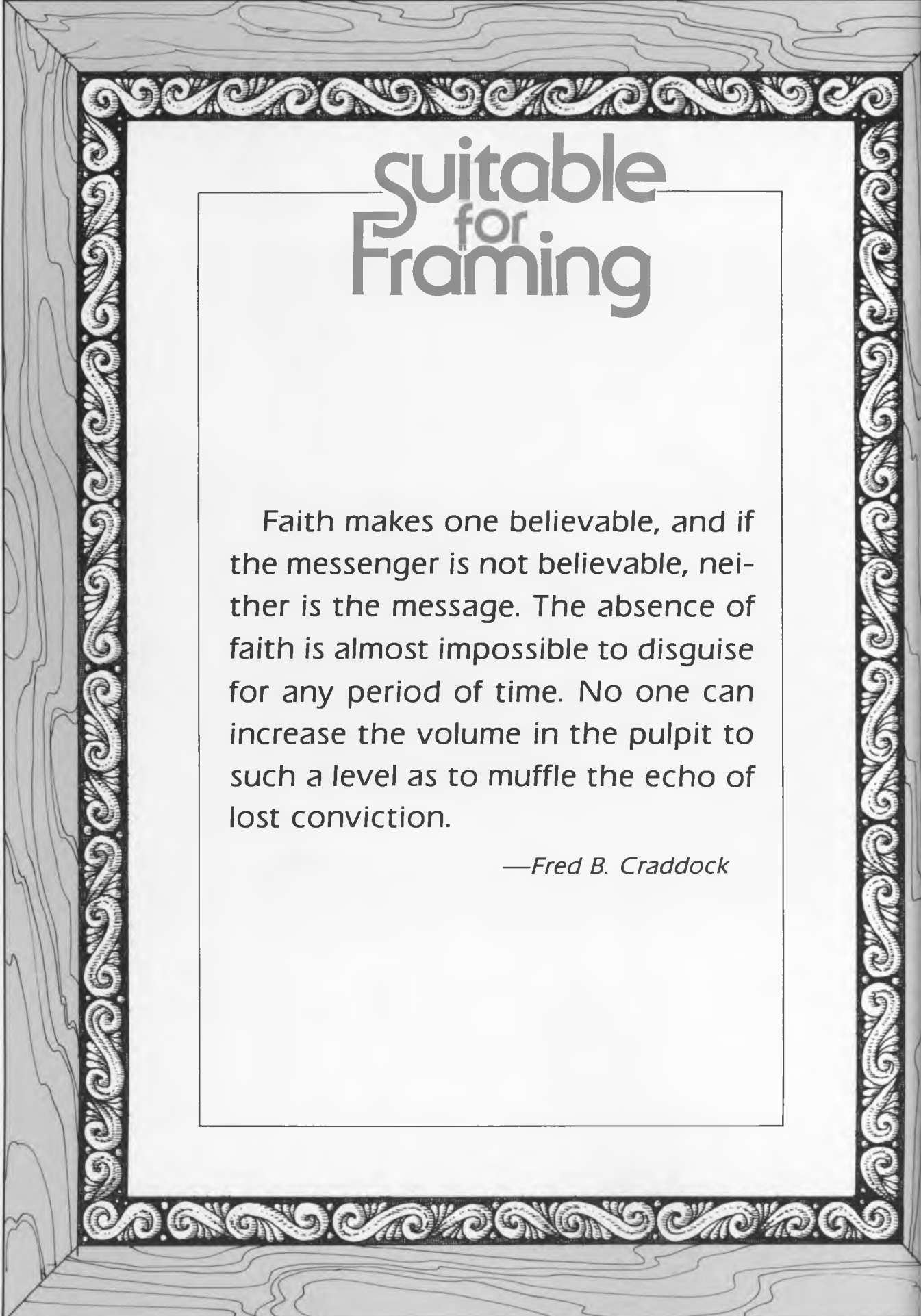


# THE PREACHER'S MAGAZINE



RESOURCES FOR THE SEASON

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# suitable for Framing

Faith makes one believable, and if the messenger is not believable, neither is the message. The absence of faith is almost impossible to disguise for any period of time. No one can increase the volume in the pulpit to such a level as to muffle the echo of lost conviction.

—Fred B. Craddock

# We Get Letters

## For Educational Purposes

Recently in Taiwan, we have started using the *Preacher's Magazine* as a source material for an advanced English class for pastors, associates, and wives.

The first week, we looked at the Pastoral Clinic article in the SON issue of the "Case of the Unwanted Mother" by Naramore. That week one pastoral family was dealing with a suicide attempt. The article gave them direction as to how to help this person and his family. And as the article mentioned in one of the solutions, they took him into their home to work with him.

The next week, we were starting the discussion of the article "Visiting the Sick" in the Visitation section of the JJA issue when a call interrupted the class. A frantic mother was calling for a pastor's wife's help. Her son-in-law had just been told that his cancer was terminal and death would come within two months. The daughter wanted to give her child to the pastor to raise and die with her husband. The situation gave the article an immediacy that discussion and prayer only intensified.

That evening, the pastoral family did not make a social call, but one with focused purpose. Two days later, the man died. The wife reacted with hysteria and upset the hospital staff (mental health care is not yet a well-developed science in Taiwan). The pastor's wife was called in and, using the suggested techniques in the article, the threatened murder-suicide was averted. The wife was able to talk her fears and frustrations out to the point that she could begin to trust God to meet her needs. The pastor and his wife have taken her into their home to continue the healing process. At this time they are hoping to get her into the church fellowship and build a support group around her.

Your articles have been used of God in a timely, critical training situation in Taiwan among the Chinese people. God bless you and the *Preacher's Magazine*.

—Nancy Zumwalt

## "Yes"

I've just placed the summer '85 *Preacher's Magazine* on my desk after reading your editorial on inductive preaching. Though different from your usual fine offerings, you have stimulated a great "YES" in my heart and mind. I am challenged to work more diligently at developing my skills in this inductive methodology. Thanks.

—Clair Budd

## Pastoral Sabbaticals

Reading "Is Continuing Education Possible?" by Albert L. Tuesdale in the JJA '85 issue, I was reminded of still another option to help the pastoral ministry keep alert mentally and spiritually—a sabbatical. Professors have periodic sabbaticals, why not the pastors? Even realizing how difficult this

may be to implement, a meaningful and well-planned sabbatical every few years would enhance the pastoral ministry and greatly benefit the local church as well. A sabbatical of a few months' duration would be my suggestion to implement in connection with continuing education or some other meaningful activity.

—Michael Hutchens

## Likes Leadership Theme

I just want to thank you for the *Preacher's Magazine*. I thoroughly enjoy each issue. The recent issue, with its theme on leadership, reminded me of Dr. C. Galloway's class, Dynamics of Leadership. It was particularly appropriate for us here in Africa. We are screaming for the development of lay leadership and involvement.

Thanks, also, for the extra copies that we get at Swaziland Nazarene Bible College. Many of our students, especially those working on the B.A. in religion and the Th.B., benefit from each issue.

—Peter K. Walker

## It's Not on the Charts

I'm writing to express my appreciation for the article, "It's Not on the Charts," from the June/July/August, '85 issue. Thank you for printing it. It shows a rare depth of understanding.

So much stress is placed on rapid church growth, either explicitly or implicitly, some of us in these difficult assignments feel pretty left out. Our bishops and district superintendents ought to reread this article from time to time before visiting us. Maybe it would help them better understand where we are living and working.

—Leonard J. Chester

## Unsuitable for Framing

I find the more that I think about the "Suitable for Framing" in the June/July/August '85 issue,\* the more upset I get about it. Are we to be satisfied with any ministry that doesn't bear visible fruit? With all due respect to Henri Nouwen, I must heartily disagree with him. I cannot find gratification in anything other than visible fruit. Where would we be now if John Wesley had found gratification in the Church of England with a fruitless ministry? Where would we be if he had found gratification in the mystic quietism of the day, even though it was a fruitless religion? Fortunately, he was convinced by Edwards and Whitefield that the Word rightly preached bears visible fruit (Outler, *John Wesley*, p. 17)! I will never be satisfied with a ministry that does not bear *visible* fruit!

—Charles R. Carey 

\*If our pastoral gratification has to come from visible change, we have made God into a businessman and ourselves into sales managers. —Henri Nouwen

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# THE HERITAGE OF LENT

by Charles R. McCall

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**P**rotestants have often regarded the observance of Lent as a specifically Catholic practice that produces little of spiritual value for either Church or individual believer. Evangelicals are suspicious of set forms of piety, and skeptical that regulation can promote personal growth. They have frequently viewed a fixed period of fasting and self-denial as an old wineskin that could not contain the fresh ferment of the Spirit's presence in the life of the believer. For some followers of Jesus, the observance of Lent and like forms of devotion is needless if not inimical to Christian vitality.

In recent times, however, many evangelicals have shown a growing appreciation for the Christian calendar year with its possibilities for emphasizing important events in the biblical narrative and principles for Christian development. Holy Week especially has become a time for fastening attention upon the central redemptive event of Christian faith. With widespread attention to the spiritual challenges of Holy Week has come a growing interest in the historic period of preparation that developed in the ancient Church in anticipation of Easter. What are the origins, the development, the practices, and the significance of Lent? Answers to these questions can open to us new possibilities of spiritual growth in the life of the Church today.

The season of Lent, a 40-day period of fasting in preparation for Easter, is a time of penance. It is marked also by almsgiving, refraining from festivities, and devoting more than usual time to religious services.<sup>1</sup> The term *Lent*, from an Anglo-Saxon word *lencten*, meaning "spring," is akin to the English term *lengthen*. It probably

referred originally to the lengthening hours of sunlight as spring advanced.<sup>2</sup>

Scholars are uncertain about the exact origins of the religious practices associated with Lent. They probably arose from the fasts prescribed for baptismal candidates in the Early Church. Christian writers at the beginning of the third century describe an elaborate ritual for the baptism and reception of new members into the Christian community. Candidates for baptism were received only once or twice a year, usually at Easter, though sometimes at Pentecost. Called "catechumens" from the extended period of instruction that preceded baptism, the candidates began preparation with a ritual bath on Thursday, then fasted on Good Friday and Saturday. In the dark hours before dawn on Easter Sunday, they were baptized, sealed by the bishop's laying on of hands, and then led in white robes into the worship assembly on Easter Sunday for their first communion.<sup>3</sup> The beginnings of Lent are probably found in the Good Friday fast, in which the faithful were called to join the catechumens in repentance and rededication.

The 40-hour fast that began on Good Friday was gradually extended to one of 40 days. Fasting came to be observed in the Western Church through a period of six weeks, on every day except Sunday. In the Eastern Church, both Saturdays and Sundays were excepted, and the period of fasting extended through eight weeks. Since the six days for six weeks actually made up only 36 days, a later extension backward to Ash Wednesday provided a full 40 weekdays of fasting, in imitation of the biblical examples of Moses, Elijah, and Jesus. Ash Wednesday received its name from the practice of marking the sign of the cross on the foreheads of believers with ashes as a symbol of penance.

During the Middle Ages, fasting was strictly observed. Only one meal a day was permitted, toward evening, and meat was not allowed even on the Sundays within the period. After the ninth century, a gradual relaxing of the rules occurred. Fish was permitted, and the evening meal was moved back to three o'clock in the afternoon, eventually as early as noon. The trend toward relaxed observance has continued until, at present, only the first day of the Lent and Good Friday are obligatory days of fasting among Catholics.<sup>4</sup>

The 40 days of fasting continued to mark a time when catechumens were instructed and prepared for baptism, but they also commemorated, in a special way, Jesus' experience in the wilderness.<sup>5</sup> Concentration on the event of the Crucifixion centered properly on the latter part of Lent, but the entire period became a time to focus on the earthly life of the Lord and to challenge the



Charles R. McCall



Paul M. Schrock

faithful to prepare for Easter by imitating His example.<sup>6</sup>

The fifth Sunday in Lent is Passion Sunday. In the week that follows, Passion Week, the seriousness of Lent is intensified. The sixth Sunday, Palm Sunday, marks the beginning of Holy Week. From early in the fourth century, special services began to be observed in Jerusalem, beginning with a festive procession from the Mount of Olives into the city. These special services spread from Jerusalem to other parts of the Church, and increasing attention was paid to the days of Holy Week. Maundy Thursday, the time of the Lord's Supper, receives its name from a corruption of the Latin phrase *mandatum novum*,<sup>7</sup> "a new commandment," from John 13:34: "A new commandment I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another" (NIV). Good Friday and Holy Saturday are the only days of the year in which no celebration of the Mass occurs in Catholic churches. The three-hour service often held on Good Friday is a post-Reformation development in both Catholic and Protestant churches.<sup>8</sup>

The Reformation churches took varied attitudes toward the observance of Lent. Lutheran and Anglican churches retained many of the traditional customs, including liturgical aspects of the Sundays in Lent. Luther advised that the "Hallelujah" continue to be sung during Lent and Holy Week, where the Latin Church omitted this note of rejoicing during the period of fasting.<sup>9</sup> Anglicans were later to follow Luther in keeping the "Hallelujah" as part of the liturgy during Lent.

In Switzerland, the Reformed churches made a sharper break with Catholic practice. Ulrich Zwingli, the

**"Lent is here to brace us for our journey again. We can come once more to Calvary totally recommitted to our Lord and invulnerable in Him."**

Reformation leader in Zurich, defended the right of Christians to eat meat during Lent, but preserved observances for Holy Week. While Luther tended to allow what was hallowed by custom and not condemned in Scripture, Zwingli and the followers of Calvin desired to rule out everything not expressly sanctioned in Scripture.<sup>10</sup> The attitude of Calvin's followers is illustrated by a letter from the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, signed by John Knox and other ministers, and addressed to Theodore Beza, Calvin's successor in Geneva. This letter from the year 1566 mentions the festivals of "our Lord's nativity, circumcision, passion, resurrection, ascension, and sending the Holy Ghost upon his disciples." It then continues with the declaration, "These festivals at the present time obtain no place among us; for we dare not religiously celebrate any other feast-day than what the divine oracles have prescribed."<sup>11</sup> This Calvinist heritage later evoked from the Puritan fathers of New England their frequent denunciations of "popery," in all forms, and explain the background of much evangelical uneasiness about Lent in modern times.

John Wesley, high church Anglican that he was in his early ministry, observed Lent carefully according to what he believed was the custom of the Early Church. In a statement that described some of his ascetic ideals and practices as he undertook his ministry in Georgia, Wesley listed among other things the following:

"I believe it a duty . . . so far as I can . . .

1. To observe the stations.
2. Lent, especially the Holy Week.
3. To turn to the east at the Creed."<sup>12</sup>

The passage above represents Wesley before Aldersgate, and later in his ministry his views changed considerably, but he remained a high churchman in many respects throughout his life. In 1743, he published a document designed to answer the charge that the Methodists were undermining the Church of England. Wesley stated that he had always observed the rubrics of the *Book of Common Prayer* "with a scrupulous exactness." He cited fasting during ember days, Rogation Days, Fridays, and Lent as examples of his careful adherence to the rubrics and concluded, "many can witness I have observed them punctually."<sup>13</sup>

Late in his ministry, Wesley abridged the *Book of Common Prayer* for the use of Methodists in America, and among other changes, omitted all references to Lent except for Good Friday. While he was mainly concerned with the needs of his followers in America, he was a far cry from his days in Oxford and Georgia. Wesley never ceased, however, to insist upon fasting and spiritual discipline for himself and his followers.<sup>14</sup>

This backward glance at the observance of Lent shows a period rich in the history of Christian devotion

and challenging in its annual call for inward renewal by contemplating Calvary. Do we not need the discipline of self-denial and a spirit of penitence for our absorption in the material and the temporal in the Church today? Can we not well utilize a period of grace when our fellow Christians around the world are simultaneously concentrating on the meaning of the Cross and demanding that we face anew its claim upon our strength and devotion? Lent brings to us some rich possibilities for personal growth and institutional effectiveness.

1. Lent is a period of grace that offers a variety of opportunities. If we as evangelicals reject the patterns of the past, we can explore the new possibilities that each spring affords. We can seek renewal of spiritual life even as there is renewal of life in the cycles of nature. We can claim the freedom indicated by Paul when he said, "One man considers one day more sacred than another; another man considers every day alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind" (Rom. 14:5, NIV). Charles R. Erdman paraphrases Paul's words as follows: "Therefore . . . one who observes the demands of a most exacting Church Year should not be regarded as bound by narrow tradition, nor should one who disregards such demands be considered irreverent or lacking in faith."<sup>15</sup> However we choose to use the Lenten season, we ought not to bypass the advantages it offers for the spiritual life of the Church. As Charles L. Wallis reminds us: "Lent means many things to many people. Though not consistently observed within evangelical Christianity, this period of grace offers a privilege available as in no other season for the heightening of spiritual ministries and the deepening of the spiritual life."<sup>16</sup>

2. "Lent is a time for putting first things first." With these words, Bishop Stephen Bayne admonishes us that Lent's time of preparation, the discipline and the self-denial are all for the purpose of following in the footsteps of Jesus Christ. As Bayne emphasizes, "The negative aspects of Lent are incidental to this purpose. We abstain from the common amusements and pleasures of life during Lent—not because there is something evil in them . . . they are not evil but good; yet there are more important things; and Lent is a time for putting first things first."<sup>17</sup>

3. Lent is a time to assess our responsibilities in view of the world's needs. The modern Church has tended to overlook the medieval emphasis on almsgiving in Lent. Perhaps it is because we look upon charity or welfare as the responsibility of government, but we could well make Lent a time of annual inventory of needs that might lie in our power to alleviate. Wesley coupled with true fasting the necessity of "enlarging our prayers" and works of charity: "It remains only, in order to our observing such a fast as is acceptable to the Lord, that we should add alms thereto; works of mercy, after our power, both to the bodies and souls of men: 'with such sacrifices' also 'God is well pleased.'<sup>18</sup>

4. Lent is a time of recommitment in our spiritual discipleship. Whatever else Lent may be, it should be a time when we look again at the example of our Lord, and take up our cross anew to follow Him. W. E. Sangster challenged Wesley's followers in Britain in a sermon for the beginning of Lent: "We need this annual checkup in our spiritual lives. Even those of us no longer young in

discipleship know how easy it is to slip back. . . . Lent is here to brace us for our journey again. We can come once more to Calvary totally recommitted to our Lord and invulnerable in Him."<sup>19</sup>

5. Lent is a time to *preach* the gospel. When Christians are centering their thoughts on the life and the death of Jesus, there exists an exciting opportunity for the preacher to declare the central facts of Christian faith. A generation ago, noted Congregational pastor Harold Ockenga determined to redeem the season of Lent by a series of sermons on the primary truths of the gospel. Observing that Lent was a time when men expect to hear about the life, death, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus, Ockenga began a series of Lenten sermons that extended across 25 or more years at Boston's Park Street Church. This ministry became "a blessing to the congregation, a witness to hundreds of visitors, and a means of evangelism whereby some made a first commitment to Christ."<sup>20</sup>

Andrew Blackwood witnessed the effectiveness of Ockenga's Lenten ministry in Boston and urged every young man in divinity school to adopt such a philosophy of life. Noting that Ockenga ministered in a church without fixed forms of worship, Blackwood urged pastors to imitate Ockenga in two things that lie at the heart of the gospel preaching:

1. During Lent preach regularly about the Lord Jesus Christ as day by day He draws nearer to Calvary.
2. During Holy Week, in sermon after sermon, bring every hearer face-to-face with the Christ of the Cross as the world's only Redeemer and King.<sup>21</sup>

This is an eloquent challenge to remind us that Lent is a time to proclaim the gospel message.

Bequeathed to us by the early Christian community, the Lenten season comes to us bearing the prayers and self-denial and almsgiving of martyrs and saints as examples for us. But this season especially brings before us the figure of our Lord and demands that we take up our cross anew and follow Him.

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## A Lenten Sermon Series

# PREACHING FROM LUKE'S GOSPEL DURING LENT

by Alexander Varughese

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The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the center of the proclamation of the gospel. This is evident from Peter's statement, "This Jesus God raised up, and of that we are all witnesses" (Acts 2:32, RSV; see also 3:15; 4:10). The Easter event constitutes the mightiest of all the acts of God. Lent, therefore, provides for us another opportunity to celebrate God's power.

Any attempt to gain or offer freedom involves the prospect of revolution, pain, and death. So it is with God's offer of freedom to mankind. God, through His Son, caused established religious convictions to be reversed. He called for a revolution in man's thinking, his attitudes, and his actions. His disciples continue to follow that path of revolution in the world. This message is at the heart of Luke's writings (Luke, Acts). He provides

for us a basis for celebrating the Lenten season as a season of joy and freedom in Jesus Christ.\*

As a Gospel writer, Luke, "having followed all things closely," gives us "an orderly account" (1:3, RSV), so that we may better understand the events that lead up to the joy of Easter celebration. This series is an attempt to study a selected number of passages from the Gospel. They highlight the mind and message of Luke as the first historian and an early theologian of the Christian Church.

### A Celebration of God

(Luke 1:46-55)

#### **Background**

Read Luke 1:5-45. Notice here that Mary's outburst of joy came not at Gabriel's announcement (vv. 28-38) but at the subsequent greeting of Elizabeth (vv. 41-43). Gabriel's greeting, "O favored one" (v. 28, RSV), did not fit her understanding of God, aware that she was an unknown maiden, among the lowest of society. Elizabeth's greeting, however, confirmed Gabriel's words to her.

#### **Literary Form**

Mary's response to Elizabeth is quite similar to the hymns of praise in the Book of Psalms. It is a lyrical poem with a wealth of Hebrew thought and expressions. Compare this song with Hannah's prayer in 1 Sam. 2:1-10.

#### **Text Analysis**

Four theological themes may be developed from this passage.

1. Mary comes to an awareness of herself as one in whom a basic theological principle is at work. Regardless of her lowly status, God finds favor with



Alexander  
Varughese

her and bestows upon her His richest blessing (vv. 46-48).

- II. What is at work in her is not an isolated theological principle; it has universal application. It is a demonstration of God's holiness to all who love and respect Him (vv. 49-50).
- III. Mary's experience revolutionizes her understanding of God. He is not bound to act by the standards of man. God acts as a revolutionary by upsetting the social structure and reversing the social order in fulfilling His plan of redemption (vv. 51-53).
- IV. Mary's confidence in the faithfulness of God becomes the basis for the hope of Israel and of mankind (vv. 54-55).

#### **Practical Application**

God, through Jesus Christ, calls us to come to a new vision of ourselves. We are worthy in His sight to receive His mercy and redemption. He challenges us to have a new vision of himself as the champion of all who fear Him. Furthermore, He calls us to have a renewed vision for the redemption of mankind, based on our new understanding of God and His faithfulness.

#### **A Celebration of the Gospel of Jesus Christ**

(Luke 4:16-30)

##### **Background**

Compare this passage with Mark 6:1-6 and Matt. 13:54-58. Consult commentaries for a discussion of the reason why Luke has placed this narrative at the beginning of Jesus' ministry. Notice also the emphasis on "Spirit" in the previous two narratives (3:21-22; 4:1-13) as well as in the brief statement about Jesus' Galilean ministry (4:14-15) and verse 18 in this passage. A thematic connection may be observed here.

##### **Literary Form**

This passage is written as a narrative, with the quotation of a poetic oracle from Isa. 61:1-2.

##### **Text Analysis**

Two primary theological themes may be found in this passage.

- I. The gospel of Jesus proclaims liberty to all, regardless of our condition (vv. 16-22). The hope of the Jubilee Year (see Lev. 25:8 ff.) has become a reality to those who believe in Jesus Christ. The messianic age is inaugurated with the proclamation of pardon and liberty to all in captivity.
- II. The gospel of Jesus Christ demands action rather than compliments (vv. 23-30). There is an interesting turn of events in this narrative. Those who complimented the reading of a sermon text are now offended by the preacher and his sermon!

##### **Practical Application**

As His disciples, the gospel of Christ must become the basis of our lives and work. Yet it also serves as a reminder of our prejudices and other signs of spiritual maladies. The gospel of Jesus Christ calls us to repentance and warns us of judgment. The celebration of the gospel must be accompanied by the acceptance of its demands upon our lives.



The Dome of the Rock and the temple area viewed through the window of Flavus chapel on the Mount of Olives.

#### **A Celebration of Jesus' Attitude**

(Luke 9:51-56)

##### **Background**

This passage begins the second stage of Jesus' activities, according to Luke's Gospel. The journey Jesus begins will take Him to Jerusalem (9:51—21:38). Read also about the history of the Samaritan-Jewish hostility, which began around 538 B.C. History reminds us that the Samaritans were violently opposed to the Jewish nation and the Temple in Jerusalem. Galilean pilgrims to Jerusalem were frequently under attack from the Samaritans.

##### **Literary Form**

Luke writes this passage as a narrative, in biographical style.

##### **Text Analysis**

Three attitudes are represented here:

- I. *The Attitude of Jesus.* He is on the road to be "received up." The goal is His glorification (Greek: *analempsis*) in Jerusalem through His death and resurrection. He wants to make it a peaceful, non-violent journey by tolerating the hostile Samaritan villagers.

- II. *The Attitude of the Samaritans.* They are intolerant, hostile, and inhospitable. Their antagonism against anyone who travels to Jerusalem is clearly evident in their response to Jesus' disciples.
- III. *The Attitude of James and John.* They are ardent followers of Jesus, but ignorant of Jesus' method of accomplishing His glorification. Jesus intends to follow through the path of suffering. James and John are impatient with the Samaritans. They are caught up in the Elijah Syndrome (*cf. 2 Kings 1:1-16*). They represent the traditional Jewish hostile attitude toward the Samaritans.

#### **Practical Application**

Luke describes three attitudes and urges us to possess that of Jesus Christ. The story has an interesting postscript. James and John were themselves consumed with the fire from heaven on the Day of Pentecost. Read Acts 8:4-17. Here Luke describes John in the regions of Samaria with Peter. They are praying for the Holy Spirit to fall upon the Samaritan believers. The Spirit of Jesus does make a difference in the lives of His disciples! The fire from heaven comes now, not to destroy the Samaritans but to consume them in His holy love.

### **A Celebration of Loyalty** (Luke 10:38-42)

#### **Background**

This section is an integral part of Luke's "on the road to Jerusalem" section (9:51—21:38). This narrative fits well in a section that attempts to answer the question, "What does it mean to be a disciple?"

#### **Literary Form**

This passage is written as a narrative, in biographical style.

#### **Text Analysis**

Two persons are introduced here, representing two different expressions of loyalty to Jesus Christ. The lesson Luke wants us to hear becomes clear when we keep the background in mind. In this text, he repeats this background with his peculiar "on the way" expression. Jesus is on the way to Jerusalem to be glorified on the cross and to be glorified by God (*analempsis*). Martha and Mary are both described as listening to Jesus' teachings. But Martha's attention is "distracted" (v. 40, *literally*, "She allowed her attention to wander") because she is anxious to serve Jesus. She is more concerned with serving Him than she is with listening to His teachings. Mary, on the other hand, takes time to listen to Jesus, enabling her to become a better servant/disciple.

#### **Practical Application**

True celebration of our loyalty to Jesus Christ comes through our personal communion with Him. We often allow our attention to wander away from the teaching of Jesus in our overzealousness and eagerness to serve Him. Christ demands our full attention when He speaks to us. The degree of faithfulness with which we serve Christ depends on the degree of our faithfulness in listening to Him.

### **A Celebration of Love** (Luke 21:1-4)

#### **Background**

Jesus reached His destination (Jerusalem), but the mission is yet to be accomplished. His mission is to pour out His life for the sake of the world. The story of the widow and her offering prepares the ground for Luke's presentation of Jesus offering His all for the sake of the redemption of mankind.

#### **Literary Form**

Luke writes a narrative, in biographical style.

#### **Text Analysis**

Two key phrases will guide the interpretation:

- I. The rich offering their gifts *out of their abundance* (v. 1).
- II. The widow offering her all *out of her poverty* (v. 4).

#### **Practical Application**

True love for or devotion to Christ is evident in the act of offering Him all that we have. He offered all that He had for our redemption. Christ calls us to celebrate our love for Him with our appropriate response.

### **A Celebration of Friendship** (Luke 24:13-35)

#### **Background**

Luke places this beautiful narrative between the story of the disciples' strong disbelief of the Resurrection (24:1-12) and the story of Jesus' appearance to the Eleven, who had not yet fully comprehended the truth of the Resurrection.

#### **Literary Form**


Narrative, in biographical style, this passage is an excellent example of Luke's skill in conveying deep theological truth through storytelling.

#### **Text Analysis**

Two theological themes are evident in this passage:

- I. Jesus, the uninvited friend on the road to Emmaus (vv. 13-27). The troubled and disappointed disciples find comfort in the company of the risen Christ incognito. The reports of His resurrection did not ease their doubts and fears. What gives them comfort is the correct understanding of scripture by the risen Lord, whose identity remains hidden to them. Though unknown to them, He is a true friend along their way.
- II. Jesus, the invited friend on the road to Emmaus (vv. 28-35). The friend along the way becomes a guest. True fellowship takes place at the table. The two men who were once perplexed are now comforted, with the scriptures, by the risen Lord. Faith in His resurrection is established in their hearts. They are now ready to proclaim it to others.

#### **Practical Application**

The risen Lord remains a friend to those who are perplexed and who live in doubt of His gospel. True knowledge of Him is offered to those who invite Him to stay with them as the disciples did (v. 29). 

\*See Frederick W. Danker, *Luke in The Proclamation Commentaries: The New Testament Witness for Preaching*, Gerhard Kroegel, ed. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976), 112-13. Danker observes in the Gospel of Luke a clear attempt to portray Jesus as offering us freedom "from demeaning views of God," and "from demeaning confinement" in substandard social, moral, and religious practices (p. 112).

# TENEBRAE

by Virginia Cameron  
*Assistant Professor of Music*  
*Mount Vernon Nazarene College, Mount Vernon, Ohio*

It was one of those services that was more than a routine hour in God's house. It was a means of grace—an instruction from His heart to mine. I worshiped, understood, and appreciated "His life for mine" in a vivid, dramatic manner that 20 years of ordinary services had not been able to do.

This door of worship was opened to me as a college student home for Easter break. I didn't know if Tenebrae was something to eat, wear, or shop for. I went to my first Tenebrae service with a basic attitude of reserve and mistrust of anything beyond my evangelical exposure.

I was not prepared for the impact this service had on my life. Nor was I to know that same aura of awe, appreciation, and deep devotion to the Lord would be re-

kindled each time since that I have pondered His sacrificial life and death in the context of Tenebrae, and experience in worship.

Tenebrae has been such a significant time in our own church's life that it has become an "annual tradition," anticipated and attended not only by our own church family but by others in the community as well.

Allow me to share with you about Tenebrae more objectively: its historical background and structure, as well as how to plan and prepare for the service.

## *Descriptive History of Tenebrae*

The Tenebrae service has traditionally been held on Maundy Thursday evening. Maundy Thursday, the day immediately preceding Good Friday, commemorates Christ's establishment of the Lord's Supper as He met with His disciples for the last meal before His death. As He celebrated the Passover seder, the Lord gave to His disciples the mandate<sup>1</sup> to take the role of a servant, demonstrating that principle as He washed the disciples' feet (John 13:12-17). The Tenebrae service is a vehicle that dramatically depicts, through scripture and music, the events of Passion Week from that Last Supper to the Lord's death.

Tenebrae is an ancient service dating back to the early centuries of the church. Its name derives from the Latin word meaning "shadows." This "service of shadows" literally and visually recounts the deepening darkness that enfolded the Lord as He agonized in prayer alone, experienced Judas' betrayal, the flight of the disciples and denials of allegiance, and as He sensed the weight of what it meant to have sin separate Him from the Father.

During the service the sanctuary lights are gradually



Virginia Cameron

dimmed and candles are extinguished to portray the approaching hour of darkness on Friday and the hours during which His body was entombed.

### *Planning the Tenebrae Service*

Carefully selected scripture readings form the skeleton of this service. Music fleshes it out, and the brief periods of silent meditation between each "shadow" complete the substance of the service as each worshiper allows the Holy Spirit to imprint that message on his heart.

Traditionally, each "shadow" of the Cross represents, in chronological order, an event or teaching from the Thursday and Friday of Holy Week. Scriptures may be compiled from relevant Gospel passages, or you may use a topically edited composite of the Gospels already in print.<sup>2</sup> The reading assignments should be distributed to the readers and prepared well in advance of the service. Care should be taken that uniformity of translation be preserved throughout the service.

Music should be selected in consideration of its correlation to the scripture text it amplifies. Consideration should be given to preferences of your local congregation. Music may be sung by the congregation, choir, small ensembles, and soloists. Remember, however, that as the service progresses, the light available for reading printed music will diminish. This will make it necessary to use most of the congregational songs in the earlier segments, and plan small ensembles or solos for later segments (having, of course, made provision for flashlights or stand lights). A very effective musical response to the last scripture portion could be a carefully selected and prepared congregational medley of familiar choruses and hymns that can be sung "by heart" in the darkened sanctuary. (Some appropriate selections might include one or two verses of songs such as "My Jesus, I Love Thee," "The Old Rugged Cross," "Were You There?" "At the Cross," "Near the Cross," "When I Survey," etc.)

Careful correlation and planning is a must among the

Paul M. Schrock



pastor, lighting and sound assistants, readers, musicians, Communion stewards and elders, and the music director. We have accommodated this by (1) canceling the regular Wednesday prayer meeting in deference to the Maundy Thursday service, and using that Wednesday for Tenebrae/cantata practice, and (2) meeting with all service participants and technicians for final instructions and prayer a half hour prior to the service. A separate planning session and rehearsal will be required for the lighting assistant.

The sanctuary should be prepared simply, but with symbolic purpose. A large cross may be draped with yardage of black, dark purple, or blue fabric across its arms, and a crown of thorns attached to the center of the crossbar.

The seven candles may be held in a candelabra or on seven separate candle stands, each draped with dark fabric. A small thorn branch may be laid at the base of each candle. Many other creative variations for these sanctuary arrangements may be used.

#### Service Outline

Two varied examples of a Tenebrae service outline are provided here for your referral. Note that instructions and a brief explanation as to the history and nature of the service are included in the bulletin or worship folder for each worshiper.

The beauty of this service is its simplicity and its adaptability to any size of congregation, and the fact that it can be tailored to local church tastes and worship styles, depending on the music selected for each segment.

#### Service A

### TENEBRAE A SERVICE OF DARKNESS

#### Organ Prelude

#### Scripture Meditation

*For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee.*

Isa. 60:2

*And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.*

John 1:5

#### The Last Supper

Hymn 313<sup>3</sup>

Scripture

The Last Supper

Hymn 315

Communion

"According to Thy Gracious Word"

Pastoral Meditation

"Here at Thy Table, Lord"

#### Gethsemane

Scripture

Hymn 138

"Tis Midnight"

#### The Denial and Trial

Scripture

Hymn 140

"Lead Me to Calvary" (verses and 4)

#### The Suffering Servant

Responsive Reading

556

Hymn 232

"Just as I Am"

#### Christ Sentenced

Scripture

Hymn 132

"O Sacred Head, Now Wounded"

#### On the Way to the Cross

Scripture

Duet

"Blessed Redeemer"

#### Crucifixion

Scripture

Silent Prayer

Organ Meditation

"There Is a Fountain"

#### Dismissal

*Please reverently preserve this hour of remembrance and leave the church building in silence. Ponder these things in your heart.*

*And there was a darkness over all the earth . . . and the sun was darkened.*

Luke 23:44-45

#### Service B

### TENEBRAE—A SERVICE OF SHADOWS

Organ Prelude and Silent Prayer

Choral Meditation—"O Come and Mourn with Me Awhile"<sup>4</sup>

Congregational Hymn 148—"There Is a Green Hill Far Away"

Prayer—The Lord's Prayer

#### SHADOWS OF HOLY WEEK

#### 1. The Shadow of His Body Broken for Us

Scripture: Matt. 26:26-29

Hymn 314—"Bread of the World in Mercy Broken"

The Eucharist

Prayer of Thanksgiving

#### 2. The Shadow of the Betrayal

Scripture: Matt. 26:17-25

Ensemble—"Ah, Holy Jesus"<sup>5</sup>

#### 3. The Servant

Responsive Reading 556

Hymn 132—"O Sacred Head, Now Wounded"

Scripture: John 13:1-17

#### 4. The Shadow of the Desertion

Scripture: Matt. 26:31-35

Hymn 138—"Tis Midnight"

#### 5. The Shadow of an Unshared Vigil

Scripture: Matt. 26:36-45

Hymn 138—"Tis Midnight"

#### 6. The Arrest at the Gate

Scripture: John 18:1-5

Ensemble—"Go to Dark Gethsemane"<sup>6</sup>



Kay Freeman

## 7. The Shadow of the Cross

Scripture: Mark 15:16-20

Songs of the Cross—Congregational Medley

Darkness—Silence

The Return of the Light

Benediction

Dismissal: Please leave the church in silence, allowing your heart to ponder these things.

### *A Word About This Service*

The ancient Tenebrae service dates back to the early centuries of the Christian Church. Coming from the Latin word meaning "shadows," Tenebrae depicts the flight of the disciples and the approaching Crucifixion. It summarizes the events and teachings that occurred in Holy Week from Maundy Thursday and Good Friday, preparatory to the Resurrection on Easter Sunday.

As you enter, meditate on the fact that it was Maundy Thursday when the 12 disciples were with Jesus in the Upper Room for the last time, and that He and they stood in the shadow of the Cross.

The extinguishing of the candles and lights as the service progresses symbolizes the approaching hour of the Crucifixion. The time of total darkness recalls the hours Christ was in the tomb. The return of the light is prophetic of the Easter soon to dawn.

Think and pray on the meaning this service has for you and for the church.

### *The Mechanics of the Service*

The organ prelude should be subdued and meditative. The seven candles may be lit, and the readers (and choir ensemble, if used) will proceed silently to their places during the prelude. During the service, as each reader completes the assigned Scripture passage, he should extinguish one of the seven candles before sitting down. Allow for a few moments of silence in which each person may "ponder" in heart and mind the impact of the scripture. Let the service proceed without a sense of hurry.

Corresponding to each candle extinguished, the sanctuary lights will be dimmed (if a dimmer switch is available) or the lights turned off in carefully preplanned groups. When the service has progressed to the last scripture and meditation, the only remaining light in the sanctuary should be a single spotlight on the cross. When the music of this "shadow segment" is finished, the light on the cross will be extinguished, leaving the sanctuary in total darkness, representing the "gross darkness" that exists apart from the Light of the World and the darkness of the tomb in which the Lord's body was laid.

After a period of silence, the pastor will lead the congregation in prayer, reflecting on Christ's aloneness in His hour of sacrifice and what His redemptive work has meant for "the people who walked in darkness," offering a prayer of gratitude and commitment.

At the close of the prayer, the single light on the cross should return, prophetic of Christ's coming resurrection. The readers, musicians, and congregation should leave the sanctuary in absolute silence. If you have nursery attendants, forewarn them to be prepared to quietly facilitate those picking up their children. All lights, except the spotlight on the cross, should remain off until everyone has left.

The weight and sanctity of this dramatic service is a reminder of the magnitude and meaning of the Lord's death, sacrifice, and model to us of the Suffering Servant. It will, by contrast, make the joyful Easter morning celebration of His Life more jubilantly understood and expressed.

### NOTES

1. Hence *Maundy*, from the Middle English *maunde*.
2. One such source is *The Book of Life* (Zondervan, 1980), vol. 20, *The Lord of Life*.
3. The hymn and responsive reading numbers refer to the Nazarene hymnal, *Worship in Song* (Lillenas Publishing Co., 1972).
4. From *Service Book and Hymnal* (Augsburg Publishing House, 1958).
5. *Ibid.*
6. *Ibid.*

## An Easter Sermon

# THE DOUBT OF THOMAS

by A. B. Bruce\*

*John 20:24-29*

"Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came" on that first Christian Sabbath evening, and showed Himself to His disciples. One hopes he had a good reason for his absence; but it is at least possible that he had not. In his melancholy humour he may simply have been indulging himself in the luxury of solitary sadness, just as some whose Christ is dead do now spend their Sabbaths at home or in rural solitudes, shunning the offensive cheerfulness or the drowsy dullness of social worship. Be that as it may, in any case he missed a good sermon; the only one, so far as we know, in the whole course of our Lord's ministry, in which He addressed Himself formally to the task of expounding the Messianic doctrine of the Old Testament. Had he but known that such a discourse was to be delivered that night! But one never knows when the good things will come, and the only way to make sure of getting them is to be always at our post.

The same melancholy humour which probably caused Thomas to be an absentee on the occasion of Christ's first meeting with His disciples after He rose from the dead, made him also skeptical above all the rest concerning the tidings of the resurrection. When the other disciples told him on his return that they had just seen the Lord, he replied with vehemence: "Except I shall see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe." He was not to be satisfied with the testimony of His brethren: he must have palpable evidence for himself. Not that he doubted their veracity; but he could not get rid of the suspicion that what they

said they had seen was but a mere ghostly appearance by which their eyes had been deceived.

The skepticism of Thomas was, we think, mainly a matter of temperament, and had little in common with the doubt of men of rationalistic proclivities, who are inveterately incredulous respecting the supernatural, and stumble at everything savouring of the miraculous. It has been customary to call Thomas the Rationalist among the twelve, and it has even been supposed that he had belonged to the sect of the Sadducees before he joined the society of Jesus. On mature consideration we are constrained to say that we see very little foundation for such a view of this disciple's character, while we certainly do not grudge modern doubters any comfort they may derive from it. We are quite well aware that among the sincere, and even the spiritually-minded there are men whose minds are so constituted that they find it very difficult to believe in the supernatural and the miraculous: so difficult, that it is a question whether, if they had been in Thomas's place, the freest handling and the minutest inspection of the wounds in the riser

\*Alexander B. Bruce was born in Perthshire, England, in 1831. He was educated at Edinburgh University and the Divinity Hall of the Free Church of Scotland, which he entered at age 18.

At age 40 he published his *Training of the Twelve*, which, within a few years, was on the shelf of almost every minister in Great Britain and thousands in North America. This work, in the opinion of many, has never been surpassed.

His other epochal work was *The Humiliation of Christ*, published in 1876.



Saviour's body would have availed to draw forth from them an expression of *unhesitating* faith in the reality of His resurrection. Nor do we see any reason *à priori* for asserting that no disciple of Jesus *could* have been a person of such a cast of mind. All we say is, there is no evidence that Thomas, as a matter of fact, was a man of this stamp. Nowhere in the gospel history do we discover any unreadiness on his part to believe in the supernatural or the miraculous *as such*. We do not find, e.g., that he was skeptical about the raising of Lazarus: we are only told that, when Jesus proposed to visit the afflicted family in Bethany, he regarded the journey as fraught with danger to his beloved Master and to them all, and said, "Let us also go, that we may die with Him." Then, as now, he showed himself not so much the Rationalist as the man of gloomy temperament, prone to look upon the dark side of things, living in the pensive moonlight rather than in the cheerful sunlight. His doubt did not spring out of his system of thought, but out of the state of his feelings.

Another thing we must say here concerning the doubt of this disciple. It did not proceed from *unwillingness* to believe. It was the doubt of a sad man, whose sadness was due to this, that the event whereof he doubted was one of which he would most gladly be assured. Nothing could give Thomas greater delight than to be certified that his Master was indeed risen. This is evident from the joy he manifested when he was at length satisfied. "My Lord and my God!" That is not the exclamation of one who is forced reluctantly to admit a fact he would rather deny. It is common for men who never had any doubts themselves to trace all doubt to bad motives, and denounce it indiscriminately as a crime. Now, unquestionably, too many doubt from bad motives, because they do not wish and cannot afford to believe. Many deny the resurrection of the dead, because it would be to them a resurrection to shame and everlasting contempt. But this is by no means true of all. Some doubt who desire to believe. Nay, their doubt is due to their excessive anxiety to believe. They are so eager to know the very truth, and feel so keenly the immense importance of the interests at stake, that they cannot take things for granted, and for a time their hand so trembles that they cannot seize firm hold of the great objects of faith—a living God; an incarnate, crucified, risen Saviour; a glorious, eternal future. Theirs is the doubt peculiar to earnest, thoughtful, pure-hearted men, wide as the poles asunder from the doubt of the frivolous, the worldly, the vicious: a holy, noble doubt, not a base and unholy; if not to be praised as positively meritorious, still less to be harshly condemned and excluded from the pale of Christian sympathy—a doubt which at worst is but an infirmity, and which ever ends in strong, unwavering faith.

That Jesus regarded the doubt of the heavy-hearted disciple as of this sort, we infer from His way of dealing with it. Thomas having been absent on the occasion of His first appearing to the disciples, the risen Lord makes a second appearance for the absent one's special benefit, and offers him the proof desiderated. The introductory salutation being over, He turns Himself at once to the doubter, and addresses him in terms fitted to remind him of his own statement to his brethren, saying:

"Reach hither thy finger, and behold My hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into My side; and be not faithless, but believing." There may be somewhat of reproach here, but there is far more of most considerate sympathy. Jesus speaks as to a sincere disciple, whose faith is weak, not as to one who hath an evil heart of unbelief. When demands for evidence were made by men who merely wanted an excuse for unbelief, He met them in a very different manner. "A wicked and adulterous generation," He was wont to say in such a case, "seeketh after a sign, and there shall no sign be given unto it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas."

Having ascertained the character of Thomas's doubt, let us now look at his faith.

The melancholy disciple's doubts were soon removed. But how? Did Thomas avail himself of the offered facilities for ascertaining the reality of his Lord's resurrection? Did he actually put his finger and hand into the nail and spear wounds? Opinions differ on this point, but we think the probability is on the side of those who maintain the negative. Several things incline us to this view. First, the narrative seems to leave no room for the process of investigation. Thomas answers the proposal of Jesus by what appears to be an immediate profession of faith. Then the form in which that profession is made is not such as we should expect the result of a deliberate inquiry to assume. "My Lord and my God!" is the warm, passionate language of a man who has undergone some sudden change of feeling, rather than of one who has just concluded a scientific experiment. Further, we observe there is no allusion to such a process in the remark made by Jesus concerning the faith of Thomas. The disciple is represented as believing because he has seen the wounds shown, not because he has handled them. Finally, the idea of the process proposed being actually gone through is inconsistent with the character of the man to whom the proposal was made. Thomas was not one of your calm, cold-blooded men, who conduct inquiries into truth with the passionless impartiality of a judge, and who would have examined the wounds in the risen Saviour's body with all the coolness with which anatomists dissect dead carcasses. He was a man of passionate, poetic temperament, vehement alike in his belief and in his unbelief, and moved to faith or doubt by the feelings of his heart rather than by the reasonings of his intellect.

The truth, we imagine, about Thomas was something like this. When, eight days before, he made that threat to his brother disciples, he did not deliberately mean all he said. It was the whimsical utterance of a melancholy man, who was in the humor to be as disconsolate and miserable as possible. "Jesus risen! the thing is impossible, and there's an end of it. I won't believe except I do so and so. I don't know if I shall believe when all's done." But eight days have gone by, and lo, there is Jesus in the midst of them, visible to the disciple who was absent on the former occasion as well as to the rest. Will Thomas still insist in applying his rigorous test? No, no! His doubts vanish at the very sight of Jesus, like morning mists at sunrise. Even *before* the Risen One has laid bare His wounds, and uttered those half-reproachful, yet kind, sympathetic words which evince intimate knowledge of all that has been passing through His

doubting disciple's mind, Thomas is virtually a believer; and *after* he has seen the ugly wounds and heard the generous words, he is ashamed of his rash, reckless speech to his brethren, and, overcome with joy and with tears, exclaims, "My Lord and my God!"

It was a noble confession of faith,—the most advanced, in fact, ever made by any of the twelve during the time they were with Jesus. The last is first; the greatest doubter attains to the fullest and firmest belief. So has it often happened in the history of the church. Baxter records it as his experience that nothing is so firmly believed as that which hath once been doubted. Many Thomases have said, or could say, the same thing of themselves. The doubters have eventually become the soundest and even the warmest believers. Doubt in itself is a cold thing, and, as in the case of Thomas, it often utters harsh and heartless sayings. Nor need this surprise us; for when the mind is in doubt the soul is in darkness, and during the chilly night the heart becomes frozen. But when the daylight of faith comes, the frost melts, and hearts which once seemed hard and stony show themselves capable of generous enthusiasm and ardent devotion.

Socinians, whose system is utterly overthrown by Thomas's confession, naturally interpreted, tell us that the words "My Lord and my God" do not refer to Jesus at all, but to the Deity in heaven. They are merely an expression of astonishment on the part of the disciple on finding that what he had doubted was really come to pass. He lifts up his eyes and his hands to heaven, as it were, and exclaims, My Lord and my God! it is a fact: The crucified Jesus is restored to life again. This interpretation is utterly desperate. It disregards the statement of the text, that Thomas, in uttering these words, was answering and speaking to Jesus, and it makes a man bursting with emotion speak frigidly; for while the one expression "My God" might have been an appropriate utterance of astonishment, the two phrases, "My Lord and my God," are for that purpose weak and unnatural.

We have here, therefore, no mere expression of surprise, but a profession of faith most appropriate to the man and the circumstances; as pregnant with meaning as it is pithy as forcible. Thomas declares at once his acceptance of a miraculous fact, and his belief in a momentous doctrine. In the first part of his address to Jesus he recognizes that He who was dead is alive: My Lord, my beloved Master! it is even He,—the very same person with whom we enjoyed much blessed fellowship before He was crucified. In the second part of his address he acknowledges Christ's divinity, if not for the first time, at least with an intelligence and an emphasis altogether new. From the fact He rises to the doctrine: My Lord risen, yea, and therefore my God; for He is divine over whom death hath no power. And the doctrine in turn helps to give to the fact of the resurrection additional certainty; for if Christ be God, death *could* have no power over Him, and His resurrection was a matter of course. Thomas having reached the sublime affirmation, "My God," has made the transition from the low platform of faith on which he stood when he demanded sensible evidence, to the higher, on which it is felt that such evidence is superfluous.

We have now to notice, in the last place, the remark

made by the Lord concerning the faith just professed by His disciple. "Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen Me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."

This reflection on the blessedness of those who believe without seeing, though expressed in the past tense, really concerned the future. The case supposed by Jesus was to be the case of all believers after the apostolic age. Since then no one has seen, and no one can believe because he has seen, as the apostles saw. They saw, that we might be able to do without seeing, believing on their testimony.

But what does Jesus mean by pronouncing a beatitude on those who see not, yet believe?

He does not mean to commend those who believe without any inquiry. It is one thing to believe without seeing, another thing to believe without consideration. To believe without seeing is to be capable of being satisfied with something less than absolute demonstration, or to have such an inward illumination as renders us to a certain extent independent of external evidence. Such a faculty of faith is most needful; for if faith were possible only to those who see, belief in Christianity could not extend beyond the apostolic age. But to believe without consideration is a different matter altogether. It is simply not to care whether the thing believed be true or false. There is no merit in doing that. Such faith has its origin in what is base in men,—in their ignorance, sloth, and spiritual indifference; and it can bring no blessing to its possessors. Be the truths credited ever so high, holy, blessed, what good can a faith do which receives them as matters of course without inquiry, or without even so much as knowing what the truths believed mean?

The Lord Jesus, then, does not here bestow a benediction on credulity.

As little does He mean to say that all the felicity falls to the lot of those who have never, like Thomas, doubted. The fact is not so. Those who believe with facility do certainly enjoy a blessedness all their own. They escape the torment of uncertainty, and the current of their spiritual life flows on very smoothly. But the men who have doubted, and now at length believe, have also their peculiar joys, with which no stranger can intermeddle. Theirs is the joy experienced when that which was dead is alive again, and that which was lost is found. Theirs is the rapture of Thomas when he exclaimed, with reference to a Saviour thought to be gone for ever, "My Lord and my God!" Theirs is the bliss of the man who, having dived into a deep sea, brings up a pearl of very great price. Theirs is the comfort of having their very bygone doubts made available for the furtherance of their faith, every doubt becoming a stone in the hidden foundation on which the superstructure of their creed is built, the perturbations of faith being converted into confirmations, just as the perturbations in the planetary motions, at first supposed to throw doubt on Newton's theory of gravitation, were converted by more searching inquiry into the strongest proof of its truth.

What, then, does the Lord Jesus mean by these words? Simply this: He would have those who must believe without seeing, understand that they have no cause to envy those who had an opportunity of seeing, and who believed only after they saw. We who live so far

(Continued on page 59)

# CHRISTIAN OR AMERICAN?

by David Cubie  
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**W**hat holidays do you celebrate in your church? Which takes priority if Mother's Day or Memorial Day conflict with Pentecost Sunday? If you were called to minister in Mexico, Canada, Britain, Germany, Paraguay, or India, what type of calendar would you follow? Or imagine yourself, transplanted from any of the above countries into a church in the United States, what strange religious world would you enter?

Almost 49 years ago, when I was 9, my father resigned his Nazarene pastorate in Morley, England, to accept a church in Cliftondale, Mass. In June we sailed from Liverpool and landed in Boston, where we were thrust into a new world. Arriving on Sunday morning, we went directly to church. Though also a Church of the Nazarene, it had a new religious orientation, symbolized in those days by the ever-present Stars and Stripes.

National religion is not unique to the United States. Each nation has its own way of uniting religion with patriotism and national aspirations. Each has its religious-patriotic calendar. In the United States, despite the political separation of church and state, there developed a close bond between religion and national aspirations, to the extent that in nonliturgical churches the national calendar became the church calendar. The two great Christian holidays, Christmas and Easter, are celebrated. Yet of these two, only Easter, and its accompanying holy days of Palm Sunday and Good Friday, has a primarily sacred significance. Beyond these two dates the church year proceeded by way of patriotic or semipatriotic days.

Sermon topics, hymnology, and prayer were expected to focus around national patriotism on the Sundays nearest Memorial Day, the Fourth of July, and Armistice Day (Veterans Day). Even Thanksgiving, with its opportunity for thanking God for the harvest, was, at least in New England, a time of remembering the Pilgrim fathers. Another set of sacred days were centered around the national icon—mother. Thus in addition to patriotic days, Mother's Day, Children's Day, and eventually Father's Day were celebrated. Special attention was given to the oldest mother, the youngest mother, and the mother present who had the most children. Another day, though less significant because most people were away for the last summer holiday, was Labor Day.

Other days, so prominent in the celebration of Christians in other lands, were overlooked or seen as a symbol of formalism. Such days as Epiphany, Ash Wednesday, and Ascension Day are

largely forgotten. Lent and Advent are commemorated at local whim. Even Pentecost (or Whitsunday, as it is known in England) is often bypassed, even in those denominations that celebrate the gift of the Holy Spirit. If Pentecost happens to conflict with either Mother's Day or Memorial Day, as it does occasionally, the Holy Spirit must yield the place of honor either to mother or the patriotic dead.

The point of this contrast is to raise the question, Are we more national than Christian? Is there much that has been lost from our Christian understanding because these holy days have not been preserved? In this day of the internationalization of our church, we must be reminded that our first call is to be Christian. To facilitate this universal fellowship, we must rediscover what is common to all. Maybe a first step would be to remember that even the term *American* is international, belonging to all who live in both South and North America.

Because of our evangelistic heritage and our opposition to formalism, there is a resistance against adopting that which is liturgical. What may be lost from this outlook is not only a sense of history, of being part of the Church from its beginning, and a sense of oneness with all Christians, but also valuable evangelistic opportunities. That which is truly Christian has the evangel at its center. If so, then the Christian calendar should be a valuable aid to our 20th-century evangelism.

Advent, the season prior to Christmas, was, in the Early Church, a season of penance, in preparation not only for Christmas but also for the Second Advent. Advent, as well as celebrating the joy of Christmas, could be directed toward evangelism. The message would then declare Christ's advent not only in terms of His birth and our anticipation of His second coming but in terms of the present as well. Penance (repentance) through faith opens the doors for His present coming in the person of the Holy Spirit.

Another largely forgotten holiday in the Christmas season is Epiphany. In the West, especially in Spanish countries, it is the feast of the magi. In the East, it is the feast of Christ's baptism. Both of these have evangelical significance. As the feast of the magi it proclaims that Christ, even in His birth, was "a light to lighten the Gentiles" (Luke 2:32). As the feast of His baptism, it can be a special day for the baptism of all those who have recently discovered Christ's advent. They have welcomed Him into their lives. The outward sign of an inward work is given added significance by its celebration in conjunction with the memory of our Lord's nativity and His own baptism. From this point on they may grow "in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man" (Luke 2:52) even as our Lord did.

A group of days that are valuable for nurturing the new Christian, as well as others, in the Christlike life are part of the Lenten season. The Lenten season includes not only the great days celebrating the acts of Christ—His life (Palm Sunday through His trial), His death, and His resurrection—but also the season in which the Christian is reminded that Christ's life must become his own. It is a season of both love and self-denial. Our Lord sanctified himself so that all who are His may be sanctified (John 17:19). So His disciples are to sanctify the Lord Christ in their hearts also (1 Pet. 3:15). Lent and its first day, Ash Wednesday, represent both penitence proposed and penance begun. It is when we, in obedience, take up our cross and follow Him. In contrast, Maundy Thursday's concentration moves from self and

(Continued on page 59)



David Cubie

# Easter: Day of Happy Surprises

by Edward F. Cox

Chaplain, Mount Vernon Nazarene College, Mount Vernon, Ohio

**E**aster is a day of happy surprises. On the first Easter, Jesus' followers were amazed, astounded, and ecstatic because of that morning's events. A more recent Easter held three happy surprises for me.

After attending a sunrise service, we were forced, because of an unusual schedule, to spend the day traveling. During our trip we stopped for a brief visit with my sister, who had recently learned she had cancer. We had our first surprise when we reached her home. My sister had gone to church.

I did not remember my sister being in church since her childhood. This morning she had told her husband that she wanted to attend Mother's church. My mother had worshiped each Sunday, until her last illness made it impossible, at Calvary Church of the Nazarene. For her children, it will always be known as "Mother's church."

We hurried to the church, and found my sister sitting in the place Mother had usually occupied. Sunday School had just ended, and the morning worship service was about to begin. Now came the second surprise.

It was the closing day of the church's revival. There would be no choir cantata, no religious drama by the youth, no Easter program by the children. On this Easter morning, there was to be an evangelistic service.

As the invitation was given following the message, my wife asked my sister if she would like to go to the altar to pray. My sister responded, "I sure would!" She found the resurrected Christ as her Savior and Lord. Months later, after her death, we were told that she had been in church every Sunday since that morning.

I want to say more about that second surprise. I know there are ways to worship God and to observe special religious days other than with a preaching service. Drama and music can be powerful and appropriate means of telling God's Good News. I appreciate the dedication with which choirs and others prepare special Easter presentations. I am troubled, however, that pastors often find their preaching time severely limited or preempted by special programs on Easter morning.

Some will say this is the pastor's fault. Perhaps, but we should be aware of the pressures he or she feels as various

groups lay claim to Easter morning. In some churches this time has been given to nonpreaching activities for so long they have become the traditional modes of Easter worship. What pastor has not had his fingers burned by tradition?

Choirs, having spent hours in preparation, want to present their cantatas before the largest possible congrega-

**Think about the Easter program at your church last year. What part of it was more important than preaching the resurrected Christ?**

tions. Any time before Easter seems too early, while after Easter would be anticlimactic. Easter Sunday morning seems just right.


Although we are seeing less of it, some churches hold their big Sunday School rallies on Easter. On a day when there is likely to be larger attendance than usual without trying very hard, it's sometimes tempting to go all out to "break the record." But it is not especially good strategy. How much better it would be to give our extra efforts to those Sundays that tend to have low attendance. Sometimes a unified service is planned to include a children's program and a brief message by the pastor. Attempting to have a Sunday School session and a worship service at the same time, the result is something that is neither.

Another practice I gratefully confess to have known to happen only rarely is the Sunday Easter egg hunt. At least once, however, I heard it announced to be held immediately after Sunday School! As a Sunday School activity, the whole Easter egg business is questionable at best. But it is certainly inappropriate for a Sunday.

Have I come across as a stuffy old preacher who wants to rob Easter worshippers of their joy and happiness? I hope not. What could be more joyous than the Easter message fresh from the lips of a minister whose heart is afire

with the assurance that Jesus lives? Do I sound opposed to alternate forms of worship? I'm not. My heart has often been blessed and thrilled by the music of Easter. I only urge careful consideration for the appropriate time and place for it.

So I had a loved one with a terminal illness, away from God and hungry-hearted, who met Jesus on Easter. Isn't that an isolated incident? Perhaps, but I sometimes wonder if we really know what our Easter visitors are thinking and feeling. To assume that they have only come to model their fine new clothes is surely too harsh. Having seen us go into the church every seventh day throughout the year, they may wonder what draws us there. We know. It is the fact that Jesus Christ is alive and meets with us there as we gather in His name. We have no desire to keep it a secret. Let them hear it when they come in the clearest possible way—a sermon full of faith and brimming with invitation.

Some smile at the story of a pastor who wished his Easter congregation a merry Christmas and happy New Year. He reasoned that he would not see them again until next Easter. How much better to expect that our guests will discover with glad surprise the empty tomb and our risen Lord. We can tell them that what occurs in our churches on Easter is not really any different from other Sundays. Each first day of the week is Resurrection Day for us. 



Edward F. Cox

# *Easter: Sacred or Profane?* *or* *Break the Rabbit Habit!*

by Virginia Cameron

*Assistant Professor of Music*

*Mount Vernon Nazarene College, Mount Vernon, Ohio*

It's spring! Once again the merchandise mongers release their seasonal deluge of commercials, advertisements, and sale fliers.

Easter will soon be here, and with it will come a Madison Avenue barrage of propaganda aimed at us and our children. We will hear more about the Easter Bunny than the Paschal Lamb; more about marshmallow chicks than the Bread of Life; more about Easter bonnets than the crown of thorns; more about egg hunts than the One who hung on the Cross.

Our churches and homes must counterattack this secular "wimping" of the powerful message of Christ's redeeming sacrifice and triumphant resurrection. We must begin early in the Lenten season to celebrate, educate, and recount these scriptural accounts in our homes, Sunday School classes, and worship services.

Most of us have customarily observed and celebrated the Resurrection on Easter Sunday, the most significant of all Christian holy days. This is essential and appropriate. But perhaps there are other practices that could heighten our awareness and enhance the understanding of the freedom-giving significance of this holy season.

In our "body of believers" we have found the following observances and methods helpful in turning our hearts and minds to the crux (Latin for *cross*) of Easter.

This listing is not comprehensive, and perhaps your church already employs many of these plans and ideas. However, this itemization may trigger some creative thoughts of

your own concerning how you may implement, apply, and/or modify them for your church.

1. Acknowledge the traditional church year calendar and observation of Lent. The Lenten season spans 40 weekdays from Ash Wednesday to Easter Sunday. Lent prepares our hearts and sets the backdrop against which the drama of Easter and resurrection power is played out.

Consider having a special covenant service for prayer meeting on Ash Wednesday. Carefully selected scripture and a time for reflection and prayer can be centered around the Lord's last days and teachings prior to His crucifixion. The service could conclude by providing a time in which each person can privately enter into covenant with the Lord concerning some area of spiritual growth, self-denial, or undertaking a Spirit-led ministry.

For some it will mean "offering up" an area of their life-style. Some may limit or eliminate TV viewing to enable expanded prayer, Bible study, or visitation. For others it will be relinquishing the "right" to worry or to complain, allowing the Lord to transform an area of personal habit displeasing to Him.

Others may respond to an involvement in a specific area of service: studying the Gospels; being obedient to a specific personal directive; shepherding a new believer or nurturing a friendship with a non-believer; or undertaking a special project within or outside the church as the Spirit leads. This self-examination and challenge may also be combined with prayer, fasting,

and/or an area of fiscal giving, such as Faith Promise or missionary offering.

2. Emphasize the Lord's sacrificial death and atonement in your selection of scripture, sermons, and music. Make these areas the focal points of all that transpires in the services during Lent.

3. Plan special activities and services. Design them to raise the awareness of your congregation to the impact of what transpired for us during those days of our Lord's life. Consider Easter cantatas, drama presentations, or a special festive service of celebration, praise, and testimony on Palm Sunday.

Another possibility is a special evening of congregational, choral, and ensemble music combined with scripture readings, minimessages, readings, meditations, and/or drama carefully correlated around a central Lenten theme such as "The Lamb of God," "The Finished Work," "The Atoning Blood," "The Sacrifice," etc.

As you plan these services, consciously involve a wide diversity of people from your congregation, including participation from several age-groups.

One of the most effective and impressive of Holy Week services is a Maundy Thursday Tenebrae service (see the separate article on Tenebrae in this issue).

4. Visually prepare the sanctuary. Simple symbolic decoration will greatly enhance this season, becoming an illustration of Christ's death and resurrection.

This could be done with a set of seven banners thematically prepared, one new banner added each

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# RENEWING SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE AT EASTER

by Larry W. White

Pastor, Lakeholm Church of the Nazarene, Mount Vernon, Ohio

**W**hile I was a student at Penn State, my wife, Linda, and I daily drove the same route to school and work. One morning I exclaimed, "Look at the red door on that house! No one could miss that, could they?"

Linda began to laugh and said, "They couldn't? We've been this way a hundred times and you are seeing just now what's been there all the time."

What could I say? I had not noticed the obvious. This is often the case with us and God. He is always there, but we are seldom aware of His presence.

How often are we conscious of Immanuel, God with us? Yet it is God's desire that His people have a continual fellowship with Him. It is also the deep yearning of every human being to know God. The Psalmist spoke for many of us when he wrote, "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God" (Ps. 42:1). When we read these words, something inside us cries out, "Yes, yes, that is what I desire. That expresses exactly how I feel." However, there are few who can honestly say that they are continually aware of the divine presence of God.

The key is our abiding in God, as Jesus tells us in John 15. Spiritual disciplines provide a means of abiding in Him. Albert E. Day, in *Discipline and Discovery*, says, "If you abide in me and I in you—that is the big 'if' which stands between our barrenness and fruitful, redemptive prayer and service. Abiding in him, prayer becomes communion and service becomes a sacrament." "His abiding in us," Day adds, "becomes the Presence for which our spirits cry, the comradeship which sweetens all loneliness, the victory which banishes all fear, the medicine which heals our diseases, the answer which resolves all tragedy. Discipline, then discovery, then deliverance, then doxology."

In Rev. 3:20, we have these words of Jesus: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any one hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me" (RSV). We have opened the door of our lives to Jesus Christ by faith, and as a result, He resides within this human temple of flesh. At the same time, we know it is possible to have someone living in the same house with us and have only occasional fellowship. Frequently there is a lack of real fellowship. I mean real, *intimate* fellowship—so rich that when we must be apart, the glow and the power of that fellowship sustain us. It draws us back again and again. It is a fellowship that creates a hunger for more. This kind of intense relationship does not happen by accident. We must discipline our lives for it to take place, and then continue disciplining our lives to sustain it.

The Lenten season reminds us that the spiritual disciplines must become an integral part of our lives. We might share an intimacy with Jesus, just as Jesus knew intimacy with the Father. Spiritual disciplines are those things we do, or don't do, in order to be more conscious of God. They are things we do or don't do so we may experience more of God's grace in our lives. They must never be seen as ends in themselves. They must be a means to the end of knowing God and God

only in one's life. Bill Kellerman, in an article for the February 1985 issue of *Sojourners*, put it this way, "To undertake a Lenten discipline, to fast or deny an appetite, is not to inflict some perverse self-punishment or to be justified by a religious act. It is a prayer of freedom: To loosen the bonds and restore a right order to the created order. Disciplines are the willful acts of our lives which turn our attention away from self and toward God."

The things I give my attention to, those things I become. Kellerman says, "it has been said that 'thoughts are motors.' If we hold them in our consciousness long enough, they will move from mind to heart to action."

Spiritual disciplines are undertaken in the Lenten season in order to bring God and His kingdom into our active consciousness. Thus, if we hold Him in our minds long enough, the power of His divine presence will move from mind to heart to action. I believe this was what Paul had in mind when he wrote: "I appeal to you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world but be ye transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may prove what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect" (Rom. 12:1-2, RSV).

Until I offer up myself to God as a living sacrifice, my mind is so full of self that I cannot know God's perfect plan. With Paul, I must be crucified with Christ so that I might really live. The disciplines offer up self so that the mind might no longer be squeezed into the world's mold, but be transformed by the Spirit of God. When the Spirit moves us from thinking of self



Larry W. White

to thinking of God, there will be a transformation of heart and character.

Spiritual disciplines move the consciousness of man from a preoccupation with self to a dynamic awareness of God in all of life. Lent is a time when our attention is more fully caught by God. What gets our attention, gets us!

The Lenten season is a perfect opportunity to lift up the value of the disciplined life for our people. It is important that we draw attention to the connection between the crisis works of grace and the working out of our own salvation. The spiritual disciplines correspond with the "walk" in the Spirit. In part, they are what is meant when they say, "The resurrected person is to live as a citizen of God's kingdom."

The disciplines of the Christian life help keep us conscious of God. They help us to not pass Him by, as I passed the red door, unnoticed. As we become more and more conscious of God in all of life, the less susceptible we will be to the pressures of the world molding us into its image. We will be in a

place where God can renew our minds and transform us into His image. Before Him we will be found holy and blameless. Before men we will be more loving, humble, gentle, and patient. In *An Autobiography of Prayer*, Albert E. Day says, "It is in conscious fellowship with God that we become the men and women we ought to be and, in our best moments, want to be." Later in the same paragraph he says, "There is something that happens when one is alone with God which never occurs elsewhere." The disciplines put us alone with God.

Here are some of the traditional disciplines you can practice with your people during Lent. Use the work sheet below to guide your reflection on how to use these disciplines.

As you lead in these disciplines, you might want to read or reread these two books: *Discipline and Discovery*, Albert E. Day, Abingdon Press, and *Celebration of Discipline*, Richard Foster, Harper and Row. Practicing spiritual disciplines during the Lenten season should not be an end but a beginning. Perhaps it can produce a pattern for lifelong discipleship. 🙏

## SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE WORK SHEET

Discipline	Need	Form	Objective	Implementation
	How well is this discipline already carried out in my church? Very well, somewhat, weakly, not at all	What kind of program, organization schedule, etc., is needed for this discipline?	What is your general and specific aim and purpose for this discipline?	What organization, age-groups, or individuals would successfully carry this out?
Bible Study				
Meditation				
Fasting				
Solitude				
Simplicity & Frugality				
Sacrificial Obedience				
Humility				
Generosity				
Service				
Prayer				
Confession				

# LIVING IN RESPONSE TO EASTER

by Bill Youngman

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**E**aster, for the Christian, is both a historical and a personal event. It is historical in the literal death and resurrection of Jesus, the Christ. It is a personal event for every true believer.

Paul graphically described this parallel in Ephesians: "You were dead in your trespasses and sins," and thus "you formerly walked according to the course of this world" (Eph. 2:1-2, NASB). This means that we all "formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath" (v. 3, NASB). *But* (here is the personal experience of Easter) "even when we were dead in our transgressions [God], . . . because of His great love with which He loved us . . . made us alive together with Christ . . . and raised us up with Him" (vv. 5a, 4b, 5b, 6a, NASB). As a result of this personal resurrection, the true believer is now "His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them" (v. 10, NASB).

Here, then, is the heart of the issue. The Christian was once spiritually dead and lived as a citizen of this world. But now, having been raised up with Christ, he is to respond to this historical and personal Easter event by living out the implications of being God's workmanship, "created in Christ Jesus for good works."

Just as the spiritually dead person lived as a citizen of this world, so now the resurrected spiritually alive person is to live as a citizen of God's kingdom.

The big question, of course, is, "What does this mean?" How does a resurrected person live as a citizen of God's kingdom while still a resident of this world? Paul's answer in Ephesians is a practical place to begin. Five times he tells us how Christians are to "walk" or live in response to Easter.

The first response is *a life of appreciation*: "Walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called" (4:1, NASB).

God has called us first to be "holy and blameless before Him" (1:4, NASB), second "to adoption as sons" (v. 5, NASB), and third, to "an inheritance" (v. 11, NASB). This calling from God instills hope (vv. 12, 18), whereas the callings of this world are lifeless (2:1-10), Christless and hopeless (v. 12).

The life of the one who understands what God has done and appreciates His calling will be characterized by humility, gentleness, patience, forbearance, and the desire for unity (4:2-3). These are not qualities, however, of Christian clones. There is diversity within the unity of the Body (vv. 4-11), yet all of this is harnessed and channeled for one great purpose: "The equipping of the

saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ" (v. 12, NASB). The spiritual maturity of the Body is the concern and responsibility of each of its members.

Personal gratitude and corporate maturity, then, is what motivates the life of appreciation in response to Easter. God, through Christ, has done much for us individually and wants to do so much for us corporately. We choose to express our appreciation and individuality in a manner that glorifies God and builds the Body of Christ.

Related to the life of appreciation, and clarifying it further, is *the life of separation*: "Walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk" (4:17, NASB). This is Paul's second suggestion on how we should live in response to Easter.

Appreciation and separation help explain each other. A genuine appreciation forces a separation from that which is incompatible with the object appreciated. In the same manner, the choice to separate oneself from certain attitudes or actions implies the appreciation and acceptance of other attitudes and actions judged to be better or more appropriate.

Paul is reminding us that if we really appreciated God's calling personified and climaxed in Easter, we will also separate ourselves from that which characterizes the spirit of this world. Because this world is darkened in its understanding, alienated from the life of God, ignorant, and hard of heart, it has become callous, sensual, and greedy, expressing itself in falsehood, stealing, and rottenness of speech (4:18-19, 25, 28-29).

The separation is from the old self, the way of deceit. This separation is demonstrated by practicing the opposites: truthfulness, honest labor, and edifying speech



Bill Youngman



(4:25, 28-29). This is the new self, which reflects the nature and character of God. Easter Christians are keenly aware that a dimension of separation characterizes the lives they live. This separation, however, is not a rigid, cold legalism so sensitive to the offense that it is insensitive to the offender.

The life that is lived in response to Easter is also *a life of imitation*: "Walk in love, just as Christ also loved you" (5:2, NASB).

The love we are to live is the self-giving love of God, made manifest in Christ. We are to be "imitators of God!" It may seem strange that Paul warns against "immorality," "impurity," "greed," "filthiness," "silly talk," and "coarse jesting" (5:3-4, NASB). Yet, when looked at a bit more closely, each is seen to be a violation of love, a destructive attitude or action. The flip side of all this is that love is an attitude, demonstrated in action, that helps others grow. Agape love, therefore, is always constructive, never destructive. This is the way God relates to us: constructively, producing growth. This is the way we, too, are to live our lives.


This love is not sentimental and soft, avoiding confrontation with truth for fear of alienation. In order that we might be both tender and tough, we are directed to this fourth dimension of the "walk" that responds to Easter. Here the Christian is to *live a life of illumination*: "You were formerly darkness, but now you are light in the Lord; walk as children of light" (5:8, NASB).

This life in the light has two applications. The first, which has to do with the practice of personal piety, has already been discussed in several of the aspects of the life lived in response to Easter. The second, however,

opens a ministry responsibility that is new to many Christians. The life of illumination is to exercise a Christian social conscience. Not only are we admonished to "not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness," but we are also encouraged to "even expose [reprove] them" (5:11, NASB).

It is relatively safe to refuse to participate in the "deeds of darkness." It could literally be dangerous to expose and reprove those systems and practices that exploit and dehumanize our brothers and sisters. Yet is this not part of our responsibility, as those whose Father "requires" them "to do justice, to love kindness" (Mic. 6:8, NASB)?

It seems logical, then, that Paul concludes his fivefold description of the life lived in response to Easter by calling it *a life of investigation*: "Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men, but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil" (5:15-16, NASB).

This life of investigation intentionally seeks to "understand what the will of the Lord is." J. B. Phillips puts it more pointedly: "Don't be vague but grasp firmly what you know to be the will of the Lord" (5:17). Perhaps that is what many of us need to do to revitalize our relationship with God. In our more honest moments, we admit that at times it is difficult to apply the simple, practical implications of God's will to our lives. And yet, the sober truth will not go away: Not everyone who says, "Lord, Lord" will enter the Kingdom of heaven; only he who does God's will. The life lived in response to Easter finds and follows the will of the One who made Easter possible. 

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## Sacred or Profane?

(Continued from page 19)

Sunday of Lent. Or a large cross could be mounted, suspended, or displayed prominently in the sanctuary during the Lenten season.

On Palm Sunday the cross could be simply decorated with two crossed palm branches. For the Maundy Thursday service, drape long, dark fabric across the arms of the cross and place a crown of thorns in the center of the crossbar.

The sanctuary should be resplendent on Easter Sunday morning to announce the Lord's victory over the grave. Lilies (perhaps purchased as memorial gifts) creatively arranged and displayed, will complement the cross, now draped in white, yellow, or purple satin.


5. Easter caroling? Sure, why not! Carols are joyful songs having

texts based on religious events. Prepare a list of 10 or 12 well-known, easy-to-sing favorites, selecting hymns and gospel songs with Lenten-Easter significance. Hymnals or song texts sheets could be provided.

Just as with Christmas caroling, you must arrange for drivers and/or transportation and prepare your caroling route in advance. Include stops at hospitals, nursing homes, and homes of shut-ins. (Advance notification to institutions is not only courteous but often required.)

Caroling can be a pleasant "whole family involvement" way of reaching out during the busy seasonal schedules of individuals and churches. Mutual giving and receiving becomes apparent as both carolers and those caroled are ministered to and enriched by the loving gifts of music and self.

Caroling can be done by smaller groups such as a Sunday School class, teens, senior adult group, children's choir, or adult choir; or it can be opened to all the church. Although Easter caroling may take place any time during Lent, Good Friday, Saturday, and Easter Sunday are especially good days for this activity. Try it. You'll be amazed at the results.

There are many other activities and means to remind both believer and nonbeliever that Easter is a celebration of the Lord and His life, not just a time for bunnies, bonnets, and baskets. Let these suggestions be a catalyst for your own creativity. Add to them your own celebrations and means of instruction from sunrise services to special films and videocassettes. May the living Lord establish the work of your hands, hearts, and minds. 

## An Ascension Day Sermon

# RESURRECTING THE ASCENSION

by Phil McCallum  
Kansas City

### Introduction:

What a rude thing to do at a bon voyage gathering! In this moment of great sorrow at the parting of Jesus, these insensitive disciples carry on like a pack of school-boys after the dismissal bell. Twenty centuries have passed since the Ascension, but one cardinal rule of etiquette has not—it is considered rude to express joy at a comrade's departure.

We have all experienced farewells. There may be a preliminary joy, but sorrow is the norm at the final parting.

After I graduated from college I went on a six-month mission project to Australia, requiring I be separated from my fiancée. We had light conversation on the way to the airport. However, as the airplane taxied down the runway, neither of us were experiencing "great joy" as the disciples were.

Expositors have developed various conjectures to explain the disciples' strange mirth. Meyer suggests that it was due to "the Lord's teaching and blessing." Another declares that it was "because of the promised gift of the Spirit."<sup>1</sup>

Anyone who has experienced the pain of separation can testify that it would take much more than these placebos to transform sorrow into joy. While my fiancée and I were separated, there were many things that helped ease the pain of parting. We wrote letters, exchanged photos, and shared precious (and expensive) moments on the telephone. But none of these things really satisfied.

So it was with the disciples. These 11 men standing on the Judean hillside had just finished a three-year discipleship training course with Christ that joined them in eating, sleeping, praying, sharing, serving, preaching, working miracles, and traveling. The absence of Christ was, therefore, as obvious as a first grader's missing front tooth and as painful as David's parting from Jonathan.

The Ascension was not the first time the disciples had witnessed the disappearance of Jesus. They had seen

the transfigured Christ disappear into the cloud of God's Shechinah glory, only to reappear again. Recently, they had several encounters with the resurrected Lord. But though He disappeared at will, He always reappeared sooner or later.

Perhaps in the light of this past experience, Peter, James, and John thought that this Ascension cloud would dissolve and the Lord would be seen once again. But when the cloud lifted there was no Christ. As if to add insult to injury, two angels verified that Christ was indeed gone.

To have left this scene of sorrow with such joy, the disciples must have experienced something in the Ascension that overcame their grief.

### I. The Establishment of Christ's Lordship

Let us set out to discover the source of this joy that overcame the grief of loss. In his Gospel account, Luke records that the disciples worshiped Christ following His ascension. The term translated *worship* is used frequently to describe the action of those who greeted Jesus with respect.

But when we search the New Testament to find when the disciples themselves knelt or fell to worship Jesus, we discover that they rarely did so. When they did prostrate themselves before Christ, it was generally in response to some supernatural act that established Christ's Sonship.<sup>2</sup> When the terrified disciples saw Christ walking toward them on the Sea of Galilee, when Peter was enabled to do the same, and when the waves were calmed, they fell before Christ and worshiped Him (Matt. 14:33). Seeing the authority of Christ, they confessed that Jesus was "truly . . . the Son of God."<sup>\*</sup>

When these disciples fell down and worshiped their ascending Lord, they were not just doing so out of force of religious habit. It was a significant action in response to what they beheld. There above them, rising into the Shechinah glory of God, was Jesus, now confirmed the Son of God and Lord over all.

Peter, a witness to this ascension, declares the significance of this event as the establishment of Christ's

Lordship. In 1 Pet. 3:22 he writes, "[Jesus] has gone into heaven and is at God's right hand—with angels, authorities and powers in submission to him." The connection between Christ's ascension and the demonstration of His Lordship is clear.

Christ had demonstrated His authority before in the authority of His preaching, His healing of the sick, and in His forgiving of sins. But none of these spheres of authority matched the authority granted at the Ascension. The Ascension was the royal road to His heavenly coronation. There at the supreme investiture Christ was granted the divine scepter that marked His Lordship over all creation. Edward Perronet penned it:

*All hail the pow'r of Jesus' name!  
Let angels prostrate fall.  
Bring forth the royal diadem,  
And crown Him Lord of all.*

It was this testimony of Christ's Lordship that sent the disciples rejoicing down the mountain. It was this display of the divine authority of Christ that continually drove them to praise at the Temple. The disciples' joy was not out of rudeness but out of devoted allegiance. Their Master was Lord!

## II. What Does This Mean?

### A. Intercession for the Present

Though hidden from view, this same ascended and glorified Christ still reigns. The Ascension must mean something for us. Let us look at both of Luke's accounts again.

If you read both of these renditions carefully you will notice how reserved they are. In the Gospel, Luke simply states that Christ was "taken up" (NIV) or "parted" (RSV) from them. In the Acts account, Luke adds a little glamor with the angelic beings, but besides this the story is rather tame.

Compare Luke's story of Christ's ascension with the account of Elijah's translation in 2 Kings 2. Swooping out of heaven, a chariot with blazing horsemen sweep Elijah into a whirlwind, and the glorified prophet disappears into the stars.

To this, Luke pales by comparison. Jesus' ascension is reported with Spartan simplicity. Luke merely says that Jesus left or parted from His disciples. There is no triumphalism here, no chariot or blazing horsemen. Just Christ being lifted up and enveloped in a cloud of God's glory.

Some of the New Testament apocryphal authors felt Luke's account needed a little pizzazz, so they embellished the story. The apocryphal "Letter of James" depicts the exalted Christ mounting a golden chariot, riding off into the sunset while waving farewell in a kingly fashion. In the apocryphal "Letter of the Apostles," the author fantasizes:

As [Jesus] so spake, there was thunder and lightning and an earthquake, and the heavens parted asunder and there appeared a bright cloud which bore Him up. And there came voices of many angels, rejoicing and singing praises. . . .<sup>3</sup>

But this is not the account we have. Luke's record in both his Gospel and in Acts is rather bland. This seems so unfitting for what we expect from divine majesty. But it is so fitting of Christ.

Just consider the parallels between the Ascension and the great hymn of Phil. 2:6-11:

Who, being in very nature of God,  
did not consider equality with God  
something to be grasped,  
but made himself nothing,  
taking the very nature of a servant,  
being made in human likeness.  
And being found in appearance as a man,  
he humbled himself  
and became obedient to death—even  
death on a cross!  
Therefore God exalted him to the  
highest place  
and gave him the name that is above  
every name,  
that at the name of Jesus every knee  
should bow,  
in heaven and on earth and under the  
earth,  
and every tongue confess that Jesus  
Christ is Lord,  
to the glory of God the Father.

It is not a question of whether or not Christ *deserved* the thrills of a glorious departure, rather if He *required* them. Jesus required no glittering embellishment at His ascension, for His own glory supplied all that was necessary. The simplicity of the Ascension was a sufficient statement of the Sonship of Christ. He needed no angel choirs or golden chariots to buttress His claim to Lordship. His acceptance by the Father was enough. The sacrifice of Christ's blood was now proclaimed to be sufficient. Any traditional trappings would have been unnecessary, for He was Lord.

The theology is beautiful, but what does it mean? We peer into the heavenly glory with our mouths agape like the disciples, uncertain of what it all means.

The writer to the Hebrews searched this mystery. He writes, "He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption" (9:12).

Because of this sufficiency, this same ascended Jesus intercedes for us even now, making our needs known to the Father. Listen again to the writer to the Hebrews:

Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. . . . Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need (4:14, 16).

Jesus Christ is seated beside the Father making intercession for us. He pleads on our behalf, obtaining for us the riches He has won. His wounds cry out on our behalf. He is not a phantom or a spirit, but *this same Jesus* who walked upon this earth, now ascended and seated beside the Father in heaven.

When we think of Christ as Intercessor, our minds become flooded with images: a crafty lawyer bending facts to obtain mercy from a begrudging judge; an am-

*(Continued on page 41)*

## Plans for Pentecost Sunday

# HURRY UP AND WAIT

by W. Terrell Sanders

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**P**entecost, Pentecostals, Pentecostalism. These words are filled with so much controversy and emotion that we are slow to use them anymore. Yet the theme of Pentecostal power is one that we must claim for our own lest we lose our very reason for being. Nazarenes are born in Pentecostal revival, and if a people so conceived survives, it will be on the basis of Pentecostal power.

But what are these rumblings we hear? Anxiety in some quarters permeates the air like a dark mist. Clergy perceives that people are not open to holiness teaching. The laity asks, "Why do we hear so little about holiness?" Has the message become dated, irrelevant? Do we believe it anymore? If we do, then we must proclaim it with power born of conviction. Perhaps this is where we have been weakened. Our convictions have been brought into question, and in response people have heard stuttering rather than singing "Pentecostal fire is falling, praise the Lord it fell on me."

It would seem to be a contradiction in terms to be a Nazarene without conviction based on Pentecostal power. But it happens to you and me. Why? Because we are Samsons who have known power in the past and assuming its continued presence, we do not notice that the Spirit has departed (see Judg. 16:20).

So what should we do? Those with military experience have often bemoaned the practice of marching double time only to be left standing in line for 20 minutes. Waiting is hard. It seems a waste. We resent when anyone compels us to do it.

But this is the very thing we need to do. Hurry up and wait! "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint" (Isa. 40:31).

Some questions seem not worth asking—like Jesus asking the blind men "What do you want me to do for you?" (Matt. 20:32, NIV). They obviously wanted healing. Just like you and me, right? We want a fresh infilling of Pentecostal power in our churches. But are we willing to wait?

Lack of productivity is not the only thing that makes waiting hard. It is hard because it forces us to confront our inner emptiness. Do you ever catch yourself looking in the mirror in the morning? You see the reflection of your body. You catch the depth of your eyes, those windows of the soul. And the self within seems to call out to those eyes, "Who am I? What am I doing? What is life about?" Such introspection can bring healing if we will honestly answer, "I'm not sure. Fill my cup, Lord. I am waiting on Thee."

One of the great places that Christians can wait upon the Lord is at the Communion table. Pentecost Sunday would be a good time for the celebration of the Lord's Supper.

Wesley maintained that sincere, unconverted seekers could receive Communion in the hope that they might experience it as a "converting ordinance." Now most of us would be hesitant to go that far. General consensus would maintain that it is for believers only. But would it not be appropriate for us, as Wesleyans, to advocate the sacrament as a gracious opportunity for Christians to

seek the Lord in His sanctifying power? As Wesley put it, "... the Lord's Supper was ordained by God to be a means of conveying to men either preventing, or justifying or sanctifying grace, according to their several necessities."\* What could be more fitting than a Pentecost Sunday Communion service where people are urged to "hurry up and wait"?

The following worship guide could be used as a Sunday morning service. But it would be more in keeping with the tenor of the foregone concepts if the preaching took place in the morning worship service and the eucharist was observed in the evening. This will prevent the Lord's Supper from becoming a minor *addendum* to the end of the sermon, and it will provide ample time for genuine waiting upon the Lord.

\*John Wesley, *The Journal of the Rev. John Wesley, M.A.* Nehemiah Curnock, ed. (London: Epworth Press, 1938), 2:36.



W. Terrell Sanders

## WORSHIP GUIDE

Call to Worship: Isa. 40:28-31

Hymns: "How the Fire Fell"  
"The Comforter Has Come"

Choir: "Pentecostal Fire Is Falling"

### Hurry Up and Wait!

Introduction: Use the previously mentioned military illustration along with other instances of waiting that are frustrating to you.

Texts: Luke 24:44-49. Jesus commands the early believers to wait in Jerusalem.

Acts 1:12-14. The obedient disciples went to Jerusalem, waited, and prayed in one accord.

#### I. The Power of Waiting

- A. Waiting is hard to do. Seems wasteful.
- B. Our emphasis is on "*doing* something for the Lord."
- C. Why does Jesus ask that we wait? So that we have opportunity to submit our wills and receive His fullness.

*Illustration:* Peter was built for action. But waiting in the courtyard revealed his weakness.

#### II. The Power of Wanting

- A. One mark of maturity is the willingness to delay immediate need gratification for the sake of a higher value.
- B. Busyness makes us feel like we are accomplishing something—whether or not we are.

Do we want God's best? Do we want it bad enough to put aside our busyness and wait? To wait on the promise of the Father?

Emerson said, "Nothing great was ever accomplished without enthusiasm." There is passion attached to greatness. Our waiting is not idleness but passionate seeking.

*Illustration:* Jesus asked the cripple a seemingly silly question, "What do you want me to do for you?" He still asks that question. Are you passionate in your desire?

#### III. The Power of Winning

- A. Success builds success. Athletes talk about "winning streaks."

Pentecost: the most successful day in the history of the Church (Acts 2:1-6, 39).

- B. Point to the need for a personal Pentecost.

*Illustration:* It is easier to guide a moving object than it is to move a stationary object. We need to "get on a roll" for God. We do it by repeatedly waiting. This is a cycle that repeats itself.

Conclusion:

Do you want real vigor in your Christian life?

Will you wait upon the Lord?

"Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord" (Ps. 27:14).

Hymn: "Pentecostal Power"

### Communion Service

Hymn: "Leaning on the Everlasting Arms"

Read in Unison: Acts 2:29-42

Homily: Note the response of the Early Church to Pentecostal power.

They *devoted* themselves to: Teaching  
Fellowship  
Breaking of Bread—  
The Lord's Supper  
Prayer

Devotion involves a narrowing of focus. Only the goal is in view. Everything else fades into the background. Focus on Christ, ask Him to come.

*Illustration:* Kentucky Fried Chicken advertises: "We only do one thing. We do chicken right!"

The apostle Paul says, "This one thing I do!"

What do I say? What do we as a church say? God grant us singleness of vision. Remind us of our deep sin. Re-create us in Thine image.

Receive elements.

Make time allowance for people to pray aloud individually. There may be seekers, and you can sense their need in this time.

Closing song: "Fill Me Now"

# MONDAY MORNING DEVOTIONS FOR MINISTERS

by William J. Prince

*President, Mount Vernon Nazarene College, Mount Vernon, Ohio*

Monday, March 3  
**HOSANNA!**  
Mark 11:9 (NASB)

Jesus was committed to the will of the Father. His entry into Jerusalem at Passover was an affirmation of who He is. The message of the prophets was coming into focus as the crowd of pilgrims was caught up in a dramatic sense of God's promise being fulfilled. The Messiah was truly here, and the parade that went before and behind Jesus proclaimed His arrival. They began to shout praises to Christ, the King.

It is true that praise is the habitation of God among His people. Praise brings forth trust in God.

The crowd may have lacked a depth in its commitment, but that does not take anything away from the object of their praise. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the One who came to release mankind from the power of sin, was authentic.

Most of what we hear from the media is negative. Now we hear negative reactions to Christian values. Righteousness is put up to scorn. The Christian can, however, and indeed must, have another attitude. Our intentions must be holy.

Neither our actions or reactions should be false or shallow. They must be based on faith in the Lord, who delivers those who put their trust in Him.

Monday, March 10  
**THE SON OF GOD**  
John 6:27

"Are you the Son of God?" The elders of the Temple hoped to convict Jesus of blasphemy. But the question was not

new to Him. Jesus did not answer directly but gave somewhat of the same answer as He had given when asked if He were the Messiah. He would give this same answer again when Pilate asked if He was King of the Jews.

Jesus' performance of miracles—physical healings, bringing the dead to life, and the forgiveness of sins—was so obvious that any attempt to answer was futile in front of His hostile audience.

Jesus not only fit the place of the Jewish Messiah, He held a universal position as the "Son of Man," a Messiah for all mankind. He extends beyond the boundaries of Judaism or of any other group that would confine God to themselves. He bore the sins of us all. This brings to our whole message the full truth of Jesus, the "Son of God and Son of Man," as our Savior.

In this identification of Sonship, He brings us into the filial relationship by His use of the title "Abba," an intimate relationship with the Father. Paul declares this same relationship and reveals the dependable and knowable, day-to-day relationship we have with the Father through Jesus Christ. It is this relationship that gives us a sure confidence of His love and care.

Monday, March 17  
**"WHAT IS TRUTH?"**  
John 14:6

Pontius Pilate, Judea's Roman governor, stood face-to-face with Jesus of Nazareth. During his interrogation, he heard Jesus speak of "Every one that is of the truth," to which Pilate asked, "What is truth?" That question tugs at

the minds of powerful world figures at this very season. Pilate didn't wait for an answer. He turned away, too impatient to dwell on it. It would have made a difference in his life had he tarried for the answer.

Many are struggling to fill the inner unrest and vacuum with the latest fads. As Henry Thoreau described, "The mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation." Jesus could have told him that He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life (John 14:6). Jesus is the satisfying Word and the Source of life.

Jesus does not point us to a philosophy, a religious ritual, or a code of morality. He leads us to himself. As political systems, religious obsessions, and human manipulation all fail, the clearer the truth of Christ becomes to us.

Paul declares, "Having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God" (Rom. 5:1-2, NASB).

Monday, March 24  
**WHAT IS REALLY IMPORTANT?**  
Gal. 5:22-34

Palm Sunday had its interesting and inspiring moments for Jesus, but He didn't stay around to take a popularity poll. There was to be no election of the Savior. The air was full of speculation and anticipation. Would Jesus actually come to power? The disciples themselves were probably torn between elation and depression by the constant shifting in the people's attitudes toward Jesus.



William J. Prince

Holy Week in the life of Jesus was contradictory, harassed, pushed, rushed, and it seems in some ways, premature and unprepared. No one had made full arrangements for the Feast of the Passover. No provision was made for the foot-washing ritual.

The atmosphere in the Upper Room was tense with anticipation. Something significant and unusual was about to happen.

Yet Jesus comes to the Passover with a trust in the Father's will and purpose. It is our constant challenge to keep our hearts, eyes, and ears in tune with the will and purposes of the Father. The crowd is often mistaken about the most important things in life. But we can have a reality of the Holy Spirit's presence in such a way that life is a constant pattern of trusting in Him in every situation.

Remember, "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control" (Gal. 5:22-23, NIV).

March 31  
**IMITATING OUR FATHER**  
John 3:16

I've heard it said, "We become like the gods we worship." Isn't it tragic that so much murder, violence, and terrorism is done in the name of religion? It seems to be a throwback to the concept of God as an ogre. Oh, how we need to spread the message that God is "Abba," Father. The foundation of evangelism is not that men are lost, but that God is love. God is concerned for humanity.

Passion Week and Easter reveal to our world that God is intimate, personal, and knowable. One of the prayers in the Temple ritual was, "God does not extend His love to a bird's nest."

Jesus answered, "Not a sparrow falls that your Heavenly Father does not know about" (see Matt. 10:29).

It is intellectual to speak of God as the

Supreme Being, the Creator. But Jesus simply said, "God is our Father." A good father is concerned for his family. A good father does not hurt or forsake his own. Jesus reveals God as a Heavenly Father who is concerned for His people, One who does not hurt or forsake them.

In our busy and complicated lives, it is important to keep an intimate and honest relationship with God, who "so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth [trusteth] in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

Monday, April 7  
**CHRIST UNDERSTANDS LONELINESS**  
Matt. 27:45-46

There is probably no other anguish as heart-rending as loneliness. Think of military personnel thousands of miles from home. Think of the one who has lost a spouse, or the couples who long for the laughter of their missing child. Think of the lonely person in the midst of hundreds of other lonely people at an airport.

Across the years I have met many who have lamented their loneliness. Some who have faced bereavement or divorce have asked, "How can I go on?"

At some time in our lives, we all ask, "Does anyone care?" It is not trite for us to say that God understands. He cares about us. Jesus Christ is moved by every hurt and anguish of heart. He desires to help and to deliver us.

At Calvary, hanging on a cross in the midst of hate and rejection, our Lord Jesus Christ experienced the ultimate loneliness. He called out even when the Father had turned His face away and His disciples had fled in fear. We cannot experience the depth of His loneliness, but He can understand ours.

Jesus is truly the One "who sticks closer than a brother" (Prov. 18:24, NIV). He is the One who promises that He will not leave or forsake us. He gives strength to the one who dreads facing another day. He comes into our open hearts, bringing grace and peace. He comes into the midst of our circumstances with the admonition, "Don't be afraid, it is I." May we learn to take our eyes from the storm and place them, in trust, on Him.

Monday, April 14  
**OUR POTENTIAL IN CHRIST**  
Rom. 5:19

There are possibilities for good or evil in every person. One disobedient child can disrupt an entire family. One off-key instrument can bring chaos to an orchestra. One saboteur can destroy an army. Adam had the opportunity to de-

velop a race obedient to the word and will of God. But His disobedience infected the whole human race with the seed of rebellion.

It often occurs to me as I look over the students in chapel, that untold blessings, joys, and greatness are encompassed in the minds and hearts of these young people. Yet I am also aware of the possibilities of hurt, suffering, and sin. Faith in Christ, and the ability of the Holy Spirit to remove the old man and install the new, is vital to individuals and to society.

No one can force us to be good. God alone is the source of righteousness.

D. L. Moody heard, "The world has yet to see what God can do through one person fully dedicated to Him." In response he declared, "By the grace of God, I am determined to be that man."

Christ reestablished the possibility of personal righteousness for those who trust in Him.

Monday, April 21  
**IT ISN'T OVER TILL IT'S OVER**  
Luke 6:27-28

Have you ever noticed a child's attitude toward life? He doesn't dwell on the philosophy of it, but he certainly wants to live with vigor. There is something exciting about his desire to know and experience. A child's curiosity is never satisfied—until he becomes an adult. Learning is natural to a child. He does not work at learning. Somewhere, however, the attitude changes as learning begins to take effort. New information becomes bothersome.

Joshua was called to begin a new career when he was over 80 years old. Living and learning are always interlocked. When others were trying to find a place to sit and rest, Joshua was gathering the people of Israel together to take them into the Promised Land. His sense of obedience to God and his concern for his people brought new vigor and purpose to his life.

To build one's life into a box of security or into a rut resenting change is always tragic, and sometimes fatal. I asked Dr. Henry Wallin, who stayed active and successful in the ministry in his 80s, how he kept so happy in the ministry. His answer surprised me, "One, human relationships; and two, I accept change." God is never finished making His will known in our lives.

Monday, April 28  
**IT ALL COMES BACK**  
Luke 6:31

While serving at European Nazarene Bible College, we spent a week in the St. Moritz area. A Christian friend operated a "gast haus" at Bever, and we

rented quarters for our family. We rode the ski lift or cable tram up to hike in the Alps. The soft tinkling of the Swiss cowbells and the thin, crisp air gave the aura of a heavenly place. We came to recognize the Alpine wildflowers and edelweiss. After we had hiked a way, we came to a meadow. It was so situated that it provided clear echoes of our voices. You could shout "Hello" and get back a friendly "Hello . . . hello." You could shout "I love you" and get an "I love you . . . love you" back. You could also shout "I hate you" and get back a harsh echo of "I hate you . . . hate you."

And so it is in life. God has said so. The reaping of what is sown; the receiving an echo of love or hate. It all comes back again. Oh, what a lesson to live by!

Tennyson said, "Our echoes roll from soul to soul and grow forever and forever." The echoes of ourselves roll from people's lives back to us. It applies to every relationship—school, social, church, and business. "No man liveth or dieth to himself."

Jesus said, "And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise. . . . Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven: Give, and it shall be given unto you . . . For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again" (Luke 6:31, 37-38).

Monday, May 5  
**ONE ON ONE**  
John 21:19

Our relationships with Jesus Christ are so personal that no one else can possibly understand them. Obeying or following Christ is such a relationship. The Lord convicts us individually, He saves us individually. He gives individual spiritual gifts and individual calls. We speak to Him individually.

Jesus spoke individually to Peter as they were seated around a small fire on the shore of the Sea of Galilee. It was just after dawn, and the morning was quiet and still. There was the aroma of cooking fish and warm bread. The unusually large catch of fish had given the disciples a feeling of success. Besides that, they were with the resurrected Jesus. There must have been a feeling of expectancy among them. After they had eaten, Jesus abruptly asked Simon Peter, "Do you truly love me more than these?" (John 21:15, NIV). We have no record that Jesus had spoken to Peter about his denial until He asked this direct question. Also, Jesus used Peter's old name, "Simon." This, though asked in a group, was an individual question. Peter needed not only to answer Jesus

but also to give this testimony to the other disciples. Perhaps Jesus' question was embarrassing to Peter. For a few moments they spoke of the sincerity of Peter's love for the Lord. It must have been painful for him, but he answered Jesus with humility.

Then, without accusing or condemning, Jesus renews his invitation to Peter: "Follow me." It was easily understood by Peter and by the disciples. What a beautiful reconciliation. Peter was brought back into a relationship with Jesus Christ by a call to commitment.

Monday, May 12  
**THE MYSTERY IS REVEALED**  
John 8:28

I get a little nervous with some preachers who talk of the great mysteries of God and the gospel. It's as if God is going to spring something on us. There are certainly things that we do not all understand. But they do not mean that God has a hidden agenda to be revealed only to some privileged persons, leaving the rest of us in the dark.

It has never been God's style to hide from His people. He reveals himself to us. There may be things too great for our comprehension, but He is open to reveal them. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom," but that fact was never meant to put us in fear at the thought of God's will for our lives.

Jesus Christ is the revelation of all that God promised in the Old Testament. He is the assurance of fulfillment in every life that would trust Him. Dr. Dennis Kinlaw stated recently that one of the great desires of Jesus was that people would know Him. Jesus never lived in seclusion. He did not dart from shadow to shadow with half-truths or frustrating idealism. He deals with us in the light of truth and life and love. Death is the consequence of sin and evil. He told us the truth about the results of sin. But He presented himself as the One who is able to forgive sin and deliver us from the power of evil. He promised that His Holy Spirit would come to dwell within those who put their faith and trust in Him.

The "I am" of Jesus as the Way, Truth, and Life bring to us today an assurance of a secure tomorrow.

Monday, May 19  
**FORGIVENESS AND MORE**  
Matt. 18:21-22

We all talk and preach (and some even brag) about the forgiving of our sins. We praise the Lord for His forgiveness. However, this is only the beginning of the story. The rest of it lies in our forgiving others.

Peter asked Jesus, "How many times

is forgiveness required?" The Old Testament indicated three, so it seemed generous to Peter to offer the number seven. Jesus understood our desire to have God's forgiveness. But He also understood that not only do we limit our forgiveness of others but that we also demand that forgiveness be deserved.

Jesus' answer to forgive 70 times 7 was to convey an idea of limitlessness. He regards forgiveness not as a matter of law, but of grace and mercy. The law demands worthiness, but love and grace transcend unworthiness.

Jesus taught His followers to pray, "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors" (Matt. 6:12). In this, Jesus revealed the basic spiritual truth that our relationships with other people have a direct bearing on our relationship to Him.

Would it be that our failure to forgive would rob us of joy, spiritual power, or even spiritual life? It is not justice, but mercy we need in our dealings with each other. The Psalmist has acknowledged, "But I have trusted in Thy lovingkindness; my heart shall rejoice in Thy salvation. I will sing to the Lord, because He has dealt bountifully with me" (Ps. 13:5-6, NASB).

Monday, May 26  
**"THE FAITH OF THE FATHER"**  
Mark 11:22

In the messianic revelations of Jesus to His disciples, He bade them "have the faith of God." This reveals the faith that God had in His own Word. He said, "Let there be light," and there was light.

We may have confidence that the father has faith in His beloved Son. He had assurance that what His Son came to do would be accomplished. The sacrifice on Calvary would be a finished, perfect work. The Father had faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior of the world through His obedient, redeeming work. If this faith is reproduced in our hearts through the Holy Spirit, we discover ourselves rooted and grounded in Jesus.

The faith of God is even greater. It is faith in the mighty action of His Holy Spirit. When He sent the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, God had faith and confidence that He would accomplish His purpose as the Sanctifier.

This confidence can be ours as the faith of God is reproduced in our hearts: faith in the living God and His word; faith in Jesus Christ as our Redeemer; faith in the Holy Spirit, that He will accomplish what He was commissioned to do. Such a faith will be an appropriating faith.

"O for a faith that will not shrink; nor murmur nor complain . . . that shines bright and knows no fear; no doubt."



# Susanna Wesley: Mother, Educator, Model

by Cindy Jones  
*Kansas City*

**P**roverbs characterizes the virtuous woman as one who "openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness. She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness. Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her" (31:26-28).

Such a woman was Susanna Wesley: mother, homemaker, educator, and spiritual leader. But her life must be viewed in the context of the time in which she lived; otherwise, she will be greatly misunderstood.

Her many accomplishments took place within a narrow circle whose center was a home in a remote swamp of Lincolnshire. Her activities were primarily restricted to her family and to her husband's parish. "She had few congenial friends in Epworth and is said to have made only one trip to London in 40 years of her sojourn at Epworth. But she was never bored."<sup>1</sup> She gave the world two godly men: John, the founder of Methodism; and Charles, one of the greatest hymn writers of all time.

Born on January 24, 1669,<sup>2</sup> Susanna was the youngest of a brood of 24 or 25 (even her distinguished Puritan father seemed uncertain of the figure).<sup>3</sup> Her father, Dr. Samuel Annesley, was the leader of Dissenting ministers in London during the reign of Charles II.<sup>4</sup> She was not only the youngest but also the favorite daughter of the doctor.<sup>5</sup>

Her education was thorough. She appears to have had the advantage of a liberal education including Latin, Greek, and French.<sup>6</sup> Her later writings compare favorably in clarity and strength with the most classic English of her times.

At 13 she decided to join the Church of England, but this meant no relaxation of Puritanical austerities.<sup>7</sup>

Susanna was of an even disposition with a "deep and natural piety," which she is said to have inherited from her mother. In a letter written to her son John in later years, she says that early in life she made it a rule "never to spend more time in any

matter of mere recreation in one day than she spent in private religious duties."<sup>8</sup>

Susanna was quiet, contemplative, and very penetrating in intellect. She was slow in making up her mind, but unwavering once she did.<sup>9</sup>

In 1688,<sup>10</sup> she married Samuel Wesley, a strict Anglican curate who much fancied himself a poet.<sup>11</sup> She was about 19 or 20 years old.<sup>12</sup> Seven of the 19 children born to Susanna and Samuel came before Samuel had secured a living of more than £50 sterling a year.<sup>13</sup> (In today's terms, this would be approximately \$75.00, or about \$500 in the 17th century.)

Only 10 of the 19 children survived infancy. To the education of 10, Mrs. Wesley devoted herself with a care and solicitude realized only in the resulting character and influence of her children. Their poverty precluded the luxury of having many servants, but no detail that affected the health or moral and intellectual training of the family was neglected. For many years this training was essentially home training.

She prepared treatises for use as textbooks and made a complete manual of doctrine, which showed extensive reading and comprehensive acquaintance with the whole circle of religious truth. She felt it "no small honor" that she was entrusted with the care of so many souls.<sup>14</sup> These efforts were made in the midst of extreme and harassing cares, of poverty, and of debt, and sometimes fear of prison for her husband!

"Samuel Wesley was not a bad husband, and he certainly was not a bad man. But he suffered from violent delusions, an uneasy temper, improvidence in worldly things, and an aggressively rigorous devotion to Anglicanism."<sup>15</sup> Samuel was often absent from home for months at a time, attending convocations in London. Susanna felt bound to keep up family devotions. On Sunday evenings she read prayers and a sermon and talked to the children on religious subjects.<sup>16</sup>

Being the spiritual leader of the household placed her in trying circumstances sufficient to call forth all the resources of

the most cultivated Christian mind. She conducted her household affairs with judgment, diligence, and economy. Her children found in her a devoted, talented, and systematic teacher. As the sons and daughters grew, she was their able and affectionate counselor and friend. Whatever the Wesleys became, they were sons and daughters of a very extraordinary woman, and they owed much to the example and instruction of their mother.<sup>17</sup>

Susanna felt the central ingredient in the molding of character was the mastery of the will. Instruction of the mind could be postponed, but the subduing of the will must commence almost immediately after birth. If a child learned to respect his parents, there would be fewer serious difficulties in further education. Susanna would overlook many childish pranks but strongly condemned stubbornness and the deliberate breaking of rules.<sup>18</sup>

"Susanna believed self will was the root of all sin and misery." Accordingly, she regarded parents who conducted strict training of the will as co-workers with God, while those parents who neglected such training were associates of the devil. If a parent promoted the salvation of his child it made them both happy.<sup>19</sup> Susanna believed wholeheartedly in Prov. 22:6, "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it." "She interviewed each child singularly on different evenings for intensive spiritual teaching; John's night was Thursday, and Thursday evenings were of special significance to him throughout his life."<sup>20</sup>

As soon as Samuel, John, Charles, Emilia, Susanna, Mary, Mehetabel, Anne, Martha, and Keziah<sup>21</sup> could speak, they were taught the Lord's Prayer for morning and evening devotions.<sup>22</sup> Later they were taught collects, a catechism, portions of scripture, and prayers for parents. Sunday was distinguished from other days. God's name could never be spoken of lightly or thoughtlessly. Even amongst family the children could not address each other without prefixing "Brother" or "Sister" to their proper names.<sup>23</sup>

There were no funds for a private tutor, so Susanna took over the education of her children at home. "The lessons were from nine o'clock to twelve and from two to five. During these hours nobody was allowed to interrupt them, nor could a child leave the school room except for a good reason."<sup>24</sup> Each day consisted of six hours of school, and in a quarter of a year, each child read better than most women of that day.<sup>25</sup>

Historians are unanimous in saying Susanna was a born teacher. She had the patience for it. On one occasion her husband, sitting in on a session of the school, counted the number of times she repeated one bit of information to the same child. Always impatient, he could sit quietly no longer. "I wonder at your patience," he cried, "You have told that child twenty times the same thing."

"If I had satisfied myself by mentioning it only nineteen times," was the calm reply, "I should have lost all my labor. It was the twentieth time that crowned it."<sup>26</sup>

Susanna never relaxed the domestic and educational disciplines that fit her children for life. The children did not play with Epworth children. On each child's fifth birthday, serious school lessons were begun for six hours daily. On the first day of school they were expected to learn the alphabet. "Only John Wesley's two sisters Molly and Nancy required as long as one-and-a-half days for this, while his eldest brother Samuel needed only a few hours."<sup>27</sup> After learning the alphabet they learned the first verse of Genesis, and after that the next.

They quickly recognized the words they had learned whenever they saw them again. By this method each child learned to read, one after the other. Psalms were sung every morning when school was opened, and also every night when the lessons were ended. In addition to all this, at the close of the day each of the older children took a younger child and read the psalm appointed for the day in addition to another chapter in the Bible, after which they went and had their own private devotions.<sup>28</sup>

Susanna made it a rule to teach none of her daughters to sew before they had completely mastered reading, and she was particularly happy that her daughters were able to read far better than the average woman in England.<sup>29</sup>

It is amazing that one person with so many responsibilities could maintain such a schedule. In addition to childbearing, the conduct of her household with too few maids, her man-

### **Susanna's brand of child rearing demanded a lot from the children, and even more from the parents.**

agement of tithes, and her parish duties, she kept school for many years and did it well. She had a systematic procedure. "The statement by Fitchett that the childhood piety of John Wesley was 'constructed on the principle of a railroad time table' is therefore not surprising."<sup>30</sup>

Training began at birth. Even during the first three months of life, when the infants slept almost continually, they were dressed and undressed at fixed times. They were laid in the cradle while awake and rocked to sleep. At first, they were allowed to sleep three hours in the morning, and three in the afternoon. Later the time was reduced to two hours. Finally, no sleep was needed during the day. The children were taught to fear the rod by the time they were one year old, and some before that, and to cry "softly." By this means, the Epworth parsonage, though full of children, was as quiet as if there had not been one in the house.<sup>31</sup>

The children were taught to ask softly for anything they wanted and to eat whatever was provided. As soon as they could handle a knife and fork they sat at the table with their parents. In the mornings the meal consisted of spoon meat. Sometimes at night the fare was the same. Whatever they had, they were only permitted to eat one thing, and that very sparingly. No eating or drinking between meals was allowed, except in case of sickness, which seldom occurred. They were never allowed to go into the kitchen to ask for something to eat from the servants. If they did, they were most certainly beaten, and the servants were severely reprimanded.<sup>32</sup> After beatings the children were expected to cry softly.

Family prayers were held at 6 p.m. nightly, after which the children were given their supper. At 7 p.m. the servant girl began to wash them (starting with the youngest), so that all were in bed by eight o'clock at the latest.<sup>33</sup>

They were so used to eating and drinking what was given them that when any of the children became ill there was no difficulty in their taking unpleasant medicine. They were not allowed to refuse it, though some of them would throw it up again.<sup>34</sup>

The children were quickly made to understand that they

Nazarene

# UPDATE

UPDATE EDITOR, MARK D. MARVIN, PASTORAL MINISTRIES

## MAKING PRE-EASTER SERVICES FRUITFUL

There is no more beautiful or meaningful time than the Lenten season. It provides an opportunity to lead our people into the "fellowship of Christ's sufferings" and to help them experience "the power of His resurrection" anew.

A well-planned program of special services emphasizing themes appropriate to the Cross bring glory to God and nurture true discipleship among the people. A study of the gospel narratives recording Jesus' understanding of His mission and His steps to the Cross reveals a wealth of topics that the Holy Spirit can use to effect spiritual growth and development in the congregation—commitment, obedience, forgiveness, the spirit of self-sacrifice and service, etc. The slowness of the disciples to understand the mission of our Lord and their part in it provides a mirror that reflects any reluctance to follow Jesus "to the death."

The pre-Easter or Lenten services should point toward and climax on Easter Sunday. They can dramatize the significance of the seven sayings of Jesus from the Cross; personalities and the Cross; the Cross in the Christian experience. It would be fruitful to build a series of messages based on John 17, our Lord's great high priestly prayer for His disciples just a few hours before His death. It is this chapter, of course, that has given us our quadrennial theme, "That the World May Know."

Several special days during Lent can be emphasized in public services. Research and review their doctrinal and spiritual significance.



by General Superintendent  
John A. Knight

Ash Wednesday, the first day of Lent, is a good time to focus attention on the value of spiritual discipline, obedience, and prayer and fasting.

Passion Sunday, the fifth Sunday in Lent, provides an occasion to highlight the need for intimate fellowship, times of solitude, with the Lord.

Palm Sunday, the first day of Holy Week, commemorates the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem. The shallow commitment of the fickle crowds; the steadfast march of our Lord to the accomplishment of His mission, refusing to follow a path of compromise or be diverted by the plaudits of the selfish mob; and Christ's desire to make a "triumphal entry" into our lives and homes are obvious points of profitable emphasis.

Maundy Thursday, the day before Good Friday, is a good time to highlight servanthood and loving God by serving others. (Communion is more properly provided or observed on this day, and not on Good Friday.)

Good Friday, the Friday before Easter, is so called because it commemorates the day on which the Savior suffered death on the Cross for the entire world, including us.

Easter Sunday climaxes the Lenten season, and celebrates Jesus' resurrection, and ours, from the dead.

During one of my pastorates, I announced to the congregation that we would be observing Communion each week during Lent, at a different service each week. No advance notice would be given as to whether it would be Sunday morning, Sunday evening, or Wednesday evening. Special services were held each evening of Holy Week. The chronology of events in the life of Christ during the first Holy Week was reviewed and highlighted in the appropriate service. Communion was served on Maundy Thursday evening, by candlelight.

As expected, when the plan was first announced—Communion every week for seven weeks—a few less sensitive souls thought the pastor was being too liturgical. It turned out to be a highlight of my ministry, and like a revival among the people. The believers were built up in the faith, spiritual growth was evident, commitments were deepened, the church was strengthened, and Christ was glorified.

Should the Spirit lead you to do so, I challenge you to try it.



## THRUST TO THE CITIES

"Thrust to the Cities" is a denomination-wide emphasis to bring the gospel to urban areas. The target city for 1986 is **CHICAGO**

A city of 3 million people, Chicago has more than 20 distinct ethnic neighborhoods and unlimited ministry potential. The Church of the Nazarene plans to establish 25 new churches and 3 human resource centers in the greater Chicago area.

Your congregation can support the "Thrust to the Cities" campaign with your prayers and your finances.\*

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### OTHER GOALS FOR THE DENOMINATION

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- Target City for 1987—Mexico City, Mexico

#### QUADRENNIAL GOALS (1984-1988)

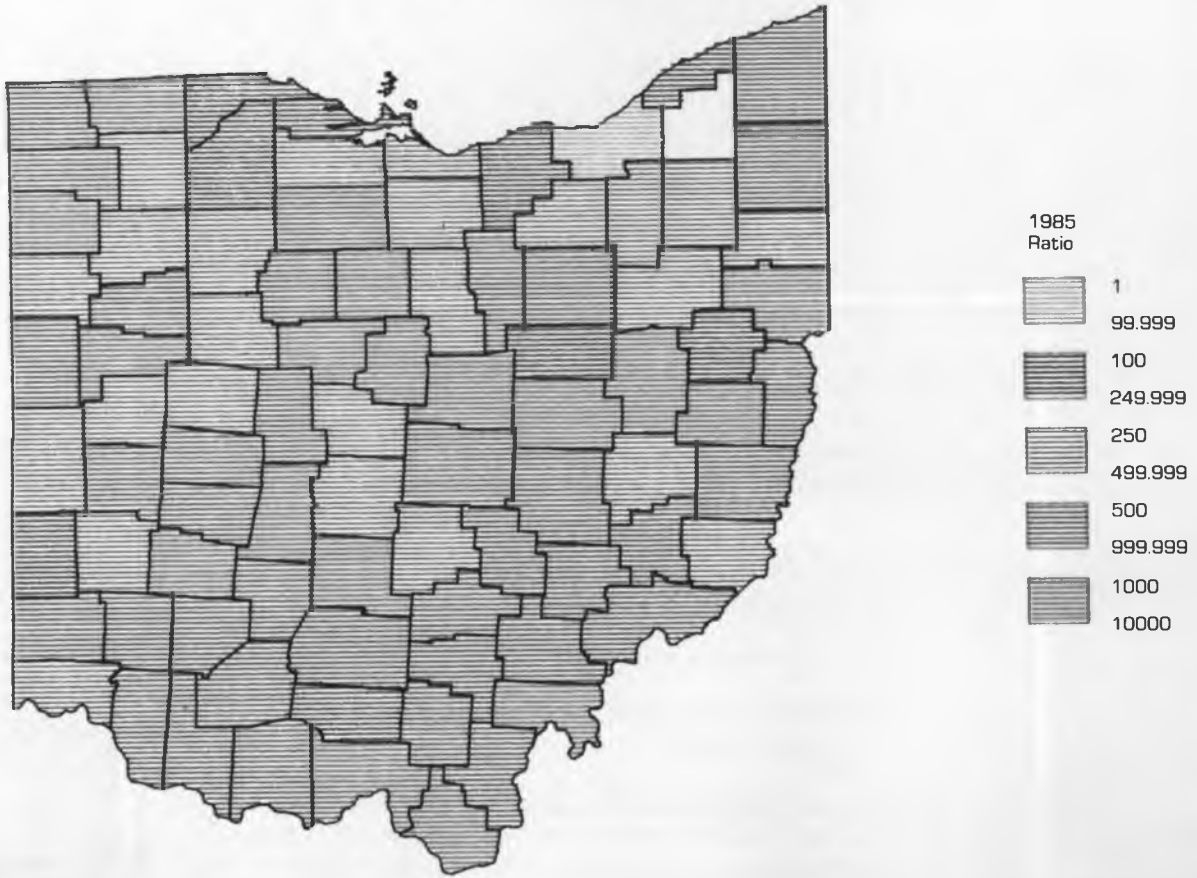
- 576,688 total members
  - 143,811 new Nazarenes
  - 5,390 churches
  - 726 additional ministers

#### DECADAL GOAL (Worldwide)

- 1 million members by 1995

\*THRUST TO THE CITIES qualifies for "10% Mission Special" credit.

**NAZARENES PER 100,000  
OHIO**



There are more Nazarene members and churches in Ohio than in any other state, or than in any country other than the United States. Yet there are still areas in Ohio where more work can be done, as shown by the map above. One county (Geauga) has no Church of the Nazarene. Several counties throughout the state are underreached. Even the "best" county (Knox) has reached less than 1 in 10 people. Although the church has made significant impact on Ohio, there are still areas with great potential for ministry.

Studies like this one, performed by the Statistical Research Center in the Division of Church Growth, help districts focus on new areas of outreach. Similar studies can be done for individual counties and/or cities, helping local churches target their ministry areas.

For further information, contact Dale E. Jones, senior statistician and analyst for the Statistical Research Center.

This is one more way your General Budget dollars are being used to help the church grow.

**STATISTICAL RESEARCH CENTER DIVISION OF CHURCH GROWTH**

International Headquarters/Church of the Nazarene • 6401 The Paseo • Kansas City, MO 64131 • (816) 333-7000

# INTERNATIONAL MEMBERSHIP SUNDAYS

APRIL 13, 1986

NOVEMBER 9, 1986

The Church of the Nazarene has set aside two Sundays per year for added emphasis on receiving new members. Here are some guidelines to assist you, as a pastor, to plan for these important Sundays:

- Plan to receive new members.
- Place special importance on new Nazarenes.
- Don't overlook the children in your church.
- Conduct pastor's classes to prepare new converts for membership.

The following materials have been developed to aid in the preparation of candidates for membership. They are available from the Nazarene Publishing House.



**FOR ADULTS**



**FOR CHILDREN**



**OUR GOAL: 1 MILLION MEMBERS BY 1995**

# EVANGELIST'S DIRECTORY

EVANGELISM MINISTRIES, CHURCH OF THE  
NAZARENE INTERNATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

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

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

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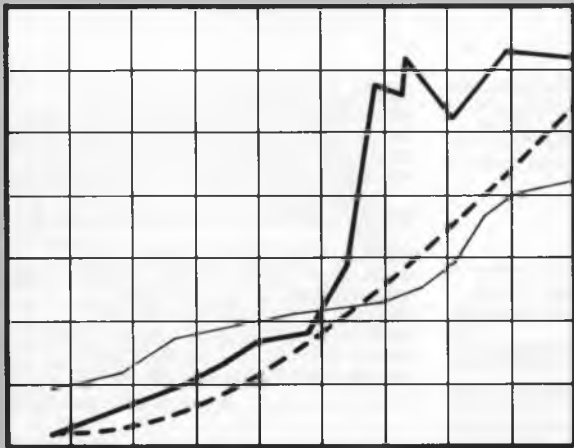
New Position: Pastor ( ) ; Evangelist ( ) ; Other \_\_\_\_\_

All official records at Headquarters, including those in the General Secretary's office, and the periodicals checked below will be changed from this one notification.

Check *Herald of Holiness* ( ) ; *World Mission* ( ) ; *Preacher's Magazine* ( ) ;


Other \_\_\_\_\_

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(PM M-A-M 1986)

# Compassionate Ministries

In Africa and Haiti, many of our national pastors and laymen suffer from the same drought and famine that threaten the lives of thousands of others. Compassionate Ministries comes to their aid. For \$18.00 a month, you can make it possible for their children to go to school, as well as to survive in the midst of famine. For only \$5.00 a month, children in Haiti can attend school and receive one hot meal each day. Not only does your contribution help these children, but it also helps to proclaim the message of Jesus Christ and His love.

"They killed my mother and one of my little sisters inside the house. I ran away into the mountains. For five days I stayed hidden in the hills. We were hungry and thirsty. I'm happy here because I have food and a place to sleep."

In Guatemala, Compassionate Ministries has established "El Hagar del Nino," our Nazarene refuge center. Here we assist children who have been affected by the turmoil in their country. You, too, can come to the aid of one of these children for \$30.00 a month. This will provide food, clothing, and shelter—the bare essentials of life.



Clip and mail to: Nazarene Compassionate Ministries, 6401 The Paseo, Kansas City, MO 64131.

*Yes, I am interested in sponsoring a child in one of these world areas. Please send me a complete information packet.*

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**WORK & WITNESS**  
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 6401 The Paseo  
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“... THAT THE WORLD MAY KNOW ...”



# THE SHEPHERD'S LIFE

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

LEADERSHIP • INSPIRATION • FULFILLMENT • ENRICHMENT



## GOES NATIONAL

Surveys have been made of the three regions yet to be connected with the CoNET Heartline at Christian Counseling Services (CCS) in Nashville. This survey assessed the perceived needs of pastors and wives, and the fulfillment of those needs. The most surprising result of the surveys is that there is no significant statistical difference among all U.S. regions.

Personal needs and feelings about the ministry are much the same whether a person lives in a rural or urban setting, on the West Coast or Appalachia, whether he pastors a large or small church, whether he is young or older.

Nazarene pastors and their families have been benefitting from the Heart-



Dan Croy, Heartline coordinator at CCS.

line. Although CCS is supported and directed by Nazarenes, it has no official connection with the general church. As a highly recognized social agency in Nashville, it is staffed with qualified Christian counselors. District superintendents have expressed appreciation to Mr. Dan Croy, Heartline coordinator, for the staff's professional conduct in support of our ministers.

We anticipate all U.S. regions becoming part of the COMMunication NETWORK, extending COUnseling, COnsulting, and COntinuing education opportunities to all our districts. □



MINISTRY INTERNSHIP

Pastoral Ministries' *Ministry Internship* program is based on the mentor concept. It's the blending of youth and experience in a covenant relationship that enhances both ministers.

The bottom line is to develop skills for ministry from models in ministry. The controlling principle is accountability. Participating ministers covenant to share the dynamics of their pilgrimage with each other.

Any district can have this program. No cost is involved. A year of commitment, concern, and implementation are the only requirements. The district superintendent identifies potential supervisors as well as interns. Nearly a dozen districts are currently implementing this exciting program.

For more information, contact Rev. Wilbur W. Brannon, Pastoral Ministries director. □



Rev. David J. Felter, Education Program manager, comes to his position from the pastorate of the Wichita, Kans., Linwood Church. He holds masters' degrees in religion and education from Bethany Nazarene College and Indiana University, respectively.

## EDUCATION PROGRAM MANAGER DEVELOPS MODULAR APPROACH TO CONTINUING EDUCATION

Rev. Wilbur W. Brannon announces a new emphasis on continuing education. Education Program Manager David J. Felter has designed a "modular" approach to continuing education.

These modules are being conducted at the King Conference Center on the Headquarters campus. Modules are being designed to stand alone or to be integrally linked. The first module dealt with experimental ministry and featured Dr. H. B. London, Jr., of Pasadena, Calif., First Church. Other module themes include *Intentional Ministry*, *Revitalization in Ministry*, *Formational Ministry*, and *Inquiring Ministry*. Each module features a noted authority in its field. Participants react to the subject matter in peer group dialogue sessions.

The modular approach is holistic. Time is spent in study, reaction, fellowship, recreation, and worship. These modules are being videotaped, and will be available for districts to use in their local continuing education programs. □

# VideoNet

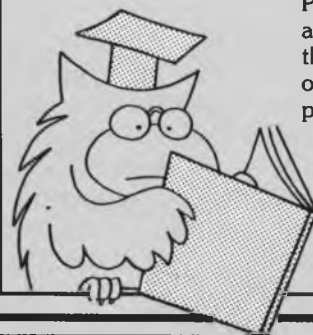
Regular features on the monthly "Ministry Today" program include:

- Special Feature:** A minidocumentary on a person, a ministry, a contemporary issue for local churches.
- Nazarene News Update:** A look at some aspect of current events as it impacts the pastor and/or local church.
- Pastor to Pastor:** Just for the pastor. A heart-to-heart talk with Pastor Earl Lee; encouraging and uplifting.
- Parsonage Perspective:** An insight into parsonage life and the pastor's wife's ministry.
- Window on the World:** A look at something happening outside our denomination or outside the United States and Canada.
- Video Catalog:** A review of some good resources available on videotape from Nazarene Publishing House or other Headquarters' ministries.

## NEW "APPROVED WORKMAN" COURSES DEVELOPED

"Approved Workman," a learner-directed, independent study program of continuing education, is adding new courses! Now evangelists can participate in a totally new, tailor-made program. Dr. Stephen Manley and Dr. Charles "Chic" Shaver have worked to develop a curriculum on continuing education courses keyed to the special needs and challenges facing those in special ministry. Through the "Approved Workman" program, an evangelist may earn continuing education credit in self-directed learning.

Continuing education market research showed pastors want a course in PASTORAL CARE. We are pleased to announce that Dr. Norman Henry of Nashville has prepared just such a course. Write Pastoral Ministries for an enrollment form today!



## PASTORS—THIS IS FOR YOU!

Are you at a standstill in your search for an associate? Are you discouraged, with no bright prospects? Well, take heart! It's time to take action in a different direction.

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**Pastoral Ministries**  
Dept. PM  
6401 The Paseo  
Kansas City, MO 64131  
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ATTENTION DISTRICT BOARD OF MINISTERIAL STUDIES SECRETARIES!

We hope things are running smoothly for you and your students. Here is just a reminder of a few things you should keep in mind as we approach the assembly season:

1. Are your Course Record sheets for each student up to date? This is very important in insuring quick response from Pastoral Ministries when you request a Certificate of Graduation. We need a copy of your work in order to send you the certificate.
2. Do you need any supplies from Pastoral Ministries to insure continuity for your students?
3. If you have questions concerning the Course of Study in any area of its administration, do not hesitate to phone Pastoral Ministries for assistance.

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# Today's Hospital Chaplain

Today's chaplain is a health-care specialist. His education, experience, and special training equip him to understand those who are ill. He possesses the personal strength and pastoral skills to respond appropriately to their needs and with sensitivity to their feelings. He is secure enough in his own person and religious faith to accept those to whom he ministers as they are and to relate to them as a helping person.

The basic ministry of the chaplain is to the patients. He will also, however, minister to the families of patients, to the medical staff and personnel of the institution, and to students enrolled in the educational programs of the institution. He is a valuable resource to community clergy who may refer parishioners to him for pastoral counseling and to whom he is available for consultation as his schedule permits. The chaplain may perform any number of meaningful services for the hospitals, many of which contribute somewhat directly to the total spiritual environment but less directly to patient care.

In addition to his primary work of pastoral ministry to individuals, the chaplain administers the total pastoral care activities.

The chaplain is a part of the professional interdisciplinary team in the hospital. He has the capacity to make a unique contribution to the well-being of the "whole man." He moves among medical staff and personnel at all levels in the same way as a minister does in a community. He receives and makes direct referrals, consults in confidence with staff members about patients, but holds in confidence information given to him by patients in the spirit of confession.

—from "Establishing a Chaplaincy Program," *The American Protestant Hospital Association*

For those not interested in full-time hospital chaplaincy, the following suggestions should be useful in hospital ministry.

1. Give the patient as much privacy as possible, by pulling the curtain, pulling up a chair, and sitting down. Give them your undivided attention and then wait, wait, wait, and follow their lead.
2. Offer cheer, hope, warmth, assurance, and appreciation. *Don't ever promise what you can't deliver, and be doubly careful about keeping your promises.*
3. Be aware that you must earn your acceptance by patients, staff, and medical personnel.
4. Keep your visits short. Sleeping is a very important part of the healing process.
5. Familiarize yourself with the six stages of grief: shock; frozen emotions; difficulty distinguishing fact and fancy; unpredictable emotional outbursts; association of persons with objects and/or occasions; finally grief acceptance.

—Neal Kamp, Hospital Chaplain

Chaplaincy Ministries cannot offer placement assistance. However, if you are interested in full-time hospital chaplaincy, contact:

CH(COL) Curt Bowers, USA (Ret)  
6401 The Paseo  
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*His Word*

### January Emphasis BIBLE STUDY/REVIVALS

Consistent Bible reading and study is important to all Christians. One of the many facets of NWMS is to provide suggested plans for individual or group Bible study. Following are listed five plans:

- I. Read the Bible straight through. By reading three chapters a day and five on Sunday you will complete the Bible in a year.
- II. Read some in the Old Testament and some in the New Testament each day. Many Bibles carry a plan such as this.
- III. Read the Bible through by classification of books, such as Pauline Epistles, poetry, etc.
- IV. Read a book of the Bible at one sitting. This plan completes the Bible in less than a year and is a source of great blessing and of increased understanding of the Scriptures whenever undertaken.
- V. Follow the Daily Bible Reading Schedule found in the January/February/March 1986 issue of *Focus* magazine, which is available through your local church, pastor, or missionary society leaders.

Bring — “New Life”  
to  
Your  
Church



With an ALDERSGATE Vacation Bible School! Plan now.

# Tools of the Trade for the Busy Pastor

## MINISTER'S DAILY WORKBOOK

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**FOR SUNDAY**—A full page for recording sermon theme, text, songs, special music, announcements, attendance, and offerings, and summarizing previous week's activities.

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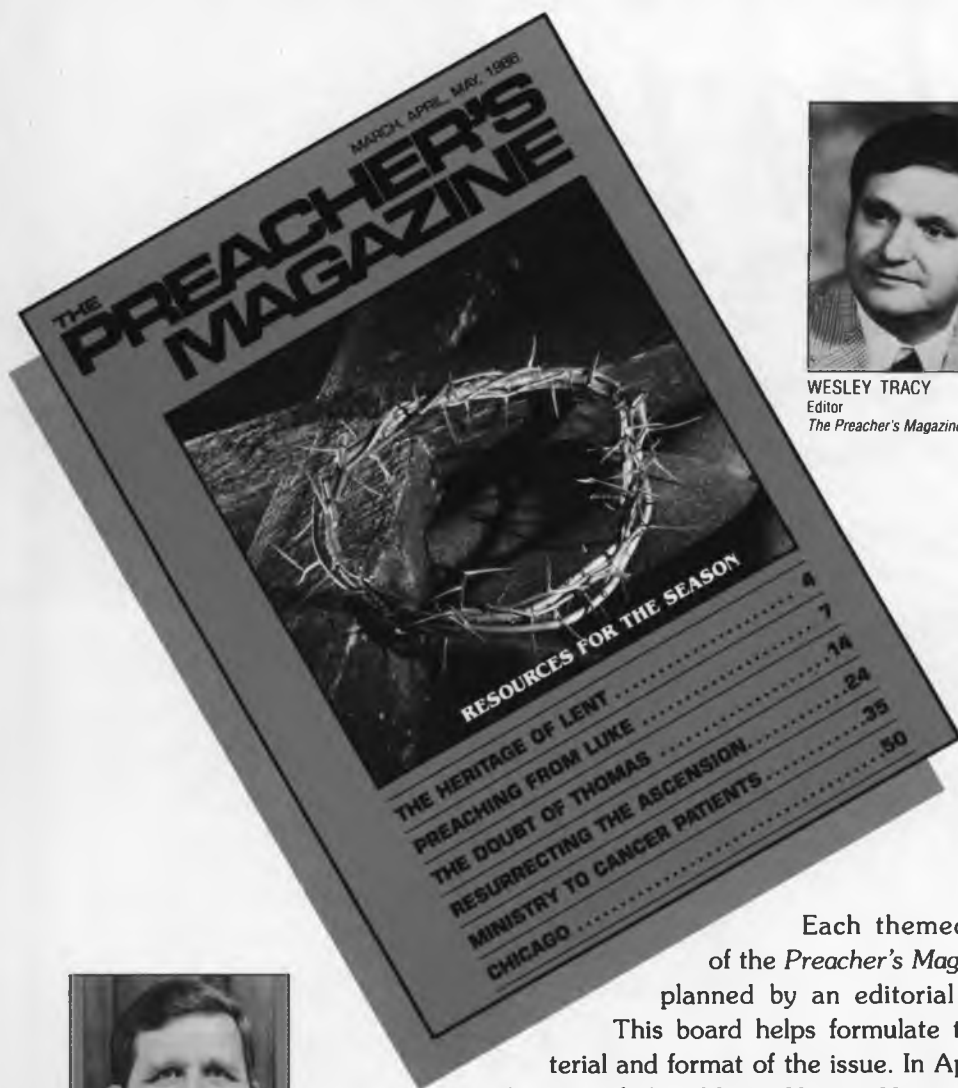
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Each themed issue of the *Preacher's Magazine* is planned by an editorial board. This board helps formulate the material and format of the issue. In April, the editor traveled to Mount Vernon Nazarene College. There he met with the college president and chaplain, four religion professors, and a local pastor. Together, they served as the editorial board that planned this issue on "Resources for the Season."



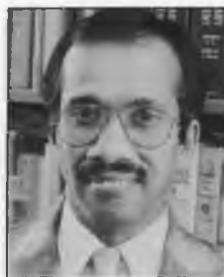
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might have nothing they cried for. Even the lowest servant was to be asked, "Pray give me such a thing," and the servant was never allowed to let them omit that phrase.<sup>35</sup>

There was no such thing as loud talking, cursing, swearing, profanity, obscenity, or rude ill-bred names. Playing and running into the yard, garden, or street without permission was rigorously forbidden.<sup>36</sup>

All went well at the rectory until the fire of 1709, which not only burned down the rectory but also scattered the children and threatened to undo much of Susanna's training of them. The children had to live with neighbors. The children were left at full liberty to converse with the servants, to run abroad, to play with any children, good or bad. They also learned to neglect a strict observance of the Sabbath, learned several songs and bad things. The civil behavior for which they were admired was about lost, and the reforming was not an easy task. But to Susanna it was a challenge. She soon had them back to their former ways and even added improvements.<sup>37</sup>

The memory of the fire and the burning of their home was stamped indelibly on the minds of the Wesley children. For Susanna, too, the fire was a turning point. She resolved to take special care of John, "a brand plucked from the burning," who had been so providentially rescued from the blaze before the roof fell in.

On the 17th of May 1711, as part of her evening meditation, and under the heading of "S.J." (Son John), she vowed to God, "I would if I durst, humbly offer Thee myself and all that Thou hast given me, and I would resolve (oh give me grace to do it) that the residue of my life shall be all devoted to thy service; and I do intend to be more particularly careful of the soul of this child that Thou hast so mercifully provided for, than ever I have been, that I may do my endeavor to instill into his mind the principles of thy true religion and virtue. Lord, give me grace to do it sincerely, and prudently, and bless my attempts with good success."<sup>38</sup>

Susanna had eight rules or "by-laws" that constituted a kind of children's charter at Epworth, and it shows how enlightened she was to understanding children. These were written in detail for John's benefit.

1. It has been observed that cowardice and fear of punishment often lead children into lying; till they get a custom of it which they cannot leave. To prevent this, a law is made that whoever is charged with a fault, of which they are guilty, if they would ingenuously confess it, and promise to amend, should not be beaten . . .
2. That no sinful action, as lying, pilfering at Church or on the Lord's day, disobedience, quarreling, and c., should ever pass unpunished.
3. That no child should ever be chid or beat twice for the same fault; and that, if they amended, they should never be upbraided with it afterwards.
4. That every single act of obedience, especially when it crossed upon their own inclinations, should be always commended, and frequently rewarded, according to the merits of the case.
5. That if ever any child performed an act of obedience, or did anything with an intention to please, though the performance was not well, yet the obedience and intention should be kindly accepted; and the child with sweetness directed how to do better for the future.
6. That propriety [property rights] be inviolably preserved;

and none suffered to invade the property of another in the smallest matter, though it were but of the value of a farthing, or a pin; which they might not take from the owner without, much less against, his consent. This rule can never be too much inculcated on the minds of children; and from the want of parents or governors doing it as they ought, proceeds that shameful neglect of justice which we may observe in the world.

7. That promises be strictly observed; and a gift once bestowed, and so the right passed away from the donor, be not resumed, but left to the disposal of him to whom it was given; unless it were conditional, and the condition of the obligation not performed.

8. That no girl be taught to work till she can read very well; and then that she be kept to her work with the same application, and for the same time, that she was held to in reading. This rule also is much to be observed; for the putting children to learn sewing before they can read perfectly, is the very reason, why so few women can read fit to be heard, and never to be well understood.<sup>39</sup>

Susanna was a very sensitive woman. In one of her daily pauses for devotions after having dealt rather sharply with one of the children, she warns herself: "Never correct your children to satisfy your passions but out of a sense of your duty to reclaim them from their errors, and to preserve your authority. And then be exceeding careful to let the measure of correction, be proportional to the fault." She adds, "Make great allowances for the weakness of their reason, and immaturity of their judgments."<sup>40</sup>

Susanna felt the child's will must first be conquered. Instead of losing patience with a child, and before "putting one's foot down," the tendency is reversed. Strictness first, then gradually one may reduce that strictness to a relaxed relationship.<sup>41</sup> Susanna was influenced by the educational theory of John Locke, whose works she read and admired.<sup>42</sup>

The modern parent who is self-indulgent and ill-disciplined may look at Susanna's approach to education and prefer the easier option of "self-expression" and "free development" for his children. He may disapprove because it not only sets high standards for children but also makes greater demands on parents. Actually the way a parent himself lives, and the kind of being he is, is more powerful than all spoken words of command. The Wesley children knew that the same constraint was in Susanna's life and character.<sup>43</sup>

Susanna was not a killjoy, and games were found and played in the Wesley household. There was laughter in the rectory, including to John's later embarrassment, games of cards.<sup>44</sup> The Wesley children were not repelled by their early training, either as children or in later life.

Susanna's influence over her children, through her life and teaching, was powerful and lasting. When the boys left home for school and university, she was their faithful correspondent and mentor. Even as grown men they valued her advice, and sought it equally on theological questions, matters of conduct, and problems of the spiritual life.<sup>45</sup>

Susanna's final years were spent residing at the Foundery.<sup>46</sup> Though accustomed to the stately ritual of the Anglican church and all its rigid beliefs, she was able, when an old lady, to adjust to the outdoor preaching of the Methodists, their extempore prayers, and their evangelistic fervor. Nor was Susanna's attitude one of mere acquiescence to something she could not control. She came to be convinced that the movement was of God.<sup>47</sup>

The end came for Susanna on July 23, 1742. She was 73 years old. All the children were with her in her final hour, except John who was in London. He returned home to pray the commendatory prayer for his mother, just as he had done several years earlier for his father. The children carried out their mother's final request: "Children, as soon as I am released, sing a psalm of praise to God."<sup>48</sup>

"Susanna was buried in the Dissenter's Cemetery, Bunhill Fields across City Road, from the site of what was later Wesley's Chapel. John read the service of the Church of England and beside her grave delivered a sermon to 'almost an innumerable company of people' who were there to do her honor."<sup>49</sup>

In sure and certain hope to rise,  
And claim her mansion in the skies,  
A Christian here her flesh laid down  
The cross exchanging for a crown.<sup>50</sup>

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"And in response to Pastor Clingerham's request for a computer..."

# HOSPITAL MINISTRY WITH CANCER VICTIMS

by Alden Sproull

**C**ancer is a disease that has deep spiritual, emotional, and cultural implications. For most people in our society the diagnosis of cancer is a death sentence. Many are even concerned about its "contagiousness." It is perceived as dirty and invasive, ravaging the body and distorting the spirit. It is a disease that induces guilt ("My vaginal cancer came from that affair 30 years ago"), that arouses fear ("I know I am dying, but will it be painful?"), that provokes doubt ("Can I really believe the CT scan?").

Cancer is an insidious, slowly progressive disease. The course is crisis ridden, its jogs and turns are sudden, and its effects are visible.

I am a photographer by avocation. Photographic concepts help me understand the reactions to cancer. Just as a photographer utilizes various lenses to capture that special picture, I have found that cancer patients during the course of their disease utilize different lenses for clarity or sharpness of blurredness.

Prior to cancer most people can be perceived as looking through a normal lens, with fairly broad vision and clarity of perspective. With the diagnosis of cancer, the lens becomes unfocused and scattered; everything appears jumbled and cluttered. Once treatment has been started and the cancer comes under control, there is a renewed sense of clarity but with a narrower focus. Recurrence of the disease knocks the picture out of focus. If one reaches the terminal phase of cancer, the focus is closeup, peripheral vision is blurred, and only the most valued things of life are clear.

This illustration is not to suggest a rigidly defined process of stages in cancer. Rather, it is intended to suggest a process that is flexible and changeable, much like a photographic lens.

## *Pre-Cancer: Vision Wide, Broad, and Clear*

We live our lives as though nothing serious is ever going to happen to us, assuming that this life is ours to hold and to keep. The diagnosis of cancer shatters this

illusion. Suddenly we are confronted by the uncertainty and finiteness of life.

Yet we who minister to people whose lives have been changed by cancer may still be harboring illusions about our own lives that separate us from the world of the cancer patient. Hence, we have much to learn from cancer patients. In listening to them we discover a variety of coping resources that range broadly in effectiveness. From things they have said, I have been immensely helped in my ministry to them.

The following are taken from comments some cancer patients have shared.

Don't expect too much from us around the time of diagnosis, recurrence, or admission for treatments—we have all we can do just to survive.

Remember we as a family have developed ways to respond to crises in the past, and that we will use them. Good or bad, this is what we bring to the present problem. Don't judge our family or me too severely.

Many of us feel some sense of responsibility for our illness. We know it's illogical, but we still feel it. Don't try too soon to talk us out of it.

We do know clearly what we need or want from you. We know you are a pastor and at times that gets in the way because it reminds us that we are dying. Sometimes we want to escape you, just as sometimes we want to escape the reality of our situation.

What we do want is for you to be a friend, at times a counselor, at times our intercessor-communicator with God. Don't try too hard to do too much for us.

We bring our own unique religious history. We expect you to respect that uniqueness, yet we want you to challenge us at appropriate times to grow beyond our moorings.

Don't talk down to us. Don't make us feel lousy that we're sick. We need for you to treat us normally even

though we may be dying. That's expecting much, but we've come to expect much from ourselves and others.

Be flexible; do not treat us just as another cancer patient. We are unique persons with unique needs; we want our individuality to be respected so that we can retain our unique identity as long as possible.

These reflections have taught me much about cancer and about those who have the disease. They have also informed my ministry. They have suggested that my ministry be flexible, sometimes supportive, other times confrontational; and individualized, respecting the unique needs and varying moods of each cancer patient.

#### *Cancer Detection: The Picture Is Jumbled*

Irene was 43 years of age. Several months earlier she had been diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. She reported to me that her life had fallen apart due to cancer. She had become demanding of everyone. This included a demand that she be told "the truth and nothing but the truth."

After several heated conversations with Irene's oncologist, he finally spelled out the issues clearly. She became so enraged that she fired her physician and hired one who would support her viewpoints. Obviously she was confused and ambivalent. She could not handle the truth she demanded. She needed some of her denial supported. The demands she placed upon her family and others were her need for them to be close to her in crisis. Yet the demands were driving them further from her. The diagnosis of cancer had been devastating for her. The whole picture was blurred and out of focus, as was her behavior.

Peter was in his late 60s when he was diagnosed with lung cancer. Upon entering Peter's room, he threw up his hands and declared that he had nothing to say, that he did not want or desire any "clergy types" around. Yet the staff and family reported numerous religious concerns that he had identified in speaking with them. Sensing the ambivalence, I finally proposed that I visit with him daily but would only discuss religion at his initiative. Cautiously, he agreed to my proposed contract.

Others experience this "jumbled picture" on a limited scale. They find it necessary to move toward a focus of clarity for support and coping. Mary, 24, was a special-education instructor. Diagnosed with acute leukemia, she was very hopeful that aggressive treatments would effect a remission and enable her to return to teaching. She read voraciously about her disease and came to know almost as much about it as her doctor. Details of the disease became an obsession. Many other activities were suspended. It was her way of coping, but it also threw life out of focus for her.

For still others, the focus remains uncluttered. Pamela, seven years of age, was diagnosed with a cancerous brain tumor. The words of Scripture, "and a little child shall lead them," often came to mind as we talked together. After the initial surgery and radiation, Pam expressed few fears about anything. She continued to live her life to the fullest. I remember a very special gift that she gave me. She had memorized Paul's description of

love (agape) from 1 Corinthians 13. It was a very moving experience. She demonstrated complete trust and faith in a God whom she loved and believed would take care of her. She talked about heaven and her excitement about someday being there. She periodically talked about the sadness that she felt at leaving her family. But wherever she was in her illness, she responded with renewed hope and courage.

Pamela did not have many of life's entrapments to hold her back. She faced each day with the simplicity of a child. Life remained in focus for Pam. The picture was unblurred. Pam had a very special faith. It was unique, and all of those around her were challenged by it.

From these vignettes one can see that ministry to cancer patients can be demanding and exhausting, as the disease is to the patient. In such a ministry I have found that listening is extremely important. What are the unique meanings and needs of the individual? What is the person's story? How is this person coping? What coping resources are there within and beyond this person? How can I intersect this person's life in a meaningful way? Am I able to become a caring participant in his rage, tears, sorrow, guilt, and grief? Can I be fully available to cancer patients as they confront life's boundaries? Can I stay with them when the lens becomes jumbled and chaotic?

#### *Cancer Under Control: Renewed Clarity*

As the incidence of cancer increases, the fears and myths deepen. As the incidence increases, so do the treatment modalities. Treatment often effects remission of varying lengths of times. When remission occurs, it usually induces hope mingled with apprehension. One asks if it is for real or how long it will last or if it can be trusted.

It is during this time that hope is reevaluated. Everything in life is based on some level of hope. A cancer patient's hope has a variety of levels—hope for a cure; hope for more time; hope for relief from suffering; hope that one can still accomplish some personal goals. Often patients in remission will resume the tasks of life with renewed vigor. It almost suggests that if one can busily engage the tasks of life, then one is well. Vigorous activity is associated with health.

However, at the same time, many cancer patients in remission approach those tasks with a new perspective. It is rare that one can push against the boundaries of life and not be deeply affected. Some alter their life's goals. Many feel they are living on borrowed time and savor the moments and experiences as they come. Some push down on the accelerator and feverishly seek to accomplish in months or years what they had expected to accomplish in a lifetime.

For many cancer patients the deeper meanings in life are more sharply focused even though the course of their disease remains undetermined. *It is indeed a beautiful irony to feel inner serenity and composure while one's external life is fraught with uncertainty.*

#### *Cancer Recurs: The Focus Is Jumbled and Narrowed*

Recurrence of cancer is a devastating experience. It shatters one's confidence in treatment; it actualizes

# SEEING FROM THE OTHER SIDE

by Jim Cummins

*Pastor, Central Church of the Nazarene, Orlando, Fla.*

**M**onday found me making hospital calls again. This is one of the high priority items in my ministry. I gave it my best care and attention; however, just as the person who gives shots all day long forgets how it hurts, I forgot how really important it was to be there that morning. Pressured with other duties, I felt pushed and probably didn't give people the care they deserved. I forgot how important a pastoral call had been to me when I was a patient.

That evening I arrived home about 9:30 P.M., and my wife shared the news that my father had just suffered two heart attacks. The next morning I boarded a plane to Sherman, Tex. My mom, two sisters, and I waited in the Intensive Care Unit's waiting room, hanging on to each ray of hope.

My dad's pastor had been faithful to call, to pray, and to be a friend to him even before the illness. I had counseled and comforted people in such situations for the past 20 years, and now I found myself anxiously waiting to see Pastor Roland. There was nothing

he could say that I could not say, nothing he could pray that I could not pray. But he was "our pastor." He came not only to the hospital but also to the house, bringing a casserole and offering prayer. He gave us a sense of peace and security in our desperate situation. From the other side, I saw the importance of having a pastor near in time of crisis.


I remembered times when I had felt helpless and useless and did not know what to say. It came afresh to me that one of the important things a pastor has to offer is simply that he is "pastor." He earns that special place as a servant of the Word through shaking hands on Sunday, eating lunch with members during the week, and being obedient to God as He leads the church. Being there is important.

I don't remember much of what Dad's pastor said. I don't even remember what he prayed. But he was there, and his office as God's representative was important to us.

From the other side, God showed me that a strategic part of my ministry

is just being there—even when I am at a loss for words, too hurt to do anything but cry with the family or listen to stories of the past that have no real significance for me. My presence as pastor is important.

We may not agree with the president of the United States in all areas, but there is a respect and awe that go with the office. We focus our attention when *the* president walks into the room. The office carries with it certain privileges, but also certain heavy responsibilities. Likewise the office of pastor carries many privileges but along with them comes the awesome responsibility that we are God's personal ambassadors.

The next time I walk into a hospital room, I will remember how I felt as Pastor Dave Roland walked in to see our family. I will walk in with a heavier sense of responsibility knowing that my presence brings comfort to someone—and glad that a look at this part of my calling from the other side gave me a new awareness of its importance. 

one's worst fears. Many of the feelings encountered in the detection phase resurface, sometimes with even more intensity. It means the disease is out of control. It means life for that person is out of control.

Irene grew worse as time went on, and her care became so complex that her family came to the realization that she could not be taken care of at home. There was one major difficulty: Irene had made her family promise that she would not have to return to the hospital.

When she was readmitted to the hospital by her family (against her wishes), she felt betrayed. I entered her room shortly after admission and found her sullen, resentful, and detached. Not only did she feel betrayed by her family, who went against her wishes, but also by God, who did not maintain her remission. She felt helpless, at the mercy of a family that made arbitrary decisions against her will, at the mercy of disease, now out of control, at the mercy of a capricious God she could no

longer trust. Irene's focus had become jumbled and confused, and I sought to share in Irene's hurt and rage. She was able to see her family's helplessness. She was able to forgive her father and husband. Irene died unable to "forgive" God who, in her opinion, had betrayed her.

Mary returned to the hospital six months after discharge, out of remission and in need of additional chemotherapy. Bill, her husband, had great difficulty accepting Mary's illness. Mary sensed this and withdrew from Bill. She turned instead to her mother, who became the primary care-giver. In her regression Mary drew closer to her mother as she distanced herself from her husband. Mary struggled with these issues; but the experience was too difficult to handle without mother. The focus was jumbled.

During this recurrence phase it is very difficult for the professional to fully empathize with the cancer patient. There is a chasm that is difficult to span. It is difficult, at

times, to accept the regression, the rage, the cynicism, the fear, and the futility that are often expressed.

Difficult though it may be, it is extremely important that those ministering to cancer patients be secure in accepting their own limits and finiteness. This is not easy to do when one's own life is filled with buoyancy, energy, and power. *The wide contrast in mood, outlook, and situation in life between cancer and noncancer persons can make communication between them strained.* For a hospital chaplain, filled with vitality and a zest for life, to enter into the deep anguish of one whose life is rapidly ebbing is indeed a demanding challenge.

#### *Dying: Vision Narrowed and Sharpened*

It is often in dying that our focus upon living is sharpened. Such persons begin to obliterate the peripheral and extraneous and to concentrate upon that which is vital and important.

Peter was in and out of the hospital several times in the last six months of his life. I visited him regularly and participated in staffings with him, but conformed to the contract that I never initiate any discussion of religion. So did he.

During Peter's last admission, he called me to his room; Ruth, his wife, was in tears. They both knew that he was dying. Ruth had difficulty in saying good-bye. Peter was gasping for air. He looked at me and with great difficulty, thanked me for keeping my end of the contract but now asked that I pray with him. He struggled to share some feelings about his relationship with the church. We held hands together, prayed, and asked God to be present with both Peter and Ruth. His words at the conclusion of the prayer spoke of peace and rest. The lens was sharpened. In a short 15 minutes Peter died.

Jane is a new patient. She knows that she has only weeks to live. This knowledge is enabling her to accept the painful realities of her life. "I postponed having a child for my teaching career. I will never be able to teach those children again. Now the most important aspect of my life is my husband and family. Whatever time I have left I will use that time to experience them and to prepare all of us for my dying."

Many patients begin a process of purging and refining, which is common. How they do it, and where they now focus their energies, will vary. My task as a chaplain is to support the process: *to help them withdraw from that which once consumed their life powers and to focus their energies upon that which is most vital to them now* This ministry helps such persons to sift and refine their basic values.

It is a process that is fraught with religious dimensions. It is a process all persons ought to engage but few actually do. The cancer patient, now confronted with a life-terminating disease, is virtually compelled by that situation to a narrow and sharpened focus. Such a person no longer has the time or the stamina to dissipate energies in a vast array of activities.

Such are the potential losses and gains in one who is dying of cancer: as one is surrendering life, living may take on a deeper and sharper focus.

#### *Pastoral Care to Cancer Patients*

In ministering to cancer patients I find that my initial task is to understand how the individual perceives the crisis. There is a direct relationship between perception and coping. What does it mean for this person to have cancer? What is being threatened? What are the significant losses? Only the patient can tell us. My role is to listen and discern.

Then I want to know the coping capabilities of this individual. What are the strengths and resources? How can they be effectively mobilized? How has this person habitually coped with similar losses? Can those coping mechanisms be made useful now? Who are the significant people in this person's life? What role are they able to play now?

Finally, I want to help this person respond in as meaningful, responsible, and creative a way as possible. This includes helping the cancer patient identify and assess options. What choices does this person have, now and in the near future? What are the consequences of either pursuing or ignoring those choices? In what way are one's basic values expressed through those choices? Only the individual can make those decisions. My role is to facilitate that process and to support the individual's capacity and right to choose.

Some of the decisions may have to do with the continuation or modification of treatment. Others have to do with job, family, initiating life-style changes, making provisions for one's possible death. Some have to do with the intense emotions that often surge to the surface. Others have to do with one's relationship to God. Some have to do with the *past*, with regrets and unfulfilled dreams; some with the *present*, with acceptance and adjustment; some with *future* plans and provisions for self and others. I find that my ministry attempts to weave its way through a maze of dynamics, problems, variables, and decisions that are complex and demanding.

Not to be overlooked is the cancer patient's family, who are being confronted by severe change and potential loss. The family's internal structure of relationships can help and/or hinder this process. As individuals vary, so do families. Some will communicate openly about the situation, others will be more guarded. Some will overindulge the patient in possessive and protective ways. Some will withdraw their emotional investment. Some will be able to deal directly and responsibly about decisions and tasks. Others will need to deny the realistic implications of the cancer.

This much can be said without qualification: *both patient and loved ones are going through an upheaval; both are facing losses; both may need to make significant changes in their living patterns; both need support to help them deal with each other and with themselves.*

In my ministry to cancer patients I observe many dichotomies. Some patients are at peace, with satisfaction that theirs has been a rich and full life; others are filled with remorse because too much has been left undone. Some want to die because life under present conditions offers no hope for the future; while others lack desire to live because their life has been fraught with failure. Some express a firm belief in eternity yet cling tenaciously to this life; others express no such hope yet die serenely. Some feel closer to God in their dying,




while others feel distance. Some willingly relinquish control and place their fate in the hands of others, while others press for more information and fear the growing loss of control. As people are different in living, so they are no less different in dying.

An important part of my ministry is to help cancer patients and families to realize that their intense emotions are appropriate vehicles of communication. The everyday experiences of living with cancer can cause revolt, resentment, hatred, rage, bitterness. Since these are real, authentic feelings, they are viable means of communication with God and their loved ones. Indeed, they are as useful as feelings of affection. If such intense feelings are denied expression, it is difficult to see how the more positive feelings can be authentically expressed. For we can hardly be ourselves unless we make these feelings known to each other. If we cannot be open about such feelings to God and to those who love us, then to whom can we be open?

Much growth and intimacy can occur when these honest, though negative, emotions are allowed expression. Once expressed, these often open the door for the warm, affectionate feelings to be expressed.

A cancer diagnosis draws people to the basic issues of life, to the core questions of existence. But they are questions that bring us back to our roots and to our connections.

The chaplain brings a symbolic and personal presence to this quest for the basic issues of life. Through this presence the chaplain tries to meet some of the obvious needs for respect, love, appreciation, listening, and hope. The chaplain seeks to provide a constancy to the shifts and changes in mood and condition.

To minister to those afflicted by cancer is a humbling experience. To walk with those who will soon die and be separated from us, from this life as we know it, is both demanding and draining, both awesome and painful. Such a ministry can impact the values and deepen the spirituality of the one who ministers. Through such experience the human struggle becomes more vivid. Indeed, those who minister become cosojourers in the most intimate, challenging experiences of life. 

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## OUTRAGEOUS

by Martin E. Marty

**T**he Adolph Coors brewery people subsidize right-wing moral causes. As we are middle-wing, we stand no chance of being subsidized, so it takes no courage for me to bring up the latest Coors contribution to American morality.

An Associated Press news release tells of Coors Chairman William K. Coors speechifying to security analysts. He acknowledged that drunken driving is "a major problem" for 18- to 21-year-olds. Coors, who sold 10.9 million barrels of beer in nine months, said that only 5 percent of the drinkers are abusers. He also questioned the motives of those who try to work to stop drunken driving, given the safety of 95 percent of the swillers.

Someone asked Coors about the fact that his company paid 250 college students to promote beer at "chugalug" and "get-drunk" parties and at campus wet T-shirt contests. What does our number one subsidizer of morality have to say to that? "We do this not because we think it is right, but because other brewers do it. They will steal our lunch—they'll eat our lunch—if we don't do it. I personally think it's outrageous."

Post the Ten Commandments on the schoolhouse wall and try out the Coors New Morality, the oldest one of all:

"Oh yes, Yahweh, we know we shouldn't bow the knee to Baal. But the prophets of Baal will steal our lunch if we don't compete for the heart of Israel."

"Yea, Lord, verily, forsooth, we swear we shouldn't swear by your name but, curse the competition, we have to survive in this market."

"Puff-puff-puff. I'm out of breath, Jehovah; I know I shouldn't be working on the Sabbath. But this is the promised land of free enterprise, and we have to outwork and outsell the Canaanites."

"Absalom may be my name and dishonoring my parent may be my game, but all the other kids do outrageous things, too."


"If you don't want people to go around killing brothers, Elohim, why not say, 'Thou shalt not kill.' After all, Abel was the *only* kid on the block—or on the face of the earth, for that matter—who hadn't killed his brother." Thus Cain.

David: "You don't like it that I whored after Bathsheba? Why pick on me? Aw, Lord, all the other kings do it."

"I wouldn't have stolen, but people in all the other tribes steal, and I'd be at a disadvantage if I had to turn honest. Honest!"

"Bear false witness? This one I'm clear on. If something is outrageous, I'll call it outrageous. So will our whole tribe. 'Thou shalt not covet'? Covet, schmovet—I don't care. I only know we *really* want to outdraw the Ephraimites and Asherites during the autumn wine chugalug, get-drunk orgy."

That's most of the commandments, depending on how you count them. Coors has given us the principle of New Morality. From it, all the rest flows. Beer out, money in.

These be thy gods, O Israel. 

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# WHAT SHOULD YOUR CONGREGATION PAY YOU?

by Joe Huddleston

*Manager of Public Relations and Information for Pensions and Benefits Services USA, Church of the Nazarene*

Perhaps no one knows your needs like you do. In that regard, you are an expert. Only you have access to the records that show exactly what it costs for you and your family to live with your personal life-style and methods of ministry.

Most local church boards are vitally concerned to know if they are adequately compensating their minister. Most laymen are keenly aware of their divinely appointed responsibility to care for their minister and his family. However, adequate ministerial compensation can often be confusing and misunderstood. Perhaps a simple outline of ministerial compensation could be beneficial to all parties concerned. One such outline incorporates four elements in the total care of the pastor and his family: cash salary, housing, employee benefits, and reimbursements for professional and business expenses. It should be remembered that all compensation paid has a direct relationship to both the financial strength of the congregation and the fruitfulness of the pastor's labors.

**I. Cash Salary.** The cash salary paid to the minister is that "pay" which a minister has complete authority to spend as he sees best and as his needs dictate. This is not unlike the pay that a layman receives on payday. Some factors affecting cash salary are job requirements, professional qualifications, educational background, experience, the socioeconomic factors affecting the pay scale in the local community, and such subjective factors as bonuses and merit pay for a job well done. Cost of living adjustments should be considered in an annual review of cash salary.


**II. Housing.** Because the IRS grants special tax advantage for a minister's housing, nearly every church makes this a distinct area of compensation. Many churches provide a parsonage and utilities, others pay a housing allowance adequate for the minister's needs, and still others provide a parsonage, utilities, and give a furnishings allowance. If structured according to the IRS guidelines, this area of ministerial compensation can be exempt from federal income tax.

**III. Employee Benefits.** Every church should be aware of the need to provide appropriate employee benefits. While not every church can provide all of the following benefits, every church should recognize their value and set a goal of adding benefits as their financial

resources allow: provision for a retirement program (full Social Security tax reimbursement, a pension, and a supplemental retirement fund through a tax-sheltered annuity); health insurance; dental insurance; term life insurance; long-term disability insurance; personal accident insurance; appropriate cash bonuses; adequate vacation; and paid holidays.

Many of these employee benefits can be provided "tax free" if handled properly. Your local church is exercising wise stewardship when it provides these benefits so as not to create unnecessary tax liability.

**IV. Reimbursements for Professional and Business Expenses.** Many items considered by some churches to be a part of the pastor's salary (or at least employee benefits) are actually professional, business, or travel expense reimbursements. Examples include: the expense of operating a car for church business; ministerial books and periodicals; convention expenses; expenses of continuing education; dues paid to professional organizations; church supplies such as birthday cards, postage, etc.; gifts "expected" to be given to members at weddings, baby showers, etc.; and hospitality expenses incurred while specifically doing the work of the church. When any of these expenses are incurred because a minister is doing the work of the local church, they should be considered expenses of the local church. As such, they should be reimbursed. If these are accounted for accurately to the church, such reimbursements need not be reported to the IRS. They are neither salary nor cash compensation. They are not employee benefits, but merely expenses for operating the local church.

Because the church believes in a God-called ministry, the church cannot parallel industry in all aspects of being an employer. However, the local church board must act as a good employer in the area of compensation for the minister and the local church staff. The minimum goals should be to provide adequate cash salary, parsonage and utilities (and/or housing allowance), appropriate employee benefits, and full reimbursement for professional and business expenses. 

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

## RESURRECTING THE ASCENSION

(Continued from page 25)

bassador speaking to a foreign government making clear facts and customs that are unfamiliar. But neither of these depict Christ as Intercessor. God does not unwillingly grant mercy as a civil judge; He wills the salvation of all. Nor does God need His divine wisdom enlightened by a diplomat, He is omniscient. No, Christ's intercession, as Henry Ward Beecher said, affects us, not God.<sup>4</sup> Christ's intercession is a direct result of His suffering for us. Because of this sacrifice and the scarred Christ that stands before the Father, we have been changed from death to life.

It is as Charles Wesley wrote:

*He ever lives above  
For me to intercede,  
His all-redeeming love,  
His precious blood to plead.  
His blood atoned for all our race . . .  
And sprinkles now the throne of grace.*

### B. Return of the Future

The Ascension account in Acts, however, does not leave us only with the interceding Christ of the present. The shining men in white comforted the disciples. "This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way . . ." (1:11).

*In the same way.* What comfort this phrase must have brought the apostles throughout their ministry. The Book of Acts records their ministry which was marked by hardship and suffering. James was executed. Peter was imprisoned. Paul was publicly beaten and placed in stocks. Stephen was stoned.

In these times of persecution and despair, the hope of the Christ's return "in the same way" brought great comfort. Why? For as Christ left in glory, declaring His Lordship, so He would return in that same glory, bringing the final victory.

And what was Christ's glory over? His suffering, His humiliation. The Ascension was not an escape from the suffering of the Cross and the present age; it was a bold declaration of God's victory over all adversity. Proclus, a fifth-century Bishop of Constantinople, said, "The cross on which [the pirate] did nail the Captain has become the rudder of shipwrecked nature and it steers us into the heavenly harbour."<sup>5</sup> Jesus Christ ascended in glory; likewise He will return in glory.

Albert Camus, the French existentialist, in his novel *The Plague*, writes of an epidemic of the bubonic plague that strikes the Algerian city of Oran. The picture is gruesome as Camus spares no adjectives in his description of the gory effects of the pestilence. Thousands die. The hospitals are filled beyond capacity. Death becomes common.

The hero of the novel is Dr. Rieux, a physician who is tireless as he fights against the disease. The noble doctor combats the plague, caring for the sick and dying.

But throughout the plot the Christian hope in its authentic form is absent. Dr. Rieux confesses that plague and death are absurd. There is little that he and the citizens of Oran can do to defeat it, however, so they might as well defy death by helping to alleviate the suf-

fering. There is never any hope of victory, no conquering of death; just a last laugh in the face of suffering and a final noble struggle.<sup>6</sup>

Why bring up a depressing story like that in the middle of the glories of the Ascension? Because it is exactly where it belongs. Camus shows us the futility of a world that excludes the Christian hope. And what is that hope? The ascended Christ, Lord over all, returning to declare His Lordship.

Our struggle with suffering is not like some broken record stuck on a funeral dirge. Christ is coming! He will return and declare his authority. In that day we will exchange our suffering for His triumph. The apostle Paul says in the midst of persecution, "We share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory" (Rom. 8:17).

Oscar Cullmann, the New Testament scholar of the University of Basel, compared the triumph of Christ to World War II. He likened D day to the resurrection of Christ, where the decisive foothold was established and the turning victory won. V-E Day, the final victory of the war, Cullmann compared to the return of Christ when the final victory will be won.<sup>7</sup>

We, as citizens of this world, live in the tension between D day and V-E Day. The victory is assured in Christ's return, but there is still temptation to be faced and suffering to endure. But see the transformation of the present pain by the hope of Christ's return. Just as Christ's resurrected glory changed the events of Good Friday from seeming defeat to victory, so we will share in that same power in His return.

We share in His glory. Elijah ascended, but he could not be followed. But as Baumgarten has said, Christ's ascension is "a bridge between heaven and earth that provides a way for all who believe."<sup>8</sup>

What shall we do, then, with this Ascension day? We must allow the truths of the Ascension to invade our everyday existence. Because Jesus has been made Lord of all and intercedes for us now, prayer shifts from mere ritual to communion with Him. Because Christ will return for us in majesty, we share the confidence that our present suffering will be transformed by that power. Marvel then with St. Augustine: "Today we have received by grace a greater place of refuge through the Ascension of Christ that we had lost through the envy of the devil."<sup>9</sup>

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\*All scripture quotations are from the *New International Version* of the Bible.

# SHEPHERD TO SHEPHERD

by Eddie Estep  
Kansas City, Missouri

**R**ecently, *USA Today* devoted its entire editorial page to the question: "Should pastoral care be subject to lawsuit?" This attention on our vocation should prompt us to take a fresh look at what is involved in the ministry of shepherding. Such a question as that posed by *USA Today* would not arise were it not for the fact that there are examples of good and bad shepherds in our world today.

Such was the case in biblical times, although biblical examples of good shepherds far outnumber the examples of bad shepherds. The imagery of a shepherd and his flock was deep in the hearts of the people of Israel. Shepherding was an exalted vocation. The patriarchs had been shepherds. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, the sons of Israel—all were shepherds. Moses tended Jethro's sheep for 40 years. David had watched the flocks. All through the Word of the Lord there is the imagery used by Peter in the fifth chapter of his first Epistle:

*To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder, a witness of Christ's sufferings and one who also will share in the glory to be revealed: Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.*

(1 Pet. 5:1-4, NIV)

Let us consider further the biblical job description of the spiritual shepherd.

## **The Responsibility: Shepherd the Flock**

Peter is exhorting the church leaders in Asia Minor with the fact that it is their responsibility to "be shepherds of God's flock."

What did Peter have in mind when he said, "Be shepherds"? Just what did shepherding involve? Peter was writing to people who knew what shepherding was about. They knew shepherding involved:

**Feeding.** Sheep need food to grow and develop. They need the proper diet to be strong and healthy. It was the shepherd's responsibility to see that the flock was properly nourished.

Peter knew that these Christians in Asia Minor would need to be fed and strengthened by the Word. The Church was relatively young—less than 35 years old—and these Christians would need the proper spiritual diet if they were to de-

velop properly and be strong in the faith. It was the shepherd's responsibility to see that the flock was fed. Although feeding was a big responsibility, it wasn't the shepherd's only responsibility. The shepherd idea must not be swallowed up by the preacher idea. The flock needs more than food. Shepherding also involved:

**Tending.** "Be shepherds" in the NIV reads as "feed" in the KJV and as "tend" in the RSV. Both ideas are involved in shepherding. Sheep not only need food but also need the care that comes with "tending." They need corporate care, and they need individual care. Shepherding involves protecting the flock from harm, healing injuries suffered from thorns and sharp rocks, and leading the flock to safe places of rest. It involves searching for any of the flock that have gotten lost. Shepherding includes the caring and strengthening of the sick in the flock.

Peter knew that the Christians in Asia Minor would need more than good spiritual food to grow and develop. They would need special care as well. Nero's persecution of the Christians had begun, even as Peter wrote. He anticipated a time of suffering and persecution for his readers was soon to come, if it hadn't already. Indeed, the preceding chapters of this letter deal with the themes of suffering, persecution, and comfort. These spiritual shepherds would need to feed and tend if the flock were to be strong, healthy, and well. And our shepherding will have to include the aspects of feeding and tending if we are to pastor healthy flocks.

But what exactly did Peter mean when he said, "Be shepherds of God's flock"? The shepherd's flock included all those sheep under his care. The flock consisted of not only those gathered in the safety of the fold, but also any sheep that were lost or had gone astray. Peter, a few chapters earlier (2:25), reminded his readers that they had at one time been like straying sheep, but they had "returned to the Shepherd."

And so, in a narrow sense, our flock will be those gathered within the fold of our own church. But the flock under our care will also include any who are lost or gone astray. "The flock" may not all be in the fold. Matthew said that Jesus had compassion on the crowds, because "they were . . . like sheep without a shepherd" (Matt. 9:36, NIV). God forbid that any of our flock be shepherdless!

## **The Proper Attitude of Shepherds**

Peter not only says that it is important to "be shepherds of God's flock," but he also said it is important to shepherd with the proper attitude. Surely Peter was thinking about the

prophecy of Ezekiel at this point. For in Ezekiel 34, there is the best example of the worst shepherds to be found in the Bible. Listen to Ezekiel:

*The word of the Lord came to me: "Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel; prophesy and say to them: 'This is what the Sovereign Lord says: Woe to the shepherds of Israel who only take care of themselves! Should not shepherds take care of the flock? You eat the curds, clothe yourselves with the wool and slaughter the choice animals, but you do not take care of the flock. You have not strengthened the weak or healed the sick or bound up the injured. You have not brought back the strays or searched for the lost. You have ruled them harshly and brutally. So they were scattered because there was no shepherd. And when they were scattered they became food for all the wild animals. My sheep wandered over all the mountains and on every high hill. They were scattered over the whole earth, and no one searched or looked for them.'*"

(vv. 1-6, NIV)

These shepherds were the spiritual rulers and leaders of Israel. As shepherds they weren't totally worthless; they can serve as a bad example. They had a position of privilege, but they were not *willing* to shepherd. Rather, they chose to neglect the flock. Notice the parallel in Peter's words: "Be shepherds . . . not because you must, but because you are *willing*." We also recognize that these shepherds in Ezekiel first made sure they themselves were well fed and clothed. They made sure their physical and material needs were met to the level of conspicuous consumption without regard for their responsibility to, or the needs of, the flock. Again notice the parallel in Peter's words: "Be shepherds . . . not greedy for money, but eager to serve."

Instead of "be shepherds . . . not greedy for money," the KJV reads, "Feed the flock . . . not for filthy lucre." It is interesting that this phrase only occurs five times in the KJV. It is used only once in the Old Testament, referring to the sons of Samuel (1 Sam. 8:3). In the New Testament it is used twice by Paul in 1 Timothy, speaking of bishops and deacons. It is also used by Paul in his Epistle to Titus. Then there is Peter's use of the word here. It is remarkable that the warning against filthy lucre, or greed for money, is in all these cases addressed to ministers of religion. The difference between one greedy for money and one eager to serve is the difference between a hireling and a true shepherd.

If all these other shortcomings weren't bad enough, Ezekiel also writes that the shepherds of Israel ruled the sheep "harshly and brutally." Notice again the parallel in Peter's words: "Be shepherds . . . not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock." Be examples to the flock. That's what Jesus had in mind when He said that the shepherd "goes on ahead of them [the sheep], and his sheep follow him" (John 10:4, NIV).

Two men were watching a few sheep slowly mill around a hillside. A man was behind the sheep driving them—yelling as he pushed them, all the while prodding them to get over the hill. After a while, one of the two men said to the other: "I thought the shepherd led the flock from the front." "Oh," replied the other, "that man isn't the shepherd, he's the butcher."

The difference between the good shepherd and the bad shepherd is that the good shepherd will be concerned for the welfare of his flock, while the bad shepherd thinks of them only as so many opportunities for his own gain.

### **The Chief Shepherd: Jesus Christ**

There are many positive examples of shepherds throughout the Bible, all seeming to point toward the example of *THE* Shepherd—personified in Jesus Christ. In Hebrews He is called the "great Shepherd" (13:20, NIV). John called Him the "good shepherd" (John 10:11). Here in our text Peter calls Him the "Chief Shepherd" (NIV).

Jesus Christ is the Chief Shepherd because He is the shepherd's example.

Peter said, "Be shepherds . . . not because you must, but because you are willing." Was there ever a more willing shepherd than Jesus Christ? The Chief Shepherd laid down His own life for the sheep; no one took it from Him, but He laid it down of His own accord. Jesus was a willing Shepherd.

Peter wrote, "Be shepherds . . . not greedy for money, but eager to serve." Was there ever a shepherd more eager to serve than Jesus Christ? Paul wrote these words about the Chief Shepherd: "[He] made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man [as a shepherd?], he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross!" (Phil. 2:7-8, NIV). Jesus was a willing Shepherd, eager to serve.

Peter wrote, "Be shepherds . . . not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock." Was there ever a shepherd who was more an example to the flock than Jesus Christ? I think of these words by Dorothy Thrupp:

*Saviour, like a shepherd lead us;  
Much we need Thy tender care.  
In Thy pleasant pastures feed us;  
For our use Thy folds prepare.  
We are Thine; do Thou befriend us;  
Be the Guardian of our way.  
Keep Thy flock; from sin defend us;  
Seek us when we go astray.  
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus!  
Thou hast bought us; Thine we are.  
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus!  
Thou hast bought us; Thine we are.*

Jesus Christ is a willing Shepherd, eager to serve, and a true example to the flock.

Jesus Christ is also the Chief Shepherd because He owns the flock. That is something we must never forget. The word of Paul to the leaders of the church at Ephesus was, "Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood" (Acts 20:28, NIV). The flock is paid for, bought with a price: the blood of the Chief Shepherd. We are to be *His* Shepherds, shepherding *His* sheep. We are not the owners of the sheep.

We would do well to remember that. And we would do well to remember this: We are not only His shepherds but His sheep as well. In the words of the Psalmist, "He is our God and we are the people of his pasture, the flock under his care" (Ps. 95:7, NIV).

So why did Peter write these good words about shepherding to the pastors in Asia Minor? Why did Peter, a *fisherman*, write about shepherding sheep? Could it be that in Peter's words we hear the echo of the last earthly words Jesus addressed to Peter? Those words, then addressed to Peter, are today addressed by Christ, to us:

"Do you love me? Feed my sheep."



# Ministering with Joy

Developed from the 15th chapter of John,  
with a focus on verse 11

by Robert Coleman

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**T**he late Dr. Charles Berry told of the inadequate gospel he preached when he began his ministry. Like many other young men with a liberal theological training, he looked upon Christ more as a great teacher than a divine Savior. For him Christianity was essentially equated with being a nice person.

During his first pastorate in England, while sitting in his study late one night, he heard a knock. Opening the door, he saw a poor Lancashire girl standing before him.

"Are you a minister?" she asked.

Getting an affirmative answer, she went on anxiously, "You must come with me quickly. I want you to get my mother in."

Imagining that it was a case of some drunken woman out on the streets, Berry said, "Why, you must go get a policeman."

"No," replied the girl. "My mother is dying, and you must come with me, and get her in—to heaven."

The young minister dressed, and followed her a mile and a half through the lonely streets. Led into the woman's room, he knelt beside her, and began to describe the goodness and kindness of Jesus, explaining that He had come to help us live unselfishly.

Suddenly the desperate woman cut him off. "Mister," she cried, "that's no use for the likes of me. I'm a sinner. I've lived my life. Can't you tell me of someone who can have mercy on me, and save my poor soul."

"I stood there," said Dr. Berry, "in the presence of a dying woman, and I had nothing to tell her. In the midst of sin and death, I had no message. In order to bring something to that pain-filled woman, I went back to my mother's knee, to my cradle faith, and told her the story of the cross, and the Christ who was able to save to the uttermost."

Tears began running over the cheeks of the eager woman. "Now you're getting at it," she said. "Now you are helping me."

The famed preacher, concluding the story, said, "I

want you to know that I got her in. And praise be to God, I got in myself."

Isn't that beautiful! A dying old woman and a young upstart preacher going into the Kingdom together. That's how we became a branch in the Vine. And in that fellowship, we partake of the very life that flows from the heart of God.

Jesus, in John 15, likens himself to the True Vine and His Father to the Vinedresser. His disciples in turn are compared to branches extending from the Vine, bringing forth fruit to the glory of God. Just as Jesus has poured His life into them, the disciples now will display His nature in their fruitfulness, and in so doing, they will know His joy. "These things I have spoken unto you," He says, "that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full" (John 15:11).

In marveling at the simplicity of this teaching, let us not miss its magnitude. For Jesus focuses here the very essence of His plan to raise up a Church of all nations that will praise Him forever. It grows out of a *relationship* with Him; it multiplies through fruit-bearing *discipleship*; and it is constrained by *love, a devotion obedient unto death*.

**I**  
*The relationship to Christ sustained by believers establishes the basis for this life. "Abide in me," Jesus says, "and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. . . . For without me ye can do nothing" (John 15:4-5).*

The transference of His life comes through the enabling power of the Holy Spirit, a truth brought out in the closing verses of the chapter. God is seen as the Father in administration; He is recognized as the Son in revelation; but He is known as the Spirit in operation. Whenever God's power flows, the Spirit is at work.

Thus, in the beginning, the Spirit moved upon the face

of the deep, creating the cosmos according to the divine will. By the same means, God breathed into that form made in His likeness and the creature became a living soul. Likewise, it was the Spirit who directed the redemption plan of God through the Old Testament period, calling and equipping persons for special service.

In the fullness of time, as was promised by the Spirit-inspired prophets, He planted the seed of the Father in the womb of the virgin, so that she conceived and brought forth into history the eternal Word. The Spirit led Jesus during His incarnate life, directing His teaching and empowering His ministry. Through it all, the Son was glorified. That supremely is the ministry of the Spirit. The Spirit does not speak of himself; rather He lifts up the living Word, and as men and women see Christ, they are moved to bow before the Savior in true repentance and faith.

"Marvel not," Jesus said, "Ye must be born again"—born from above, born of the Spirit (John 3:7). "It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing" (John 6:63, NASB). Not only does He re-create us in the likeness of Christ; but He also fashions and perfects us in Christ through His sanctifying grace, whereby we are changed into His image, "from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord" (2 Cor. 3:18).

If we are not in the life-flow of the Vine, as Jesus points out in this discourse, the branch dries up and is "cast . . . into the fire" (John 15:6). It's an allusion to hell, underscoring the ultimate consequence of living apart from God. We may have the appearance of a branch—go through all the motions of religion—yet still not know our Redeemer. The Christian life is not a creed, not a system of morality. It is fellowship with a real Person—the Son of God, who loved us and gave himself for us.

## II

While stressing the necessity of the life-flow relationship, Jesus also emphasizes that *abiding in Him produces fruit. This is the purpose of the branch—to display and propagate the nature of the Vine.*

Fruit is the reproduction of the seed planted by the Spirit of God. Barren branches are useless and will not be allowed indefinitely to clutter the Vine. By the same criteria, to make the branch more fruitful, needless twigs that sap its strength must be pruned away.

God expects a harvest. Jesus explains, "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples" (John 15:8). *Disciple* means "learner." So a disciple of Christ is one who learns of Him. The object of Jesus' ministry, thus, was to make disciples. As they learned of Him, and followed in His steps, they would grow in His character and also become involved in His fruit-bearing mission to the world.

This strategy was formally explicated in His Great Commission before returning to heaven. "Go and make disciples of all nations," He said, "baptizing them . . . and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you" (Matt. 28:19-20, NIV).

What this means becomes clear as we look at Jesus. His life is the interpretation of the Commission. The disciples could understand it because what they had heard Him teach was explicated in the way He lived.

They observed how He took the role of a servant,

responding to the need of a dying race. In His ministry to the multitude, He was especially sensitive to those who wanted to learn and were alert to His call to follow Him. Usually these disciples were not the most distinguished people, not even the most religious—just common folk like us. Yet in their hearts was a yearning for reality, a basic honesty in recognizing their need for a Savior.

With these chosen men He concentrated His ministry. For the better part of three years they walked the highways of Israel together. They worked together. In the evenings, when they were weary, they turned in to some friendly home, and they ate and slept together.

Imagine! He came to save the world, but He spent more time with a handful of disciples than with all the rest of the world combined. In doing so, He brought ministry to the level where all of us can relate—at home and at work, in the daily associations we have with a few people.

In this family atmosphere, by precept and example, He taught the disciples the secrets of His inner life. Nothing was withheld. "All things that I have heard of my Father," He said, "I have made known unto you" (John 15:15).

To the degree that they could assist in His ministry, He gave them things to do. At first they just took care of His hospitality, providing entertainment and living accommodations. I haven't found any place where Jesus ever turned down an invitation to dinner. What a beautiful way to help some people get involved! After awhile the disciples assisted in baptizing converts; a little later they are teamed up and sent out to visit in villages where He had not gone, doing essentially the same ministry they had learned from their Lord.

Clearly He expected fruit from His disciples—fruit that would remain and seed other plants (John 15:16). Faith in Him and reproduction of His work are inseparable. "He that believeth in me," Jesus said, "the works that I do shall he do also" (John 14:12). I do not see believers duplicating every aspect of His specialized ministry, like teaching or healing, though all have a part in these works through His Body, and some are uniquely gifted for them. But in the basic function of fruit bearing, every member of His Church participates directly in the mission of Christ.

The implication of this for us dare not be missed. Jesus did not come himself to reap the harvest; He came to offer the sacrifice, making it possible for the world to be redeemed. But on His way to the Cross, He concentrated His life upon raising up those who would carry on His work after He was gone. They were given the joy of the harvest.

Jesus even said "greater works than these shall [you] do" (John 14:12). The statement leaves us breathless with wonder. How can the likes of us ever do anything greater than our Lord? Yet that is the promise of Jesus. While I do not presume to fathom its depths, in one respect at least I can see how it was true in the lives of those disciples and is still being fulfilled in His Church today. Not that believers now preach greater sermons or work greater miracles. But in the sense of the harvest—the ingathering of the people—there is a greater work. The largest number of believers mentioned before Christ returned to heaven is said to be about 500. Yet

when the Spirit is poured out at Pentecost, and Christ is lifted up, 3,000 are converted. That is more on one day than Jesus had won in over three years of His ministry. And every day after that others were added to the Church as they were being saved.

We would do well to follow His example. Our Savior does not commission us to make converts, but to go and disciple the nations. True disciples of Christ inevitably become disciplers of others, assuring the process of reproduction. Of course, we must attend to the needs of hurting people about us, communicating the gospel in word and deed. In this ministry of caring, though, we must be especially sensitive to persons awakened by His Spirit who want to become disciples.

The place to begin is with those we are with every day—at home, in the neighborhood, at work. Invest time together. Let them see how you live. As they develop, find ways to involve them in the work of Christ. There is something everyone can do.

Have you heard of the riding academy in Texas that advertises they have a horse to suit every style? For fat people they have fat horses; for lean people they have skinny horses; for fast people they have fast horses; for slow people they have slow horses; and for people who don't know how to ride at all, they have horses that have never been ridden before.

I do not know what your skills and gifts may be, but when it comes to ministry, whatever your style, there is a horse for you to ride. It doesn't matter whether you are a pastor or a schoolteacher, a farmer or a waitress, you can make disciples. The Great Commission is not a special gift or calling; it is a life-style.

When will this be understood? Fulfilling Christ's last command is not becoming a preacher or going overseas as a missionary, but living intentionally to bring leaders to know Christ and His mission to the world. Here we share a common priesthood. As those with us learn to disciple others within their sphere of ministry, and teach them to do the same, the process of reproduction ultimately encompasses the whole world. Indeed, if we will all be faithful in this ministry, the nations can be won in our generation.

### III

But *producing fruit has cost*, a truth that Jesus weaves through this discourse. A seed must be planted in the earth and die to bring forth a harvest.

This principle is engraved in the universe. *Life can only be released when it is given away*. In a supreme, unspeakable way, this is brought into bold belief at Calvary.

As Jesus hung on the Cross, the worldlings gathered to mock Him. "He saved others," they sneered, "but he can't save himself!" (Matt. 27:42, NIV). The irony is that in their derision the motley crowd said the truth. Of course our Lord could not save himself and still save the world. That was the point. He had not come to save himself; He came to save us. He was not on the earth to be served; rather He was here to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many; He came to seek and to save the lost.

Behold, the love of God! Even while we were yet sinners, alienated in our minds by wicked works, Christ

loved us and gave himself for us. There was no other way that He could fulfill His mission. And even as He loved, we are commanded now to love in obedience to His Word (see John 15:9-10).

Here is the motivating force that constrains our ministry. Love is its heartbeat. Without it our work is nothing more than sounding brass and tinkling cymbal. Understand, though, it is Calvary love that Jesus is talking about—a love that embraces the Cross, joyfully laying down life for the beloved.

Maturing in such love likely will take a lot of pruning and dying to self. This becomes painfully evident in the way we take offense when slighted, or grow irritable when the going gets tough.

We can understand, then, why Jesus tells His disciples that abiding in Him will bring hardship. In fact, the same disdain that He received at the hands of evil men can be expected by those who follow Him. "The servant is not greater than his Lord" (John 15:20). Nevertheless, we are assured that in losing ourselves for His sake we shall discover the fullness of His joy. And as the seed falls to the earth and dies, it will bring forth a harvest—an ingathering of souls that will be celebrated in eternal praise around the throne of God.

Seeing the joy that is beyond, we can endure with patience the sufferings of the cross. What a blessing it will be to come to the end of the journey, confident that we have been obedient to the heavenly vision.

One who traveled with Bishop Francis Asbury left an account of his last days, which reflects this joy. After more than 50 years traversing this continent in a faithful, fruit-bearing ministry, his tired body finally could take no more. In March of 1816 he preached his last sermon in Richmond, Va. When he arrived at the church, he was so weak that he had to be carried into the pulpit, and held up by two men as he spoke. Though he had to make frequent pauses for the purpose of recovering breath, he preached for nearly an hour with great feeling. Having finished his testimony, he was carried from the pulpit back to his carriage.

The bishop wanted to get to Fredericksburg, but after several days of traveling, because of the inclement weather and his failing strength, he stopped at the home of George Arnold about 20 miles from town. Toward evening he became greatly indisposed. His cough increased, and it was impossible to lie down. Early the next morning he remarked that he had passed the night with much suffering and suggested that the end was near.

Recalling that it was Sunday, he requested that the family be called into his room for worship. What a scene that must have been! The indomitable leader, now so emaciated that he seemed more dead than alive, was propped up in bed, while the members of the household gathered about him. A hymn was sung, prayer offered, a portion of scripture read and expounded from the 21st chapter of Revelation.

During the service Bishop Asbury appeared calm and much engaged in devotion. He was offered a little barley water but was unable to swallow. Soon his speech began to fail. Observing the obvious distress of his traveling companion, Asbury raised his dying hand and looked at him joyfully. His friend leaned over and asked



# Where There Is No Controversy the People Perish

by Gerald Kennedy


I was present at a meeting the other day when a prominent preacher was introduced to speak on a controversial subject. This in itself ought to make the headlines, since many of our preachers would rather be caught stealing than facing any vital issue. The fellow who gave the introduction said that this preacher was sometimes regarded as a controversial figure, but he was regarded universally as a man of integrity and courage. Then I began to raise some questions within myself about the whole subject of controversy.

The first question was, what kind of questions could a person deal with that are not controversial? How many things can a person talk about without risking the possibility of a difference of opinion? And if there is a difference of opinion, the result is controversy. We might discuss the weather, but even there we find some like it hot and some like it cold. How about heaven? The nice thing about that subject is that nobody can prove much. I read a book a few years ago written by a man who claimed he had been there and returned, but such experts are mighty few. Still, there are many people with rather strong ideas about the subject, and they differ with each other. It used to be safe to talk about Mother, but in our day we blame what is wrong with us on our parents. So you might run into trouble on that trail.

Since nearly everything has a controversial tinge to it, maybe the best thing to do is become an "on the one hand, and on the other" kind of preacher. You know the type. He was described by a listener who said he was not quite sure what the preacher was trying to say, but he seemed dedicated to the idea of not offending anyone. Even here, however, the results are not always salutary and safe. The fellow in the middle so often gets thrown at by both sides.

Then I asked myself another question. Is the gospel noncontroversial? Jesus did not find it so; neither did Paul, Peter, or the other apostles. Of course they were all living in pagan environments, while we live in a country that has been officially Christianized. However, Martin Luther found a number of the brethren did not see eye to eye with him, and John Wesley faced mobs that made him long for the safety of a den of lions. I looked around me at the contemporary leaders of the churches. Every one of them is under fire from one source or another, and most of them have walked through dark valleys of opposition during most of their ministry.

So I came to a conclusion: To be a Christian means to be a controversial figure. To be a preacher means to be a warrior against the hosts of darkness that sometimes sneak into churches and get into city government. If anyone ever refers to me as a noncontroversial figure, I shall demand an apology. May the good Lord deliver us from the namby-pamby, watered-down Christianity of our age and give us the courage to rejoice when our attack draws fire. And may we be able to do all this in love.

When a preacher reported to John Wesley on his travels about a circuit, he was asked if he had won any converts. He sadly confessed he had not. Had he made anyone angry? He brightened up and said no. Whereupon Wesley turned away in despair as though the man were hopeless. Our fathers thought that anger was often a sinner's first response. So does the Book of Acts. Where there is no controversy, the people perish. 


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the bishop if he felt the Lord Jesus to be precious to his soul. Whereupon the valorous saint, now unable to speak, with much effort lifted both his hands in token of triumph. A few minutes later, his head slumped over, and the old warrior entered into rest.

Fellow servants of the Lord, when you get to the last step of the way, worn from years of toils in the vineyard, lift up your hands and praise the Lord. He is faithful who has promised. Not one word has failed that He has spoken. Someday the King is coming! Even now He is gathering His people from every tongue and tribe and kindred and nation—a Church beautiful in holiness that will

praise Him who reigns over all, from hallelujah to hallelujah, forever and forever.

Evangelism puts us on the wave length of eternity and brings us to live in the joy of the new Jerusalem. While it does not yet appear what we shall be, we know that when Jesus does come, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. Then every knee shall bow before Him, and every tongue confess to the glory of the Father, that Jesus Christ is Lord.

This is the reality in which we should minister, and by the grace of God, it can be the joyous experience of us all. 

# THE ORDER OF SALVATION: MILEPOSTS OR BUS STOPS

by C. L. Bence

**J**ohn Wesley understood salvation to be a journey along a well-defined path. Each believer passes through specific stages on his way to glory. In its simplest form, the Wesleyan order of salvation speaks of being saved (justified) and sanctified. In a more developed understanding, the process embraces spiritual biography from its starting point in the "natural man" to its culmination in the glorified saint.

Wesley's clearest explanation of this step-by-step process of salvation is found in his sermon "On Working Out Your Own Salvation":

Salvation begins with what is termed . . . *prevenient grace*; including the first wish to please God, the first dawn of light concerning his will, and the first slight transient conviction of having sinned against him. All these imply some tendency toward life; some degree of salvation; the beginning of a deliverance from a blind, unfeeling heart, quite insensible of God and the things of God. Salvation is carried on by *convincing grace*, usually in the Scripture termed *repentance*; which brings a larger measure of self-knowledge, and a farther deliverance from the heart of stone. Afterwards we experience the proper Christian salvation; whereby, "through grace," we are "saved by faith;" consisting of those two grand branches, justification and sanctification. By justification we are saved from the guilt of sin, and restored to the favor of God; by sanctification we are saved from the power and root of sin, and restored to the image of God. . . . [Sanctification] begins the moment we are justified . . . It gradually increases from that moment . . . till, in another instant, the heart is cleansed from all sin, and filled with pure love to God and man. But even that love in-

creases more and more, till we "grow up in all things into Him that is our head;" till we attain "the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

Wesley's image of faith as a path to a distant goal has been a popular metaphor in Christian literature. Its most familiar treatment is John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, but the concept goes back further than the 17th century. Jesus himself spoke of the narrow way that leads to eternal life. Many scholars see the Beatitudes as a sequentialized description of the path to perfection. The Christian mystics often described their experiences in terms of the journey of the soul, or of stages of ascent to God. By the Middle Ages, Roman Catholic theologians had developed a clear outline of the steps to sainthood. However, their order of salvation was associated more with vocational status than it was with personal experience of saving grace. To become holy, one had to pass through various stages (counsels) of perfection, moving upward—from lay Christian to priest, to monk and, ultimately, to saint—through increasing levels of religious discipline. Christianity was a ladder to heaven, with clearly distinguishable rungs for every level of commitment. It was the believer's devotion rather than divine grace that determined how far up the ladder of salvation he progressed.

The Protestant Reformers reacted against this graduated scale of salvation. They spoke instead of the totality of divine grace that made redemption an all-or-nothing experience. Calvin proclaimed that all persons were either in grace (the elect) or apart from grace (the reprobate). Attempts to measure salvation by external standards were inappropriate, if not sinful. Salvation was solely of God's grace. Progress in one's

spiritual life introduced an element of human agency, undermining God's saving work. A Christian could become a better parent, church member, or citizen through spiritual disciplines. But these improvements would not make one more saved or spiritually superior to any other believer.

Luther's view was even more problematic. He saw every Christian as a paradoxical combination of saint and sinner. The person with faith was totally righteous, regardless the moral condition his actions indicated. The Christian remained a sinful, unprofitable servant of God. Therefore, the Christian walk could not be a matter of progress toward fuller salvation. It was an ever-repeated crisis of repentance and faith. Like Calvin, Luther urged his followers to develop Christian graces, but he would never concede that one became more spiritual by such attempts.

In their attempt to eliminate human effort and righteousness through works from their doctrine of salvation, the Reformers opened the door to antinomian abuses. If spiritual progress was impossible, if all believers were equally righteous, if moral conduct had no effect upon one's standing with God, why strive to grow in Christ at all? If the sinful nature was necessary, why not surrender to those baser desires and still trust in God for salvation through faith alone? The result was a "bargain basement" Christianity, allowing believers the full benefits of salvation for minimum faith in Christ's pardoning work on the Cross. If one met the minimum requirements of saving faith, that person's standing and inheritance in Christ was equal to the most devout. Why bother to press on to moral perfection?

It was the German Pietists and Wesley who brought back the emphasis

upon growth and development in spiritual life. Wesley detected the antinomian flaw in Luther and chided him for it. "Who has wrote more able than Martin Luther on justification by faith alone?" he commented in his sermon "On God's Vineyard." "And who is more ignorant of the doctrine of sanctification, or more confused in his concept of it?" The Reformers had absorbed sanctification into their doctrine of justification by faith. The Methodists proclaimed sanctification a second and *further* aspect of God's saving work. Not only was there an ongoing cleansing of the believer's life, but there was also a definite instantaneous sanctification in which the believer died to the sin nature and was filled with love. Converts were urged to "go on to perfection!" Wesley spoke of "the method whereby God leads us step by step toward heaven" (*Notes*, Rom. 8:30). He could logically outline those steps in a Wesleyan order of salvation. To reinforce the need of progress, he spoke of degrees of faith, of love, and even of salvation. Grace could be added to grace, glory could be added to glory as one moved toward a fuller salvation. The goal was not simply to be "saved," or even to be "sanctified." Wesley wanted his followers to become "altogether Christians."

Here, then, is the contrast, and the problem, that faces those of the Wesleyan tradition today. Catholic theology proposes a stair-step salvation. Every act of obedience and piety is rewarded by increased grace. Such a view is loaded with dangers. Believers can easily assume that it is their own spiritual dedication that produces spirituality. The role of God's saving grace is lost in a frenzy of discipline, commitments, and programs of spiritual formation. In measuring spiritual progress, other people become the standards of evaluation. Legalistic codes replace personal commu-

nication with God. Furthermore, the temptation to become spiritually proud is obvious. If salvation is gradual, then a believer can compare himself with others and, like the Pharisee, find satisfaction that he is "not like other men." Finally, in such a scale, one can always choose a satisfactory level of commitment and settle for something less than full salvation.


On the other hand, the all-or-nothing theology of the Reformers reduces salvation to an uncomplicated "believism." It does not motivate one to holiness and discipleship. One settles for a once-for-all conversion crisis, or a cycle of ever-repeated, ever-confessed sin. Without some concept of spiritual progress, the believer is left either with a next-to-nothing salvation offering pardon without life transformation, or with a super-inflated salvation that falsely promises holiness without consecration and ethical purity.

Wesley struggled to find a middle ground between these misconceptions. The result was a doctrine of entire sanctification that he himself admitted was "exceedingly complex." In formulating his views on entire sanctification, Wesley retained the Catholic emphasis upon spiritual progress as well as the Protestant emphasis upon salvation by grace through faith. He returned to the concept of an order of salvation, but avoided the "staircase theology." He saw each step, not as an end in itself, but as potential for the believer's further spiritual growth. According to Wesley, no true Christian could ever speak of having reached the ultimate goal of Christlikeness in this life. No Christian would dare announce that he had attained to "the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." Entire sanctification, the removal to the "bent to sinning," does not make one love and serve others in the same degree as the Mas-

ter himself did. There is always room for further growth in love. Furthermore, even though one may cease sinning willfully, the Holy Spirit constantly reveals imperfections that need to be brought into conformity to the divine will. There is no place for pride or for resting on spiritual accomplishments. There are no "bus stops" where we can get off and settle for a lesser destination than heaven. The goal is still "set before us," and we must keep moving on.

We of the Wesleyan tradition face the risk of reverting to Catholicism when we see any crisis event as an end in itself. Every accomplishment is a means to press on to a higher objective more effectively. The only stopping point on this journey is in glory.

Though there are no bus stops, we can observe mileposts along the way. The Bible reveals an order to this ongoing process of salvation. We can use experiences or biblical standards of conduct to evaluate our spiritual progress. We can silence Satan when he points out our deficiencies by showing him what grace has already accomplished in our lives. We can encourage others with testimonies of spiritual victory. We can anticipate Christlikeness as we experience increasing glory.

Mileposts, not bus stops! Attainment of spiritual maturity should be a promise of divine resources to help us walk further. We have focused too long on reaching justification or entire sanctification, and have not given sufficient emphasis to the ongoing process in which these crisis moments occur. We must learn to view them as Wesley did, as significant events that remind us that we are making progress. We must continue in the pilgrimage of faith. When one becomes an "altogether Christian," Wesley instructs us, "Exhort him to press on, by all possible means, till he passes from faith to faith." 

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# A NEW BEGINNING IN

## CHICAGO



*Robert Taylor Homes from Dan Ryan Expressway. Ten blocks of stark brick where 35,000 people are housed in 28 high-rise apartment buildings on Chicago's south side. The largest housing project in the U.S., it is the scene of drug trafficking, homicide, gang activity, unemployment, teen pregnancy, and infant mortality.*

### How a man and his dream are bringing hope to a city

by Nina Beegle

CHICAGO! To walk her streets, climb the stairs of her tenement houses, and drive through her affluent suburbs is a kaleidoscope of contrasts and contradictions—the very wealthy and the very poor . . . cultural center—skid row . . . Lincoln Park—debris-strewn ghettos . . . Sears Tower—and seamy storefronts staring at cracked sidewalks . . . Lake Forest mansions concealed behind iron fences and verdant gardens—and Robert Taylor Homes.

The Robert Taylor Homes on Chicago's south side are 10 blocks of stark brick where 35,000 people live wall-to-wall in thousands of apartments—the largest housing project in the United States, according to official statistics. It is the scene of the television series "Good Times," which featured the Evans family and the "Dyn-o-mite kid." However, unlike the Evans family, most of the Robert Taylor Homes families are single-family units.

At the edge of this housing project is an oasis called the Douglass-Tubman Christian Center where little children get a good meal and a head start in a life that otherwise holds little hope.

It was at this center that I shook the hand of a distinguished black man, Rev. Gilbert Leigh, and began the tour of five other facilities where he has established outreach ministries to needy people.

"It is difficult to say what is impossible," said Robert H. Goddard, the father of modern rocketry, "for the dream of yesterday is the hope of today and the reality of tomorrow." Leigh called his dream "New World Christian Ministries" and so far, since 1971, it has shaped itself into six facilities where Head Start programs operate. Out of the contacts made through these, many other ministries have evolved.

Rev. Leigh, Jamaican by birth, has been ministering to blacks and other races in Chicago for more than 20 years. In his unassuming but persistent way he has made himself known and respected among city officials, and his wisdom and aplomb are recognized by his ministerial peers—black, white, and in between.

An elder in the Church of the Nazarene, Leigh pastored

the Ingleside Church of the Nazarene on Chicago's south side for 20 years. As he ministered to spiritual needs he became increasingly concerned about the broader social, educational, and economic needs that trapped the people generation after generation into the poverty cycle. In answer to these needs he had a dream, but no capital. He was having difficulty feeding and clothing his own family.

That Leigh serves a God who can do the impossible was evident as we walked through the six well organized and equipped facilities that serve more than 12,000 children and their families in low-income communities. It was also obvious that this remarkable man does more than dream dreams.

"Christ expects us to share what He has given us with those who have nothing," says Leigh, "just as the little boy with the lunch did in the story of the loaves and the fishes. The boy acted out of obedience and love. Because of his response all of them had more than they could eat. Such a response from God's people will help to alleviate the sufferings of the poor throughout this city and the world."

Though the basis for New World Christian Ministries' existence is the gospel of Jesus Christ as the answer to man's problems, Leigh's philosophy of ministry espouses the holistic approach. NWCM is involved in youth services, family services, emergency food and clothing distribution, financial counseling and emergency assistance, health services, job counseling, tutoring, advocacy services and many other humanitarian endeavors. Many of these are natural outcroppings of its main emphasis, the educational programs. These have top priority in Leigh's administration.

Through the Head Start programs he invites parents to get involved in the classrooms and, when their trust is gained, into the parenting and counseling programs. From these they learn of educational opportunities for themselves as well as other self-help programs.

"The children in our Head Start programs pave the way to family services, which eventually bring changes that benefit not only the families but also the communities in which

they reside," Leigh explains. "Many of the teachers and office workers now in our programs are former school drop-outs whom we guided through available educational programs."

Sherry West, coordinator of the parent involvement program at Douglass-Tubman Christian Center near the Robert Taylor Homes, was one of those. Discouraged, skeptical, and somewhat bitter when she first came, she reluctantly accepted the invitation to help in the classroom. Initially, she was impressed with the NWCM's Head Start program because they properly diagnosed her child's learning disability within two weeks. The public school had shifted him from program to program without ever properly diagnosing his problem.

"In the classroom, I was learning more than the kids," Sherry says. "I learned a lot about how to deal with the children at home. When I started going to the parents' meetings a whole new world opened up to me. We learned family management, stress management, and who to go to for what, so we could improve ourselves and our situations. The parents had a support system among themselves too. We swapped clothes until no one knew whose was whose. One day a little kid was ready to punch out another kid because he was wearing 'his' jacket. It ended up being very funny, because it had gone the rounds and the mother who originally bought the jacket forgot she'd ever loaned it and that it was once her child's."

As Sherry excitedly reeled off her accomplishments since she completed her education, I realized the meaning of "New World" in the acronym NWCM. In her new world she is no longer among the "down under" but has become an advocate for her people, first on the city level and now the state. "My life has done a turnaround since I got involved at Douglass-Tubman Center," Sherry says. "Now I'm training parents as I was trained when I first came into the program."

A young Eastern Nazarene College grad, Howard Henry, greeted us in his small office at the center. Howard is a social worker and parent coordinator for New World at Douglass-Tubman Christian Center. He does short-term crisis intervention counseling.

"These people live on a day-to-day coping basis," says Howard, "because crises are a daily thing in their lives. When too many pressures and crises come at once, we have child abuse, suicide, and other bizarre behavior re-

sulting from psychological overkill that blows the safety valve."

Howard Henry could have sought a more lucrative outlet and an easier setting for ministry, but he felt strongly that the field of social service was getting away from its original purpose and that the church needed to go beyond just standing with its hand out ready to give to people without really giving of themselves.

"I really appreciate efforts on the part of our denomination to renew its commitment to minister to the poor," said Howard, "and I hope we can learn ways of addressing these problems that will enrich our relationships with the poor and not cause further alienation. Most of them are not here, as many think, because they are lazy."

"We need to develop a perspective toward ministry to the poor that goes beyond just doing good to entering into dynamic relationships with them—getting to know them, praying with them, sharing our lives with them in a give-and-take relationship that allows us not only to minister but also to be ministered to by them."

When no one is willing to take a lesser salary or adopt a sacrificial life-style, then there is no one to minister in these pockets of despair.

"We need to confront the problems of the urban setting where poverty is largely influenced by environmental factors beyond the control of the individuals within that community. Even though I can't control the situations, I can become a friend to the people and do the kind of giving that touches their hearts. I can enter into honest relationships with them that will begin healing processes in their hearts and lives. And this is really possible. They respond warmly to honest relationships. Too often people are overwhelmed by the needs and find it easy to say, 'They are not my problems. There's nothing I can do.' But there is something everyone can do. It is up to each of us to find out what that is."

People in the Robert Taylor Homes recognize Howard's sincerity and his nearly four years at Douglass-Tubman have established many friendships among them.

The next Head Start program we visited was the first that Leigh had organized, in the Ingleside Church of the Nazarene where he had pastored for so many years. Here a group of children were having eye and hearing tests at one end of a large room, which was divided into sections by low bookcases. Bright-colored carpets were sprinkled with little black tots in their varied learning situations,

*Rev. Gilbert Leigh, founder and president of New World Christian Ministries, counsels a woman in his office in West Chicago. NWCM offers a better life to thousands on Chicago's south and west sides.*



scarcely taking notice of our intrusion.

In contrast to the limited quarters we had just seen, the third Head Start was located in a Roman Catholic facility that had once housed a large parochial grade school. NWCM leases it for \$1.00 a month with the stipulation it be used for social services. Several of their facilities are obtained by similar agreement, including one with a Lutheran church where most of the scholars are Hispanic, and one with Reformed Church of America. In all of these, space was dormant because constituents had moved away and congregations had diminished. Churches around the city are aware of Leigh's work and welcome New World Christian Ministries into their unoccupied facilities.

The second floor of St. Bernard's, another Roman-Catholic-owned building, holds the newest fulfillment of Leigh's hopes—the New World Christian Academy. It opened in September 1985 with 30 children, K-6. A thriving Head Start program services 120 children in six classrooms on the first floor.

This kind of help, along with funding from the Department of Health and Human Services, and networking with other social service agencies, has allowed Rev. Leigh to reach out to people far beyond the scope of his ministry to children alone.

"We try to employ Christian people," says Leigh, "but few want to work here. One of our greatest needs as far as the Christian focus is concerned is to develop around family counseling. Eighty percent of the children at Douglass-Tubman have teenage parents. Their grandmothers bring the children to this school while still raising their mothers."

As we bumped along on the patched and pocked streets of the ghetto to visit the next NWCM facility on our list, I asked Rev. Leigh, "If I could pull out of a magic hat anything you would like to have to develop your programs and bring them in line with your hopes, what would you ask me for?"

"Well, I suppose, first of all, I would ask you for some people. I'd like, for example, to turn the Douglass-Tubman building over to a support group who could take advantage of the gym and all that space for outreach, youth programs, after-school programs, Bible studies. We could use family counselors, child-abuse specialists, secretaries, accountants. We have to meet state requirements for all these positions, which means we must find professional people who are willing to be involved in the urban setting.

"People like Neil Myrie, your Head Start program monitor, who is driving this car?" I asked. Neil's mother is East Indian and his father is Cuban.

"Yes, like Neil Myrie. Neil has his B.A. in theology and his master's degree in management. He's studying to be a minister and is a great help in the program in many ways. And like Howard Henry who could go out and get a much higher paying job, but the needs of the people he ministers to are

more important to him than dollars and cents. That kind of people.

"If you could pull some doctors and nurses out of that hat, we could begin a health center. We have referral services now, and we check the Head Start children for hearing and visual difficulties, but many of these people cannot see doctors when they do get diagnosed. They don't have the kind of money that regular doctors and hospitals charge. We need our own health clinics.

"Another great need is for American black pastors. The problem is, of course, that when they get their education they don't want to come back to the ghetto. They want to get away from it. And the problem with people coming here to work from white-Anglo churches is that they need to be oriented. It's just like going to a foreign mission. The missionaries have to be oriented to the culture and to the way the local people think and feel about things before they can minister effectively. You have to build a trust relationship with these people. That takes time.

"If I could get either American blacks or whites interested, we have a program called SCUPE, Seminary Consortium for Urban Pastoral Education, that works in as part of their seminary education while they are training in urban settings. And I've been talking to some people at Olivet about developing an extension program. Roosevelt University has some programs that come to the site, and other institutions provide services we are unable to provide. Our Christian schools could help us similarly."

"With the whole denomination focusing on Chicago this year, how do you think that might affect New World Christian Ministries?" I asked.

"It is my hope that during 'Chicago '86 Thrust to the Cities' the church will be able to grasp the opportunities available in each of these areas developed by NWCM, to plant churches where care and love have built bridges of friendship and trust. The groundwork has been laid and planting churches should be a natural progression. I have longed to see that happen, but I haven't been able to do it alone. Perhaps now is God's time."

God's time? God's time is always NOW. It must be *our* time. Phineas Bresee thought so when he said, "The first miracle after the baptism of the Holy Spirit was wrought upon a beggar. It means that the first service of a Holy Ghost-baptized church is to the poor; that its ministry is to those who are the lowest down; that its gifts are for those who need them the most."

As Howard Henry said, each of us can do *something* to change the deplorable suffering of so many. Chicago '86 Thrust to the Cities is the time for us to open our hearts to the Lord, individually. Perhaps God will give you and me a dream. Our dream may not reach thousands as New World Christian Ministries does, but it may reach one or two. That's the way Jesus dealt with the human problem.

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# PREACHING WITH AUTHORITY

by J. Grant Swank, Jr.

People are not listening to us. We are preaching, but they are thinking about lunch. Or they are toying with the baby's shoes. Or they are looking at their watches. Or they are leafing through the hymnal or the Sunday School leaflet. They go to sleep before our very eyes.

What has happened to the most exciting half hour in the week—that 30 minutes to raise the dead? It has fallen upon boring times. We must revive the pulpit if we expect to revive the pews. We must get back to the burning causes of Christianity and sense the authority of Christ descending upon us when we prepare to preach the gospel.

What are the "stuffings" of authoritative preaching?

1. *Preaching with conviction is Penetrating.* It goes to the marrow of the spiritual bone. It refuses to play with the trivial and inconsequential. It dares to go deeply in order to find fresh reservoirs of the spirit. And it is sharpened with that purposeful thrust from the very first word, for if the beginning of that message does not grip, the chances are slim of getting the hearers' attention later on.

Penetrating preaching uncovers hypocrisy. It will strip the phony right before the people's eyes, in the name of God. The "Thus saith the Lord" power will descend upon the messenger to cause all souls to stand naked before God, who sees all.

Furthermore, penetrating preaching unnerves complacency. The trouble with many of our congregations is that they are napping in their comfortable doctrines, their past accomplishments, their sophisticated niceties, and their religious badges and merits. They are shining their spiritual buttons while the world is going to hell. That kind of mindset must be shaken; it must crumble if we are to get the troops marching again.

2. *Preaching with conviction is Personal.* It refuses to

waste time on the irrelevant but instead noses in on the individual's hurts and bruises, where he lives. When people go to hear a sermon, they rarely expect a lecture or some treatise. They go to be stirred, sent forth with new power from beyond them. They want that one behind the pulpit to speak directly to them, and they want to hear what God has to say to them in the midst of their confusions.

Personal preaching relates to practical living. Some sermons waste the first 10 minutes on froth. One wonders for the first half of some messages what the fellow is really trying to say. This should never be. By the first 4 minutes into the preaching, every listener should know the basic theme of what is to follow. And what follows should deal with the grass and pebbles, where people walk.

Personal preaching should reverberate throughout the souls of the hearers. It should get hold, grip, hold fast, and then set loose spasms of adventure down through the corridors of the spirits. The people should get so caught up in what is being said that they actually forget their surroundings. Even if that urchin on the second row goes out—down the center aisle—and trots back again, tripping over the feet of three or four others, those in the sanctuary will barely notice. Instead of welcoming the interruption for change of pace, they will keep their heads in the direction of the preacher, for they do not want to miss the next word.

3. *Preaching with conviction is Persuasive.* Its goal is changing lives from darkness to light, in the power of the Spirit. It is a proclamation that expects souls will be turned about face from sin to holiness, from self to sanctification, from hell to heaven. It is expectant preaching, earnestly speaking the word of the Lord.

Persuasive preaching loosens the crusty foundations of the heart. It simply will not let the dust gather. When

(Continued on page 59)

# HELPING MOURNERS

## *Case Studies for Reflection and Discussion*

The following cases are taken from *Understanding Mourning* by Glen W. Davidson, published in 1984 by Augsburg Publishing House, Minneapolis (BA080-662-0803, paper back, \$5.50), and used by permission. Some of the questions for discussion are also taken from topics Davidson treats in the book. You may wish to order a copy for your library.

### **Linda and Gordon's Story**

Loss of a child is uncommon today. Prenatal care, high-risk nurseries, and sophisticated technology have all reduced the rate of infant mortality. But all the successes of science did not spare Linda and Gordon. Their son died shortly after birth, an event unexpected both by them and their obstetrician.

Linda has difficulty remembering the details of her baby's birth and death. She remembers vividly, though, how she was made to feel. She felt like a failure.

Linda did not see her son, either living or dead. He was whisked away to a high-risk nursery. She was moved to the gynecology service away from the nursery area. Few people spoke to her, and those who did avoided mentioning the baby. Her physician gave her medication to stop lactation.

Gordon arranged a private funeral while Linda was still in the hospital. Together with his mother, they had the nursery furniture stored away and had even repainted the room, "so she wouldn't be reminded of the baby" when she came home.

"It was unreal," Linda explained. "I thought I had gone to the hospital to have a baby. When I came home, everyone seemed in a conspiracy to suggest that it had never happened. After a while I even began to doubt that I had been pregnant."

### **For Reflection and Discussion**

1. What is the likely result of "a conspiracy to suggest that it had never happened"?

2. One misunderstanding of grief is to think that mourning is for women only. To what extent is that idea at work in this case?

3. Accepting the reality of loss is an important part of grief work. How could you help Linda/Gordon with this task?

4. To what extent would you suppose that Linda feels guilt, anger, depression? What about Gordon?

5. What would be your goal in counseling Linda and Gordon? Give a biblical-theological rationale for your goal.

6. What person in your community of faith do you think would be able to help Linda and Gordon? Why?

7. To what extent do you think a small support group such as a chapter of SHARE would help Gordon and Linda?

### **Erica and Warren's Story**

There was no conspiracy of silence for Erica and Warren. The death of their 19-year-old son was headline news. Everyone in town talked about the accident in which a prominent citizen, driving a car while under the influence of alcohol, ran the youth and his motorcycle off the road. Their son was fatally injured and pronounced dead at the hospital emergency room.

It was difficult to tell who was most angry—Warren or the community at large. In public Warren kept himself "under control." In private all he could think about was



revenge. In the past Warren had had some unpleasant business with the driver of the car. So had many others in town. The driver had a recognized problem with alcohol and even had his driver's license suspended for a time. He tended to be "a wheeler-dealer," and, in Warren's words, "contributed nothing positive to the community." Warren's son had been a star athlete in high school, active in the church youth group, affable, and well liked.

Erica and Warren's pastor commented that the funeral was the most difficult in his ministry. The pastor found doubts about God crowding out any notion of love and justice. He confessed to the congregation that he was at the funeral as a fellow mourner, confused and frustrated, and together they must "wait on the mercies of Almighty God."

The funeral would have been a "healing experience," according to Erica, except that the driver of the car came "drunk and blubbing." Warren called the man a murderer. Everyone was terribly upset. The funeral director described the scene as a nightmare. Rather than a time to pull the community together for emotional support, the funeral became the occasion for further isolation and the emotions of anger and embarrassment dominated the scene.

#### For Reflection and Discussion

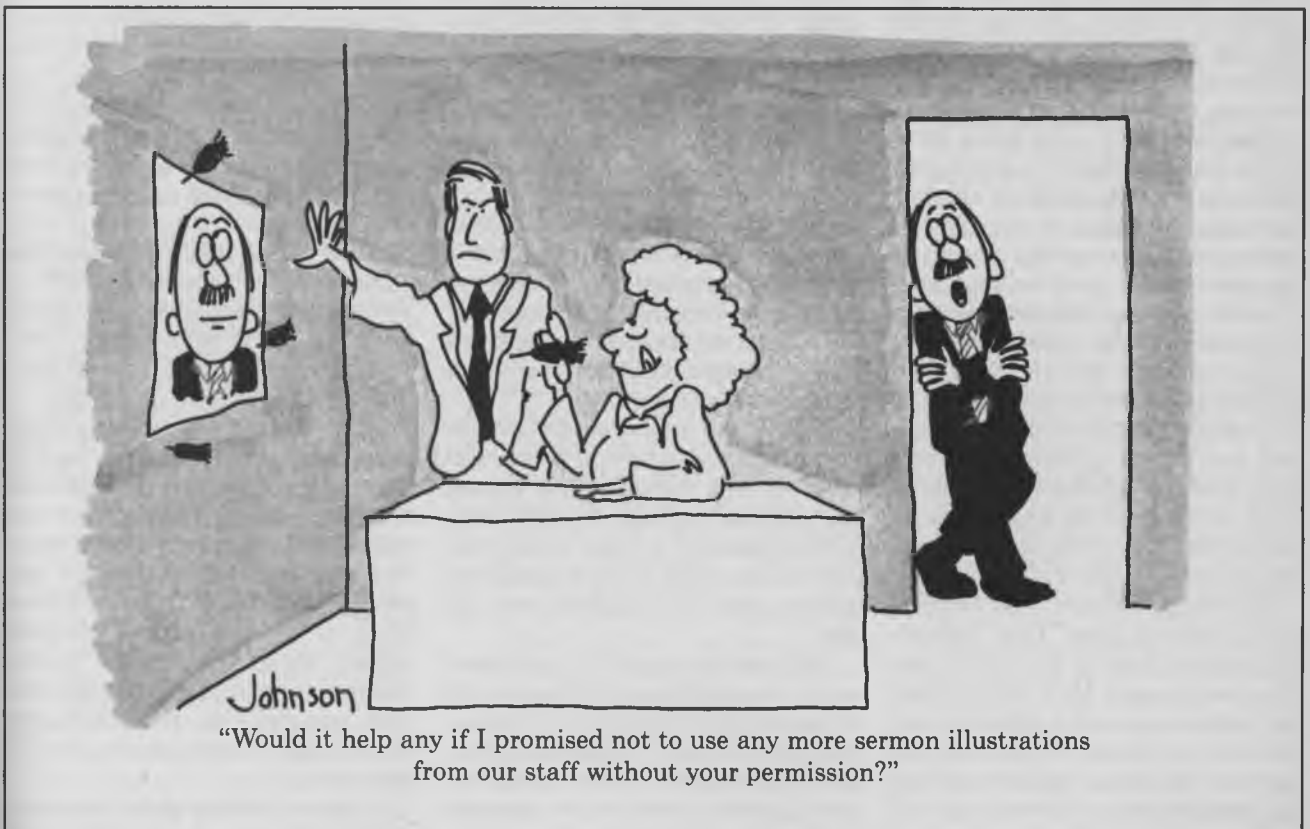
1. If you were the pastor in the Erica-Warren case and had a chance to do the service over again, what specific things would you do differently?

2. Adjusting to an environment in which the deceased is missing is a universal grief task. In what ways could you help Erica and Warren get started in their grief tasks?

3. Some people advise the grief stricken to keep busy and don't think. How would this help or hurt Erica and Warren?

4. Some advisers say grief is a private matter and should be done out of sight and that public expressions of it should be controlled. Is this good or poor advice for Erica and Warren?

5. If Erica and Warren were members of your church, what persons and organizations could be recruited to develop a supportive social network for them?



# I WILL TO LOVE YOU

by Patricia Wood

I just don't love him anymore," Jane shared with her pastor. "We don't have anything in common. I'm thinking of getting a divorce, but thought I should talk to you first."

Jane accepted Christ into her life as a little girl. Her parents were divorced, and she was raised by a grandmother. She attended church very little during her growing-up years.

Then she married Jeff. One evening they and their two little girls attended a musical presentation at the church. They both rededicated their lives to the Lord that night.

Jeff served on the church board and he and Jane taught a Sunday School class together. He was a quiet, hardworking man. He worked nights in a factory, slept part of the daylight hours, and spent the rest chopping wood for their wood stove or doing repairs around the house.

Jane was confined at home most of the time with two very active girls. Because of Jeff's schedule she had little activity outside of church. She attempted a correspondence course from a local college, but found it too time-consuming and not in agreement with biblical teaching. Though she felt she and her family should be more involved in the church, she was torn between that and her loyalty to home and children. She also felt she was hindered from working for the Lord because her husband was not outgoing and did not want to get too involved.

For several months these feelings of resentment grew. Then depression settled over her like a thick fog. She tried to read, but it was difficult with little ones around. She had very little time to herself. Eventually, she decided she really did not love her husband anymore. The only way out was to seek a divorce.

She decided to at least talk to the pastor first. He listened, remembering how many times he had heard similar stories. There was no child abuse, no wife abuse, nothing seriously wrong, yet they had grown far apart. Was there an answer to their problem?

"Have you really made up your mind to seek a divorce, or do you have a desire to keep the family together?" he questioned. He had to find out if it was too late. He had learned that when people came to him with their problems, the damage was often irreparable. Then he could only listen.

"I know this is not good for the children," she said. "I came from a broken home. Yet I wonder if it's good for them to go on living in a home that doesn't exist on love and affection?"

The pastor suggested some reading materials and asked if her husband would come in with her for counseling.

Jeff agreed to come in and talk. He was a little shocked at his wife's attitude but wanted to do everything he could to keep his family together. The pastor was relieved, as he knew their marriage could only survive if the two worked together.

During the interview the pastor had suggested that Jane counsel with his wife. Maybe if she shared with another woman it would help. The following day Jane called Dot and set up a time to get together for coffee after the children went to bed.

Dot was nervous and wondered what she could say to help Jane. Do all women feel neglected at times—not really desired? she wondered. She remembered times when her own children were much younger and her husband worked two jobs.

She began to feel she was only intelligent enough to talk to babies, as she had no opportunity to converse with adults. She felt stifled and wanted to run away from it all. Now she and Pastor Dave were enjoying their teenage children together.

Dot sought wisdom from the Lord and requested that her husband be praying for her when she went to visit Jane.

Jane poured out her feelings to Dot. All the time Dot was silently praying, *Lord, what can I say to her? I know it is not Your will that a marriage break up. What will become of these children? Help me to know what to say.*

About an hour and a half later, Dot went home depressed. She felt she really was no help. She mulled over the conversation as she lay in bed later, waiting for sleep to come. *Lord, only You can save this marriage, she prayed. I don't know of anything else I can do. I am willing to do anything, but right now I have to leave them in Your hands.*

Pastor Dave and Dot knew that Jane had not proceeded with divorce. When they asked how things were going she would reply, "OK, I guess." All they could do was keep praying. How helpless they felt.

Months later, Jane once again asked Dot over for coffee. As they sat at the kitchen table Jane said, "We are getting along a lot better now. I am not going to get a divorce. Pastor Dave's suggestions—that we get away once in awhile for a meal, or go out shopping—have helped. We are trying. Jeff has arranged his schedule to spend more time with me. Also, he tries to take the girls sometimes so I have some time alone.

"I got to thinking about what you said, too," she added. "You said,

## Life in the Fisher Bowl

OH PLEASE FORGIVE ME  
MRS. MILLER!



R. GREEN

LET ME ASSURE YOU THAT THAT WAS  
NEVER MY INTENT!



...AND MRS. MILLER, PLEASE FEEL FREE  
TO CALL BACK ANY TIME YOU WANT TO  
CLEAR THE AIR.



PHONE



WELL YOU SEE... THE REASON THAT  
OUR PHONE'S NOT WORKING IS  
BECAUSE MY WIFE INADVERTENTLY  
JERKED IT OFF THE WALL.

'Love is an act of the will, not a feeling.' I had never thought about it like that. I thought I had to feel something special to really love. There are times when I never have any feeling at all. You also said, that if I willed to love him, the feelings would return. You were right. I don't feel like I did when we were first married. Maybe I'm not supposed to, but I do believe

I love him. I'm sure we are going to make it."

Dot smiled and breathed a prayer of thanks to the Lord. She remembered sharing those thoughts with Jane. She had read them somewhere herself.

Jane went on, "I know there will be struggles. Things are not perfect, but we are working on sharing with

each other and the girls. We try to find time for them as well as ourselves. Even they have calmed down and seem to be much happier."

As Dot drove home that morning, relief and joy enveloped her. She prayed once again that the Lord would bless Jane's home and make her marriage grow.

## Helpful Advice to Wives of Ministers

- 1. BE YOURSELF**—Be content with the way God has made you. Don't try to be someone else (Phil. 4:11; Ps. 115:4).
- 2. LET OTHERS BE THEMSELVES**—Don't try to put others in your mold. We all have different ways of expressing our gifts.
- 3. YOU ARE NO DIFFERENT BECAUSE YOUR HUSBAND IS A PREACHER**—There is not one thing you should do, or refrain from doing, just because your husband is a minister. You cannot please everyone! You are who and what you are—because Jesus is in you. Obey Him.
- 4. GET INVOLVED AS GOD LEADS YOU**—Allow yourself to be led by the Holy Spirit into those areas of service where you are best suited.
- 5. BE HOSPITABLE**—Do not wait for others to make the first move. Open your heart and home freely with no thought of returned kindness. (Read *Open Heart—Open Home* by Karen Burton Mains.)
- 6. DON'T TRY TO CHANGE THE CONGREGATION**—God will use your prayers and godly example to do any changing that is needed. His Holy Spirit works where we cannot! However, we should always know why we believe as we do so that we can give an answer to all who ask.
- 7. HANDLE CRITICISM WISELY**—This is one of the hardest hurdles. Criticism can be constructive—if you let it. If it is not justified, then FORGET IT! GIVE IT TO YOUR LORD! LET HIM HANDLE IT!
- 8. DON'T BE OVERLY SENSITIVE**—Give people the benefit of the doubt. Realize that gruffness sometimes comes from pressure or sickness and should not be taken personally.
- 9. ADJUST TO YOUR HUSBAND'S LIFE-STYLE**—Don't expect him to be who he isn't. Everyone has both good and bad traits. Concentrate on his good points and thank God for them constantly.
- 10. SHOW INTEREST IN YOUR HUSBAND'S WORK**—Encourage and compliment him. Trust him and so live that he can trust you.
- 11. LOVE YOUR HUSBAND**—Surround your husband with your love. Show him that you care about him.
- 12. HELP YOUR MATE**—To be the humble father/priest he wants and needs to be in order to be the spiritual leader of the family.
- 13. MAKE YOUR HOME A HAVEN OF REST**—Keep yourself and your home neat. That does not mean you will always have a spotless house! Someone may need your love—and that is more important than having the dishes done. As you make your home a haven for your family, it will also be a haven for the hurting.
- 14. DON'T OVEREMPHASIZE MATERIAL THINGS**—God sees your need! He cares! Trust Him.
- 15. BE AMENABLE TO CHANGE**—You might have to move! Don't make your plans around yourself.
- 16. LEAN HARD AND FIND FAVOR**—Because a woman has a great influence in the home, she needs to pray often for wisdom in order to be a blessing to her family. Find strength in God's Word and in time spent alone with Him who giveth to all "women" liberally. There is no substitute for spirituality!

—Kay Hermon

# SERMON ILLUSTRATIONS



## WHAT'S IN A NAME?

### Illustration

While browsing through a bookstore, I came upon a book of photographs of the English royal family. I was intrigued by a picture from the 1920s, a London street scene. King George V stood in the midst of a great crowd. Out from the press of the eager onlookers had emerged a small urchin, dressed in rags. As he stood before the king, the disparity between their social classes was harsh. Yet the boy gave the monarch an ear-to-ear smile.

The photo's caption recorded the joy of discovery: "My name," the boy boasted, "is George, too!"

For a fleeting moment a bond was formed between the two that sliced through the class distinctions that had previously held them poles apart. All because of this one common treasure possessed by both king and pauper.

### Source

Personal experience

### Truth, Concept, or Doctrine Illustrated

We, too, bear a common name. The brotherhood we share in Christ is such that, regardless of external distinctions, we all share a common treasure in that "My name is Christian, too!"

### Two Supporting Scriptures

Matt. 18:20  
John 17:20-23

—Phil McCallum

## ON THE LORD'S SIDE

### Illustration

During the critical days of the American Civil War, a timid individual exclaimed to Abraham Lincoln, "Oh, Mr. President, I am most anxious that the Lord shall be on our side!"

Lincoln, his response characteristically terse and penetrating, replied, "Strangely enough, that gives me no anxiety at all. The thing I am concerned about is to make sure that I am on the Lord's side!"

### Source

*If God Be for Us*, by P. S. Rees. William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids.

### Truth, Concept, or Doctrine Illustrated

Too often we are tempted to ask God to be with us in some endeavor or to be

on our side in conflict. Yet it would be better for us to ask, "Am I on God's side in this issue?" "What can I do for Him?"

### Two Supporting Scriptures

1 Cor. 3:9  
2 Tim. 2:15

—Russell Hosey

## GREATER GLORY

### Illustration

*Portia:* That light we see is burning in my hall.

How far that little candle throws his beams!

So shines a good deed in a naughty world.

*Nerissa:* When the Moon shone, we did not see the candle.

*Portia:* So doth the greater glory dim the less:

A substitute shines brightly as a king,

Until a king be by; and then his state

Empties itself, as doth an inland brook into the main of waters.

### Source

"The Merchant of Venice," by William Shakespeare, Act 5.

### Truth, Concept, or Doctrine Illustrated

Those who brightly light the way to Christ are themselves dim in comparison to Him.

### Two Supporting Scriptures

John 1:6  
2 Pet. 1:19

—Dan Powers

## "WHAT'S THE RUSH?"

### Illustration

Satan once called together all the emissaries of hell. He asked for one volunteer to go to earth to aid in the ruination of men's souls.

One creature stepped forward and offered, "I will go."

Satan asked him, "If I send you, what will you tell the children of men?"

"I will tell the children of men that there is no heaven," he replied.

"They will not believe you," Satan said, "for there is a bit of heaven in every human heart. And in the end, everyone knows that right and good must have the victory."

A darker, more foul demon than the first stepped forward.

Satan asked him, "If I send you, what will you tell the children of men?"

"I will tell them that there is no hell."

"Oh, no," replied Satan, "they will not believe you. For in every human heart is a conscience, an inner voice that testifies that not only will good be triumphant, but that evil will be defeated."

One last creature came forward, this one from the darkest place of all.

"And if I send you," asked Satan, "what would you say to men and women to aid in the destruction of their souls?"

"I will tell them," he answered, "that there is no hurry."

And Satan said, "Go!"

### Source

*Quote* magazine, April 15, 1985. From *Christianity Today*.

### Truth, Concept, or Doctrine Illustrated

People tend to procrastinate when it comes to spiritual matters. It is easy for them to succumb to Satan's subtle deceit.

### Two Supportive Scriptures

2 Cor. 6:1-2  
Gen. 3:4-5

—Joe Colaizzi

## PRISONERS OF SIN

### Illustration

Australia was once a penal colony of Great Britain. With an abundance of convicts and a shortage of horses, prisoners were often used to plow farmland and to turn virgin soil. Out of that national heritage comes this traditional poem:

*They whipped us, they lashed us,  
They drove us through the strand.  
They harnessed us like horses  
To plow Van Dieman's land.*

### Source

*The Restless Years*, by Peter O'Shaughnessy, Graeme Inson, and Russell Ward. Hamlyn House, Sydney, Australia.

### Truth, Concept, or Doctrine Illustrated

The terribleness of bondage to sin.

### Two Supporting Scriptures

Gal. 5:1  
John 8:34

—Chris Northey


## PREACHING WITH AUTHORITY

(Continued from page 53)

people come into the sanctuary, they come dressed up. They have pasted on their faces those customary smiles. Their manners are in place. But behind all that are aches and pains, doubts and depressions. There are tensions in the home, quarrels in the marriage, squabbles with the children—that very Sunday morning on the way to church! When the preacher gets hold of these people, he is to loosen up that crust, pour out the water of life, soak those souls in hope and faith, expecting the Spirit of the living God to plant His fresh seeds for plants to blossom for the Kingdom's sake.

Consequently, persuasive preaching lifts. It gets hold of those in the pits and tells them that they can come into heights again. They can scale the mountains of the Lord. They can make it! It is setting forth the promises of God so that the people understand that they do not have to give up. There is a way out in the will of God. They can know His strength for the day and leave the halls of darkness for that fresh light of Christ. Our people are hungry for it. They are begging for it.

We have our fancy sanctuaries and our well-trained clergy. We have our public-address systems and film projectors and control systems. We have our carpeted rooms and low-hanging lamps. We have our smiling ushers and badged greeters. No problems there. But all of that is nothing if, when it comes time for the message from God, the people start to snore. Then we have lost it, and that is a disgrace. There is no substitute for dynamic preaching.

Jesus Christ was known for His authoritative preaching. May the men and women of God who are under His call go forth likewise. 


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## CHRISTIAN OR AMERICAN?

(Continued from page 17)

sacrifice, to love. It is the feast of love, a day when my obedient sacrifice is transcended by love for the one in need. On that Thursday our Lord not only broke bread but also "laid aside his garments, . . . took a towel, and girded himself . . . and began to wash the disciples' feet" (John 13:4-5). *Maundy* is from the Latin *mandatum*, referring to the new commandment (*mandatum*) given to the disciples on that night, that they "love one another" (John 13:34).


Other valuable days are Ascension Day, Pentecost (Whit-sunday), and Trinity Sunday. These provide opportunity to celebrate and proclaim the promise, the fulfillment, and the meaning of the Holy Spirit's presence. Ascension teaches that when Christ ascended, it was not to leave us but to come nearer to us than our breath, in the person of the Holy Spirit (Eph. 4:10). These special days provide occasions to welcome Father, Son, and Holy Spirit to take permanent and complete residence. We welcome the One who is Love to a place of full authority.

Antiquity is not the only source of Christian days. We ought also to remember those days set aside by the contemporary church to further Christian communion. These are Brotherhood Sunday in February, World Day of Prayer in March, World Communion Sunday in October, and Reformation Sunday near the end of October. Each of these have themes essential for the proclamation of the gospel. 

## THE DOUBT OF THOMAS

(Continued from page 16)

from the events are very apt to imagine that we are placed at a great disadvantage as compared with the disciples of Jesus. So in some respects we are, and especially in this, that faith is more difficult for us than for them. But then we must not forget that, in proportion as faith is difficult, it is meritorious, and precious to the heart. It is a higher attainment to be able to believe without seeing, than to believe because we have seen; and if it cost an effort, the trial of faith but enhances its value. We must remember, further, that we never reach the full blessedness of faith till what we believe shines in the light of its own self-evidence. Think you the disciples were happy men because they had seen their risen Lord and believed? They were far happier when they had attained to such clear insight into the whole mystery of redemption, that proof of this or that particular fact or doctrine was felt to be quite unnecessary.

To that felicity Jesus wished His doubting disciple to aspire; and by contrasting his case with that of those who believe without seeing, He gives us to know that it is attainable for us also. We too may attain the blessedness of a faith raised above all doubt by its own clear insight into divine truth. If we are faithful, we may rise to this from very humble things. We may begin, in our weakness, with being Thomases, clinging eagerly to every spar of external evidence to save ourselves from drowning, and end with a faith amounting almost to sight, rejoicing in Jesus as our Lord and God, with a joy unspeakable and full of glory. 



# SERMON OUTLINES



## WHAT GOD HAS PROMISED

A Series of Three Sermons

### I. THE SOURCE

*Scripture:* 2 Pet. 1:1-11; *text, v. 4.* "By which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust."<sup>a</sup>

*Introduction:* How important that we focus attention on God, and on *what God has promised!* Looking at others, we become critical; looking at a false, tinsel world, we become cynical; looking at ourselves, we become discouraged. However, hearts will be amazed, and greatly *encouraged* as we, "Turn [our] eyes upon Jesus, and look full in that wonderful face!"

Let us then look to these marvelous and mighty agreements of Almighty God with vulnerable, sinful man. Someone has said that there are 30,000 promises in the Bible. Bud Robinson is quoted as saying of them, "You can lay down on them; stretch out on them; and cover yourself with them!" With Peter let us share the SOURCE, the SOLACE, and the SUFFICIENCY of the promises of God. We look first to the SOURCE of the promises. That source is God's giving, "By which have been given to us . . ."

A. How exciting to think of *God's gifts!*

1. The gift of *Scripture:* "All *Scripture is given* by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

2. The gift of a *Savior:* "For God so loved the world that *He gave His only begotten Son*, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

3. The gift of *salvation:* "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is the gift of God*, not of works, lest anyone should boast" (Eph. 2:8-9).

4. The gift of *life itself:* "Nor is He worshiped with men's hands, as though He needed anything, since *He gives to all life, breath, and all things*" (Acts 17:25).

5. The gift of *adequacy for life's needs:*

a. *Wisdom* for the way: "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of *God*, who *gives to all liberally* and without reproach, and it will be given to him" (James 1:5).

b. *Increase* for labor: "So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but *God* who *gives the increase*" (1 Cor. 3:7).

c. *Victory* in the conflict: "But thanks be to *God*, who *gives us the victory* through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 15:57).

d. *Power* in time of weakness: "*He gives power to the weak*, and to those who have no might He increases strength" (Isa. 40:29).

e. *All things for enjoyment*, ". . . trust . . . in the living *God*, who *gives us richly all things to enjoy*" (1 Tim. 6:17).

f. *Eternal life* at last: "For the wages of sin is death, but *the gift of God is eternal life* in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 6:23).

B. Having noted all the many, mighty, and marvelous *gifts of God*, remember that *HE is the SOURCE.*

*Conclusion:* "Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!

'For who has known the mind of the Lord?

Or who has been His counselor?'

'Or who has first given to Him

And it shall be repaid to him?'

For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen" (Rom. 11:33-36).

### II THE SOLACE

*Scripture:* 2 Pet. 1:1-11

*Introduction:* We are, in these meditations, seeking the *encouragement* there is in what God has promised! In the previous study we observed THE SOURCE, the gift of God! We think now of the SOLACE there is, the comfort there is, in these words from God to us. Note Paul's great outburst of praise in this regard, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, *the Father of mercies and God of all comfort*, who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God" (2 Cor. 1:3-4). And the text, 2 Pet. 1:4, ". . . exceedingly great and precious promises . . ." SOLACE!

A. The *solace* of the promise's *greatness*

1. The *cross* not too heavy: ". . . God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted *beyond what you are able . . .*" (1 Cor. 10:13).

2. The *call* will be heard: "Call to Me, and *I will answer* you, and *show you great and mighty things*, which you do not know" (Jer. 33:3).

3. The *constancy* of the Presence: ". . . lo, *I am with you always*, even to the end of the age" (Matt. 28:20).

4. The *coming* of the Holy Spirit: ". . . It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, *I will send Him to you*" (John 16:7).

B. The solace of the *precious promises!* Like:

1. *Revival* for the weary:

"He gives power to the weak,  
And to those who have no might  
He increases strength.  
Even the youths shall faint  
and be weary,  
And the young men shall utterly  
fall,

But *those who wait on the Lord*  
*Shall renew their strength;*  
They shall mount up with wings  
like eagles,  
They shall run and not be weary,  
They shall walk and not faint" (Isa. 40:29-31).

2. *Renewal* for the defeated:

"The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord,  
And He delights in his way.  
*Though he fall,*  
*He shall not be utterly cast down;*

For the Lord upholds him with His hand" (Ps. 37:23-24).

3. *Remembrance* for the aged:

"*Even to your old age, I am He,*  
And even to gray hairs I will carry you!  
I have made, and I will bear;  
Even I will carry, and will deliver you" (Isa. 46:4).

4. *Reassurance* in death:

"*Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,*  
I will fear no evil;  
For You are with me;  
Your rod and Your staff,  
they comfort me" (Ps. 23:4).

*Conclusion:* The King James Version, John 16:7 says, "It is expedient for you

that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you." John 14:18 (also KJV) says, "I will not leave you comfortless [orphans, marg.]: I will come to you." He is the greatest SOLACE (comfort) of all! Sing with Frank Bottome, "Oh, spread the tidings 'round . . . the Comforter has come!"

### III. THE SUFFICIENCY

**Scripture:** 2 Pet. 1:1-11, with special emphasis on the last portion of v. 4, ". . . that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust."

**Introduction:** Let us praise Him and revel in the richness and vastness and might of those revelations that point to *what God has promised!* We have noted that the SOURCE of this richness is *our promise-making God!* We have noted SOLACE in the offer of the Holy Spirit as the Helper, or Comforter. This concluding word will point to SUFFICIENCY, in the mighty crescendo of the anthem, ". . . that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped . . ." Note:

- A. By the promise we *escape* . . .
  1. escape the condemnation
  2. escape the guilt
  3. escape the pollution of an evil world
- B. By the promise we *partake* (of the divine nature)
  1. Which is of great sufficiency
  2. For it carries with it *other partakings* as well. Partaking of the *nature* . . .
    - a. We partake of *His heavy cross*: ". . . rejoice to the extent that you *partake of Christ's sufferings*, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy" (1 Pet. 4:13).
    - b. We partake of *His holiness after chastisement*: "For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them, but He for our profit, that we may be *partakers of His holiness*" (Heb. 12:10).
    - c. We partake of *His hope* in labor: ". . . he who plows should plow in hope, and he who threshes in hope should be *partaker of his hope*" (1 Cor. 9:10).
    - d. We partake of *His heavenly calling*: "Therefore, holy brethren, *partakers of the heavenly calling*, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confes-

sion, Christ Jesus" (Heb. 3:1).

e. We *partake of His home* for His saints: "Giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be *partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light*" (Col. 1:12).

**Conclusion:** Before us lie the vistas of tomorrow. It will have its mountains to climb, and sometimes it will seem that we will never reach the top. It will have its deep valleys; its dark forests; its wilderness times, hot and oppressive. But there will be strength for the mountain climb and guidance through the deepest valley. There will be Light in the darkest forest; there will be cooling and refreshing oases in the hottest, most oppressive desert. All of these *answers* will be so because of the exceeding great and precious promises of God—realized because we have accepted, believed, and acted on WHAT GOD HAS PROMISED!

\*All scriptures, unless otherwise indicated, are from the *New King James Version*. Emphasis in the varied scriptures is mine.

—J. Melton Thomas

### THE POWER IN THE BLOOD AND BAPTISM

Text: Matt. 3:1-6

Baptism is an outward sign of an inward bath in the blood:

- I. FORGIVENESS of sins (Matt. 26: 27-28)
- II. FINDING eternal life (John 6:54)
- III. FLOWING in the stream from Jesus' side (John 19:34)
- IV. FOLDING into God's peace (Col. 1:19-20)
- V. FELLOWSHIPING with Jesus in holiness (1 John 1:7)

### THE GODLY MOTHER

Text: Proverbs 31

She is . . .

- I. TRUSTWORTHY (v. 11) in that she is
  - A. TURNED GODWARD (v. 12)
  - B. THRIFTY (vv. 16, 19, 21-22)
  - C. TIME-CONSCIOUS (v. 18)
- II. TENDER (v. 20)
- III. TOUGH (v. 25)
- IV. TONGUE of wisdom/kindness (v. 26)
- V. TOUCHED by God (vv. 29-31)

### LOOKING AT MOTHER

The face of Jesus shone  
In your kind look at dusk  
When desp'rate, panic-ridden,  
I thought the world to dust  
Had turned upon its space—  
The planet done was dark  
E'en to the empty kingdom's trace  
Of my discarded heart.

I peered into your eyes  
Unknowing first I saw  
Except to realize  
That on my knees I'd crawl  
To catch another glance  
Of that Man's love there shone  
On my imploring, crippled stance  
That thought its journey'd run.

—GS

### A SPIRITUAL "HAS BEEN"

Scripture: Luke 15:11-32

**Introduction:** This is the only parable Jesus ever told that was directly aimed at backsliders. It is a story for spiritual has-beens. There are four things that stand out in this young man's life.

I. *He sent himself off.* This young man left his father on his own accord. When people backslide they are never driven, they leave on their own. There are three reasons why people backslide.

A. The blessing of the heart goes out. It becomes a common thing.

B. They never go on to be sanctified and make Jesus Lord.

C. They allow the ugly attitudes of others to stand between them and the Savior.

II. *He let himself down.* When people walk away from God, the next step they take is down, they lower themselves down into sin. God never drops us back into sin, we lower ourselves.

III. *He picked himself up.* If a backslider is ever to get back to God, he must pick himself up.

IV. *He brought himself back.* Once he has picked himself up, he must bring himself back to where he left God.

**Conclusion:** When it was the lost sheep, the shepherd went after him; when it was the lost coin, the lady went looking for it; but when it is the lost son, he knows how he got away and he must humble himself and come back. When he comes back, the Father will be waiting with open arms.

—Darrell Brown  
Dalhart, Tex. 



# TODAY'S BOOKS for TODAY'S PREACHER

## **MORE THAN SYMBOL: 30 SERMON IDEAS FOR CELEBRATING THE LORD'S SUPPER**

By Eli Landrum, Jr., Broadman Press,  
\$3.95 (BA080-542-2304).

It's obviously Communion Sunday. The sacramental elements are at the center of the sanctuary, covered with a bright white cloth. But how is the speaker possibly going to tie the Lord's Supper in with his message? It certainly doesn't seem to be heading in that direction!

Anyone who has spent time on the pew-side of the pulpit has experienced that scenario at one time or another. Because you have, you can appreciate Eli Landrum, Jr.'s, assertion that "the [Lord's] supper should be the center of a worship period, not tacked on to the end . . . as an afterthought."

*More than Symbol* is a collection of 30 short sermon ideas for Communion services. By using contemporary illustrations and insights, Landrum strips the sacraments of some of their mystery, allowing the layman to more fully grasp its significance in his own spiritual life.

Whether or not these sermon ideas appeal to any one pastor, this book can be a significant model for developing meaningful Communion service messages.

—David Singer

## **THE COVENANTS OF PROMISE: A THEOLOGY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT COVENANTS**

By Thomas Edward McComiskey, Baker Book House, 1985, \$10.95 (BA080-106-1830).

This book presents a novel approach to the study of the biblical concept of covenant. The basic thesis is that there is a bicovenantal structure in Scripture: (1) the promise covenant made to Abraham is primary and continues in force eternally; and (2) the administrative covenants of circumcision, the law, and the new covenant as merely historical expressions administering the original

promise and having aspects of obedience. This classification departs from the usual categories of promissory and obligatory covenants, which are of equal importance, and both being necessary to a full-orbed understanding of biblical covenant.

This bicovenantal structure is stated early in the book, but is not defined. The reader must glean the definition from further reading of the book, and must go back to reread in order to gain understanding. The same is true with the meaning of administrative covenants. There is a lack of clarity in the table of contents as it does not indicate any progression of thought. Both the title and subtitle are somewhat misleading. The author goes beyond covenants of promise; and the theology is not restricted to the Old Testament.

There is a great deal of good to be gained from this work. McComiskey does well in demonstrating the continuity of God's purpose in different historical expressions of covenant. The appendixes following the second chapter on "The Law in the Teaching of Jesus" and "The Law in the Teaching of Paul" contain excellent exegetical studies on crucial New Testament passages.

McComiskey's position is undoubtedly influenced by his Reformed theology. He equates biblical covenant with the traditional expression of Reformed theology as covenant theology. This amounts to saying that a term in the discipline of biblical studies is the same thing as that term in the discipline of systematic theology. This is certain to bring a protest from readers who do not share in the Reformed tradition of systematic theology.

—Alvin S. Lawhead

## **THE BIBLE AND I**

By E. M. Blaiklock, Bethany House Publishers, 128 pp., paper, \$3.95 (BA087-123-2987).

"A rough path is sometimes worth the treading if, in so doing, we can tread down the brambles in the path of another." So writes author E. M. Blaiklock

concerning some of his life experiences. It could also be said of his book. Blaiklock is a scholar and teacher of classical literature. This obviously colors the tone and texture of his writing. But buried in the classical style, he conveys a message that the evangelical church needs to hear. He traces his experiences and the influence of his study as it relates to his understanding of the Bible. He grapples with the liberalism of the '20s, teaches the wisdom of John from the Greek text, and explores the personalities of Luke, Paul, and the Psalmists. He concludes that the Bible can stand every test of its validity and emerge as the revealed Word of God.

This book will bless some and bore others. Those who persevere to the final chapter will find rich inspiration and refreshing insight to the eye of faith. Those nuggets will be worth sharing to "tread down the brambles in the path of another."

—Jim Sukraw

## **DECISION MAKING AND THE WILL OF GOD: A BIBLICAL ALTERNATIVE TO THE TRADITIONAL VIEW**

By Garry Friesen and J. Robin Maxson, Multnomah Press, 1984, \$8.95 (BA088-070-0246).

All books about God's will and how to find it say the same thing—except this one. Friesen challenges the traditional view of finding God's will.

Have we been guilty over the years of setting aside good, honest exegesis for the sake of tradition and misguided teachings? Does the Bible teach that there is an individual will or plan for each person? If so, how can it be found? Why does it take some people such a long time to discover this will? These and other questions are answered with a strong commitment to the authority of Scripture.

You may not agree with all that he says. *But he will make you think and search the Scriptures.*

Beg, borrow, or buy a copy of this excellent book and see for yourself.

—Gary Skagerberg





# NEW TESTAMENT WORD STUDIES

by Ralph Earle

## WORLD

In the King James Version of the New Testament there are three Greek words that are translated as "world." The first is *aion*, which occurs 128 times. It is translated (in the KJV) 71 times as "ever," 38 times as "world," and only twice as "age" and twice as "eternal." The second is *cosmos*, which occurs 187 times. It is always rendered "world," except in 1 Pet. 3:3 ("adorning"). The third is *oikoumene*. Occurring 15 times, it is translated "world" 14 times and "earth" once (Luke 21:26). We should perhaps add that *ge* (pronounced "gay") is translated "world" once in the KJV (Rev. 13:3), out of 252 times it occurs. It really means "earth" (188 times), "land" (42 times), or "ground" (18 times).

In the first installment of this article we should like to discuss the very significant word *aion*. Then, in the second installment we plan to look at *cosmos* and *oikoumene*.

In ancient Greek literature *aion* first meant "life," then "lifetime," "age," "space of time," and finally (from Plato on) "eternity." Plato thought of *aion* as timeless, ideal eternity. This carries over into the New Testament. In Rom. 16:26 Paul speaks of "the eternal God" (*ho aionios theos*), an expression already found in the Septuagint Old Testament (Gen. 21:33; Isa. 26:4; 40:28).

In Kittel's *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* Sasse writes:

The concepts of time and eternity merge in the formulae in which *aion* is linked with a preposition to indicate an indefinite past or future, e.g., *ap'aionos* (Lk. 1:70; Acts 3:21; 15:18) and *ek tou aionos* (Jn. 9:32) in the sense of

"from the ancient past" or "from eternity," or *eis aiona* (Jude 13) and *eis ton aiona* 27 times, especially common in John (e.g., 4:14) in the sense of "for ever," or "to all eternity" (1:198).

We get our word *aeon* from the Latin form of *aion*. And we think of aeons as "ages." It would seem that this is the basic idea of the Greek word. Sasse writes: "In the NT the present and future aeons are mentioned in the Synoptic Gospels, in the Pauline writings, and in Hebrews" (TDNT, 1:205). Interestingly, we find in Mark 10:30 a reference to "this time" (*kairos*) and "the coming aeon" (*aion*). The latter, of course, is eternity. So *aion* expresses both time and the timeless.

In Gal. 1:4 Paul speaks of "the present evil age" (*aion*). Here the KJV has "this present evil world." This is a very evil age, but the age to come, eternity, will have no evil for those who spend it in heaven.

This leads us to another observation by Sasse. He claims: "The sense of 'time or course of the world' can easily pass over into that of the 'world' itself, so that *aion* approximates closely to *cosmos*." He goes on to say that in Matt. 13:22 and Mark 4:19 "the phrase *hai merimnai tou aionos* means 'the cares of the world'" (TDNT, 1:203). But we prefer: "the worries of this life" (NIV).


We must confess that we agree more fully on this point with J. H. Thayer's discussion of *aion* in his *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*. He would explain the above Greek phrase as "the anxieties for the things of this age." He writes:

As the Jews distinguished . . . the time before the Messiah, and . . . the time after the advent of the Messiah . . . so most of the NT writers distinguish *ho aion houtos*, "this age" . . . , the time before the appointed return or truly Messianic advent of Christ (i.e. the *parousia* . . .), the period of instability, weakness, impiety, wickedness, calamity, misery—and *aion mellon* "the future age" . . . i.e. the age after the return of Christ in majesty, the period of the consummate establishment of the divine kingdom and all its blessings (p. 19).

It is interesting to note that R. C. Trench, in his famous *Synonyms of the New Testament*, criticizes the KJV for its sparse use of "age." He writes: "It may be a question whether we might not have made more use of 'age' in our Version" (p. 213). He goes on to say:

One must regret that, by this or some other device, our Translators did not mark the difference between *cosmos* (= mundus), the world contemplated under aspects of space, and *aion* (= seculum), the same contemplated under aspects of time (pp. 213-14).

It seems to us that the distinction between *cosmos* and *aion* should appear in English. The NIV uses "age" most frequently as the translation of *aion*.

We might append one brief note. In our English versions "forever and ever" usually translates *eis tous aionas ton aionon*—"to the ages of the ages." This compound expression is especially prominent in Paul's Epistles (4 times) and in Revelation (12 times). 



# THE ARK ROCKER

## Kudo

**S**merdly is fit to be tied. He has just learned that the Nazarenes have elected to their general superintendency a man without an honorary doctorate—for the first time in their history. And it's quite beside the point for old Smerd that the "new man" has a genuine Ph.D. or that the other "new man" elected at the same convention does sport an honorary (richly deserved).

What Smerd fears is a general (no pun intended) devaluation of the honorary—just on the eve of his nomination to receive one. And it doesn't seem quite fair. After all, he had written the recommendation for an earlier recipient and is now getting his reward for doing so. Tit for tat and all that. But now this happens—one doesn't need one of those things to gain favorable attention, or even top position any more.

Aside from the personal dimension, Smerdly wonders just how dark a shadow this will cast on the decisions of those who have usually awarded honoraries. It did give them a chance to exercise their gift of extraordinary perception in discovering depths of character and breadth of accomplishment not always discernible to the naked (pardon the expression) eye of the ordinary grass roots bloke. That gift'll be suspect hereafter.

And, says he, recommendations for honoraries afford a necessary, socially acceptable outlet for sanctified imagination. He rather prides himself, sanctifiedly so, he says, on the skill with which he transformed what appeared to the untrained eye to be rather ordinary activities into Herculean labors and into a chain of ever grander victories over less tractable obstacles; to say nothing of the alchemy of making a pleasant, "good ol' boy" into a model of angelic virtue. And, says he, even if the publically read citation was a bit on the "politically serviceable" side, and not quite guileless, "It served the greater ends of the church, for we need to recognize authority and support it. And we need models to point to."

But surely we can be clever enough to serve the purposes that Smerdly suggests, insofar as they are right, in other ways. Of course, there are those who deserve any and every honor that the people of God can give them. There are those, in fact, who do us more honor in

receiving our kudos than we can do in our giving them. We'll stay open to recognizing these folk—grandly.

In fact, you know, now may be the time (permit my boldness to suggest) for the Nazarenes to lead us all in demonstrating just how holiness folk can honor each other in a spirit of sanctified celebration. Instead of reading off puffery that should have everyone on the platform crossing his fingers and blushing because of its "historical creativity," they could read citations that bring blushes for their seeming invasions of privacy, because the data cited came of a resolute but quiet abandonment to the perfect love of God and neighbor that was designed to be exercised without public notice. Such strategies do seem to have Bible approval, don't they?

Think of the possibilities! Commencement day at Old Holiness College: bright blue sky, suave air, a large celebrative crowd, giddy graduating seniors, proud faculty. Now comes the citation, and it's so tied to Christlikeness that no one thinks of ego-building. The recipient fidgets abashedly, for he or she has been "caught out" on matters that he or she considers to be means of service, not steps to honors. And then the crowd, spontaneously, stands and sings "Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow."

Well, there are places prepared to award Smerdly his honorary. And we'll take it in good part and call him "Doctor" or "Senator" or "Colonel" or "Grand Whoopee" or whatever, for the rest of his days. Better yet, we'll delight to praise him for the good that he will assuredly do.

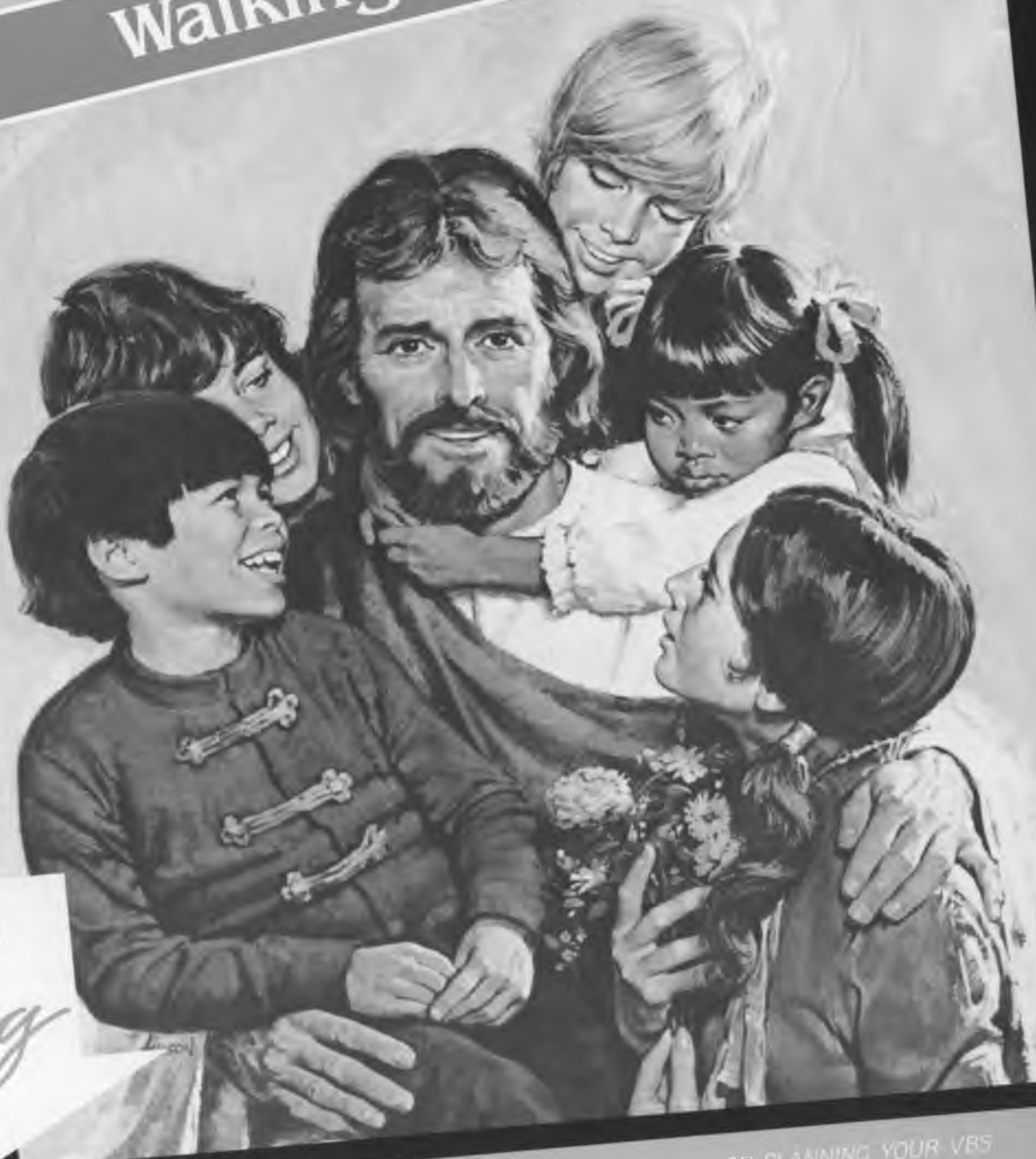
Then we'll rejoice even more for and with the person who really did merit the title, even if the citation was a bit override and even if real history did take a bit of con-torting.

But what could we do, what would we do, with an authentic holiness movement kudo—one that clearly says, "Here's what we really mean by perfect love"? We need an honorary that we can drape over a genuine human being that has about every inch of it the aura of the Lordly Servant and the Servant Lord. Let it be from those whose theology teaches them to give the very best.

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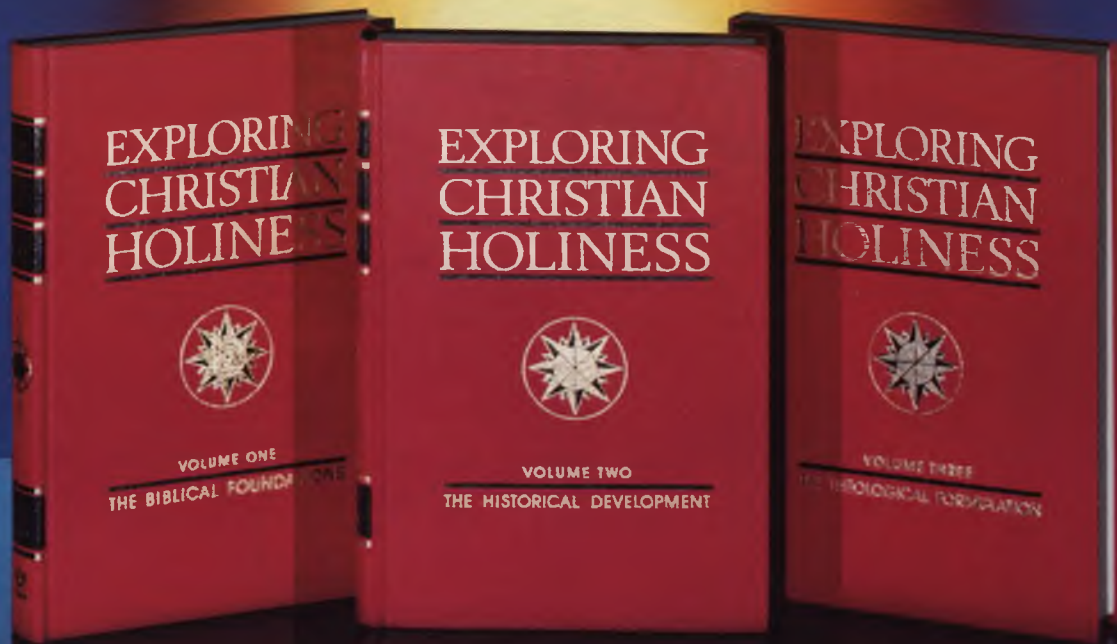
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