

The PEACHERS' Magazine



- How to Have a Sunday School that Is Alive and Well
- Wanted: Radical Moral Development in the Church
- What's Right with the Sunday School?
- Dachau 1944 – The Christmas Eve Sermon

December, January, February, 1978-79

A Prayer for Our Lay Teachers

Our Heavenly Father: We pray especially for Thy manifest presence in Thy house today as that great army of lay teachers go to teach Thy Word. They reach to serve all ages and many needs. Be pleased to give them the peace and joy of Thy truth so that they shall not instruct simply by rote. Enable them in every class to dispense fitting portions, according to human needs. Their age-range is so wide and the needs are so deep. Earnestly we pray for Thy promised help in every corner of our Zion where Thy Word is taught.

Show all of us again the victory of Thy Cross and the splendor of Thy grace. Help all who teach to remember the cost of Thy grace—now offered to all so freely. Enable every teacher to climb the learner's hill in order to teach others with understanding. Give to each one the needed discernment touched by the Holy Spirit himself.

Help all who teach to reflect Jesus by the tone of his own life and service. Thy Son has taught us so clearly that Thou dost love and care and communicate with us, even now. Make us like the Master Teacher who washed His disciples' feet himself. In every class, let God's voice be heard through redeemed men and women.

Save us from the confusion and bewilderment of human success formulas that might entangle us in this holy business. We would plant the seed of truth and water it with divine love and compassion. But only Thou canst afford the needed increase. May we as laborers with God be content with the reward of Thy presence and the joy of doing Thy will. But let none of us be content with less than our best and may we cherish the worth of one immortal soul.

Some of these children and young people have no one at home who seems to care. Enable our God-fearing teachers and pastors to supply this lack. This very day, make every one of us an instrument of Thy truth and grace, and give us Thy peace.

Prepare every one of us who serves Thee now until we shall be at home in Thy home when our final call comes.

In His worthy name we pray,

Amen.

—Samuel Young

IMAGE, PRESTIGE, AND OTHER IMPORTANT MINISTERIAL QUALITIES

by Neil B. Wiseman

Image, prestige, sophistication, and class—those labels jar us a little when applied to the church and our ministry. In our heart of hearts we know people are impressed by cars and clothes, but they are not very much changed by them. But secular forces keep crowding us on these issues. And the question needs to be asked occasionally, Just how important are these things to us who have been called to a servant ministry?

My friend George Failing, editor of the *Wesleyan Advocate*, recently reprinted a pointed editorial from the pen of the late Paul W. Thomas, veteran churchman of the Pilgrim Holiness Church, who raised these issues: "Did not Jesus teach us to take the lowest seat at the feast? What about all those people who push themselves to the front, who seek the spotlight and the applause of men? . . . Religious workers advertize their own successes like conceited children. What has happened? Is poison nourishing? Is sin righteousness? Is death life? Is pride of person, place, and achievement humility?"

Over a friendly cup of coffee a student minister recently told me that his "well-known" ministerial mentor advised him, "Buy expensive cars. Wear fine clothes. Avoid controversy at any cost. All of this will build a good image for your ministry."

I asked, "Is that all he said?"

With surprise, my young friend answered, "Should there be more?" And then I wondered, should there be more? Can a 20th-century holiness ministry be built on cars, clothes, and no controversy?

About the time I finished Failing's magazine, I was moved by hearing Dr. J. V. Morsch quote a request made to St. Francis by a humble peasant, "Good master, I pray thee be as good as we think you are."

Then a new anthology of Tozer's writing titled *The Best of A. W. Tozer* (Baker) communicated a similar message, "The itch to have pre-eminence is one disease for which no natural cure has ever been found."

A few days later I was introduced to Andrew Murray's article "Humility and Holiness" in which he writes, "Pride can lift its head in the very temple of God and *make His worship the scene of its self-exaltation.*"

Those five experiences cause me to ask, Just how important is image and prestige to us? Our society is obsessed with appearance; reality seems less important than image. Even some clergy persons seem more committed to the way things look than the way things are; more concerned with dazzling ministerial trivia than bedrock basics.

Titles like pastor, evangelist, professor, editor, administrator, and denominational leader produce positive meanings in the minds of people we serve. These Christian service assignments obviously place us in the limelight with unique responsibilities and privileges. But if we allow ourselves to simply use our office to enhance our image, we compromise our ministerial integrity and rob the church of competent service.

Recently a ministerial brother announced his call to a "prestigious

church" which he defined as a bigger salary, more members, and a larger income for the church's program. Does all of this sound like language which one might expect to overhear as the first-century preachers left the Upper Room? How does it fit with the Suffering Servant pattern of our Living Lord?

Doesn't image-building look pretty silly when we remember ministry is always a symphony, never a solo? When we preach, parents, former Sunday school teachers, professors, and Scripture writers all share in the glorious moment. When we counsel, textbook writers, previous counselees, the Holy Spirit, and the trust that people feel for all ministers piles up to make our counseling useful. When we sing, the poet, the songwriter, the publisher, the printer, and the accompanist all shape our song. When we build a church, the carpenter, painter, land-developer, and financier determine the final edifice. How foolish, then, to conclude that our ministry is all of our own doing.

Charisma, artificiality, and fascination with appearance may provide temporary ecclesiastical hypnosis for some church members, but it will not last. When life tumbles in, people want substance, reality, and integrity in their preacher.

Our image does not make much difference to the grieving widow who has not had one pastoral call in the eight months since her husband's death.

Our image does not make much difference when the doctor's report is malignancy and the prognosis is grim.

Our image does not make much difference to the adulterous husband whose sin has destroyed his family and stalked his trail with guilt too heavy to bear.

Our image does not make much difference to the Christian parents whose rebellious teenager has been written off instead of ministered to.

Our image does not make much difference to the confused seeker at our altar; it hardly affects his struggle to find grace to establish a new quality of life.

And I wonder if our image makes much difference to God.

Jowett was so right, "The morning after the coronation I possess a handful of withering leaves." In a little while, maybe tomorrow, I will leave this place. The praise of man will soon disappear. Reputations, like fortunes, may be lost in a day or even in an hour. And how quickly a jealous colleague can ruin the confidence of ministerial brethren with surmises or half-truths. But authentic ministry lasts forever; it is remaining fruit.

Image is too heavy a burden for any of us to carry. The pressure of phoniness, piety, pretended intelligence, big spending, denominational infighting, prestigious degrees, and fancy dress all get progressively more demanding as time goes along. Somewhere we have to drop this useless burden from our weary back; to call a halt to the wasted energies that go into image-building. No flesh and blood person can live up to image; nor should he be expected to do so.

Maybe this image-building need is only in our heads. For their interceding priests, do congregations want play-actors or real people shaped by God's grace? When the ultimate questions of life crowd them, needy folks are unimpressed by the labels in our suits or the shine on our cars. Then our titles and our degrees without devoted ministerial competence leaves hurting people hungry and cold just when they need soul-care the most. When crises come, they want shepherds who know sheep, green pastures, still waters, and the Chief Shepherd.

Is it not truly true that authentic ministry produces image as its by-product? And is it not equally true that image-building by itself never accomplished anything very important for God? Why not, then, give ourselves to authentic ministry and let our image take care of itself?

Maybe contemporary man joins the peasant from St. Francis's time with his tender request, "Good master, I pray thee be as good as we think you are."

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We goofed, and inadvertently omitted names of some important people in the last issue of the *Preacher's Magazine*. The magazine has a circulation of 15,000, covering the Church of the Nazarene, The Wesleyan Church, the Evangelical Friends churches, and the Churches of Christ in Christian Union. Names of associate and contributing editors will be included in future issues.

THE PREACHER'S MAGAZINE

Proclaiming Christian Holiness

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THE ARK ROCKER

Cosmic Psychiatry, Promotion, or Inspirational Preaching

The opening service of the camp meeting came upon us like an April sunrise. T. M. Anderson, in the twilight of a great preaching ministry, made the pulpit glow. He inspired the congregation of over 1,200 people with his scriptural exposition, combined with homespun humor and genuine compassion.

As the spiritual tide rose, some people began to shout. Others waved handkerchiefs. Many wiped tears of happiness and blessing. A few made a trail of dust as they ran through the straw scattered in front of the altar. All of us, from gray-haired saints to eagle-eyed youths, were caught up in the thrilling moment of spiritual inspiration brought on by Spirit-anointed preaching.

The moment seemed appropriate for an altar call, or an offering, or any kind of response. T. M. Anderson stopped suddenly, asked the congregation to stand and sing a short chorus. Then he leaned across the pulpit, and with a friendly wave of his hand shouted, "Good night. See you tomorrow."

The dramatic ending of the service caused a buzz of excitement. People shook hands with strangers and slapped friends on the back. A few continued to shout. Spontaneous singing broke out in one corner of the tabernacle. Smiling countenances and faces lit up with joy marked the entire crowd. This was inspiration.

Other times of high inspiration came to mind, such as R. V. DeLong preaching on "Christ the Alpha and the Omega," or G. B. Williamson exalting Christ with a sermon on "Lifting Up Christ." And everyone has his favorite pastor who nourished his people with inspirational preaching.

Today the occasions of inspirational

preaching are like the water holes along the old wagon trails—they are few and far between.

We have the exhortative sermon where we are urged to be better or to do more. We have the sharing type of approach, where we exchange experiences. We are bombarded with promotional addresses, asking for support of various causes and programs. We are deluged with "how to" sermons, advising us on everything from how to rear children to how to get rich and remain spiritual. Then there is an abundance of "cosmic psychiatry" sermons, where God eagerly stands by to adjust any and all personality aberrations. And many faithful pastors still preach evangelistic sermons, for which we are thankful. In fact, some will give an altar call at the drop of a hymnbook.

But what has happened to the inspirational sermon? Where do we hear the prophetic voice of God exalting God's holiness and His power? Where is the voice of the trumpet sounding out the good news of personal deliverance and victory? Who is lifting up Christ? When do we give a grand affirmation of the simple virtues of spiritual living?

People are involved in a race between hope and despair. To many, life's meaning has been crushed by the steamroller of secularism. Visions become blurred and the spirit wilts in the sun of a godless society.

So, preacher, lay before me the greatness of God. Tell me of the vision which transforms. Exalt Christ. Let your preaching, and your life, be a source of inspiration.

Of course, to inspire one must first be inspired.

The Ark Locker

We Get Letters



"Man, what a magazine! I still can't believe it—that is, that so much could be packed in one issue. Will there be anything more for the next one? This is tremendous, and I mean every word of it." (*Washington*)

"The new look (which was shockingly attractive) was complemented by the refreshing articles inside. Your purpose to give us something with substance and of current value will make readers out of the receivers . . . This issue reinstates me as a preacher. After reading it I felt proud again—not vainly, but with a new sense of self-respect—that I am fulfilling a holy and noble calling. I am challenged to reestablish rather than reevaluate my priorities as a result of this issue." (*California*)

"The first issue was just great!! I can honestly say it was the most in-depth periodical I have seen our church produce." (*Tennessee*)

"I read more of it, and received more from it, than from any other recently." (*Ontario, Canada*)

"The *Preacher's Magazine* has always been great. It's nice to see that a good thing can get better." (*California*)

"I cannot refrain from writing to thank you and your staff for what is simply a magnificent job. If these excellent articles are an example of what is to come . . . I can now look forward to being stimulated, edified, and challenged each quarter." (*Kentucky*)

"Just a note to let you know that I join with the hundreds . . . who are excited about . . . the *Preacher's Magazine*. It was a terrific step forward! Great!!" (*California*)

"Thank you for the first issue of the *Preacher's Magazine* . . . I was most helped by the devotion of half of the magazine to one subject." (*Colorado*)

"The format and the general character of the material are excellent." (*Kansas City*)

"I like the new format. I also like the quarterly publication." (*California*)

"After reviewing the new *Preacher's Magazine*, I felt compelled to extend a word of sincere appreciation for such an excellent publication." (*Florida*)

"Congratulations. I'm sure the 'new look' will be appreciated and will enhance reader interest." (*Idaho*)

"It is superb and more than we ever dreamed that it could be." (*Kansas City*)

"Thank you for the new *Preacher's Magazine*. . . . For me, even if you had to go thicker . . . it would be better smaller. And without a cover that looks like some junior Sunday school literature." (*Oklahoma*)

"You just may be in for some real difficulties with your

Preacher's Magazine. The first issue is so excellent . . . that you might encounter problems maintaining such a standard." (*Missouri*)

"I feel that this will become an important part of my ministerial study." (*Ohio*)

"Please allow me to be among the many who will want to commend you for the new *Preacher's Magazine*. If preaching is through and through an office of grace, indeed sacramental, and it is, the issue proclaims this in both overt and subtle ways." (*Missouri*)

"Splendid first edition of the new *Preacher's Magazine*! . . . It will be hard to top that one." (*California*)

"Super! Congratulations on the new format of the *Preacher's Magazine*. It's real quality. It's a credit to the church and to the Lord of the Church." (*Idaho*)

"My sincere congratulations. It ought to engender a wide and positive response." (*Missouri*)

"The new format is a delightful way to present truth attractively and interestingly. In addition, the thematic stress was especially timely and in good taste . . . every article was so rich and rewarding that it deserves commendation. Thanks for a job well done, and well begun." (*Oklahoma*)

"I must say that I am extremely impressed with the quality and the new course of direction you are evidently setting with this magazine." (*California*)

"Just looked through it and love it. This should be a great help to all pastors." (*Ohio*)

"I think you've got a 'winner' . . . I was delighted with its content, layout, and innovative style." (*Kansas City*)

"The 'new' *Preacher's Magazine* is great! For years this has been one of my favorite sources of quick reading. Now, you have improved it even more so—thanks!" (*Oklahoma*)

". . . one of the finest I have seen. So inspiring to read." (*Texas*)

"I read with much interest the new *Preacher's Magazine*. I think it is very exciting." (*Kansas City*)

"I understand this is a new style and it will take time for adjustment from the old. However, since you asked for it, I really like the type of articles . . . that we have been getting all along in the . . . *Preacher's Magazine*." (*Michigan*)

"This is the first time I can ever remember seeing an issue of the *Preacher's Magazine* that I felt was up to the quality of what our men deserve and can use." (*Illinois*)

"I enjoyed the new look and format . . . How about adding a 'Letters to the editor' section?" (*Washington*)

WE REALLY NEED THE SUNDAY SCHOOL—DON'T WE?

by Neil B. Wiseman

When any movement reaches the grand old age of 199 years, it is time for a close examination to evaluate its reason for existence. In 1780, with the purpose of using the Bible as a Textbook to teach illiterate children to read, Robert Raikes founded the Sunday school in Gloucester, England. From his time until now, the Sunday school, fluctuating between mediocrity and effectiveness, has had a roller-coaster kind of influence on the church.

Just now, the Sunday school is being widely discussed, debated, and even debunked as a relic from the past. Her friends have second thoughts about her future, her passing acquaintances ask if the Sunday school really influences anyone very much, and her enemies suggest her replacement with so-called more important approaches to ministry. Obviously a lot of things like people, the church, and the world have changed since Raikes's time. Maybe a decent burial is overdue for parts of the Sunday school, like rigorous memorization for its own sake, demanding discipline without any understood purpose, poorly planned miniature worship services called opening exercises, and droning lectures delivered by uninformed or misinformed teachers. The old of the Sunday school is passing and it probably should.

Perhaps there is logical reason to believe the church could survive without the Sunday school. While the Sunday school's 199th birthday makes her sound old, yet the church existed nearly 1,800 years before the Sunday school came into being. The issue, then, is not whether the Sunday school will survive, but, Can the church do its teaching ministry very well without it? Realistically, can the holiness church in the 80s do its ministry without the Sunday school or something like it? Can the

church be built in our time without a highly organized participative ministry committed to teaching the gospel? Even with her limitations, is there another channel anyone knows about that will achieve the same results?

Before answering these questions, think about the new ways of ministry to which God seems to be leading the church. Beyond the placid, conventional, and commonplace, the Holy Spirit seems to be pushing us to Christian service which has a surge of significance and purpose in it. But what are the new ways of doing God's work? And what are the old ways we are rediscovering?

● *Groups.* The ministry of groups in the church is front-page news in religious periodicals; conventions, books, and seminars keep giving us more and more information about them. And why not? Alienation, loneliness, change, and divorce cut off modern persons from their roots. In a time of massive mobility, everyone needs an extended family—a relational network of three or four generations consisting of children, parents, grandparents, uncles, aunts, cousins, and sometimes even great-grandparents. Contemporary people ache for such groups to provide intimacy, accountability, spiritual growth, and kinship. Yet it is nearly impossible to find such a substitute family except in the church. The way the church knows best to provide solid caring groups is through the Sunday school class.

Don't we need the Sunday school to help us maximize our ministry through small groups?

● *Mobilized laity.* Perhaps the need and the desire for involvement of the laity in the mission of

the church has never been stronger in the history of the holiness movement. This push for involvement comes both from the laity themselves and from the simple mathematical facts which prove Christianity can never win the world through the efforts of preachers alone. Any serious commitment to discipleship makes the follower of Jesus embrace His promise, "Follow me and I will make you become fishers of men" (Mark 1:17, RSV).¹ That's involvement. And it is best accomplished, using E. Stanley Jones's terms, when pastors come off the field as players and take to the sidelines as coaches, guides, stimulators, and spiritualizers. Then the church becomes a filling station and a checkup point for a long and hard week's run for the laity.²

Where else but the Sunday school can such a continually expanding army of mobilized laity be assigned front-line combat Kingdom duty? Researchers tell us that Sunday schools usually have about 8 to 10 times as many pupils as teachers. A church basketball team has only a set number of players. A church can use only so many ushers. Church boards have only a limited number of members. But the Sunday school provides more opportunity for significant service for lay workers than any other phase of church ministry.

Don't we need the Sunday school to mobilize the laity for their work of ministry?

● *Learning is fun.* The entire Western world is ablaze with education, new ideas, and learning. Adults are now committing themselves to lifelong learning; contrary to some of their childhood school experiences they discover learning is fun. Professional people now take at least one week of continuing education each year. Retirees are taking college courses and the quality of their work increases classroom competition. In our town a housewife, to keep up with her husband's interests, is taking an evening course, "How to Watch a Football Game." In another state a young widow is taking a course called "Auto Mechanics for Women." Blue collar workers are earning college degrees in their fourth and fifth decade of life. And educational journals are full of challenge to educators to gear some of their teaching to the lifelong learner.

Since we live in a society that is so interested in education, the church has this golden hour for her teaching ministry. Like never before, people are interested in personal development and serious study. What a time in human history this is for teaching the unconverted about Christ; what an opportunity for teaching the true gospel as a vital force for Christian maturity!

Don't we need the Sunday school to capture the idea that Bible learning is fun?

● *Applied faith.* Probably every Christian has at some time in life experienced a high moment of inspiration and blessing which was never applied to life. Are those high moments given us by God for the

pure delight of making us feel good? Or could it be that He means for us to think, reason, and discuss the meaning of our inspiration so the quality of our Christian living will be improved? It is now known that a concept has the greatest possibility of changing behavior when persons verbalize the idea they have heard through question, debate, or dialogue. Obviously, the public services of worship and evangelism in the church do not provide this opportunity. But it is needed.

Don't we need the Sunday school to help people apply faith to life?

● *Church growth.* During the last few months I have been exposed helpfully to over 80 hours of church growth study under the excellent instruction of Raymond Hurn, Paul Orjala, Peter Wagner, and John Wimber. Then, too, I have read books, listened to tapes, and dialogued with friends. My understanding of the mission of the church has been expanded and strengthened. I am convinced that God wants His church to grow; that includes every local church.

But look again at the church growth literature. Just now I have taken a quick, non-exhaustive check of the ideas from my church growth lecture notes. My partial list includes primary groups, entry groups for new converts, teaching—a gift of the Spirit, E-O evangelism, convert growth, church planting through satellite classes, homogeneous groups, multiple units for outreach, expanded organization for growth, E-1 evangelism, class one and two leaders, plus biological growth. These concepts, properly implemented, will make any church grow. But is there any way to put those ideas into practice without significantly involving the Sunday school or something like it?

Don't we really need the Sunday school as a channel for church growth?

Frankly, the Sunday school shows signs of decline. All it needs for eventual death is our quiet neglect for a few months or years. But can we allow it to die without thinking through our reasons for having a Sunday school? Those immortal words of Jesus keep haunting me, ". . . go and *make disciples* of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and *teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.* And surely I will be with you always to the very end of the age" (Matt. 28:19-20, NIV).³

For this gigantic task of teaching and making disciples, we really need the Sunday school—don't we? Maybe we need to pray for its renewal, to strive for its excellence, and commit ourselves again through the power of the Holy Spirit to its basic purpose.

1. From the *Revised Standard Version of the Bible*, copyrighted 1946, 1952, © 1971, 1973. Used by permission.

2. E. Stanley Jones, *The Reconstruction of the Church*, Nashville: Abingdon, p. 47.

3. From the *New International Version of the New Testament*, © 1973 by the New York Bible Society International. Used by permission.

HOW PASTORS CAN HAVE SUNDAY SCHOOLS WHICH ARE ALIVE AND WELL

by Leslie Parrott

What makes the difference? Why are some Sunday schools suffering from terminal apathy while others are enjoying glowing health as all the vital organs such as curriculum, organization, teaching effectiveness, and promotion register on the high side of acceptable levels for functioning good health?

I suppose some of the most obvious symptoms in troubled Sunday schools include such things as negative reactions to ill-sponsored bus programs, poor quality teaching, changes in Christian family priorities, space problems, and leadership difficulties.

Actually, I am more impressed with the great number of Sunday schools which are alive and well than I am with those who seem to be victimized by creeping paralysis. For many churches, Sunday school is the brightest hour of the week. It is the time when the human resources of its congregation are mobilized in strategies that involve a great proportion of the church in the teaching/learning situation. This is the hour when everyone is at their best, the early hour before the day is marred by the usual social and emotional spills and bruises of an average day. This is the hour when the mind is less impacted by conflicting personal demands, than any other period of the day. Even physical fatigue is minimal at 9:30 in the morning. What a time for the family of God to involve themselves in mutual learning!

But why? What makes the Sunday school hour a useful, productive time in some churches while other Sunday schools across town are sluggish, and nonproductive?

I could be wrong. I am no expert. But I believe the basic difference in dead and alive Sunday schools is related directly to the level of expectation.

I teach in Sunday school more Sundays in the year than I don't, even though my weekend ministry

is itinerant. And, as both an observer of the Sunday school scene and a participant in the classroom, I have come to look first in the local church for the signs that indicate the level of expectation the pastor and congregation have for the Sunday school hour.

"We always have more people in our morning worship service than we do in Sunday school" is the report some give as an explanation of low interest, small numbers, and zero growth. In other churches the same report is given as an indication of how the Sunday school is needed now more than ever. It is like the two shoe salesmen going to Africa. One wired the home office, "Can't sell shoes here; nobody wears them." The other salesman wired his English-based company, "Greatest opportunity on earth. Nobody wears shoes. Everybody needs them. Send more order blanks."

The level of expectation finally centers, for good or ill, on the attitudes of the pastor and the key laymen of the congregation toward the Sunday school hour. A cadre of dedicated, loyal laymen who see the opportunity for good in Sunday school cannot withstand the apathy of a pastor who has Christian education buried far down on the list of his priorities. A pastor with a high level of Sunday school expectation, however, will soon inspire a group of laymen to his team for developing the early hour on Sunday morning into the brightest, happiest, most productive learning hour of the week.

Pastors I know whose Sunday schools are alive and well are motivated to develop, manage, and lead a great Sunday school out of a deep personal conviction about its importance.

I believe in the high priority of Sunday school, even if the traditional practice of reporting the

A cadre of dedicated, loyal laymen who see the opportunity for good in Sunday school cannot withstand the apathy of a pastor who has Christian education buried at the bottom of his priority list.

average attendance were discarded. This has not always been true with me. My perspective on Sunday school has evolved over the years.

At first I thought the major concern in any Sunday school program was numbers. We pastors greeted each other with a standard salutation, "How many did you have in Sunday school?"

This approach made us all defensive about low-attendance Sundays and exultant about good statistics. Waking up to bad weather on Sunday morning was devastating to a pastor's morale because he knew the inclement weather reduced the statistics for the day. And facing a national three-day holiday was pure agony, to say nothing of the anguish generated by long winters and/or energy problems. As a pastor, I could feel personal satisfaction with my ministry if the Sunday school statistics were good, and thoroughly defeated if they were bad.

Somewhere along the line in my maturation process I learned there were several questions about a church that were more important than Sunday school attendance. I learned to have a greater appreciation for the character of the community where the church is located. The dominant mood of the decision-makers in the congregation, their perception of "spirituality," potential for growth, the distribution of age-groups within the church, and other more important but less objective matters than Sunday school statistics which in many instances could be manipulated.

Then I evolved next into a concern and idealism over organizational patterns. Moving the chairs around on the organizational deck was confused with progress. It is hard for me to believe it now, but I once organized the entire Adult Department around numerals which were derived by adding together the ages of the husband and wife and dividing by two so they could attend the 30s class, or the 40s class. I don't know what we did with widows and widowers unless they were consigned to a singles' class in the balcony until they got married again. Alas, I hadn't caught on that Sunday school was not for Southern Baptist Christian Education theorists who organized growth by division, but it was for people. It was for saved and unsaved people who were interested in learning more about the Bible and how it worked in their lives whether they were in the proper niche of a perfect organizational chart or not.

When I learned this, all my ideas about Sunday school took on a different look.

For instance, I never again interrupted the scheduled class hour for a promotion or religious entertainment in the sanctuary. If we had a guest quartet, college choir, or a Christian ventriloquist

with a dummy, we started Sunday school 15 minutes early for those who wanted to come, but the learning hour went on as usual. This was done from conviction that Sunday school exists for learning and not primarily for promotion.

At least a full hour was scheduled at the beginning of the year with each person who was being appointed to serve as teacher or officer. When I first implemented this idea, I sensed it was far more effective than "teachers' meetings," but I didn't know why. Now I understand more fully the dynamic of motivation for service to people and loyalty to leadership which comes from a good personal, one-to-one relationship.

Sears Roebuck, which is the largest retail business in the world, is run with only four board meetings a year, which last approximately one and one-half hours each. The company management emphasis is on one-to-one relationships of executives with their key people who form a team. I didn't know this worked in the beginning. I began the practice of individual discussion with lay leaders as a substitute for most of the group meetings, out of a sense of conviction about the importance of Sunday school people.

Another thing which came out of this sense of conviction about Sunday school was the discarding of contests as tools for motivation and growth.

The psychology of contests is built on the strong human drive for survival. When someone attempts to occupy the space I believe belongs to me, then I start to contend for it.

Animals demonstrate this character through the exercise of territorial rights. Our big old sheep dog, Thumper, will lie placidly on the front lawn all day unless another dog tries to come into our yard. Then he will take on all comers regardless of the odds for or against him. This is why every Sunday school contest, regardless of the way it is packaged, is finally the *reds* against the *blues*. Both want to occupy the same winner's circle, but there is room for only one.

Contests appeal to all those personal feelings of rights, need to survive, and challenge to power. On the football field this is fine. But I began to develop a conviction about replacing contests with programs for outreach which made everyone a winner and no one a loser.

Pastors I know whose Sunday schools are alive and well have made a decision to invest a significant portion of their time and energy into Sunday school.

I remember when it happened to me. I had called in a series of homes inviting adults to attend our

Sunday school. Consistently I was rebuffed. "We'll be at church," they said, "but Sunday school is not for us."

Some even went far enough to call Sunday school "Mickey Mouse." They said, "It's for kids." Or, "I attended that class and two people dominated the discussion every Sunday always on the subject of dispensationalism."

I began to realize our adult classes were spending a lot of time on questions few people were asking. Even worse, some classes were turning off people to church attendance.

I had come by this time in my ministerial pilgrimage to know that a disappointed visitor was harder to get back into church than a person who had never attended at all. It began to dawn on me that I would have to get deeply involved in Sunday school or it would die from spiritual leukemia. I stopped trying to delegate the central leadership of the Sunday school to a layman and made myself the central resource person to work with the Sunday school leadership. Two things began to happen.

First, I started meeting with all our adult teachers each Sunday afternoon to study the lesson for the next Sunday. I prepared mimeographed outlines which I distributed to each of the six teachers and their spouses who came for this learning session. I was teaching teachers. The five o'clock hour each Sunday became, in a certain sense, precious to this dozen persons in the process of disciplining themselves. Few conflicts of schedule could deter their attendance. Teaching began to take on a new level of spiritual service for both these teachers and their classes. And they began to develop a special relationship with their pastor.

A second response to my deeper involvement in Sunday school was the decision to begin a "Pastor's Bible Class" in the main sanctuary during the Sunday school hour each Sunday morning.

This idea grew out of a conviction. All my life I had heard growth came by winning children to the Sunday school first, and then the parents would follow. "Get to the parents through the children," was the oft repeated dictum. "A little child shall lead them," and the slogan ascribed to the Catholic hierarchy, "Give me the child until he is 12 years old," were tossed out like lifelines to eager Sunday school workers.

But I began to question this approach to outreach more and more. It seemed to me the way to reach a family was through the adults. If Mom and Dad came they would bring the children. And furthermore, we didn't have to send a bus for them since Dad brought the family in their own car.

I started off by discussing the idea thoroughly with my six adult teachers and with the Sunday school superintendent. I took this approach, "If I don't invite anyone who has been to Sunday school in the last six weeks, would it be all right for me to start and teach a new adult class?" I would specialize in people who did not like Sunday school,

or thought they didn't. I would go look for the disappointed people who were Sunday school dropouts. Also, I made it clear that my class would always be open to every other adult teacher for recruiting new members for their own classes.

On the first Sunday there were 12 negatively oriented Sunday school resisters who sat on the back row of the sanctuary. They were my class. My challenge.

For 45 minutes I went through the spectrum of curriculum possibilities watching for some theme that might spark their interest. We discussed the life of Christ, the life of Paul, a survey of the New Testament, a survey of the Old Testament, the Book of Revelation, and the regular Sunday school lesson.

Finally, the dozen Sunday school resisters came to a consensus. They wanted to know, "How did we get our Bible, and why does it have more authority than other great books?"

That week I spent five days in the University Library reading and studying. By the following Sunday I was ready with a 30-page syllabus on the Bible including its inspiration, authority, and infallibility. We had material to last us for six months.

That class was organized in the spring of the year. By August we had come to expect 75 or 80 people in regular attendance. I moved on to another church, where I organized a similar class which finally averaged approximately 250 in attendance the last year I taught it.

The growth and development of Sunday school for me came when I made a conscious decision, out of conviction, to get deeply involved. Many times I had pastors ask me, "Wouldn't you preach better on Sunday morning if you did not teach first?"

The answer was, "Probably." However, the growth and development of families, first won through that class, was worth it all. The Sunday school more than tripled in size in seven years, but I was convinced it never would have happened without deep personal involvement on my part as pastor.

All the pastors I know who have Sunday schools that are alive and well are able to create an atmosphere of faith even in places where there is none.

I doubt if the pastor has any job more difficult than creating faith where there is no faith. It must be a secondary result of the Fall in Eden that people find it easier to doubt than to believe, to find fault than to create solutions, to be unhappy than to be happy.

I once pastored a church where good men for at least 15 years had taught the congregation faithfully that their Sunday school could not be alive and well. A review of the last six years of statistics indicated the average attendance had not varied more than five. Their rationale for zero growth was predictable: (1) Wrong location of the church. (2)

Lack of appropriate space. (3) Not enough money.

In our first meeting of Sunday school workers I drew a line down the middle of the chalkboard and suggested that we write down on one side all the problems we had going against us in trying to build a Sunday school, and then on the other side all the assets we had going for us.

It took only moments to fill the chalkboard with all the problems that hindered our Sunday school. But, when it came time to write down all the things we had going for us to help us build an alive Sunday school, the group had total silence.

It was apparent to me I had one central job, to build faith where there was none. Our problem was not a better organizational chart, new curriculum, upgraded equipment, or more spectacular promotional ideas. It was obvious to me that the best chrome-plated ideas for reviving an apathetic Sunday school would peel, rust, and fall flat until they were superimposed on a hard core of faith.

Several steps emerged as we started to create faith here in this place where there seemed to be so little.

1. We started to create faith when the pastor led the workers to see we did have some things going for us. These assets included demonstrated congregational stability, a fairly high level of love and appreciation for each other, no debt, a new set of freeways which made the church more accessible to more people than ever before, and space to serve many more people than we were now serving. I am sure there were other assets we didn't see at the time. But the greatest result of this process was to see that we did have assets on which we could build. And for some people, they were seeing these positive factors for the first time. This was a very small spark for a very small faith that was just beginning.

2. Next, we set aside some time to talk about three questions: (a) Where are we now? (b) Where would we like to be? (c) How do we get from here to there? The answers to these questions may have been tentative and, in some aspects, inaccurate. But the process helped fire the little flame of faith as we increased the number of our believers in the level of our confidence. Some people were beginning to believe that maybe a good, alive, Sunday school could be developed in our church.

3. When some small achievements were made we tried to make the most of the situation for furthering our faltering faith. At this point in the development of our Sunday school faith, we could say with the man in the Bible, "Lord, I believe; help thou my unbelief."

4. Through all this process, the pastor realized he had to be the sustainer of everyone else's faith. He could never be the source of anything which would shake this slowly developing confidence. Goals had to be realistic. Credit had to be distributed in generous doses to all workers. Criticism could never come from him. To help create

faith, the pastor had to be a fountain of tough-minded optimism.

5. Finally, the law of momentum began to work and faith became contagious. It is much harder to get an airplane airborne than it is to keep it up. And it is much harder to get an apathetic Sunday school moving than it is to keep it moving. Once our small faith was converted into action and a measure of achievement could be seen, we entered the cycle of success. Faith began work which began success which began more faith and more work and more success. Faith moves out in concentric circles, taking in more workers with more faith for more workers with still more faith. Faith's law of momentum is a beautiful thing to experience.

**Pastors I know who have Sunday schools
that are alive and well give great
attention to detail.**

I once heard Mr. Farrell, a Christian ice-cream store owner in our town, ask a friend at the next table, "How can you hire a manager who can walk into a room and see everything at the same time?" He then talked on to his friend about the importance of the smallest detail in a restaurant or ice-cream store. I guess I should not have been surprised to see him develop a nationwide chain of ice-cream stores he later sold to the Marriott Corporation.

I have heard it said that a pastor needs to take care of all the important issues and the small matters will take care of themselves. I am not sure this is always true. Being sensitive to all the little details helps make us more aware of the bigger scene. I have had custodians who could not see dirt and musicians who were more sensitive to the music than they were to the people. And I've known pastors who were more concerned with big matters such as church debt, choosing the dates and workers for the next revival, and the qualities of their own Sunday morning sermons, than they were with a spotless church, greeters at the door, and flowers in the sanctuary. Perhaps both the big and the small are equally important.

Dr. E. S. Phillips, who pastored a large congregation in Bethany, Okla., never saw a child from his church he could not call by name whether it was a baby in its mother's arms, a boy on the playground, or a little girl who shook hands with him at the sanctuary door. This concentration on the names of children is not unrelated to the fact his Sunday school was alive and well.

There is no end to the detail of an alive Sunday school. The paint job in the classroom, the sign outside, the level of light in the sanctuary, the quality of print and content of the church bulletin, the tuning of the piano, dead lightbulbs, *ad infinitum*. There is no end to this detail, but it is important, and there is a reason why.

Your personality is the sum total of all that makes

(Continued on page 39)

The 1980s will demand that we pay attention to philosophy, historical development, theology, socioeconomics, culture, and technology.

THE CHANGING FACE OF THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

by Richard Spindle

Sunday School?
Church School?
Christian Life?

What's it all about? Does this mean that Sunday school is finished? Is it a vestige of the past—a dead institution? Has the time come to read the obituary of the Sunday school?

By no means is the Sunday school dead! In some churches, it is more *alive* than it ever has been. The church is beginning to take seriously her New Testament mandate to teach. There is a move away from half-prepared, teacher-centered monologue. The old compulsion to “cover the lesson in the quarterly despite evident human needs” is passing. Dull, preachy, “sit still while I instill” exercises are a thing of the past.

Sunday school as Bible study, is very much alive! An increasing thirst for study of the Bible is evidenced by the proliferation of Bible studies and Bible memorization programs. Sunday school as small groups, meeting on the Lord's Day, to care and share are very much alive. Sunday school is probably the most effective agency the church has known for grouping people together. It is the logical place and time for dialogical encounter with others over the facts of the faith. Sunday school as an opportunity for enlistment and recruitment into training, leadership, and service is very much alive. It has always been a training ground in which leaders can develop according to their gifts. It has always provided direction for ministry and opportunity for discipling. These are the kinds of things happening in live Sunday schools. The Sunday school provides a framework where they can happen. Many Sunday schools in America today are stronger than ever and realizing great growth.

A Christian Philosophy of Education

What about the “doing” of Christian education in the future through the Sunday school? What will be

the role of the Sunday school in the 1980s? Like Gabriel Moran, “I have difficulty with predicting next week,”¹ to say nothing of the 1980s. One certainty of the future is “change.” Christian education is not done in a vacuum. It is affected by many things. It cannot remain static and effective at the same time. It must change; indeed, it does change. Through change, God is able to give something new to His people. If the church and her teachers do not change with it, the effect of an evolving education program will begin to deteriorate. There are some factors that will doubtless affect the “doing” of Christian education in the future through the Sunday school. The prevailing philosophies of education always influence Christian education. The church needs to be aware of what's happening in public educational philosophies. Most all of them have something to say that we need to hear. It is true, however, that we must commit ourselves to a philosophy of education in the church that is truly Christian.

The philosophy we must seek is a Christian philosophy. As such, it is Christ-centered, Bible-based, and need-related. Our philosophy calls for the incorporation of sound educational theory and the utilization of all effective educational methodology not contrary to a Christian value system and philosophy of education. A Christian philosophy recognizes the reality both of God's sovereign love and of man's dignity and worth.²

Jesus was never untrue to the foundation truths of the gospel, but he was very flexible in how He communicated such truth. Much of our effectiveness in the 1980s will depend on how clearly we answer such questions as:

What realities do we want people to encounter?

What truths must we know and transmit?

What are true Christian values, and how can I live them out in my life?

Having thought through what it is we want to experience, know, and communicate, we must dare to be flexible enough in the Christian educative process to make Christian education appealing to the modern mind of the 1980s.

A Maturing Church

Another factor which will influence what the church does in Sunday school is the stage of the church's development. Apparently there are distinct developmental stages in the evolution of most church bodies. The early days of becoming established and "getting accepted" demand certain emphases. As the Church evolves, her approaches evolve. The kind of classroom procedures that worked so effectively in the infancy of the church may not work when the church is 100 years old. Church bodies are dynamic as the Spirit that energizes them is dynamic. To maintain an effective educational ministry through the Sunday school in a mature church may demand a shocking openness to the dynamic of change. We will no doubt face a type of identity crisis as we face the 1980's. We will reexamine our philosophy, objectives, assumptions, methods, curriculum, and programs. Some believe that "in the creative tension between the *always old* and the *always new*, [God] is working out His plans."³

The Compass of Theology

The *theological persuasion* of a church body sets the mood for her education and provides guidelines between which her educators work. "When theology is neglected, the [education] community loses its identity and sense of mission."⁴ When theology is neglected, education may happen, but it may not be Christian education. Without clear theological direction, we tend to be guided by fads and catch words. When undue emphasis has been placed on "proclamation," the teaching ministry has suffered—thus the church has suffered. When undue emphasis has been placed on the "teaching ministry" to the disparagement of all other functions, the church has suffered. Proclamation and teaching should find some balance. Sound theological guidelines save us from extremes. An avowed "evangelistic" church may neglect to give adequate emphasis to nurture and training. An avowed "social ministries church" may neglect the personal, vertical relationship to God. Our understanding of the nature of human nature makes a difference in where we begin, what we do, and how we evaluate the Christian education experience.

Our theology must always include in equal and balanced measure the New Testament tasks of the church.

The Church and Society

The maturing of a church often denotes a socio-economic change of her people. The face of a baby

church may be distinguished primarily by the disadvantaged or poor. The changing face of a mature church may indicate a lower-middle-class or middle-class image. Although we are called to reach, teach, and disciple the poor and disadvantaged as well as the middle and upper-class, the different socio-economic groups have different needs and demand different things from their churches. These demands have direct bearing on the way we will do Sunday school in the 1980s.

Our church people cannot extricate themselves from the influences of our society and culture. We resist being squeezed into the mold of society; but as culture changes, society is naturally changed—and the church is a vital institution of society. As technology advances, the face of the church is affected. The effect of television alone has become a major mold of our society. Audio and video cassettes offer new challenges and make new demands on the church—on her curriculum development and on her educational effectiveness. The church is being affected, whether she welcomes it or not, by the cultural, social, technological developments around her. We will need to come to terms with a media-oriented society in the 1980s.

The face of our Sunday school is changing today. The 1980s will demand that we pay attention to philosophies, historical development, theology, socioeconomics, culture, society, and technology. Amidst this milieu of forces that promise to be present in the 1980s, we must posit a solid Christian base that will not change. The message of the Sunday school is ever the same! The text is always the Bible! The New Testament demands are clear: *reach, teach, disciple*, "until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature" (Eph. 4:13, NIV).⁵

But from this unchanging base we must be released—literally released—to polish the past, and relate to the present, and probe the future. We must be "set free" to soar into uncharted skies and unfamiliar territory and unknown areas. We must try the untried, even if we fail. We must pursue some dreams! We must move out to the cutting edge of curriculum development and educational programming! We must take some risks! Changing human concerns and felt needs demand that the systems and techniques of delivery of the truth remain dynamic. The changing face of the Sunday school is a maturing face, but it is a pleasant face to view. It is the face of a proven institution earnestly seeking to minister to real human needs.

1. Marvin Taylor, ed., *Foundations for Christian Education in an Era of Change* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1976), p. 14.

2. A. E. Sanner and A. F. Harper, *Exploring Christian Education*, Kansas City: Nazarene Publishing House, 1978. See Appendix IV on Philosophy of Christian Education, p. 494.

3. Ralph Neighbour, *The Seven Last Words of the Church* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1978), p. 9. Quote by Leighton Ford.

4. Taylor, *Foundations*, p. 31, statement by Sara Little.

5. From the *New International Version of the New Testament*, © 1973 by the New York Bible Society International. Used by permission.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL HAS HAD A GREAT CHILDHOOD

A Look at the First 200 Years

by Richard A. Lint

A vital part of every church building program is an education unit for classrooms. And a significant percentage of every local church's ministry revolves around the Sunday school. It would be natural to think this is the way it has always been, but in reality, the Sunday school phenomenon is a relatively new aspect of the church's total program of ministry.

In fact, if Pentecost is considered to be year 0 and 1978 is considered to be year 100, almost 90 percent of the church's history passed into eternity before the Sunday school even appeared on the scene in 1780.

ROBERT RAIKES: THE SUNDAY SCHOOL IN ENGLAND

Robert Raikes is generally given credit for being the father of the Sunday school movement. While his was not the first experiment in the free education of common peoples' children (indeed, catechetical classes were not uncommon), Raikes's school was the most successful, the most enduring, and the most widely publicized. He therefore earned the accolades which history has bestowed upon him.

If you had lived in Gloucester, England, in 1780, you would have been appalled by the despair which sapped the vitality of the common people.

Families were living in squalor and poverty. Men were working from sunup to sundown—reserving precious little time or energy for recreation or affection.

Even children were sucked into this socio-economic morass. They were forced to work six days a week in Gloucester's pin-making industries. There was no time for childhood. No time for play. No time for education—to say nothing of moral training.

This situation was a national breeding ground for despair. And among the children especially, it produced a growing tide of delinquency and rowdiness.

Robert Raikes was a wealthy printer and publisher of the weekly *Gloucester Journal*. But he was

also a reformer and a lover of children. When some people in Gloucester urged him to use his newspaper to call on the police to crack down on the "savages" in the slums, he instead decided to take the positive approach. He had previously been involved in the attempted reform of prison inmates—a project which had been a total failure. Now he made a commitment to start education and reform at an earlier age.

Raikes asked himself these questions: "Is vice preventable? If so, it is better to prevent crime than to punish it. Can these ignorant masses be lifted out of this rugged, wretched, vicious state?"¹ Apparently, he answered that second question with a "yes," because he rented a room, hired four teachers, and began a program of education for the children in the slums.

Without detailing the specific events which occurred during the early development of Raikes's Sunday school experiment, I will simply outline some of its key features and principles.

1. The school met on Sunday—thus, "Sunday school." Classes were held from 10 a.m.-noon, and 2-5 p.m. The school was held on Sunday because that was the only day children were free to attend; they worked the other days.

2. The school was primarily for secular education. Its objective was to teach the rudiments of reading, writing, spelling, and arithmetic. However, this in no way excluded religion or moral education. In fact, from the very beginning, the primary textbook in Raikes's school was the Bible.² The class members learned to spell and read from the Bible.

3. Raikes began his Sunday school without help or support from the church. In fact, many clerics and church leaders were opposed to what he was doing. They considered his efforts to educate the children from Gloucester's slums to be hopeless. And they condemned the school on grounds that using Sunday for education was sacrilegious. (The most notable exception to the rule of church opposition was John Wesley, as will be seen later.)

4. The voluntary principle was an early innovation in Raikes's school. He began with paid supervisors, but it wasn't long before this plan was phased out in favor of volunteers. In addition to the volunteer supervisors and teachers there were "monitors." These monitors were older and more advanced students who tutored the younger children.

According to Edwin Rice, "The most important step in the founding of the [Sunday school] system . . . was the replacing of the . . . paid master by voluntary masters, superintendents, and teachers."³ This total voluntarism made the Sunday school much more attractive and adaptable to small and/or poor communities, and had much to do with its phenomenal success both in England and America.

5. To promote attendance at his Sunday school, Raikes inaugurated a system of awards. Pennies were given to children who attended regularly. And Raikes made no severe demands on the children. He simply required that they have clean hands and faces and that their hair be combed.⁴

One could imagine that a noble project such as Raikes undertook would have received widespread support and commendation. But such was not the case. As has already been pointed out, opposition came from the church. But opposition came also from those shortsighted persons who thought the Sunday school was a foolish exercise in futility.

Raikes and his children were dubbed "Bobby Wild Goose and his ragged regiment."⁵ In addition, not a few persons objected to the Sunday schools because they were said to be "dangerous, demoralizing, bad institutions, and agents of the devil."⁶

But in spite of opposition and some setbacks, Raikes persisted. And it wasn't long before he had more children than he knew what to do with. He opened other schools, and the movement mushroomed. He published a brief notice of the success of his experiment in the November 3, 1783, issue of his newspaper. The item was widely copied, and it wasn't long before the Sunday school movement was winning support because of its opportunities and possibilities.

One of the earliest and most influential supporters was John Wesley. Wesley saw the Sunday school's great potential for reaching children with the gospel and saving both life and soul. "I verily think," wrote Wesley, "these Sunday schools are the noblest institutions which have been seen in Europe for some centuries, and will increase more and more, provided the teachers and instructors do their duties."

Not only did Wesley personally support the Sunday school, but he also introduced Sunday schools into the Methodist church. Thus began a form of union between the church and the Sunday school which has persisted to this day. It is correct to say the Methodist church has much to do with the success and growth of the Sunday school movement—particularly in America. But it is also fair to

say the Sunday school was instrumental in the missionary outreach of the Methodists in both England and America.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL COMES TO AMERICA

While the Sunday school movement was born in England, it has achieved its greatest growth and development in America.

The first Sunday school in the United States (of which there is a record) was established in Accomac Country, Va., by William Elliott in 1785. Elliott taught his own children as well as the children of his servants. Neighboring children were also invited to attend. The purpose of the school was to teach the children to read the Bible.

The second American Sunday school was established a year later by Francis Asbury in the home of

"I verily think these Sunday schools are the noblest institutions which have been seen in Europe for some centuries, and will increase more and more, provided the teachers and instructors do their duties."

—John Wesley

Thomas Crenshaw, of Hanover County, Virginia. It was primarily for the purpose of instructing slaves.

Even though the Sunday school remained a lay movement, by 1790 the Methodist church was recommending school sessions on Sunday from 6-10 a.m. and from 2-6 p.m.⁷ In most cases the classes were held in church buildings.

The American Sunday School Union

It is beyond the scope of this article to present a detailed chronology of the development of the Sunday school in America. Thus I will skip immediately to one of the most significant events in the history of the Sunday school: the creation of the American Sunday School Union.

Delegates met in Philadelphia in 1824 to form the American Sunday School Union. Its membership came from a variety of churches and denominations, but it was not a denominational or a church organization. The purpose of the Union was spelled out in its constitution: "To concentrate the efforts of Sabbath School societies in different portions of the country; to disseminate useful information; to circulate moral and religious publications in every part of the land; and to endeavor to plant Sunday schools wherever there is a population."

Thus an organization was begun which was to have a significant and enduring effect upon laying the religious and moral foundations of the new nation. The Union immediately began to set up plans to plant Sunday schools and distribute library materials, and curriculum aids were soon to follow.

The most interesting—and possibly the most beneficial—aspect of the American Sunday School Union's work was its aggressive program of Sunday school planting. Particular attention was focused on

two areas of the country: the Mississippi Valley and the South.

In 1830, the Union made a pledge to form a Sunday school within two years in every community in the Mississippi Valley. This included an area bounded by the Allegheny Mountains on the east, the Rockies on the west, Michigan to the north, and Louisiana to the south—1.3 million square miles, with a population of about 4 million.

More than \$60,000 was raised for this project, and the Union sent out between 80 and 100 Sunday school missionaries to plant Sunday schools. It was estimated that Sunday schools were actually begun in half of the 10,000 settlements in the Mississippi Valley. In addition, more than a million books were provided for Sunday school libraries in the valley.

The phenomenal success of the Mississippi Valley project inspired the Union to undertake a similar missionary endeavor in the South. Thus, in 1834, the "Southern Enterprise" was formulated for the purpose of planting Sunday schools in Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Florida, and the District of Columbia. This was an area of 333,000 square miles with a population of 4 million, 20 percent of which were children. At this point in history the Sunday school was only for children.

There are no statistical reports on the results of the "Southern Enterprise," but according to Rice, many Sunday schools were begun, the churches were strengthened, Bible study was increased, and more than 120,000 library books were distributed.⁸

It would be difficult to adequately evaluate the long-range effects of the American Sunday School Union's missionary endeavors. It seems safe to say, however, that they dramatically influenced the moral and religious climate of the developing American republic. Sunday schools were established in areas where there had been no religious training. Many of these Sunday schools actually gave birth to churches. And then there was the religious literature that was distributed—both lesson helps and library books. These created a taste for good reading and stimulated a desire for more education among the children.

*Stephen Paxson,
Sunday School missionary without peer*

No early advocate of Sunday schools symbolizes the dynamism of the Sunday school missionaries more effectively than Stephen Paxson, of Winchester, Ill. He was converted after having been invited to attend Sunday school. He joined the church which grew out of the frontier Sunday school, and then became vitally interested in Sunday school expansion. He gave up his trade and signed on with the American Sunday School Union for one dollar a day.

Despite his commitment to Sunday schools, Paxson faced some major obstacles. He had a crippled ankle, and he stuttered so badly that he was excluded from the limited education available at that

time; as a result, he had been self-taught. He also had a family to support.

But in spite of handicaps and obstacles, Paxson set out to become a Sunday school missionary. He traveled over the entire state of Illinois, some times staying away from home for months at a time. He talked to the frontier people about their need for a Sunday school, and urged that one be organized wherever practical.

Paxson did his traveling on horseback; his horse was called Robert Raikes. This faithful mount carried him over 100,000 miles in 25 years. It was said that Robert Raikes knew Paxson's habits so well that he would never pass a child on the street or fail to turn in at a church or schoolhouse.

Paxson's achievement as a Sunday school missionary and planter speak for themselves. He organized 1,314 new Sunday schools with a total enrollment of 83,000 members. In one stretch he organized 47 schools in 40 days—a record.

EVALUATING THE CONTEMPORARY IN VIEW OF THE HISTORICAL

This summary of the beginnings of the Sunday school movement has revealed several characteristics of the early Sunday schools. It is interesting to observe how timeless those characteristics have been.

1. The Sunday school began as a lay movement. It was begun by a layman and continued to be supervised by laymen and lay teachers. The Sunday school is still a lay movement, with the superintendent and teachers (for the most part) being non-professional laymen.

2. The Sunday school began as a school for children, usually ages 6-14. Even though classes for adults made an early appearance (the first ones being in 1798, which eventuated in the development of the Philadelphia Sunday and Adult School Union in 1817; this organization vigorously promoted classes for adults), the image of the Sunday school as primarily for children has persisted.

3. The early Sunday schools were not associated with the church. Indeed, for many years they were opposed by the church. Even though most Sunday schools are now held in churches, there is still a tenuous relationship between the school and the church. Many of those who attend Sunday school never become active in the church. On the other hand, there are many persons who attend church faithfully but never come for Sunday school. It is obvious that much work needs to be done in this area of church-Sunday school cooperation.

4. Robert Raikes began his Sunday school to provide a general secular education. When public education became widespread, it was no longer necessary for the Sunday school to provide this kind of education. As a result, the Sunday school shifted its emphasis to Bible study and moral training. The current thinking is that Sunday school is a Bible

(Continued on page 57)

WANTED: RADICAL MORAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE CHURCH

by Donald M. Joy

"What is a Wesleyan?" one of my seminary students asked David, age eight.

"I can't describe it. It's kind like any other church, like a Baptist maybe—but it's more religious. It's really sharp on religion."

The student went deeper: "What is a Christian?"

"A Christian is when you know God as your personal Savior and you love Him."

"Can you tell me the difference between a Wesleyan and a Christian?"

"If you're a real good Christian, they're the same."

David, by his eighth year, already knows that there are various kinds of Christians. He has labels to help him sort out those who are "really sharp on religion." But David's definition of those of us in the holiness tradition may be too starkly accurate for comfort. I want to state three hunches about us—even overstate them to make them painfully clear. Then, I want to offer two steps which we might be taking to correct the troublesome tendencies in our movement. Here are my hunches:

1. *Traditionalism traps.*—The "heart" of any great idea or movement cannot be transplanted from the original generation to the next or any other. But the "language" can be taught. So future generations tend to imagine that they have been faithful without knowing the qualitative difference between "language" alone and "language with heart." The same tendency is stated tersely: "God has no grandchildren; only children." Today we may need to regard the sacred words of our holiness tradition as if they were inscriptions on tombstones beneath which we may have buried the "heart" with our founders. "Entire sanctification," for example, just might be a very different

phenomenon if we were to break through to its "heart" (that is, the very heart of the experience itself) than if we merely swear our allegiance and raise it as a banner and imagine that we are being "faithful to the doctrine."

2. *Entry fascinates.*—"Crisis" experiences have come to be commonly described as mere spiritual highs or emotional peaks. This leads us toward what Bonhoeffer called cheap grace, and we are producing too much cheap discipleship. Classically biblical and Wesleyan crises are true crises. That is, they are troughs of pain, separation, sacrifice, death, and surrender which tend not to happen in a moment, dry-eyed behind contact lenses, on an Easter morning. "Peak moments" may mark the end and resolution of a deep crisis, but some have ritualized and dogmatized instantaneous peak ecstasy as the proof of orthodoxy.

3. *Growth repeals.*—For too many of us, "process" is all but forgotten in our preoccupation with getting peak experiences. In a culture which is tuned to instant gratification, we have little encouragement to take the long view on Christian maturity. We want what we want, and we want it now. The view that Christian maturity looms up ahead, that God's sanctifying grace plumbs new and deeper reaches of our personality in the fourth, sixth, and ninth decades of life—all of this somehow goes against the grain of our instant gratification, instant maturity generation.

So the temptation is to turn our backs on process and focus on the bright ecstasy of instant experiences. We write books about entire sanctification, but we are preoccupied with "how to get sanctified." We generate steps, even spiritual laws. We give titles that suggest maturity, but in the

end we are stuck on “entry behavior” with little attention to marks of the maturing process. Perhaps we say little because we are ourselves victims of the *traditionalism trap*—we know the language better than we know the rugged terrain where it was hammered out in Scripture and in holiness history. Which may be to say: much of the “heart” may have gone out of our inheritance, and we have become merchants of tombstones with beautifully engraved words.

Spiritual Maturity: The Ultimate in Human Fulfillment

The idea that healthy persons are *constantly* undergoing change is rooted in the biblical view of man. “When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became a man, I gave up childish ways” (1 Cor. 13:11, RSV).¹ Jesus saw himself as coming to bring us to “life,” but more—to bring us to having it “abundantly” (John 10:10). Paul disclosed a deep motivation for ministry in writing his hope for the Colossians: “That we may present every man mature in Christ” (Col. 1:28, RSV). Yet some of us with our fascination for two religious experiences have built up a static model of salvation and discipleship which falls short of the biblical and Wesleyan tradition and is badly arrested into plateaus which are labelled “one” and “two.” Without a dynamic model we tend never to move on in that continuous process by which “we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being changed into his likeness from one degree of glory to another” (2 Cor. 3:18, RSV).

Today we may need to regard the sacred words of our holiness tradition as if they were inscriptions on tombstones beneath which we may have buried the “heart” with our founders.

John Wesley put forward a wide-angle perspective when, in his 1739 sermon “The Spirit of Bondage and of Adoption,” he outlined and defined three stages in which a person might find himself. His appeal, of course, was for a person to move from either of the first two toward the third. The progression was from the “natural man” to the “legal man,” finally to the “evangelical man.”²

Moral Development: A Social Science Model

Jean Piaget’s research work *The Moral Judgment of the Child* was published in French in 1932. In it he reported discovering a developmental pattern by which we can predict how growing children will solve problems of moral judgment at various ages. His work has been replicated and expanded by many of us, but it is Lawrence Kohlberg’s work, first at the University

of Chicago in 1958 and now at Harvard University, which has gathered interview data and given us a grid of moral development for looking at adults as well. Kohlberg’s major interest has been in describing the content of various levels and stages of moral thinking. As with Wesley, Kohlberg has discovered three major levels of moral reasoning; the leap points between the levels amount to two major life crises which are characterized by a radical change in life orientation.

Kohlberg’s Level I is an orientation to self-service, with moral thinking preoccupied with physical consequences.

Kohlberg’s Level II is an orientation of respect toward outside respected sources of authority; it focuses on submitting to authority and to pleasing other persons who are seen as having a legitimate right to rule.

Kohlberg’s Level III is an orientation toward adherence to principles written internally (on the heart), having been voluntarily embraced and made one’s own. Those principles require obedience regardless of physical consequences or what other people think. They are, in short, the basis of moral sensitivity to human worth, and moral courage regarding social sins.

It is striking that Herman Hesse, famous for his novels *Siddhartha*, *Steppenwolf*, *Beneath the Wheel*, and others, wrote, also in 1932, a brief essay, “A Bit of Theology.” A shrewd observer of human character, Hesse claimed to have made a discovery about moral and spiritual growth which he considered to be “the simple truth.”

The path of human development begins with innocence (paradise, childhood, the irresponsible first stage). From there it leads to guilt, to the knowledge of good and evil, to the demand for culture, for morality, for religions, for human ideals. For everyone who passes through this stage seriously and as a differentiated individual it ends unflinchingly in disillusionment, that is, with the insight that no perfect virtue, no complete obedience, no adequate service exists, that righteousness is unreachable, that consistent goodness is unattainable. Now this despair leads either to defeat or to a third realm of the spirit, to the experience of a condition beyond morality and law, an advance into grace and release to a new higher kind of irresponsibility, or to put it briefly: to faith.”³

First Wesley, then Hesse, and Piaget-Kohlberg, using quite different methods, arrived at strikingly parallel observations about varying levels of moral thinking. In order for us to consider whether they have continuing significance for those of us concerned with Christian education in holiness churches today, I want to offer you a simplified set of terms and for each level illustrate how moral thinking colors views of religious experience, authority, Scripture, and prayer.

Level I: Orientation to Self-satisfaction

Religious experience: I want to be saved to avoid going to hell. I want to be sanctified because I want everything God has for me.

Authority: After the way God took my baby, I knew He was trying to tell me something; I figured I

might as well give up now as run from Him anymore.

Scripture: It says here women shouldn't speak in church, and that settles it. Or, I just closed my eyes this morning and put my finger here on this page, and this is my promise for today.

Prayer: We just asked God to show us what He wanted us to do, and this man called and offered to buy our house, so we just knew we were supposed to move.

Notice that with each of these there is (a) a perspective which suggests that everybody would agree with the conclusion drawn—what Piaget calls "egocentrism," the view that the moral universe looks to everyone else as it does to me; (b) a common thread of concreteness to the moral reasoning—tangible proofs, simplistic and shallow understanding of the Bible, interpreting tragedy as God doing it to them; (c) a tendency to regard the religious in magical terms—a naive universal among small children, but less appropriate in adults. While these are highly religious statements, they nevertheless correspond to Wesley's "natural man" stage in that they are motivated by "fear alone"—that is wanting to so get under God's will that they avoid bad consequences, or, better yet, get good stuff for doing the right rituals.

Level II: Orientation to Outside Expectations

Religious experience: I really owe a lot to God and to these people. The least I can do is to give my life to God—that's why I came to the altar. Besides I'm really committed to being a good Free Methodist (Nazarene, Wesleyan), and I know that I need to be sanctified to show I am fully obedient to God.

Authority: I want to join the church because I need to belong to something wiser and better than I am; I need to make and to keep some promises. I see the pastor as God's leader for us, and I want him to teach me what I am expected to become as a member here.

Scripture: I really want my life to be governed by Scripture. I know that it is God's inspired Guidebook for regulating my life and making human society function right. I know too that all of Scripture must be taken together for me to get the big picture.

Prayer: I pray because Jesus prayed and He told us to pray. I pray whether I feel like it or not or whether I get what I want; I pray because my survival as a believer requires that I live in obedience and dependence upon God.

While a person may come to God out of Level I motivations of self-interest, no footing in faith can develop until a Level II orientation prevails. Here the growing believer may still be sensing some fear of God's awful justice, but he or she is moving away from "fear alone" to what Wesley called "fear mixed with love." Level II orientation sees God's authority, a church leader's authority, and the Bible's authority as properly constituted, existing for the common good, and as demanding my ad-

herence to legitimate authority. Continued obedience does not depend upon getting self-centered answers to my prayers or being treated nicely, or even finding the "fleece" wet: "mine not to question why, only to do or die." Level II orientation characterizes a true and dutiful servant—a person justified, put right, with outside, higher authority. It produces rigorous obedience, blind acceptance of outside direction, and submits to authority because others have the right to rule over him/her. But Level II with its mixture of "fear with love" is not yet the free, productive energy of a life dominated by "love alone" as Wesley described his third level.

Level III: Orientation to Universal Principles

Religious experience: I can tell you the time and the place, but it is embarrassing now how self-centered I was, how much I bragged and how arrogant I was as a young Christian; I guess everybody comes in in that condition. I could describe some persons whom I believe to be entirely sanctified, and I could assure you that I am committed to God's working out His grace in my life in that way, too. But I hope you will make judgments about me on the basis of my spirit and my life and not ask me to make extravagant assertions about my own spirituality.

Authority: I am committed to the church because I am a part of its life and its functioning. I voluntarily submit to the guidance of my denominational leaders because they and I are committed to the common task and the life together in the Body of Christ. I trust every member of the body to take his or her responsibility seriously, and I need not protect my own interest or tremble in their presence. If I were in any of their places, I know that they would need to place that kind of belief and trust in me.

Scripture: I am saturating myself with God's Word. Sometimes it feels as if it is written on every fiber of my body. My mind, my choosing, my vocation, are all immersed in all that I know of God and His ways with persons. I am entirely at peace with all of Scripture and find my energy easily flowing out to spread the Good News of God's revelation in Scripture. I need not belligerently defend its authority. Its truthfulness is not contingent on finding some lost manuscript or sticking with a particular version; God's Word is larger than any debates which may rise about it.

Prayer: I pray because God is worthy of my praise and thanksgiving. I pray because I have a sense that God's work in the world is carried out through persons, and I want to seek God's face continuously so as to better understand both who He is and who I am and what my responsibility is. I want to so perfectly attach my energy to His that He can flow through me to do His work and that I can release my energy to Him for His use at His tasks.

In Level III, fanatic defense of orthodoxy gives way to compassion for all persons and the knowledge that truth needs no arguments or evidence

in court. The disciple is so at peace, at one with his Lord, as to regard Him as Brother, Friend. He is so immersed in Scripture and in the perspective of God toward the world that he instinctually sees persons, issues, and problems as if he were standing outside of himself and seeing them from all perspectives at once, then moving in to assist, confront, or heal as the case may require.

A Wesley Recovery? The Church as an Ethical Development Community

To the extent that a congregation functions as the body of Christ, it is going to be a community of persons in all stages of growth. A church in which many of the members are "arrested" in stage development will be a sick church and will have a distinctly limited ministry—limited to those persons whose moral development stage is beneath that of the core arrested group. There are two things we can do now to get on with doing what the Early Church was doing with Corinthians and what Wesley was doing with miners and drunks:

1. We can begin to describe the church and to live in the congregation as a community of persons *all of whom* are being changed from one degree of glory to another. It will mean that we are our brothers' and our sisters' keepers and that we are responsible for stimulating everybody's growth and development.

2. We can evaluate our congregation's effectiveness as an ethical development community against the criteria which tend to produce growth: Every person's worth and dignity will be protected. This means that the use of sarcasm, cynicism, ridicule, and shame must be abandoned. Every person should be able to say of any contact with our community of faith, "They really love me there."

We must practice justice and love as God uses them. This calls for equitable justice which looks for good motives, and understandingly excuses defects of perception and immaturity as reasons for failure, rather than quickly censuring other persons. This demands unconditional love which holds enemy as well as friend, the rebellious as well as the cooperative, the poor as well as the rich, in positive regard and works for their best interests.

A Challenge for Holiness Christian Education

If we could seize upon a fresh discovery of the nature of God's justice and love and could generate fresh standards for ethical rigor in the Body of Christ today, there is little doubt but that we would find ways of attaching ourselves to the moral tasks in today's world which need so urgently to

be handled. If you are willing for an experiment, covenant with me to apply the acid test of equitable justice and unconditional love to the section of the body where you live and work.

a. What would Sunday school classes look like if they were operated by these criteria? Are we prepared for the kind of growth that would occur if people discovered that we were really committed to the loving care of persons?

b. What would that administrative board or committee look like if you applied the justice/love formula to its political structure, its self-perpetuating tendencies, its "official posture" compared to its "back room reality"?

c. What would your family relationships look like if you quit throwing around status and power based on sex and age, and began to treat all members of the family as if they were worth what God regards them to be?

If you are ready to take this experiment farther, let's rename some of our operations around the church to make sure that people know we are committed to constant growth as Christians. Examples might be:

New members' class: Spiritual Formation Class

Sunday school: Bible Development Classes

The prayer meeting: Discipleship Development Hour

Teaching training: Leadership Development

The class meeting: Christian Growth Groups
Moral development infused by the grace of God produces saints today. It always has. Lawrence Kohlberg estimates that less than 5 percent of the U.S. population functions at the principled level, Level III. And with all of the "parking lots" along the holiness route, I suspect that he might not find any more of us had made it to radical principled living and thinking. The troublesome thing about a social scientist is that he isn't much interested in labels, jargon, or high-sounding assertions about our claims to ethical holiness. He has a measuring stick that reaches into the mind and into the heart; he tends to be unmercifully fair. In that sense his measurement of us might not differ much from that great and final Day of the Lord—except that on that day Lawrence Kohlberg will find that his measuring stick is being read too.

1. From the *Revised Standard Version of the Bible*, copyrighted 1946, 1952, © 1971, 1973. Used by permission.

2. Dr. James Stuart, Greenville College, Ill., has brought together much of John Wesley's writing and autobiographical material to organize Wesley's life around those three stages. I have built on Stuart's work in using Wesley as a sample "case" in my "Moral Development and Christian Holiness," *Asbury Seminary*, April, 1975, reprints available at \$1.00 from SPO 004, Wilmore, KY 40390.

3. Herman Hesse in "A Bit of Theology," *My Belief: Essays on Life and Art* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Girous, 1974), p. 189.

"Let us train our young in the fear of God, let us direct our women in the good way. . . Let our children partake of the training that is in Christ."

—Clement of Rome

**Life-changing learning is the purpose of every unit
and every lesson in Aldersgate Graded Curriculum.**

A FEW THINGS EVERY PASTOR SHOULD KNOW ABOUT OUR SUNDAY SCHOOL CURRICULUM

by Robert Troutman

Aldersgate graded curriculum materials and Topsy don't have much in common. Topsy, you'll remember, just "grewed." A number of things come into existence by that means—but Aldersgate curriculum isn't one of them.

There's no need to bore you with the circumstances that led 10 of the Wesleyan-Arminian holiness denominations to explore the feasibility of publishing a cooperative Sunday school curriculum. Suffice it to say that in the spring of 1965, representatives from these groups met to dialog and see if there were enough areas of agreement to warrant such a project. It was agreed that there were, so work began.

From then until September, 1969, when the first Aldersgate Graded Curriculum materials were introduced (and periodically ever since), committees met often and labored long to bring to fruition the hopes of that first group. As one who has been involved in the A.G.C. process since the first meeting, let me share with you what I feel are some of the important aspects of this curriculum.

The Twelve Quarterly Themes

Aldersgate Graded Curriculum is built on the idea that for learning to be meaningful, the facts, stories, and scriptures which the pupil learns in individual lessons must be related to larger concepts. The planners of A.G.C. materials organized the curriculum around 12 quarterly themes, or large concepts. These are not exhaustive, of course, but they provide a framework in which the Word of God may be explored and applied to the human situation. Individual lessons break these large themes into smaller concept units on the understanding level of the pupil.

At any age level from primary through senior high, the pupil will study in these 12 areas:

Year One

Quarter One—The Story of the Old Testament People.

Quarter Two—Basic Beliefs

Quarter Three—Discipleship: Interpersonal Relations

Quarter Four—The Church

Year Two

Quarter One—The Message of the Bible

Quarter Two—Men of God

Quarter Three—Discipleship: Personal Commitment

Quarter Four—Decision-making as Christians

Year Three

Quarter One—The Living God

Quarter Two—The Life of Jesus

Quarter Three—The Acts of the Apostles

Quarter Four—Discipleship: Relationship to the World

Using the 12 quarterly themes does not mean that all pupils in the Sunday school will study the same part of the Bible every Sunday. But during the quarter, some of the lessons for every age-group will relate directly to the theme. Other lessons may relate indirectly to the overarching quarterly theme. The amount of time given to direct exploration of the theme each quarter, and the approach to it, varies with the age level. Generally speaking, older pupils spend more time studying lessons which are beamed directly to an understanding of the theme.

A clearer picture of how the 12 quarterly themes serve as the framework of Aldersgate Graded

Curriculum materials may be seen by looking at what happens during a given quarter; for example, the fall quarter of Year One. The boldface type indicates units which are a direct exploration of the theme. Other units, though related to the theme in a less direct way, deal with significant need areas of the pupil.

explored how to make Christian decisions on his level, becomes a junior? Because he is older and is facing a new set of life situations, the number and kinds of decisions a junior makes increases. He needs to look at the decision-making process again, relating it to his specific needs at this stage of development. The same procedure must be re-

Interruption of the spiral curriculum principle by do-it-yourself curriculum projects or hopscotching from one curriculum to another results in creating serious gaps in the young student's Christian education.

Quarter One, Year One

Quarterly theme: The Story of the Old Testament
People

Primary. Unit 1—**Abraham and His Family
Follow God**

Unit 2—The Bible, God's Wonderful
Book

Middler. Unit 1—Learning About My Bible
Unit 2—Learning to Walk with God
Unit 3—Joseph Lives for God

Junior. Unit 1—A Look at My Bible
Unit 2—Bits of Biography (O.T.)

Junior High. Unit 1—What We Believe About the
Bible
**Unit 2—Exploring the Old Testa-
ment**

Senior High. Unit 1—The Universe—God's
Creation
**Unit 2—Life Experience from Old
Testament Characters**

Because the cycling pattern is different, nursery, kindergarten, and adult materials are developed on a different framework, and do not correlate with the 12 quarterly themes. However, the same basic ideas are considered in these materials.

A Spiral Curriculum

One of the important ideas underlying Aldersgate Graded Curriculum is that any concept really worth knowing as an adult can be taught to pupils of any age, when presented on their level of understanding. As the pupil matures in his development, these concepts (the 12 quarterly themes) are reinforced and expanded.

Is it important for adults to understand how to make decisions based on biblical teaching? Yes, but we cannot wait until the adult years to deal with Christian decision-making. Persons of all ages have to make decisions. How to make decisions, how to evaluate decision, and standards for making Christian decisions need to be considered by even young children.

But what happens when a primary pupil, who has

peated as the pupil continues to mature—into a junior high, a senior high, and an adult.

In Aldersgate Graded Curriculum, the 12 major concepts are dealt with at every age level, primary through senior high. For this reason, our curriculum is sometimes called a "spiral curriculum." It is built so that each pupil repeats the cycle of quarterly themes every three years.

This does not mean that the learner reviews the same lessons every three years. He studies the same basic ideas (the 12 quarterly themes), but in a different way and on a more mature level each time. Note that for Year One, Quarter Two, the theme is "Basic Beliefs." During this quarter, primary, middler, junior, and junior high pupils study the Ten Commandments. (Senior highs deal with the broader scope of Christian beliefs.) Obviously, the primary child's ability to understand and apply the Ten Commandments is different from that of the junior high. Both can gain from a study of the concept, but each one must deal with it on a level which he can understand and which applies to his daily living. This is what a "spiral curriculum" does.

Knowledge, Feeling, and Life Response

Learning in the Sunday school takes place according to the same psychological principles that apply in any other learning situation. Recognizing this, each unit and lesson in Aldersgate Graded Curriculum deals with more than a presentation of biblical fact. Factual knowledge is not downplayed, but lesson developers are urged to keep in mind that the ultimate purpose of learning in the Sunday school is changed lives. Knowledge of the Bible and understanding of Christian principles is the basis, but learning is not complete until the pupil reflects his understandings in changed attitudes and behavior.

Each lesson in Aldersgate Graded Curriculum is built around a threefold teaching goal. The writer is asked to consider three questions: (1) What do I want the pupil to *know*? (2) What do I want the pupil to *feel*? (3) What do I want the pupil to *do*?

These three areas are closely interrelated.

In a junior lesson on "Those Who Are Different," the pupil explores the biblical account of Jesus and the woman who was bent double. Through a variety of learning activities on his level of understanding, he is guided to "*Realize or understand* that God wants him to treat everyone as a person of worth." As he looks more closely at Jesus' concern for the woman, he is helped to "*feel* Christian concern for those less fortunate than he."

But the learning process is not complete yet. What he *understands* and *feels* needs to be *put into action*. He may not be able to do this in the Sunday school classroom, but he will have opportunities to do it during the coming week if he remembers—and if he knows what he can do. To increase the probability of putting what he has learned into practice, the session concludes with activities which help the pupil to "Plan ways of showing God's love this week to someone who has a special need." Added encouragement is given by telling the pupils that next Sunday they will have an opportunity to share ways they showed God's love during the week.

Life-changing learning is the purpose of every unit and lesson in Aldersgate Graded Curriculum. A wide variety of learning activities to catch and hold the interest of the pupil is used—but each one is carefully built into a lesson plan that guides the pupil through the three stages of knowing, feeling, and doing.

Planning a Balanced Diet

Balance is important in one's diet, spiritually as well as physically. The developers of Aldersgate Graded Curriculum have given careful attention to keeping a proper balance in these materials. This includes a balance between Old Testament and

New Testament for each age-group, and throughout the entire curriculum scheme. It also includes a balanced emphasis upon the various areas of Christian teaching. Learning goals have been developed in six major areas, with two of these being further subdivided. Every child using A.G.C. materials will study in these areas:

- I. God
 - The Father
 - The Son
 - The Holy Spirit
- II. The Bible
- III. Salvation
- IV. The Church
- V. Himself/Herself
- VI. Discipleship
 - Personal
 - Interpersonal
 - In Our Society

Materials for nursery and kindergarten are built on these six areas, even though they do not follow the 12 quarterly themes since they use a two-year cycle instead of a three-year one.

It All Fits Together

Hopefully, the information presented in this article underscores the fact that Aldersgate Graded Curriculum materials fit together to make a whole. The 12 quarterly themes and the six areas of study are the foundation which supports the entire curriculum. Because of the "spiral curriculum" principle, a pupil who misses the lessons planned for him at any point in the spiral misses an important part of the total emphasis.

If you have questions about Aldersgate Graded Curriculum materials, write to your church headquarters for additional information.

Teacher Qualifications in Bible Times

"His aim must be to keep children from all intercourse with that which is vicious; to suppress all feelings of bitterness, even bitterness at wrong done to the child's own parents; to punish all real wrongdoing; never to prefer one child to another. He must rather show sin in its essential repulsiveness than try to threaten a child out of it by speaking of its consequences in this world, or in the world to come. He must never discourage the child. He must never promise and not perform, lest the child's mind become familiar with falsehood and the broken word. He must never lose patience, but, if the child does not understand, he must patiently explain the matter over and over again, in order to make it plain. He must treat the child like a young heifer, whose burden is daily increased. In every case he must first try kindness, and only when kindness fails must he physically punish."

—A. Edersheim: *Sketches of Jewish Social Life in the Days of Christ*

WHAT'S RIGHT WITH THE SUNDAY SCHOOL?

by Kenneth S. Rice

"Compared to public school education, Sunday school is marginal to American society, yet is an important little school in the rearing of the whole nation. The Sunday school is the big little school of the United States . . . On its own turf, the Sunday school has enjoyed more success than failure." With these words, Robert Lynn and Elliott Wright introduce their book, *The Big Little School*.

Lynn is a professor at Union Theological Seminary and Wright is a staff writer for Religious News Service. Neither of them would be disposed to have a prejudice for the Sunday school. Yet they use 108 pages of fine print to tell what is right with the Sunday school.

But that book was published in 1971. Though it covers almost 200 years of Sunday school history, many things have happened in the last seven years that make current and appropriate the question, "What's right with the Sunday school?"

The March 1, 1978, issue of the *Herald of Holiness* released an interview with Dr. W. T. Purkiser by Wil Spaite. In answer to the question, "What methods do you see as most effective today for Nazarenes to win their world for Christ?" Dr. Purkiser said, "I see a continuing strong need for Sunday school—reaching into the homes first bringing in the children and youth, then seeking to bring in the whole family."

In a recent letter Harry Piland, Sunday school director for the Southern Baptist Convention, said, "Those at Fuller have made significant contributions to the concept of outreach and growth, but we are using some of the

ideas and simply plugging them into our Sunday school. We are creating no new organizations to do the job." In a telephone conversation, George Edgerly, from the Assemblies of God, said essentially the same thing.

I. Laymen in Ministry

We are all interested in church growth. We know we must carry out the redemptive mission of Christ. The Great Commission gives us our marching orders. Ephesians 4:11-13 gives us the "means" and the "ends" of our work. How can the Sunday school help us be faithful stewards?

One holiness denomination defines the Sunday school as: "The laymen of the church using their gifts of ministry and organized to carry out the Great Commission." This is what it should be—not what it is in every church. But, it is what it can be in any church.

The significance of laymen being involved in the redemptive mission of the church was a major emphasis of the host of books that appeared in the late 60s predicting the future of the church, and particularly the church in the 70s. Larson and Osborne, in their book *The Emerging Church*, say, "The strategy or grand design for the emerging church of the 70s is the emergence of the lay apostolate as God's primary means of accomplishing His will in the world." Dr. E. Stanley Jones said in *Reconstruction of the Church—on What Pattern?* "The church of the future must be primarily a lay church . . ."

The latest writings stress the same truth. McGavran and Arn,

in their latest book *Ten Steps for Church Growth*, say, "If a church is serious about the Great Commission, the involvement of laity is of utmost importance. The growth of each church is uniquely dependent on its laity." In the interview mentioned above, Dr. Purkiser said, "One of the most encouraging features of the present day is the involvement of lay persons in the total work of the church."

The Sunday school is not the only place lay persons can be involved, but it is one of the best. The reaching, teaching, winning, and discipling work of the Sunday school involves the use of many different gifts.

So in thinking about "what's right with the Sunday school," we begin with the great utilization of lay gifts, talents, and interests.

II. Sunday School Has the Right Textbook

Something else right with the Sunday school is its emphasis on the Bible.

The Travis Avenue Baptist Church of Fort Worth, Tex., has had unusual growth. It was a large, self-satisfied church that seemed to be on dead center. Dr. James Coggin, the pastor, challenged his staff and key laymen to make a study of churches across America that were effective in reaching people. Their study included churches of four denominations.

They summarized their findings in five characteristics of these growing churches: (1) a climate of confidence and victory; (2) simplicity in organization and administration; (3) emphasis on re-

suits rather than process; (4) plenty of parking space; and (5) emphasis on the authority of the Bible.¹ This last characteristic I have found in each of the 38 large and fast-growing Sunday schools I have visited from the 100 largest and the 50 fastest growing churches listed in *Christian Life* magazine.

"The word of God is quick and powerful" in church growth just as it is in personal growth. Sunday school is the major Bible teaching agency of the church—not the only one, but the principle one. The Bible is not the only material available for teaching in the Sunday school, but it is the major textbook. All the other material is introductory, expository, or supplementary to help better understand the Bible—or it should be. The need is to perfect the effectiveness of the teaching.

III. An Organization of Small Groups

The Sunday school is "right" because it is an organization of small groups.

People feel lost in the impersonal world in which we all live. Our identification is the social security number we have been assigned or the IBM card that describes us. Many are still lost in the crowd that attends the worship or the evangelistic service of the church. Sociologists say that small groups are the most important relationships we have.

The Sunday school provides an organization of small groups with common interests and for a common purpose. It can be an intimate experience where people become individual persons associating with others who generally care about them.

After spending two years studying thousands of churches, Richard A. Myers found that the churches with the same average attendance at church school reported almost identical numbers of extensions by profession of faith. He then conducted experiments to determine why this was true. He reports, "The experiment demonstrated that the class, or small group, is the key to growth.

Families are drawn into a church that way. More groups mean more growth."²

Many churches are losing the simplicity of their organization by creating additional small groups rather than concentrating on utilizing the small groups they already have in their Sunday school.

IV. A Field and Force for Evangelism

The evangelistic potential is something else that is strategically right with the Sunday school.

Many writers on church growth say that the secret of growth is related to the evangelistic thrust of the church. McGavran and Arn, say, "The key to dynamic, effective church growth is in recruiting, training, and utilizing class II leaders." They describe class II leaders as "members whose energies are primarily directed to serving the evangelizing non-Christians in their ministry areas in an effort to bring them into the body of Christ."³

What better opportunity is there for this than through the Sunday school organization. Every person the church knows about who has spiritual needs is already assigned through the Sunday school organization to one of the best Christians in the church as his or her responsibility.

The weakness is in making clear what that responsibility includes. Most teachers think they have the responsibility of preparing a Sunday school lesson each week. They have not been made aware that they are responsible for immortal souls. This means "by all means save some." When the bell rings at the end of the Sunday school hour, it is the teacher's responsibility to see that his or her pupils attend the worship service. Teachers should make arrangements for their pupils to get to the Sunday evening services of the church. When we have a revival, this is our revival committee. Sunday school teachers already know what the

spiritual needs are and should be responsible to help get their pupils into the revival services. In the Church of the Nazarene alone, over 600,000 people are enrolled in Sunday schools who are not members of the church.

In answering the question about how he became a Christian, Dr. Purkiser told Wil Spaite, "I have a clear recollection of a conversion experience when I was six or seven at a Salvation Army Decision Day in Sunday school." This no doubt influences his high regard for the Sunday school as a great evangelistic opportunity.

I have found that fast-growing churches make their teachers responsible for the spiritual welfare of their pupils. Time is spent in weekly teachers' and officers' meetings reporting on pupils who have been saved, discussing spiritual needs, and planning together to meet those needs.

Some churches have their classes meet prior to the time of the evangelistic service. Roll is taken. They come into the service and sit together so teachers are immediately available to assist pupils who would like to respond to the altar call. Teachers are then responsible for following up on absentees from the revival just as they follow up on absentees from Sunday school. The Holy Spirit honors this planning and preparation in carrying out His redemptive mission. The Sunday school provides the organization and the personnel for this effective evangelism.

It is easy to see why Dr. Marion Lawrence, the executive secretary of the World Sunday School Association, said that the Sunday school is a sleeping giant lying at the door of the church, who if awakened and aroused will fill the church with people.

"What's right with the Sunday school?" Well, it's *all right*—if we use it right.

1. Coggin and Spooner: *You Can Reach People Now*, chapter 1.

2. Myers, Richard A.: *Program Expansion, the Key to Church Growth*, Report No. 1 in Church Development Series, p. 3.

3. McGavran and Arn, *Ten Steps for Church Growth*, p. 109.

Sunday School and Evangelism have been roommates for two centuries. One of the popular classics that has promoted this union over the last 23 years is “The Pull of the People,” by J. N. Barnette. Hundreds of thousands of Sunday school leaders and pastors have studied it. The book shows us the centrality of evangelism in the spectrum of Christian education and nurture. Here is chapter one of that book.

THE PULL OF THE PEOPLE

by J. N. Barnette

And Jesus, when he came out, saw much people, and was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and he began to teach them (Mark 6:34).

There were multitudes of lost people when Jesus was on earth; there are multitudes today.

Where are these lost people? They are everywhere—in every community. They are in busy cities, in thronging marketplaces, in towns, in villages, in the quiet country places. Some of them are in your community. Do you know how many of these people live in your community?

Who are they? They are your relatives and neighbors; they are your friends and acquaintances; they are the prominent and the obscure; they are the happy and the sad; they are the thoughtful and the careless; they are the known and the unknown, the lovely and the unlovely.

We live in a world of crowds. Wherever you live, you will find a crowd. Even in the quiet, beautiful countryside, you will have the psychology of the crowd thrust upon you. A Christian cannot long look at these crowds without deep and inspiring thought—reflecting on questions that press for an answer: **Where are they going? What do they want? What are we going to do with these crowds—these crowds within sight of our church houses, within reach of our Sunday schools? What would Jesus do in the midst of these crowds? Does anybody care for the crowds of people? God does.**

I. The Compassion of God Is for People

“But thou, O Lord, art a God full of compassion, and gracious, longsuffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth” (Ps. 86:15).

“The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. He will not always chide: neither will he keep his anger for ever. He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us. Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him” (Ps. 103:8-13).

“But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd” (Matt. 9:36).¹

God loves man, and out of divine grace provides for his salvation. Jesus died for all men. The Holy Spirit convicts men of their need.

II. How Is God's Compassion for People Expressed?

God's compassion is expressed in four positive ways:

1. God Cared Enough to Give Jesus

His is the unspeakable gift—the gift of salvation through Christ Jesus. Men can measure the exact value of worldly gifts. Words are not available to express the meaning and the value of God's gift. Nor

can the heart of man comprehend the love of God in Christ Jesus. The best that man can do is to accept the gift, be grateful for it, cultivate it, use it for others and for the glory of God. God loves man with an everlasting love. God, at an immeasurable price, has provided salvation for all who will accept his gift.

2. *Jesus Care Enough to Die for Man*

"But God commandeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8).

3. *The Holy Spirit Cares Enough to Work with Men*

He convicts men of their sinful condition. He puts a desire in the hearts of all men to be saved. "And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment" (John 16:8).

He intercedes in behalf of men. "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered" (Rom. 8:26).

4. *God Cared Enough to Give the Bible*

"But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name" (John 20:31).

What a message! What a promise! What a privilege we have to teach and tell others about this message and promise!

Surely the words of Dr. Hight C. Moore express the obligation and desire of all true Christians:

As he lay in a Roman dungeon awaiting his martyrdom, Paul passed to Timothy the torch that is still aflame: "The things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also" (2 Tim. 2:2).

What things?

The things and only the things that were in perfect accord with what was divinely written in various countries over a period of about fifteen centuries by forty or more men of God who separately and solitarily were "moved by the Holy Ghost." The amazing unity of the Word of God as revealed through Chaldea-trained Abraham, Egypt-trained Moses, Judah-trained David, Babylon-trained Daniel, Persia-trained Nehemiah was not disturbed a feather's weight nor deflected a hair's breadth by Roman-trained Paul. The things he taught were precisely what the others taught, so far as they taught them for the single and sufficient reason that all were taught of God.

"The same commit thou."

"The same"; nothing more; nothing less; nothing other. The same in substance; the same in emphasis; the same in presentation; the same in power.

Teach every group we can gather, every time it gathers, the gospel of the revealed, revealing, redeeming, risen, reigning, returning, rewarding Christ. Chain and confine every pulpit to the eternal purpose of God among men from far creation to far consummation. Energize and effectualize every

church with the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, who "will guide you into all truth."

III. **Why Did God Give His Unspeakable Gift to Man**

The Bible tells all who will read:

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

Jesus had to make the decision to die on the cross. Why did Jesus give his life?

1. *Because the Sure Penalty of Sin Puts All Men Under Its Awful Doom*

The Word of God is clear as to the universality of sin: "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23).

The Bible is clear in declaring the fruits of sin: "The wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23).

2. *Because Man Is Helpless to Save Himself*

The Bible shows unquestionably that man is not able to save himself. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God" (Eph. 2:8).

3. *Because God's Estimate of the Value of a Soul Is Great*

In Matthew 16:26 Jesus states the supreme value of a man in such simple words that even a child can comprehend: "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

The fact of the immortality of the soul lifts the work of a church to a very high place. This fact should extend the provision of a church to include every available person. God's estimate of the value of a soul places above everything else the ministry of the church to people.

IV. **Do Lost People Pull at Your Heart?**

Do you see the multitudes today as Jesus saw them? Are you moved as Paul was moved in his day? Do you weep over the people as Jesus wept over Jerusalem? Does anybody care enough to give them the gospel of Christ? Some do!

1. *Some Examples of Concern*

A prominent professional man was teacher of a class of adults, all members of the church. When he saw the returns from a religious census, he resigned and asked his pastor to assign him the names of some of the men who were lost and to let him use the kitchen, the only available space, for his classroom. In a little while he had the kitchen filled with men on Sunday morning. Today some of these men, now Christians and church members, are teaching in the Sunday school. What caused the teacher to do this? It was the pull of lost people upon the compassionate heart of a Christian man.

A successful businessman, a deacon and former Sunday school superintendent, saw an unchurched community, where sin flourished through a beer

parlor and dance hall. He requested his church to authorize him to organize and conduct a Sunday school in that community. In a few months the beer parlor was gone and the dance hall closed. Today a beautiful church building stands on the lot where the beer parlor was before. Why did this businessman go to all the bother, expense, and work? One reason—the pull of the people who were lost constrained him.

A class of 14 women asked to be dissolved and assigned to another class, giving as the reason that their enrollment was too small for work. The pastor recalled that Jesus began his earthly ministry with only 12 men. The class was assigned to another teacher, and in less than a year's time it had 44 enrolled. This class took the lead in forming two classes out of the one. In time, as a result of the spirit and work initiated by the first class, six additional classes for adults were organized, and soon the attendance grew from 84 to 200. Why? The pull of lost people was permitted to take possession of that class of 14 women.

A church, located in a lovely country community, cared enough to erect a new building, enlist and train 74 Sunday school workers where there had been only 20, organize 47 classes where there had been only 16, establish 11 departments where there had been none. As a result the Sunday school enrollment increased from 200 to 561. Likewise, the number of baptisms was more than doubled. Why? This church was moved with compassion and this church expressed its compassion in deeds.

Why do some teachers love to visit while others do not? Why do some superintendents find it easy to enlist and keep an adequate number of workers while others cannot enlist workers? Why do some superintendents have growing Sunday schools while others do not? Why is it that one group of churches baptizes each year 1 person for every 8 church members, while another group baptizes only 1 for every 40 church members?

One chief reason—the pull of the people on the hearts of those who lead and teach. Compassion compels. The compassion of Jesus moved Him to give His life for people.

2. *Do We Need Spirit?*

Do we need spirit-power compassion—a deep sense of the need, a love for the Lord that impels? Do we need this hidden something that moves Christian workers out after people?

There are people all about our churches. But what will make us go after them? What will make pastors, Sunday school superintendents, teachers, class officers, Christian men and women with their names on the class rolls—all of us—go?

Are we going as we should? Are we going at all? A group of 53 officers and teachers in a workers' conference reported three visits for the previous week. Jesus told us to go. What will make us go as he told us to go? What will make us go as Paul went?

"To every creature," "into all the world," "other sheep," "next towns" are words that no doubt burned themselves into the hearts of Peter and of the others who heard them. Evidently Paul heard such words from the apostles. Surely the Spirit of God brought them into his mind again and again so that when he heard the Macedonian call, he immediately went.

"The love of Christ constraineth us," "woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel," "my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is," "great heaviness and continual sorrow"—all reveal to us the spirit of Paul for people.

Where did Paul get this spirit? It is the spirit of Christ. That is where Paul got it—from Jesus. What was the spirit of Jesus? "Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring" (John 10:16). If that had not been His spirit, where would we be today? "I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also" shows the spirit of Christ.

The last command, "Go ye into all the world," Jesus meant, no doubt, should ring the longest in the ears of his followers, and lay the heaviest on their hearts.

Did Jesus ever forget the unreached? Never! When Jesus gives us His picture of the shepherd and the flock, where does He focus our attention, lodge our compassion, and direct our efforts? On the sheep in the fold? No, on the shepherd going out after the one lost sheep. Yes, going on and on until he found it.

As long as the major portion of the thinking, planning, and giving in a church is expended upon the church members themselves, so long will a spirit like that of Paul be rare.

Do evangelicals need to realize anew that the way of salvation for the churches lies in thinking less and less of the church as a field to be cultivated, and more and more of it as a force to be trained in the spirit of concern for the lost and directed toward the goal of reaching the unreached for Christ?

How may we get the Spirit of Christ? We can measure our own spirit by Paul's spirit and see how far short we fall. Paul said, "But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, . . . that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings" (Phil. 3:7-8, 10).

There it is. Do we match it? Are we willing to do what Paul did? Are we willing to suffer the loss of our worldly ambitions, our traditional opinions, our pet sins—all for the cause of Christ?

We can measure our spirit by the spirit of the great Christians of the past and present—Paul, Livingstone, Moody, Truett, and others. If we honestly measure our likeness to Christ and face

our weakness, we will let the knowledge of our shortcoming shatter our complacency, kill our false pride, and fill us with a divine discontent.

We can desire, pray, and work for the spirit of Christ. Do we want it? It is available in abundance for all. A few minutes each day in sincere prayer for the unreached will help. An average of at least one visit each day in efforts to win the unreached will fill one's heart with the spirit of Christ.

What do you suppose would happen if each one of the Sunday school officers and teachers should for one year desire, pray for, and practice the spirit of Christ? Why not? Will you?

V. Is Your Church Working in Harmony with God's Will Toward People?

What God sent His Son to do, Jesus commissioned His Church to proclaim.

1. What Would Jesus Do if He Were on Earth Today?

What would Jesus do if He were teacher of your class? It is a strange question, but look at it. This question was asked of a thoughtful man, and his reply was, "He would no doubt do just exactly what He has instructed us to do, as given in Matt. 9:36-38 and 28:19-20; and in Luke 15:1-7 and 14:16-23."

Would Jesus leave any family in your community out of His love, plans, and efforts if He were a worker in your church? *If so, which family?*

Should the church program be planned to minister to the needs of all the people, or to suit the convenience of the leaders? In Christian work, somebody must suffer. If the leaders plan meetings, programs, and schedules to meet their convenience, then lost people will suffer.

God's interest in this world is for the salvation of people—all who will believe. Jesus came into the world to seek and to save that which is lost. The work of a church is identical with the work of Jesus—"As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you" (John 20:21).

2. Is Your Church Ready to Minister to All the People in Your Community?

Has your church made provision in the Sunday

school for every member of every family? If not, why has it not?

Can your church provide for all the people in your community?

Is your church willing to begin immediately to provide for more of the people in your community?

When a church is really moved with compassion for people, will not the result always be provision for the enrollment of more people for Bible study?

"I looked on my right hand, and beheld, but there was no man that would know me: refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul" (Ps. 142:4). The cry of this heart disturbs us, or does it? Could it be said by an individual or family in your community, "No man cares for my soul"? How much does your church care? How strong is the pull of the people in your heart? Strong enough to secure some more space, organize some more departments and classes, enlist and train some more teachers, and go out after the people? Does provision for enrolling people for Bible study have priority in your church?

Is your church at work with the zeal that a vision of spiritually dead multitudes today would demand?

Consider what Jesus has commanded, and evaluate the work your church is doing in reaching people for Bible study.

After Jesus died and arose from the grave, He commanded His followers: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world" (Matt. 28:19-20).

When a church fails to give priority to provision for Bible study, gospel preaching, and Christian training for all the people for whom it is responsible, is not that church off center in relation to the purpose of God in the world?

When the measure of our active concern is determined by the love of God, by the compassion of Jesus, by the value of lost souls—we will feel the pull of the people.

From *The Pull of the People*, by J. N. Barnette. Nashville: Convention Press, 1956. Used by permission.

1. See also Lamentations 3:22-23; Psalm 86:15; 145:8; Luke 15:20-24.

"Dear Lord, the great Healer, I kneel before You. Since every good and perfect gift must come from You, I pray give skill to my hand, clear vision to my mind, kindness and sympathy to my heart. Give me singleness of purpose, strength to lift at least a part of the burden of my suffering fellowman, and a true realization of the privilege that is mine. Take from my heart all guile and worldliness, that with simple faith of a child I may rely on Thee."

—Mother Teresa of Calcutta

CAN RELIGION BE TAUGHT?

by H. T. Reza

Can religion be taught? Some say it can; others say it cannot.

In my case, instruction in religion came only after I realized that God exists apart from the church building, but is manifested in the church building. He is active in the world even though the world is not conscious of Him. Only when I became conscious of God and the work of His Son could I let Christ come into my heart. At that point, Sunday school began to prepare me for life. In other words, I needed to be related to God before I could be instructed in the things of God.

Early Encounters with Religion

My first recollection of attending church was when, at the age of four, I found myself sitting with my mother on the dirt floor of a Catholic church. My mother would tell me many years later that she had taken me in to "offer flowers," an event which was held yearly for children of the community.

The next event I remember took place in a Protestant church in the town of Teloloapan—one of

the southern states of the Republic of Mexico. My older sister and I stood with some others in front of a minister who had come from Mexico City to hold special services. At the age of eight, I was baptized.

Aside from these two events, I recall very little of my early religious life. My connection with Sunday school was as a class officer and a secretary to the Sunday school, so I did not get to attend class very often.

When I did attend class, there were three things I always looked forward to: (1) the time for memorization—I loved to learn Bible verses; (2) the exercises in finding passages of the Bible, as done in a quizzing program; and (3) the receiving of a colored card which was given to all of the children to take home. In my room at the Nazarene day school, there were 50 to 100 of these cards plastered on the wall, a custom still prevalent today in Latin America.

In our family we could miss a meal or a certain function, but we would never miss Sunday school. Sunday school was the best training arena for life, so we thought.

The Nature of Religion

Still, the question is: Can religion be taught?

Descartes was right when he said the first step of the human mind, the desire to confirm personal worth and dignity, is an essentially religious act. He implied that religion emphasizes three acts: (1) being conscious of the ego, (2) the experience of the world, and (3) a sense of dependency upon God. These acts are the result of the man's desire to "become related" to his ideal.

Religion is immortal. It flows into the human soul and becomes richer as we reflect upon it and experience life. Auguste Sabatier defined religion as a commerce between a soul in distress and the mysterious power on which its destiny depends. He says, "Prayer is religion in action—that is to say, real religion. . . . Religion is nothing if it is not the vital act by which the whole spirit seeks to save itself by attaching itself to its principle."¹ If religion cannot be taught, consciousness of religion can be developed through a relationship with Christ. This in turn gives meaning to religious education.

The Nature of Religious Education

Exploring Christian Education, one of the more recent books in the field, assumes that man is religious by nature. Instead of giving reasons for teaching religion, it starts by explaining what religious education is. Apparently it takes for granted that we, at some point, become conscious of religion.

T. Franklin Miller, quoted in the first chapter of *Exploring Christian Education*, says: "Whenever one surrenders to Christ in full commitment of his life and his nature partakes of the divine nature, there is a difference in the quality of his relationship to God; but prior to, during, and forever following such a great decision, there must be the nurture and support of the Christian community."² Education in the church concerns itself with the nurture of persons in all their relationships throughout the life span.

In other words, there is first a relationship to God, followed by the nurturing and support of that relationship. If teaching religion means seeking right relationships between God and man, Christian education becomes the tool in advancing, nurturing and unveiling spiritual verities to men and women who have recently come in contact with God.

I Believe . . .

I believe in religion, for I cannot accept God creating man without instilling in him a desire for relationship with God.

I believe in religion because it is the expression of man's way to relate himself to others.

I believe in religion because of the necessity for deterrents to crime, evil actions, and anything that denies the goodness of God.

I believe in religion because it fills the emptiness in me with hope in a future life and present joy on earth.

As a follow-up to these beliefs, I cannot conceive of a denomination without strong emphasis in the teaching of Bible principles.

My Answer to My question

Personal responsibility for answers to "jugular vein" issues cannot be replaced. Systems are only as good as the convictions behind them—and convictions are personally conceived, and personally carried. It should be obvious by the preceding that, in the view of this writer, the teaching of religion is a team affair, where the team is made up of God in an immediate teaching role, and the Church in an expanding, explanatory role.

Bible understanding, memorization, and the practice of biblical principles, then, are all vital to the future of Christian education.

1. Augustine Sabatier, *Outline of a Philosophy of Religion* (New York: George Doran Company, 1935).

2. As quoted in *Exploring Christian Education* (Kansas City: Nazarene Publishing House, 1978), p. 16.

REFLECTIONS ON CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Christian education is having models and being models—human channels of communication to reach an ever-widening group of children and adults with love, truth, and faith.

Christian education is to have an awareness and an expectation so that meaning can be found in that which God means for us to learn.

Christian education is to help each discover and respond to God's Holy Spirit so that all can have a meaningful understanding of themselves in the world.

Christian education is the Bible confronting us in our humanity and opening to us the secret of how we can be at one with God and others.

Christian education is seeing for yourself, believing with your own soul, knowing with your own mind, choosing with your own free action, so that faith and obedience are your own.

Christian education is being real in our relationships and responses to others. It is aliveness to truth and to the problems of life with which truth confronts us.

—John W. Gaeddert

SEEN & NOTED

Seen and Noted in the 1978 Gallup poll:

- Of the 61 million unchurched American adults, 74 percent said they wanted their children to have religious training. When asked what kind, 73 percent said "Sunday school." Seventy-six percent of churching adults wanted their children in Sunday school.

- The three reasons unchurched adults gave most often for leaving the church were:

- (1) Teaching about beliefs were too narrow
- (2) Too much concern for money
- (3) Moral teachings too narrow

- Forty-seven percent of unchurched American adults once attended Sunday school.

- In 1952, 75 percent of Americans tabbed religion as "very important in their lives. In 1965 the figure dropped to 70 percent. In 1978, religion was "very important" to 53 percent.

- Sixty percent of the unchurched and 52 percent of the churching agree that most churches "have lost the real spiritual part of religion."

- Seventy-six percent of churching Americans and 86 percent of the unchurched believe that "an individual should arrive at his or her own religious beliefs independent of any churches or synagogues."

- Friends, good preaching, and good religious education were frequently cited as reasons for being drawn to a particular church.



What does the world think about Sunday school today? Look at the quotes in the press using the term Sunday school. "That is Sunday school stuff." "What do you think this is, a Sunday school league?" "She's as harmless as a Sunday school teacher." "Me? Go to Sunday school? You kiddin' or somethin'?" It is obvious that the world thinks the Sunday school is a harmless, little old patsy. Or a doting grandfather talking about the good old days. Or a broken-down athlete wanting to run the mile race, but only able to jog to the next corner.

Modern man will not be content to feed on the same spiritual diet. If he can reliably predict what will happen at 9:45 a.m. Sunday morning, you have already lost his keen edge of desire.

—Robert E. Bingham



"Never let Paula see either in you or in her father that which she cannot imitate without sin."

—Jerome: *Letters* 107.9

"Among outward sins none so heavily burdens the world in the sight of God, nor deserves such severe punishment as the sin we commit against our children by not giving them an education."

—Martin Luther



People ask these questions when moving into a new community and deciding on a church:

1. How good is the Sunday school?
2. Does the church have a nursery?
3. What boys' and girls' clubs does it have?
4. What adult activities does it sponsor?
5. What about the quality of its music?

—W. Curry Mavis



"Education makes a people easy to lead, but difficult to drive, easy to govern, but impossible to enslave."

—Lord Brougham



"The Jews were from their swaddling clothes . . . trained by their parents and instructors to recognize God as Father and Maker of the world until, from their earliest youth, they bore in their souls the image of the commandments."

—Philo



"If I had to give up preaching and my other duties, there is no office I would rather have than that of schoolteacher. For I know that next to the ministry it is the most useful, greatest, and best; and I am not sure which of the two is to be preferred."

—Martin Luther



"Sunday school is a violation of the Sabbath day and a means for the lower elements of society to become more intelligent and thus more alert in their destructive ways."

—The Archbishop of Canterbury's response to the first Sunday schools.



"No local congregation contains or represents the whole mission of the church . . . self needs in a congregation can become an obsession to the point of obliterating the vast needs beyond."

—Allen J. Weenink

Nazarene

UPDATE

Compiled by Stephen M. Miller,
Department of Education and the Ministry

“Sunday School Is Big Business”



Those of us who were acquainted with the late Gordon Olsen will never forget his repeated use of this phrase. This great layman invested much of his life promoting the cause of the Sunday school as teacher and superintendent in the local church and as a speaker in

Sunday school conventions. A big businessman himself, he left no doubt that he considered the work of the Sunday school to be more important than almost any other business in life.

And it is. Take Jesus' word for it. In Matthew 28:19-20 He commissions Christians to go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them and “teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.” This high priority assigned to the ministry of teaching by the Master makes Sunday school worth all the time and effort that it costs.

In a day when many of the mainline denominations provide classes only for children, we would do well to reaffirm our traditional belief in the principle expressed in the little chorus which we used to sing:

Everybody ought to go to Sunday school,

The men and the women and the boys and the girls.

We never outgrow our need for studying God's Word. New Christians desperately need it as a means of discipling. But older Christians need it, too, for as

we get beyond the need for gospel “milk” we still need the strength provided by the “meat” of the Word.

And never has the interest in Bible study been more widespread than it is today. Wise is the pastor and congregation that plugs into this current concern for the teaching of the Scriptures. Many people who do not attend church services are responding to small-group Bible studies in the homes. What an opportunity this presents for our people to get their friends and neighbors involved in such studies in their homes and then invite them to share in the ministry of teaching provided by the adult Bible classes of the Sunday school.

There is evidence that the traditional promotional programs for increasing Sunday school attendance are “running out of gas” in many churches. Average attendance has shown a steady decrease church-wide. While some are still having good success with bus ministries, others have about given up this emphasis. Current statistics are proving that the attendance at the morning worship service is equal to or larger than that in Sunday school in most churches.

All of this must not lull us to sleep about the importance of Sunday school. If anything, it should reawaken us to reemphasize the continuing need for Christian education as provided by the Sunday school. With Gordon Olsen, let us reaffirm that “Sunday school is big business” indeed.

General Superintendent Eugene L. Stowe

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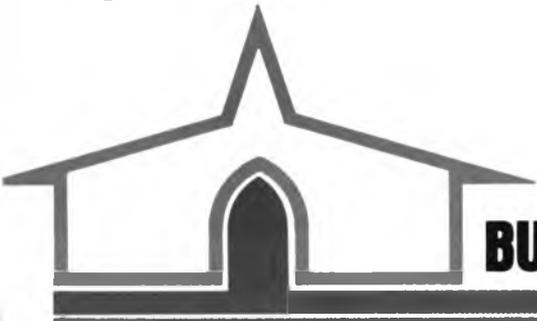
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At the *Preacher's Magazine*

The Editorial Chair

is supported by the wise counsel of a rotating editorial advisory board. Each issue of the new *Preacher's Magazine* will accent a quarterly theme. An advisory board of persons with experience and expertise on the subject is recruited to tell the editor and his staff what needs to be said about the accented theme. Serving without pay, the editorial board pictured on this page helped us put together this issue on "Preaching." A riotous burst of applause is due these gentlemen.

Future boards will be helping us frame issues of the *Preacher's Magazine* on these pertinent themes:

- Pastoral Care
- The Epistle to the Ephesians
- Christian Holiness
- . . . and many more



Ralph E. Simpson
Pastor, St. Joseph, Mo.
First Church



Richard Spindle
Executive Coordinator
Division of Christian Life



J. Paul Turner
Department of
Adult Ministries



Melvin McCullough
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the *Preacher's Magazine*



Stephen M. Miller
Editorial Assistant
the *Preacher's Magazine*

Regional Youth Leadership Conferences



MANC Region
February 22-23
Overland Park, Kans.

ONC Region
February 26-27
Kankakee, Ill.

MVNC Region
March 1-2
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March 5-6
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March 8-9
Atlanta, Ga.

BNC Region
March 12-13
Oklahoma City, Okla.

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March 22-23
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APRIL 15

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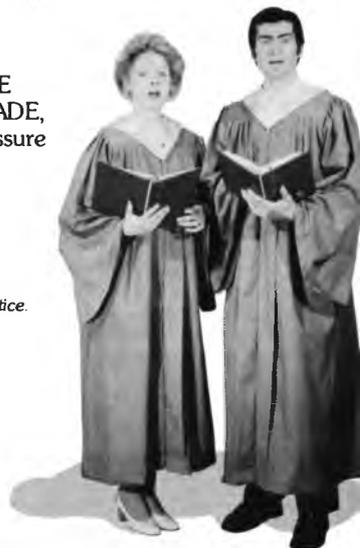
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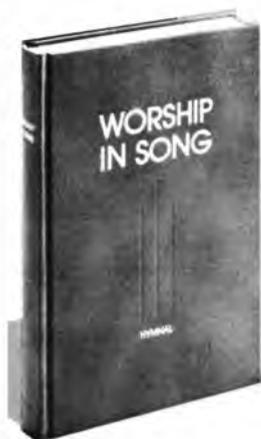
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For more information on these items, consult your copy of the Nazarene Catalog 1979, sent to all pastors. **FREE** copy sent upon request.

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EVANGELISTS' PICTORIAL DIRECTORY

The Department of Evangelism will be listing the Evangelists' pictures in alphabetical order and give important information about them in the following issues. You may cut this page out to start your Directory to have for easy reference when needing an evangelist.



ARTHUR ALLEN (C). New England. Attended Eastern Nazarene College and graduated from Burton College and Seminary. Pastored in Vermont, Maine, New York, and Connecticut. Evangelist since 1972.



C. R. ARMSTRONG (C). Central Florida. Owasso College graduate. Pastored 24 years. Adept in visitation, bus survey, and assisting in church extension. Proclaims scriptural holiness kindly but with challenge.

A



DAN ALLEN (C). South Arkansas. Nazarene Bible College graduate. Pastored 2 years. Emphasis upon prayer and personal soul-winning.



ARNI FAMILY SINGERS (R). Missouri. Attended Nazarene Bible College. Song Evangelists. Lisa, 12, and Meribeth, 17, play the piano and sing. Tammy, 7, sings solo. The whole family sings to lift up Jesus.



CARL AMOS (C). Missouri. Pastored 34 years. Holiness preacher. Pilots own airplane as means of transportation.



MILDRED SISSON ASBURY (R). West Virginia. Attended Olivet Nazarene College. Ordained 33 years ago. Pastored in Virginia, West Virginia, South Carolina, North Carolina, and Indiana.



LAWRENCE & KAREN-LOUISE ANDERSON (C). New England. Song Evangelists. Pastored 10 years.



WALTER ATTIG (C). Illinois. Olivet Nazarene College graduate. Pastored 26 years. Forceful preacher of God's Word. Messages to all ages with a challenge to holy living.



GEORGE ANDREWS (C). North Arkansas. Attended Eastern Nazarene College and Bethany Nazarene College. Preacher and Song Evangelist. Pastored 18 years. Outstanding tenor solo voice. Well-rounded ministry. Messages are forceful and Bible-centered.



KENNETH & MILDRED BABCOCK (C). Upstate New York. Pastoral experience. Biblically-oriented and scripturally sound. Mildred is an accomplished soloist.

B



RICHARD BAKER (C). West Virginia. Preacher and Song Evangelist. Pastored about one year in West Virginia. In evangelism 10 years.



TOM BANEY (C). Southwest Indiana. Nazarene Bible College. Revival and camp meeting singer. Carries full music program.

EVANGELIST CHRISTMAS LOVE OFFERING

At this Christmas season, remember the evangelist(s) who served your church this year. Send checks of \$10.00-\$25.00 or more to show your appreciation of them. Most evangelists hold from 20-40 revivals each year. This means there are no paychecks for the remaining weeks. They would appreciate this gift and are worthy of your support.

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ILLUMINATION FOR MINISTRY



Department of Education and the Ministry

Illumination for ministry — that is what the Department of Education and the Ministry is all about: helping Nazarene laymen and ministers cultivate faith and skills for Kingdom service. This illumination takes place in a variety of places, like local churches, college campuses, and even in Christian homes. It goes on nonstop around the globe, as serious Christians prepare to more effectively serve God in their world.

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And the work goes on!

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From all our educational institutions there is coming a steady flow of Spirit-filled graduates whose entrance into the Nazarene bloodstream will contribute much to the vitality of our church in the challenging days ahead.

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A denominational goal is to involve every minister in a week-long continuing education event each year.

Additional illumination for service can be obtained in the advanced ministerial studies course—a home-study program designed for ordained ministers.





DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND THE MINISTRY
INTERNATIONAL HEADQUARTERS, CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE
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Course of Study

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And Much More

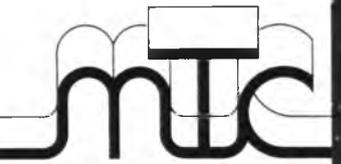
The Preacher's Magazine plays an important role in the continual development of our ministers. This quarterly magazine is sent to every Nazarene minister.

The MTC—Minister's Tape Club—is a new ministerial development project, designed to provide monthly practical insights for more effective ministry.

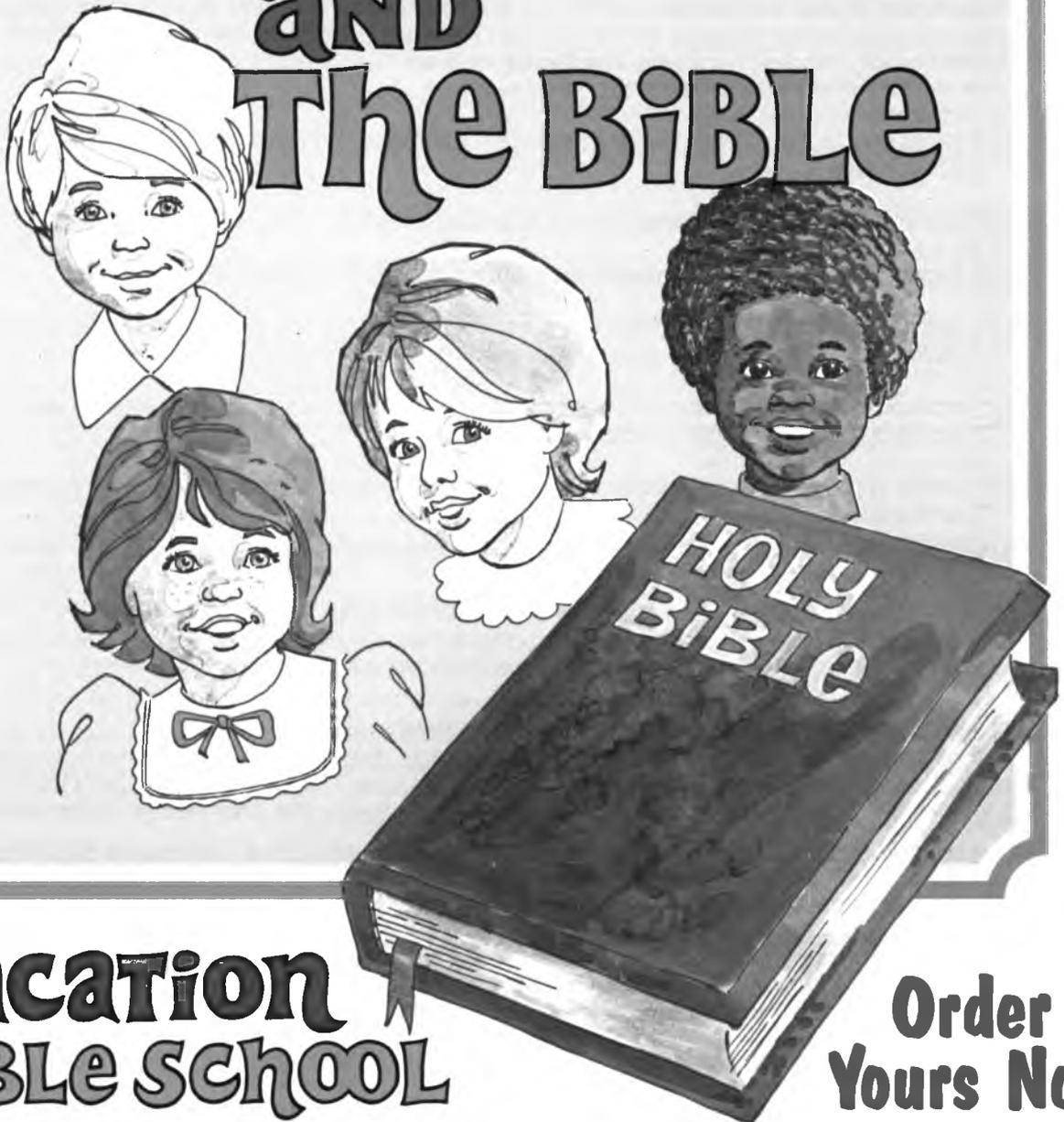
WILCON—Wives' Leadership Conference—is the ladies' answer to PALCON. Designed for ministers' wives, WILCON will be in full operation during the summer of 1979.

The Department of Education and the Ministry operates as a liaison in multiple-staff ministries between associates and local churches.

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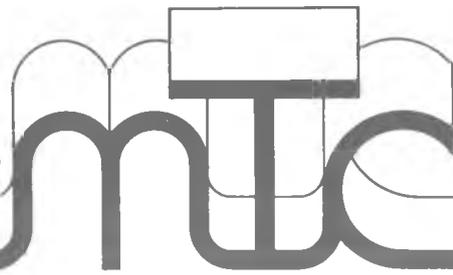
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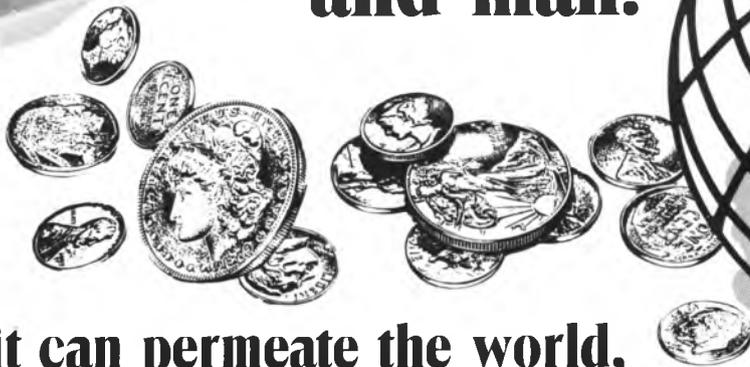


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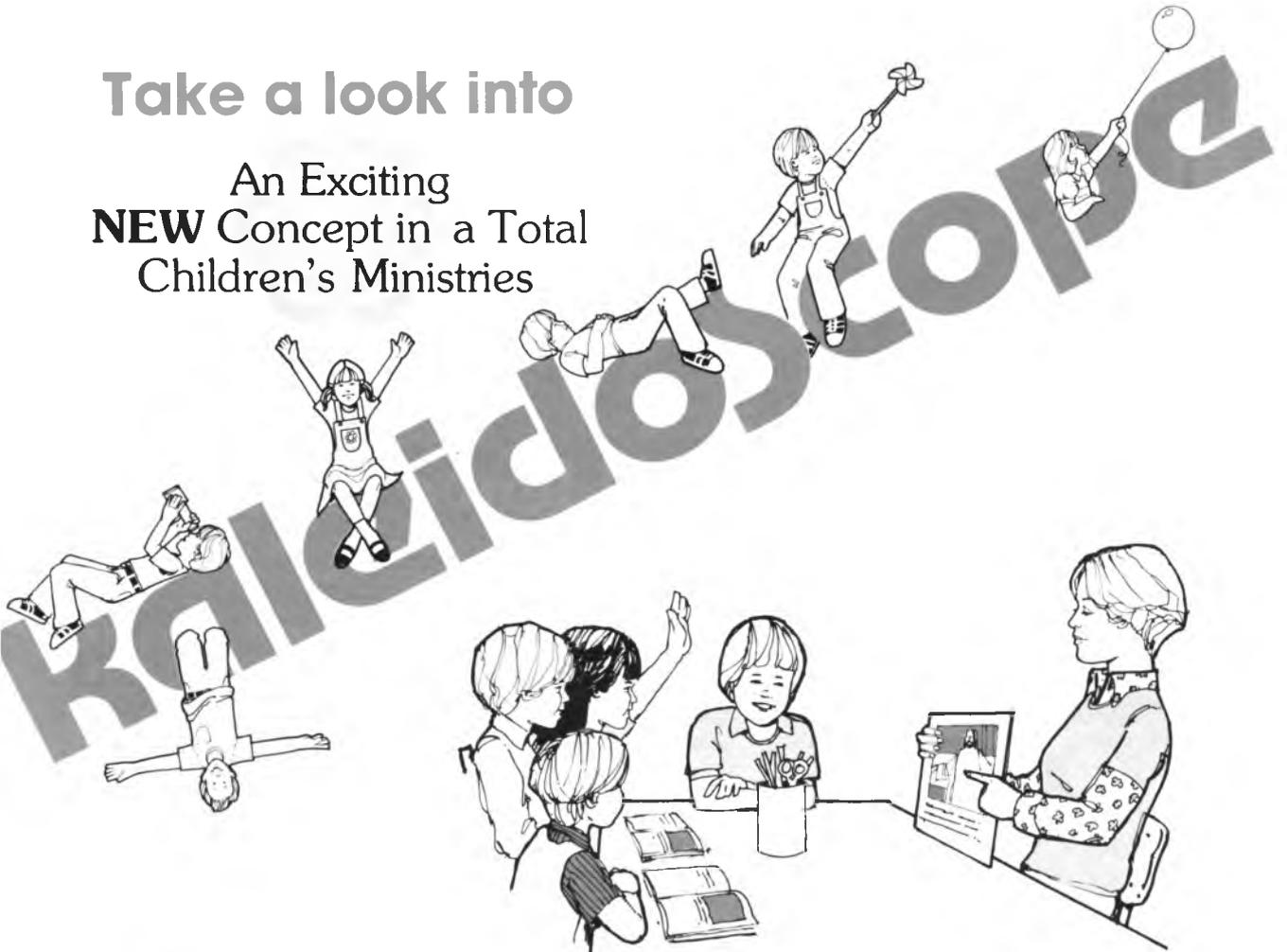
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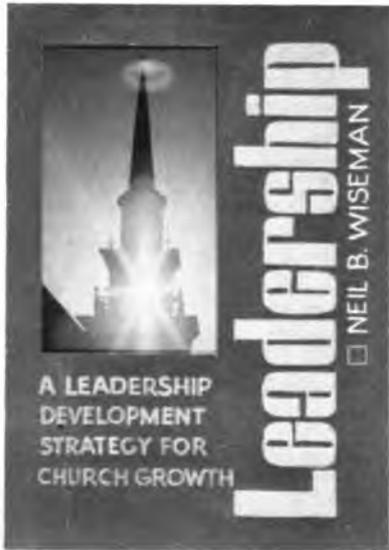
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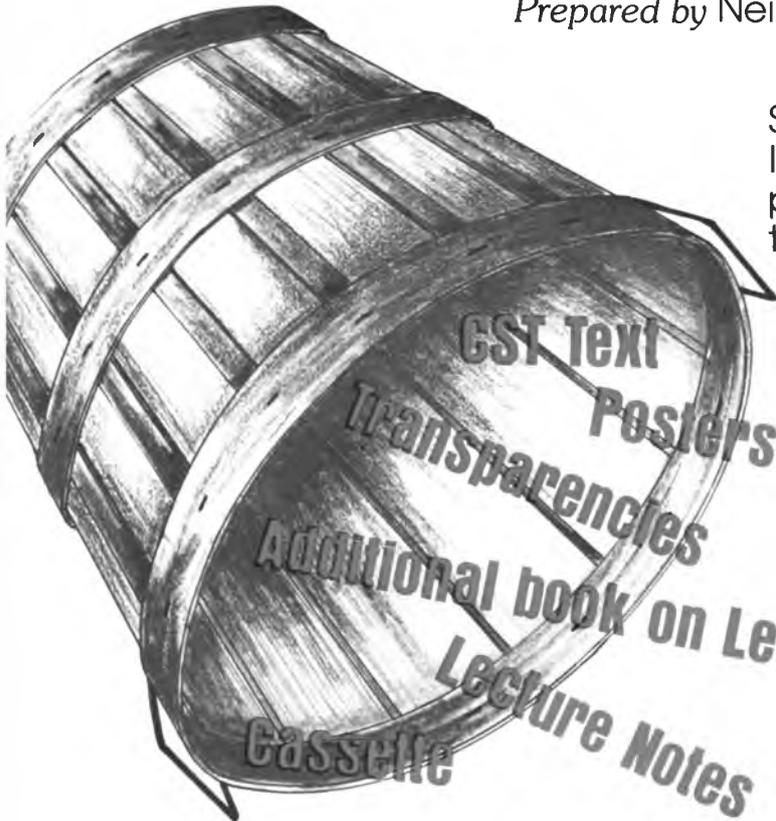
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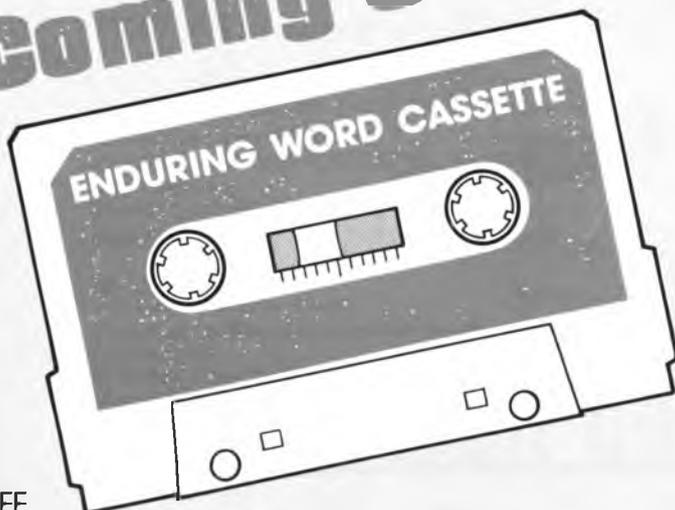
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SEMINARY SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 1979

A Prayer... A Letter... A Declaration

Since 1951, the congregations of the Church of the Nazarene have, by authorization of the General Assembly, participated generously in an annual SEMINARY SUNDAY OFFERING, to be used for the capital needs and long-range projects of Nazarene Theological Seminary. In gratitude to God, and in appreciation to those who have so generously participated, we present three meaningful messages relating to the task of NTS—A PRAYER, A LETTER, and A DECLARATION!



Dr. J. B. Chapman

General Superintendent
1884-1947

A Prayer

God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, look upon us here today and deliver us from the curse that comes upon religious bargain hunters. Help us to count the cost of things that are indispensable, and then help us to pay that price, as our fathers used to do. Thou hast not changed, and our needs are ever the same. In our bargaining, we have obtained but inferior goods. We ask for the heartache and the heartbreak and the tears and the signs which in all the days of the past have presaged the sort of spiritual awakening which we now crave. Deliver us from smugness and unfounded content. Give us that deep love for Thyself and Thy Church that has always acted as an expulsive power to force out all opposites. And give us the souls of men for whom Christ died. Amen, and amen.

The above prayer was prayed by General Superintendent Dr. J. B. Chapman during his message to district superintendents in which he proposed the establishment of NTS.



A Letter

Somewhere in this class of 1978 is the writer of this letter. He is now pastoring a home mission church on one of our southern districts.

Dear Dr. Nease:
I am excited and eager at the thought of completing my years of formal preparation and entering the full-time Christian ministry. Yet, although I am learning more and more to rely on and rest in God's will, still I am experiencing some apprehension about the uncertainties of the future. . . . If seminary has taught me nothing else, it has at least helped me to mature in my Christian experience until I believe I am now prepared to remove the training wheels I've been using and still keep my balance in life. Seminary has been an invaluable learning experience for me. I suppose the one thing I have learned the most is that I still have a great deal to just relax and let Christ be in charge. Nothing in my life that I'm aware of is really out of control, because He is in control.

Cordially yours for His church.

A Declaration

Theological education, as carried on at NTS, focuses in ministry, that is to say, in the service of the work of God to the spiritual needs of mankind. Essentially, our commitment is vocational. While our intention is to be as highly academic as our abilities permit, we will not allow ourselves to lose sight of the overwhelming goal of equipping men and women for service to our Lord. We fully understand the importance of intellectual maturity . . . but failure to communicate effectively the Word of God to the salvation of needy persons virtually cancels the value of theological academics. Philosophical, theological, or biblical acumen without Christian passion for souls nullifies the whole enterprise of theological education, in our judgment.



Dr. Willard Taylor and Dr. Sergio Franco with Mexican NTS students.

The declaration above was delivered by Dean Willard Taylor, at the opening session of the new Extension Program of NTS in Mexico, June, 1978.

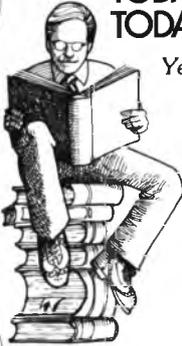
ALL AT NAZARENE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY ARE GRATEFUL TO BE A PART OF OUR GREAT HOLINESS CHURCH. YOUR PRAYERS AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT IN 1978 CAME AS AN EXPRESSION OF LOVE. NTS CONTINUES TO NEED THIS LOVE ON SEMINARY SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 1979!

—Dr. Stephen W. Nease, President

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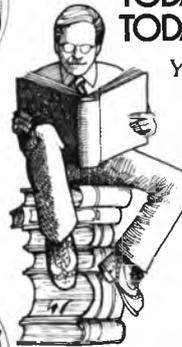
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TODAY'S BOOKS for TODAY'S PREACHER

Every book reviewed in this column may not agree at all points with evangelical holiness positions. Yet each book contains sufficient useful material to warrant bringing it to our readers' attention.

Mental Health: A Christian Approach

By Mark P. Cosgrove and James D. Mallory Jr. (Zondervan, 1977. 88 pp., paperback, \$2.95).

Lingering hostility between theology and psychology is dispelled by Cosgrove and Mallory in this succinct, comprehensive, and immensely readable exposition of the ministry of Christian counseling.

They assert that they are equipped to provide a strategic healing ministry within the church. If the church is to be faithful to the healing compassion of Jesus, then it must respond aggressively to the growing incidence of mental, emotional, and relational breakdowns.

The time is past when the church can afford to deal with the trivial and superficial human problems while referring the "tough cases" to the secular healers.

The authors do an effective job of creating a biblical model of mental healing. Many of the insights shared can provide effective resource material for the pastor who is trying to raise the level of his people's sensitivity to the importance of building loving Christian relationships.

The strongest section of the book is in the assertion that "the church has the potential to heal substantially the men and women and children of our communities. . . . When God reaches out and puts His arms around a suffering

person today, He often does it through the arms of His church" (pp. 67-68).

—C. S. Cowles

Assimilating New Members

By Lyle E. Schaller (Abingdon, 1978. 128 pp., paperback, \$3.95).

"How can we reach more people with the Good News that Jesus Christ is Lord and Savior? How can we bring them into our church? How can we help them feel more at home here? How can we keep our new members from dropping into inactivity?"

These questions, posed by church growth author Lyle Schaller, are real. Pastors are confronted with these issues in seeking to be effective ministers and leaders in the call to measurable progress.

The author gives considerable attention to the glue that holds churches together.

Schaller's chapter on "Twelve Ways to Keep People from Joining Your Church" is sobering to the honest mind and burdened heart. He deals with the dynamics of inclusion and exclusion with special emphasis on the "we-they" thought and practice patterns.

The author suggests ways of strengthening membership through group life, and developing sensitivity to the large number of inactive members.

He challenges the reader with a climactic reminder that there is a price tag on church growth. He speaks of the attitude of members, need for enthusiasm, intensity of belief, and ultimate control that church members have over what happens. Schaller says "that it is unchristian for a congregation to seek new members unless it is also willing and able to accept them into that called-out community."

This church growth book will help any pastor in the work of assimilating new members into the church.

—W. Talmadge Johnson

The Husband Book

By Dean Merrill (Zondervan, 1977. 194 pp., hardback, \$6.95).

"How to" books on husbanding are scarce. Here is a very practical one. It comes very close to being what its subtitle suggests, "A Job Description for the Married Man." Men who want to be good husbands will appreciate the help. Suffering wives will love the author.

Extreme thinking has caused much confusion concerning the husband's role in the modern family. Women's lib accuses Paul of error when he entitles husband "head of the family." Paul is a "woman hater, a male chauvinist." On the other hand, extreme fundamentalism interprets

headship as a domineering autocracy: the wife's role is that of a sweet but brainless lump of sugar.

Merrill's book takes a very sound, sane, and scriptural approach to this important subject. There is a biblical role for the husband, and every wife would appreciate her husband filling the role as described by the author.

There is much valuable material here for counseling troubled marriages and for premarital counseling. Any pastor's preaching ministry to home and family will find enrichment in these chapters.

I recommend *The Husband Book* to would-be husbands as a help in getting started right, and to seasoned husbands who need improvement—most of us.

—R. B. Acheson

The Tabernacle of God in the Wilderness

By Paul F. Kiene (Zondervan Publishing House, 1977. 176 pp., hardback, \$14.95).

The strength of this work lies in the way Kiene has illustrated how details of the Old Testament Tabernacle relate to Christ.

Kiene does this by comparing Old Testament descriptions of the Tabernacle with New Testament passages, especially from the Epistles and Hebrews. This comparison is done in a way that will appeal to a wide readership; it is not carried to extremes.

Kiene's work, which is a translation of a source that originally appeared in German, may be faulted for inadequate use of modern studies. There are also some instances in which Kiene is lacking in his understanding of how Old Testament passages relate to the New Testament. The most noticeable of these is seen in his comment that the new covenant of Jer. 31:31-34 is exclusively for the "house of Israel and of Judah."

Despite the drawbacks, Kiene's book would be helpful to the pastor. It is an attractive volume, with fine artwork throughout. A set of

24 slides that supplement the book is available for \$24.95.

—Harvey E. Finley

The Transforming Friendship

By Leslie D. Weatherhead (Abingdon, 1977. 125 pp., paperback, \$1.25).

Weatherhead wrote this book to show how Jesus transforms everyday life situations by His presence in believers.

He says: "It has truly been said that Jesus could go into any Army mess, into any factory dining hall, into any hotel or boardinghouse, into any students' hostel or college, and His presence would not make men uncomfortable. His second visit would be eagerly looked for."

The entire book is dedicated to the reality of the friendship of Christ in daily living. The author deals with the intimacy and power of Jesus in the life of the believer, the qualifications and personal nature, and how this friendship will affect each believer as he relates to his own friends.

Weatherhead uses a warm, approachable style that makes the book appealing to everyone from the new Christian, to the aged, to the discouraged. It will also be

profitable for those who might want to use it for a Bible study guide. At the back of the book the author has taken time to write study questions for each chapter. I commend this book to you.

—Phil Riley

Human Nature, Election, and History

By Wolfart Pannenberg (The Westminster Press, 1977. 116 pp., paperback, \$4.95).

Pannenberg, one of the world's leading theologians, tries to resurrect and reestablish the doctrine of election by emphasizing its corporate rather than its individual nature. God's elective will consequently works through the Kingdom to establish justice and peace and salvation.

Rather than being elected to salvation in the predestining sense, the reconciled believer "is elected in order to serve as God's agent" (p. 49) to establish His kingdom.

Pannenberg, always concerned about history, does a fine job of explaining how the doctrine of election was reduced to an individualistic concept.

—Gerard Reed



PREACHERS' EXCHANGE

FOR SALE: One set of *Hastings Dictionary* (5 vols.), good condition, \$45.00. Allen A. Bennett, 108 Maple, Nampa, ID 83651.

FOR SALE: Six copies of *Evangelism Explosion*, by D. James Kennedy, hardback, good condition. Will sell all six books for \$35.00. Rev. M. L. Peterson, 825 W. 11th St., Tempe, AZ 85281.

FOR SALE: *History of the Christian Church*, by Schaff, (7 vols.). *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, by Edersheim (2 vols.). E. B. Dourte, 1860 Harrington Dr., Lancaster, PA 17601.

WANTED: One copy of *Women in the Church*, by Putnam. Ruth A. Fidelman, 6502 Harrison Ave., Sciotoville, OH 45662.

WANTED: Two copies of *Homiletics and Pastoral Theology*, by A. M. Hills. W. C. Vaughan, 369 W. 59th St., Hialeah, FL 33012. Phone (305) 822-6293.

WANTED: *Life of Mrs. Mary D. James*, by J. H. James. Copies of *The Methodist Hymnal*, copyright 1905. Mrs. Louis A. Bouck, Kentucky Mountain Bible Institute, Vanclève, KY 41385.

A wedding is in order because—

Home-centered Learning and Sunday School Ought to Be More than “Just Friends”

by Paul S. Hontz

What’s happening to the Sunday school? Good question. Unfortunately the answer to that question is usually a pessimistic one. I’d like for us to consider a “what if” proposition. What if, by some unforeseen and unimaginable circumstance, Sunday school were suddenly abolished? Seriously. What would happen? Perhaps nothing in some places. But I dare say that for most of us there would be an immediate concern for the spiritual welfare of our people; particularly our children. What would we do? Where would we turn? Well, what did we do before Sunday school existed? Better yet, what does the Bible have to say about Christian education?

Everything that we know about Jesus’ education between the ages of infancy and 12 is contained in these two verses:

And when they had performed everything according to the Law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own city of Nazareth. And the Child continued to grow and become strong, increasing in wis-

dom; and the grace of God was upon Him.

—Luke 2:39-40 (NASB)¹

In this brief statement is a wealth of information that I believe to be imperative for a successful Sunday school ministry.

Notice that Luke records that the parents of Jesus “performed everything according to the Law of the Lord.” This is significant in that it reveals Mary and Joseph to be meticulous in the way they raised their Son. From His earliest days Jesus was surrounded by an atmosphere that was conducive to spiritual growth. And it was an atmosphere provided by devoted parents.

From the Word, as well as the historical evidence available to us, it is clear that it was the Hebrew mother who was responsible for the initial training of the children. She was the one who went about preparing the Sabbath meal, kindling the Sabbath lamp, and preparing for the various rituals—all the while being watched by inquisitive young

eyes. Why even before he learned his alphabet, that child was attracted to the religious activities of his mother at home. His attention must have been arrested by the faithful attention given to the *mezuzah* attached to the doorpost. Everytime that doorpost was passed, his parents reverently ran their fingers across it; reminding themselves of the joyous psalm: “The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for ever more” (Ps. 121:8). Again and again in the course of a day, this was done. Can you imagine the impact upon the child? Long before he could go to the school or local synagogue, the private prayers at home, the domestic rites, the religious festivals and weekly Sabbath observance would indelibly impress themselves upon the child’s mind.

But while the earliest religious teachings would naturally come from the mother, it was the father who was ultimately responsible for teaching. No duty was higher

than to impart knowledge of the Torah to his child. This was paramount. Every other responsibility, including eating, was secondary. This meant work. And above all, it meant a commitment of time.

I'm saying that Joseph made time to be with Jesus and to teach Him.

I'm saying that Mary was devoted to God and revealed that devotion in her home activities.

I'm saying that all of this was in Luke's mind when he said that Mary and Joseph "performed *everything* according to the Law of the Lord." They were very careful about how they raised Jesus. They took their spiritual responsibilities toward their children ser-

As we marry Home and Sunday School, we edge closer to the biblical ideal in which religious education is not a preparation for life—it is life itself.

iously. And they followed a biblical plan.

The apostle Paul records a correlative teaching in 2 Tim. 3:14-15:

You, however, continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned them; and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus (NASB).¹

Timothy first received knowledge. From that knowledge, learning took place; he internalized and personalized those facts provided by his mother and grandmother (1:15). Knowledge and learning then led to personal conviction: he became convinced of those things. From this childhood training came the wisdom "that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." But it all began with the knowledge conveyed through the family.

Now what does all this have to

do with having a successful Sunday school ministry? Everything in the world! The ancient pattern in which the family circle was the arena of religious education is not irrelevant to us today. Ideally the Sunday school and the family form a holy partnership through which Christianity is both *taught* and *caught*.

In Christian homes the family unit should be the primary learning center which is supported and supplemented by the Sunday school. Many local churches and denominations are making concerted efforts to get these team members together.

One of the popular ways congregations are getting Sunday school and home closer to the "altar" is by designating a certain night of the week as "Family Night." On this night no church activities are planned—ever. The family is encouraged to spend the evening together (preferably without TV) sharing a family curriculum which complements the Sunday school lessons. Both the Church of the Nazarene and The Wesleyan Church, for example, provide such materials from their denominational publishing houses.

Another way to help the romance between Sunday School and Home is by providing transgenerational learning experiences in the Sunday school. In many evangelical churches it is possible for a child to grow up and never be exposed to expressions of faith by parents or other significant adults. Church and home have become two very separate areas of focus, particularly for the young.

In the past several months we have been asking ourselves some penetrating questions in our local fellowship. Three chief questions that have had a marked influence on our thinking are: (1) What are we saying about the family when we constantly segregate the age-groups? (2) What are we saying about the family when we present the Sunday school hour as if it were the only time for Christian nurture? (3) What are we saying

about the family when we examine the church bulletin and discover something going on every night of the week?

In response to these questions, we have found ourselves moving into some new areas. We believe we must offer our people transgenerational learning experiences in Sunday school that directly involve the participation of the family at home. We must do this if we are going to recaptivate the biblical stance. Behind this is not only the desire to encourage the family to fulfill its biblical responsibilities, but also the realization that unless this kind of thing is done, we will be in danger of sacrificing an entire genera-

Ideally the Sunday school and the family form a holy partnership through which Christianity is both caught and taught.

tion by failing to provide them with sound adult modeling.

Urie Bronfenbrenner, in a report to the White House Conference on Children (fall, 1970) shared this fundamental and disturbing fact:

. . . children need adults in order to become human. The fact is fundamental because it is firmly grounded both in scientific research and in human experience. It is disturbing because the isolation of children from adults simultaneously threatens the growth of the individual and the survival of the society. The young cannot pull themselves up by their own bootstraps. It is primarily through observing, playing, and working with others older and younger than himself that a child discovers both what he can do and who he can become, that he develops both his ability and his identity. It is primarily through exposure and interaction with adults and children of different ages that a child acquires new interests and skills, and learns

(Continued on page 61)

He called some to be "pastors and teachers"

THE TEACHING MINISTRY OF THE PULPIT

by Kenneth Culbertson

In the pulpit, wonder of wonders, I participate in the eternal. There even I become a herald of God's saving grace. I unashamedly believe that the gospel is "the power of God unto salvation" (Rom. 1:16), and when I preach the gospel, I expect it to be a power-filled event. I can never forget that as I preach, the Spirit of God is encountering the spirits of men with the Good News of salvation.

Even with this high concept of preaching, however, I am left with the question of *kerygma* and *didachē*. "It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be pastors and teachers" (Ephesians 4:11, NIV).¹ Is it necessary for me to be a "teacher" as well as a "preacher"? I have been faced with this question many times as I have looked out at my flock and realized that they needed not only to be introduced to Jesus, but also, as the Scripture suggests, to learn of Him. If I am to be both preacher and teacher, when am I to preach and when am I to teach? Or do the two occur simultaneously? Is the "gospel" only the proclamation of the saving facts of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection to persuade the unbelievers to believe? Is teaching somehow separated from the proclamation of the gospel, something to be exercised only upon those who have already believed?

C. H. Dodd, in his book *The Apostolic Preaching and Its Developments*, distinguished between

"preaching," *kerygma*, and "teaching," *didachein*. He defined teaching as primarily ethical instruction, whereas, preaching he viewed as "the public proclamation of Christianity to a non-Christian world."² This differentiation grew out of Dodd's search for an answer to the prevailing theological schools of his lifetime. Borrowing their methods and turning them to more constructive use, Dodd answered those who claimed that the historical Jesus could never be separated from the Early Church's perhaps distorted perception of Him, with the discovery of a common element which could be traced from the witness of the followers of Jesus back through the period of oral tradition to Jesus himself. This common element was "preaching," the *kerygma*, and, as Dodd pointed out, it was essentially the same when proclaimed by Peter, Paul, or by Jesus himself. The implications of Dodd's scholarship are significant for any serious pastor today. If the preaching of Peter, Paul, and Jesus was significantly, similar, modern Christian preaching must be based upon that similarity.

Drawing from the preaching of Paul in 1 Corinthians 15; Rom. 10:8-9; etc.; and from the preaching of Peter recorded in Acts 2-4, Dodd suggests the common apostolic preaching, or *kerygma*, to have included the statement of these essential truths:

Prophecy has been fulfilled, and the promised New Age has been inaugurated through Christ's coming.

Christ was born of the seed of David.

He died as the Scriptures said He would, to redeem us from the evil age of the present.

He was buried.

He rose again the third day as the Scriptures declared He would.

He has been lifted up to the right hand of God, declared to be His Son and Lord of the quick and the dead.

He will come again to judge and to save.

Men are offered entrance into the life of the New Age through repentance and forgiveness of sins.³

Archibald Hunter, in his book *The Message of the New Testament*, suggests the essential apostolic *kerygma* can be recorded in this manner:

- I. A claim that their message was the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy.
- II. A historical exposition setting forth Jesus in His life, death, resurrection, and exaltation.
- III. A summons to repent and accept the forgiveness of sins in Jesus.⁴

Both of these men point out that the Gospels are essentially an expansion of this *kerygma*, and that Paul's preaching is not different from Jesus', but again essentially this same *kerygma*.

Dodd relates that the verb *keryssein* means "to proclaim." The *kerygma* is therefore the proclamation or announcement of the saving facts concerning Jesus. It is the announcement of the Good News, and its verb form *keryssein* may be used interchangeably with *evangelizesthai*, meaning "to evangelize" or "to preach the gospel." Dodd reminds us that a *keryx* was a herald, or "anyone who lifts up his voice and claims public attention to some definite thing he has to announce."⁵ The common announcement of the New Testament was then, according to Dodd, that the Day of the Lord had come and that Jesus and all who truly "preached" after Him were announcing its coming, and calling men to participation in its life through that announcement.

Dodd readily shares his idea of what this means to contemporary preaching:

Much of our preaching in Church at the present day would not have been recognized by the early Christians as *kerygma*. It is teaching, or exhortation (*paraklesis*), or it is what they called *homilia*, that is, the more or less informal discussion of various aspects of Christian life and thought, addressed to a congregation already established in the faith . . . While the Church was concerned to hand on the teaching of the Lord, it was not by this that it made converts. It was by *kerygma*, says Paul, not by *didachē*, that it pleased God to save men.⁶

Dodd sees the *didachē* as being distinct from the *kerygma* and as being most apparent in the later letters of the New Testament as the Church began to expand upon the original *kerygma* with its own exposition. Hunter explains some of the differences in the later Gospels by suggesting the inclusion of these didactic elements to the core *kerygma*.

Both of these men suggest great disparity between "preaching" and "teaching." If I accept their evaluation and if I am to be a pastor and teacher as Eph. 4:11 suggests, I have a difficult, seemingly divided, task.

Craig Skinner, however, provides a different perspective in his book *The Teaching Ministry of the Pulpit*. After describing preaching as an art, Skinner traces the development of preaching from the schools of the prophets through the classical contributions of Aristotle and Quintilian to the specifically Christian development of the art. He rightly reminds us of the necessity for the human development of this divine-human activity called preaching.

Skinner challenges Dodd's separation of *kerygma* and *didachē*. He suggests that preaching and teaching are linked together in such passages as Matthew 4:23; Luke 20:1; and Acts 5:42.

Interesting light is thrown on the question through a comparison of three verses from the Gospels which refer to Jesus' ministry:

And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people (Matt. 4:23).

And he preached in their synagogues throughout all Galilee, and cast out devils (Mark 1:39).

And he preached in the synagogues of Galilee (Luke 4:44).

This comparison seems to indicate that Dodd's separation of teaching from preaching is not warranted, since these terms are used interchangeably to describe the same synagogue ministry of Jesus.

Skinner shows further that in John 6:59; 7:14; and 8:20, unbelievers are the object of teaching (*didaskēi*), yet the emphasis, especially in 8:20, is upon redemption rather than upon ethical or doctrinal instruction. It is interesting to note that in 6:59, the context is Jesus' discussion of himself as the bread of life. The verb is a form of *didaskō*, teaching, yet the discussion concerns a subject which Dodd would assign to the *Kerygma*—the apocalyptic feast. Again we can recognize that the distinction between preaching and teaching, between *kerygma* and *didachē*, is, in fact, often blurred.

Further evidence of the interrelation of preaching and teaching can be seen in the Corinthian list of offices which omits the term *evangelist* from the terms *prophet*, *pastor*, and *teacher*. Evidentially the assumption is that each of these would be evangelists preaching (*kerygma*) the Good News.

Often Paul's preaching had, of necessity, elements of teaching incorporated. As he spoke at Lystra and Athens, he had to teach the folly of their polytheism and idolatry, so that he could share the Good News. It would seem to be "straining at a gnat" to suggest that until he began to recite the specific items recorded in Dodd's outline of the *kerygma*, he was not preaching. The whole divine-

human encounter was preaching, and teaching formed a necessary part of the event.

In Col. 1:27-28, we find that the proclamation of the gospel involved more than a simple "heralding" of the facts, by the use of the participles *nouthetountes*, "admonishing," and *didaskontes*, "teaching." We can observe once again the interchangeability of preaching and teaching when we realize that the verb *kataggellousin*, "to tell thoroughly," is used in its proper form in Phil. 1:15-17 as a synonym of *keryssousin*, a form of *keryssein*, or "preaching."

Skinner further shows that 1 Cor. 15:1-11 is an excellent example of *how* preaching and teaching are interrelated as dual parts of a single event. The gospel is proclaimed and the implications of that gospel upon the lives of the believers are expounded. Both are a part of preaching, *kerygma*. Skinner writes: "There is always a didactic element implicit within the apostolic evangelistic preaching . . . there is always a kerygmatic element implicit within the apostolic teaching."⁷

If I accept Skinner's explanation as being correct, how will my preaching be affected? I will certainly have to view my responsibility to be not only a proclaimer, but also a teacher, and should then be able to live more comfortably with Eph. 4:11. But I must attempt this with caution. If the teaching of the Scriptures grew out of the proclaimed facts of redemption, as Skinner suggests, then I must be certain that my teaching grows out of these proclaimed facts of redemption. The strength to live in obedience to that which is taught will come only from personal response to the saving grace which is proclaimed. My teaching must not be mere moralizing, for then it would be my own. It must spring from the proclamation of the saving facts, and at the same time be part and parcel of those saving facts.

Am I left then with the problem of choosing between the approaches of two competent scholars,

or is there more evidence to help tip the scales?

I believe a comparison of the accounts of the final commission of Jesus to His disciples will help us to determine our answers. Luke speaks specifically of preaching in 24:45-49, but Luke's prologue to the Book of Acts speaks of "all that Jesus began both to do and teach," as if Jesus' disciples were to carry on what He had begun, including teaching. Recognizing that Matthew 28:19-20 is a parallel passage to the above mentioned passage in Luke, we are left with the alternative that Matthew either changed the meaning of Jesus' commission by substituting the words *make disciples* and *teaching* for the word *preaching*; or once again we may conclude that *preaching* and *teaching* are interchangeable terms.

My preaching, I am convinced, must have both proclamation and teaching to be truly biblical. Those who for years had been taught at the feet of the Rabbis might respond to a simple declaration of the *kerygma* that what they had learned for so long had now come to pass; but those who had learned little or nothing of such matters had to be taught what the proclamation of the *kerygma* meant for them personally. It remains so today!

My task is clear. I must proclaim *and* teach!

He called some to be pastors *and* teachers, and then He said, "Fear not; I am with you always." I can never enter the pulpit without the awesome knowledge that it is my responsibility to preach and to teach the most important facts ever spoken to human beings; nor can I afford to enter without remembering that He enters with me to preach and to teach.

1. From the *New International Version of the New Testament*, © 1973 by the New York Bible Society International. Used by permission.

2. C. H. Dodd, *The Apostolic Preaching and Its Developments* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1964), p. 7.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 17.

4. Archibald M. Hunter, *The Message of the New Testament* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press), pp. 29-30.

5. Dodd, p. 7.

6. Dodd, pp. 8-9.

7. Craig Skinner, *The Teaching Ministry of the Pulpit* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1973), pp. 86-87.

ALIVE AND WELL

(Continued from page 11)

you what you are. The twinkle in your eye, your smile, one crooked tooth, and a thousand other details add up to give you a unique quality that is either positive or negative. Either because of these characteristics you have a "good" personality or you have a "bad" personality. The same is true with a

city, a state, or a country.

And the same dynamic works in giving a church its own unique personality. In your church, every detail is important, for each one is part of the great mosaic that is either appealing or repelling.

I know my analysis of an alive or apathetic Sunday school places a great amount of the responsibility for success or failure on the pastor. But I am afraid that is the way it is in business, in government, or anywhere else, including the church.

What would you say if God called you to preach the Christmas sermon to the pitiful prisoners in Hitler's death camp at Dachau? Here is what Martin Niemoller preached to them on:

CHRISTMAS EVE, 1944

Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger (Luke 2:10-12).

When Christmas must be celebrated in captivity it is naturally a rather dismal affair. Ordinarily we human beings are really satisfied only when the holidays, as one says, "have finally been happily endured again." And this is readily understood. There is no feast in the course of the year that moves us so deeply as Christmas, that brings back so many cherished and intimate memories, that awakens in us such strong and deep longings for what has been taken from us!

Thus it happens that in these holidays we feel somewhat uncertain about ourselves and actually fear continuously that we may lose control over ourselves. Bitterness in bearing the burden laid upon us and revolt against our lot are then particularly close to us. We must strive with innumerable contending feelings in our breast. And so it finally happens that we are really glad when the average daily routine again enfolds us and when the stormy waves of emotions, which made us restless and uneasy, gradually subside again.

Under such circumstances there remains little chance for the joy of the heart, as we knew it formerly in the Christmas days and which used to make our souls spacious, luminous, and grateful. We are now indeed a "people that walked in darkness," as the prophets said (Isa. 9:2), men who are tossed back and forth between fear and hope and

who finally can find nothing better to do than to let things take their course.

Life Without God

But now the ancient proclamation sounds in our ears, those Christmas glad tidings with the angel's announcement to the shepherds in the fields, that moving story of a Babe in the manger who would bring to all people joy and salvation. Centuries have drawn comfort, joy, and hope from it; but today it looks almost as if the era of grace was finished, as if all this was merely an echoing sound which our ears still perceive, but which is no longer strong and powerful enough really to set human hearts in motion.

If we ask the reason for this, however, we obtain a simple, but significant answer: man has fallen into the habit of living his life without God. My dear friends, I do not wish to be misunderstood. I do not mean the people who call themselves "godless," and for certain scientific, philosophical, or political reasons assert, "There is no God"—people with whom we cannot be classed. I mean decidedly ourselves, who are assembled here, who have not yet discontinued the practice of opening and closing the course of our days with prayer. But God often seems to us to be so infinitely far that we think He is not concerned with our planet. It does in fact really seem as if He had left this earth to its own devices, in order that mankind might at last destroy it completely. And from this notion it is but a narrow step to the distrustful question, "How could God be concerned with me, a small, miserable, little man, in a time when hundreds of thousands, and millions, perish dismally? Is that not utterly senseless and paradoxical?" The result of such thoughts, which

actually force themselves upon us at this time, is that unconsciously we exclude the thought of God from what happens to us day by day, that we see only the human beings and the terrestrial conditions and base on them, according to circumstances, either our hopes or our fears. This is the situation which I have in mind when I say "to live without God"; it prevents us from drawing from the Christmas story such comfort, joy, and hope as our fathers did.

Precisely in this plight of the heart the glad tidings of Christmas will bring us help, if only we hear the message properly, and believe it as the word which the Living God speaks unto us and on which we shall meditate for a moment.

There, then, lies the Babe in the manger. Innumerable poets have sung His praises, numberless painters have pictured Him, and since the days of our own childhood we see Him thus through our inner eye, crowned with a nimbus and transfigured with the romantic radiance which art and the poetry of the human spirit have poured upon that scene in the stable of Bethlehem.

The reality of the gospel message ignores all this fictitious magic. In the tidings imparted to the shepherds only a twofold "sign" is named for them and for us, i.e., two matters which are significant for this child and his identification: This Babe is wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger. That is all. And what does this tell us? First of all, the Child that lies there wrapped in swaddling clothes is no less feeble and helpless than any other babe born into this world. The mother must care for Him lest He perish, must wrap Him in swaddling clothes lest He freeze to death, must nourish Him lest He die of hunger. So the swaddling clothes are a characteristic sign and presage for the life of the Man of whom it was said on a later day: "He saved others; himself he cannot save; (Matt. 27:42). In the second place, the manger likewise is no mere pictorial feature for the enhancement of the poetry of Christmas; it is again a sign, a sign of the homelessness of this Babe: "There was no room for them in the inn." The manger also is an omen, for the Babe was to grow into the Man who was forced to say of himself, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head" (Matt. 8:20). These are the two signs given to the shepherds, and to us also.

But if we now look deeper and ask what the human helplessness and earthly homelessness of the Infant Jesus can tell us, then the tidings of great joy begin precisely here: God, the eternally wealthy and almighty God, enters into the most extreme human poverty imaginable. No man is so weak and helpless that God does not come to him in Jesus Christ, right in the midst of our human need; and no man is so forsaken and homeless in this world that God does not seek him, in the midst of our human distress.

The Seeking God

Here the situation is therefore not as in the man-made religions. These require that we human be-

ings set out to go to a distant deity, throned in its majesty above us in unattainable heights, on which we must laboriously climb—but without ever reaching the goal because our strength is simply not adequate. Here, conversely, God comes down to us and cares for us; and He does not single out the strong and good, in order to abandon to himself and to his fate the feeble and ill. Here, out of the swaddling clothes and the manger, comes this call unto us: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. 11:28). Here takes place what the apostle Paul comfortingly proclaims to us: "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor" (2 Cor. 8:9).

This is what is so singularly peculiar in the Christian message of salvation, which tells us, "You need not go to search for God; you should not

You should not imagine that He is far from you and is not concerned with what crushes you! . . . Whoever can grasp this in faith is not forsaken in prison and in death; for in the worst darkness he may say, "Thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me" (Psalm 23:4).

imagine that He is far from you and is not concerned with what crushes you! He is here and is close to you in the Man who, as a Babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, was lying in the manger. All your need is so far from being alien to Him that on the contrary He gave himself freely in order to bear it with you." Whoever can grasp this in faith is not forsaken in prison and in death; for in the worst darkness he may say, "Thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me" (Ps. 23:4).

My dear friends, on this Christmas feast let us seek, in the Babe of Bethlehem, the One who came to us in order to bear with us everything that weighs heavily upon us. Then we will undoubtedly become aware of the great joy that is announced to us; and out of the brilliance that surrounded the shepherds a shining ray will fall into our darkness. This Child is called "Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us" (Matt. 1:23). Yea, God himself has built a bridge from himself to us! A dawn from on high has visited us!

We have thus considered a single phase of the Christmas message, and it may seem that in this manner the essential has been said. But there is still another phase, and in the end it is even more important for us. For sure, the signs—swaddling clothes and manger—remain loyal to the Man after the Child has outgrown them. He goes on His way, onward into the depths of mankind: He becomes an itinerant preacher, followed by the common people while great men and scholars face Him with explicit skepticism, if they consent to notice Him at all. He

becomes that peculiar kind of saint who associates with publicans and sinners, with harlots and lepers. He becomes at last the "man of sorrows," betrayed by His own disciple, understood by none of His friends, and even deserted by God's hand—His earthly life ended on the cross (and that means on the gallows). "See, what a man!" His whole life was a path of grief and woe, from the manger to a grave which was not even His property. Such is the life of this Child, as it unfolds before our eyes.

But God has placed His own superscription on this life; He sends us this message about this Child: "Unto you is born this day . . . a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:11). Here more than comfort is at stake, as God inclines toward us; here salvation, deliverance from mortal need and danger are involved; for the word which our Bible translates as *Saviour*" means originally *rescuer* or *deliverer*, One bringing help when we ourselves are no longer able to help ourselves.

Sinners Need a Savior

The Holy Scriptures do not leave in doubt what sort of need is meant here—from which only a Savior, a Deliverer, can rescue us. They speak plainly of sin and mean thereby our disobedience against God's holy commandments, the impudent mutiny of the human creature against his Creator. And the Scriptures trace this perversion in the basic human attitude toward God back to the first beginnings of the human race and regard pessimistically all human striving for improving this condition: "Every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Gen. 6:5). Death and judgment are the end; for "the wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23), and God "shall reward every man according to his works" (Matt. 16:27).

To recognize the truth of such a verdict, we need not follow human history step by step; a glance at our own heart and life—when they are honorable—shows us more clearly than all examples that we cannot abide one instant before the holy God and His commandments, and that in reality all the misery of our lives is well deserved if, yes, if there is a God in heaven who demands of us obedience to His holy will. This bad conscience is consequently almost always the secret mainspring of all crass or refined atheism and godlessness. For who could ever have found a way to redeem himself from his bad conscience, and therefore from his sins, other than to deny God, or to forget Him, or at least try to forget Him, and to place himself in God's place as his own legislator and lord?

Yet no one can escape from the grasp of God! "Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me" (Ps. 139:7-10). There is no escaping from God, and none may elude His judgment. It is therefore hardly astonishing that this earth is becoming more and more a hell, that a

battle of all against all rages here; but it is astonishing when, to this human world, these tidings are proclaimed: "Unto you is born this day . . . a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."

Of course *how* this promised salvation will occur, *how* our deliverance takes place, is not told us in the Christmas gospel; but it had already been foreshadowed and ushered in. The seer of Isaiah 53 had foreseen it: "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows." A pious man has coined this fine saying, "The passion of Christ begins with His swaddling clothes." In Christ, God himself brings the deliverance which we are unable to secure for ourselves: He not only inclines toward us, but lifts us toward himself: "I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more" (Jer. 31:34). Christ, the "God with us," is also the "God for us," and we may joyfully cry out, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Rom. 8:31).

That is truly a proclamation which deserves the name "great joy." Fear may now withdraw: "Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people." Surely this is a joy which passeth all understanding; for it concerns God's work and activity, and how could we understand that? This joy is more than what we human beings may ever dare to expect and hope. But it is an object of petition, it is to be believed. And who believes, has!

It is to the shepherds that was given the first information about the Savior who lies as a Babe in the manger. They are simple, plain, people: "To the poor" is the gospel preached (Luke 4:18). They certainly did not have unlimited wishes and no grandiose hopes for their earthly existence; they assuredly did not dream of a Paradise on earth that was soon to come. And whoever does so will always disregard the biblical tidings about Christ. But he who wishes to reach again an agreement with God and seeks peace of mind may and must be helped. The glad tidings of Christmas proclaim to him: "God is near, to help you; Jesus Christ, your Brother and your Savior, is here; fear not, only believe!"

And we, dear friends, who are cut off from the outside world, inactive spectators of all men's battles and convulsions, we who have daily many hours to gaze inwardly and to understand ourselves clearly, we who often miss so painfully the peace of mind because we do not look at God and His Word, but rather at mortals and their doings—should not our inward hearing be especially receptive to the tidings brought to us by the Christmas gospel? Should not the saying about the "great joy" concern us in particular, since we know fear—fear of death as well as fear of life? Let us therefore today, on this holy Christmas Eve, beseech the Lord Jesus Christ that He, who came as a Babe into a world alienated from God in order to save it, may enter also into us, bring us His salvation, and grant us His joy! Amen.

From *Dachau Sermons*, by Martin Niemöller, translated by Robert H. Pfeiffer, pp. 1-14. Copyright 1946 by Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc. Reprinted by permission of the publishers.

TO SPARK A FIRE

by G. Roger Schoenhals

When was the last time you tackled a heavy book and wrestled with tough ideas? Have you added anything worthwhile to your library since school days? Is your theology going anywhere? Do you feel like crawling in a hole when one of your colleagues tries to engage you in heady dialog?

It's not apple pie to keep the mind growing when immediate needs press for time and attention. A parson has to be motivated.

One way to build a fire under yourself is to become involved in the Wesleyan Theological Society, a body of men and women who seek to help each other grow in subjects relating to the Wesleyan-Arminian faith.

Thirteen years ago WTS was born as a commission of the Christian Holiness Association. Its stated purpose is to "encourage and exchange ideas among Wesleyan-Arminian scholars and other persons interested in this area; to accept leadership for the doctrinal seminar program of the Christian Holiness Association; to stimulate scholarship among younger theologians and pastors; and to publish a journal consisting of significant contributions to Wesleyan-Arminian scholarship."

Members and friends of the society meet annually for a two-day conference dealing with various aspects of Wesleyan-Arminian thought. Scholarly papers are read and followed by discussion. Later in the year the papers are published in the society's *Journal* for further study and reflection. Conferences are held on the campuses of various Christian colleges, usually in the midwest. This year's meetings were held at Mount Vernon Nazarene College, in Ohio.

I've been a member of the society for several years. Here are some of my observations about last year's conference.

1. Young scholars are active in the society. For some reason I had the idea that WTS conferences were where old guard met to reinforce themselves on traditional aspects of holiness doctrine. Not so. The conference I attended was peppered by up-

and-coming as well as seasoned veteran theologians, who are turned on to diligent research and thoughtful debate.

2. A second impression relates to the content of the papers. Again, I guess my twisted mind had led me to expect a series of sermons on holiness doctrine, similar to some of my theological classes at seminary. Instead, I was pleasantly surprised to find professors and other program participants wrestling with such subjects as "John Fletcher's Influence on the Development of Wesleyan Theology in America," "Entire Sanctification in Early American Methodism," "Nineteenth Century Philosophy and the Development of Holiness Theology: A Study in the Thought of Asa Mahan," "The Fundamentalist Leavening of the Holiness Movement, 1914-1940," "Through the Sanctifying Spirit: Finney's Synthesis of Wesleyan and Covenant Theology," and "The Doctrine of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit: Its Emergence and Significance." It's the kind of grist I need to keep my mind grinding away on intellectual matters relating to my faith and heritage.

3. WTS is a going concern. Those who think Wesleyan doctrine is no longer relevant to mainstream evangelical thought need to take a look at the swelling membership in WTS. The thousand-member society picked up 50 members last year, and the conference at Huntington College was the largest ever. These statistics, along with a growing number of publications relating to Wesleyan history and thought, indicate a rebirth of interest in the Wesleyan message for today.

Many of our pastors may be unaware of the society's existence. That's why I'm writing this article. And that's why I'm including the secretary's name and address. He'll provide information about the *Journal*, membership, and this year's program. Write Wayne E. Caldwell, Th.D., Wesleyan Theological Society, 215 E. 43rd St., Marion, IN 46952.

Becoming involved in WTS is one way to keep the cobwebs out of the theological rooms of your mind. It will also put you in touch with the cutting edge of contemporary Wesleyan thought.

WOULDN'T YOU LOVE TO BE A MODEL?

by Marjorie Goslaw

"I'm sick and tired of being an example" stormed our little boy. He and his brother, along with several other boys, had been allowed to camp out in a tent during camp meeting. Well after curfew their noisy pillow fight got my husband up out of bed. He brought both our boys back into the cabin for the night. He admonished them about how the district superintendent's kids were to set good examples—a speech our youngster was weary of hearing.

Little boys are not the only ones to grow weary with example setting. It is a malady not unknown to ministers' wives. But if example setting is a good thing, we must not "grow weary in well doing." Paul praises the Thessalonian Christians because they "became a model to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia" (1 Thess. 1:7, NIV).¹

Personalizing this verse in my own devotions, I replaced "Macedonia and Achaia" with the name of my own town and my own church. I looked up the word *model* and discovered this definition: "A person regarded as a standard of excellence to be imitated." Meditating and praying on this verse seemed to lift Christian *modeling* out of the realm of duty into the freedom of love.

I recommend this quiet-time exercise to other ministers' wives. It is a good observation point from which to view our lives. While you meditate on 1 Thess. 1:7 (and Eph. 5:1), ask yourself three questions.

1. How do I handle anxiety about material things?

The Bible tells us:

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus (Phil. 4:6-7, NIV).

Do we really believe it? Loudly we answer, "Amen!" But sometimes we may unwittingly testify that this promise is not working well in our lives by our attitude toward financial needs.

There are some ministers' wives who must work outside the home and church to make it possible for their husband to serve as pastor of a church. Thank God for them! If it were not for dedicated wives who are willing to go to work at secular jobs, many churches would be pastorless. These women are modeling lofty Christian virtues.

On the other hand, some ministers' wives seem to think that the only proper response to the first threat of financial trouble is

to dash out and get a secular job before sundown. Here are some risks that such action may invoke:

A. The job may become more important than the role of minister's wife.

B. A pastor may become a part-time housekeeper and babysitter to the neglect of study and visitation.

C. The higher standard of living made possible by the added income may become a necessity and an imposing factor when seeking the will of God regarding a call to another church.

D. A pastor-husband may need to grapple with the constant undermining of his morale by the inference that he is unable to support his family.

2. How do I handle anxieties related to health and illness?

Do I constantly fret about my family's ailments, talk nonstop about our hurts, our pain, our operations? Do I make "headlines" of the illnesses in our family? Do I allow our poor health to become a crutch, or an excuse for my inconsistencies? Would it not be possible to allow anxiety over poor health to become a *cause* of poor health as well as a result?

Should any of these be true, it might appear that we are so wrapped up in ourselves that we

have little real concern for others. And we would silently proclaim that we have failed to find in prayer the source of "strength for our day." This falls short of ideal Christian modeling.

3. How well do I handle criticism?

It comes to all of us, at one time or another, criticism of ourselves, our husbands, or our children. Books could be written and still not supply all the answers. But I have observed some of the attitudes and actions that can arise in the midst of criticism, and the resulting breakdown of influence and effectiveness.

The question is—"How do we react to criticism?" Do we fret and worry about the intent, motives, and effect of the criticism? Some do so aloud to others—creating an atmosphere of tension and division. Others just "stew" inside, building up an "ulcer" of bitterness and self-pity.

Are we tempted to endeavor to justify ourselves, going to extremes to vocally and actively defend against the critic? Would it be possible that we would try

to discredit the critic—and thus participate in the same activity that has hurt us? There may be a tendency to feel justified in doing so, even though others may be hurt in the process. Do we eventually ascribe to the critic the lowest, most carnal motive?

When we react in these ways, are we not giving evidence to our lack of a settled assurance that we are in God's will, and so can fully trust Him to defend us?

There is a positive approach to dealing with criticism. We can acknowledge that while it hurts, it may also be beneficial. Even though the accusation is not true, it may serve as a reminder that we may be vulnerable at this point and need to ask the Lord to strengthen our defenses.

Most of all, we can evidence the presence of the "peace that passes understanding" in the stormy times of criticism. For when the Lord stills the storm, not only are we comforted, but there is healing and love for those with whom we have developed strained or broken relationships. So often, those who have criticized are hurting too.

This peace is not something we can produce ourselves. It comes to us at the point of "praying through"—praying until a fresh assurance of His presence is real, praying until we can love unhindered those who have hurt us. It comes as we are praying in the name of Jesus, who endured the most severe criticism and false accusations, to become our Savior, and looked lovingly at His accusers and prayed "Father forgive them."

As we open our hearts to Him, He will help us to learn to be models of those who truly believe His promises. Christian modeling does not mean that we become emotional yo-yos, controlled by every misinformed whim of public opinion. But it does mean that we live responsibly and Christian in all circumstances. He will teach us to handle the difficult times in our lives so that they bring glory to His name.

Being a model may not be easy, and may not be glamorous or even popular. But it is biblical and worth the effort.

1. From the *New International Version of the New Testament*, © 1973 by the New York Bible Society International. Used by permission.

From an Evangelist's Wife

A PRAYER

Lord, that time is rapidly approaching . . .
Seems only a few days ago we faced those long weeks
with no income.
Thank You for the carefree days . . .
Dropping a check in the mail for utilities consumed,
Paying the mortgage on time,
providing a nourishing meal,
Paying the tithe, and helping with those special offerings.
I hold my head high and keep pretending,
it will be this way all year!
But Lord, You know me . . . I need a lot of props.
Would You please make those three months pass
swiftly?
Why did my neighbor have to lean over the fence and
ask, "Does your church provide any help during the
summer when your husband is not preaching?"

I smilingly assured him, "We'll make it fine!"
But the awful truth rears its head again.
I know I should have faith,
Shouldn't question,
Shouldn't doubt.
But however hard I try I can't hide from You this
desperate, screaming ache to ask . . . "Why is
provision made for every worker in MY church except
the evangelist?"
I can't tell people these things, Lord, because they think
I'm strong.
They don't know I'm a coward . . . but You do.
So keep propping me up like a spindly plant, and help
me to grow strong and courageous.
When these times come and the props are taken away,
please, please stand very near.

HOW SHALL I PREACH TO TEENS?

by Stephen Manley

More preachers are threatened by the teenage crowd than any other group I could name, and with good reason. When service after service you stand and stare at a whole group of them on the back row, you wonder how to reach them. Some of them are from Christian families, some from the bus route, and some are from broken homes. Some came just to get away from their parents, and others came just to be with their girl friend. To preach a message that communicates with them is no easy matter.

The Joke Approach

Due to the complexity of the problem I, like others, have experimented with several approaches. One is the "joke" approach. It consists of filling the brain waves with an immense reservoir of up-to-date jokes which will be ready for use at the slightest need. It enables you to be surrounded by 20 joke-telling teens and every other joke is yours. It causes you to shine at such moments when someone coughs in the service, for it reminds you of a joke which immediately restores attention back to yourself. I have to admit that I have had to set the joke approach aside. When teens went home from youth camp and reported to their parents that I was the most wonderful joke-teller they had ever heard, I got the feeling that maybe the no-joke of the gospel was a bit overshadowed with the laughter of the moment. I have ceased to feel guilty for not keeping the crowd rolling in the aisles.

The Entertainment Approach

A second approach for the presentation of the gospel is the "entertainment" approach. This goes all the way from skit preaching to gospel films. It may include gospel magic and puppetry. When you are able to combine all of these methods into a one-hour jam-packed fun time, you will no doubt be the amazing youth speaker you have always wanted to be. But while you may amaze the audience you

may fail to communicate deep truth. I have watched teen groups which could care less about Bible study get so emotionally stirred with a movie on the Second Coming that the altars were lined. That would have been fine if the end result would have been interest in the Word. But you guessed it, they were as dull towards the Word after the emotional stir as they were before. I have been with teen groups who seemed to be totally disinterested in the worship service. Yet the singing of a roving quartet which laced its gospel songs with "country-western and pop" stirred them to lining the altars. I thought that the next worship service would be something to behold, only to discover that the same disinterest was present even after the emotional stir. The gospel is more than entertainment. The world has driven our people into spectatorship with their entertainment; our preaching must draw them out of spectatorship into participation.

The Celebrity Approach

Another method is the "star" approach. Christians everywhere have been enamored with this. We have latched on to the saleable conversions of the top athletes, the beauty queens, the gang leaders, and have sold ourselves a bill of goods that produced negative tendencies. Have we convinced our teens that Jesus will help them to be touchdown heroes too? If they need to lose 30 pounds to attract their desired date, is the answer simply "come to Jesus"? We might be teaching them to use Jesus like you would use a health spa instead of surrendering to Him. After all, this surrender to Jesus might not make one a successful star; rather it might give one a bleeding back in some Philippian jail, or cause one to amaze his friends by attending Wednesday night prayer meeting instead of basketball practice.

The Spoiled Approach

The fourth approach that I have set aside is the

“spoiled rotten” approach. Sunday after Sunday our young people have heard us tell them how much harder it is for them than it was for us. They have heard us lay out the excuses for their dullness on Sunday morning in the back row. After all, they watched the late late show on Saturday night, and teens need their sleep even if it is during the sermon on Sunday morning. We have had the pizza party for them. Not only did we plan it, but we paid for it, and picked up the mess afterwards. We have handed the whole Christian package to them on a silver platter and wondered why they did not buy it. We have spoiled them. We have failed to teach them that they are as much responsible for prayer and ministry support as any adult. There is not one standard for teens and another for adults. It is amazing, the number of young people who have referred to Sunday worship as their parents’ service rather than their own. They felt no responsibility towards the worship service at all. The candy wrappers on the floor where the teens sit is part of the proof.

A More Excellent Way

This leads me to the approach that I believe in. I will have to confess; it is not original. I copied it from Jesus. In fact, the pattern for His approach can be seen in the story of the confrontation between Jesus and the rich young ruler (Mark 10:17-22).

There was something about the atmosphere of Jesus’ living that penetrated the heart of a young man. He had the kind of general excitement of positive living that caused fellows like the rich young ruler to fall at His feet and say, “I don’t know what You have, but I want it.” Our preaching to young people is going to have to contain an excitement of positive earnestness that penetrates every word we say. We must be so thrilled with it ourselves that we come on with all we have in order to convince them. The dull quoting of our memorized speeches, and the negative expression of the badness of our world does not grab the attention of this generation which is looking for real answers. We must speak with a positive, authoritative, excited message which has come from Jesus and has been lived out in our own lives. If you are not so excited that you can hardly stand it, do not expect young people to listen.

In bringing answers to a young man’s question, Jesus took the biblical approach. He quoted the Old Testament. Preaching on the latest world events or sharing the impact of the latest television series will not get through to young people. Our topical sermons, saturated with embellished stories, have left them sleepy. Let us get back to biblical, expository preaching. John Wesley pledged himself to be a man of one Book. Let us challenge young people to bring their Bibles to church because we use them. Let us make our message so biblical that they cannot get the full impact of that message without

getting into the Word with us. We must be so filled with the Word that every answer to every question that a young person asks will end up in the Word. Young people must catch from us that this Book is the authority for this hour.

The third part of Jesus’ approach is that He was not afraid of the high standard for godly living. He hit the rich young ruler squarely with the call for obedience to the commandments of God. It was a strong call because it was right. Maybe we have been so afraid of turning young people off that we have watered down the call for total obedience. Jesus’ call to this young man was demanding. This young man knew that to walk with this Christ would take absolute surrender of his life. Not a surrender to a list of rules easily kept, but to the total will of Christ. It is easier to keep a list of rules than it is to sell all you have and give to the poor. It is easier to fit into a form of living than it is to change your priorities and your loves. I have found it easier to keep the rules of the church than to obey Jesus in every area of my life. We must get over our fear of calling our young people to total obedience to Christ. We must insist on it without excuse.

Jesus called the rich young ruler to himself. We must get back to the Christ-centered message. That which has held me in the church has not been her fine organization or earthly rewards, but it has been the Christ to whom she introduced me. In our preaching we must bring our young people to a confrontation with Christ. Our responsibility is not the solving of all their problems or the answering of all their questions. Our responsibility is to so emphatically show them Jesus that they cannot get away from Him. In every message give them a vision of Jesus. Make the ultimate issue Jesus himself.

Notice that Jesus was not intimidated by the possibility of rejection. Yes, He lost this young man (verse 22). But what was the alternative? To have reduced the call to less would have been to lose him anyway. Many times we have been so afraid of turning the teens off that we have presented an anemic gospel no one would die for and have turned them off anyway. It is indeed time we shot straight from the shoulder with the full demands of the gospel just as Jesus did. If we do less we shall lose this generation for sure. The idea of taking up your cross and a rearranging of your priorities has always been a stumbling block. There have been those in every generation who do not make it. But for the sake of those who will make it, we must be clear in our challenge. I have discovered that the more challenging and demanding the message is, the more our young people respond. Do not sell them short. This generation is not easily fooled. Get your best message out for the teens; get your deepest truths out for the young people. They may come closer to grasping it than any other group.

Jesus is a better Pattern anytime for youth ministry than cultural fads, current events, keep-’em-lauging theory, or social trends.

THE PASTOR AND SENIOR ADULTS

by Melvin Shrout

"Old age has its problems, but the wildly distorted image of old age may be its biggest problem of all."¹ Look at two very important questions! (1) How do pastors see senior adults? and (2) How do senior adults wish to be viewed?

How Pastors See Senior Adults

One pastor stated bluntly, "I have no time for old people. They have no future. The young have a future, and I will give my energies to them."

In a more apologetic and thoughtful mood another volunteered, "I have made no place for older people in my pastorates. All my efforts have been focused on men and young couples."

This exclusivity is not without its rationale. I've been there battling the stats and the budgets. It's understandable, but not excusable, from these standpoints. And it politely says, as another pastor did, "Their place is on the back seat. They've had their day."

Extreme you say? You wouldn't say that? True, most would not take these positions, given some thought.

Pastors, staffers, and church officials, however, can in effect reflect the same attitudes by a failure to include them in program planning and church life in general, as a way of relegating senior adults to passive grandstand sitting.

It's possible, too, to have a patronizing view which is satisfied with placating the seniors with a few special events.

Others group older people into a "few old folks" category, which is thus assigned to the Home Department and promptly forgotten.

Most of these attitudes and approaches are due to a lack of knowledge about older people.

For example, few older people are in fact homebound or immobile. Only 5 percent of the senior adults fall into this category. The average age of those entering nursing homes is 84.

How Senior Adults Wish to be Viewed

These are the clues to what older members want from their pastors: to be understood, to be accepted as whole persons, and to be included in the life of the church. Alex Comfort observes, "Ageism is the notion that people cease to be people, cease to be the same people, or become people of a distant and inferior kind, by virtue of having lived a specific number of years."² Ageism, like racism, is offensive to those victimized by it.

Older people would appreciate the pastor's awareness of their need to have the gospel related to their needs, at least occasionally. On the basis of personal experience, this may be nearly impossible for some younger pastors. The trauma of retirement years, and the need for spiritual guidance to meet new tests of faith needs to be learned, either by association with older persons, or academically—or both.

A pastor who is sensitive and alert to the needs and hurts of people, and who studiously seeks to understand the problems of the aged, will have his senior adults in focus too as he unfolds the Word.

The thoughtful pastor will not rely on stereotyped thinking and truisms. He will evaluate for himself the "over the hill" tag worn by senior adults. As he opens himself to this ministry, he will gain immeasurable personal strength from a close relationship with the "old saints." Besides finding them

different than he thought, he will also discover some latent talents and hidden desires to be engaged in useful service for the church.

There is no group which can afford more in terms of time, volunteer status, and often financial resources.

Not all senior adults are poor. One church adjacent to retirement housing benefited from more than 20,000 tithing dollars from the small percentage who attended. One pastor stated, "The senior adults and their program worked a miracle in our church: with the help of a lay leader who was sent to a denominational retreat, the attitude of the senior adults toward the building program changed, and the building program had smooth sailing."

A man converted in his late 70s through the efforts of a new Senior Adult Ministries calling program, was responsible for 12 people coming to the church in the six months before his death.

Older persons can learn new skills, and many are excited by the opportunity. Stored in this old attic of retired personnel may be more than nostalgia and respect for the yesteryears. It may contain the personnel for programs now begging for an opportunity to get under way.

They can be challenged to lead the way spiritually too. The "difference" in churches is spirituality, by whatever definitions are employed. And it could be that the greatest long-term result in ministering effectively to the "old saints" is a quality of spirit in the church which makes it alive, exciting, and growing.

1. *Facts and Myths About Aging*, free by writing to the National Council on Aging, 1828 "L" Street N.W., Washington, DC 20036.

2. Alex Comfort, *A Good Age* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1976), p. 7.

HOW TO BUILD A CHURCH STAFF

by David R. Grant

At the conclusion of his message on how to raise children, a young preacher was approached with the question, "Young man, do you have any children?" Following a negative answer, she further questioned him, "Young man, are you even married?" Again his answer was no. Then she came forth with the classical statement, "Well, young man, I have raised 15; and I am here to tell you there ain't no how to raise them."

There is no one right way to build a church staff. Each church must build its staff in accordance with the personality of the church. However, there are some basic principles that seem wise to follow.

Experience has taught me that few things done by a church need the prayers of the people and the leadership of the Holy Spirit more than that of building a staff. Building a church staff involves more than adding staff members. It also involves building relations as the total personnel work together for the accomplishment of the common objective.

Some of the most painful and traumatic experiences a church can know result from mistakes made in the selection of staff members. However, we need to be prepared to make mistakes here as we do in every other facet of life. When such a mistake is made, it should be corrected with a minimum of dissension and hurt. To do this, much prayer and counsel are needed. Mistakes can be turned into learning experiences and spiritual growth if properly used.

The church itself plays a vital role in building a staff. The members should never think in terms of employing or hiring someone to do the work someone else ought to do. But when the occasion arises where there is a need for a vocationally called staff member, the church has the responsibility of meeting that need according to the leadership of God. No church member is to think that the employment of a staff person is to relieve him of his obligation and opportunity of serving his Lord. Rather, it is the privilege of the church to give adequate support to a staff member in order that he may be able to serve in the most satisfactory way.

Of course, no church will ever be able to build a staff according to the members' desires apart from adequate financial support. People in vocational church work have the same physical needs as any other human being. Most of them have spent more years than the average person in academic preparation. Such training involves time and monetary expenditures. The moral and ethical thing is to properly reimburse a staff member for his labors. If he is financially comfortable, he is freer to do the things expected of him.

The starting point is to establish a need. This is true regardless of the size church and the number of staff members a church may have or need. Many times the need is first recognized by the pastor. It becomes his responsibility to analyze the situation carefully, present the facts to the proper people in the congregation and lead the church to meet the need.

I want to stress the word *need*. Staff members should never be status symbols. Staff members should not be added to feed the pastor's ego. Unless there is a genuine need, the Lord's work prospers much better without additional staff members. If there is a legitimate need, the other side of the equation is equally true. The Lord's work prospers as the need is met. Not only should the need of a staff member be established, but also it must be carefully defined. Such a definition is called a job description. A job description is important to all involved. The staff member under consideration will know what is expected of him, and all other staff members will know how they relate to the new position.

Once the need is established, the church gives its approval for such a person, and much prayer has been made on behalf of finding the person, the mechanics of securing the proposed staff member are put into operation. Naturally, different churches and people will make different approaches as to the way this is done. Times, circumstances, and positions will vary. But there are some basic steps to follow.

First, the names of prospective persons are to

be secured. Schools, colleges and seminaries, the district superintendent, staff members of other churches, and one's own staff can be helpful at this point. When the names are secured from one's own staff, they are generally people that are known personally. Then references are sought. References must be secured from people who know the person, know of his or her work, and other pertinent information.

When enough desired information has been gathered, a personal contact may be made with the prospective staff member. This gives him an opportunity to make inquiries, to size up the pastor, as well as to gain other pertinent information that will help him determine whether he is interested. After such information has been shared, the potential staff member is invited to the church field where he is being considered. Usually he will meet with the appropriate persons or committees; tour the facilities; determine additional information about living conditions, schools, and other input that will enable him to make a wise, sound, spiritual decision. After such a meeting as this, and if there is a reasonable assurance of his acceptance, the church will extend the call in the manner that is in accordance with its policy.

Once officially called by the church, the person should be notified immediately. Usually a telephone call announcing the call should be followed by a letter giving more details. By the time all of this has been done, the prospect is usually ready to give an immediate answer. If not, a reasonable length of time should be allowed for the decision to be made. However, he should not lead the church along, allowing them to think he will accept when he already knows he will not. Neither should he delay an unreasonable length of time before giving a positive answer.

Most churches having a multiple staff are rather generous in helping the new staff member move

and make adjustments. The general practice is for the church to bear the expense of moving. The little, thoughtful things at this point are of much help in making adjustment happily. After the arrival on the field, some type of welcome should be made by the church, such as a reception.

The first and most important support to be given to the staff member is fellowship. Regardless of the capabilities, dedication, and hard work a person may do, unless the members follow, little will be accomplished. Closely associated with fellowship is encouragement. Encouragement serves as a motivating factor in ways few other things will. It can be given in the form of words, kind deeds and actions, warm hospitality, and commendation.

An essential in the area of building relations is communication. Naturally, each administrative officer and each subordinate will have his own system in giving and receiving information. But when as many as two or more people work together, it is absolutely essential that communication lines stay open. When they become blocked, the effectiveness of work is greatly hampered.

Mutual love and support are essential in building staff relations. When all staff members are working toward the same goal, they become a team. A team is successful only to the extent that each team member supports his teammates and enables them to do their jobs.

In order for a church to build an adequate staff, every staff member needs to be dedicated to the task of glorifying the name of the Lord. This is true whether it is a small church with a part-time pastor, or a church with two staff members, or one with multiple staff members and specialized tasks. The work of our Lord deserves and demands the best that is in any person.

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TROUBLESHOOTING IN HOLINESS DOCTRINE

by J. Kenneth Grider

In the area of holiness doctrine, errors and misunderstandings are sometimes preached within the holiness movement.

1. One widespread error is the understanding that the Roman Catholics say we receive entire sanctification in purgatory. John Wesley said this in his *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*, and people have been parroting his error these 200 years. They have said that the Calvinists say entire sanctification is received at death; the Roman Catholics, in purgatory; and the Wesleyans, during this life.

Actually, the Roman Catholics teach that original sin is cleansed in water baptism (either infant or believer). They teach that in purgatory one is cleansed from the temporal punishment which accrues to him for his mortal sins, and from the punishment due him for his less serious venial sins. Purgatory is a punishment, instead of a grace of God to be received. And it is a punishment for acts of sin, not original sin.

2. Another error in the preaching of entire sanctification is in calling it the baptism of the Holy Spirit instead of the baptism with the Holy Spirit. "Of" suggests that it is the Holy Spirit's own baptism. Instead, it is Christ's, and Christ uses, not water, but the Holy Spirit. Thus John said he baptized with water, but that One coming afterward, Christ, would baptize with the Holy Spirit (Matt. 3:11-12).

3. Still another frequent error in holiness preaching is in the interpretation of Philippians 3:12 in relation to 3:15. In v. 12, Paul says he is not perfect; and in v. 15, he includes himself among those who are indeed perfect. The usual interpretation in the holiness movement has been to say that he is not perfect (v. 12) from the standpoint of his actual conduct, his life, his actions; and that, according to v. 15, he is perfect in the sense that his heart has been made perfect in love.

What has happened, here, is what has often happened among us who preach: we have made our interpretation without regard to the context. Verse 11 reads, "In order that I may attain to the resurrection from among the dead" (NASB)¹. Then the next words are, "Not that I already obtained *it*, or have already become perfect, . . ." (v. 12, NASB). It is therefore the kind of perfection we will receive in glorification when our bodies are resurrected,

that Paul says he has of course not attained to. It happens that we are not fully perfect in our conduct during this life, but that it is not what is being referred to here.

4. Often, also, holiness people have preached from Ephesians 5:25-27 by using the King James Version, not realizing how rich a holiness text that passage is when read from the various versions which render the Greek properly. This passage states in the KJV that "Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it . . ."

It happens that the two works of grace, the new birth and entire sanctification, are both clearly referred to here. Yet you would not realize this by reading the KJV. The NASB reads, "that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word." This translation shows that two distinct works of grace are being referred to. The RSV likewise shows this by rendering it: "That he might sanctify her, having cleansed her."² The cleansing here referred to happens in regeneration, when we receive initial sanctification—the acquired depravity (from our acts of sin) being cleansed. This regeneration cleansing is also referred to in Titus 3:5 where we read about "the washing of regeneration" (KJV, RSV, NASB).

So Christ gave himself up for the church, to sanctify it, after He would have already cleansed it by the washing of regeneration. The word for "cleansed" is an aorist participle, and that kind of participle normally expresses action which takes place prior in time to the action expressed by the main verb of a sentence.

This is a most special two-works-of-grace holiness passage. John Wesley said he'd choose it if he were asked to select the one passage of Scripture which most clearly teaches Christian perfection. Wesley, however, a teacher of Greek at Oxford University, knew what some people do not realize: that the KJV reading sounds like a redundancy, and does not show that the initial-sanctification cleansing of regeneration takes place prior in time to entire sanctification.

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2. From the *Revised Standard Version of the Bible*, copyrighted 1946, 1952, © 1971, 1973. Used by permission.

John Wesley—Preacher to the Poor

by Donald Metz

In Wesley's day three social groups were associated with the church in Britain. The rich and people of influence belonged to the established church, the Church of England. Among the dissenting congregations, merchants and craftsmen were dominant. But among the Methodists, the poorer people formed the majority.

Wesley believed that the stream of divine mercy should be turned into channels of human kindness and springs of personal salvation. From 1739 on, the poor and the oppressed in Britain listened with mounting interest to the Methodist's vibrant proclamation of God's all-inclusive love and mercy. In prisons, in schools, in businesses, and in medicine, Wesley ministered to the poor.

The response of the poor was spontaneous—and somewhat pathetic. On Sunday, May 20, 1742, Wesley entered the poorest part of Newcastle-on-Tyne. He writes that "after preaching, the poor were ready to tread me under foot out of pure love and kindness."¹ As he leaves the same city on the last Thursday in December he writes that "both men and women and children hung upon me so that I knew not which way to disengage myself."² Such a response indicated the hunger of the poor for hope, forgiveness, and meaning in life.

Prisons drew the attention of Wesley from the beginning. After his return from America early in 1738, Wesley renewed the prison

ministry started in his Oxford University days. An early instance is recorded on Monday, March 6, 1738, when he witnessed to justification by faith of a man sentenced to death.

In 1753 he was still visiting prisons. At the age of 76, Wesley faithfully kept at his prison ministry. On Wednesday, April 28, 1779, Wesley preached to prisoners at Whiteley, Yorkshire, at six o'clock in the morning. The ground was covered with snow, but so many prisoners attended that the service was held in the prison courtyard.

Taking collections for the poor represented another phase of Wesley's practical applications of Christian love. Preaching near Bristol in January of 1740, he "made a collection in our congregation for the relief of the poor." Two more collections were taken during the same week, and he writes that "we were enabled to feed 100, sometimes 150 a day, of those we found to need it most."³

In London, Wesley set up a temporary workshop where he employed a dozen men during the winter of 1740 in spinning cotton. Women were given work at knitting. Ever the organizer, Wesley selected 46 people in the London congregation to visit the sick at least three times a week.

Another charitable enterprise was initiated by Wesley in 1746. He noticed that many small business people needed to borrow money occasionally for short-term projects. The interest rates

of the pawnbrokers were outrageous, and banks would not deal in such small investments. So Wesley collected 50 pounds to lend. Two stewards were appointed to meet every Tuesday morning to lend up to 20 shillings, to be repaid within three months. In less than 12 months, 250 people received help.

The Foundry in London became, among other things, a school and a "poorhouse." At one time, 60 children were attending it, with the expense of lodging and training coming from gifts. During another period, the occupants of the poorhouse were "nine widows, one blind woman, two poor children, two upper servants, a maid, and a man." In addition, four or five preachers were sometimes given lodging.

In 1746, Wesley introduced another experiment in social service. Not satisfied with educating, feeding, clothing, and sheltering the poor, Wesley desired to improve their health. In December he began to provide medicine for the poor. In less than three months, 500 people received some kind of medical aid. Wesley secured the help of a professional apothecary (druggist) and a surgeon. Still unsatisfied, he published a self-help book on personal health entitled *Primitive Physic*.

Before he died, Wesley requested that he be carried to his grave by six poor men. His request was granted. Even in death, Wesley was a preacher to the poor.

SERMON CRAFT

by C. Neil Strait

Quality Newness

In Revelation 21:5 there is an exciting thought—"Behold I make all things new."

There are two Greek words for new—"Neos" meaning new in point of time, and "Kainos" meaning new in terms of quality.

Two exciting thoughts, then, emerge. "Neos" is something that is only new in its particular emphasis or re-emphasis. For instance, Neo-Wesleyanism is not necessarily a new theology. It is only reference to a group or thought that gives reemphasis to old truths. The term neo-orthodoxy is a good example of the use of this word. "However, "Kainos" is something that is new in terms of quality. And the word here takes on significance because only Jesus is qualified to give new life—"Make all things new." Only Christ is able to give the dimension of newness to life that is a quality/life-changing newness.

Other ways or plans or religions may be able to give a new emphasis, a new approach, a new idea, a new motivation, but only Christ can give the quality of newness that touches the eternal, life-changing fibers of life.

Forgiveness

In Mark 16:7 there are these words: "Go tell His disciples and Peter, that He goeth before you into Galilee . . ." Two words stand out—"And Peter."

In these two words is summarized the thought and thrill of forgiveness. Why the emphasis on Peter? Was the angel, at the suggestion of a Resurrected Lord, conveying His love and forgiveness by these words? Pastor Bill Draper, Olivet College Church, said that "this was Jesus' way of impressing upon Peter that he was still included in the list of disciples."

The future of Peter's life is clue, and proof, of what was meant by the two words. Peter took hold of forgiveness to be one of the leaders of the Early Church. Reminder, incidentally, that forgiveness takes a man from way back—where Peter was after his denial—right into the center of God's love and service.

All of this may prompt a question. If a man is forgiven, is he serving? And, if not, why not?

Isaiah's Prayer

The sixth chapter of Isaiah gives us a glimpse of Isaiah at a most meaningful time in his life. Here are some simple thoughts from his prayer.

One, *Isaiah looked up*. In verse 1, Isaiah writes: "I saw also the Lord . . . high and lifted up"; and in verse 5, he says: "I have looked upon the King, the Lord of heaven's armies" (TLB).¹ Every beginning of any spiritual recovery, or any meaningful exercise of the heart, begins with the upward view. Often, in the midst of problems and pain, we look down. Rufus Jones, the great Quaker, encourages his followers to "open a window on the Godward side."

Two, *Isaiah looked inward*. The Hebrew word for prayer, *tefila*, means to judge oneself, to subject oneself to Divinity. It is experiencing God. Isaiah's inward view proved the value of the upward view, for his encounter with God gave him a startling view of himself. Verse 5 records Isaiah's response, "My doom is sealed, for I am a foul-mouthed sinner" (TLB). The journey to better things begins by seeing the worse. We cannot hope for a better life until we are conscious of the cesspools of the heart now.

Three, *Isaiah looked around*. And in response to what he saw

came God's commission. "'Whom shall I send as a messenger to my people? Who will go?' And I said, 'Lord, I'll go! Send me'" (v. 8, TLB).

Prayer that is effective has three characteristics about it: the upward view, the inward view, and the view of others.

Reconciliation

One of the great New Testament scriptures is 2 Corinthians 5:18-19, "All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation" (NIV).²

Gerald O'Collins, in his book *The Calvary Christ*, suggests three uses of the word *reconciliation* which are: (1) the *acceptance* of hard situations or facts; (2) the *removal* of contradictions or incompatibilities; (3) the *removal* of enmity or conflict (Gerald O'Collins, *The Calvary Christ* [The Westminster Press, 1977], p. 83).

These three uses of the word *reconciliation* could be a "starter" for either a sermon or a series, on the theme of reconciliation.

Portrait of a Preacher

John Bunyan one time gave this portrait of a preacher: "His back to the world, his face toward Heaven, and a book in his hand."

Not a bad portrait. Beware, however; where one of the above is missing, the whole picture—and preacher—is distorted.

1. From *The Living Bible*, © 1971 by Tyndale House Publishers, Wheaton, Ill. Used by permission.

2. From the *New International Version of the New Testament*, © 1973 by the New York Bible Society International. Used by permission.

SERMON OUTLINES

An Advent Sermon

THE GREATEST STORY EVER TOLD

Scripture: Luke 2:1-14

INTRODUCTION:

1. Every Christmas we retell the Nativity story.
 - a. Some say that a story loses its meaning by much telling.
 - b. Yet to us, the Christmas story is more precious each time it is told.
2. The Christmas story involves:
 - a. A Babe in a manger
 - b. Hardhearted men refusing Him a place
 - c. Humble shepherds loving Him
 - d. Angels heralding His birth
 - e. Foreign kings worshipping Him
3. But it goes far deeper:
 - a. It is the climax of all history.
 - b. It is a message of atonement from sin.
 - c. It is the account of the miracle that makes all other miracles credible.

I. IT IS THE STORY OF INCARNATION

- A. Jesus is God become man through the virgin birth.
 1. Jesus was not divine because He was born of a virgin, but Jesus was born thus because He was divine.
 2. We need not defend this truth, because it cannot be explained outside of an eternal God.
- B. Jesus was supernaturally conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of a virgin in order that He might perform the complex act of redemption.
 1. As a man He set an example for all mankind to follow:
 - As a Child, He was subject to parents;
 - As a Man, He did not shirk His duty or shrink from honest toil;
 - As a Man, He was subject to God;
 - As a Man, He was full of compassion;
 - As a Man, He accepted reproach without bitterness.
 2. As God, He revealed the true nature of God and His power in the world:
 - As God, He performed miracles,
 - As God, He went to the Cross and paid the price for sin,
 - As God, He ascended into heaven,
 - As God, He sent the Holy Spirit,
 - As God, He will come again.
 3. As the God-man, He represents us before God, and brings man and God together.
 4. As the God-man, Jesus has completed a perfect redemption.

II. IT IS THE STORY OF ATONEMENT FOR SIN

- A. Christmas cannot be understood apart from the needs of man.
 1. We all need forgiveness. "All have sinned" (Romans 3:23).

2. Christ's purpose for coming was to ransom us from sin (1 John 3:5).

B. Christmas is an announcement of God's atoning love.

1. He loved us when we were yet in sin (Romans 5:8).
2. He loved us enough to give His Son (John 3:16).

III. IT IS THE STORY OF WONDER, AWE, WORSHIP, AND PRAISE TO THOSE WHO HEAR IT

- A. Small minds want everything explained.
- B. Great minds stand in awe before an Almighty God.
- C. The true worshipper accepts the miracle and power of God.

CONCLUSION:

1. As we enter this Christmas season
 - Let's tell the story again.
 - Let's relive its praise and wonder.
2. It is the greatest story ever told!

Loren W. Gould
First Church of the Nazarene
Akron, Ohio

A Christmas Sermon

CHRISTMAS MEANS THINKING OF JESUS

Scripture: Luke 2:1-20

INTRODUCTION:

1. What do most people think about at Christmastime? Christmas savings account, presents, Santa Claus, tree lights and decorations, feasts, parties, shopping, home and friends.
2. To all of us it should mean, "Thinking of Jesus."

I. HIS BIRTH

- A. Born of a virgin
 - He began as a miracle—Son of God and man.
- B. Born in a manger
 1. No place in the inn
 2. No room because so many other things crowd in: Room for work, play, food, family, fame, pleasure, selfish pursuits, ambitions, friends—but no room for Jesus.
- C. Born among friends
 1. Shepherds
 2. The wise men
 3. Humble parents
 4. Angels from heaven

II. HIS PURPOSE

- A. To save His people from their sins
 1. His birth has as much to do with redemption as His death.
 2. Those who knelt by His manger must have felt their hearts "strangely warmed."
 3. Those who met Him later were also thus affected: the wise men, Simeon and Anna, learned

men in the Temple, the disciples of John, Levi, Nicodemus, Zacchaeus, woman at the well, and Paul.

- B. To give strength to the weak
- C. To be our Friend

III. HIS MESSAGE

- A. "The kingdom of God is at hand . . . repent."
- B. Love God with all your heart and love your neighbor as yourself.
- C. "Ye must be born again."
- D. "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden."
- E. "Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence."
- F. "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature."

CONCLUSION:

- 1. Will you be thinking of Jesus this Christmas?
- 2. There are a lot of Christmas carols picturing Christ's birth, angels, the manger, shepherds, wise men, Bethlehem, peace on earth. Perhaps we would like to add some songs of redemption to this list, for they are truly Christmas songs.

Loren W. Gould

A New Year's Sermon

ANTICIPATING A YEAR OF VICTORY

Joshua 1:1-11

Text: Joshua 1:2

INTRODUCTION:

- 1. For 40 years the children of Israel had wandered aimlessly in the wilderness.
- 2. Now Israel stood at the dawn of a new day—God challenged the people to be obedient and possess the land. He promised them victory if they obeyed.
- 3. God's challenge was one of immediate action accompanied by great courage. "Now therefore"; "Arise and go"; "Be strong and of great courage."

I. GOD'S CHALLENGE CONTAINED DEFINITE PROMISES OF SUCCESS AND VICTORY.

- A. God promised to give them the land. "I do now give you this land."
- B. They would receive the promise as they acted upon it. "Every place the sole of your feet shall tread, I will give you."
- C. Nothing would be able to stop them. "Not any man shall be able to stand before thee."
- D. God would make their success an inheritance for all the people. "Unto this people thou shalt divide the inheritance."

II. GOD'S CHALLENGE CONTAINED CERTAIN CONDITIONS FOR VICTORY AND SUCCESS.

- A. Obedience to all the Law. "Turn not to the right or to the left."
- B. Faithfulness in witnessing. "Law shall not depart out of thy mouth."
- C. Study of God's Word. "*Meditate*"—Go over and over it until you are fully aware of its teaching. Then practice all that is contained therein.

III. GOD'S CHALLENGE CONTAINED DEFINITE PROCEDURES TO ASSURE VICTORY AND SUCCESS.

- A. Plans were made.

- 1. Joshua said, "Tell the people to prepare food for the trip."
- 2. He set a timetable for going over—"In three days."
- 3. All success depends on the execution of plans.

B. Cooperation was pledged.

- 1. Those who were to live on this side of Jordan pledged to go over with the others saying, "All that you command, we will do."
- 2. Lugging and foot-dragging will hinder success. Success comes with teamwork.

C. The majority rejected all dissent concerning their plans.

- 1. There are always those who feel it can't be done.
- 2. Others will want to go another direction altogether.
- 3. Joshua had some who preferred to stay where they were and keep doing the same things as before.

D. They took courage, believed God, and found victory and success.

CONCLUSION (Application):

- 1. We are facing the New Year and we want it to be a year of victory and success.
- 2. We must follow the course that Joshua followed if victory is to be ours.

Loren W. Gould

PRAYER PARTNERS

Text: 2 Thessalonians 3:1-6

INTRODUCTION:

The memories of those first days' ministry in Thessalonica had never dimmed for Paul. His evident concern was manifest in his continuous prayers (1 Thessalonians 1:2; 3:10; 5:23; 2 Thessalonians 1:11) for his sons and daughters in the faith.

However, he realized that prayer is a two-way exercise—Pray for us as we pray for you. 1 Thessalonians 5:25; 2 Thessalonians 3:1.

Pray for us:

I. FOR A POWERFUL PROCLAMATION (v. 1)

- A. How much of a Christian preacher's (teacher's) power, increasing as time goes on, comes from the accumulation of intercession from his spiritual children?
- B. Prayer releases the greatest "power trigger" in the world.
- C. Prayer brings revelation of the glory of God.

II. FOR A PERSONAL PRESERVATION (v. 2)

- A. Deliverance from unreasonableness of men. Ridicule is often one of the hardest things to bear.
- B. Deliverance from unbelief of men. Open opposition and sometimes violent antagonism face the dedicated Christian disciple.

III. FOR A PREEMINENT PASSION (vv. 5-6)

- A. A heart directed to love.
- B. A heart determined to enjoy the endurance which characterized Jesus.
- C. A heart "separated" from all that is alien to Him.

CONCLUSION:

In praying for others—we effectively pray for ourselves.
In praying for ourselves—we cannot but pray for others.
—T. W. Schofield, Manchester, England

WESLEY ON FASTING

by Clarence Bence

"The man who never fasts is no more on the way to heaven than the man who never prays."

By today's standards, this comment of John Wesley appears quite strong. Yet early Methodism placed great emphasis upon the spiritual discipline of refraining from all food (fasting) or, to a lesser degree, some particular food (abstinence).

And although fasting is no longer required of our members, the practice is still encouraged for those "going on to perfection." Furthermore, when properly understood, it challenges the fat, comfortable life-style of our society and calls us to a responsible holiness.

John Wesley considered fasting an essential part of Christian discipline.

The Holy Club at Oxford fasted two days a week, in keeping with the practice of the Early Church. Wesley's preachers were asked to fast once a week, and all societies were to observe a day of fasting each quarter in preparation for the watchnight services. Wesley's journal frequently documents his participation in these day-long fasts; his last recorded fast was in July, 1789, when he was 86!

Two of Wesley's sermons contain most of his comments on fasting and abstinence—the first written within a year of his Aldersgate experience, the other less than two years before his death. In his early writing, "The Sermon on the Mount—Discourse VII" (5:344-360),* he defended this

discipline against those who viewed it as a legalistic practice of external piety.

Wesley acknowledged that fasting was subject to abuse, particularly when it was made an end in itself rather than a means of God's grace.

There were pharisaical Christians who fasted only to gain the approval of others; there were misguided Christians who assumed that such works of righteousness *merited* God's favor and obligated Him to answer their prayers. There were even pathological Christians who fasted in order to punish the flesh by beating themselves with self-hatred.

Yet, despite all objections and distortions, Wesley contended that fasting was commanded by Christ as a means of grace, and to neglect it was sinful.

Wesley argued fasting was a discipline that strengthened the Christian's relationship to both God and man.

In relation to God, it enabled the believer to establish the proper priorities of life. Everyone has forgone eating on some occasion because more pressing matters demanded attention. If this were so for temporal concerns, argued Wesley, should it not also be true in spiritual matters?

A willingness to seek God before legitimate human desires fostered "a seriousness of spirit, earnestness, deadness to the world, and consequently the love of God" (5:351). Fasting could therefore be an aid to prayer, not

as man's manipulation of the divine will, but as the recognition of God's claim upon the individual's time and desires.

For Wesley, fasting was also an expression of stewardship toward oneself and one's neighbor.

Opposing the natural desire to eat was an act of *confession*, in which believers admitted they had given in to the temptation for easy living. "They know how much they have sinned in excess of food; how they have indulged their sensual appetites, perhaps to the impairing even their bodily health,—certainly to no small hurt of their soul" (5:350).

One can only imagine how Wesley would assess the fast-and-fancy food culture of the 20th century and the lack of discipline among those who proclaim Wesleyan tradition.

This lack of self-denial is no recent development in the Methodist camp; in his own lifetime Wesley watched with increasing alarm the growing laxity among his followers.

In a letter written just before his death, he urged one of his lay preachers, "Exhort all our brethren steadily to wait upon God in the appointed means of fasting and prayer; the former of which has been almost universally neglected by the Methodists" (13:119).

And in a pastoral sermon, "The Causes of the Inefficacy of Christianity" (7:281-290), Wesley indicated how serious an offense this indulgence in the good life was. Here his emphasis on fasting

was not upon its devotional benefits, but upon a responsible attitude toward the hungry persons of the world.

By wasteful consumption of food, Christians demonstrated a callous indifference to the needs of others. "Many of your brethren, beloved of God, have not food to eat; they have not raiment to put on; they have not a place where to lay their head. And why are they thus distressed? Because *you* impiously, unjustly, and cruelly detain from them what your Master and theirs places in *your* hands on purpose to supply *their* wants! See that poor member of Christ, pinched with hunger, shivering with cold, half naked? Meantime you have plenty of this world's goods,—of meat, drink, and apparel. In the name of God, what are you doing? Do you neither fear God, nor regard

man? Why do you not deal your bread to the hungry and cover the naked with a garment?" (7:286).

To those who justified their personal extravagance by saying they could afford such luxuries, Wesley offered a stern rebuke. "But you say you can *afford* it! O be ashamed to take such miserable nonsense into your mouths! Never more utter such stupid cant; such palpable absurdity! Can any steward afford to be an arrogant knave? To waste his Lord's goods?" (7:286).

Love of God and love of neighbor—the discipline of fasting develops both.

We are too easily tempted to separate "spiritual" and "social" concerns. Wesley instructed his followers to fast in humility before God . . . and then collected an offering for the hungry and poor at these fasting services. His

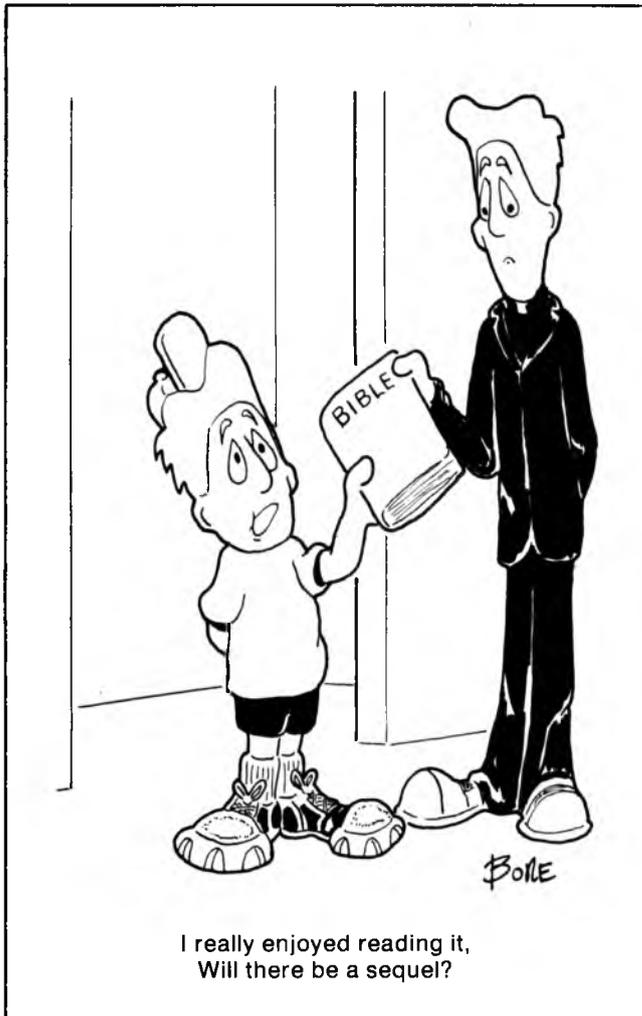
instructions for fasting focuses on both affliction of the soul, and works of mercy for the needy.

The New Testament Church recognized the need and benefit of fasting; Wesley urged the early Methodists toward the same kind of discipline.

Today we live in a society where easy living and easy believing are all too common. In an effort to escape charges of "legalism" or "puritanism," we have sometimes indulged ourselves to the point of neglecting our duty to both God and neighbor.

In an age of shallow spirituality and worldwide hunger and suffering, we who claim to be "perfect in love" need to recapture Wesley's spirit of self-denial—by fasting.

*References are to the *Works of John Wesley*, Zondervan Reprint Edition.



SS, a Historical Perspective

(Continued from page 16)

school and the Sunday school hour is the Bible study hour.

5. In its early years the Sunday school movement was aggressively evangelistic. The Sunday school evangelists were more concerned with winning children to Christ than they were with implementing appropriate learning theories and educational methodologies. However, in some respects it appears that methodology has replaced evangelism. "If it has, this has happened not by design, but because of a misunderstanding of the true meaning of Christian education. The prevailing present-day opinion is that evangelism and education are inseparably bound together, and that in true Christian education they both exist."⁹

The Sunday school has an illustrious past. But the history of the Sunday school has not yet been completely written. With his feet firmly in the past, the Sunday school enthusiast looks toward the future. And he clearly sees that, with God's help, the best is yet to be.

1. Edwin Wilbur Rice, *The Sunday-School Movement and the American Sunday-School Union* (Philadelphia: The Union Press, 1917), p. 14
2. *Ibid.*, p. 18.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 17.
4. David J. Fant and Addie Marie French, *All About the Sunday school* (New York: Christian Publications, Inc., 1947), p. 10.
5. Clarence H. Benson, *History of Christian Education* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1943), p. 121.
6. Rice, *Sunday-School Movement*, p. 20.
7. Clarence H. Benson, *The Sunday School in Action* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1941), p. 18.
8. Rice, *Sunday-School Movement*, p. 205.
9. Paul H. Vieth, *The Church and Christian Education* (St. Louis: Bethany Press, 1947), p. 26.

**An exegetical study of the Old Testament mandate
for religious education.**

The Interpretation of Deuteronomy 6:4-9

by Frank G. Carver

"Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one! And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart; and you shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up. And you shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and upon your gates" (NASB).¹

I

The Historical Question: Where Do We Find Our Text?

1. What Was the Life Setting of Deuteronomy?

In what literary genre? Deuteronomy, the fifth book of the Old Testament Pentateuch, can be characterized as "preaching about the law of Yahweh."² The most obvious feature of the book's structure is that it comprises three addresses of Moses to Israel suggesting that it may be viewed as a typical farewell speech.³

More helpful is the similarity of the structure of Deuteronomy to that of the ancient Near Eastern political treaty which was used to spell out the con-

ditions imposed by a great power on a smaller or vassal state. Its various features, preamble, historical prologue, general and specific stipulations, divine witnesses, and blessings and curses, correspond to the broad outline of Deuteronomy.⁴ Most basic to the literary genre of Deuteronomy is this ancient treaty pattern through which the basis and stipulations of Yahweh's covenant with His people Israel are expressed.

From what historical setting? A precise historical setting for Deuteronomy as we have it is difficult to identify, the suggestions ranging from the last days of Moses to the post-exilic period. Two things, however, seem clear. First, "the book is based firmly on the historical figure of Moses and in some way or other enshrines words which he spoke to Israel in Moab."⁵ Second, some kind of editorial processes have brought the book to its present form.⁶ But what situation in Israel's history was most crucial in that process?

The particular setting is most likely found somewhere between Moses' exhortations and warnings to Israel on the plains of Moab before Israel crossed over into Canaan, and the discovery of Deuteronomy in the Jerusalem Temple during the reforms of Josiah (2 Kings, cc. 22—23) in the seventh century B.C. The danger of religious syncretism, which permeates the book, characterized that whole period. The Mosaic traditions as transmitted in Deuteronomy no doubt functioned relevantly in the life of Israel all through its preexilic history. At

some point in the continuing struggle for the purity of Israel's faith, probably during the period of the monarchy, these traditions dating from the time of Moses reached their definitive form. Thompson suggests "a date of the eleventh to tenth century B.C., some two or three centuries after Moses."⁷

As it exists in our hands, Deuteronomy is a call to a renewal of the Mosaic covenant in the face of Israel's all too prevalent predisposition to "go after other gods" in their political and religious life. The pervading theme throughout is simply that of the first commandment, "You shall have no other gods before Me" (5:7).

2. What Is the Role of 6:4-9 in the Content of Deuteronomy?

The major content of Deuteronomy is presented in a series of three addresses of Moses,

1:1-43	What God Has Done
4:44—28:68	The Law of God
29:1—30:20	Recapitulation of the Covenant Demand

The book is concluded by 31:1—34:12, "The Last Acts of Moses and His Death."⁸ We find our text at the heart of the first part of "the law of God" where the basic stipulations of the covenant are set forth (cc. 5—11). Deuteronomy 6:4-9 follows the opening hortatory presentation of the Ten Commandments, the foundation law of the covenant (5:1—6:3), and is a summary interpretation of that law exhorting to its obedience in the life of the people. From this glimpse into its heart, the exposition of the law begins to fan out in its application to the life of the people in the remainder of the second address. Our verses, the *Shema* at the heart of Jewish faith for many centuries and given central place in Jesus' teaching (Mark 12:29-30), are the focal point in Deuteronomy's presentation of the significance of the Mosaic covenant for Israel.

II

The Recreative Question: What Did Our Text Mean to Its First Readers?

1. How Does the Writer Seek to Communicate His Message?

What is the structure and form of the text? The structure of Deuteronomy is best grasped when viewed in relation to the ancient Near Eastern treaty pattern:⁹

1:1-5	Preamble
1:6—4:43	Historical Prologue
4:44—11:32	General Stipulations
12:1—26:19	Specific Stipulations
27:1—29:1	Blessings and Curses
29:2—34:12	Witnesses: final appeal and historical epilogue

When we analyze in greater detail the general stipulations (4:44—11:32), which state the substance of the covenant relationship between the suzerain king and his vassal,¹⁰ the structure and

function of the summary exhortation of 6:4-9 is clearly exhibited:

4:44—6:3	The basic commandments of the covenant faith
6:4-9	The principle commandment
(1) 6:4-5	The basic exhortation
(1.1)	6:4—The call
	6:4a—Introductory command
	6:4b—Confession of faith
(1.2)	6:5—A paraenetic restatement
	6:5a—Expanded command
	6:5b—Limitation
(2) 6:6-9	A formula for remembrance
(2.1)	Statement of the ethical principle
(2.2)	Command to instructional duty
6:10-25	A call to remember
7:1-26	Instructions for holy war
8:1—10:11	Lessons from the past
10:12—11:32	A call to commitment

Employed in 6:4-9 are the forms of confession (4b) and paraenesis (5) or ethical exhortation akin to apodictic law (e.g., 5:7). Parallels in the wisdom literature suggest that the form of the whole is an educational address, didactic in intention, with its life setting in the ancient educational processes of teacher to pupil or of father to son.¹¹

In the covenant context of Deuteronomy the principle commandment (6:4-9) of the covenant stipulation instructs in the proper confession of Yahweh and the response in life appropriate to that confession. Expressed in distilled essence is the heart and whole of Deuteronomy's message as Yahweh through the Mosaic tradition instructs His son Israel. The rest of the book is commentary.

(1) *The Basic exhortation* (vv. 4-5). This "great commandment consists of two movements expressing first the fundamental truth of Israel's religion, and second, the fundamental duty founded upon it."¹² We begin with . . .

(1.1) The call (4): "Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one!" The call opens with the introductory command (4a), "Hear, O Israel," a set formula in Deuteronomy (4:1; 5:1; 6:3, 4; 9:1; 20:3), which functions as a call to obedience for "all Israel" (1:1, 5:1, 34:12). "Israel" includes "the forefathers, the present Israel and even those who were yet to be (*cf.* 5:3), i.e., God's word through Moses had permanent significance for Israel."¹³ As in the context of the Near Eastern treaty, "hear" has the sense of "obey," a hearing that leads to obedience.¹⁴ In 5:1, hearing the law is spelled out as "learn them and observe them carefully."

The object of the command is the confession of faith (4b), "The LORD is our God, the LORD is one!" "LORD" is Yahweh, the covenant name for Israel's God,¹⁵ the one who brought them "out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery" (5:6).

The four words of the confession, "Yahweh, our God, Yahweh, one," can be translated as "Yahweh is our God, Yahweh is one," or "Yahweh is our

God, Yahweh alone." There are other possibilities, but the essential meaning is clear: "Yahweh was to be the sole object of Israel's worship, allegiance, and affection."¹⁶ Indicated by "one" was first the "uniqueness" of Israel's God: "Who is like Thee among the gods, O LORD?" (Exodus 15:11). Expressed second was the "unity" of God: "He was not merely first among the gods, as Baal in the Canaanite pantheon, Amon-Re in Egypt, or Marduk in Babylon; He was the one and only God and as such He was omnipotent."¹⁷

The second movement of the basic exhortation completing the call (v. 4) is . . .

(1.2) A paraenetic restatement (5): "And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might." This hortatory definition of the appropriate response to the call consists of an expanded command (5a) and its limitation (5b). The expanded command (5a), "and you shall love the LORD your God," is linked by the "and" with what precedes (4) in such a way that the "love" appears to define more precisely the character of the action called for in "hear." Love is Israel's only appropriate response to the character of their God.

The use of "love" reflects the treaty language, expressing a relationship between a vassal and his suzerain that went beyond the merely legalistic. The primary source of the language of loving God is the precedent of God's love, "shown to the Israelites principally in the Exodus, and, in a larger context, in their election and calling from the time of Abraham."¹⁸ Using strong metaphors from family life, Hosea 3:1 employs the verb to express Yahweh's deep affection for Israel.

A series of three qualifying adverbial phrases comprise the limitation (5b): "with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might." "Heart" indicates the seat of the mind and will as well as a wide range of emotions; "soul" refers to the source of life and vitality (Genesis 2:7);¹⁹ and the addition of "might" or strength to these indicates how unre-served and all-encompassing of the Israelite man's being and life was to be his love for Yahweh his God.

(2) *A formula for remembrance* (vv. 6-9). Now the application to everyday life of the call (4) and its paraenetic interpretation (5) is made, how is this comprehensive and penetrating love for Yahweh to be expressed? Stated first is the underlying ethical principle of the Israelite response to God (6): "And these words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart." The word of God upon the heart of man (Deuteronomy 11:18; Jeremiah 31:33) is the key principle of man's adequate response in life to God. "These words" reflected on with the mind and acted upon by the will makes obedience to God something different than formal legalism. It is rather a loyalty and a love that "flows out of gratitude and devotion,"²⁰ a love spontaneous and undivided.

From this principle follows the command to instructional duty (7-9): "and you shall teach them diligently to your sons . . ." The "words" are to issue out of the heart into the activities of life as the family is repeatedly instructed (4:9; 6:20-25; 11:19). The words of 6:4-5 which contain the quintessence of the Mosaic covenant "were to permeate every sphere of the life of man";²¹ "and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up."

Although taken literally and made a legalistic practice later by the Jews (Matthew 23:5), the injunctions which follow probably had originally a metaphorical intent:²²

And you shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates (8-9).

A "sign" functions as a witness, pointing beyond itself to something that is to be made effective by remembrance. A living memory of "these words" of the saving acts of Yahweh and His covenant stipulations, would keep faith and allegiance alive.²³

2. What Is the Writer Attempting to Accomplish in the Passage?

Within the treaty framework of Deuteronomy, 6:4-9 comes at the heart of the general stipulations defining the basic nature of the covenant between God and Israel. Following the Ten Commandments, the first commandment (5:7) is given an expanded reinterpretation and application to the life of Israel. The writer is calling his readers (and hearers as the book is read in a covenant renewal ceremony) to a renewal of the confession basic to Israel's existence, a confession of the uniqueness and unity of Yahweh. In the light of their ever-present temptation to compromise with the Canaanite cult surrounding them, this confession inherently demands a single and utter loyalty to Yahweh, an obedience that penetrates to the inner being of man and comprehends his total living.

The practical principle of life in Israel was the words of God's law as brought to inner focus in 6:4-5, occupying the mind and activating the will. They were to be "on your heart." "These words" were to be the continual object of instruction in the home and the object of conversation and meditation throughout all the activities of daily life. They were "signs" to keep the covenant salvation and life at the forefront of their thinking and operative in their living.

Deuteronomy 6:4-9 was the fundamental instruction of Yahweh for covenant life to His children Israel, mediated through the transmission of the Mosaic covenant tradition through the literary instrument of Deuteronomy to "all Israel." The remainder of the book interpreted and applied this basic instruction to the life of Israel in her time and culture.

III

The Life-Response Question: How Does the Text Apply to Contemporary Life?

1. What do I hear?

About my understanding of God? The redeeming God who has met me in my history is one whose very nature, the ultimate significance of His oneness which I experience as utter grace in Jesus Christ, requires my undivided loyalty.

About my relationship to God? My relationship to God is grounded uniquely in His character, now revealed in Jesus Christ, and is above all a supremely personal relationship, for it involves the entirety of my inner and outer existence.

About my manner of life before God in the world? The whole of me can be given to God in loving obedience because God's covenant word as fulfilled in Jesus Christ has been written on the very fiber of my inner being. As I meditate and act upon it there, it transforms the whole of my life, in the home, on the job, and in the community. Life becomes a transforming witness to the grace and love of God.

2. What do I proclaim? Sermon: A Life Set Free *Introduction:* the covenant setting—Moses, all Israel, Jesus Christ

I. To acknowledge God properly (v. 4)

- A. In life response (v. 4a)
- B. In a personal confession (v. 4b)

II. To love God adequately (v. 5)

- A. As the only appropriate response (v. 5a)
- B. With the total being (v. 5b)

III. To serve God effectively (vv. 6-9)

- A. Out of an inner dynamic (v. 6)
- B. In the home (v. 7a)
- C. In every sphere of life (v. 7b)

Conclusion: A freedom maintained through the "signs" of the covenant (vv. 8-9)—the word of God in the context of grace fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

1. Unless otherwise indicated, all scripture is from the *New American Standard Bible*, copyright © The Lockman Foundation, 1960, 1962, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975. Used by permission.

2. J. A. Thompson, *Deuteronomy, The Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries* (Downers Grove, Ill.: Inter-Varsity Press, 1975), p. 24.

3. *Ibid.*, pp. 14, 16.

4. Peter C. Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1976), pp. 23-24. See II.1 below for the structure of Deuteronomy viewed in relation to the treaty pattern.

5. Thompson, p. 68.

6. *Ibid.*

7. *Ibid.*

8. *Ibid.*, pp. 78-80.

9. Craigie, p. 24.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 23.

11. See Proverbs 1:8; 4:1, 10; 6:20-22; 7:3; 8:6; and Moshe Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic School* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972), p. 305.

12. Craigie, p. 168.

13. Thompson, p. 81.

14. Craigie, p. 147.

15. Thompson, p. 84.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 121.

17. Craigie, p. 169.

18. *Ibid.*, p. 122.

19. Thompson, p. 122.

20. *Ibid.*, p. 123.

21. Craigie, p. 170.

22. Thompson, p. 123. The present passage, along with 11:13-21; Exodus 13:1-10, 11-16, was written on small scrolls, placed in small leather containers and bound on the forehead and the left arm when the *Shema* was recited. . . . A further practice developed, that of enclosing these four passages in a small container for attaching to the doorpost of one's house.

23. *Ibid.*, p. 124.

Home & Sunday School

(Continued from page 36)

the meaning of tolerance, cooperation, and compassion. Hence to relegate children to a world of their own is to deprive them of their humanity, and ourselves as well.

Yet this is what is happening in America today. We are experiencing a breakdown in the process of making human beings human.

This danger is as real for our churches as it is for our society. Successful Christian education must facilitate and support the family unit as a chief source of learning.

Further, the home and Sunday school can be drawn together in a holy union as a teaching-learning team by the use of the "home-work" assignments in the Aldersgate Graded Curriculum. Particularly in the children's materials,

take-home exercises which solicit parental involvement are being increasingly stressed.

Remembering that God ordained the home even before He ordained the Church, let us strive to promote home-centered learning which is reinforced with high quality Sunday school training.

Of course, in many cases the parents of our Sunday school children are unsaved and unconcerned about their children's religious education. From the first children chased down in Sooty Alley and dragged into Mrs. Meredith's kitchen by Robert Raikes's workers, the Sunday school has strongly emphasized reaching out to children from unchurched homes. In such cases, home-centered learning is almost impossible. This calls for extra care and nurture from con-

cerned Sunday school teachers.

But the family-Sunday school principle should not be counted out even here. Spiritually alert teachers build a bridge of concern from child to unchurched family members. And in many cases the parents can be won to the Lord. They then can be encouraged and trained to make their own home a center of Christian teaching.

The model presented by the Old Testament family, and by Jesus' own family is as modern as it is ancient. Nothing better has been invented, and as we marry Sunday School and Home, we edge closer to the biblical ideal in which religious education is not a preparation for life—it is life.

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OLD TESTAMENT WORD STUDIES



by Charles Isbell

Isaiah 9:1-7

As background study for preaching on Isaiah 9:1-7, read the commentaries by Otto Kaiser, *Isaiah 1-12, The Old Testament Library* (Westminster, 1972), pp. 123-30; and by R. B. Y. Scott in *Interpreter's Bible*, Vol. 5, pp. 230-34. Pay particular attention to the outline of the passage given by Kaiser.

"Walk" and "Have seen" (9:2)

The RSV, JB, and NEB all are correct in rendering both *walk* and *have seen* as past tense forms. In Hebrew, "walk" is a participle with no tense (time) of its own. Because its tense must be determined by the tense of the main verb in the clause in which it occurs, the past tense form of "see" (*rā'ū*) places both words into past tense time. Read, "Those who used to walk in darkness have seen a great light."

"Is born" and "Is given" (9:6)

KJV "is born" and "is given" have been followed by many modern versions with unfortunate results. Both Hebrew forms are "perfects" or past tenses, and either present (NIV, RSV, among others) or future (NASB) is misleading. The NEB is quite correct on the entire phrase: "A boy *has been* born for us, a son given to us." This is the prophetic perfect (completed action roughly equivalent to English past tense), signifying that a prophet is so confident of the truth of his prediction that he speaks of it as if it had already happened, even though both he and his audience know well that it is the future of which he speaks.

"Government" (9:6)

Government (Heb., *misrāh*) does not mean an organized po-

litical structure, but *authority* for rulership or the *ability* to dominate and lead others. The translation of the Jewish Publication Society of America has captured the idea beautifully: "Authority has settled on his shoulders." Notice further that the tense should not be future (KJV, RSV) but past, "has been," or "has settled." This is another prophetic perfect.

"His name" (9:6)

Virtually all translations have missed the Hebrew idiom which begins the next phrase. Rather than, "His name shall/will be called," (KJV, RSV, etc.), the proper phrase would be, "He has called His name," as Kaiser has suggested (p. 124). Ancient Near Eastern monarchs chose, that is called, the names and titles which they would carry during their administrations. The titles given in Isaiah 9:6 are those which the coming Ruler would choose for himself as characteristic of His reign.

Because of the fact that Egyptian throne names were fivefold, it is commonly agreed among scholars that there should be five titles mentioned in verse 6. A widely accepted view is that only four of these titles are represented in the present form of the Hebrew text, a fifth having been lost from earlier manuscripts. This view operates upon the assumption that "wonderful" and "counsellor" are one title only. My own opinion is that there are five titles, to be sure, but that all five have remained in the traditional text. These five are as follows:

(1) "Wonder." The Hebrew word *pele'* is used frequently in the Old Testament, but never as the adjective "wonderful" as some wish to read it here. It rather is a

noun, the best translation of which is simply, "Miracle." The traditional Hebrew text has given *pele'* a disjunctive accent, properly understood it as a noun independent of the following word, and in my view, specified it as a separate title of the coming Ruler.

(2) "Counsellor" (KJV) is better "Adviser." Hebrew *yō^cēs* means, "one who advises, counsels, plans, etc." The purpose of this title is to assure that He will be the Source of correct and wise decisions. But beyond that, One who is himself an "Adviser," will not need to lean upon the counsel of others.

(3) "Mighty God." The third title chosen voluntarily by the coming Ruler is Hebrew *'ēl gibbōr* (KJV "mighty God"). The word *gibbōr* is used consistently in the Old Testament to refer to an aristocratic or noble warrior class. Here the word is applied to the Ruler along with the appellation of divinity. The compound must mean something like, "the Divine Warrior." Theologically, ancient Israel always believed that her wars were "holy" and ordained by God, that God himself was the Commander in Chief of her soldiers.

(4) "Forever a Father." The fourth title is Hebrew *'abī ^cad*, the meaning of which would normally be, "forever a father." Near Eastern monarchs were fond of referring to themselves as "father" of people they ruled. The reign of Isaiah's coming Ruler would never come to an end; He would be "Father Forever" to His people.

(5) "Peaceable Prince." The final title may be rendered either "Prince of Peace," or "Peaceable Prince." As Scott has written, "the Hebrew word, *shālōm*, means not merely the cessation of war but . . . rich, harmonious, and positive well-being" (IB, 5, 234).



NEW TESTAMENT WORD STUDIES

by Ralph Earle

Matthew 6

“Closet” or “Inner room”? (6:6)

The word *tameion* first meant “a treasury,” and then “a store-room.” But since these were always built at the back end of the house, with no windows or outside doors that thieves could use, it came to mean “an inner room.” Since “closet” today usually refers to a clothes closet, the correct translation is, “Go into your inner room” (NASB).¹ That is, get alone with God.

“Babbling” (6:7)

“Use vain repetitions” is all one word in Greek, the verb *battalogo*. It originally meant “stammer,” then “repeat.” Since the form here is the present tense of continuous actions, the best rendering is: “Do not keep on babbling like pagans” (NIV).² They keep repeating the same thing.

We have often wondered, when hearing someone pray in public, how this command of Jesus can be missed by so many sincere Christians.

Even preachers are not innocent in this matter. It is our duty as leaders to set an example to our people in the matter of praying, as in other things. It would add effectiveness and beauty to our worship services if our prayers were thoughtful as well as fervent. And a thoughtful prayer need not by any means be a formal prayer.

The scene on Mount Carmel described in 1 Kings 18 is significant. After the prophets of Baal had worn themselves to exhaustion, yelling, “O Baal, hear us,” screaming and leaping on the altar, crying aloud and cutting themselves, Elijah stepped forward.

With quiet faith in the presence and power of God he prayed a brief, simple prayer—and got results. It may be that sometimes what we need in praying is not more frenzy, but more faith.

And so we find here that the model prayer which Jesus gave his disciples, what we now call “The Lord’s Prayer” (vv. 9-13), is characterized not by verbosity and extravagance, but by reverence, confidence, simplicity, and brevity.

“Hallowed” (6:9)

The Greek word is *hagiastheto*. The verb *hagiazō* means “sanctify.” So the literal rendering here is, “Let Your name be sanctified.”

This would be a good prayer for us to pray each morning: “Lord, may Your holy name be sanctified in my life today by everything I do, or say, or even think.”

“Forgive” or “Have forgiven”? (6:12)

The Greek word is in the perfect tense, *aphekamen*. So the exact translation is “as we also have forgiven” (NIV). We cannot ask or expect God’s forgiveness until we have forgiven others.

“Evil” or “Evil one”? (6:13)

The Greek noun for “evil” is *poneria*. But here we have *tou ponerou*, “the evil one” (NIV).

“Thine is the Kingdom” (6:13b)

The ending of the Lord’s Prayer —“For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory for ever. Amen”—is not found in the oldest Greek manuscripts. It was added as a liturgical doxology when the prayer was repeated in public, just as preachers commonly say today at the end of a scripture reading, “May the Lord add His

blessing to the reading of His Word.”

The ending of the original Lord’s prayer seems a bit abrupt. So the doxology was added.

Does this mean that we should not repeat this part when we pray this prayer together in public? We would say, “No, by all means include it!” It would be awkward to omit it. But when we are studying the meaning of the Lord’s Prayer, we should know exactly what it contains.

“Of a sad countenance” (6:16)

This is all one word in Greek, *skythropoi* (only here and Luke 24:17). Today we would say, “Do not put on a gloomy face” (NASB).

“Corrupt” or “Destroy”? (6:19-20)

The Greek verb is *aphanizo*, which literally means “make unseen.” So it is more than “corrupt.” The better translation is “destroy” (NASB, NIV).

“Single” (6:22)

The word *haplous* means “simple, single (in which there is nothing complicated or confused . . .); whole; of the eye, good, fulfilling its office, sound” (Thayer, *Lexicon*, p. 57). Because of the contrast with “evil,” it may well carry a moral significance here.

In this chapter Jesus emphasizes three things: sincerity, simplicity, and singleness. They make three good points for a sermon outline, or a series of three sermons.

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CLERGY QUIZ

- Of the 50 million singles in the U.S.A., which is the smallest group?
 - Singles over 65.
 - Singles over 30.
 - Never married singles under 30.
- Which of the following is in Jerusalem?
 - Mount Carmel
 - Mount Hermon
 - Mount Moriah
 - Mount Tabor
- "Make a joyful noise unto the Lord all ye lands" is the first verse of:
 - Psalm 100
 - Psalm 91
 - Psalm 139
 - Psalm 22
- The Aldersgate Graded Curriculum can best be described as which kind of curriculum?
 - Stacked
 - Sequential
 - Spiral
 - Open-ended
- Which of the following names does not belong in this list?
 - Wilson Bryan Key
 - Bruce M. Metzger
 - F. Wilbur Gingrich
 - Gerhard Kittel
- Which of the following does not belong in this list?
 - El Shaddai*
 - Adonai*
 - Elohim*
 - Yahweh*
 - Aphar*
- Which of the following was not written by E. Stanley Jones?
 - Abundant Living*
 - "Hey, That's Our Church"*
 - The Divine Yes*
 - Conversion*
- Which of the following hymns was not written by Charles Wesley?
 - "Arise, My Soul, Arise"
 - "O For a Thousand Tongues"
 - "Love Divine, All Loves Excelling"
 - "My Faith Looks Up to Thee"
- This line comes from which of the hymns in Luke? "And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David."
 - Ave Maria*
 - Benedictus*
 - Nunc Dimittis*
 - Magnificat*
 - Gloria in Excelsis*
- Who said, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace . . . for mine eyes have seen thy salvation"?
 - Simeon
 - Elizabeth
 - Zacharias
 - Anna
- Which of the following was a very successful Sunday school missionary?
 - Henry Van Dyke
 - Stephen Paxson
 - Henry Drummond
 - Susan B. Anthony
- The lyrics to "O Little Town of Bethlehem" and "Hark the Herald Angels Sing" were written respectively by:
 - James G. Holland and Edmund Sears
 - Phillips Brooks and Charles Wesley
 - Nahum Tate and Isaac Watts
 - Norris Carsworthy and Nadine Finnell
- The sermons "On Sin in Believers" and "The Repentance of Believers" were authored by:
 - Richard Watson
 - John Wesley
 - Martin Luther
 - Adam Clarke
- Which of the following has not made notable contributions to New Testament theology?
 - George Eldon Ladd
 - C. H. Dodd
 - Oscar Cullman
 - Lyle Schaller
 - Alan Richardson
 - W. G. Kummel
- A study of church growth shows that generally denominations associated with the National Council of Churches:
 - Are growing faster than those not associated with the NCC.
 - Are growing at about the same rate as those not associated with NCC.
 - Are far behind the non-NCC churches in growth, and are in fact losing rather than growing.
- In Christian education, an "affective" objective has to do with:
 - Cognitive information.
 - Attitudes, feelings, and values.
 - Behaviorial response to teaching.

Answers:

10-A; 11-B; 12-B; 13-B; 14-D; 15-C; 16-B; 17-C; 18-C; 19-A; 20-C; 21-A; 22-E; 23-B; 24-D; 25-B; 26-C; 27-B; 28-E; 29-A; 30-C; 31-A; 32-C; 33-A; 34-B; 35-B; 36-B; 37-C; 38-B; 39-A; 40-C; 41-A; 42-C; 43-A; 44-B; 45-D; 46-B; 47-A; 48-C; 49-A; 50-C; 51-B; 52-B; 53-B; 54-B; 55-B; 56-B; 57-B; 58-B; 59-B; 60-B; 61-B; 62-B; 63-B; 64-B; 65-B; 66-B; 67-B; 68-B; 69-B; 70-B; 71-B; 72-B; 73-B; 74-B; 75-B; 76-B; 77-B; 78-B; 79-B; 80-B; 81-B; 82-B; 83-B; 84-B; 85-B; 86-B; 87-B; 88-B; 89-B; 90-B; 91-B; 92-B; 93-B; 94-B; 95-B; 96-B; 97-B; 98-B; 99-B; 100-B.

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