? Will you allow God to start revival in you—now?

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—Phil Riley, NTS Class of '62



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

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# CIVIL AIR PATROL

The Civil Air Patrol chaplaincy offers a unique opportunity for clergy to perform their ministry in an ecumenical setting, extending their outreach to the larger community.

The Civil Air Patrol (CAP) is the official auxiliary of the United States Air Force. It is also a private benevolent cooperation. As an integral part of the USAF, CAP makes major contributions in a number of endeavors, including search and rescue, disaster relief, youth development, and fostering a greater appreciation for aerospace in the United States.

A random sampling of denominations that provide chaplains to CAP reveals that the Church of the Nazarene is seventh in the number of ministers serving as CAP chaplains. We also have many chaplains in lay leadership positions, such as wing or regional chaplains.

## THE CIVIL AIR PATROL CHAPLAIN:

1. is a volunteer; he serves without pay.
2. has no age requirement. Retired clergy qualify to be CAP chaplains.
3. has no health, medical, or physical requirements.
4. needs college and seminary degrees (though waivers can be granted on an individual basis for the seminary education for older clergy when a résumé of extensive practical experience is submitted).
5. has no quotas or numerical restrictions from any one denomination.
6. is authorized to wear the CAP uniform, including the chaplain's cross and appropriate officer grade.

If you are interested in the CAP chaplaincy or wish more information, contact:

**Curt Bowers, Director, Chaplaincy Ministries**  
6401 The Paseo, Kansas City, MO 64131



# STEWARDSHIP SERMON CONTEST

## FOR MINISTERS

All licensed and ordained ministers of the Church of the Nazarene are invited to submit an original, unpublished sermon of 500 words or less ON ONE SPECIFIC AREA OF STEWARDSHIP.

The purpose of the sermon should be to provide insight and challenge for individual stewardship accountability of one's resources.

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All manuscripts must be postmarked by  
Midnight, September 1, 1986.

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**SIX DIVISIONS** increase your chances of receiving a special award. When you send your entry (see page 32K), please designate one of the following categories:

1. Ministerial student—College \_\_\_\_ Seminary \_\_\_\_
2. Active pastor—church membership less than 100
3. Active pastor—church membership 100 or more
4. Evangelist
5. Retired minister
6. Minister serving in a connectional capacity (headquarters personnel are NOT eligible).

---

**SIX MAJOR AWARDS**—To enhance your ministry!

**ONE GRAND PRIZE** (to be selected from the six first place winners)  
Video cassette recorder, one year's free subscription to VideoNet, and the "Stewardship Sermon Book."

**FIVE FIRST PRIZES**—One year's free subscription to VideoNet and the "Stewardship Sermon Book."

**ALL** entrants will receive the "Stewardship Sermon Book."

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# STEWARDSHIP SERMON CONTEST

## GUIDELINES FOR WRITING

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1. Choose one specific area of stewardship and pinpoint all your ideas about this particular area.
  2. Organize your best ideas around a clear-cut point or conclusion.
  3. Guard your introduction (lead) and the conclusion. Remember that they are the important "ends" that will ultimately tie together all that is in between.
  4. Stay on the subject. Once you have established your premise, don't wander into other areas.
  5. Reread and rewrite your sermon until you are satisfied that it has arrived at its intended destination.
  6. Choose words carefully. Make them precise and specific.
  7. Keep in mind the "judge's dozen":
    - (1) Overall effectiveness/clarity impact
    - (2) Value of the sermon to the listeners
    - (3) Basic interest of the subject matter
    - (4) Continuity throughout the sermon
    - (5) Emotional impact on the listeners
    - (6) Style
    - (7) Introduction (lead)
    - (8) Conclusion
    - (9) Grammar/spelling/punctuation
    - (10) Economic use of words
    - (11) Title applicability and catchiness
    - (12) Manuscript mechanics/neatness/readability
- 



# STEWARDSHIP SERMON CONTEST

## OFFICIAL RULES OF ENTRY

1. Sermon must be the original, unpublished work of a licensed or ordained minister of the Church of the Nazarene (headquarters personnel NOT eligible).
2. Sermon must communicate a clear message about one specific area of stewardship.
3. Sermon must not exceed 500 words; must be typewritten, double-spaced, and on one side of 8½" x 11" paper.
4. Sermons will be judged by the Pastoral Ministries director and the Sermon Committee and will become the property of Stewardship Services.
5. All entries must be postmarked by September 1, 1986.
6. Sermons must be properly identified with your name and address and must be accompanied by an official entry blank. (Names will be blocked out before the sermons are sent to the judges.)

### OFFICIAL ENTRY BLANK

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Division \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_  
District \_\_\_\_\_ Church \_\_\_\_\_  
School \_\_\_\_\_ (if a student)  
Sermon Title \_\_\_\_\_

I am entering the enclosed sermon in the Stewardship Sermon Contest. I understand that my sermon will become the property of Stewardship Services and will not be returned to me, and I do hereby give consent for my sermon, if chosen, to be published.

Please attach this entry blank to your sermon and mail to:

**STEWARDSHIP SERMON CONTEST**  
*Stewardship Services*  
6401 The Paseo  
Kansas City, MO 64131



# THE SHEPHERD'S **LIFE**

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

**LEADERSHIP • INSPIRATION • FULFILLMENT • ENRICHMENT**

## **GOD CALLS THE BEST FOR THE BEST**

The number of those responding and qualifying for Christian ministry must increase if the church is to make any significant gains toward winning this generation. God is calling. There should be no doubt about that. It is His will that there be sufficient workers.

As ministers, we can become preoccupied with our own priorities and fail to make the need for more ministers an important matter of prayer. Even when Jesus looked upon His society He saw the "harvest is plentiful but the workers are few." So he pressed on his disciples an urgent request to "ask the Lord of the harvest . . . to send out workers into his harvest field" (Matthew 9:37-38, NIV).

If it was urgent then, how can we escape the necessity of carrying out that divine commission today? If young people are going to be sensitized to God's call to ministry:

1. They must see you and me consumed with the joy and excitement of ministry. If we don't feel good about doing God's work, how can we inspire those who observe us?
2. We must be models for ministry that capture the imagination of those whom God is calling. They must sense that this is the noblest calling and the highest

vocation to pursue. Our bearing can convey that image.

3. Our churches must provide our youth with opportunities for ministry. They can discover how God has gifted them for ministry as they participate in service projects.
4. Young people should be given roles in the public church services. They need to feel the importance of doing God's work.
5. A discerning pastor will talk to persons upon whose life God is apparently placing His hand and will encourage them to reach for God's highest for them.

Let us have special services focusing on commitment for ministry that can be climaxed with victorious prayers around the altar. Such times can be confirming to young people seeking God's will for their lives. Mature Christians can take such opportunities to encourage the young people by their testimonies and assurances of prayer.

God is calling young people. Let us make sure none "cop out." Not only will they miss God's best for their lives, but the church will be weakened and the devil will win an advantage. God's call must prevail. Let's pray it will!



**Wilbur Brannon**  
Pastoral Ministries director



## SUPPORT FOR NEW PASTORS

Pastoral Ministries is providing, without financial obligation, orientation workshops for districts interested in the Ministry Internship program. These workshops are for supervising pastors and interns who have been identified by the district superintendent as Ministry Internship participants.

Ministry Internship provides the new pastor with the support of an experienced fellow pastor. As they meet together on a regular basis, the new pastor is free to discuss his own ministry in an atmosphere of confidentiality. By investing himself in the life of a younger minister, the supervising pastor finds fulfillment and a means of extending his own ministry. Practical aspects of ministry are discussed and reviewed, as the supervising pastor shares from experience tips on how to conduct weddings, funerals, Communion services, and board meetings.

An increasing number of districts are providing ministry internships for pastors entering their first through their fifth years of ministry. Pastoral Ministries plans to offer this program on 40 districts by the end of 1986.

For more information, contact Pastoral Ministries, 6401 The Paseo, Kansas City, MO 64131.

## ENHANCE YOUR MINISTRY SKILLS

Continuing education has never been more important than it is today. Your ministry skills can be enhanced in the quiet setting of King Conference Center on the Headquarters campus. Several events are being planned this fall. Most focus on an area of ministry development or enrichment. Registration is limited to a "first-come, first-served" basis.

"Approved Workman" offers a self-directed program of continuing education. Pastors, associates, deacons, evangelists . . . all can earn Continuing Education Units. Based on reading texts and study projects, the "Approved Workman" program features a wide range of topics and educational concerns. You can earn a certificate for just 5 CEUs in any one area. For 50 CEUs, you can earn a plaque to be awarded at your district assembly. Write Pastoral Ministries today for full information.

## ETHNIC TRAINING CENTERS

Starting an ethnic training center? Pastoral Ministries would like to share your dream. Write us and let us know what you are doing. We are building an information base for distribution to those working in this type of ministry. Let us know what's working in your area. Pastoral Ministries interfaces in these efforts at the point of training for ministry. By staying in touch, we can help each other accomplish the Great Commission in the urban areas of the world.



## HEARTLINE GAINS ACCEPTANCE

An increasing number of parsonage families are finding it beneficial to call the toll-free "Heartline" number. And those who have used "Heartline" are finding it a "safe" call to make.

CoNET Heartline is the counseling service designed exclusively for use by those in the unique position of living in a parsonage. Located at Christian Counseling Service in Nashville, Heartline's counselors are highly qualified, dedicated Christian professionals. Not only are they able to help in the pastor's personal and family situations, but the counselors are valuable resource persons for the pastor to contact in his own counseling situations. The pastor is able to gain insights as a result of discussing matters with one who is skilled in providing perspective.

Virtually every U.S. district now participates in the Heartline program, and hopes are that we will be able to expand it to include other world areas as well.

The CoNET Heartline number is 800-874-2021. For further information on this confidential service, write for a free brochure from Pastoral Ministries, 6401 The Paseo, Kansas City, MO 64131, or from Christian Counseling Services, P.O. Box 60383, Nashville, TN 37206.

## VideoNet

Here are just a few ways VIDEONET/Ministry Today is being used by pastors and local churches:

1. In a fellowship of area pastors over lunch.
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\*By selecting Option No. 1 or Option No. 3 you are entitled to a new NIV Study Bible, a \$30.00 value, absolutely free!

## COURSE OF STUDY UPDATE

In June 1985, the General Assembly passed legislation that provided for a second ordination credential, the deacon. This order is for those who, though called to full-time Christian service, are called to areas other than preaching. Pastoral Ministries was charged with developing this additional track for the Course of Study. To that end, an Advisory Committee was formed, consisting of Wilbur Brannon, Pastoral Ministries director; David Felter, Pastoral Ministries education program manager; Bennett Dudney, Publications International director; B. Edgar Johnson, general secretary; Gary Wright, pastor, El Dorado, Kans., First Church; Mark Moore, Education Services director; Hiram Sanders, Missouri district superintendent; Wes Tracy, editor, the *Preacher's Magazine*, and professor of preaching at Nazarene Theological Seminary; Neil Wiseman, academic dean, Nazarene Bible College; and A. Elwood Sanner, religion professor, Northwest Nazarene College. Dr. William M. Greathouse is the advising general superintendent.

On December 20, 1985, the committee met in Kansas City to implement the changes in the program. While changes were made in structure, the purpose of the Course of Study, "to provide quality without compromise," and "to maintain standards with a certain flexibility," remained unaltered.

One significant step taken by the committee was to recommend, in accordance with *Manual* Section F, paragraphs 418-418.5, an entry-level program to equip students for basic

ministry. This action provides training for the lay minister as well as those working toward completing ordination requirements. Thus, some students will end their studies after Level I, while others will advance to succeeding levels.

The Course of Study structure change has made necessary some terminology changes as well. It will no longer be referred to in terms of "Years," but as "Levels." Each level now has a block of courses through which the student must work before advancing to the next level.

Pastoral Ministries had determined to facilitate this change with as little confusion as possible. The same course identity numbers will be used in the new system. As new courses become available in each level, they will be inserted, using the same number. Thus, no student will repeat courses or lose credit. For example, the student who has completed Course 113 and needs Course 112 will take it even if the old course has been replaced with a newer title. With the Course of Study number-based rather than title-based, making the new courses substitutes for the old ones, administration of the program is simplified. The purpose is to make sure no student loses credit, and that no district Ministerial Studies Board secretary be left with an administrative problem too great to be worked out.

Complete details may be found in the *Handbook on Ministerial Studies*. For further information, contact Pastoral Ministries, 6401 The Paseo, Kansas City, MO 64131. □



Members of the Course of Study Advisory Committee are shown (l. to r.): Neil Wiseman, A. Elwood Sanner, Gary Wright, and Mark R. Moore.



Rev. David Felter (center), education program manager for Pastoral Ministries, explains the new Course of Study structure to Bennett Dudney (l.) and Rev. Wilbur Brannon (r.).

### NOTE:

The Course of Study will soon be available on videotape. Featuring the "interactive video" concept, groups can study courses to-

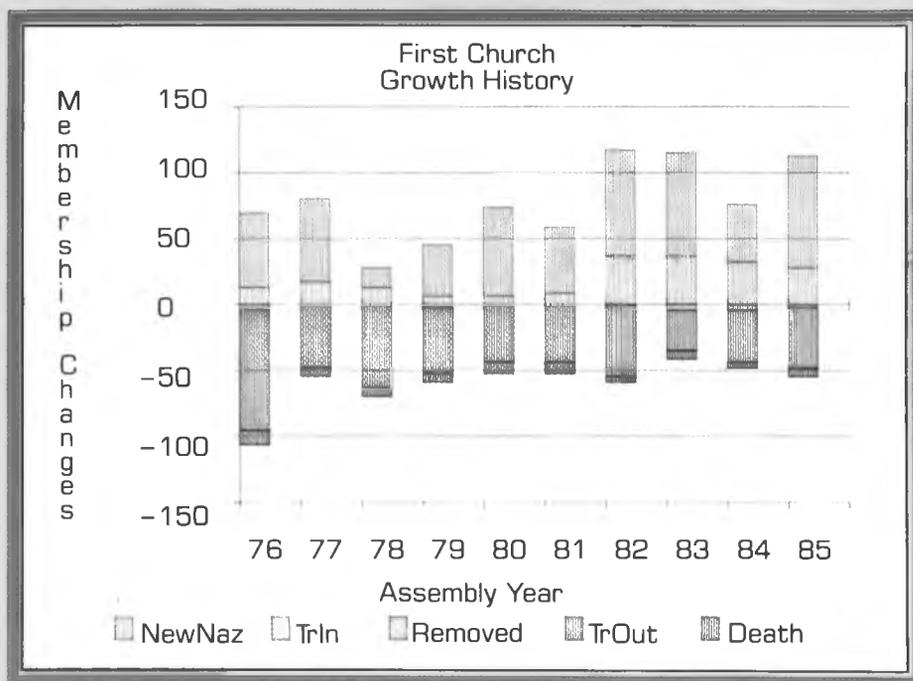
gether in an exciting and educationally viable manner. Contact Pastoral Ministries today for an availability listing. □

## “Your church is doing great this year! What are you doing that our church isn't? What programs are you running?”

**G**ood questions to be asked of a growing church. But they aren't the only questions that need to be asked. Without an understanding of the church's history, you could miss the point.

For instance, “First Church of the Nazarene” is running 10% ahead of its 1985 Sunday School and worship figures. It took in 25 new Nazarenes last year. The people say they began a new calling program in 1984. Maybe this program should be adapted for other local churches.

But there's more to this story. Although this year's growth is good, how consistent has this growth been? A look at the growth history chart below will help answer this question.



Note the sudden increase in new Nazarenes in 1982. Similar changes in transfer growth took place about then, too. Perhaps the real question to be asked is not “What are you doing now?” but, “What did you do four years ago to turn your growth patterns around?”

Any local church can benefit from examining its growth history. Periods of growth can be noted, and people in the congregation can often remember what special circumstances affected growth. Was it a new building? a special emphasis? Did another industry move to town?

Sometimes the Holy Spirit moves among His people despite anything they have done. But that does not mean we don't do our best to discover which means have been most effective in building God's church. And checking the church's growth history helps determine when such growth has occurred.

**For assistance in compiling or analyzing your church's  
growth history, contact Dale Jones, senior statistician,  
Church Growth Statistical Research Center, 6401 The Pa-  
seo, Kansas City, MO 64131.**

# Let's Get Together

## **PASTOR:**

### **WHEN SOMEONE IN YOUR CHURCH SAYS TO YOU ...**

*"God is calling me to be a missionary. What do I do?"*

*"I would like to teach on the mission field for two or three years."*

*"I would like to donate some time (up to a year) to help our missionaries."*

*"I want to go on a Work and Witness trip, but we don't have enough people in our church to form a team."*

*"I want to sponsor a child."*

*"I want to give money to help feed the hungry."*

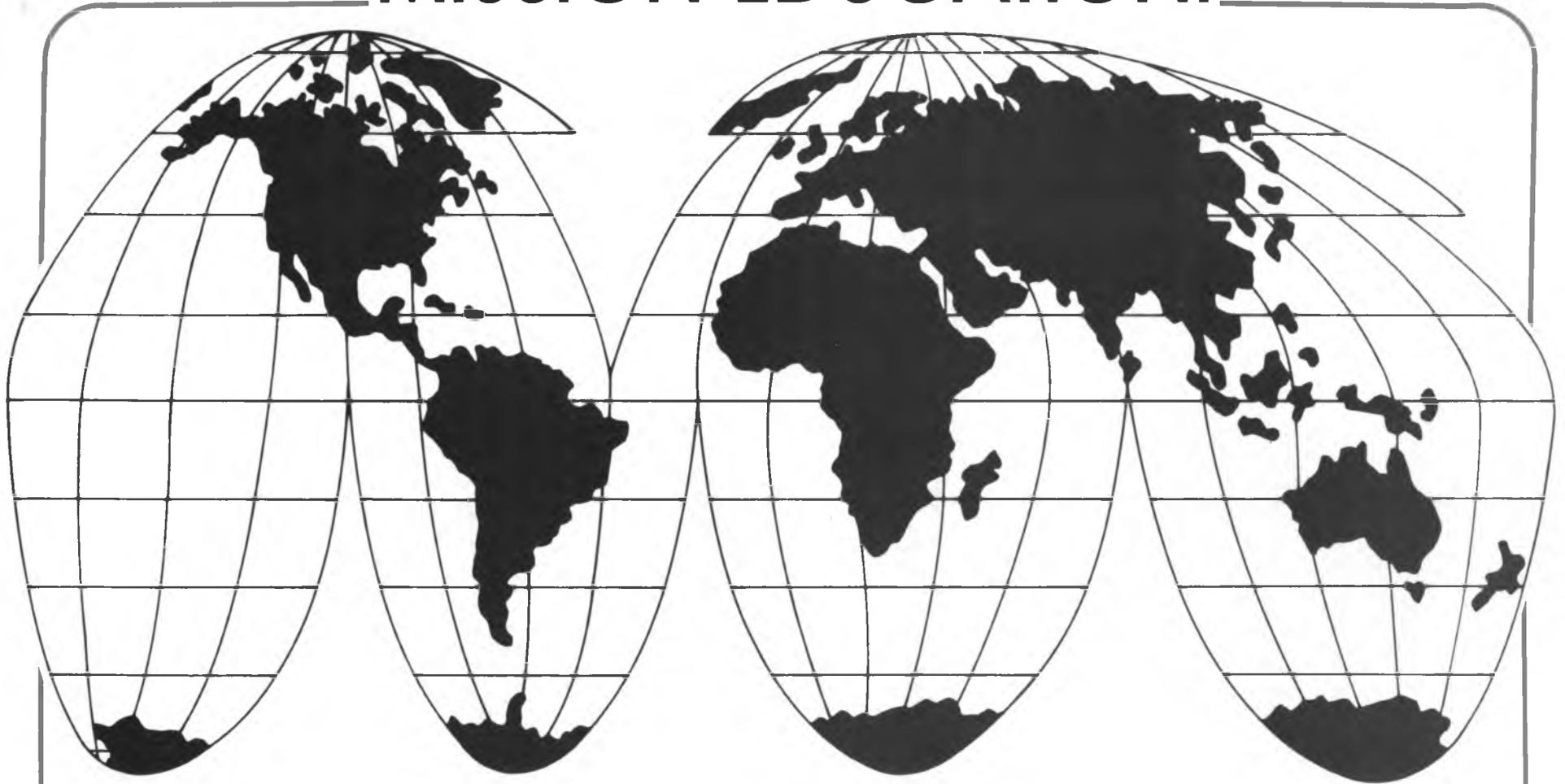
### **... WHAT DO YOU SAY TO THEM?**

PLEASE TELL THEM TO WRITE TO THE WORLD MISSION DIVISION

INTERNATIONAL CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE  
6401 The Paseo  
Kansas City, Missouri 64131

OR CALL 816-333-7000

# MISSION EDUCATION:



"How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent?"

—Romans 10:14-15 (NIV)

## IT MAKES A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE

\*For more information on the 1986-87 Mission Education programs available, write, NWMS, 6401 The Paseo, Kansas City, MO 64131.

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That's why we're changing our name to World Mission Communications. And why we need your prayers and financial support now more than ever!

Nazarene World Mission Society  
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Kansas City, Missouri 64131

Please send me more information so my congregation can support the growing efforts of World Mission Communications.

Pastor \_\_\_\_\_

Church \_\_\_\_\_

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City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

PMJJA86

1986 Offering Goal: \$500,000



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(choose any 4)



- After the birth of your first grandchild.
- When one of the "old gang" expires suddenly.
- During your pastor's next sermon on heaven.
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

Any of the above may serve to remind us that time is still marching—and today is a very good time to prepare your will, so that your heirs won't be at loose ends "tomorrow."

Your church, too, can benefit—or Christian education or missions. You can put the whole world in your will through a special bequest to the work of Christ.

**HOW TO START:** Use the coupon at right to request our free booklet, "How to Write a Will That Works." There's no obligation.



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 Calgary, Alberta, Canada  
 T2M 4N7

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

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

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HOWEVER, ONLY \$100 A MONTH ADDS UP TO OVER \$335,000 AT retirement age if you begin your TSA when you're 30 years old.\* Now that is a reasonable amount of money each month and a reasonable amount at retirement, too! And as you are able to increase your monthly contribution, your amount at retirement will be even greater.

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LET THE PENSIONS OFFICE HELP YOU DECIDE HOW MUCH YOU would need to save each month to reach the amount you want for retirement. Call or write today!

\*assuming a 10% annual effective interest rate.

TSA

# CHICAGO



## It's Our Kind of Town

"CHICAGO," according to one area pastor, "is the kind of town Nazarenes ought to do well in." He's right. Chicago is a city that needs to know God and the hope He can bring to people's lives. And that makes it the kind of town that the Church of the Nazarene wants to be a part of. Known as "America's Second City," Chicago has 3 million people, more than 20 ethnic neighborhoods, and unlimited potential for ministry. That's why we've chosen it to be the first target city this quadrennium.

- 1986 Target City: Chicago
- 1987 Target City: Mexico City

### Goals for Chicago

- To establish 3 neighborhood compassionate ministry centers and 30 new churches, over a five-year period, including ethnic works.

#### YOU CAN HELP

Your congregation can be a part of the Chicago project. We need the support of each local church to realize our denominational goals. You can support this mission through your prayers and finances. The Chicago project and the THRUST TO THE CITIES qualify as a 10% Missions Special for your church.

### Goals for the Denomination

#### QUADRENNIAL GOALS—U.S.A. and Canada

- 576,688 total members
- 143,811 new Nazarenes
- 5,390 churches
- 726 additional ministers

#### DECADAL GOAL—Worldwide

- One Million Members by 1995

# thrust to the city



## There's Still Time!

**Your congregation can impact Chicago for Christ.**

Thrust to the Cities, our mission to glorify God in the great cities of the world has already begun in Chicago. Every day this volunteer effort to make the greatest possible impact for Christ through the resources of the Church of the Nazarene grows stronger. Not only in evangelism, but in social involvement as well.

However, there's always work to be done. And our commitment to this great city on the shores of Lake Michigan has just begun.

**So, pass the word. There's still time.**

**Opportunities for:**

- Bivocational pastors
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- intercessory prayer partners

Send to:

Rev. Michael R. Estep  
Thrust to the Cities Director  
6401 The Paseo  
Kansas City, MO 64131

Please send me complete information on this newest mission field, Chicago.

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Church \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_



Do you know of  
someone from your church who's

**MOVING?**

# CALL MOVING NAZARENES SERVICE

Moving always throws a family into turmoil. New jobs, schools, doctors, the list goes on and on. Sometimes it's easy to neglect finding some of these things, including a new church. If you know someone who is moving, call Moving Nazarenes Service. We can make finding a new church home a little easier by making the initial contact with the local Nazarene pastor.

**Call (toll-free)  
1-800-821-2154**

**Evangelism Ministries**  
6401 The Paseo  
Kansas City, MO 64131\*



\*Alaska, Hawaii, and Missouri,  
call 816-333-7000

the fact that a home may not sell when it comes time for a pastoral change.

15. If the minister is the one who purchases the parsonage, any difference between purchase price and appraised value may be considered taxable as ordinary income.

16. Appreciation of property is assumed, but depreciation can be a reality due to natural and man-made disasters or economic conditions. Homeowners do not always sell at a profit. This potential is not a concern for the minister in a parsonage.

17. A minister who sells at a profit and moves to a parsonage loses a substantial percentage to capital gains tax, since he does not reinvest in a primary residence.

#### PRO HOUSING ALLOWANCE AND CON PARSONAGE:

1. A housing allowance may solve the problem of having to build a new parsonage at today's costs, while at the same time help the pastor plan for his retirement.

2. With a housing allowance, some feel that compensation planning may be more flexible, easier to compare, and simpler to budget.

3. Homeownership suggests permanency and may encourage longer pastorates.

4. Since a homeowner pays real estate taxes, he has more voice in community affairs.

5. A minister buying a home gets to choose the kind, style, and location.

6. The minister's family may decorate as they wish—even remodel without board action.

7. Homeownership becomes an important investment for the future, assuming, of course, each property appreciates in value and appropriate equity is established.

8. Homeowning pastors get a tax break. Within certain limits, the housing allowance used to provide and furnish a home is nontaxable income. (Refer to current IRS regulations for specific details, especially with regard to housing allowance and the itemized deductions of mortgage interest and real estate taxes.)

9. After reaching 55, a homeowner can sell his principal residence and not pay any tax on the first \$125,000 of profit. (This is a one-time, lifetime exemption only.) If on previous home sales he has made gains and deferred the taxes on them, he may include all those previous tax-deferred gains or "rollovers" up to the \$125,000 maximum. (IRS has specific regulations controlling how this may be done.)

10. In the event of disability, death, or retirement, homeownership with adequate insurance generally means an immediate move is unnecessary.

The above lists are not intended to be exhaustive. Hopefully they will stimulate thinking in this complex area. Many statements are similar but have opposite impact when phrased from a different perspective. In addition to the above considerations, the local church board should insist that the tax implications be explored thoroughly before any decision is made. After

talking with several IRS offices, the following examples become apparent:

There is a concern where a parsonage is to be given to a minister or sold to him at a value below the fair market value. The church normally contends that this is a gift and is not compensation to the pastor. This could be challenged, forcing the minister to pay taxes or take the issue to a tax court.

Where the church does make such a considerable "gift" to their minister, the church may be jeopardizing or calling into question its tax-exempt status. In order to have such status, the assets of the corporation cannot accrue to the personal benefit of an individual other than as compensation.

Another concern involves the sale or rental of the parsonage. The church is subject to taxation when it receives "unrelated business income." While this is certainly a gray area, this possible interpretation should not go unexplored.

Dr. Eugene L. Stowe, general superintendent of the Church of the Nazarene, acknowledges the dilemma facing churches who want to make sure their pastor has an adequate housing plan for retirement in his book *The Ministry of Shepherding* (pages 196-98). After listing several advantages and disadvantages of housing allowance instead of church-provided parsonage, Dr. Stowe summarizes the situation in the Church of the Nazarene as follows:

Among those who have had experience with both procedures, the consensus seems to be that *in most cases the church-owned parsonage proves to be of greater advantage to all concerned.*

Of course, this allows for special circumstances where a church with a strong financial base may have no difficulty when they sell their parsonage and provide a cash housing allowance. However, any such decision should be preceded by careful evaluation by the church in consultation with its church advisers and tax advisers.

For those church boards who decide to maintain a parsonage for their minister's use, there still is an alternative for caring for the retirement needs of their pastor's future. This alternative can materialize when the original question is rephrased as follows, "*How can we provide the pastor with an adequate salary now and also an adequate retirement nest egg without selling the parsonage?*" For many local churches the answer is in starting a RETIREMENT HOUSING FUND for their pastor by contributing into a Tax-Sheltered Annuity Plan. Such plans are made possible under special provisions of the federal income tax law and are sometimes referred to as 403(b) plans. Especially designed for nonprofit organizations, they usually provide more flexibility than the common IRA plans marketed to the general public. Local churches who are interested in this alternative should contact their denominational headquarters for more details. 

[This information is of a general nature. It is not offered as specific legal or "tax advice." Churches and individuals should evaluate their own unique situation in consultation with personal, legal, and tax advisers.]

# A WARM HEART AND A CUP OF COLD WATER

## *Wesley's Ministry in Bristol*

by Bob Black

*Chairman of the Religion Division  
Bartlesville Wesleyan College, Bartlesville, Okla.*

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1988 will bring the 250th anniversary of Aldersgate. We approach it on a tide of renewed interest in John Wesley and his contributions to evangelical Christianity. The past 20 years have seen a flood of books and monographs on Wesley the evangelist, Wesley the churchman, and Wesley the theologian. But John Wesley also had a social conscience, and his ministry was marked by a balance between revival and reform. Christianity, for him, was both the heart strangely warmed and the cup of cold water offered in Christ's name (Matt. 10:42).

No site on the map of Wesley's England better illustrates that balance than Bristol. A seaport of 30,000 in the 18th century, it was the western end of Wesley's triangle of itinerancy. Here was his ministry in microcosm. It's the perfect place to observe Wesley as he works out the the spiritual and social implications of his faith.

### **"You have nothing to do but to save souls"**

Just a year after Aldersgate gave Wesley his message, Bristol gave him his method. George Whitefield had had great success in field preaching in Bristol, and when he left he urged Wesley to take his place. Wesley arrived on March 31, 1739, and the next day he accompanied Whitefield to his open-air services.

At first, Wesley recoiled from the prospect. He was, after all, a priest in the Church of England and a great

lover of its liturgy and tradition. In fact, he said that up to that point he would have considered the saving of souls outside a church to be almost a sin!<sup>1</sup> Still, on April 2, "at four in the afternoon," he wrote in his *Journal*, "I submitted to be more vile, and proclaimed in the highways the glad tidings of salvation, speaking from a little eminence in a ground adjoining the city, to about 3,000 people."<sup>2</sup> Open-air evangelism opened England to the gospel, and it began in Bristol.

The Methodist class meeting was born in Bristol, too. In February 1742, a Captain Foy suggested that the Bristol society members be divided into groups of 12 and that a volunteer visit each to collect a penny a week for the retirement of the debt on their building, the New Room. The success of the plan went far beyond the discharge of the debt; Wesley soon saw these small units as the idea arrangement for his desired Christian discipleship program. The class meeting became an effective instrument for both evangelism and Christian nurture.

Wesley's first conference of lay preachers was held in London in 1744, and his second met at Bristol the following year. Here, a new rule was added to the 12 Rules adopted at the previous conference. It was Wesley's message in a nutshell: "You have nothing to do but to save souls. Therefore spend and be spent in this work."<sup>3</sup>

That seems clear enough. In the face of such an un-

equivocal statement, how could any claims be made for a Wesleyan emphasis on evangelism *and* social service—or, indeed, on evangelism *and anything else?*

#### A comprehensive definition of “salvation”

Let me put a parallel case. This same Wesley once announced himself to be *homo unis libri*—a man of one Book. Yet he read and studied uncounted books, and wrote or edited almost as many; no one appreciated books more highly or used them more diligently. Quite obviously his lines were broader than the literal reading of his words would indicate.

So it is with the soul-winning exhortation to his preachers. The key is Wesley’s definition of saving souls. He could say that Methodists have nothing else to do because he defined salvation comprehensively. For John Wesley, “saving souls” meant a lively concern for both soul and body. Salvation encompassed the whole of life as conformity to the image of God. Nothing lay outside the redemptive sphere—no evil that did not need elimination, no good that did not demand execution. Had Wesley intended *evangelism only* by his remark, his own ministry would have violated the rule, for he, more than any among his followers, was dedicated to the betterment of the individual and society.

Again, Bristol provides the examples:

- Wesley’s first sermon in the fields was in April 1739.

His text was full of social implications. It was taken from Luke 4:18-19—“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor. He hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted; to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind; to set at liberty them that are bruised, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord” (Wesley’s own rendering of that passage).<sup>4</sup> The “acceptable year of the Lord” is, of course, the Year of Jubilee, the holy year on the Hebrew calendar that called for social and economic justice for the poor and oppressed in Israel; it found its fullest expression in the ministry of Christ. As He told the startled congregation in Nazareth, “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing” (Luke 4:21, NIV). Jubilee is here! Like his Lord, John Wesley had a mission to the poor that involved “saving souls” spiritually *and* physically.

- There’s more to the story of the establishment of the Methodist classes in Bristol, too. The weekly penny for the New Room had, by 1748, become “what they are willing to give, toward the relief of the poor.”<sup>5</sup> Still later the formula was “a penny a week and a shilling a quarter,” the money being applied by the stewards to the needs of the poor as well as the expenses of Methodist itinerants.

- “Poor relief” became Methodism’s corporate mandate because it was her founder’s personal ethic. In Jan-

uary 1740 Wesley made three collections for the poor outside Lawford's Gate at Bristol and fed 100, sometimes 150 a day, who were out of work due to a severe frost. It was this spirit that prompted his terse reply to a letter from His Majesty's Office of Excise inquiring as to the quantity of silver plate Wesley owned:

Bristol, September 9, 1776

SIR—I have two silver spoons at London and two at Bristol. This is all the plate which I have at present, and I shall not buy any more while so many around me want bread. I am, sir,

Your most humble servant<sup>6</sup>

Wesley set up an interest-free emergency loan fund, a medical dispensary, a "poorhouse" (widow's home), and employment opportunities in London. In Bristol as well, his relief efforts on behalf of the poor were widely known.

• Wesley not only preached to the miners at Bristol but also established a school for their children at nearby Kingswood. Education of the underprivileged was to prove to be one of his most significant social programs.

• Prison reform was another of Wesley's concerns. He helped awaken England's conscience by campaigning against the filth, the wickedness, and the misery of prisons like Newgate in Bristol. When Bristol Newgate was cleaned up by a warden who was one of Whitefield's converts, Wesley trumpeted the difference religion can make in social institutions! On another occasion, he found 1,100 French prisoners of war kept near Bristol "without anything to lie on but a little dirty straw, or anything to cover them but a few foul, thin rags, either by day or night, so that they died like rotten sheep. I was much affected." His response was typical. He first preached a sermon condemning the abuse, then organized the populace to correct it. Twenty-four pounds was collected for clothing, the Corporation of Bristol sent mattresses and blankets, "and it was not long before

contributions were set on foot at London, and in various parts of the Kingdom."<sup>7</sup>

• Finally a word on slavery. John Wesley had opposed slavery since his days as a missionary to Georgia, and his *Thoughts upon Slavery* (1774) made him one of the very few Britons, aside from the Quakers, to take an early stand against "that execrable villainy." The Society for the Abolition of Slavery would not be founded for another 13 years. The year after the society was established, Wesley delivered a courageous antislavery sermon in Bristol. As a seaport, Bristol was an important link in the slave-trade chain, and Wesley anticipated a show of hostility. He made a point of giving two full days' notice of his topic, and the hall was filled for his sermon. The only disturbance, though, was a terrible thunderstorm, which disrupted the meeting temporarily. Wesley's verdict on the storm: "Satan fought, lest his kingdom should be delivered up."<sup>8</sup> The meeting continued. Wesley was almost 85 at the time.

Bristol was only one town out of the world that was Wesley's parish, but it reflects the full range of his compassion. E. Douglas Bebb has written that the soul was the center but not the circumference of Wesley's interest.<sup>9</sup> In Bristol, as elsewhere, he preached and practiced the whole gospel for the whole man.

Your town, and mine, can benefit from an authentically "Wesleyan" ministry; a balanced ministry of evangelism and social concern. Bristol proves it. 

#### NOTES

1. John Wesley, *The Works of John Wesley* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1978 reprint of the 1972 edition), 1:185.
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Ibid.*, 8:310.
4. *Ibid.*, 1:185.
5. *Ibid.*, 8:253.
6. John Telford, ed., *The Letters of John Wesley* (London: Epworth Press, 1931), 6:230.
7. Wesley, *Works*, 2:516-17.
8. *Ibid.*, 4:408.
9. E. Douglas Bebb, *Wesley: A Man with a Concern* (London: Epworth Press, 1950), 74.

## TRY

Those great scourges of mankind—hunger, discrimination, and injustice—are not going to be abolished in my lifetime—or even that of my children's children. But I am not going to lie down and bemoan the hopelessness of it all. I can take one short step, strike one puny blow, lay one tiny brick on behalf of the future. For that is where the citizenship of the Christian lies.

—Colin Morris

# THE CHURCH MUST HAVE DREAMERS

by Neil Hightower  
*President, Canadian Nazarene College*

Here comes that dreamer!' they said to each other. 'Come now, let's kill him and throw him into one of these cisterns and say that a ferocious animal devoured him. Then we'll see what comes of his dreams' (Gen. 37:19-20, NIV).

The world, and even the Church, has often dealt with its dreamers in the same way Joseph's brothers did. We hardly know how to fit them into the normal, routine way of doing things. Yet it is their activity that forms the raw materials out of which great leaders fashion the principles and practices of movements in history.

Dreamers are prods to the Church. They see objectives and plans that exist in the spiritual world that must transmigrate into the everyday world. They muse and speculate about what it might be, and come away from such mystic meditation convinced that it can be. They draw pictures in the mind and the soul, and set about to fill in the outline with muscle and mortar, and faith and faithfulness.

Dreamers keep the Church from perishing. They constantly hold up the heavenly vision of their Damascus road experience and remind us that God is able. They keep the note of faith sounding, and constantly worry us with God's impossible possibility. Logic is not always their forte, but they remind us that love and faith and hope are foundations that underpin everything Christ's Body ought to undertake. As someone has said, "Humanity cannot forget its dreamers; it cannot let their ideals fade and die; it lives in them; it knows them as the realities which it shall one day see and know."

Dreamers are prophets, not

scribes. A scribe is a researcher, recording what others say. A prophet reports what he has seen and felt in the presence of God. Dreamers are familiar with the throne room of God. They, like Isaiah, see the Lord "high and lifted up." From that vision they come forth to the people to cry: "I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips" (Isa. 6:5, NIV). Dreamers know the purging of that experience, and proclaim, "though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow" (1:18).

Most of the Church's dreamers have been youths. Moses was; and so was Caleb, who cried, "Give me this mountain!" Youth ignores formidable mountains. Never tell a young person that something cannot be done. God may have been waiting for countless centuries for someone ignorant enough of the impossibility to do that very thing. Youth are the conscience of the Church. They see things in vivid colors rather than grays and pastels. Rufus Jones said, "Conscience is the voice of our ideal self, our complete self, our real self, laying its call upon the will." And young people are willing to accept that challenge of conscience.

Dreamers are not egotists. They have a right value of others, though they are often disturbed at lethargy. An egotist is one wrapped up in himself; a dreamer is wrapped up in his vision. Someone has said that "an egotist is never in doubt but is often in error." A dreamer has no doubt about the validity of his dream and sees people bringing it to pass. He does not always understand the best mix of people, but he is not confused about their importance.

The heavenly vision Paul got on the Damascus road served as a driving force for the first generation of Christian missions. Oh that God would give us dreamers again who would not doubt the pull of that unseen picture of Christian mission imprinted on the mind of God! That transferred imprint would turn our world upside down again, through dreamers transferring their dreams.

Dreamers will not be satisfied with things as they are nor with people who are thus satisfied. Dreamers are impatient with time inefficiently used, though they will struggle a lifetime to bring their dreams into being. They understand the outlook of Cyrus H. K. Curtis, of the old *Saturday Evening Post*, who had a large sign in his office that read: "Yesterday ended last night."

Dreamers are persons who make the dust fly in the Church. Have you been pushing any dust around in your area lately? It's often dangerous to be a dreamer, as it was for Joseph. But a dream, sent into our lives by God's influence, could prove to be the nail on which the fate of people hangs. How instructive are the words of Joseph to his brothers, in Gen. 45:7, "But God sent me ahead of you to preserve for you a remnant on earth and to save your lives by a great deliverance" (NIV).

It is possible that a great deliverance in your present family or church, or even the future for either, hangs upon your willingness to dream beyond your human ability and to act upon that dream. The future and the present are not isolated or unconnected time spans. They are successfully interrelated by faithfulness based on the dreaming of impossibilities.

# A PUBLISHING EVE

Paul M. Bassett and William M. Greathouse, *Exploring Christian Holiness*, Vol. 2. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1985.

Reviewed by J. Kenneth Grider.

This is the second volume in a three-volume series on entire sanctification. Volume 1, by W. T. Purkiser, has been out for some time, and the third volume, by Richard S. Taylor, is also available now.

This review will treat both the Bassett and the Greathouse contributions, with a more detailed treatment of the work by Bassett.

Paul M. Bassett's 185-page treatment of the pre-Wesley history of entire sanctification (and somewhat of perfection or Christian perfection) is surely one of the few most special publishing events in the entire history of the American holiness movement, which in 1985 is celebrating its 150th anniversary. Having read most, if not all, of the significant holiness books, I would not estimate any one of them to be more significant than this one accomplished by the person I think of as the most outstanding scholar of all the movement's history. It is strategic that the research appears just at this time, when it is becoming so fashionable to prefer Mr. Wesley's understandings at certain points in holiness doctrine to those of the holiness movement.

In this study, my colleague plows new ground for the holiness movement. R. Newton Flew, George A. Turner, Mendell Taylor, and some others, such as J. B. Galloway, had treated the history of Christian perfection prior to Wesley, and Flew's work was done as a Ph.D. dissertation topic. Yet no one had ever made the careful and productive kind of study to be found in this new volume. No one had treated especially the doctrine of entire sanctification in the early and middle centuries. And no one had ever given detailed treatment especially of the relationship between Roman Catholic confirmation and the doctrine of entire sanctification—although Asbury Seminary's Lawrence Wood had treated it within a book (*Pentecostal Grace*, 1980, Francis Asbury Press), and in an article in the *Wesleyan Theological Journal* (Vol. 14, No. 2); and although the relationship was mentioned by Richard Quebedeaux in *The New Charismatics*. I have taught for some 30 years that the Roman Catholics, in their confirmation, teach a

second work of grace, usually of even cleansing from sin and empowerment, occurring when the already-baptized, at that time, receive or are baptized with the Holy Spirit. I have taught this, but I had never researched it carefully. Bassett, after much careful research into the original and the translated writings of the Fathers and the later figures, shows that this has been the Roman Catholic teaching. He shows that, according to their teaching, water baptism is a kind of first work of regenerating grace, and that confirmation, when the Holy Spirit is received in a special way, is an instantaneously received time of cleansing from sin and empowerment.

Bassett notes that, at first, confirmation (not then so-named) occurred during the baptism service, but subsequent to baptism; and that later it was separated from baptism (usually infant) by several years (as at present, in Roman Catholicism). Receiving the Holy Spirit was a second experience, subsequent to the regeneration understood to occur at baptism.

Bassett writes, "Baptism, says Tertullian [who did not believe in infant baptism], does not give the gift of the presence of the Spirit in fullness, but it makes one ready for that presence. So it is that immediately following baptism itself, and as part of the rite, 'we [Bassett quotes Tertullian] are anointed all over with consecrated oil . . . then the hand is laid on us, while the Holy Spirit is invoked and invited by way of a blessing . . . Then, down over the body thus cleansed and consecrated there comes, from the Father, the Holy Spirit'" (p. 39).

Bassett comments, "What is clear here, and important to understanding the doctrine of entire sanctification, is the distinction between the actual act of baptizing and the actual act of receiving the Holy Spirit in His fullness" (p. 39). Our author then says that "Cyprian, writing a generation later than Tertullian, but believing himself to be free of the slightest hint of novelty, makes the same point even more clearly in several letters" (p. 39). Then Bassett quotes Cyprian as saying, "Those who are baptized in the Church are brought before the bishops of the Church, then by way of our prayers and the laying on of our hands they receive the Holy Spirit and are made perfect by the Lord's seal" (p. 39).

Referring to water baptism, that is, "the washing of regeneration," and the later part of the liturgy, Bassett writes: "How conscious was the early Church of the

(Continued on page 40)

# EXPLORING CHRISTIAN HOLINESS

Review of Paul M. Bassett and William M. Greathouse, *Exploring Christian Holiness*, Vol. 2. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1985, by H. Ray Dunning.

Having been an original member of the "advisory" committee to the proposed volume on *Exploring Christian Holiness* (later to become three volumes), I had the privilege of early access to the manuscripts. During this gestation period I made extensive use (with full credit given, of course) of the material now available in volume 2. My classes in the theology of holiness were enriched by this research. Early on, I passed judgment that this volume was destined to become a classic in holiness literature. Unlike much that is published out of this milieu, it is not a rehash of old straw, or a repetition of the same clichés and perspectives ad infinitum. It really does break new ground, especially in the first part. Hence, I am grateful for the invitation to offer a second opinion on the work in the form of a book review.

This book, in both parts, is an outstanding product of objective historical scholarship. While it is clear that both authors are committed to the doctrine of sanctification, it is not a propaganda piece. It reflects perspective without bias, hence we have an excellently balanced treatise.

In the first section, Dr. Bassett has brought to bear his massive intellect, linguistic gifts, analytic expertise, and historiographical skills on an issue that has never been addressed in the study of the history of Christian thought about experience. While many have taken in hand to trace the history of interest in the ideal of Christian perfection, this is a ground-breaking and creative effort to study entire sanctification as an attainable experience in this life. This is, as John Wesley confessed in the *Plain Account*, the real distinctive of his "discovery." There is probably not another person in the holiness movement who has the academic qualifications to read the sources in the original languages, interpret them against the background of broader philosophical and theological perspectives, and integrate them with the whole of Christian thought in the way Dr. Bassett has done it.

His work helps us see that the doctrine of sanctification is not a theological provincialism. Furthermore, it

enables us to perceive more clearly the nature of a theology of experience. The various modes of expression, while seeking to embody the reality of experience, demonstrate that experience is not bound to any single, and certainly no stereotyped, doctrinal formula. Contending for such betrays the variety of the Spirit's work. Persons in different cultural and intellectual contexts employed their own philosophical categories and even idiosyncratic modes of language to give eloquent witness to their faith in God's delivering work in human life.

The scholarship of the second part is not as apparent, because it deals with more familiar material that is largely from English sources, but it is just as real. There is a significant use of secondary sources, but it is obvious that primary sources have been consulted. This ground has been covered so often and so thoroughly, almost to the point of overkill, that there is really no need to reinvent the wheel.

This character, however, does not diminish the impressiveness of this section. This work is doubtless the apex of Dr. Greathouse's historical studies in this area, showing significant advance over his earlier, popular lectures published under the title *From the Apostles to Wesley*. It is a model of clarity and objectivity.

His love of Wesley and devotion to the experience of heart holiness is apparent on almost every page. But this does not skew his interpretation of the history of the doctrine of entire sanctification from Wesley to Wiley.

One should bear in mind that this is a history. It would be inappropriate to turn it into preachments. One of its major values is that it helps those of us in the "modern" holiness movement to see our roots. While the work of the scientist is independent of the history of science and can be carried out just as effectively without a knowledge of that history, the work of the philosopher and theologian cannot be carried on apart from a knowledge of the history of his discipline. Thus it tells the history "like it is."

My friend, Kenneth Grider, has committed an unfortunate infelicity in his review by his criticisms of Dr. Greathouse in judging him deficient in objectivity and accusing him of imposing his own views upon the men about whose theology he has written. My reading and study, though not exhaustive, perceives Greathouse's treatment to be fair, impartial, and most of all, accurate.

(Continued on page 41)

theological implications, and experiential implications, of its baptismal liturgy? Did it intend, by this two-part liturgy, to express two intimately related but theologically distinct 'works of grace'? Certainly their sensitivity to symbol, a sensitivity shared by the cultures around them, would seem to argue so" (p. 41).

Bassett says that Tertullian speaks of "the act of baptism itself as being a restoration that prepares the baptizand for the receiving of the Holy Spirit" (p. 42). And our author adds "He is emphatic in distinguishing between the two parts of the ritual" (p. 42).

Tertullian and Cyprian are Western Fathers, but the same kind of teaching obtained in general in the East as well. Bassett writes, "Irenaeus, who was clearly a traditionalist in such matters, probably also understood baptism as expressing a 'secondness' and an 'instantaneity' with respect to the Spirit's coming upon the baptizand in fullness" (p. 47). He quotes Irenaeus as saying, "By the effusion of the Spirit, man becomes spiritual and perfect. This is what brings him to the image and likeness of God" (p. 49). Of Clement of Alexandria Bassett writes, "It is clear that this perfection is instantaneously received, and it appears to be given subsequent to regeneration" (p. 57). Of Origen he says that "it does not seem unfair to say that he did see sanctification as a distinct activity of divine grace—that is, distinct from justification" (p. 66). Then Bassett adds, "And he did see it as being given to the believer in a moment distinct from the moment in which justification was given" (p. 66).

While Bassett feels that Gregory of Nyssa, who wrote, for example, *On Christian Perfection* (p. 82), taught the nearest to Wesley's doctrine of entire sanctification of any of the Eastern Fathers (see p. 108), I wonder if writings attributed to Macarius the Egyptian (possibly written by Gregory of Nyssa) might teach even somewhat more similarly to the way Wesley did much later. Actually, Macarius' writings are, like the other early writings in general, even closer to the holiness movement's understanding of entire sanctification than to Wesley's view. This is because those writings view entire sanctification as occurring through the fullness of the baptism with the Holy Spirit. Space does not allow careful treatment of Macarius here, but it is important to read the Bassett treatment—and "Macarius" himself. Bassett says of Macarius that "this anointing [with oil, after baptism] was apparently the point of the filling with the Holy Spirit, the moment of entire sanctification, liturgically expressed" (p. 71). Bassett continues, "No matter how much growth in grace lay in the future, here was the Christian's essential purification, his perfection in righteousness" (p. 71). Bassett reads him also as teaching that "beyond the sanctification and perfection liturgically signified, there is a deeper and more complete sanctifying and perfecting work of grace" (p. 71). This "removes entire sanctification from the ritual" (p. 71), which is done of course in the holiness movement. It "'rescues' a person 'from indwelling sin, filling him with the Holy Ghost'" (p. 71), as Macarius says and as is taught in the holiness movement.

Bassett studies entire sanctification in such later theologians as Augustine and Aquinas; and in Protestant theologians such as Luther and Calvin. My understanding is that various aspects of the doctrine of entire sanctification are quite clearly taught in general by the early Western and Eastern Fathers; but that Bassett's finding it taught in such theologians as Luther and Calvin and certain other pre-Wesley Protestants is somewhat questionable. This is in part because even as the Bassett research shows, Luther and Calvin both taught only a gradual cleansing from original sin and only imputed righteousness.

It is not the purpose of this review to critique in any full sense the somewhat more than one-third of this book (115 pp.) written by William M. Greathouse, on the history of Christian perfection from Wesley onward. A few observations on the Greathouse treatment, however, will be made. One is that, while the treatment shows much study of sources, many of the basic conclusions, in my view, distort the picture. In recent years Greathouse has sometimes taught what he has called the "holistic" view of the baptism with the Holy Spirit. By this he has previously meant that the baptism with the Holy Spirit accomplishes both regeneration and entire sanctification. This view is espoused in an unpublished 16-page paper, referred to and used by W. T. Purkiser in *Exploring Christian Holiness* (pp. 114 ff.). In a somewhat unclear way he seems to be suggesting this kind of view when, in this book, he says, "The Spirit who was given at Pentecost is 'the principle of the conversion and entire sanctification of our lives'" (p. 306, no reference being given for his quote). In the present holiness text, he sometimes includes, besides both works of grace, other helps as well, in what is accomplished by the baptism with the Holy Spirit. He surprisingly interprets such writers as John Wesley and John Fletcher and Adam Clarke as teaching the way he does. Greathouse writes, "For Wesley as for Fletcher, the baptism with the Holy Spirit is holistic, embracing the total work of the Spirit in the heart" (p. 244). Three pages later he says similarly, "Like Wesley and Fletcher, Clarke takes a holistic view of the baptism with the Holy Spirit. It encompasses the total work of the Spirit within the heart, but its goal is always the destruction of remaining sin" (p. 247). I read John Fletcher as sometimes teaching that the baptism with the Holy Spirit is the time of our entire sanctification (see my *Entire Sanctification*, pp. 60-62). Yet I read John Wesley as clearly teaching that the baptism with the Holy Spirit, as in the case of the 120 at Pentecost, occasions justification (see my "Evaluation of Timothy Smith's Interpretation of Wesley," *Wesleyan Theological Journal*, Fall 1980). Adam Clarke at least almost always taught as Wesley did, as will be seen by a study of his commentary on Acts, and of Wesley's commentary on Acts (in Wesley's *Explanatory Notes upon the New Testament*). All these early Methodists were finding their way without very many guidelines such as denominational ones. They taught fluidly, sometimes teaching what they had viewed differently in other writings. This is so of Wesley, Fletcher, Clarke, and others.

The holiness movement in America ironed out some of these matters, and came to general if not unanimous agreement on some of them. One of these matters is

the movement's perhaps universal agreement that the baptism with the Holy Spirit accomplishes only the instantaneous cleansing—empowerment of entire sanctification—not both works of grace. Since entire sanctification constitutes a second definite work of grace, received after the first work of grace, the holiness movement unanimously viewed the baptism with the Holy Spirit as occasioning entire sanctification.

Then, denominations sprang up directly out of the holiness movement, and only indirectly from Wesley and the other early Methodists. These denominations, such as the Church of the Nazarene, many of them now members of the Christian Holiness Association, taught, and still teach, in this way—that is, with certain holiness movement “improvements” upon the understandings of the early Methodists. This includes the understanding that entire sanctification, and not justification also, is “wrought by the baptism with the Holy Spirit” (Article X, Articles of Faith, Nazarene *Manual*; see also Article V).

Another observation I would make about the Greathouse treatment is that, because of my own appreciation of the holiness movement's contribution, I would have devoted much more than 2 pages in 115 pages to the past 100 years of the holiness movement's history. This means that he devotes 113 pages to the first 150 years, and only 2 pages to the past century, since Daniel Steele, whose books began to appear in the 1870s. Greathouse treats only H. Orton Wiley after Steele—not even A. M. Hills. Actually, he gives some treatment to Asa Mahan and Charles G. Finney and others of the early American holiness movement's “Oberlin” wing, pointing out certain deficiencies in it such as what he calls its “Calvinistic” (p. 313) aspects. So, not being at all complimentary of the early American holiness movement, and only giving 2 pages to treating its past 100 or so years in which until recently it taught in unanimity that the Spirit baptism occasions entire sanctification (and, of course, only entire sanctification)—our author suggests by this treatment his exceeding interest in and penchant for Wesley and other early Methodists.

Indeed, his brief treatment of Wiley (after which the book closes abruptly without any general appraisals) is both strange and unclear. He is required by the data to admit that Wiley teaches entire sanctification as wrought by the baptism with the Spirit, and yet he states that Wiley associates Pentecost with “salvation” (p. 316)—which could mean the first work of grace, or both works (see p. 307). Greathouse writes, “He [Wiley] does indeed adopt the position that entire sanctification is by the Pentecostal baptism with the Holy Spirit but is very careful to preserve the Christocentric nature of the Spirit's work as understood by Wesley” (p. 316). He seems embarrassed that Wiley teaches in this way, and does not even make a complete sentence out of it before adding “but.” Then, of Wiley's view, he is soon saying, “By the baptism with the Holy Spirit, the soul's salvation is completed” (p. 316)—whatever “salvation” means. And four lines later he is saying of Wiley's view, “The work of Christ through the Spirit, however, is not only the salvation of the individual but also ‘the formation of the Church’ as the Spirit-filled Body of Christ” (p. 317). This “through the Spirit” is referred to in connection with Pentecost, and again, Pentecost results in

“salvation,” and not, as Wiley taught, entire sanctification. It might be that students, who are supposed to read this “Exploring” volume as a holiness text, will not view this kind of writing as complicated. What I read as complication evidently arises in an attempt to explain Wiley so that Wiley's views are presented as at least somewhat similar to the author's own “holistic” view—much, as mentioned, he strangely interprets to be the view of Wesley and Fletcher and Clarke, who had no need to teach that both works of grace, one subsequent to the other, are accomplished by an instantaneous Pentecostal baptism.

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#### DUNNING (Continued from page 39)

The developments from Wesley to Wiley reveal certain tensions that were present in holiness teaching and resulted in certain modifications in Wesley's view. The Protestant principle (Tillich) prohibits elevating any theologian or theological tradition (be it Wesley or Wesleyanism—and certainly not the 19th-century holiness tradition) to the level of ultimacy. However, it is difficult for this reviewer to detect any justification for seeing these developments as being “improvements” on Wesley. The more sophisticated the exegetical methods of our best biblical scholars become, the more support they find that Wesley's views reflected a balanced, exegetically sound reproduction of a major thrust of the biblical message. Many of the subsequent developments lost a balance that Wesley maintained, and this resulted in a certain one-sidedness, at least at the level of “folk theology.”

There is the balance between crisis and process, which tended to be lost with the latter being submerged in and almost exclusive emphasis on crisis. There is the continuity of the Christian life, which was theoretically dissolved in the debates over the relation of regeneration to sanctification. There was the balance between the work of the spirit and the Christological defining of sanctification, which tended to become a “Spirit” movement threatening the dissolution of the classical doctrine of the Trinity and creating the need for extracanonical definitions of the content of Christian perfection. There was Wesley's unswerving commitment to the ethical nature of sanctification. With the introduction of Palmerian “altar theology” into the holiness movement, the door was opened to a ceremonial “second-trip-to-the-altar” ritualism (see my article titled “Sanctification—Ceremony or Ethics” in *Preacher's Magazine*, vol. 55, No. 1). All of this comes through loud and clear in Dr. Greathouse's treatment, although he, as a good historian, passed little over to judgment upon the transformations.

Dr. Bassett and Dr. Greathouse have given us a magnificent, though implicit challenge to recognize that many of our concepts and formulations are culturally conditioned and to press on to an ever more biblically sound, experientially validated, internationally communicable, psychologically responsible, and adequately formulated doctrine of full salvation. Pastor, this volume does not belong on your bookshelf—it belongs on your desk, opened and carefully studied.

# “Stay Where You Are”

by David Vardaman

Pastor, Romley Wesleyan Church, Williamston, Mich.

**Y**ou are exactly where God wants you. He is not prompting you to move to another location or take up another vocation. He wants to use you right there. He knows you are in hot water; that life is boiling all around you. He knows you feel trapped and worn out from carrying heavy burdens with no hint of relief. Yet He is saying, “Stay. I need you here.”

Timothy may have been experiencing the symptoms of pastoral burnout when Paul wrote to him the first time. It is almost certain he had expressed a longing for greener pastures and that Paul had encouraged him. 1 Tim. 1:3 says, “As I urged you when I went into Macedonia, stay there in Ephesus” (NIV). In other words, “I’ve told you this before, but I must tell you again: Stay where you are!”

Paul had a good understanding of how God prompts leaders to leave old territory and enter new. He had felt God’s hand on his own life. He believed God had chosen him at birth to preach the gospel (Gal. 1:15-16). During his days of blindness, God confirmed that to Ananias (Acts 9:15). Near the end of his ministry as a free man Paul declared that he had to go to Jerusalem because the Spirit was compelling him (Acts 20:22-23). He knew the sound of God’s voice, the shape of God’s hand, and the footprints of Christ he had to follow. He also knew how Satan could disguise himself and mislead faithful servants, causing them to leave a charge before the work was done.

Timothy was burdened by church members who taught false doctrine and myths (1 Tim. 1:3-4). Others, who called themselves teachers,

had no concept of the gospel message, but spoke fabrications with great confidence (v. 7). Apparently the legalists were at work in Ephesus too, attempting to make the Christians subject to all of the Old Covenant. Rather than peace and unity, the church at Ephesus was embroiled in continuing controversy. Instead of feeling gratified in his work, Timothy felt frustrated. It is little wonder he considered moving on.

The world says that success brings better, easier, and richer times. Timothy saw darker, harder, and more demanding days. He might have felt like a failure by the world’s standards, but the spiritual person views life differently. He asks, “Is this where God has placed me? Is this where He wants me to remain? Is He going to bring discipline, direction, and healing through me? Am I willing for Him to continue using me here?” If the answer is positive, that is success. Success in God’s sight is doing His will.

Timothy had a task to complete in Ephesus. God knew the heresies he would have to face. He knew the difficult confrontations required to correct such heresies. Timothy would have to bear the strain and weariness of conflict. Perhaps Satan would use the opportunity to convince him public opinion was totally against him. Perhaps Timothy would bear the sting of private gossip as he took a stand for right. God knew it before sending him to Ephesus, and sent him anyway.

If the Ephesian church was like many churches, the greatest troublemakers had the ability to appear the most spiritual members of the body. If that was the case, Timothy

was up against it. And if he was the obedient Christian we think him to be, he kept it to himself. He didn’t publicly expose the opposition’s bad attitudes and dirty tricks in his sermons. He didn’t defend himself. Rather, he spoke to offenders individually and privately. Publicly, he took a stand for Christ and proclaimed the gospel. What a position to be in!

J. Glenn Gould wrote:

There are many occasions in life when it is far easier to move on than to remain in a difficult situation. The instinct to escape from onerous responsibility, to run away when the battle gets hot, is present with us all, and must be resisted with firm resolution . . . To escape from a galling situation, to make a fresh start elsewhere, where the grass is greener and the prospects more inviting, is a course of action which the tempter can disguise so completely as to make it appear the will of God (*“Beacon Bible Commentary,”* 9:556).

During wartime, deserting soldiers are shot summarily. It isn’t quite that dramatic in the Christian life, nor would that be desirable. In fact, it is hard to spot those deserting Christian ministry (lay or clergy). Often the deserter prefaces his flight with sacred-sounding words that discourage questions, saying, “God told me to . . .” or, “I believe God has called me to . . .” However, the full text of the speech would honestly read: “I have reached an impasse in my situation. I am tired of trying. I refuse to live like this! I’ve poured out my life for these people and they appreciate nothing I’ve done! I won’t stay here anymore.

Therefore, I have convinced myself that God wants me over there, in a greener pasture."

Sadly, there may come a point at which God sends us to another place of service rather than force us to stay and do greater damage with our burned-out attitudes. Then it can be honestly said that He is leading us, but only because we just refused to follow His first lead.

It encourages me to remember that Noah spent 120 years building the ark. The only consolation he had was that he was where God wanted him, doing God's work. Moses went before Pharaoh nine times, and he went away embarrassed, hurt, angry, and frustrated nine times. The only comfort he had was that he was following God's instructions.

After the first two years in my current pastorate, I felt like running away to something else. I didn't doubt my call to ministry, but I wondered if I should return to school or take a position as an assistant pastor under someone who knew what he was doing. The previous pastor had completed a successful ministry here. He had built a new church building and added numerically to the congregation. I was watching the congregation dwindle week by week.

One Friday evening I attended revival services in a neighboring Wesleyan church. The Lord's Supper was served that night. As I sat

waiting to receive the elements, the Lord spoke to my heart and said, "David, even if your vice-chairman leaves, you are to stay where you are!" My spirit was revived! Depression lost its grip! With the continuing encouragement, prayers, and fellowship of another pastor I resolved to stay with it! The Lord has blessed me and the church in ways that wouldn't have been possible had I gone looking for greener pastures. I had to stay to complete the task God had assigned to me.

Paul insisted that Timothy remain in Ephesus, not to wear him out with the impossible situation but to win a victory. The victory would be won as the pure gospel message was preached and hearts received the truth. When the rain began to fall, Noah was instantly rewarded for the 120 years of undaunted service. He knew he had won a victory. Moses felt that each audience with Pharaoh was justified when he saw the Israelites marching out of Egypt. He saw the victory. Jesus' last words did not admit defeat, but declared a victory, "It is finished!" Victory waits at the end of a difficult path. It is impossible for me to find victory while running away from God's appointed task.

Jeremiah complained to the Lord saying, "Why does the way of the wicked prosper? Why do all the faithless live at ease?" (Jer. 12:1,

NIV). To put it in the language of our children, "They're lucky! Those guys have all the fun! They never struggle the way we do!" Jeremiah felt sorry for himself. He was about to resign and head for greener pastures when the Lord said to him: "If you have raced with men on foot and they have worn you out, how can you compete with horses! If you stumble in safe country, how will you manage in the thickets by the Jordan?" (v. 5, NIV).

I imagine the Lord giving me the same message in today's language: "You think you've had it rough? You haven't seen anything yet! Victory lies along a steep path! Quit complaining and get to work! Stay where you are."

Jeremiah prophesied the rest of his life. Read his story some time, keeping in mind that he pastored a rough congregation. Then read the Book of Lamentations. He never had it easy. It was always an uphill battle, but for God, Jeremiah was a success because he stayed where God wanted and needed him!

Life is boiling all around you. It's hot where you live. The road is rough, but God hasn't made a mistake. He has put you where He wants you. Stay where you are, and be obedient to Him. Stay where you are, and finish the task He has assigned. Stay where you are, and win the victory for Him!



"I'm disappointed, Mom—they advertise 'Rock of Ages' and then don't play a single note of rock in the service."

# Teaching like Jesus

by Gerard Reed

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**B**eing somewhat less than divine we cannot hope to do exactly as Jesus did, but sometimes it proves instructive to compare the ways we do things with the way He did them. (More than instructive, it often disquiets us to realize how unlike our Master we are!)

Living in a vastly different cultural epoch, we cannot mindlessly impose certain effective devices Jesus used simply because He used them, for if anything, a study of Jesus' ministry reveals how flexible and varied were the ways He dealt with people and situations. Having said this, it still seems reasonable to presume that Jesus' ways of doing things should provide something of a model for His disciples.

Compare, for example, Jesus' teaching techniques with ours. The typical Sunday School class or preaching service, ironically, often looks more like a session with ancient Israel's scribes than with Jesus. The scribes, deeply immersed in the Old Testament, concentrated upon the written text, revering its inspiration and authority. The Law inscribed in Scripture demanded exegetical study and interpretation. Thus schools of rabbis diligently expounded the Torah; the Talmud emerged as a theological resource, a valuable commentary to illuminate finer points of doctrine. All truth resided in the received, written Word of God.

One's concept of truth largely shapes his style of teaching, and the scribes' educational methods reflected their concern for the written word. To know truth about God, students needed to repeatedly hear and diligently memorize the Scripture, best achieved through repetitious exercises. Beyond the mastery of material, debate and discussion centered on its inherited interpretation and its sustaining proof texts.

Much can be said to praise the scribe's pedagogy, just as much can be said favoring the "back-to-basics" pleas of modern parents who would like their children

to master reading, writing, and arithmetic. Clearly Jesus, Peter, Paul, and John studied the Old Testament and used it to proclaim the Good News. Yet, strangely enough, they used the Scriptures more as illustrative material than as authoritative, needing-to-be-memorized pronouncements. In fact, those learned rabbis, who could quote vast sections of the written Word, most misunderstood the Incarnate Word when He appeared! Thus something more than Bible study and proof texts and exegetical precision enable one to really understand and make Jesus Lord.

As a youngster in Sunday School, I occasionally endured harangues that unfavorably compared us Nazarenes with our peers in a Bible church down the road who were allegedly devouring the Word with unnatural zeal. We were, we were told, woefully deficient in our knowledge of Scripture. (And we probably were—I well remember how wondrously astounded and disinterested we were when our teacher, Sunday after Sunday, expounded upon the details of Solomon's Temple.) Fleeting, my conscience trembled as I considered the slough of ignorance wherein we floundered, unable to cite chapter and verse for answers to all questions. But I also rebelled, quite properly I think, against the implied assertion that being a Christian primarily meant memorizing scripture. I somehow sensed that what I needed, more than a head filled with quotes, was an accurate awareness of those truths that rightly relate one with God, man, and the creation.

In His teaching ministry, Jesus cultivated this awareness, for He taught "not as the scribes," who relied upon and imposed the inherited authority of Scripture and its traditional exposition. Jesus, the people sensed, "taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law" (Matt. 7:29, NIV). Generally

we think this was because as the God-man He exuded some mystical aura that automatically validated His message. But, in view of the slowness with which the people recognized His deity, perhaps something else constituted the "authority" with which He spoke.

Let me suggest that Jesus spoke with authority because He taught so that the people could see and understand as self-evident the truth He proclaimed. Rather than having to believe something because it was proclaimed upon the basis of an authority (as did the scribes, using the Scriptures), Jesus spoke with authority because He revealed divine truth through His teaching. It is all very well to accept, on the basis of your reading, that the Rocky Mountains are awe-inspiring, but it is something far different to actually see, from the top of a chair-lift at Monarch Pass, the snow-draped Ponderosa pine and soaring Collegiate Peaks.

Rather than narrowly focusing on the written Word, Jesus, the Incarnate Word in whom "all things hold together" (Col. 1:17, NIV), often pointed hearers' minds toward the world of nature and of human experience. Since "through him all things were made" (John 1:3, NIV), He developed teaching strategies that incubated personal insight rather than rote recall; inner awareness of God's real presence rather than detailed descriptions of abstract propositions concerning His attributes; immediate experience of God's love and grace rather than accepted conclusions concerning His infinite power and majesty.

Thus Jesus' parables were more than incidental and peripheral to His message. Often we hear that Jesus used parables so folk could more easily remember His sayings. But the Jews of His day were largely literate. Had He desired He could have written clear, logical, didactic treatises for His disciples to memorize and subsequently impose, much as elementary school teachers imposed multiplication tables upon many of us. Instead He used parables—in fact Matthew noted, after one of Jesus' sessions, that "he did not say anything to them without using a parable" (Matt. 13:34, NIV). Even His more didactic teachings, such as those recorded in the Sermon on the Mount, used illustrations, symbols, figures of speech, hyperbole, and humor so incessantly that they can be reduced to legalistic literalism only by distorting and perverting their message.

Jesus taught as He did, I think, much like Socrates, because He was more concerned with eliciting insights and responses from His disciples than with imparting rigorously structured, detailed content. He proclaimed the Truth that both liberates and captivates those who see it. Once we grasp the truth about gravity, for example, we need little admonition to work with it rather than against it. He tried, it seems, to guide His disciples to the place where they could see and thus truly know.

This is made clear when, at the Last Supper, Jesus explained the guiding purpose of His ministry: to equip His disciples for their ministry. He came to reveal God's love, but He also came to impart that love to His followers. Having commanded them to "love each other as I

have loved you" (John 15:12, NIV), He asserted that He considered them no longer His "servants" but His "friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you" (John 15:15, NIV). Jesus taught so as to elevate His disciples, to lead them from darkness to light, to prepare them for Pentecost, whereafter the Holy Spirit would indwell and continually illuminate them. Thus He cultivated their intelligence, readying them to receive the Truth.

To do so He used parables and illustrations, for we know, generally speaking, inner realities indirectly or analogically rather than empirically or calculatively. Thus we write songs and poems when addressing our beloved, for mathematical formulae somehow fail to reveal our hearts. This explains why Jesus (unlike Muhammad who inscribed his message in the Koran) left His gospel in the hearts and minds of His disciples, who were instructed and entrusted to sustain and expand His kingdom. It seems clear He intended the gospel to be declared in a dialogical fashion, eliciting rather than imposing assent to the truth. We awaken understanding within others when we help them think rather than by telling them how and what to think. We help others think by pointing them, through illustrations and stories, hyperbole and irony, to truths that can be known by personal insight and apprehension.

In fact, it is virtually impossible to *teach* effectively without using analogies and figures of speech, illustrations and examples. Much that passes as "teaching" frequently fails because it is mere monologue. Teaching is not speaking—even speaking with much conviction or vehemence. Teaching occurs only when learning results. Thus one of my students suggested we toss grammar to the wind and talk about teachers "learning" students, by which he meant education is a learning, not a hearing or data-collecting process.

Most of us, I imagine, learned atomic theory at some point in our lives. We were told that atoms are like small solar systems, with electrons orbiting around nuclei just as planets whirl around the sun. This is a useful analogy, but one should not take it too literally, for physicists assure us that atoms are far more mysterious than our solar system. Electrons are rather like planets—but they appear and disappear and reappear and jump out of orbit and seem to have a mind of their own! An atom's nucleus is like the sun in some ways, but when properly bombarded the nucleus will split with catastrophic fury, fragmenting in ways quite unlike (so we hope) our sun. The solar system analogy has value and is accurate up to a point, so long as we recognize that it should help us grasp a truth that is deeper than its details.

One of the most difficult philosophical positions to explain is "existentialism." Asserting abstract definitions often leaves students more puzzled than ever. But if one illustrates existentialists' concern for living in the now by telling Ernest Hemingway's story "The Short Happy Life of Francis McCumber" or their concern for estrangement by pointing to the fractured figures in some of Picasso's drawings, the essential components of existentialism may be easily grasped. To

(Continued on page 54)

## Dying for a Drink

The following case study was adapted from *Dying for a Drink*, by Anderson Spickard, M.D., and Barbara R. Thompson. It is used by permission of Word Books of Waco, Tex.

When Jack arrived at the local church, asking for help, he was bankrupt, homeless, and unemployed. A former millionaire, he had lost everything he owned in a 15-year drinking spree. Now, he was in the early stages of recovery from alcoholism, and as a husband and father of five children, he was requesting temporary financial help from the church.

The pastor and other church members responded to Jack's need immediately and provided him with a home, a job, and a car. Jack was deeply moved by the love he received and with encouragement from new Christian friends, he renewed his commitment to Jesus Christ. He became an active church member, and he and his entire family attended services three times a week. Within a few years, Jack was elected to the board of deacons.

While Jack continued to make remarkable progress in all areas of his life, his wife, Beth, became increasingly quiet and withdrawn. One day she visited the pastor, complaining of depression and loneliness. "No one knows what it's like for me," she said bitterly. "My husband ruined my life and the lives of my children by drinking away our money, and now I'm left to pick up

the pieces. Everyone thinks he's so terrific because he's a recovering alcoholic, but they don't have to live with his mistakes. Maybe if I were an alcoholic, someone would think about me for a change."

The pastor was surprised at the depth of anger Beth expressed. Assuring her that she too was loved and admired, he urged her to forgive her husband and to guard against self-pity. Beth seemed untouched by this appeal, and two months later she returned to the pastor's office to say that she herself was now drinking alcoholically. The pastor, dismissing her claim as a bid for attention, tried to help her address her own anger and resentments.

Several weeks later, the pastor discovered that Beth had told him only half the truth. Not only was she drinking alcoholically, she was also having an affair with another alcoholic. "After a bad weekend binge, Beth agreed to enter a treatment center," remembers the pastor. "But she had far more difficulty giving up alcohol than her husband. She suffered from repeated relapses, and finally she and Jack were divorced. When I last heard from them, Jack was sober, but Beth was still drinking."

### DISCUSSION GUIDE

1. What did the pastor do right in this case?

2. What did the pastor do wrong in this case?

3. What resources of the Christian faith were apparently not used in this case?

4. How would you have handled this case?

5. Try to define, in 15 words or less, Beth's most basic problem?

6. What organization or group of persons in your church could help in a situation like this?

7. In the space provided, or on a separate sheet, rewrite this tragic case. In your version, make it a successful story. Be sure to include the things that would have to happen to make this story have a happy ending. 



## HOW TO JOIN THE CORONARY CLUB

by William S. Deal, M.D.

**C**lub joining is more and more popular these days. In almost every mail preachers are besieged with requests to join this or that special club.

Many ministers, once considered too young to belong to that special club known as the Coronary Club are now becoming eligible for membership.

According to George W. Miller, the following suggestions, if pursued quite carefully, will likely prepare the younger minister for earlier than expected membership:

1. Never plan a day off, but if you are forced to do so, visit a preacher friend and spend the day talking over mutual church problems.

2. Don't allow time enough to drive to any appointment comfortably. This will show people how busy you are and will help to preserve the already bad reputation preachers have as fast drivers.

3. Be sure to try to outdo the former pastor in record-setting, and try to outdo your own record each year.

4. Never say no. Always do whatever you are asked to do if at all possible.

5. Try to please everybody and insist on being liked by everyone.

6. Don't ever delegate responsibility to anyone else if you can help it. If you appoint a committee, be sure to do most of the work yourself.

7. Try to avoid planning a night at home. If you are left without an appointment and no call comes in, accept an outside speaking engagement, or visit another meeting somewhere out of town.

8. Take all the revivals your church will allow you to have, then book more for your regular vacation periods. Place all offerings for such meetings in a special fund called the "Heart Fund."

9. Eagerly watch attendance records, especially the Sunday School's. If it lags, start a visitation campaign, headed by yourself, to restore the record.

10. When your doctor advises you to slow down, ignore him. Brag instead about how healthy you are and that you prefer to "wear out rather than rust out."

11. Don't leave the burden of your people with the Lord when you take it there in prayer. Act like the outcome of Kingdom work depends on you. Keep on worrying about it as you pray.

12. Lead your church into a building program whether it is needed or not. You must have something extra to do to show how active and necessary you are to the church and its ongoing work.

13. Consider it your civic and religious duty to be a member of all the outstanding civic clubs of the city.

14. Find another pastor nearby who needs your helpful advice and good counsel and example. Spend some time with him each month helping to build his work.

15. If this does not produce the expected results, accept the largest church that becomes available to you. Work as feverishly as you can there to beat all former records.

If these rules are followed carefully, along with retiring late at night and rising very early in the morning, you should succeed in having a coronary within a few short years. When it finally comes, be sure to blame everyone but yourself for it, and try to worry yourself into a frenzy as soon as you can. This way you can have an early appointment with the undertaker, be mourned as a great worker, and have everyone say what a beautiful corpse you were! 

# A SUFFICIENT SALARY ... OR IS IT?

by Barbara Bouldrey  
Iberia, Mo.

**P**erhaps my attitude is wrong, but I have never considered my pastor-husband's salary a blessing. In 14 years of pastoring I cannot recall ever praying, "Thank You, Lord, for the blessing of having only \$12.00 for groceries this week!"

No matter what John's salary is, there are always financial crises to conquer. If it is not a medical expense, the car breaks down or the tennis shoes fall apart—the day *after* I pay this week's bills.

So how have we managed and not become bitter? How have we survived? Here are a few simple rules.

1. Make absolutely sure you are where God wants you. We have never changed pastorates without "throwing out fleeces." Knowing that God wants us *here* gives me ammunition against Satan's attempts to discourage me about our finances.

2. Never blame your husband for your financial status. Even though John has felt bad, at times, for not providing for his family, I have never accused him of being a poor provider. Believing he is God's man, serving where God wants him, helps me accept his salary.

Dr. Forrest Nash, while pastoring College Church, Bourbonnais, Ill., said, "This church does not pay me to preach, but pays me so that I *can* preach." I heard those words before ever entering a parsonage, and it has always helped me to accept the fact that John gets less salary than

his education and ability should command.

3. Pay your tithes and bills first. Many times we have paid our tithe and our bills and then asked the Lord to feed us. We haven't always eaten three balanced meals a day, but we never starved.

It was after such a challenge to the Lord in our first pastorate that another church brought us a trunkload of groceries and an envelope of money. We had to store canned goods in our spare bedroom closet there were so many!

During our second pastorate the Lord answered that challenge time and time again. One lady received a surprise bonus and the Lord told her to give it to us on the very day we sent every penny to pay bills.

To this day, in our fourth pastorate, God has always provided our needs when we have honored Him, and our creditors, first.

4. Take a vacation and do special things as a family. For many years all we could afford was the gasoline to reach our parents' homes and back. Even then the Lord would lead a relative to give us money to help get us back to the parsonage.

We have found that if we *really* want to go to General Assembly, to Disneyland, or to a special gospel concert, God provides. He provides the determination to save, budget, and cut corners to make it.

5. Make a shopping list. During our roughest days it became hard to pass the fresh fruit and meat count-

ers, go through the checkout, and make it to the car without crying. But as I shopped I made sure I had seven breakfast meals, seven supper meals, and a pound of popcorn to fill in for evening snacks. There were many weeks we stretched a pound of spaghetti over three suppers and 10 hot dogs made two suppers and a lunch.

Where did lunch go? We discovered that when it was necessary a late breakfast and a late supper carried us through to survival.

6. Avoid credit cards. We have one credit card—for emergencies. That winter morning when the battery was dead and so was the checking account, we thanked the Lord for the credit card. Funny thing—we are still paying for that \$50.00 battery six years later! Have there *really* been that many emergencies?

7. Never lose the joy of your salvation. For three years we struggled with a hurting, bleeding church. The financial pressures ate at me until I was exhausted physically, emotionally, and spiritually. I *allowed* the problems to rob me of my joy. If only I had spent more time in prayer, releasing the burdens to the Lord!

Learn to laugh! Learn to enjoy! Grab hold of your joy and don't let go!

So . . . is the pastor's salary a blessing or a curse? Neither, it is just a part of the pastor's way of life—a way of life I accepted when I fell in love with a preacher . . . and that has been my blessing.

# A PRAYER FROM MY PARSONAGE

Author Unknown

Prov. 15:31-32

*He who listens to a life-giving rebuke will be at home among the wise.*

*He who ignores discipline despises himself, but whoever heeds correction gains understanding (NIV).*

Lord,

Something is bothering me . . . someone in the church said something critical about my husband and me. Now, because I have opened the massive door of brooding just a slit, a gust of heavy gloom has rushed into my heart. Its disturbing cloud churns as I fold clothes and soak breakfast dishes. It is the pry that has loosened my tenuous grip on sunshine for this day. I cannot shake it, so, drooping, I bring it to You, Jesus.

There is a tiny . . . well, maybe fair-sized . . . part of me that is sternly angry at her. She is being little, picky, and jealous. You know the ugly thoughts that race through my mind about her. They make me feel better for a time because I can cast the blame on her and dissipate any guilt over my own shortcomings. So, I cling to the urge to nurse these feelings as a bandage for my wounded pride. But I know, Jesus, that this is not Your way. I guess You will have to teach me a better way.

Help me sort carefully through those critical words that I might extract the bits of correction I need to help me grow. They are couched in anger, but real and valuable. I suppose I *should* listen more and talk less in that Bible study group. Shield me from a defensive spirit that would drive these lessons from my needy life, and would plant

weeds of resentment. Do not let me rationalize and dismiss it all as empty anger. Teach me through this reproof what parts of my life I need to open to change, what I need to hear.

Father, give me bountifully of Your grace to forgive the rest . . . the unjust part. You have forgiven so much in my life. Much of what she said was unjust and unkind, just as I have been unkind at times, bristling with self—offensive, defensive. Thank You for the grace You gave others to forgive me.

Then, God, help me to accept that grace. I want to stay angry, comforted by self-pity, so You will have to strip it from me lest I get stuck in its cozy rut. She may have had a bad day and used the occasion to release something. Maybe she needed the release; I need to forgive.

I suppose You allow these things to help me grow, but why does it have to hurt, anyway? Why can't I just grow and not feel the ache of growing pains. Maybe when I am open to hurting, I am open to loving and caring? It should hurt, I suppose. If it did not I would be crushed over and impenetrable . . . safe . . . as a dead man in a coffin. Perhaps there will be hurt again, but help me realize that this hurt is the burn felt by a soul that can also feel loving warmth. Because I can experience pain, I can also feel love.

Jesus, I remember how I used to view the ministry, as a rookie . . . all glowing with future victories and visions of fulfilling kingdom work. Now that 14 years have passed I can reflect on the glorious

times of building and soul winning, growing and blessing. But now I notice the quiet suggestion that there is some pain in the life of a servant. You called us into a measure of suffering as well as victory. This bout is not so much the suffering for righteousness' sake mentioned in the Beatitudes. I fear it resulted from my own un-Christlikeness, but if I did not love You, and did not choose to accept Your discipline, I would cast this hurt in the hole of self-pity or exchange it for smoldering anger, or lose it in some other worldly way. So maybe in a small way the suffering *is* because I bear Your name.

Help me arise from this, not with resentments pushing open the massive door of negativism, not choosing to withdraw from people to protect my fragile feelings, but with You and experience teaching me that growing pains are part of Jesus' cross. I can gain in it—glory in the cross.

Jesus, I will choose to close that door and open another of praise and thanksgiving. Rejoicing . . . not in spite of the hurt, but because You have given me grace to repel the chilling temptation to withdraw from people, grace to overcome the ice of resentment and defensiveness . . . because You have used these critical words to help me grow . . . because Your mighty arm has closed that massive dark door and restored the Sunshine.

Small tuition for such a priceless lesson.

*In Jesus' powerful name,  
Amen!*



## THE NIGHT BEFORE THE VOTE

by Janice Fish, *Ridgefield, Wash.*

'Twas the night before "The Vote,"  
And at the preacher's house  
Not a creature is sleeping,  
Especially his spouse!

The children are just as nervous as she,  
Because they're older now, you see.  
They remember the year when folks voted "No"  
'Cause we cancelled church on account of the snow.

Then there was the time they "shot the pastor down"  
Because of his wife's frequent trips downtown.  
Mr. White voted NO because the kids were so rowdy;  
Mrs. Noble said NO because the parsonage looks dowdy.

"The preacher's kid drives too fast," they say,  
And recount the errors of his past along the way.

"But preachers should never be heard to grumble—  
A few NO votes will keep them humble."

There was also the year Mount St. Helens blew up . . .  
And the whole preschool class got sick and threw up.  
"Surely he could have done something to stop it . . .  
A NO vote or two, and then we'll just drop it."

"Remember the times he showed human weakness?"  
"We were terribly let down—it really freaked us."  
"He made a mistake, or two or three . . .  
He'll get a NO vote for sure, from me."

As the sun creeps up on the Sabbath Day,  
Am I blessed by the prospect of "The Vote"? No way!

# DAD IS NOT BULLETPROOF

by J. Grant Swank, Jr.

*Pastor, Church of the Nazarene, Walpole, Mass.*

I was visiting in a parsonage after a Sunday morning service. Seated at the dinner table with the family, I was amazed to hear the minister's wife pick at a seemingly insignificant segment of the morning service. I could sense that the pastor already was tense about disagreements with his church board, with whom he met following the service.

The man was finding it difficult to handle the quip from his wife. I concluded that if I had not been present, he might have opened up a bit more in response. Instead, he stifled what was on his mind and attempted to change the conversation to some other topic.

On another occasion, I spent the week with a parsonage family while holding evangelistic services in their church. Before the meetings the older children found it hard to be ready on time. There was only one family car; consequently, we all had to travel together. When the family was not ready on time, the pastor became extremely tense. He tried to hide it from me; nevertheless, I felt sorry for him, knowing that he had preparations to make at the church before the services.

The pastor confronts tensions daily. Sometimes they are in the lives of others; frequently, because he is a mortal among mortals, they are in his own life and those of his family.

The pastor plans to prepare next Sunday's sermon on a Tuesday morning; however, the phone rings. The caller spends half an hour complaining about some innovative program.

The pastor is set on taking Wednesday afternoon off for his family because he has not taken off his due day for the past two weeks. As he is about to drive away from the parsonage, a parishioner pulls his car in behind him. Out bounce five people, chattering away about this

and that. The pastor hints that he is on his way out with his family; but they ignore the hint and remain in his front yard for one solid hour, caught up in their own socializing. There are no lawn chairs for anyone to sit on; but they do not seem to mind and there they stay.

The pastor has a funeral service to conduct on a Thursday morning. It is to begin at 10:30. As he heads for the door, the phone rings. He knows he simply does not have time to talk with anyone. Nevertheless, his daughter picks up the receiver and, not knowing her father's morning schedule, calls out that he is wanted on the telephone. He is trapped and attempts to explain that he is in a hurry and must leave. However, the caller simply does not appear to understand and has one more thing she wants to relate.

The pastor is going to preach a Sunday morning sermon on the Christian family. When he prepares for church he becomes involved in an argument with his wife. Several of the children spat with one another. A Sunday School teacher calls to say she is ill and will not be able to teach her class. He is not able to find a substitute for the class. Another caller informs him that there is water in the church basement again and two of the classrooms are not usable.

The pastor is expected to have some magic bulletproof vest that insulates him from the hurts and frustrations of human existence. This vest is always to be in place. He even sleeps with it! At least, that is what is often communicated by those outside the parsonage. The sorry fact of the matter is that too frequently it is also presumed by those within the parsonage.

There is no magic bulletproof vest, though it would surely have its advantage. The pastor is a person—vulnerable and feeling. His life is imprecipitable to Satan

and sin. He is under spiritual attack like everyone else. He has his highs and his lows—good days and bad.

The people who can help the pastor most—to get through life with as few bruises as possible—are those under his own roof. His family, once they recognize there is no magic bulletproof vest, can make certain they support him, understand him, and embrace him, especially when he needs it most.

This calls for a team spirit in the home. It also means sensitive “feelers” will be extended to pick up negative vibrations as well as positive frequencies that are in the air. And when the negative forces attack, the parsonage family should pull as one to provide a security net around father, communicating to him in one way or another that they care and are ready to bolster him.

I have seen pastors under intense strain needing support from their families. But not wanting to grovel, to beg for support, somewhere deep inside they acquiesce, concluding that they should be tough enough to take life without any help. Sometimes the pastor is simply too fatigued to make the attempt to establish communication with his family for their support. I have seen this too.

Somewhere the image has been projected that a pastor is a kind of spiritual superman. He is tall, strong, and ever smiling. He has instant prayer answering service. He soars through life victorious, given some hotline to deity. People can gossip about him, and he simply throws it off. Friends betray him and belittle him, but he does not feel it for he is the man of God, immune to darts against his ego. Ecclesiastical politicians can use him, but he is dedicated to higher things of life and simply does not feel the hurt.

I have heard parishioners make promises to pastors, boast of his abilities in public, and pat him on the back at church socials. They dine in his home. They call him in the middle of the night and find help from his ministerial counsel. They send their children to his study when they are in trouble. They play golf with him, have parties with his family, pray at his altar. They discuss church business at monthly council meetings and cooperate with him in one endeavor after another.

Yet I have witnessed those same people caught up in some whim of life that has blown them away from the Ship of Zion. They are no longer in their places of service where they used to be. They complain about the good people of the church. They absent themselves conveniently from worships. And then they turn cold against the man of God who led them to the gates of salvation.

They must think that somehow this pastor has a robot's heart. He is a wind-up toy—a mechanical man. He can be liked, or he can be lumped. Like God, he is ever there and ever understanding, feeling no hurt.

I just spent a weekend with a pastor friend as a special speaker for a seminar. There was a Friday evening gathering that was well attended. The Saturday session was to be from 10 A.M. through 2 P.M., with lunch in the church. When 10 A.M. came, there were only two people present, one from his own church.

He hid it well, but my friend was embarrassed. We did something else with the time, yet I knew that down deep inside that pastor was wondering what had happened to

the loyalty of his people. They had wanted the seminar. They had voted for it to be on the church calendar. They had promised him they would be there.

Later that afternoon, as he and I conversed about things of the church, he said, “I have given up on believing promises from people. When they come through by actually ‘producing the goods,’ then I will believe what they have to say.”

I thought back to the noon meal in that parsonage. That man's wife understood what her husband went through that morning. So she prepared him a most delicious lunch. And I noticed she made certain that all her conversation was supportive. She really worked at it; and I knew that that minister husband was comforted by her special caring. His mood began to change; the burden began to lift. I could tell, for I was scrutinizing the wife's craft at knowing exactly what to say and when. She knew her pastor/husband wore no magic bulletproof vest. Instead, he depended on her for that kind of protection in difficult times.

“Only one of my people showed up!” he exclaimed in the middle of our eating together. His wife paused, looked into his face, and said softly, “There were two, silly. I was there, too, and I am one of your congregation. Don't I count for anything?” And with that the three of us broke into laughter.

On a particular Sunday I was expecting just a few to show up for the service. I knew that a number would be away for one reason or another. My daughter, a teenager, picked up on my feelings. She sensed a bit of drag in my step. Just before the worship hour, she whispered to me that she had a surprise for me. She would play the offertory on the piano, a piece that she had worked on in secret. She had already informed the regular pianist and everything was in order.

For a couple of months I had tried to get her to practice a piano selection for an offertory, but she conveniently found excuses why it was never ready. Now when I was a bit down, it dawned on her that she had been careless in her relationship with her dad. It was time to have that offertory ready, and without father's urging.

Rarely does the pastor have anyone to go to when he wants to spill it all. Who can he trust? Where can he go? Who has the time? He is supposed to be self-sufficient, isn't he? He has all the answers; after all, he gives them out every day of his life. Why should he have to talk out life's difficulties with another mortal when *he* is the professional victor?

Realistically, this simply is not so. The man carrying the burdens of others has his own to tend to. He has his doubts and depressions. This comes to the fore with scores leaving pastorates for secular vocations. Also, it is written on the divorce certificates of many clergy marriages.

Is there an answer? Well, part of the answer is found in the parsonage. It is found in selflessness and sensitivity on the part of the pastor's spouse and children. There is no magic bulletproof vest. But there can be caring parsonage families to protect and love the one who, week in and week out, stands behind the pulpit, in the line of fire at the front of the battle. 

# Tangled in the Underbrush of Scant Results?

by J. V. Langford

*Retired Evangelist, Church of the Nazarene*

*"The number was exactly zero; not one showed." An otherwise successful preacher was telling of inviting to the revival 91 different persons. At one time or another most Christian workers get tangled in the underbrush of scant results.*

Doubtless this 91-to-zero encounter paints an extreme picture. But it does point up a warning: in such an hour the worker had better have a rock, firm and scriptural, on which to stand.

The anticipation of immediate success injects a powerful drive into our soul-winning efforts. But when the fist of bitter failure flattens us, what then? One writer says failure actually brings on fatigue; therefore, the Christian must by all means solve this knotty problem.

The verse that might turn our lives around is 1 Cor. 3:8. To bring into focus the message from this verse let us first misread the last word, ". . . every man shall receive his own reward according to his own—results!" Likely, many of us have often read the verse that way. Admittedly, with men this reading could be correct. Many times men reward solely according to results. But the verse actually reads, ". . . according to his own *labor*"

Bluntly, our results have nothing to do with our actual rewards. Thank God for results, for glorious results, bringing to the laborer elation and excitement, fleeting though such may be.

We have heard of the preacher who labored to win a lad. The lad accepted Christ and became a great evangelist, winning thousands. It was said the preacher will share in the evangelist's rewards. But according to 1 Cor. 3:8 the preacher will be rewarded only for his "own" labor. This is the only fair way to compensate when working with unpredictable human will. ". . . forasmuch as ye *know* that your labour is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Cor. 15:58). This outlook jolts the one who would offset his spiritual doldrums by pointing to a successful preacher he helped win to Christ years ago.

Adam Clarke writes: "God does not reward His servants according to the success of their labor, but He rewards them according to the quantum [amount] of faith and labor." We can't make the other fellow's choice, but we can certainly make our own—to labor.

For one thing, work itself has a built-in reward. A. N. Whitehead reminds us that the great explorers of history, immersed as they were in their projects, toiled for something other than money. The same could be said of Edison, Roentgen (X ray), and other inventors and discoverers.

In a small Sunday School the goal for the following Sunday

had been set for 50. A boy got all excited, biked around town inviting folks, made phone calls, and determined that whatever it took they would reach the 50 mark. Come Sunday morning. The record board glared back at him—45. Lifting his shoulders a bit he declared, "That's all right; I feel like 50!"

The only labor God will reward is the all-out effort to achieve results. And in the parable of the sower Jesus teaches that some of the seed will fall on good ground and bring forth. Actually, if the worker adopts the "reward-by-labor" concept, in the long run he will have more results than any other way.

We should have a mind-set, or rather a heart-set, that will enable us to witness as steadily as the seasons, year in and year out, not letting up after either failure or success. A golfer says, "I got to the place I wasn't elated over good shots or downcast over bad ones." Lincicome quips that when we try to serve God by fits and starts, it will be mostly by fits—many fits to one start.

Abraham found the scriptural reward. God said to him, "I am . . . thy exceeding great reward" (Gen. 15:1). The songwriter put it, "Thy approval shall be my reward." God's stamp of approval is about 96 percent and all other awards and rewards about 4.

Beverly Carradine, an evangelist of the yesteryears, tells of reading about a certain family of three girls, aged 10, 12, and 14. The 12-year-old was "weak-minded." The father, a businessman, was away on a trip. He wrote he would arrive home on a certain day at about 11 A.M. Finally the day arrived. Some time after breakfast the girls went into the garden. The 10- and 14-year-olds cut some roses, which they arranged into attractive bouquets. The retarded one watched. Then she scrambled around, picked up some sticks and wheat straw and tied around them a ragged string the best she could.

The carriage drew up. The youngest and the oldest greeted their father with their flowers. As he was admiring the roses he noticed the stricken one standing by with her bouquet of sticks and straw. Bending down he tenderly embraced her. Then he took all three bouquets into the house as the girls followed. Having procured some vases he set the two vases of roses opposite each other on a table. After that, he carefully placed the vase of sticks and straw in the most honored place, at the very center of the table with the others on either side.

Carradine, himself an effective preacher, said that after he finished the story he sat and thought about it for a long time. Doubtless all who have toiled in witnessing for Christ know pretty well what he was thinking.

# CONGREGATIONAL SINGING

(Continued from page 31)

its joy or affirmation in terms of hand clapping, 'hallelujahs,' or 'amens.'<sup>14</sup>

Any deficiency in congregational singing caused by overuse of a few singers must be corrected. Whether the cause is a choir that wrenches the song from the congregation or a choir that is given the responsibility by default, a balance must be established and maintained. The choir must not lose sight of its relationship to the congregation, and the congregation must pursue its responsibility to sing.

## Encourage Full Participation

Each person is responsible for congregational singing. Worship leaders must not assume sole responsibility. Instead, leaders should provide the framework for creative participation by every worshiper.

There are a variety of methods to keep hymn singing fresh and creative. Antiphonal singing is one broad category within which a congregation has many options for creative singing. A soloist may sing the stanza and the congregation respond with the refrain. A dialogue between the congregation and the choir, or the congregation and instruments may be established. Question-and-answer hymns are conducive to this treatment. Whatever methods are used, however, the ultimate goal is the congregation's involvement.

Caution must be exercised at this point. The congregation is not a gathering of skilled musicians. Precise variations of tempo, dynamics, and interpretation are not possible. If they are attempted, the unskilled are discouraged from participation. This defeats the goal of worship and should be avoided.

The worship leader should convince the congregation of its responsibility to sing heartily to the Lord. The members of the congregation, as priests to one another, should lead fellow worshipers to God through their singing. The emphasis on spiritual gifts and the priesthood of all believers also calls for participation from every member during congregational singing.

## INDIVIDUAL BENEFITS OF CONGREGATIONAL SINGING

Both Eph. 5:19 and Col. 3:16 talk of the personal song of the believer. This song, however, is directed to the Lord, not to himself. The benefit to the individual is a result of devotion to the Lord.

The same is true in regard to singing for each other. 1 Cor. 14:15 is set in Paul's discussion of the abuses of speaking in tongues. The primary thrust of this section is that spiritual activity, whether it be singing, praying, or speaking in tongues, is for the good of the congregation and should not be limited to personal edification.

Congregational singing will nurture each individual's spirit as the song is directed to God and to other members of the body of believers.

## Congregational Singing Is Emotional and Intellectual

Singing involves both the mind and the emotions. The poetic text appeals primarily to the intellect whereas music has emotional intrigue. When text and tune are brought together, each element complements and intensifies the other. The result is a dynamic expression greater than the aggregate of two parts.

Music will often express intense longings of an individual when appropriate words cannot be found. Music allows expression in spite of the elusive nature of feelings.

While emotional expression contributes to vitality in the church, it must not border on hysteria. In the light of 1 Cor. 14:15, William Reynolds says, "Singing is a spiritual experience . . . that is mentally perceived." This realization will aid the balance between emotion and intellect in congregational singing.

The emotional aspects of music contribute to the intellectual impact of the text. In the Old Testament, according to K. M. Campbell, "Music served to impress the words upon the heart by working on the emotions, in order to engrave them on the minds. . . . The purpose of music is the intensification of the truth."

## Congregational Singing Is a Great Teacher

God has given directives concerning spiritual education. Parents are to teach their children (Deut. 6:7; Eph. 6:4); believers are to evangelize people in all nations and teach them the commands of Christ (Matt. 28:19-20). Paul says, in Col. 3:16, that one method of teaching is singing "psalms, hymns and spiritual songs."

Someone has said that the average Christian learns doctrine primarily through the hymns he sings. This does not diminish the need or value of sermons and Bible study. Hymn singing will never replace these methods, but its instructional effectiveness must not be overlooked, either. Music in the church is another ministry of the Word of God and can be a potent force in personal and Christian communication.

A survey of church history will confirm the use of songs in Christian education. During the fourth century, Arius wrote songs to teach his claim that Christ was less than God. Mainstream Christian leaders recognized the instructional value of hymns and used music to conserve the orthodox beliefs of the church.

The reformers recognized that regularity in the rhythm and rhyme of the text, as well as structure of the melody, will increase the long-term comprehension of the song.

Today's worship leader who desires to use hymns as a teaching tool should give careful consideration to the selection of hymns. First, the text must be consistent with Scripture and doctrinal beliefs. This is crucial since so much doctrine is learned through hymns. Secondly, the tune must enhance interpretation of the text. A good correlation between the tune and text will increase a hymn's effectiveness. Finally, the congregation must be able to comprehend the hymn. Care must be taken, for example, in selecting hymns to be used with children to insure that its language and figures of speech are easily understood. Likewise, the hymn tune must be within the pupils' musical understanding.

Music has contributed greatly to the development of the Church, and congregational singing has been a powerful force in church music. The contemporary church musician must not discard congregational singing in favor of other musical endeavors. Instead, efforts should be made to strengthen congregational singing for the sake of Christ and His Church. 

## NOTES

1. Ronald Allen and Gordon Borrer, *Worship—Rediscovering the Missing Jewel* (Portland, Ore.: Multnomah Press, 1982), 16.
2. Hugh T. McElrath, "Music, Worship and Congregational Involvement," *Hymn* (January 1976), 21.
3. Austin C. Lovelace and William C. Rice, *Music and Worship in the Church* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1976), 213.
4. Harry Eskew and Hugh McElrath, *Sing with Understanding* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1980), 183.

## Teaching like Jesus

(Continued from page 45)

understand Plato's theory of knowledge, one should read his "analogy of the cave" in *The Republic*, where an easily grasped story illustrates a profound theory. Such stories are not technical manuals or logical treatises. They are illustrations designed to focus our minds on deeper realities. The approach is indirect, but perhaps only indirection stimulates our minds to personally appropriate the message.

In a very real sense Jesus taught, not to transfer ideas about God, but to prompt personal knowledge of that Reality, which is God. Thus He seemed—as did the apostle James—deeply concerned that His followers *do* the truth as well as think about it. To be a doer of the Word indicates an internalized and actualized understanding of it—mere hearers can discuss and debate and dissect and delay forever, thereby failing to learn. There is, in fact, a certain truth (though not by any means the final truth) in John Dewey's assertion that we "learn by doing." There are, of course, many things (historical knowledge, for example) that we do not acquire by doing (it would be difficult to transport ourselves back to Waterloo in 1815 so as to understand Napoleon's demise). But many of life's most important lessons are best learned by practicing.

It certainly helps to read books and articles about running if you are interested in it. As one of those who finds running challenging and therapeutic, I read and appreciate discussions on nutrition, training techniques, injuries, and races. But there is no way to really know much about running—especially its physical pleasures, its contemplative insights, its inevitable injuries—without running. *Running*, not thinking or hearing about running, enables you to understand it as well as to do it.

I also enjoy gardening. Thus I read books and magazines about gardening. They are highly interesting and useful. Whatever interests me, of course, leads me to read and study it. But I have discovered an enormous difference between reading and thinking about gardening and actual gardening. To understand it, you must dig in the dirt and smell the blossoms and watch the clouds and hear the insects.

Thus Jesus' teaching often focused on moving His hearers to act. He knew that some ideas (the Beatitudes, for example) sound paradoxical. He knew that telling people to die in order to live sounds absurd. But He also knew that we live on levels that flow around linear logic. He knew He had to teach in ways that would prompt experiment with and experience of those deep, inward truths that are eternal.

At that point, of course, Jesus illustrates the enduring truth that must be faced by all of us who teach: We basically teach who we are. We may spend much time and invest much effort in developing ideas and crafting cogent presentations, and such are always worthwhile. But ultimately we teach ourselves. "He who lives well," said Cervantes, "is the best preacher." So Jesus taught preeminently by example. He not only told people to pray, He prayed. He not only told people to love, He loved. He not only told people to die so as to live, He actually died and rose again.

In view of all this, if we want to help our hearers understand and learn, we must carefully use illustrations and analogies and be an example. This is not to say we should simply tell stories or irrelevant jokes to spike up our presentation. But we should think imaginatively enough to find figures of speech, to carve images in the air for our hearers to see what we are saying. We should study history and literature, poetry and art, using the treasury of human experience and creative thought to illustrate our ideas.

We should beware of thinking that mere repetition of formulae, mere quoting of texts, mere enthusiasm for abstract doctrines, constitutes teaching or preaching. For only when our ideas take on flesh, only when they are seen to indwell the life we experience and the world we inhabit, can they have lasting impact upon our hearers.

All this is said not, of course, to discount or disparage the authority of Scripture, exegetical study, or expository preaching, for these must continually be stressed. It is, quite simply, to remind us that if we do as Jesus did, we will do more than study and repeat and call for submission to the written text.

## Man of Steel— Man of Sorrow

Man of Steel—Man of Sorrow  
Superman with an aching heart.  
Pastor, Counselor, listen to horror  
But never cry. That's the art.

Bear the burden. Console the weeping.  
Deep within your soul keep sleeping  
Your own hurts—prevent them from seeping  
Into life lest we should find you out.

Carry the load. Never cry.  
Don't verbalize the question "Why?"  
Emotions are low—keep acting high.  
We mustn't know you ever doubt.

Shepherd. Leader. Captain Courageous.  
To show you're human would be outrageous.  
Eternal optimism may be contagious.  
That's what this job is all about.

Man of Steel—Man of Sorrow.  
Can't you see there's no tomorrow  
In keeping hid your own deep sorrow?  
God help Superman with an aching heart.

—C. Michael Courtney

## Wholeness of Scripture

(Continued from page 15)

Moravians insisted that until the Holy Spirit granted seekers that assurance and freedom, no acts of repentance or self-discipline and no employment of the "means of grace"—whether prayer, Bible reading, attending to preaching, or receiving Holy Communion—could help them. Thereafter, no effort at discipline or good works would be necessary! Wesley thought all this contradicted the call of both the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures to obedience and self-denial.<sup>39</sup> A year after the debate reached its climax, Wesley read for the first time Luther's commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians. Profoundly shocked, he renounced Luther to his preachers and, some months later, in his published *Journal*, to all the world. Meanwhile, William Cudworth and others, in the name of a Calvinism George Whitefield and the heirs of the Puritans would not countenance, rejected as both wrong and prideful any effort by Christians actually to keep the moral law.<sup>40</sup>

For nearly half a century thereafter, the two Wesleys used every occasion possible to warn their followers against antinomianism.<sup>41</sup> The publication in 1748 and 1750 of John's 13 discourses on the Sermon on the Mount and his 2 sermons on the law set forth the scriptural teaching that united grace and ethics. In 1766 Wesley published a landmark sermon titled "The Lord Our Righteousness." It spelled out carefully the promise of both imputed and imparted holiness.<sup>42</sup> When, in 1770, Joseph Benson wrote asking him if the Methodists did not risk falling into the sin of legalism, Wesley responded that he found "no such sin as legality in the Bible. The very use of the term speaks an Antinomian. I defy all liberty but the liberty to love and serve God, and fear no bondage but bondage to sin." St. Paul's testimony that God sent "His own son in the likeness of sinful flesh . . . that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us," Wesley continued, was grounded on the New Testament assumption that "*justitia legis, justitia legalis!*" "The righteousness of the law is legal righteousness."<sup>43</sup> The same year John Fletcher began writing his seven volumes of *Checks to Antinomianism*, published between 1771 and 1776. In the midst of their composition, he wrote Charles Wesley that he had become convinced that "the Law can be fulfilled evangelically by love" and asked Charles to expunge from the text of his essay on original sin "anything representing the Law as a covenant of wrath opposed to the Gospel."<sup>44</sup>

A third central theme in Wesley's system of theology—central because he thought it pervaded both the Hebrew and the Christian Scriptures—was the promise of the sanctifying Spirit.

Wesley understood from 1733 onward that the Hebrew adjective *holy*, ascribed to God, had a verbal character. The name of the third person of the Trinity, then, was properly translated the holy-making, the right-making, or the hallowing Spirit. If God's nature is defined by the holiness of love, then the divine intention is, clearly, to share the same holiness with fallen persons, renewing them in His image.<sup>45</sup> By such reasoning, the Holy Club embraced the promise of the prophets that in the new age God would grant His hallowing presence to every believer. They equated that promise with Jesus' word to Nicodemus, "You must be born again." When George Whitefield left Oxford in 1737 he began the revival that swept through Bristol, Gloucestershire, and London by preaching on being "born of the Spirit" as clearly as John Wesley did after Aldersgate; and in 1739 Whitefield said that he learned that doctrine and found that experience under the influence of the two Wesleys while at Oxford!<sup>46</sup>

This helps us understand more precisely what was new in Peter Bohler's witness to John and Charles Wesley in February and March 1738, and what they found confirmed in the Book of the Acts of the Apostles: that the gift of new life in the Spirit was attested by *conscious assurance* of forgiveness, and that this divine witness was received through faith, *usually in a moment of time*. The two Wesleys experienced this "living faith" at Whitsuntide, 1738, Charles on Pentecost Sunday itself. John heard a moving sermon that day on the gift of the Holy Spirit from an Anglican clergyman, and at Aldersgate five days later believed he experienced true regeneration. The two needed no prompting, then, to begin declaring that the witness of the Spirit to deliverance from the guilt and power of sin was the essence of saving faith.<sup>47</sup> Despite their subsequent differences over predestination and Christian perfection, the Wesleys and George Whitefield never thereafter disagreed about the morally transforming power of the Holy Spirit in the new birth.<sup>48</sup> The record of Wesley's affirmation of it is clear in a dozen sermons and in his most important theological tract, published in 1745.<sup>49</sup>

Later in 1739, as I noted earlier, the two Wesleys followed to its conclusion what they thought was the argument of Scripture and declared that the same Holy Spirit who in regeneration had delivered believers from the dominion of sin would purify their hearts and perfect them in love. As Wesley put it in his preface to the second volume of *Hymns and Sacred Poems*, published in 1740, new converts often pass through dark valleys of temptation and doubt, and sometimes are overcome. In despair from their failure, they cry to God, who assures them of His continuing acceptance and His power to keep them holy, thus establishing their faith. This assurance enables them to bear the Spirit's disclosure of "all the hidden abominations" of inbred sin remaining in their hearts, and prompts them to cry out for a "full renewal" in "righteousness and all true holiness." The Father of love then "remembers His holy covenant," Wesley wrote, and grants them "a single eye and a pure heart." He comes "with his Son and blessed Spirit" and fixes His dwelling place in their souls, bringing them into the "rest which remaineth to the people of God."<sup>50</sup>

The scriptural basis of this expectation was apparent in the texts of Scripture that Wesley cited in this preface, and thereafter made into a litany of biblical promises of purity of heart and perfect love. He began almost always with God's promise to Moses in Deuteronomy 30 that He would "circumcise the hearts of this people" so they might love Him with all their hearts and keep His statutes, and continued with the promises of inward cleansing and the writing of God's law in their hearts, which constitute the New Covenant in Jeremiah 31 and Ezekiel 36. Wesley linked all these with the promise of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount and in the conversation that followed the Last Supper that those who hunger and thirst after righteousness would be filled, that He would not leave comfortless those who love Him, believe in Him, and keep His commandments. The One whom the world cannot receive, the Spirit of Truth, would both instruct their minds and, in answer to Christ's prayer, "sanctify them in the truth."<sup>51</sup>

The wholeness of Scripture that the two Wesleys thought supported this doctrine is especially apparent in their hymns. Charles wrote one on Ezek. 36:31 called "The Promise of Sanctification." It accompanied all the many editions of his brother's famous sermon on Christian perfection, first printed in 1741.<sup>52</sup> Five years later the two published a volume for Pentecost Sunday called *Hymns of Petition and Thanksgiving for the Promise of the Father*. The title was drawn from the risen Lord's announcement, at the end of the Gospel of Luke and in the opening paragraph of the Acts of the Apostles, of His fulfillment of Ezekiel's promise that the Holy Spirit would write God's law in the hearts of His people. The texts for the 33 hymns, however, were taken from John 7:37-39 and chap-

ters 14—17. Perhaps the greatest is the one beginning with the lines, "Author of every work divine, who dost through both creations shine"; it binds not only the two testaments but the eternities together, in praise of the creating, renewing, and sanctifying Spirit.<sup>53</sup>

Little wonder, then, that John Wesley should have declared in scores of sermons, essays, letters, and prefaces the consistency of the call to holiness in both Hebrew and Christian Scriptures. From his first sermons on that subject, preached late in 1739, to almost his last one, delivered in John Fletcher's parish church of Madeley in 1791, "On the Wedding Garment," he was never able to speak of purity of heart and perfect love without appealing to the character of God the Father, to the whole tenor of the Bible, and to the fundamental doctrines of Christianity.<sup>54</sup> The law that Moses said could be fulfilled only in love Jesus had indeed fulfilled, not alone in himself but in those whom He renewed in the image of their Creator. The theme of renewal in God's image is the most persistent metaphor of Christian perfection in Wesley's writings.<sup>55</sup>

Wesley understood the opening Beatitudes of the Sermon on the Mount to reflect the customary order of salvation. Poverty of spirit, which he equated with repentance, and the experience of "living faith" in Christ, were both gifts of the Holy Spirit. Thereafter, the Spirit guided the new Christian's discovery of moral frailty and the depth of inbred sin; and through mourning, meekness, and yet deeper repentance, He created their hunger and thirst for an inward righteousness that would exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees. Through His gift of sanctifying faith, the same Spirit filled the longing heart with pure love. From that moment forward, being a peacemaker, rejoicing amidst persecution, and loving one's enemies were marks of the response of the pure in heart to the grim realities of surrounding evil. All these "holy tempers" appeared in the Christian life in some such order or sequence, Wesley explained; and all must remain as the continuing marks of a sanctified character. A believer would never attain so much grace as to have no need to practice poverty of spirit, meekness, and mourning or to seek every day to grow in the grace that the right-making Spirit supplied. Indeed, such working out of our salvation, before and after the moment of full inner cleansing, was to Wesley the essence of holiness.<sup>56</sup>

On the day in 1777 when Wesley spoke at the laying of the foundation of the New Chapel in Moorfields, a poor neighborhood just outside the wall of London, he recounted the history of the movement he thought God had raised up. Asking "What is Methodism?" he answered that it was certainly not a new religion. Rather, it was "the old religion, the religion of the Bible, the religion of the primitive church, the religion of the Church of England." He reminded his hearers that long before in his "Earnest Appeal" he had described this old religion as "no other than love, the love of God, and all mankind." Wherever this is, he declared, "there are virtue and happiness going hand in hand. There is humbleness of mind, gentleness, long-suffering, the whole image of God, and, at the same time, a peace that passeth understanding." This "religion of love, and joy, and peace," he continued, "has its seat in the inmost soul, but is ever showing itself by its fruits." It is the "religion of the Bible," which "runs through both the Old and New Testaments." Moses and the prophets and Christ and His apostles, he said, "proclaim with one voice, thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy soul, and thy neighbor as thyself." They all declare that "love is the fulfilling of the law" and "the end of the commandment, of all the commandments which are contained in the Oracles of God."<sup>57</sup>

John and Charles Wesley and George Whitefield were from the outset of their ministry, then, classic evangelicals. In an age of enlightenment, they made the plain teachings of the Bible the foundation of Christian faith. They believed the chief

of its many promises to be that of the new birth, in which the Holy Spirit began the renewal of sinful humanity in the divine image. And they thought evangelism, that is, spreading the good news of this renewal, was the fruit of a believer's incorporation by grace into the kingdom where sharing God's love for all humankind was the fulfillment of Torah. The modern evangelical movement, I believe, began that day in 1728 when John and Charles Wesley determined to make the Old and New Testament Scriptures their chief study and began seeking the holiness that would enable them to see God. The results of that study, soon shared by a circle of awakened students, appear in the early sermons of Whitefield and the Wesleys—sermons that are expositions of Scripture from a viewpoint akin to what we would today call canon criticism. They did not doubt the wholeness of the central core of biblical teachings. They grasped its consistency through a way of thinking they believed they had not carried to Scripture but drawn from it—a way of thinking properly called the hermeneutic of holiness.

## NOTES

1. Susanna Wesley, Epworth, August 18 and November 10, 1725, to John Wesley, in John Wesley, *Letters, 1, 1721-1739*, in *Works*, ed. Frank Baker, 26 vols. (Oxford and Nashville, 1974-), 25:179, 183; John Wesley, Oxford, July 29 and November 22, 1725, to Susanna Wesley, *Works*, 25:175-76, 188; Martin Schmidt, *John Wesley, A Theological Biography*, tr. Norman P. Goldhawk (New York and London, 1962), 1:52-58, 73-84, 106-14.

2. John Wesley, ms. sermon, Matt. 6:33, 1725, in Methodist Archives and Research Center, the John Rylands Library, the University of Manchester, England [hereinafter designated as MARC], Box John Wesley IV.

3. These themes pervade many of the early sermons. In addition to the one cited above, see John Wesley, ms. "So God Created Man in His Own Image" [November 1, 1730, from Gen. 1:21] MARC, Box John Wesley IV; John Wesley, "Circumcision of the Heart" [January 1, 1733, from Rom. 2:29], *Sermons I, 1-33*, ed. Albert C. Outler, in *Works* (Oxford and Nashville), 1:401-4 and passim; and his "Aldersgate Sermon" on "Salvation by Faith" [June 7, 1738, from Eph. 2:8], *Works*, 1:25-26. On the renewal of nature, see among his later sermons, "The General Deliverance" [November 11, 1781, on Rom. 8:19-22], *Works*, ed. Thomas Jackson, 14 vols. (London, 1872; reprint, Kansas City, 1978), 6:245-52; and "The New Creation" [1785, from Rev. 21:5], *Works* (London), 6:188-95. Cf. his reminiscences of the Holy Club in John Wesley, *A Short History of Methodism* (London, 1765), in *Works* (London), 8:387-89.

The dates assigned in brackets to John Wesley's sermons, in this and succeeding notes, are drawn from my preliminary efforts to assign what I thought a likely date for the formulation of the substance of each one. I used Wesley's ms. dating for the early ones but beginning in 1739 relied upon Wesley's journals, correspondence, sermon register, and the substance of the sermons themselves. This work is summarized in Timothy L. Smith, "Chronological List of John Wesley's Sermons and Doctrinal Essays," *Wesleyan Theological Journal* [hereinafter WTJ], 16 (Fall 1982): 88-110.

4. John Wesley, "On Christian Perfection, to the Rev. Mr. Dodd" February 5, 1756, *Works* (London), 11:449. Cf. Albert C. Outler, *John Wesley (Library of Protestant Thought; New York, 1964)*, 14, 135.

5. John Wesley, second discourse on "The Witness of the Spirit," April 4, 1767, from Rom. 8:26, *Works* (Oxford and Nashville), 1:293; John Wesley, *A Plain Account of Genuine Christianity* (Dublin, 1753), in Outler, *Wesley*, 188-91. Cf. Frederick Dreyer, "Faith and Experience in the Thought of John Wesley," *American Historical Review*, 88 (February 1983): 18-20, 23, 29-30.

6. John Wesley, *Journal*, in *Works* (London), vols. 1-4, entry for June 4, 1738. See also entries for March 4-6, 19, and 23, April 22, May 3, 7, 9, 14, and 24, and June 6, 1738.

7. They first published this conviction in John Wesley's preface to John and Charles Wesley, *Hymns and Sacred Poems* (London, 1740), in *Works* (London), 14:321, which he quoted at length and made the centerpiece of his *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection* (London, 1766), in *Works* (London), 11:179-82.

8. I have set forth the evidence for this early dating in Timothy L. Smith, "George Whitefield on Wesleyan Perfectionism," WTJ 18 (1984): 63-85.

9. John and Charles Wesley, "Seeking Entire Sanctification," *Hymns and Sacred Poems* (London, 1742), in *The Poetical Works of John and Charles Wesley*, coll. and arr. G. Osborn, 13 vols. (London, 1869), 2:227-86, especially the one titled "Let God Be True, and Every Man a Liar," 285-86.

10. John Wesley, *Journal*, November 12, 1738; passages from Wesley's condensation of the homilies in Outler, *Wesley*, 23-33; John Wesley [March 24, 1739] to [John Clayton?], *Letters* 1:615.

11. John Wesley, "Address to the Clergy" (London, 1756), in *Works* (London), 10:484; Wesley, *Plain Account of Genuine Christianity*, 195.

12. Rex D. Matthews, "Reason, Faith, and Experience in the Thought of John Wesley," unpublished paper presented to the Seventh Oxford Institute on Methodist Theological Studies [Summer 1982], pp. 8-12, discusses John Wesley, *A Compendium of Logic* (London, 1750), *Works* (London), 14:161 and passim.

13. John Wesley, Manchester, March 28, 1768, to Thomas Rutherford [former

Regius Professor of Divinity at Cambridge University], in John Wesley, *Works* (London), 14:354.

14. John Wesley, sermon, "The Case of Reason Impartially Considered" [July 6, 1781, from 1 Cor. 14:20], *Works* (London), 6:351, 354, 358. Cf. Wesley, *Address to the Clergy*, 482-83, 486-87, 490-91.

15. John Wesley, *An Earnest Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion* (Newcastle, 1743), ed. Gerald R. Cragg, in *Works* (Oxford and Nashville), 11:56.

16. *Ibid.*, 46-49, 56-57.

17. John Wesley, *Explanatory Notes upon the New Testament*, 2nd ed. (London, 1760; reprint, London, 1976), "Preface," quoted here from *Works* (London), 14:238.

18. John Wesley, sermon, "On Divine Providence" [March 3, 1786, on Luke 12:7], *Works* (London), 7:314.

19. Timothy L. Smith, "Notes on the Exegesis of John Wesley's *Explanatory Notes upon the New Testament*," WTJ 16 (Spring 1981): 107-10.

20. Brevard S. Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* (Philadelphia, 1979), 377-85, 347-48, 353-54, 367-68, in its hermeneutics and interpretation, is only in details an advance on Wesley's several statements on covenant and grace in the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures.

21. Cf. John Wesley, sermon, "The Righteousness of Faith" [October 18, 1741, from Rom. 10:5-8], *Works* (Oxford and Nashville), 1:203-9, with James A. Sanders, "Torah and Christ," *Interpretation* 29 (October 1975): 372-85, and Charles Harold Dodd, *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans* (New York, 1932), xxxii, 8-17, 37-42, 103-32, 196-201.

22. John Wesley, sermon, "The End of Christ's Coming" [December 8, 1758, from 1 John 3:8], *Works* (London), 6:276-77; cf. 272-75.

23. Beautifully summarized near the end of his life in the closing paragraphs of a sermon preached in John Fletcher's parish church at Madeley: "On the Wedding Garment" [March 26, 1790, from Matt. 22:12], *Works* (London), 7:316-17.

24. John Wesley, "Predestination Calmly Considered" (London, 1752), *Works* (London), 10:210-20, 224-27.

25. Timothy L. Smith, "The Holy Spirit in the Hymns of The Wesleys," WTJ 16 (Fall 1981): 24, 34-35.

26. Evidence on this point appears in Timothy L. Smith, "How John Fletcher Became the Theologian of Wesleyan Perfection, 1770-1776," WTJ 15 (Spring 1980): 75-76.

27. John Wesley, *Notes*, on Acts 4:19.

28. *Ibid.*, on Acts 10:4 and 35; John Wesley, "On the Trinity" [June 5, 1773, from 1 John 5:7], *Works* (London), 6:200; John Fletcher, "Essay on Truth" (London, 1775), in his *Works* (New York, 1877-78; reprint, 4 vols., Salem, Ohio, 1974), 1:591-92.

29. John Wesley, *Journal*, December 13, 1739; John Wesley, "A Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion," Part I (London, 1745), ed. Gerald R. Cragg, in *Works* (Oxford and Nashville), 11:105-8, 110-17.

30. John Wesley, sermon, "Justification by Faith" [October 6, 1739, from Rom. 4:5], *Works* (Oxford and Nashville), 1:184, is an initial description of the covenant with Adam.

31. Smith, "Holy Spirit in the Hymns of the Wesleys," 31; Wesley, *Notes*, on Hebrews 11.

32. John Wesley, sermon, "Justification by Faith," *Works* (Oxford and Nashville), 1:193-94. Cf. John Wesley, sermon, "The Righteousness of Faith" [October 18, 1741, text from Rom. 10:5-8], the same, 211-13.

33. John Wesley, "Sermon on the Mount—Discourse V," *Works* (Oxford and Nashville), 1:552, for the quotation; John Wesley, sermon, "The Law Established Through Faith—Discourse I" [May 4, 1741, from Rom. 3:31], *Works* (London), 5:450-54.

34. John Wesley, sermon, "The Original Nature, Property, and Use of the Law" [November 1749, from Rom. 7:12], *Works* (London), 5:437-42, the quotation being from p. 438.

35. John Wesley, sermon, "The Law Established by Faith, Discourse II," *Works* (London), 458-66.

36. John Wesley, "Circumcision of the Heart," 407-8, 413-14; John Wesley, "Love of God and Neighbour" [September 15, 1733, from text of Mark 12:30], in Charles Wesley, *Sermons*, 141-45, 158-63.

37. Two sermons, composed 25 years apart, on the same text, Matt. 6:22-23, declare both duty and grace: John Wesley, "A Single Intention" [February 3, 1736], in Charles Wesley, *Sermons* (London, 1812), 125-35, and "On a Single Eye" [November 29, 1761], *Works* (London), 7:298-99.

38. John Wesley, "Salvation by Faith," 123-4. Cf. "The Great Privilege of Those That Are Born of God" [September 23, 1739, from 1 John 3:9], *Works* (Oxford and Nashville), 1:432, 435-36.

39. John Wesley, *Journal*, from September 1739 through August 1740, contains a running account of this controversy, especially entries for November 7 and December 31, 1739, and from June 24 to August 10, 1740. Cf. John Wesley [London, August 28, 1740], "To the Church of God at Herrnhut," *Works* (Oxford and Nashville), 26:24-30; and "From the Moravian Church at Merienborn" [October 5, 1740], *Works* (Oxford and Nashville), 26:34-41.

40. John Wesley, *Journal*, June 16, 1741; John Wesley, *A Short History of Methodism*, 349-50.

41. John Wesley, "The Character of a Methodist" (London, 1742), *Works* (London), 8:339-46; John Wesley, "A Dialogue Between an Antinomian and His Friend" (London, 1745), *Works* (London), 10:266-75.

42. John Wesley, sermon, "The Lord Our Righteousness" (London, 1766) [October 22, 1748, from Jer. 23:6], *Works* (London), 5:237-46.

43. John Wesley, London, November 30, 1770, to Joseph Benson, in *Letters*, ed. John Telford, 8 vols. (London, 1931), 5:211-2 [Rom. 8:3].

44. John Fletcher, Madeley, July 5, 1772, to Charles Wesley, ms. in MARC, Fletcher volume.

45. John Wesley, sermon [from William Tilly], "On Grieving the Holy Spirit" [1733, from Eph. 4:30], *Works* (London), 7:486.

46. Charles Wesley, *Journal*, ed. Thomas Jackson, 2 vols. (London, 1849; reprint, Kansas City, 1980), entries for July 7, August 25, September 9-16 and 29, October 30, and November 5 and 20, 1737; George Whitefield, "A Sermon on Regeneration, Preached to a Numerous Audience in England" (Boston, 1739), 5-7, 20-21; George Whitefield, "A Short Account of God's Dealings . . ." (London, 1740, in George Whitefield, *Journals* (London, 1960), 86.

47. Charles Wesley, *Journal*, May 24, 1738; John Wesley, *Journal*, March 23, April 22, and May 19 and 24, 1738.

48. Timothy L. Smith, "George Whitefield and Wesleyan Perfectionism," WTJ, 19 (Spring 1984): 73-75.

49. John Wesley, "Farther Appeal," *Works* (Oxford and Nashville), 11:163-73.

50. John Wesley, *Works* (London), 14:326-27. Cf. Wesley, *Plain Account*, 380-81.

51. John Wesley, "Christian Perfection," 18-19; John Wesley, "Minutes of Some Late Conversations Between the Rev. Mr. Wesley and Others," June 26, 1744, and June 17, 1747, in *Outlier Wesley*, 140-41, 168-71.

52. John Wesley, *Works* (London), 6:20-22.

53. John and Charles Wesley, *Poetical Works*, 4:162-204 (the quotations here being on p. 199), reprinted in John and Charles Wesley, *Pentecost Hymns . . . with a Devotional Commentary by Timothy L. Smith* (Kansas City, 1982), 75.

54. John Wesley, "Sermon on the Mount—Discourse II" [July 21, 1739, from Matt. 5:5-7], *Works* (Oxford and Nashville), 1:495-97; John Wesley, "On the Wedding Garment," 316-17.

55. John Wesley, sermon, "On Perfection" [March 2, 1761, on Heb. 6:1], *Works* (London), 6:420-23. "Renewal" texts were Eph. 4:24, Col. 3:10, Gal. 6:23, and 2 Cor. 5:17.

56. John Wesley, "Sermon on the Mount," Discourses I-III, [from Matt. 5:1-4, 5-7, and 8-12, likely formulated as early as July 21, 1739], *Works* (Oxford and Nashville), 1:475-76, 481-86, 490-91, 495-98, 513-14.

57. John Wesley, "On Laying the Foundation of the New Chapel . . ." (London, 1777), *Works* (London), 6:423-24; John Wesley, sermon, "Scriptural Christianity" [his last one before Oxford University: August 24, 1744, from Acts 4:31], *Works* (London), 5:41-42.



"Stop putting the blame for the world's trouble on 'mankind'—women have a right to half the credit."



# TODAY'S BOOKS for TODAY'S PREACHER

**WORTHY OF SPECIAL NOTICE**  
**THEOLOGICAL DICTIONARY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.** Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich, eds. Abridged in one volume by Geoffrey W. Bromiley. William B. Eerdmans, 1985, 1,356 pp., \$39.95 (BA080-282-4048).

The "little Kittel" is finally here! If you can buy just one book this month, buy this one. The one-volume TDNT is an abridgement of the nine-volume set. The nine-volume set was a veritable treasury, but much of the information was so technical and exhaustive that not everyone had the time or skill to sift through all the detail to derive its essential insights. But here is a "Kittel" that every preacher or teacher can use.

One of the things that makes it usable is that all the Greek words are transliterated. Thus those who have let their college Greek slip (or even those who have never had Greek) can bring the richness of word studies back into their preaching and teaching. Also you can use either the Greek or English word for referencing. English and Greek word tables are included.

TDNT is superior to merely lexical tools in that it goes beyond the basic word meanings to show theological connotations. The religious and theological significance of the words explored are traced by their usage in secular Greek, the Old Testament (Hebrew and Septuagint texts), Philo, Josephus, etc., the rabbinical writings, the Apostolic Fathers, and the New Testament.

This volume can help make one's preaching more biblical and more theologically sound. Even if you have the nine-volume set in your study at church, the one-volume TDNT is a useful tool to have on the shelf at home. You will, I believe, find that the TDNT, one-volume, will become a tool you use every week, and not a sophisticated dust catcher on your shelf.

—Wesley Tracy

## **RADICAL COMMITMENT: GETTING SERIOUS ABOUT CHRISTIAN GROWTH**

By Vernon Grounds. Multnomah Press, 1984, paper, 124 pp., \$5.95 (BA088-070-0513).

Vernon Grounds uses the metaphor of the vineyard to focus upon God's ideal for fruitbearing Christians. He proposes to explore the meaning of Christian fruitfulness and how the Christian can bear the fruit of the Spirit. This "how to" book is useful for the new Christian as well as the seasoned saint who wants to reexamine the basics in his walk with God.

In his discussions of the new birth, total depravity, and the Trinity, Grounds makes these abstract concepts understandable to the less theologically aware. He is simple without being simplistic. He acknowledges the complexity of the divine/human relationship, yet gives clear, basic guidelines as to how we can grow in Christlikeness. He draws upon the Wesleyan tradition, yet remains firmly within the Calvinistic perspective. For example, in his discussion of the Spirit-filled life, he acknowledges the Spirit's cleansing work, yet he denies a "once-for-all death to self." He chooses to see it in terms of *process* rather than *crisis followed by process*. But even at this point his emphasis on daily Christian living is helpful to Christians of all traditions.

Grounds covers the specifics of a whole range of topics, including the new birth, the Spirit-filled life, the purpose of God's pruning, and the importance of involvement in the Body of Christ. This book would be useful to the pastor as a resource for preaching on the basics of fruitful Christian living. The illustrations are appropriate and would enhance preaching on the subject.

—David L. DeBord

## **ARMINIUS: A STUDY IN THE DUTCH REFORMATION**

By Carl Bangs. Francis Asbury Press (Zondervan), paper, 360 pp., \$10.95 (BA031-029-4819).

Carl Bangs tells us early in his study "Arminius has remained a shadowy figure . . . something which must be placed in the equation, but not the object of separate attention." This is certainly accurate historically, and the lack of accurate information has been increased in recent years by the inaccessibility of this volume by Bangs. Those of us in the Wesleyan-Arminian tradition owe an expression of gratitude to the publishers who have once again made this excellent volume available.

Arminius is, of course, the central figure, but we learn almost as much about the geography, politics, social and religious history of the period (1550-1620) as we do about the family life, university education, pastoral ministry, teaching career, and ecclesiastical involvement of Arminius himself. Bangs has admirably succeeded in providing the reader with a marvelous account of the man and his times. One does not read this volume without acquiring a twofold admiration for Carl Bangs' amazing knowledge of Arminius, and Arminius' deep piety and commitment to God.

The reader is quickly drawn into an empathetic relationship with Arminius by the fact that his mother and all his brothers and sisters were "murdered" in the massacre of Oudewater in 1575. Arminius himself was under the care and tutelage of a series of friends." His father had already died sometime between 1553 and 1558. Because of the war with Spain, and due to the frequency of plagues with which the medical community of the day was unable to cope with, death was a more common and accepted part of life. Nonetheless the tragedy in which Arminius found himself could hardly be called normal.

Because of its level of sophistication and the amount of detailed information included, this volume will not be leisure reading for anyone. To the diligent comes the prize of insight and inspiration. When you have followed the life of Arminius from Oudewater to German and Calvin's Geneva for education; back to Amsterdam, where those who had

paid for his education called him as pastor; to Leiden University, where he earned his doctor of theology degree; and finally to the ecclesiastical conference in the Hague, where he presented his "Declaration of Sentiments," one reads the words from Bertius' eulogy at Arminius' funeral: "There lived in Holland a man whom they who did not know could not sufficiently esteem, whom they who did not esteem had never sufficiently known."

We know much too little in our circles about the theological depth of Arminius' concept of a sovereign God who works all things together according to His purpose. Reading one book will not greatly alter this lack, but for those in the Wesleyan-Arminian tradition, this volume should not be overlooked.

—W. Stephen Gunter

#### THE GREAT AMERICAN ARENA

By Vernon K. McLellan. Associate Press, 1984, paper, \$4.95 (BA000-602-6729).

Many alarming things are happening in our country today that are jeopardizing our spiritual freedoms. The moral outrage of abortion is now so common that infanticide is becoming an accepted practice. How involved should the Christian be in dealing with abortion/infanticide, the battle for family values, nuclear weapons/passivity, etc.?

McLellan's book is informative and instructional. He lists the name of every U.S. senator with directions on how to reach them by mail or by telephone. One of the best resources in the book is a listing of organizations that work in the political areas of education, family, medicine, and morality. Addresses are given along with a brief synopsis of what the organizations do and how to get on their mailing lists.

If we are to survive as a nation, Christians are going to have to act like salt and light in their society. The purpose of this book is to encourage Christians to get into the Great American Arena and

to assist in preserving the freedoms that have made us strong.

—Gary Skagerberg

#### JOSHUA—MAN OF FEARLESS FAITH

By W. Phillip Keller. Word Publishers, \$8.95 (BA084-990-3602).

"O God! Moses implored. 'You select the man. You set and establish him over this people. You send him in and out before them as a supreme commander but also as a gentle shepherd' . . . The Lord's response was to select Joshua" (p. 47).

There's no mystery about it. The writer could be expected to provide guidance and inspiration from any of the Lord's mighty open-air men; and so we have JOSHUA—MAN OF FEARLESS FAITH.

Keller's parents, people of the Kenyan veldt, bush, and jungle; his youthful years in his beloved Kenya; these bred in him that empathy with the atmosphere and instinct for the Bible country of Joshua, David, and Elijah found in this book. A glance at even a few of his score of titles show that.

A SHEPHERD LOOKS AT  
PSALM 23  
MOUNTAIN SPLENDOR

#### ON WILDERNESS TRAILS MAN OF MIGHTY VALOR— GIDEON ELIJAH—PROPHET OF POWER

It is a delightfully simple and simply delightful 140 pages: a sort of mind map to the Bible reader as he follows the wilderness trails of the Israelites through the deserts of the Middle East; and as he marvels at the patience and power of Jehovah and the wisdom, courage, and faith he gave to their leaders. Only Moses overshadowed Joshua, and not always! General Joshua rides (or walks) again in Keller's presentation. We are grabbed by his exploits and humbled by his fearless faith. Joshua, the man who claimed his own mountain after settling others on theirs, is a worthy guide and right noble counselor for those of us who would be men to match our mountains.

It may not headline the literary broadsheets, but Keller's little book will be a means of grace to God's pilgrim people, and a source of challenge and comfort to those preachers and pastors who take seriously the counsel of our greater Joshua about their leadership of the Lord's people.

—T. Crichton Mitchell

### THE PREACHER'S EXCHANGE

**WANTED:** *The Face of Our Lord and If God Be for Us*, both by Dr. Paul Rees. Contact Rev. Russell B. Lundry, P.O. Box 131, Bourbonnais, IL 60914.

**WANTED:** *The Preacher's Complete Homiletic Commentary* (On the Books of the Bible). Either old editions or the reprinted Baker Book House edition. Incomplete sets in good condition negotiable. Contact Rev. Dave Nolan, Church of the Nazarene, 556 Cabot St., Beverly, MA 01915.

**FOR SALE:** Classic sermons on cassette, 16 tapes in each album:

Dr. T. M. Anderson, 32 tapes;  
Dr. L. B. Hicks, 16 tapes;

Dr. A. W. Tozer, 16 tapes on "The Attributes of God."

\$45.00 plus \$2.00 shipping for each album. Order from Marshall Smart, 1428 W. 400 N., Greenfield, IN 46140.

**WANTED:** The following volumes of sermons by Phillips Brooks, originally published by E. P. Dutton & Co., New York: 1903-4: "Use of Comfort," "Battle of Life," "Candle of the Lord," "Church Year," "English Churches," "New Starts in Life," "Visions and Tasks," "Law of Growth," "Light of the World." Contact Rev. David J. Nolan, 556 Cabot St., Beverly, MA 01915.

# SERMON OUTLINES



## MAKING THE MOST OF TODAY

**Scripture:** "This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it" (Ps. 118:24).

**Introduction:** This was a favorite text of a Roman Catholic priest. He used it in his church, at funerals, and even at baccalaureate. It is appealing!

I used the text at a Christian Businessmen's meeting in Grand Rapids, Mich. I returned about eight months after moving from that city to have some stationery printed. The printer recognized me and quoted the text with a smile. He had been to the meeting.

There are three days this text could apply to:

1. *The Lord's Day.* Let us rejoice in it. Not that we would make it a holiday but a day of worship. Our great-grandfathers called it the Holy Sabbath; our grandfathers, the Sabbath; our fathers call it Sunday, but today it is often called the weekend. Too many make a holiday out of this holy day.

2. *The day of the Holy Ghost dispensation.* There have been some great days on God's calendar. The day of creation was great and the day of the Temple (1 Kings 10:5). But the day in which we live is best (Eccles. 7:10).

3. *The 24-hour day.* This is the very heart of the text. It is the only day we are sure of. We should look forward to each day with excitement and expectancy. A day in which to prove God's grace, to scatter sunshine and see what God has planned for us (see Rom. 12:12, TLB).

### THREE THINGS WE CAN DO TO MAKE THE MOST OF TODAY:

#### I. REFUSE TO LIVE IN THE YESTERDAYS.

Yesterday is past (Phil. 3:13), tomorrow is uncertain, but today is mine. A pastor and wife were entertained in the home of a widow. In a bedroom window they found "This is the Day" written in the glass. The widow explained that she had closed a book of her life the day her husband died. God directed her mind to

Ps. 118:24 and victory and hope revived. She took a glass cutter and wrote "This is the Day" on the windowpane. Each morning as she looked out the window, she felt a fresh anticipation for the day. She stopped living in the yesterdays. We must not let our yesterdays rob us of a good today. Make restitution for the yesterdays, if need be, but remember that God doesn't demand impossibilities. God will forgive, then we must forgive ourselves. "THIS is the DAY" has a present-tense ring to it. Remember, these are the "good old days," that they'll be talking about 40 years from now.

#### II. REFUSE TO LIVE IN THE TOMORROWS.

A survey revealed that many people think more about the past and the future than the present. Jesus said, "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof" (Matt. 6:34). Why worry about tomorrow, Jesus is already there! David teaches us to concentrate on today. Plan for the future, but don't become so busy laying up money for a rainy day that you can't enjoy the good weather now. Don't misuse today if you would have happy tomorrows. Moses refused to misuse the day in which he lived because he wanted a happy future (Heb. 11:24-27).

There are two golden days in the week about which we should never worry. One is YESTERDAY, the other is TOMORROW. There is but one day in the week that is mine, and that is TODAY. Anyone, with God's help, can face the battles and burdens of one day and remain victorious.

#### III. LIVE FOR GOD TODAY.

"THIS is the day." Live a day at a time (Deut. 33:25). Yesterday is gone, tomorrow may not come. Live TODAY! Our responsibility is to exert our will daily, "We WILL REJOICE and be GLAD in it."

A Christian man was eating breakfast in a restaurant, trying to get the sleep out of his eyes. It didn't look like a very promising day to him because he hadn't

done his part by rejoicing and being glad in it. Another Christian man sat down by him and said happily, "Well, we are at the beginning of another GREAT day." His newfound friend asked, "How do you know?" He quoted Ps. 62:5, "My soul, wait thou only upon God: for my EXPECTATION is from him." He expected God would give him a great day, and He did. Expect good days ahead, and you'll have them. Start life new every morning. God can help you make every day a good day (Prov. 23:7; Phil. 4:8; James 2:20).

If we would make the most of today, we must refuse to everlastingly dwell on yesterday's failures and disappointments. Refuse to borrow trouble from the tomorrows. Live for Christ today. Be a channel of God's love, peace, and joy. Scatter sunshine, enjoy two works of grace, and have them working daily.

Today is the day of salvation. An unsaved man was asked, "Did you know God has set a particular date for your salvation?" His friend quoted 2 Cor. 6:2, "Behold, NOW is the accepted time; behold, NOW is the day of salvation." Procrastination is a thief.

We pastors must practice what we preach. I had used the Psalm 118 text in one of my pastorates. Some weeks later during one of the worst winter storms in Michigan, my telephone rang. A cheerful voice quoted the text and then she laughed. I got the message. This wintry day was one the Lord had made, and my responsibility was to rejoice and be glad in it. I did!

Anticipate a good day. Believe a good day. Plan a good day. Think a good day. Work a good day. Pray a good day!

—Jack Seberry  
New Port Richey, Fla.

## WHAT HURTS THE GOOD NAME?

**Scripture:** Prov. 22:1-13. "A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches" (v. 1).

**Introduction:** Solomon suggests in this passage that there are seven things that

hurt the "good name." The good name is the name of Christ at which one day every knee shall bow.

**I. Respect of Persons** (v. 2)

A. Good prospects and poor ones sometimes determined by:

1. Monetary worth
2. Social status
3. Ethnic background

**II. Pride** (v. 4)

A. May take various forms:

1. Pride of possessions
2. Pride of position
3. Pride of standards

**III. Disobedient Children** (v. 6)

A. Children are a reproach or a blessing.

B. Behavior in church reflects attitude toward the gospel.

**IV. Sin** (of any kind)

A. Sometimes expressed in:

1. Actions
2. Attitudes
3. Desires

**V. Stinginess** (v. 9)

A. Three ways to give:

1. Grudgingly
2. Glibly (superficial)
3. Gratefully

**VI. Scorn** (v. 10)

A. Scorners are people who have quit:

1. Reading the Bible
2. Praying
3. Witnessing
4. Going to God's house

—Bradford A. Seaman

**LIFE JUST ISN'T FAIR,  
BUT GOD IS**

**Scripture:** Luke 16:19-31

**Introduction:** In *People* magazine, Karen Phifer of St. Petersburg, Fla., wrote the following letter to the editor.

In these hard times my husband often has to work 16-hour days as a mechanic to provide for a wife and three children. His health has been affected by the long hours he spends

on his feet—which is why I had tears in my eyes as I read your article on Prince von Furstenberg. He is a man so bored with marriage that he turns to affairs, so bored with sex that he dabbles in homosexuality, and evidently so loaded with money that he doesn't even have to think about it. His smug face contrasts sharply with that of my exhausted husband. *Life Just Isn't Fair.*

**I. Life is problem-filled**

John 16:33; Job 5:7; 1 Pet. 3:14

There are a number of areas that show the problems of life:

- a. Disease
- b. Disaster
- c. Divorce
- d. Disappointment
- e. Death

**II. Life is a proving ground**

1 Cor. 3:13; 2 Cor. 13:5; 1 Pet. 1:17

The story of Job is the classic illustration that life is a proving ground. His encounter with Satan proved this:

- a. Faith—"Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him" (Job 13:15).
- b. Fidelity—"The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord" (Job 1:21).
- c. Future—"I know that . . . he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth" (Job 19:25).

**III. Life is a prelude to eternity**

This truth is evident in the scripture account of Lazarus and the rich man. Lazarus spent eternity in Abraham's bosom; the rich man lifted up his eyes in hell.

Eternity will bring to each of us either:

- a. Hades or home
- b. Horror or happiness
- c. Hell or heaven

**Conclusion:** Life just isn't fair. It wasn't fair for Lazarus or the rich man. God is fair, and only eternity will balance the books. Where will you spend eternity?

—Duane Yoesel  
Westminster, Colo.

**CLIMBING HIGHER**

**Text:** Psalm 23

**I. COMFORT**

Ps. 23:4: "I will fear no evil: for thou art with me."

God is with me in comfort as I am with Him in

- WORD (the Scripture)
- WORSHIP (the sanctuary)
- WORK (the service)

**II. CAST**

1 Pet. 5:7: "Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you."

I will cast my worry on God by

- RELEASING
- REPLENISHING
- RESTING

**III. CONCENTRATE**

Isa. 26:3: "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee."

I will stay my thinking on God by

- FASTING
- FOCUSING
- FELLOWSHIPING

**IV. CHRIST—CENTER**

Phil. 4:13: "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

I will ask, "What would Jesus do?" concerning my

- READING
- RECREATION
- RELATIONSHIPS

**OUR SHEPHERD**

**Text:** Psalm 23

Our Shepherd is . . .

**I.** Ps. 23:1: *Our supply*

**II.** Ps. 23:2: *Our stillness*

**III.** Ps. 23:3: *Our storehouse*

**IV.** Ps. 23:4: *Our staff*

**V.** Ps. 23:5: *Our surprise*

**VI.** Ps. 23:6: *Our surety*

—J. Grant Swank, Jr. 

# SERMON ILLUSTRATIONS



## GOD'S WILL IS BEST

During World War II, a farmer who lived near London wrote to the Scripture Gift Mission. He enclosed a five-shilling offering and requested prayer that no bombs would fall on his small farm. It had been dry, he said. He had had to buy water, and his harvest was poor.

The secretary of the Mission wrote back. "I cannot pray that no bombs will fall on your land," he wrote, "But I will pray that God's will be done."

Soon afterward, during an air raid on London, a bomb fell on the farmer's land. Though it broke all the windows in the farmhouse, no one was injured. As the farmer surveyed the damage done by the bomb, he found that the crater it had made was so deep that it uncovered a spring. This spring produced enough water not only for his own farm but for others, too.

As a result, the next harvest was so abundant that this farmer was able to send a £50 check to the Scripture Gift Mission as a Thanksgiving offering.

### SOURCE

*Pointed Illustrations*, by W. M. Tidwell. Beacon Hill Press, Kansas City.

### TRUTH, CONCEPT, OR DOCTRINE ILLUSTRATED

We sometimes petition God for the wrong thing. We ask for Him to move in our lives, then we designate how He should work. We should ask, rather, for His will to be done.

### TWO SUPPORTING SCRIPTURES

1 John 5:14  
James 4:15-16

—Submitted by David Sharpes

## DEAD TO THE LAW

Napoleon Bonaparte had instituted a draft. One of those drafted was a young man who, for personal reasons, didn't want to serve in the emperor's army. Instead, a friend volunteered to take the man's place. The substitution was made; the surrogate was subsequently killed in battle.

Some time later, another draft was called for. By some clerical error, the same man was drafted again. "You can't take me," he told the officer in charge, "I'm dead. I died on such and such a battlefield."

"Are you crazy?" the officer exclaimed, "Here you are, standing in front of me. I can see that you aren't dead!"

"No sir," he insisted, "I am dead. Look at the roll."

There on the roll was the man's name

with another name written beside it. Still they persisted, and the case was taken before the emperor Napoleon himself.

Upon examining the evidence, Napoleon concluded, "Through a surrogate, this man has not only fought, but has died in his country's service. No man can die more than once, therefore the law has no claim on him."

### SOURCE

*Great Pulpit Masters*, by Dwight L. Moody. Fleming H. Revell Co., New York.

### TRUTH, CONCEPT, OR DOCTRINE ILLUSTRATED

We are no longer under the law. Christ died for us, in our stead.

### TWO SUPPORTING SCRIPTURES

Rom. 6:14  
Gal. 2:19

—Submitted by Dan Powers

## GETTING WHAT WE EXPECT

The Mediterranean island of Crete had been in the midst of a prolonged drought. As the days went by with no promise of rain, a priest was moved with compassion for his farming parish. He announced one Sunday that the following week would be devoted to prayer and fasting in preparation for a special prayer for rain, which he would offer on the next Sunday.

The desperate villagers obeyed, spending the week in prayer and fasting. The appointed Sunday saw the sanctuary filled to capacity. Yet the priest was not pleased. "Go away," he cried. "I will not offer the prayer. You do not believe."

"But Father," they protested, "we fasted and we believed!"

"You believed?" the priest responded. "Then where are your umbrellas?"

### SOURCE

*Parables, Etc.*, James S. Hewett, ed.

### TRUTH, CONCEPT, OR DOCTRINE ILLUSTRATED

The movement of God in response to our prayers of faith correlate with our expectancy of grace.

### TWO SUPPORTING SCRIPTURES

Matt. 8:5-13  
Matt. 13:58

—Submitted by Phil McCallum

## PUTTING THE OCEAN IN THE HOLE

St. Augustine was once perplexed about the doctrine of the Trinity. As he meditated, walking along the shore, he came upon a small boy playing with a

seashell. The boy had dug a hole in the sand and was using his shell to pour water into it. "What are you doing, my little man?" Augustine asked him.

"Oh," replied the boy, "I am trying to put the ocean in this hole."

At that point the truth dawned on Augustine. "That is what I am trying to do; I see it now," he exclaimed. "Standing on the shores of time I am trying to get into this little finite mind things that are infinite."

### SOURCE

*Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations*, by Paul Lee Tan. Assurance Publishers, Rockville, Md.

### TRUTH, CONCEPT, OR DOCTRINE ILLUSTRATED

We are not able to comprehend all of God; there is always more to know of Him. We must be content with the knowledge that we will not know fully until we see Him face-to-face.

### TWO SUPPORTING SCRIPTURES

1 Cor. 1:25  
Ps. 147:4-5

—Submitted by Bryan Davis

## OUR ONLY PLEA

A lawyer remarked that one of the foundational axioms in law school is:

If you have the law, pound the law;

If you have the facts, pound the facts;

If you have neither law nor facts, pound the table!

When we approach God we cannot pound the law, for by it we have been declared guilty. Nor can we pound the facts, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23).

Having neither law nor facts on his side, our lawyer friend should stop being a Pharisee. He should instead be like the tax collector who pounded his chest and cried, "God, have mercy on me, a sinner!"

### SOURCE

From a briefing on the Uniform Code of Military Justice, Lowry Air Force Base, Denver.

### TRUTH, CONCEPT, OR DOCTRINE ILLUSTRATED

We are guilty before the law. Our only hope is to plead God's grace to be justified.

### TWO SUPPORTING SCRIPTURES

Luke 18:9-14  
Rom. 3:19-24

—Submitted by Clifford N. Fisher



# NEW TESTAMENT WORD STUDIES

by Ralph Earle

## WORLD (continued)

In the previous installment, we looked at the Greek word *aión*, "age" (but almost always translated "world" in the KJV). Now we want to study *cosmos* and *oikoumene*.

*Cosmos*—we use the initial "c" because that is the way we have taken it over into English—first meant "order" (Homer and Plato), then "ornament" or "adornment," especially of women. That is the way it is used in 1 Pet. 3:3, where it is translated "adorning" (KJV) or "adornment" (NASB, NIV). Basically, the cognate verb *cosmeo* means "put in order." It is used clearly this way in Matt. 25:7, where we are told that the 10 virgins woke up and "trimmed" their lamps.

In their *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (a translation and adaptation of Walter Bauers *Greek-German Lexicon*) Arndt and Gingrich give no less than eight distinct meanings of *cosmos* in Thayer's *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (pp. 356-57), which is based on another German lexicon of the New Testament, by C. L. W. Grimm.

The first two meanings in Thayer's *Lexicon* are "order" and "adornment," which we have already noted. These are combined in Arndt and Gingrich's first point.

The second definition in AG (third in Thayer) is philosophical: "*the world as the sum total of everything here and now, the (orderly) universe*" (AG, p. 445). This was the universe—"the heavens and the earth" that God created (Gen. 1:1). So Jesus says, "before the world was" (John 17:5, NASB) and "before the foundation of the world" (John 17:24, NASB). This usage (for "universe") is fairly common in the New Testament.

Skipping AG's third definition, which is highly debatable, we come to the fourth one: "*the world*" as the earth, the planet upon which we live." This usage occurs from Matthew to Revelation. One aspect of this is "*the world as the habitation of mankind.*" We are "born into the world" (John 16:21). *Cosmos* is also used specifically to indicate "*earth, world, in contrast to heaven.*"

AG's fifth point is "*the world as mankind,*" or "*the inhabitants of the world*" (Thayer). This meaning of *cosmos* also appears throughout the New Testament.

The sixth point (seventh in Thayer) is "*the world as the scene of earthly joys, possessions, cares, sufferings.*" Thayer spells it out at greater length: "worldly affairs; the aggregate of things earthly; the whole circle of earthly goods, endowments, riches, advantages, pleasures, etc., which, although hollow and frail and fleeting, stir desire, seduce from God and are obstacles to the cause of Christ." Examples of this usage are found in Gal. 6:14; 1 John 2:16-17; and several other places.

This leads us to the distinctively New Testament usage of *cosmos*. It is expressed this way by AG: "*The world, and everything that belongs to it, appears as that which is hostile to God, i.e., lost in sin, wholly at odds with anything divine, ruined and depraved.*" Thayer (no. 6) puts it this way: "The ungodly multitude; the whole mass of men alienated from God, and therefore hostile to the cause of Christ."

Every careful reader of the Bible is familiar with this use of "the world." Satan is called "the prince of this

world" (John 12:31; 16:11). And it is in John's Gospel that this use of "the world" is most prominent. We might note also that of the 187 times that *cosmos* is found in the entire New Testament, 103 of those are in John's writings: 79 times in his Gospel, 23 times in his First Epistle and once in his Second Epistle. John was very conscious of "the world" in its opposition to the things of God. We might add that Paul uses *cosmos* 21 times in Corinthians. The church at Corinth was altogether too worldly!

The eighth use of *cosmos* noted by AG is "totally, sum total." Both Thayer and AG cite James 3:6 as an example of this.

Now we come to our last word for the "world," *oikoumene*. Actually this is the present passive participle feminine of *oikeo*, "inhabit" or "dwell." But it is used as a noun 15 times in the New Testament. It is translated (in the KJV) 14 times as "world" and once (Luke 21:26) as "earth." The meaning clearly is "the inhabited earth" (Abbott-Smith, *Lexicon*, p. 313). In classical Greek it was used for "the countries occupied by Greeks, as distinguished from barbarian lands" (ibid). The Romans, quite naturally, used it for the Roman Empire, which took in most of the Mediterranean world. Luke uses it clearly this way in Luke 2:1, where instead of "all the world" (KJV) the NIV has "the entire Roman world." This is unquestionably the true meaning here.

In the rest of the New Testament it is used for the inhabited earth or the inhabitants of the earth. The one exception seems to be Heb. 2:5, where it appears to refer to the coming messianic age. 



# THE ARK ROCKER

## TEACH US TO PRAY

**I**t was a typical church meeting. Until we broke the ice by filling our stomachs, we couldn't get into anything meaningful. But after we had mutually indulged we were ready for a lengthy time of planning, organizing, list making, and elaborating on our unique ideas and those used by a growing congregation in another city.

Prayer time finally came . . . that designated time in all church meetings. A gathering of the prayer warriors of the church could not adjourn without prayer. It just wouldn't be proper. One by one we took our turns. Bless us. Use us. Inspire us. Work among us.

The meeting was proper, and the ideas were great. We were inspired, uplifted, and challenged to win our city for Christ. Just as we were six months ago—one year ago—and two years ago. We shook hands, patted each other, gathered our dishes, and walked through the snow to our cars.

I drove home in troubled silence. The words of the Bible, "You have not because you ask not," flooded my thoughts. The lights were out. Slumber had fallen on my household. But I stared wide-eyed into the darkness. "You have not because you ask not."

A few months ago we asked, specifically! We asked for money to pay off our debt—a specific sum on a specific date. Our request was granted. But when it comes to souls, we pray bless us, use us, inspire us, work among us. Even if God answers, who will know?

We didn't ask specifically for an observable answer.

Educators have found that unless a teacher has a specific objective with an observable result it is uncertain whether learning actually takes place. Likewise, in my personal life with Christ, if I do not know what it is I want Him to do for me today, I become dry, defeated, and discouraged. But if I ask specifically for today's needs—"Lord, I need to get my washing and ironing done"—I have observable results. Either I did or I didn't. Either He did or He didn't.

Because I believe the promise—"Whatsoever you ask in my name believing ye shall receive"—I get daily answers to prayer—specific answers! My faith grows, and I get excited.

I wonder—about the church meeting—what could we have asked for that would ignite our faith and our enthusiasm? Perhaps we could simply have asked, "Lord, send us one person who will say 'I want to call, I want to make phone calls.'"

At the end of the week—either He did or He didn't—according to our belief. Are we afraid to have our faith challenged? What if He didn't? Do we really believe, or is it safer to pray bless us, use us, inspire us, work through us.

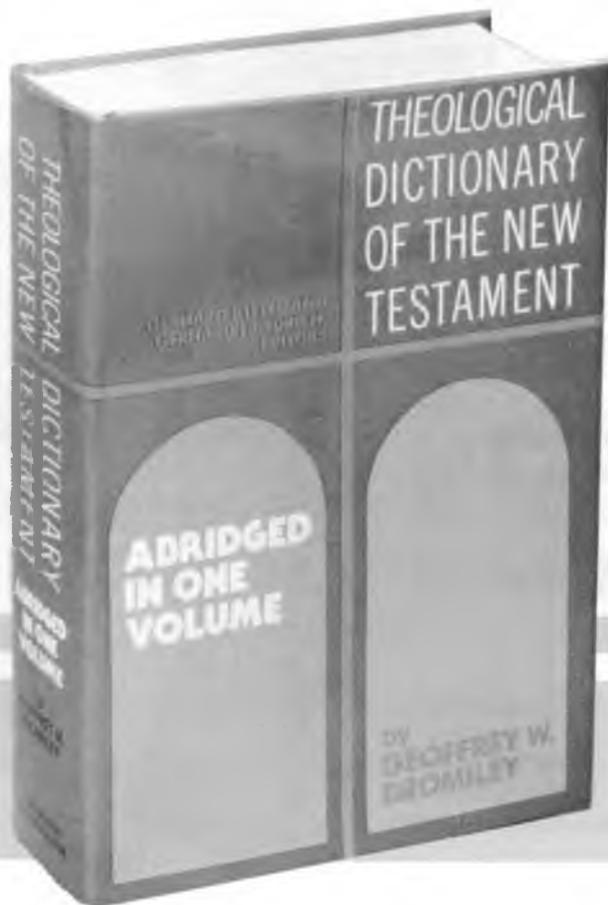
Lord, when I go to the next church meeting give me either a specific direction to speak up or give me the ability to exchange trivia.

*The Ark Locker*

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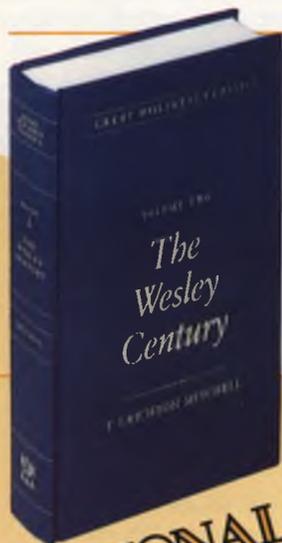
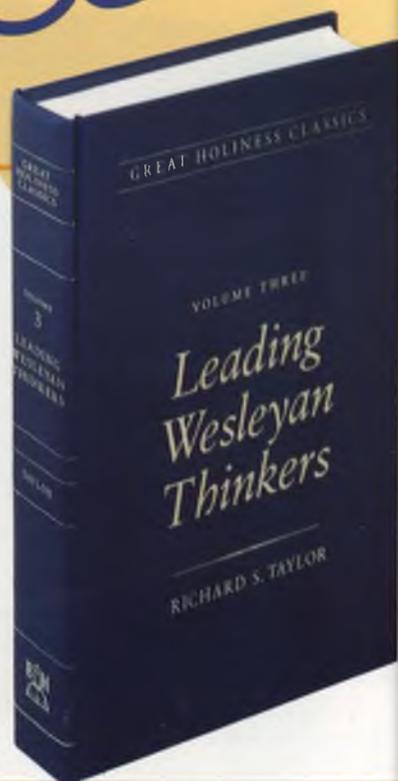
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