

SEPTEMBER, OCTOBER, NOVEMBER 1987

# THE PREACHER'S MAGAZINE



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Jesus is truly our friend  
when He is also our critic.  
We must be willing to listen  
to this other side of Him  
which seeks to be brutally  
frank with us, that the best  
in us may be challenged and  
our witness enhanced.

—C. S. Calian

# We Get Letters

## FOUND MONEY ISSUE HELPFUL

Thank you for the March-April-May 1987 issue. I have felt for a long time that we really needed advice on money matters for ministers. Each article is very informative, and I trust will be heeded.

—(Rev.) Rose M. Hoffman  
Schuylkill Haven, Pa.

## BETTER LATE THAN NEVER

I want to congratulate you on a very fine issue of the *Preacher's Magazine* featuring "The Minister's Money." It was comprehensive and well done. I just wish it had been written 20 years earlier.

In 1985 I retired from the pastoral ministry after 42 years of consecutive service. The last 15 years of that time were the only years of preparation for that event. The TSA purchased through the church, and the investment in a home enabled me to retire with some financial confidence.

The emphasis given to this area of need by Pensions and Benefits Services is heartening indeed.

—Marlyn W. Anderson  
Salem, Oreg.

## SOLID ADVICE AND COMIC RELIEF

I was a banker before becoming a pastor. Therefore, I read with interest the issue on "The Minister's Money." Some good stuff in there. Some other stuff, too! I found solid investment advice, keen insight into perennial financial woes, and even a bit of comedy.

I was especially amused by D. Martin Butler's remark that we pastors get "a free house, and our utilities paid for us." Imagine my chuckle when I assessed the potential for an equity loan on my "free" house!

A real belly roll erupted over William C. Miller's suggestion that the *Wall Street Journal* might be a good source of investment stratagem for pastors. I still take the *Journal* (a holdover from my banking days), but I scarcely profit from its technical jargon any longer. Its value to me these days is a blend of memorabilia and editorial review. For most pastors, the *Wall Street Journal* is to investments as Calvin is to Bresee—not much in common!

I will say one thing. The average pastor out here in the field is doing an admirable job of tying general, district, local, and parsonage budgets together with a mighty thin string! I have an idea you fellas would get a bit more than chuckles if you solicited articles from the trading floor. It really is funny how most pastors do as well as they do. Of course, it helps a lot when you get a free house!

—Dennis D. Frey  
Champaign, Ill.

## IN DEFENSE OF EARLE

I am deeply disappointed in Brother Don Jernigan and his indictment against Dr. Ralph Earle ("We Get Letters,"

DJF 1986-87). It was certainly a far cry from "speaking the truth in love," which becomes holiness people.

Fifty years in the church gives no one the right to deny Dr. Earle (or anyone else) an opinion. One wonders how often the holiness movement has been crippled by such unloving criticism, narrowness, and dogmatism on nonessentials.

About the cartoon over which Dr. Jernigan was so upset, I always understood such cartoons function as a way for us to laugh at ourselves and to stimulate fresh thought. We *do* need to update our prayer language. Whether or not Dr. Jernigan has heard anyone pray like that, many of the rest of us certainly have! There is nothing magical about using "thees" and "thous."

Let me remind Dr. Jernigan that even though the KJV is 400 years old, it was not widely accepted until the 1800s. Let's not make the mistake of clinging to the King James as the Catholics did their Latin. We are evangelizing people of the 1980s, not of 1611. How will we make account to God if we read His Word to people who still wind up in hell because we read it in a language they don't understand?

—R. Mark Montgomery  
Milan, Ill.

## WHY THE CONTROVERSY?

I want to comment on the letter in the DJF 1986-87 issue, addressing Dr. Earle's word study and a cartoon, both in an earlier issue.

It is amazing that there is so much controversy surrounding new translations and so much blind defense of the KJV. The tone of Jernigan's letter conjurs up visions of the "we've-always-done-it-this-way-so-why-change?" mentality. As a student of Dr. Earle's, I came to appreciate his deep commitment to truth through sound biblical scholarship. I didn't always agree with him, but I believe that many of his well-researched points were and are valid. I do remember him saying that some 400 words in the KJV have totally different meanings today than they did in 1611. If that is the case, why can't we give up a sacred cow—or at least allow other translations to help us better understand God's Word?

I do not advocate abolishment of the KJV. I use it often. I do, however, appeal to the KJV advocates to loosen up and allow the other translations their due. Yes, the NIV—or any other translation—may lose its impact after some years, but take a look at how rapidly our society and our language have changed in the last 100 years. When it's time for a more up-to-date translation, I plan to support it as well—if I'm still around!

As for the cartoon, if the shoe fits, wear it. There are too many preachers whose language and voices *do* change radically when they step into the pulpit. True, preaching and public prayer are serious business. But our people need and desire a clear, concise, and understandable delivery.

—David R. Becker  
Oakes, N.Dak.

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# THE PREACHER'S MAGAZINE

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# THE WESLEYAN WAY TO SPIRITUAL FORMATION

by Wesley Tracy

I have never much liked the term *discipling*. Everyone hears the term differently. To some it is a strategy for follow-up. Others see it as making disciples. Some see it as certain mechanical functions applied like a mustard plaster to new converts. A few treat it as indoctrination aimed at producing heel-clicking, regimented devotees. Some regard discipling as exercises to help the new Christian become established in the faith. Others see it as a process aimed at assisting in the task of spiritual formation. I prefer the latter.

In this piece I want to look at discipling through spiritual formation eyes. By spiritual formation I mean that dynamic process through which Jesus Christ becomes the shaping power of one's life. The indwelling Christ graciously restores the image of God to one's being, at all levels of personhood, forming Christ in us and enabling the person to more and more experience and express, in both being and doing, Christ's Spirit. Spiritual formation is received through faith nurtured in devotion, fellowship, and worship, and appropriated through commitment, discipline, and self-forgetful service.

It has been my privilege recently to intensively study John Wesley's ideas about spiritual formation. I began by reading many of the works on the spiritual life that John Wesley himself read and reprinted for the use of his people. I spent many profitable hours in *A Christian Library*, a set of collected works on the spiritual life first published by John Wesley in 50 volumes (1749-55). This collection contains works from patristic,

Spanish, French, German, Anglican, Puritan, and even American spirituality.

Following that part of the study I read some 2,850 of Wesley's letters. Since most of the letters are not included in the standard sets of Wesley's *Works*, which I had studied for years, I found the letters, beginning with the eight volumes of Telford's two editions of the *Letters*, very helpful. I created my own (nonexhaustive) concordance of the letters noting some 150 spiritual formation topics therein.

I then collected the information on the principle sources, practices, and themes and wrote a 550-page manuscript called "The Wesleyan Way to Spiritual Formation." That document became the textbook for a seminar I led at Nazarene Theological Seminary.

In studying Wesley's practice of discipling and spiritual formation I discovered

## THESE CHARACTERISTICS

In the letters we see Wesley operating as a spiritual guide. He developed an ongoing correspondence with many new Christians. Typically the correspondence continued over many years. For example, Wesley's correspondence with Ann Bolton began when Ann, a new Christian and a young woman, was about to marry "the wrong man." Wesley wrote Ann some 130 letters during the next 29 years. In the letters we see Wesley guiding her from new faith, through temptations, much suffering, to entire sanctification and into outstanding Christian service.

Certain characteristics typified Wesley's spiritual guidance.

### 1. Affection

Wesley wrote to his people with simple, unabashed affection. "Our Lord . . . has given us to each other, that we may strengthen each other's hands in Him,"<sup>1</sup> Wesley wrote to William Holland. "I have always loved you since I knew you," Wesley wrote to Mrs. Knapp, "but lately more than ever because I believe you are more devoted to God and more athirst for His whole image."<sup>2</sup> "You are exceeding near and dear to me," he wrote to Ann Bolton.<sup>3</sup> Wesley's letters abound with hundreds of expressions of deep affection not unlike those that Paul expressed to the Thessalonians. "With such yearning love we chose to impart to you not only the gospel of God but our very selves, so dear had you become to us" (1 Thess. 2:8, NEB).

### 2. Candid Openness

Wesley and his correspondents communicated with remarkable openness. Wesley believed that "when we love one another, there is no need of either disguise or reserve."<sup>4</sup> For Wesley such openness was the best proof of friendship.<sup>5</sup> Typical of Wesley's counsel on the subject was his advice to Elizabeth Ritchie, "It is of use to have a friend to whom you can pour out your heart without disguise or reserve."<sup>6</sup>

### 3. Commendation and Encouragement

Wesley, the spiritual guide, was quick to commend his people for any sort of progress in spiritual formation. He was no gushy flatterer, but he could find something commendable in almost everyone to whom he wrote.

#### 4. Accountability

Wesley strongly believed that Christians were to hold each other spiritually accountable. When Ann Bolton failed to respond to several of Wesley's searching letters, he wrote demanding "a particular account of your inward and outward health."<sup>7</sup> After a few weeks Wesley wrote again, "Nancy, Nancy! What is the matter? . . . You give me concern. I have many fears concerning you. Tell me without delay how your soul prospers."<sup>8</sup>

The study of the letters also turned up

#### THESE PARADIGMS

Wesley's discussion of progress in spiritual formation included such paradigms as the natural, legal, and evangelical stages, the almost and the altogether Christian, the faith of a servant—the faith of a child, and the babe, young man, and father categories borrowed from St. John. Behind all of these paradigms there stood the master paradigm based on the *ordo salutis*. It comprehends all the briefer schemata named above and is a paradigm of grace from beginning to end: atoning grace, prevenient grace, justifying grace, sanctifying grace, grace for growth in perfection, and glorification. A benefit of being aware of the "stageness" of each element in the paradigm helps us avoid plucking one element from the paradigm and making of it a theological provincialism. For example, one might extract sanctifying grace from the paradigm and elevate it above the other elements, cut it off from its context and try to make it function independently. This has to do with the discussions we used to have about crisis and process in sanctification. Processively sanctification fits into a lifelong paradigm, existentially it is a crisis experience. We must lose neither aspect.

My study of the letters also brought to the foreground

#### THESE STRUCTURES

Wisely, Wesley planned for discipling structures that would enhance spiritual formation. George Whitefield, for example, didn't, and in his old age he commended Wesley's discipling plan while moaning that his own people were "a rope of sand." Wesley's societies, classes, and bands have been the subject of various writings by this author and many others. Therefore they will not

be described in detail here. Let it simply be noted that they were structures for discipling and spiritual formation. Every Methodist was required to be a member of a class—a group of 12 persons who met weekly. Further, one might become a member of a four- or five-person band that met weekly for in-depth sharing and mutual assistance in Christian living.

These organizations Wesley regarded as utterly essential, for no one, he believed, could live the Christian life alone. Mary Stokes was urged, "Keep close to your class, your band . . . they have the words of eternal life."<sup>9</sup> In a time of fading faith, Ann Bolton was counseled, "From the time you omitted your class or band you grieved the Holy Spirit . . . begin again without delay. The day after you receive this go and meet a class or band. Sick or well, go! If you cannot speak a word, go . . ."<sup>10</sup>

In the letters, another practice beyond the famous class and band structures comes to the fore. We see that Wesley promoted a sort of one-on-one mutual spiritual direction. He encouraged everyone from his banker, Ebenezer Blackwell, to his niece, Sarah Wesley, to find a soul friend or a "twin soul" with whom they could talk and pray without reserve. For example, Wesley five times in his correspondence with Dorothy Furdy referred her to individual spiritual friends. In June of 1757 he referred her to "a poor, queer old woman in Bristol . . . with whom it might do you good to talk . . . Her name is Elizabeth Edgecomb."<sup>11</sup> A few months later he put her in touch with Sarah Crosby, with the hope she would be "a blessing to your soul" and "again bring the promise of holiness near."<sup>12</sup> In 1759 Dorothy was urged to talk with Cornelius Bastable, "an uncommon monument of the power of grace."<sup>13</sup> Later Wesley advised her to "converse frequently as well as freely with Miss Johnson."<sup>14</sup> Still later Dorothy was commended for conversing with "Miss Ritchie . . . a precious soul." Dorothy is to "do her all the good you can, and incite her to exert all her talents."<sup>15</sup>

Scores of such references are found in the letters. Who can measure the positive effect of this loving mutual spiritual guidance that apparently went far beyond typical or professional care? The societies, classes, and bands along with person-to-person care produced deep mutual loyalties, unusual understanding, constant encouragement and comfort, and ongoing accountability among these "companions on the way."

The study also revealed John Wesley's emphasis on

#### THESE PRACTICES

##### 1. Prayer

As one would expect, Wesley in the letters continually pointed persons to prayer as "the grand means of drawing near to God."<sup>16</sup> Regular private prayer was constantly recommended. Using written prayers in private devotion, along with extemporary praying, enabled the believer to pray properly even in times of weariness, suffering, or depression.

The abuse of private prayer that Wesley warned against most was the flights of whimsey he called mystical prayer. Wesley insisted that prayer be policed by reason and the Scripture. Meditation was not to be subjective fantasy but reflection on the Scriptures. John Wesley would despise the sort of thing touted by a one-time professor at Vanderbilt in a recent book on prayer. The author recommends the repetition of nonsense syllables so one can get out of his head and touch God. This is the opposite of the Wesleyan way of prayer.

Wesley urged his people to make life a continual prayer, to live every moment in an attitude of prayer. He wanted them, even while they were hard at work in the mills and the mines, to have a constant consciousness of God's presence. He reprinted de Renty's experience and the writings of Brother Lawrence on practicing the presence of God.

Wesley urged group prayer as well. Usually in the form of one-hour prayer meetings in the homes in various parts of the town. Persons were to pray one at a time. Prayer sessions could be punctuated with brief "exhortations."

##### 2. Bible Study

Study of the Bible was to accompany prayer. The Bible was to be studied with the aid of Wesley's *Explanatory Notes* on the Old and New Testaments or Matthew Henry's commentary. Wesley recommended no less than two hours per day in Bible study and prayer. Preachers were expected to put six hours per day in prayer, study, and reading.

##### 3. Devotional Reading

Wesley, in his letters, was constantly referring believers to various printed works. Among the most recommended were *The Christian's Pattern* (Wesley's edition of *The Imitation of Christ*), the *Arminian Magazine*, *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*, *Law's Works*, and the biographies of Jean Baptiste de  
(Continued on p. 47)

# DISCIPLING THROUGH THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

by Lyle B. Pointer

*Pastor, First Church of the Nazarene, Boise, Idaho*

I'm not going back to that Sunday School class! It's ridiculous! I simply don't believe that God answers prayer the way those people were talking about."

Robert had attended a young adult Sunday School class where one of the class members spoke of a specific answer to prayer. Robert was convinced that God worked only in generalities. He could not accept the idea that God would become involved in the specifics of a Christian's life. The praises of the young adults in response to this answer to prayer overwhelmed him.

Robert quit attending that Sunday School class and was encouraged to try another one. He tried a class made up of an older age-group, but he didn't stay there long either. God was undermining some of the basic assumptions Robert firmly believed. Later, when a personal evangelism team visited in his home, he reacted negatively to their presentation of the gospel.

God was at work. Robert was experiencing the Holy Spirit's conviction. His church attendance, though sporadic, was continuous.

The pastor invited him to join a discipling group. Eight men joined the pastor in studying the Book of Nehemiah. Some of the time during these weekly meetings was spent merely in fellowship. Robert told the group about a unique exploration trip he had taken with a group of mountain climbers. The men thoroughly enjoyed hearing of his unusual experiences.

One purpose of this discipling group was to become

involved in a task. The task agreed upon was to help a distant home mission church. To reach it, the men traveled together for three hours. Then they worked on a building together—hammering nails and cutting lumber. They encouraged the local pastor and the volunteer laborers from that vicinity.

A special bonding took place among the men in that Bible study; love and an acceptance that Robert had never experienced before captured his heart. For the



Lyle B. Pointer





The Downstairs Attic

first time in his life he was praying aloud. He was sharing insights from God's Word when formerly he had been silent.

Robert began to testify to God's goodness in his own life; he began to attend the church services consistently; his involvement in his Sunday School class showed that he had broken over into new spiritual life.

*Why discipling?* Jesus knew if Christianity was ever to become a "people movement," He would have to train men to be spiritual leaders. Jesus looked at the people of His day and saw them as a grainfield ready to be reaped. But He also noticed the shortage of workers. He laid down a principle for all who would follow Him: pray for workers. Jesus saw prayer as a spiritual means by which God enables us to do what we cannot do otherwise. Jesus therefore spent all night in prayer before He chose the disciples.

If ever a lost world is to be led to Christ, we must multiply the number of persons who know how to touch the lives of people with the good news of Jesus Christ. The church dares not lose its purpose of deploying people in ministry. Discipling is the primary method of equipping leaders for ministry.

**What is discipling?**

Discipling is a process—a process that teaches people to be Christlike, to gain confidence in ministry, to acquire skills in serving, and to reproduce spiritual life in others. *Discipling produces behavioral change.* Christ's method and His message centers on people. He helped them to understand both themselves and what they were to do. He affirmed their positive character qualities.

Jesus expected certain results from the men He trained. Though He never expected anyone to do what he was not capable of, neither would He be satisfied when a person fell short of his capabilities.

*Jesus taught concrete concepts.* He believed that certain information could be life-transforming. Matters of priority were addressed again and again, such as when Jesus said to seek the Kingdom first. Amazingly, Jesus said that there were some who could not become His

disciples. Those who would not leave family, or the one who refused to bear his own cross, or he who would not let go of material things (Luke 14:25-33). Christ required the supreme place in our affections. Human relationships must recede. Self-love must also die.

*Jesus taught His disciples through relational experiences.* He made sure His disciples were party to His encounters with unbelievers. He even exposed them to the hypocritical church. He did not protect them or seclude them. He refused to build fences to keep His disciples from the realities of conflict. He took His disciples everywhere. They observed His interactions with people.

Jesus' relationship with His disciples was a mixture of scolding and compliments. He called them "men of little faith." On the other hand, He commended Peter for correctly discerning who He was. He seemed to know when to prod and when to praise. Jesus ministered to the whole person. He gave attention to the disciple's emotional well-being. He was sensitive to their fears. He also challenged them to noble purposes.

The results of this close relationship were evident in their readiness to assume and to execute His command to make disciples of every person. Three years of observing Jesus at work in the various circumstances of life had prepared them. They could tackle the tasks that He had assigned to them.

Jesus transferred leadership responsibility to the disciples. He did not delegate the whole assignment to them in a short time. Rather He prepared them little by little. He gave them small tasks to do. They became His advance men for the crusades He undertook. He had them secure a colt for Him, prepare the parade route, and recruit the crowd for the Triumphal Entry. Jesus' close association with Peter, James, and John indicated His intent to shift the load of leadership responsibility.

Jesus allowed His men to fail as well as to succeed. When He was on the Mount of Transfiguration, the nine disciples remaining in the valley were unable to heal a troubled boy. He helped them learn from their mistake,

teaching them to assume greater spiritual responsibility.

Jesus gradually turned over the reins of leadership, reminding the disciples of their purpose. The summation of their tasks: to make disciples by baptizing, and teaching all people. The men who followed Jesus were now prepared and confident. He left them to finish the job—bringing men to God.

How to implement discipling principles?

Discipling consists of a purposeful, training relationship culminating in the development of a Christian worker. Jesus' model of calling 12 men, sharing His life, exemplifying holy living, delegating responsibility, and commissioning laborers to minister can be captured through adult Sunday School classes.

The decline of Sunday School attendance and of the impact of the Sunday School class experience has given rise to the need and popularity of the modern discipling movement. Sunday School has become an old wine-skin.

A minister once asked me, "What is the divine purpose of Sunday School?" The Sunday School's objectives are no longer self-evident. His primary objectives of evangelism and leadership development have been forsaken. Nurture has typically replaced these essential purposes in today's adult classes.

What is the divine purpose of Sunday School? At its best, Sunday School is a fellowship experience, God's people focus on applying His Word to daily living, so that class members can in turn instruct others in God's ways.

The purposes of Sunday School and of discipleship should be identical. Both the Sunday School and discipleship ought to work toward changing behavior in the believer. Both ministries should aim toward equipping the believer for service.

Now a difficulty arises. It is often easier to create a new structure (discipling) than to revamp an existing one (Sunday School). Sunday School has evolved into a scaled-down liberal arts classroom. Information giving, rather than behavior modification, typifies it. The emphasis is now on curricula, rather than upon how God's Word becomes flesh in our day. "Head knowledge" has replaced life-action. Sunday School teachers are teaching the Bible instead of teaching people.

Recently, an adult teacher delivered a superb lecture. His research was obvious and thorough. He presented new information. The Sunday School class listened with interest. His topic: angels.

Now, what earthly good are angels? That question wasn't answered. No practical application was made. No behavioral change was required. Information alone was presented.

Cognitive teaching is nonthreatening. It asks for no self-disclosure; no response is sought. Scholars flourish, but disciples are stillborn.

The expectation is that every Sunday School class is made up of students. Most Sunday School attenders are not scholars. The majority of the people in Sunday School do not easily convert principles into practice. The person who is most apt in applying concepts to changed behavior is probably the one teaching.

An application-oriented teacher can model Christian values, attitudes, and behavior. He can lead others into new levels of Christian experience.

Although many Sunday School teachers are capable of producing disciples, most do not. The examples are too few for teachers to follow.

How does a pastor overcome this obstacle?

*First suggestion:* Start a new class with the pastor as teacher and with discipling its stated purpose.

*Second suggestion:* Offer to substitute teach an existing class for 6 to 13 weeks. Do this once or twice a year. (Most teachers would enjoy a sabbatical.) After two or three years, teachers and class members should be disciplined.

*Third suggestion:* Train two or three persons in a Bible study fellowship setting until they are ready to teach a Sunday School class in the same manner in which they have just participated.

The Sunday School can serve as a workshop for disciple-making, just as Jesus' association with the Twelve produced life-changing behavior.

Since behavioral and ethical changes are expected, the Sunday School teacher or class leader will spend time with individual class members. One teacher said that he was spending 10 hours a week preparing his lessons. A wise church leader suggested that he cut his preparation time in half and spend the other 5 hours with individuals from his class. The teacher took the advice. The class immediately began to grow both spiritually and numerically. People discovered that they were cared for as persons. The focus of Sunday School teaching has to be caring, rather than preparing.

Discipling inside and outside the classroom consists of Christians knowing each other as persons and friends. The conversations common to friends will also be flavored with accounts of God's involvement in our lives. As friends we will ask for prayer. Interaction with friends—asking questions, suggesting scriptural priorities, affirming God's faithfulness—develops a heightened openness and thus obedience to God.

These strong friendships should be developed with a certain task in mind. Much discipling falls short of scriptural discipleship because it has no purpose beyond fellowship.

When pastors and teachers understand what people are feeling, needing, and expecting, we can modify those values, emotions, and felt needs to conform to the holy life advocated in the Bible. Biblical concepts presented apart from life-experiences are not considered vital, relevant, or meaningful.

Butch grew up in the church, earned his doctorate in electrical engineering, taught at a denominational liberal arts college. He knew the Bible and had taught Sunday School for years. But he was abrasive, task-oriented, hostile, opinionated, and chauvinistic. He loved people, but few felt that. For six years his pastor-friend golfed with him. They talked, laughed, played, and prayed. The pastor-friend challenged him to make changes. Butch's response was: "I don't change for anyone. I treat everybody the same. When I don't like something I state my opinion." His pastor-friend, not buffaloed by the gruffness, confronted him with the facts that his inflexibility stifled his effectiveness. Butch began to change. A Milquetoast he is not. But he is becoming a confident, caring, and trusted leader.

# A BIBLICAL FOUNDATION FOR DISCIPLING

by Hal Perkins

*Pastor, Church of the Nazarene, Moscow, Idaho*

If Jesus were called to pastor a church like those we pastor, to what aspect of pastoring would He give himself? Would His priorities and schedule be similar to yours and mine, or different? If different, in what ways?

By looking at the Gospel accounts, we discover some of the things Jesus gave himself to. He taught and preached on numerous occasions. In addition we have considerable record of His personal ministry to people—listening, counseling, praying, healing, helping, serving, delivering. We also have significant data concerning His involvement with a few select persons to whom He gave himself and whom He took with Him in His preaching and shepherding ministries. These select persons we have called His disciples (though He had many more), and we call His ministry to them *discipling*. Jesus also gave himself to times alone with His Father in prayer—the vital key to all the rest He did.

As pastors, we are expected—like Jesus—to teach and preach, which we do. There is, further, the responsibility that we minister to people personally—carrying on

the shepherd's heart of Jesus in knowing and caring and praying for our flock personally. In the last two decades a renewed thrust of Jesus' discipling ministry has flooded the pastor's literature, creating some pressure, considerable confusion, and some genuinely effective ministry. With an appropriate renewed emphasis on the pastor's responsibility to his family, the above listed ministry concerns, plus other pastoral responsibilities, private time with our Heavenly Father (the key in Jesus' ministry) is tragically often lost in the contemporary pastor's life-style. (At one recent pastors' retreat, less than 10 percent of the pastors could report a consistent devotional time.)

The question, then, is this: What is discipling and should it be allowed to replace something else in the already overtaxed schedule of most pastors? If we have a holistic view of discipleship, and understand the significance of disciple-making (discipling), it helps to resolve the dilemma of "to disciple or not to disciple."

First, why make disciples? There are three brief reasons:

1. *Jesus made disciples.* With all He had to do, and with severe time limitations, Jesus spent great blocks of time with His chosen few and almost always had them with Him. We, His followers, must consider following at this point.

2. *Jesus commanded His disciples to make disciples.* Jesus' summary commission to His followers was to do what He had done in terms of disciple-making (Matt. 28:19-20). None could doubt either Jesus' concern for reaching the world or His wisdom in how to best accomplish it. His command to disciple must be faced honestly.

3. *Making disciples is a proven method of expansion.* Individuals and groups (Christian or not) who have followed the principles of discipling have expanded their organisms and organizations dramatically. Disciple-making has been demonstrated to have worldwide implications for any group that patiently and effectively implements its principles.



Hal Perkins

Second, what is discipleship? *Discipleship* is a broader term than *disciplining*, and the two must not be equated. Failure to understand this distinction creates confusion and frustration. First, we will consider discipleship. Discipleship is the *state of being a disciple*, just as ownership is the state of being an owner. To understand discipleship, we must clearly define what a disciple is. The Greek word for *disciple* is usually understood to mean a learner, or follower, often with the concept of an apprentice. Vine suggests that a disciple is “a learner, indicating thought accompanied by endeavor . . . one who follows another’s teaching.”

What, then, are the components of Christian discipleship? There is a primary component (following Jesus) from which two more components naturally flow (becoming like Jesus and reproducing Jesus).

1. *A disciple is a follower of a leader (Luke 14:27)*. To be Christ’s disciple means to *follow* Him as leader. His call to Peter and Andrew resulted in their following Him (Matt. 4:19), along with James and John (v. 22), Matthew (9:9), and other would-be disciples (v. 22).

Christ’s teaching repeatedly affirms that following Him is essential to a relationship with Him. “Anyone who does not carry his cross and *follow* me cannot be my disciple” (Luke 14:27, NIV, italics mine throughout). (The question has been raised, “Is it possible to be a Christian and not be a disciple of Jesus?” Biblically and theologically, no! The title “Christian” was a nickname that was given to Jesus’ disciples at Antioch [Acts 11:26]. To be called Christian was to be a disciple of Christ. The covenantal requirements of saving relationship—repentance [1 Pet. 3:9; Luke 24:47], faith [Eph. 2:8-9; John 3:16], commitment to obedience [Matt. 7:21; Heb. 5:9; John 3:36]—require honest commitment to the Lordship of Christ. Unfortunately, too often the church’s nominality and unclear teaching/training so powerfully shape the convert’s understanding of being a Christian that often a wide gap exists between profession of faith and visible Christian discipleship.) “If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and *follow* me” (Luke 9:23, NIV; cf. Matt. 16:24; Mark 8:34). “Anyone who does not take up his cross and *follow* me is not worthy of me” (Matt. 10:38, NIV). To follow Christ makes us worthy of Him (not as perfect keepers of the law but as those who honestly trust Him); to follow Christ enables us to come after Him; to follow Christ enables us to be His disciples.

To be Jesus’ followers (disciples) involves the following:

a. *To be mastered by Him (Matt. 4:20-22)*. This is the initial response to His call. This is repentance—changing our mind about who shall master our lives, putting our faith in Jesus as Master. This is conversion. This is to be born again.

The rich young ruler almost became Jesus’ disciple, but he could not make the commitment to let Jesus be Master, and therefore was unable to follow Jesus and be His disciple (Mark 10:17-22). His faith was rooted so deeply in his riches that he would not yield to Jesus’ will. To follow Jesus involves the initial basic commitment that He shall be my Lord and Master. Christian discipleship begins in authentic conversion.

Persons become disciples of Christ (and therefore Christians) on the basis of genuine commitment to Christ’s Lordship (repentance, faith), not on their ability to perform as Christians. True repentance inevitably leads to significant growth and life change, but usually later than sooner. Authentic but immature Christians, like infants, usually require care, support, and guidance. They usually come to Christ needing emotional and/or relational healing. They need to put the brakes on lifelong attitudes, motives, perspectives, values, and habits. Most must be spiritually paranted before they begin to care for their own spiritual needs and to minister significantly to others.

b. *Meeting with Him (John 15:1-8)*. To say that Jesus is Master yet fail to listen to Him denies Jesus the freedom to be Master. It is unthinkable to allegedly

**Persons become disciples on the basis of their commitment to Christ’s Lordship, not on their ability to perform as Christians.**

work for someone while being unwilling to listen to the employer’s instructions. If we allow the life-giving truth, values, priorities, standards, directives of Jesus to flow into us (like sap from the vine into the branch), we bear fruit and prove ourselves to be Jesus’ disciples. If we do not abide (meet with Him, commune with Him), we dry up, wither, are cut off and thrown into the fire (John 15:1-8). To follow Jesus we must meet with Him.

The key to being Jesus’ disciple when He was in the flesh was the willingness to respond to His call to be *with Him* (Mark 3:14). Today, this involves communing with the Spirit through the Word—praise, thanksgiving, confession, devotional Bible study (listening), intercession, ministry preparation, and renewal of commitment. Corporate worship, small-group fellowship, family altar, and practicing His presence throughout the day are all components of being with Jesus. However, the historically validated key to effective discipleship is the one-on-one “closet” time with Jesus. To be Jesus’ disciples involves following Him, which necessitates being with Him. Christian discipleship hinges on the devotional and worship life.

c. *Ministering with Him (Mark 10:44-45)*. The heart and life of Jesus was ministry . . . love expressing itself in service to others. “The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister.” If we are to follow Jesus, we must become ministers . . . persons with God’s love expressing itself in service to others. Commitment to and communion with Jesus (mastered by and meeting with Him) are prerequisites to effective, consistent, long-term ministry. Christian discipleship

helps restore the universal priesthood of believers. Christian discipleship involves every believer (disciple) as a ministering force.

2. *A disciple becomes like the leader (Luke 6:40).* Jesus said, "A student [Greek, *mathetes*, "disciple"] is not above his teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be *like his teacher*" (Luke 6:40, NIV; cf. Matt. 10:24-25). This is perfectly reasonable when we understand that a disciple *commits* to a master or teacher. He watches, listens, learns, and practices under the supervision of the teacher (leader, master, rabbi, etc.). The process of discovering God's will for ministry, involvement in ministry, and accountability for ministry conforms us more and more to the image of Christ . . . both inwardly and outwardly. Christian disciples become like Christ.


a. *Inward Christlikeness—heart holiness (1 Pet. 1:15-16).* Following Jesus (mastered by Him, meeting with Him, ministering with Him) enables a cleansing, purifying presence of the Spirit to reveal the extent of our self-love and self-reliance. It enables the Spirit to lead us to and through the crisis moment of the crucifixion of self-sovereignty and self-centeredness, and to be filled with the Spirit, effecting a pure, total devotion to and dependence on God—just like Jesus. Jesus was dependent on His Father (John 5:19, 30; 8:28; 12:49-50) and devoted to Him (John 14:31; Luke 22:42, etc.). Disciples of Christ, like Christ himself, become entirely sanctified—loving God with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength and trusting God with all their hearts.

b. *Outward Christlikeness—life holiness (Eph. 4:13; 5:2; 3:19).* The disciple of Christ, committed to following Jesus and entirely sanctified (pure love for and faith in Christ), will inevitably grow in being a Christlike, godly person. Carnal and temporal values, attitudes, motives, priorities, speech, responses, and behavior will be revealed, repented of, and conformed to Christ's eternal values, loving and positive attitudes, godly motives and priorities, Christlike speech, responses, and behavior. The Word, the Spirit, the church, and the Spirit-filled disciple will together create a person who is ever growing in visible Christlikeness.

3. *A disciple reproduces the leader (Matt. 28:19-20).* Christian discipleship inevitably includes discipling of others or disciple-making. It inevitably involves the influ-

encing of others to become followers of Christ (Matt. 4:19). The Great Commission (28:19-20) requires that those who are committed to obeying Jesus (His disciples) will go into their world, make conversion possible (typically through their love, faith, and witness), guide the convert toward baptism and teach them to obey everything Jesus taught, including the Great Commission requirement of disciple-making by all disciples. Paul exhorts others to follow him as he follows Christ (1 Cor. 11:1; 2 Thess. 3:9). He tells Timothy to make disciples and teach them to make disciples (2 Tim. 2:2).

Here we note the difference between *discipleship* and *discipling*. *Discipleship* is my attachment to Christ, including following Him (mastered, meeting, ministering; becoming like Him [holy in heart and life], and reproducing Him in others, or discipling). *Discipling*, or disciple-making, is just one component of my attachment to Christ. It is the component of my conscious effort to serve Him by helping others to be and/or grow in their discipleship or attachment to Him. To equate discipleship with discipling may drive the less mature to assume they are not or cannot be disciples of Christ because they are not discipling. It also may lead disciplers in their identifying discipling with discipleship, to ignore their personal needs for abiding, loving, purity, and growth in character. Often the result is burnout, or ineffectiveness, or negative influence. In their zealousness to work with others, they fail to be nurtured and grow themselves and thereby influence or disciple those with whom they work in this same error of *doing* without *being*. Further note: the church, for better or worse, is constantly discipling (i.e., influencing). To the extent that the church is sanctified, or like Christ, it will have a sanctifying, Christlike influence. To the extent that it is carnal, it will disciple others to be carnal at best and often turned off.

**Conclusion:** Christian discipleship is relational attachment to Christ that results in following Him, becoming like Him, and reproducing Him in the lives of others. It is a relationship of listening, trusting, and obeying Christ, resulting in effectiveness in prayer, holy lives, loving ministry, evangelism, and parenting converts to obey all that Christ commanded. When these dynamics are unleashed in the life of a local church, it will become a significant force in the battle against evil for the salvation of the lost. May God help us to obey our Lord's call to make disciples. 

## Pontius' Puddle



# THE HEART OF

## The Discippler's Goal

Nick described the beginning of his Christian life:

*When I first went to the altar it seemed so easy. I was told all I had to do was pray the sinner's prayer. My guilt and shame poured out in racking sobs as tears ran down my face. I made my plea for forgiveness, repenting of my sin to Jesus. Feeling my prayers were answered, I arose with confidence that all was well with my soul.*

*The good, God-fearing people flocked around me. There was rejoicing that at last my burden of guilt and sin was placed on Jesus. . . . Everyone shook my hand and praised me for the steps I had taken. I felt 10 feet tall as I made my journey homeward. How could anything be so great?*

*The next day all I wanted to do was read the Bible, pray, and sing hymns. The world around me, however, had not changed. The guy next to me at work, the one I visit with every day, started laughing when I began to read my Bible on a break. Bowing my head to pray at lunch, I heard, "Hey, when did you become a Jesus freak?" Where, now, are all the praises I received for my steps for Jesus? Where is the easy road I heard this would be? Oh, how I need a Christian friend today!*

*Without warning, the bills, doubts, fears, and problems all crowded in with the force of thunder and lightning. . . .*

*Where were all those people who praised me on Sunday? Why has no one bothered to call me on the phone? Why has no one stopped by my home this past week to talk, help me with my questions, and just praise the Lord? No one even asked me over to their house or desired my company for a cup of coffee. I thought Christians helped each other. Where are the Christians now when I need them? Doesn't anyone care that I am alone, broke, sad, confused, hungry, and scared?<sup>1</sup>*

Nick finally gave up and quit going to church. He is evidence that "If the pressure of the world is not equalled by the support of the Christians, the convert will be lost."<sup>2</sup> Nick is the product of a church that does evangelism but neglects discipling. His story would break the heart of any true discipler.

This issue is so crucial that Kenneth Kantzer, a senior editor for *Christianity Today*, prophesies, "If we win the

battle for evangelism but lose the battle for discipleship, we have lost the church of the next generation."<sup>3</sup>

The discipler's goal is to produce disciples. The word *disciple* is used 269 times in the Gospels and Acts, and means a "taught" or "trained" one.<sup>4</sup> Waylon Moore sees Jesus defining a disciple three ways in John's Gospel:

1. A disciple is a Christian who is involved in the Word of God on a continual basis (John 8:31).
2. A disciple is one who lays down his life for others (John 13:34-35; 15:13).
3. A disciple is one who abides daily in a fruit-bearing union with Christ (John 15:4-5; 17:20).<sup>5</sup>

A discipler is one who is committed to enabling others to become better followers of Christ. Though one who has accepted Christ only one week ago may be a real Christian, he is only a "babe in Christ." The discipler works with the new Christian until he becomes strong and mature. A mature Christian is one who has grown sufficiently to stand alone under temptation, is able to reproduce himself spiritually, is involved in service for Christ, and is responsibly related to a local church.<sup>6</sup> Probably, in the North American context at least, the whole first year of a new Christian's life needs special attention from others to bring about spiritual stability.

Paul's goal was to "present everyone perfect in Christ" (Col. 1:28).<sup>7</sup> Yet as a concerned discipler, he realized he had a part in that result. Thus he continues, "To this end I labor, struggling with all his energy, which so powerfully works in me" (v. 29). Earlier, Paul had saluted the reconciling power of God: "But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation" (v. 22). But he was quick to make this victorious presentation conditional on discipleship: "If you continue in your faith, established and firm, not moved from the hope held out in the gospel" (v. 23). This continuation is of utmost importance, since "the world around you" is continually trying to "squeeze you into its own mould."<sup>8</sup>

Discipling may range from a Christian dad asking his children how they are doing spiritually to calling a group of 12 Christians to an intentional commitment and pledge to one another to spiritual exercises to promote growth. The discipler needs to catch a vision of what it means to disciple others and plan to do so. He cannot assume he will stumble into discipling casually. Howard

# THE DISCIPLER

by Charles "Chic" Shaver

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Hendricks questioned, "Where are you headed? Where are your men?"<sup>9</sup> Robert Coleman has said, "One must decide where he wants his ministry to count—in the momentary applause of popular recognition or in the reproduction of his life in a few chosen men who will carry on his work after he has gone."<sup>10</sup>

## The Discippler's Relationship with God

The main reason the early Christians witnessed and spread the gospel was a sense of gratitude for "the overwhelming experience of the love of God which they had received through Jesus Christ."<sup>11</sup> So it is in discipling. The main reason I disciple others is because of my gratitude and joy for an exciting and continuing relationship with Jesus Christ. Richard Peace has warned, "At the root of the loss of motivation is the loss of experience."<sup>12</sup> Thus, the discipler's first concern is to keep his own heart warm with God's abiding presence.

The command of Eph. 5:18 is in the present tense, "keep filled with the Spirit." J. B. Chapman urged an ordination class,

I charge you to keep your hearts alive in the things of God. Be men of prayer and faith, and do not be satisfied with anything short of a continuous sense of the divine presence in your hearts and lives. . . . Insist on praying through to God every day and allow nothing to take the place of this divine assurance.<sup>13</sup>

Skills, strategy, creativity, and programming are all important in the work of the church, but one's relationship with God always takes first place as the basis for all ministry. Billy Graham said it about preaching, but it could be said about discipling too:

Never forget we are to communicate the gospel by a *holy life*. . . . Your preaching emerges out of what you are. We *must* be a holy people. Those who have affected me most have not been the great orators. It is those who have been holy men. Robert Murray M'Cheyne said, "A holy man is an awful weapon in God's hand."<sup>14</sup>

If one is spiritually stale, the first step in discipling others is to deal with the staleness. Let me suggest these steps:

1. Acknowledge the staleness to God and to yourself.
2. Take time for a spiritual inventory—at least a half day alone with God in prayer and the Word.



Charles "Chic" Shaver

3. If God shows sin, deal with it. God only reveals sin to remove it.
4. Find help in the fellowship of a Christian friend or a group of believers where there is openness, prayer, and concern. Every pastor needs a support group.
5. Check the possibility of fatigue or boredom creating depression. Remember Elijah's physical and nervous exhaustion.
6. Establish a daily time with the Lord. I'm impressed with the district superintendent who lives by the motto, "An hour a day; a day a month; a week a year."<sup>15</sup>

If I disciple others, it is my relationship with God that is the cause. Paul said, "Christ's love compels us" (2 Cor. 5:14), and "God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit" (Rom. 5:5).

## The Discippler's Concern for His Disciples

In the 32 years prior to 1975, 54 of every 100 new people received into the membership of Nazarene churches were lost through dismissal, removal, or transfer to other denominations. For 1976-79, the losses were 46 percent. For 1980-84, the losses were 42 percent.<sup>16</sup> Though it is encouraging that our back door losses are decreasing, a loss of 42 percent is still unacceptable and speaks to the need to be concerned for young disciples.

If your five-year-old daughter normally arrived home from kindergarten at 3 P.M., what would you do if she had not arrived home by 5:00? Can you imagine yourself saying to your spouse, "If she doesn't get home by 7:00, I think we ought to start looking for her"? I hardly think you would wait that long. By 5:00 you'd be desperate.



The Downstairs Attic

How is it we can be so concerned about the physical welfare of our biological children and yet so unconcerned about the spiritual welfare of our spiritual children? If your new Christian misses his appointment to sit with you in church Sunday morning, you ought not to wait two or three days to check on him. The absence is a danger signal. You ought to be in contact with him Sunday afternoon.

A good discipler simply needs to *care* for new Christians. Paul apologized for his struggling disciples at Galatia: "My dear children, for whom I am again in the pains of childbirth until Christ is formed in you" (Gal. 4:19). This same concern possessed Hudson Taylor, founder of the China Inland Mission, as he sought to guide their first converts. His biographers write:

The claim of the little band of believers who needed them as parents in the Lord could not be set aside. It

was to their love, their prayers, these souls had been committed, and to leave them now, even for the good of others, would have been to disregard the highest of trusts, parental responsibility. . . . For what the missionaries were themselves, this to a large extent their children in the faith became, and there is no better, surer way of passing on spiritual blessing.<sup>17</sup>

Deep personal concern for young Christians was evident when Paul wrote the Corinthians,

Even though you have ten thousand guardians in Christ, you do not have many fathers, for in Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel. Therefore I urge you to imitate me. For this reason I am sending to you Timothy, my son whom I love, who is faithful in the Lord. He will remind you of my way of life in Christ Jesus (1 Cor. 4:15-17).

Here Paul stresses the major condition for a good discipler—he must have a parent's heart. He must feel toward the spiritual child as a parent feels toward his biological child. The spiritual parent had been defined as "the one most responsible, on the human level, for the spiritual birth of a Christian."<sup>18</sup> There are times, however, when it is important and necessary for someone besides the one who led them to Christ to take over the spiritual nurture of young Christians. Paul sent Timothy to the Corinthians in his place. Timothy could be called the adoptive spiritual parent, "One, who though not responsible for the birth of the new Christian, agrees to take responsibility for his spiritual nurture. He adopts the spiritual child."<sup>19</sup> The parent heart in the discipler is the key. The parent extends himself at all costs to make sure the young Christian lives, grows, and matures. Waylon Moore says, "Spiritual parents are to love their children as Christ loved them; this love is the basic necessity for successful parenthood, and is usually [what is] missing in follow-up that fails."<sup>20</sup>

After Rachel accepted Christ, Dan and Lois led her through *Basic Bible Studies*,<sup>21</sup> met with her regularly, and prayed for eight weeks. However, they kept close and kept encouraging after the eight weeks were complete. When Rachel had a prolonged battle with her tobacco habit, Dan and Lois were there and cared. Dan and Lois had parent hearts, and today Rachel is a victorious Christian and church member, and a witness for Jesus. When Fred and Patty found Christ on a Thursday night in their apartment, Rob and Sharon disciplined them. Soon after Fred and Patty joined the church, work required them to move to another state. When these still-young Christians wrote back that they couldn't find a church with as much love as the church they were converted in, their home congregation prayed. Twenty-five people in the home congregation wrote or phoned to offer encouragement. Finally Fred and Patty said they had decided to find a church to which they could give their love. They had moved from "get" to "give." Their home church had parent hearts. Today Fred and Patty are faithful church folk, and Fred is a member of the board.

There are four basic ways to disciple Christians: personal contact (as when Paul returned to visit converts), personal representatives (as when Paul sent Timothy), personal prayer (Eph. 1:15-23), and personal correspon-



dence (1 Thessalonians).<sup>22</sup> But all these activities require parent hearts.

The parent heart concern is captured in Ron Roger's phrase, "pouring your life into a couple of guys."<sup>23</sup> The spiritual parent or the adoptive spiritual parent is concerned for his disciple to be obedient to the Lord Jesus and models that life for him.

The discipler will seek private time with his disciple, as Jesus did in Mark 9:30-31: "Jesus did not want anyone to know where they were, because he was teaching his disciples." He will encourage and commend his convert's progress. Depending on the age of his disciple, the discipler will expect levels of commitment and accountability. If the disciple is to have *Basic Bible Study* number 3 done, then that is expected. One pastor told me that his associate phones his 16 discipleship leaders on the day their groups are to meet. If they don't get the phone call, they tend not to meet. He believes, "People do what you inspect, not what you expect."<sup>24</sup>

Lance was approaching seminary graduation. He came to me concerned about his inadequate devotional life. I asked him to do only two things—have a daily time with the Lord, and then report the result to me weekly. Over the next four weeks I received notes that went something like this:

*Week one:* "Dear Prof., I spent time each day in prayer. It was a duty, but I did it."

*Week two:* "Dear Prof., as I spent daily time in prayer, I felt like God began to speak to me."

*Week three:* "Dear Prof., I've been praying—God has been leading. My wife and I are praying together."

*Week four:* "Dear Prof., I've had a great week with the Lord, and this morning as I was talking to Him, He told me I didn't have to report to you any more."

That was just great with me. But Lance learned faithfulness to God by being faithful and accountable to me. A parent heart cares enough to hold his disciple accountable.

### The Discipler's Strategy for Extending Care

The caring discipler will soon realize he cannot do it all. Real love requires us to equip others so they can be disciplers. Gordon Wetmore, former pastor of Kansas City First Church of the Nazarene, put it this way, "Our goal is to make disciples who will make disciples who will make disciples . . ." <sup>25</sup> Pastor Harold Clay has extended himself by training four groups of laity for four different levels of ministry in his congregation.

There is determination in the parent heart. It cares so much that it holds on till it develops the strategy and skills necessary for discipling. It will have to choose how it invests time. I told Judy I could give her limited time in dealing with her problem. She accepted that, we counseled, and she made progress. However, I gave more extensive time training and equipping Carol. Now Carol has had 18 disciples in her Bible study group—including Judy, who is now making even greater progress. Mark 3:14 teaches that Jesus "selected 12 to be his regular companions."<sup>26</sup> These 12 in turn disciplined thousands.

After over 25 years of ministry I've reached these conclusions:

1. The laity in our churches have love, but need a developed strategy and program to channel it.

2. Once people are equipped, they need ongoing leadership, encouragement, and accountability to function most effectively.

So as disciplers, we need parent hearts. Our goal is to produce mature Christians—Christians who have grown sufficiently to stand alone under temptation, are able to reproduce themselves spiritually, are involved in service for Christ, and are responsibly related to a local church. Recently we had Rick and Karen over for dinner. They had been associates in our local church and were on their way to pastor a congregation in another state. Karen wanted to know what she needed to be a good pastor's wife. There was a little fear in her expression. I said, "Karen, what you need most is good old-fashioned *caring*. To *care* for people—that's what's needed." Caring is what makes the heart of the discipler too. It is a caring so intense that it says, "I will see my spiritual child live and grow and mature at all costs. It may take time, or energy, or prayer, or fellowship, or study, or accountability, or whatever—but my child must make it."

Oh, remember Nick that I told you about at the beginning of this article? Recently, after 30 years of defeat and being away from God and the church, he got back to God. Now he's in a church that cares about both evangelism *and* discipleship. His pastor and many of the people of his church have parent hearts. And Nick is doing great!

### NOTES

1. Nick wrote these words as he later looked back on his early struggles in trying to follow Christ. I have made slight adaptation in his statement. Throughout this article, when I have used case histories of people, I have exercised the liberty of changing names in many cases in order to protect privacy.

2. Charles "Chic" Shaver, *Conserve the Converts* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1983), 10.

3. Kenneth Kantzer, "Time to Look Ahead," *Christianity Today* (October 17, 1986), 17.

4. Waylon B. Moore, *Multiplying Disciples: The New Testament Method for Church Growth* (Colorado Springs: Navpress, 1981), 21.

5. *Ibid.*, 21-23.

6. Shaver, *Conserve the Converts*, 8.

7. *The Holy Bible, New International Version* is quoted throughout this article unless otherwise noted.

8. Rom. 12:12 from the *New Testament in Modern English*, Revised Edition © J. B. Phillips, 1958, 1960, 1972. By permission of the Macmillan Publishing Co.

9. Quoted by Dr. Robert Munger, Fuller Seminary, Pasadena, Calif., January 20, 1978.

10. Robert Coleman, *The Master Plan* (Westwood, N.J.: Revell, 1963), 37.

11. Michael Green, *Evangelism in the Early Church* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970), 236.

12. Richard Peace, *Small Group Evangelism* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1985), 49.

13. D. Shelby Corlett, *Spirit Filled, the Life of James Blaine Chapman* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, n.d.), 133.

14. Billy Graham, "Billy Graham on What He Does Best," *Christianity Today* (September 2, 1983), 31.

15. Much of this paragraph is adapted from Leighton Ford, *The Christian Persuader* (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), 33-36.

16. Based on Shaver, *Conserve the Converts*, 11, and recent statistics of the office of the general secretary, Church of the Nazarene.

17. Dr. and Mrs. Howard Taylor, *Hudson Taylor's Spiritual Secret* (Chicago: Moody Press, n.d.), 97-98.

18. Shaver, *Conserve the Converts*, 8.

19. *Ibid.*

20. Waylon Moore, *Multiplying Disciples*, 24.

21. Charles "Chic" Shaver, *Basic Bible Studies for New/Growing Christians* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1972).

22. Waylon Moore, *Multiplying Disciples*, 42-46.

23. Quoted in Larry Richards, *Three Churches in Renewal* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975), 20.

24. Interview with Bartlett Hess, Ward Presbyterian Church, Livonia, Mich., June 14, 1978.

25. A concept frequently stated by Gordon Wetmore while pastor of Kansas City First Church.

26. Robert Munger, "Training the Laity for Ministry," *Theology News and Notes* (June 1973).

# WINNING AND DISCIPLINING WOMEN

by Lillian Johnston

General Coordinator of Women's Ministries, Church of the Nazarene

**M**arilyn (not her real name) was becoming a bit irritated with her fellow worker, June. She wondered how many times she had to turn down an invitation before June finally understood that Marilyn did not want to go to any church functions. She sighed. June was asking, "We are having a ladies' luncheon on Saturday. The program will be about how women can cope with stress in their lives. Why don't you come go with me?"

Marilyn thought, Well, it does sound interesting. And I don't have anything planned. Besides, once June sees that I just don't fit with a church crowd, maybe she'll leave me alone and quit asking! So Marilyn agreed to go.

So, reluctantly, and with lots of second thoughts, Marilyn found herself with June at the church for the monthly ladies' luncheon. She was rather surprised when she was asked to take a picture of herself or a family member from her purse and place it in a basket. When she saw everyone was doing it, and laughing about it, she decided to go along with it.

Then the basket was passed around for women to remove any picture they chose. Each woman was expected to search the room for the woman who owned the photo she'd chosen. Marilyn was hesitant at first but was soon asking and answering so many questions that she forgot her shyness.

Finally, Marilyn asked the right person if the picture she had belonged to her. "Yes," came the reply, "that's my daughter. I'm going to be telling about her in my message this morning." At that moment, Marilyn was interrupted by the woman who had Marilyn's picture.

Just more of women's foolishness? Definitely nothing spiritual about this women's meeting so far, is there? But just wait until you hear the rest of the story!

Women need to be won and disciplined with love and friendship. How many women can be won with hell-fire and brimstone sermons? Methods like those in the above story are used successfully in breaking down the barriers to friendship and discipleship that are found in today's world by women.

Two thousand years ago, Jesus went out of His way to disciple women.

- He encouraged women such as Mary to sit at His feet and listen to His teachings right along with the men.
- Jesus took time out to disciple the outcast woman at the well. Because of this, she brought others to Him (John 4).

- Jesus, himself broken, aching, and bleeding, stopped en route to the Cross to comfort and prophesy to the hurting women who accompanied Him (Luke 23:27-31).

- Jesus accepted the emotional response of the woman, freed from sin, who lovingly washed His feet with expensive perfume and dried them with her hair. He did not rebuke her extravagance or waste of money but accepted her offering as an expression of love and appreciation.

- Jesus praised the tiny offering of the widow who gave everything she had to God.

Our Savior, who is also the Creator of women, saw the special needs of women and ministered to them. He knew they could be trained to be disciples, right along with men, and did so. But, as their Maker, He also knew that women have some basic needs that may need to be dealt with in ways different from men.

A woman must have a certain degree of security in her surroundings. She needs to know that she is among friends who accept her as she is, with all her warts and runs in her stockings. If she does not have this sense of security in the church, she will probably not attend the church nor any of its disciple-making functions.

Like women of the past, today's ladies need a support group. They have a need for community, a sense of belonging. The church is an ideal place to plant such support. Win and Charles Arn, in *The Master's Plan for Mak-*

*(Continued on p. 19)*



Lillian Johnston

# FIRST STEPS

## The Spiritual Biography of a Baby Christian

by Ruth Hubbard as told to Nina Beegle

**W**hy don't you stop and see your dad while you're in Durand?" my husband, John, asked as I prepared to drive over there from Flint to visit his mother. It was the week before Christmas, and John's father had died at Thanksgiving time. I knew this would be a hard time for his mother.

"No," I said. "I don't want to see him. I'm already depressed." I had pretty much ignored my father for the past nine years, even though he lived only two blocks from my mother-in-law.

I never saw my dad again. He died the next morning. At the funeral home I stood for a long time looking at the shell that had been my father, and thinking there had to be something more to life than what I was seeing. My dad was gone. Where? Though I had been brought up in church, the only feelings I had about God were that He was very judgmental. I desperately wanted to know more about what happens after death. I think that day,

for the first time, I really faced the fact that everyone has to die, and that I would someday die.

My good friend, Dorothy White, walked up to me as I stood there, and she hugged me. I started to cry, and she asked, "How can I help you?"

"Oh, help me, Dorothy, help me. Somehow I just can't cope with it," I pled.

Her answer startled me. "You have always had a problem in your life, Ruth. You have always looked to people to help you with everything, and they have always let you down. You have got to learn to look to God."

Those few words lodged themselves somewhere in my brain and kept playing over and over, wherever I went. Whatever I did. When I was depressed. When I was trying not be.

For the last 26 years the Whites and the Hubbards had spent New Year's Day together, so the week after my father died we got together with them again, on New Year's Day, January 1984.

"Ruth, I'm responsible for a retreat at my church. It's at Swartz Creek. Will you come?" Dorothy asked. "Because I need somebody there to reinforce me, and you're such a good friend, it would really help me. Will you come for me?"

"Well, I don't know," I hesitated.

"It's only \$25.00," she said, "and if you don't enjoy the retreat, you can spend the time in the motel pool."

Reluctantly I agreed to go. February came and she called me on a Thursday. "Are you coming to the retreat on Friday?"

"What retreat?" I said. I had completely forgotten. I had made a commitment with a friend to come to dinner, so I made my excuses.

"Well, then come later," Dorothy said. But I wasn't very excited about it.

My dinner friend knew that I had just lost both my



Nina Beegle

father-in-law and my father, and she had a kind of misery-loves-company evening planned since she had just lost a very close male friend of hers in an airplane accident. She had purchased two bottles of wine for the occasion—one for her and one for me. I am not a drinker, but we were both feeling depressed and we proceeded to polish off the first bottle.

As we shared our woes she told me she had been searching for the meaning of life. I pounced on that and told her that I, too, felt I needed to get closer to God.

"Oh, that's not what I mean," she said and shared her findings about reincarnation and spiritualism and some other isms. It made me feel creepy. She had a bunch of books she wanted me to read.

She left the room briefly, and I had an overwhelming sense of someone standing at my shoulder and a voice saying, "I am calling you for the last time." I knew it was God. When my friend returned I jumped from my chair. "Where are you going?" she said.

"I have to leave right now," I answered. "I am going to a retreat." She had just made this derisive remark about my friend Dorothy, calling her a good little Christian who was trying to save my soul. I couldn't get out of there fast enough.

On my way to the retreat I realized that it was going to be very obvious that I had been drinking. Dorothy is a strong person; she will not tolerate this, I thought. But I decided to proceed so I could at least say I had come. I would knock on the door and she would tell me to go home and it would be all over.

She opened the door, and she hugged me. "I'm so glad you came," she said. "This is our room, and you can have that bed. And I have something else to tell you. We have adjoining suites with the speaker and my pastor's wife."

I felt she had really set me up, but then she repeated the offer that I might spend my time at the pool if I didn't want to go to the retreat. I went to the retreat.

Elizabeth, the speaker, talked about the choices she had made and how they affected her life, the struggles she had with herself and with her son after he was left paralyzed from the neck down. Not that there was much in her life that was like mine, but it was as though she was flipping the pages of a book and every time she told something about her life, a part of my life flashed before me—things I had completely forgotten. I thought about the wrong choices I had made. Then she hit me right between the eyes.

She had dropped out of the church and gone away from God. She had blamed other people, the hypocrites in the church, her husband because he wasn't a Christian, her children, everything. Now she was hitting me right in the heart. She said that she came to realize that her relationship with God must be just her and God. No one else.

I went to my room, thinking that with all those people milling around down there, I wanted to be alone. But in came Elizabeth. It was just her and me. After a bit she said, "Ruth, are you ready to make a choice?" She knew I was, and I knew I was. She prayed a short prayer and I received the Lord Jesus Christ. What a change! How could such a short prayer make such a big change?!

Out of that wonderful, safe environment I went back

home to my husband and our children who could not share the wonder of what had happened with me.

The next day was Sunday. I told my husband I wanted to go somewhere. In the car he said, "Where are we going tonight?"

"We're not going anywhere, but I am going to church."

He thought I was making jokes. He laughed and said, "Where are you going to church?"

I named Dorothy's church. Then he really laughed. "Come on. I don't believe that. You're not going to the Bible-thumping church." His assumption was that any church that held services on Sunday evening was radical.

"Well, yes, John. I am going to go."

"Why would you consider that?"

"Well, the speaker and I formed a relationship at the retreat, and she is going to be at that church and I want to see her before she leaves."

"OK, I'll drop you off there and you can get a ride back home or call me after the service, but you are not going to drag me into coming."

"OK," I said, and went in alone. I looked down about 35 rows of seats skirted by several aisles and chickened out. As I turned to leave an usher came and asked if he could help. "I am waiting for Elizabeth," I said.

"Well, church has already started and everybody is inside," he said, and added, "Elizabeth who?"

"I don't know. She is staying with a friend of hers from Flushing. Her name is Edna."

"Edna who?"

"I don't know."

"I will open the door and you can look in and point her out if you see her. I will take you to her."

I stared at the backs of hundreds of heads. I had only seen her one weekend. Suddenly, I thought it was a good time to go home. Just then a man tapped me on the shoulder and said, "You must be Ruth Hubbard? Elizabeth McCool told me to watch for you. I will take you where they are."

Elizabeth was up in the second pew. I was chagrined, and felt like I had a big billboard on my back reading: I AM A NEW CHRISTIAN.

I sat down just as the pastor began to pray. In my church it is deathly quiet when the pastor prays. Here, the man on my left is praying about a job, another is praying for his mother, the lady behind me is praying for her son, and someone else for his brother. I am thinking, "This is very weird." When the pastor begins to preach, they do it again. Someone is saying amen, and someone else is saying praise the Lord.

I wanted to get out of there as soon as it was over, but Edna reached over and said, "Can I hug you?" and as she's hugging me, "I've been praying for you." She introduced me to her friend, and she did the same thing. I was overwhelmed. These total strangers had been praying for me! I couldn't remember even my mother saying she was praying for me, and here were these people I had never seen . . . I could hardly take it in.

There were five exits, but Elizabeth was persistently leading me toward a particular one. At the door she introduced me to the pastor of evangelism and his wife. They both said, "We have been praying for you this weekend." They told me to come back, and I thought, maybe. Someday I might visit.

But the next morning Edna, one of the ladies I had been introduced to, called and said, "Ruth, could I just come and visit? I came from the same church background as you. Maybe we can talk about some things."

"Oh, I want to talk to somebody. Come on over." As we talked I asked her, "How do I keep this wonderful feeling? How do I keep this joy and peace that I feel now? I am so afraid it will go away. There isn't anybody around me to share it with."

"Well, you have got to read the Bible, get grounded in the Word of God."

"I don't know how to read the Bible. I don't know anything about it."

"I just happen to have a Bible study with me. I could go through it with you for eight weeks."

The first time she came I felt like maybe nothing had happened to me after all. The second visit she gave me another Bible study lesson. I was convinced that I had just gotten all wrapped up in the emotion of what was going on at that retreat and all.

But by the time we finished those Bible studies she was able to reinforce me in my commitment and *get me grounded*, as she said.

I spent a year in the *Basic Bible Studies*, and then they got me started in the Sunday School class for new Christians, taught by Jerry, the pastor of evangelism. One day Jerry called me and asked if I'd give my testimony at a banquet. I didn't know what a testimony was. Never heard one.

"Keep praying about it," he said, "and just write down what has happened to you. The Lord will tell you what to say."

The Lord did tell me what to say that night, and He also told me He wanted me to begin training in personal evangelism. While I was going through the training Rev. Street called one evening and asked if I'd go make a call with him, that he felt that maybe I was supposed to go. That night a 78-year-old man gave his heart to the Lord, and I became his spiritual parent, taking him through the same Bible studies that had helped me. He told me later he had a book of excuses thicker than my arm as to why he shouldn't be a Christian, and he had hardened his heart for many years.

That was about two years ago. I'm hooked. Hooked on Jesus and hooked on sharing the gospel so others can know Him. Whoever said the Christian life was dull?



## DISCIPLING WOMEN

(Continued from p. 16)

*ing Disciples*, declare that incorporation could very well be the most important, and crucial, aspect of making disciples.

Women's groups within the church could well be the best way to incorporate women disciples. A small group of some kind is vital, even if it is only a loose-knit group of women friends. Women's Bible studies, parenting classes, special women's programs, women's luncheons, and special days or retreats for women are all excellent tools to use to incorporate women into full involvement in the church.

The "Great Commission conscience" can and should be taught through women's meetings in the church. The group should be able to develop need-meeting ministries that will enable women in the church to draw in their family and friends. Sessions on color analysis, weight control, nutrition, self-esteem, rape prevention, coping with kids, family communication, women's roles, combatting stress, homemaking tips, craft classes, shopping trips, preschoolers' mothers' clubs, money or time management, and a myriad of other common-interest subjects provide excellent means for outreach to women new to the church.

Unsaved women, like Marilyn, will come to the church, especially when invited and brought by another woman, to learn about subjects of interest to them much more readily than they will respond to an invitation to a regular church service. After they have met some of the women at such an interest-centered meeting, they will be more apt to come to other church activities and services.

This is what happened to Marilyn. She was befriended by those at the ladies' luncheon, made to feel at ease, and her interest stirred by her encounter with the lady who happened to be the speaker that day.

During the message, the speaker shared how her own daughter, the one in the picture that Marilyn had, attempted suicide. She shared her heartbreak. But better than that, she shared the strength and courage that God gave her during that time of struggle. Marilyn hoped that her face did not betray her shock. Did the speaker know that just recently Marilyn's teenage son had tried to commit suicide? Had the speaker been told that she had been literally overwhelmed at times with feelings of guilt, inadequacy, and grief? This woman actually understood Marilyn's needs.

Marilyn accepted God's offer of forgiveness that day after the message. She was so intrigued by the "coincidences" that had occurred that she turned to her friend, June, and asked, "Does God always work like this?"

Marilyn learned the answer to her own question. She continued to be disciplined individually by her friend. Bible studies and share groups at ladies' meetings helped her begin to share Christ with others and to learn how to use her talents and abilities in God's kingdom. Through the process of evangelism, which was largely through the efforts of other women, Marilyn became a disciple of Christ.

Discipled women make the best disciplers for other women. This is why women's ministries groups can be the best aid a pastor can have for discipling women.

Through women's Bible study and prayer groups, women can grow spiritually and learn to see, as Marilyn did, the power of God at work in their lives. Individual or group scripture memorization plans help women develop the spiritual strength they need to stand firm in today's world.

The command of Christ was to "go and make disciples of all nations" (Matt. 28:19). There are *more women* than men in "all nations." We need to utilize every available means to disciple women.



# The Pastor as a Discipler of Children

by Miriam J. Hall

*Director of Children's Ministries, Church of the Nazarene*

Every fall in the seminary class I teach, I ask each of the students to design a coat of arms. In the five sections of the diagram, they are to draw pictures or write paragraphs representing their recollections of and feelings about the type of ministry they received in the church when they were children. I give them these guidelines.

Section 1: Memories of the classrooms in which they were taught.

Section 2: Memories of one or more teachers.

Section 3: The impact their pastor made upon them through his interaction—or lack of it—with them.

Section 4: Their concept of God as a child.

Section 5: A word or phrase that best describes the type of ministry they received.

The results of this activity are always an eye-opener both to me and to the students. The responses usually fall into two distinct categories. Some students report memories of attractive, well-kept classrooms, caring/in-

involved teachers, *and a pastor who was warm and took time for them as children.* These students also report that they had positive feelings about God as children, along with a positive attitude toward the church, which they still feel. The second group of students recall drab, barren classrooms, uncaring/uninvolved/stern teachers, *and a pastor who was aloof or even forbidding to children.* These students report negative feelings about God and the church, *which they are still struggling to overcome.*

The results of this activity confirm what I have believed for many years—that *the pastor plays a vital part in the success or failure of the church's ministry to children.* Not only does the pastor have the opportunity to help disciple children directly through his personal relationships and interactions with them, but he also tends to set the tone for all that happens to children in the church. His interest in, knowledge about, and support of ministry to children usually makes the difference between a so-so children's program and one that has the potential for changing lives.

I would like to suggest some ways a pastor can make a significant contribution to the discipling of children. The suggestions are grouped into the categories mentioned previously: (1) the pastor's direct interactions with children, and (2) the leadership he gives to the church's total ministry to children.

## **PERSONAL INTERACTIONS WITH CHILDREN**

### **1. Think of *children* as your parishioners, just as adults are.**

This seems like a small detail, but it is an important one. I believe one reason some pastors tend to overlook children is because they think of them as appendages to their parents, rather than as individuals who have a legitimate claim on their pastor's care and concern. Children are not appendages to adults. Each one is an individual



Miriam J. Hall



whom Christ died to save and who needs to be shepherded by the pastor.

The importance of children to the church is highlighted by Asbury professor and noted writer, Dr. Donald M. Joy. He has stated that "Christian faith is never more than one generation from extinction."<sup>1</sup> A survey of adult Christians shows that about 86 percent of those active in the church were converted as children. Ten percent were converted as teens or early adults, and only 4 percent were converted after age 30. Viewed from this perspective, it becomes apparent that every pastor needs to take a vital interest in his "parishioners" who are between the ages of 1 and 12.

When a pastor thinks of children as parishioners, he begins to respond to them differently. He takes time to greet children by name when he meets them in the church hallways. He shakes their hands after the worship service and talks to them occasionally about things that interest them. He even stoops down to speak to the tiniest parishioners—looking at children on their eye level.

There are many other ways a pastor can let children know he cares about them and thinks they are important. Here are just a few:

- When a child is in the hospital, call on him, just as you would his parents. During the call, remember to talk with the child as well as to his parents. Pray for the child in his hearing. A boy or girl will probably never say to you, "Your prayer before my operation really helped me not to be afraid," but the experience cannot help but make an impact on the child's life.

I know of one child whose pastor visited him at home during a serious illness and brought him a carton of 7-Up tied with a big red ribbon. This child is now an adult, but he remembers his pastor's gesture with affection and gratitude.

- Mail personally signed birthday cards to children—they *love* to receive mail.

- When a child earns an award or makes some other achievement, announce it from the pulpit or put a write-up in the church newsletter.

## 2. Utilize your opportunities to meet with children's classes at church.

Not all effective interaction with children needs to be on a one-to-one basis. You can also impact children by meeting with them in a group setting such as a Sunday School class, children's church, or a Caravan group. On occasion, the curriculum for these ministries suggests that the pastor come to the class to tell what he does, or to share some specialized information with them.

Recently, my pastor, Dr. Paul Cunningham, made an outstanding effort to minister to a group of sixth grade boys and girls. The children had been questioning the church's position regarding movie attendance, so the teachers invited Dr. Cunningham to speak to the classes; he agreed. The morning he was scheduled to speak, tragedy struck; a well-known woman in the church passed away after a long illness. In spite of this, after he had met with the grieving family, Dr. Cunningham came to the sixth grade class. In a voice sometimes choked with emotion, he talked to the children about the importance of living close to God and being ready to meet Him at any time.

Will all of these children remember what Dr. Cunningham said and put it into practice? Probably not—but they will not forget that their pastor cared enough about them to come, even at a difficult time.

## 3. Teach children when you can.

Few pastors can teach a children's class regularly, but they can do it for special occasions. At the last General Convention, two children's directors told me about the

impact made on their church's children when the pastors taught the *Foundations of Faith* catechism. In each case, the children had gotten better acquainted with the pastor, and—as a result—drew closer to the church.

If you are unable to teach an entire course to children, at least try to attend some of the sessions and let the children ask questions of you. As a pastor, you have things to contribute to children that are different from that of even the most skilled children's worker. Again, this kind of involvement will say to children, "Our pastor cares about us."

#### 4. Pray with children.

Pastor Bob Snodgrass periodically had all of the children and their teachers gather at the altar. As he prayed for them, he moved from child to child, placing his hands on their heads. Pastor Earl Lee made it a practice to visit the older elementary children in their homes to talk with them about their need of salvation.

When children respond to an altar call, don't pass them by just because children's workers are dealing with them. Even if the workers are handling the situation well, let the child know you are there and are praying with him, too. Be ready to talk with the child if the Holy Spirit leads you in this direction.

Christian educator Lawrence O. Richards specifies five processes that influence spiritual growth in children. One of them is "belonging to a vital faith community."<sup>2</sup> When a child's pastor involves himself with children in some of the ways suggested, it communicates to the child that he *does* belong with God's family. This understanding is a foundation for the child's later decision to commit his life to God and to the church. They may not seem like much at the time, pastors, but the little things you do to show you care for children are all part of the process of discipling that child.

### GIVING LEADERSHIP TO CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

#### 1. Grow in your understanding of children's needs and the programs available to meet those needs.

The first way to gain this understanding is through reading. These books and brochure will supply the basic information you need.

- *Jesus, the Children's Friend* is a biblical study of Jesus' response to children. It gives the "why" of children's ministry.

- *If I Were a Child Today* discusses the conditions in today's society that negatively affect children and suggests ways the church can counteract these influences.

- *Total Ministry to Children* discusses the ministry needs of children and describes programs available to meet those needs.

Another way to learn more about ministry to children is to talk with children's workers.

#### 2. Use your influence to support children's programs and workers.

As pastor, it is your responsibility to approve those who are being considered for positions of leadership in the children's division. Let those who are selecting teachers know that you

want the best workers possible to teach children. Pray for those being considered, and let them know that you consider their work important.

You can also help the church determine how budget funds will be used. Does money for children's work come last on your church's list of priorities? Are children meeting in water-stained, unpainted, poorly furnished, or overcrowded classrooms? Let your church know that you are committed to giving the children's division a fair share of the budget so they can minister to children effectively.

Other ways you can support your children's workers and children's program are:

- In the annual installation of workers, make a few remarks about the importance of ministering to children.

- Drop by children's classrooms periodically to greet the children and encourage their teachers.

- Publicly commend children's workers from the pulpit, in the bulletin, or in the church newsletters.

- Let teachers know they may share their prayer concerns for their pupils with you.

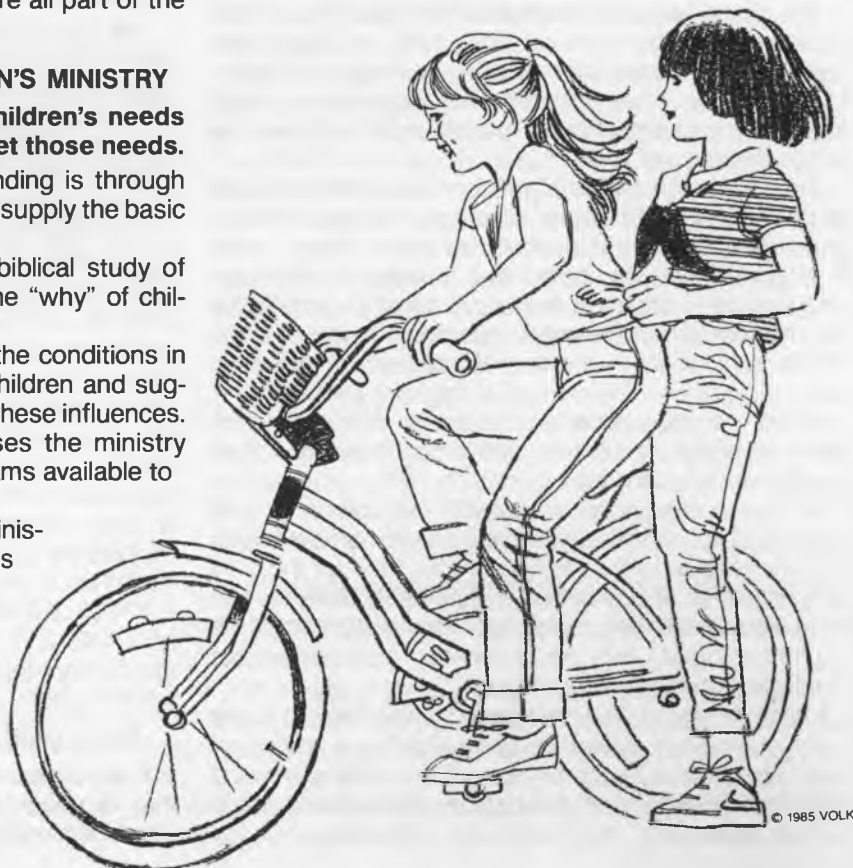
- Give the children's division visibility by having children periodically take part in the adult worship services.

Being a discipler of children takes planning ahead, time, and effort on your part. But I think you'll agree that nothing quite compares with the feeling you get when a boy or girl sees you someplace and exclaims, "That's *my* pastor!"

### NOTES

1. Donald M. Joy, "Why Reach and Teach Children," *Childhood Education in the Church*, rev. ed., Robert E. Clark, Joanne Brubaker, and Roy B. Zuck, eds. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1975, 1986), 13.

2. Lawrence O. Richards, *A Theology of Children's Ministry* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1983), 76.





# One Pastor's Way of Developing Discipling Ministries

by Hal Perkins

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**M**any factors have led me to be deeply committed to disciple-making, not the least of which are Jesus' own example and Matt. 28:19-20. Being and making disciples of Christ has been my mission all of my 13 years as a pastor. There have been some exciting success stories; there are some nagging questions. My objectives include: helping those I work with to be committed to the Lordship of Christ; to meet with Him daily; to be entirely sanctified; to consistently lead their families in Bible study and prayer; to be minister/evangelists on the job; to care for and/or pastor/shepherd a small group in the church; and to be effective in reproducing the above objectives in others.

The question is this: How can I, an already busy pastor, implement an effective discipling ministry in my congregation?

First, I must be a true disciple of Jesus myself. I must be sure He is Master of all. I need to meet with Him privately—to allow Him to search me, teach me, correct me, fill me with faith and love, and empower me. I must be His servant by serving my family, my neighbors and community, and my church. I must be entirely sanctified, trusting and loving God with all my heart, soul, mind, and strength. I must allow no ungodliness to remain in my life. I must keep things right with others and be an example to all. Thus, by my godly life I become a discipling, influencing force at the heart of my family and church. This is discipling by influence.

Second, I seek to consciously make disciples. As a pastor, I have the special opportunity of developing a church-centered discipling ministry. This is done through agreed-upon mission, vision, and ministries.

## I. Mission

My mission is the Great Commission (Matt. 28:19-20), which in principle calls me to go into my world to enable all unbelievers to become believers, and to then see that these believers are obeying all that Jesus taught. For me, a disciple follows, becomes like, and reproduces his leader.

## II. Vision

To disciple my world (be it 4,000 or 400,000) seems so overwhelming that it is easy to almost give up the evangelistic enterprise and be content to respond to most of the 12 to 16 hours per day demands of pastoring. An evangelistic church needs a leader who sees what could be and deeply believes that it shall be. He has vision. Dare I suggest the modest "vision" of our churches doubling in five years? If your church now averages 100 in worship, could you believe God for 200 five years from now? For 180 in Sunday School and 150 in evening worship? Could you confidently believe God for 100 people consistently being disciplined by the Word and Spirit in prayer time each day? Can you see 35 families (50 percent of 70 family units) being consistently disciplined by the family leader through meaningful family worship? Can you see 16 evangelistic home Bible studies where the lost are cared for and won to the Lord and leaders are equipped for ministry? I believe a discipling ministry, properly conceived and executed, can be used by God to achieve these victories. Let me share some of the ministries I seek to establish to accomplish this kind of vision.

### III. Ministries

A. *Worship and Preaching.* I have great confidence in the powerful discipling effect of a worship service that facilitates communication with God and biblical sermons that instruct, inspire, and call to action. Good preaching is a basic tool in making disciples.

B. *Pastoral Care.* Loving care for the flock is an effective discipling tool. It incarnates Jesus' love and results in others following this example. As I follow Christ, they follow me, and the church grows in love. This also opens my people to His message through me. **Note:** I do my very best to systematically take one of those I am formally discipling with me on all pastoral work possible. This is important in discipling lay ministers/pastors.

C. *Formal Discipling (Lay Pastor Development and Multiplication).*

Some time ago I attended a church growth conference. There I came to realize that laypersons could be involved in pastoral ministry much more quickly if they were "merely" equipped to minister rather than seeking to equip them with the desire, wisdom, and skills to multiply leaders. The model for disciple-making that I now employ is not as idealistic in terms of worldwide reproduction of leadership. However, I believe it is more effective for local church growth.

1. *Lay Pastor Workshop.* A workshop to communicate the plans to achieve the God-given vision for growth is planned, promoted, and provided. Board members and Sunday School teachers are specifically invited. I share my vision and my need for help to achieve this vision. The help needed will be a group of lay pastors who will be entitled, equipped, and expected to perform many of the kinds of ministries provided by professional pastors or staff. The lay pastor workshop explains the methods of ministry (work of the lay pastor, prayer, small-group leadership, evangelism, initial discipling, etc.).

2. *Lay Pastor Trainees.* To be considered for the position of lay pastor, a person must (a) attend the lay pastor workshop; (b) attend the weekly Lay Pastor Training meeting for at least 13 weeks; (c) observe a pastor or lay pastor in ministry to others; (d) be observed by a pastor or lay pastor in ministry to others; (e) receive, respond to, and report on ministry assignments each week; (f) each week turn in a written report of personal prayer life, pastoral leadership of the family, church attendance, tithing record, other personal ministry; (g) demonstrate

an understanding of and loyalty to the church's mission, vision, theology, and standards; (h) pass the lay pastor written examination; and (i) be approved as a "lay pastor" by the pastor and at least three others who have observed the spirit, the life-style, the faithfulness, and the character of the lay pastor trainee.

3. *Lay Pastors.* Upon completion of at least 13 weeks of supervised ministry training, a pastor trainee who meets the above listed criteria becomes a lay pastor. (Note: It is best to start with just a few, as each trainee needs to be supervised.) My lay pastors are responsible for one of two structures.

The first is a Sunday School class that serves as a discipling group. I call them "shepherding groups." We try to include every person with whom we have significant contact in one of these groups and provide pastoral care for them by the lay pastor. Through Bible study and application, ministry planning, and relaxed accountability, the lay pastors seek to disciple their groups (and thus the majority of the church). This is the "teach to obey" of Matt. 28:19-20.

The second structure is a LIFE group. LIFE stands for Love Inspiring Friendship Evangelism. (Jesus was a "friend of sinners.") This group is *specifically evangelistic* in purpose. Two lay pastors plus a host person (or couple) team together to meet weekly in a home, restaurant, business, or school. Their goal is to win at least one new family to Christ each six months. They create a friendship list (relatives, neighborhood friends, business friends, etc.), pray for them, attempt to serve them at their felt need levels and/or participate in recreation with them. In short, they genuinely befriend and serve non-Christians, and in the process, earn the ability to effectively invite their non-Christian friends to their LIFE group, "a place where a few of us meet to study the Bible and help each other through prayer and responding to each other's needs." The LIFE group is the "go" of Matt. 28:19-20. It is a kind of halfway house where many non-Christians are more comfortable than in a church or Sunday School class. In my New Jersey pastorate, these groups were effective in reaching many non-Christians. In my Idaho pastorate, I tried to move the groups into the church building and regular church structures (Sunday School and Wednesday night services) to simplify the ministry, but it has not been as effective in reaching the nonchurched person.

### Pontius' Puddle



The key to both the shepherding and the LIFE groups are the lay pastors who lead them. Once approved as lay pastors, I require that they meet with me in a small Lay Pastor Training group each week. This is an ongoing discipling and equipping. The curriculum and methods I use are to be used by the leaders of the LIFE groups. The curriculum is usually a life application from the Sunday morning sermon or a sequential study of needed issues from my *Leadership Multiplication*. (This training method is an adjustment from the more rigorous theological training I originally required of my lay pastors. This plan has them learning *by leading* instead of learning for a lengthy period of time *in order to lead*. Further, it has all the lay pastors learning content from the senior pastor instead of being taught by another lay pastor.) The lay pastors must agree to receive weekly ministry assignments and to report on the ministry. They also submit a weekly, written report on their personal life (prayer, family, church attendance, tithing, etc.) and their LIFE group (attendance, activities, evaluation). Lay pastors are also expected to attend every Lay Pastor Workshop (two or more per year for review and inspiration) and to set a goal of securing at least one person/couple to attend with them who may become a new lay pastor trainee. LIFE groups can be geographically established or be based on homogeneity; including groups for special needs like single parents, those with alcohol problems, etc. It is important for the pastor to not allow more groups to start than he can adequately supervise. This means observing the group about once a month, meeting privately with each lay pastor to discuss questions, problems, victories, and needs, and responding to the needs of either the lay pastor or those in his group with which he needs help.


The lay pastors are equipped to present the gospel simply and to do initial discipling. However, I try to aug-

ment this by offering three classes on Sunday morning during Sunday School, each of which last one month, to strengthen the basic understandings of the new attendees/converts, and to give me more contact with new people:

1. *Pastor's Class*: teaches grace, repentance, faith, assurance, and baptism. The goal is baptism and clear understanding of salvation by grace and call to holiness.

2. *Holiness Class*: teaches how to cope with imperfect performance, temptation, and the need for God's part in, and our responsibility in being entirely sanctified. The goal is testimonies to being entirely sanctified.

3. *Membership Class*: teaches the mission, history, vision, theology, and standards of the Church of the Nazarene. The goal is church membership.

Discipling is a broad term. It includes evangelizing, helping others to become followers of Christ. It includes initial follow-up, helping new converts adjust to a new Master and learn to live by His grace under His government. It includes helping Christians learn to effectively serve Christ. It includes helping Christians mature to the point of effectively leading others to evangelize, to follow up, to lead to serve, and to lead to lead. I work with some of my lay pastors (LIFE group leaders) to help them lead others to Christ and provide for initial follow-up. I work with other lay pastors (Sunday School teachers) to help them pastor and lead the whole church in becoming servants of Christ. Thus through preaching, pastoral calling, and working intensively with lay pastors, I am integrating the principles of discipling into my pastoral ministry. I recognize that many of the principles and details are not spelled out in this article, but I pray that the general plan can be inspirational to someone who is grappling with the issue. 

## A PASTOR'S PRAYER

Lord, make my life a gentle light  
 Within our world to glow—  
 A constant flame, burning so bright  
 Where'er my path may go.

Lord, make my life a simple song  
 To cheer a heart that's sad;  
 To help the struggling one be strong  
 And make the sorrowing glad.

Lord, make my life a rugged staff  
 So that the weak may rest;  
 To lend support in time of need.  
 And correction when it's best.

Lord, make my life a copy of  
 The Man from Galilee—  
 To preach, to teach, to heal, to love—  
 His life, Lord, seen in me.

—Bud Reedy

Preparing to Preach from Gen. 17:1

# WALK BEFORE ME, AND BE BLAMELESS

by Stephen G. Green

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One's walk with God involves more than chasing promises. This relationship involves a life-style of faithfulness, which the Old Testament describes as a covenant of mutual responsibility.

In *The Cost of Discipleship*, Dietrich Bonhoeffer describes this truth as "costly grace." "Cheap grace," he says,

means the justification of sin without the justification of the sinner . . . the preaching of forgiveness without requiring repentance . . . grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without Jesus Christ. Costly grace is the treasure hidden in the field; for the sake of it a man will gladly go and sell all that he has. . . . Costly grace is the gospel which must be sought again and again, the gift which must be asked for, the door at which a man must knock. Such grace is costly because it calls us to follow, and it is grace because it calls us to follow Jesus Christ. It is costly because it costs a man his life, and it is grace because it gives a man the only true life.<sup>1</sup>

Gen. 17:1 is a call to "costly grace." In this verse God calls Abraham to perfection.

Some of the most difficult sermons to preach are those that are taken from a single verse. Gen. 17:1 is a verse that many of us in the holiness tradition are tempted to preach from out of context. But to under-

stand how this passage is to function in our lives, we must first understand how it functioned in the Abraham story.

## THE LARGER CONTEXT OF THE ABRAHAM STORY

Abraham's story begins in Gen. 12:1 with the call of Abram to chase after the promise of God. This promise was to bless Abram and his descendants, and through him, the whole earth. It is important to note at this point that there seems to be no demand of any certain life-style from the recipient of the promise. God seems only to make the promise and to call Abram to chase after it. There are no stipulations to be fulfilled as part of the covenant agreement. Abram has no requirements made of him until chapter 17.

The high point of Abraham's story is found in chapter 22. Up to this point, he has chased after the promise. Abraham's chase was not without some doubt and impatience, but he always finally believed God. His commitment to the promise paid off, and Abraham finally received it. Chapter 22 portrays a miracle of faith. God tested Abraham, asking him to surrender Isaac, the fulfillment of the promise, back to Him. The power of this part of the patriarch's story is seen in Abraham's complete trust in and obedience to God. Having chased after

the promise, Abraham is now willing to give it up. How was that possible? Something had to have taken place between chapters 12 and 22 to prepare Abraham for this complete sacrifice. Much of what had taken place can be found in the call to "costly grace" of chapter 17.

## CHAPTER 17

This passage comprises an introductory phrase, mentioning the patriarch's age and a series of speeches from God to Abram. Narrative is used to show Abram's responses. The only time he speaks is in verses 17 and 18, where his struggle to believe the promise of God is evident. The chapter concludes with a narrative section (verses 22-27) showing the obedient execution of God's instructions. Now, a closer look at the *details* of this chapter is needed.

In verses 3-8, the promise, understood as a covenant, is explained in detail. In the entire Abraham story, only 15:18 refers to covenant. *Covenant* is a term of relationship, in which a superior has established a bond with an inferior party. "The covenant is the primary metaphor for understanding Israel's life with God. It is the covenant which offers to Israel the gift of hope, the reality of identity, the possibility of belonging, the certitude of vocation."<sup>2</sup>

The promise is also understood, in verses 7 and 8, to be eternal. The covenant is made not only with Abraham but with all of his descendants as well. This is a reference to its timeless validity. The importance of this everlasting covenant can be seen first in the similar expression of the Davidic covenant. God's everlasting promise to Abraham was reinforced in His promise to David. These promises have been Israel's greatest source of strength throughout her history. An example of this can be seen in the dark days of exile, when the Davidic dynasty was no more and Israel had lost its land and identity. The people of faith found hope as they reminded themselves that God had covenanted himself forever to Israel. Israel had a future, because God would bring them to it, even if by means they could not yet perceive.

The covenant promise is also life-changing. Abram was no longer able to understand himself or his wife as he once had. God's covenant promise brought with it a change of identity, expressed in the changing of their names from Abram to Abraham (v. 5), and from Sarai to Sarah (vv. 15-16). The popular etymology of his name change is given in the text, "the father of a multitude of nations." This name change points back to Abram's call in 12:1-3. The idea of Abraham being the father of nations and kings coming forth from him is connected with the hope of a universal extension of God's salvation beyond the limits of Israel.

In verses 9-14, the sign of the covenant is given. Abraham and his descendants will bear the mark of the covenant on their flesh. Circumcision, so important to Jews and sometimes controversial in their history, makes Abraham and his descendants partners in the obligations of the covenant. No Jewish practice is more significant than circumcision. Though this does not make a child born into a Jewish home a Jew, it does confirm his special relationship to the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. To not circumcise a child was more than merely neglecting a rite, it was a rejection of God's sign. This

was subject to divine punishment, as seen in verse 14.

In the history of Israel, her people have been tempted to abandon this sign because of persecution or a desire to be like the world. During the reign of Antiochus IV, circumcision was prohibited by royal decree, but devout Jews continued the practice even at the risk of death. Within 100 years the political situation had changed. Now many Jews began to abandon the rite of circumcision because they wanted to conform to the dominant Greco-Roman way of life.<sup>3</sup> The world never makes the sign of covenant relationship easy for the people of God.

In verses 17-21, Abraham responds to God's promise of a son through his barren wife, Sarah. His first response is curious—he prostrated himself and laughed. This seems to point to a mixture of submission and doubt. Abraham wants to believe, yet the situation tempts something within him to rebel against belief. This causes Abraham to offer God the opportunity of transferring the impossible promise just made, to the possible heir who is already in hand. God does bless Ishmael but insists that His promise would be carried through Sarah, the barren one. Isaac would be the heir of the everlasting covenant. God's power has always been made perfect in weakness. God often chooses the impossible situations to fulfill His promises. In submissive doubt, Abraham continues to be the "father of faith."

The last section of this passage is verses 22-27. Here, Abraham responds obediently to the voice of God. The old promise had brought about a new identity with new responsibilities. The presence of God now seemed removed from Abraham. What would he do with the instructions of God Almighty? How does he know that the promise will happen? How does he know that the new obligations can be carried out? How does he know that his new identity is real? He can only know through faithful obedience. Abraham neither reflects on what had just taken place, nor waits to see what will happen. In obedience, he makes the sign of the covenant visible.

### DETAILED EXAMINATION: GEN. 17:1-2

"When Abram was ninety-nine years old, Yahweh appeared to Abram and said, 'I am El Shaddai. Walk in my presence and be perfect. Therefore, I will establish my covenant between you and me, and I will multiply you exceedingly.'"<sup>4</sup>

The name *El Shaddai* is of great importance to the patriarchal story. It is God's revelation of himself to Abraham that would continue to remind the patriarchs of the promise (Gen. 17:1; 28:3; 35:11; 43:14; 48:3; 49:25; Exod. 6:3). Most scholars feel that the name originally meant "god of the mountains." The many uses of this name in the Book of Job point to its emphasis upon the power and majesty of God. This is probably why the LXX translated it *pantokrator*, "Almighty." Therefore, El Shaddai calls all covenant people to two basic responses. The first response is submission. This is the All-Powerful King who is revealing himself to Abram. The second response is hope. The All-Powerful King is the One who promises. He is willing and able to do what He has promised.

El Shaddai's actual address to Abram contains two commands. The first of these imperatives is, "Walk in my presence." The command "to walk" is a *hithpa'el*

verb. This verb form in the Hebrew text is reflexive, meaning it has reference to oneself. "To walk," in the Hebrew mind, is to live life out. Life is a walking about. Therefore, God commands Abram to live his life in the awareness that he is in the continual presence of El Shaddai.

The second imperative is, "be perfect." *Tamim* is the Hebrew word that has been translated "perfect." The LXX has translated this word with *amemptos*. This is the reason so many translations have rendered this passage "be blameless." There is a difference between the Hebrew word and its Greek translation. The major difference is that "blameless" expresses a subjective judgment, while "perfect, complete, whole, and integrity" reflect a condition. Abraham is called to a condition of *tamim*, while he lives, aware of the continual presence of God. VonRad points out in his commentary that *tamim* refers to a relational perfection of Abraham toward God. This command would not mean moral perfection, as one living without mistakes, but "it signifies complete, unqualified surrender."<sup>5</sup>

In the preceding verse, God revealed himself as the Almighty One and called Abram to live *tamim* before him. Now in verse 2, God reveals His side of the covenant agreement. The word normally used for the establishing of a covenant, *karat*, is replaced by *natan*, "to give." Though the covenant people are called to maintain their side of the covenant agreement, it is the grace of God that "gives" and guarantees the covenant. The Almighty One makes His original promise new. He binds himself to fulfill what He has promised to do. In a unique way, God and Abraham will belong to each other as never before (v. 8).

### THEOLOGICAL RATIONALE

An isolated reading of Gen. 17:1 would miss the major concern of the text. A casual reader may think that the biblical writer was concerned about the moral imperfections of the patriarch. But a contextual reading of this verse allows us to understand that the great burden is that of unfulfilled promise. It was not just an "add on" that the story begins with Abram's age. The patriarch had hoped for God to fulfill His promise for 24 years. After 11 years, Abram and Sarai took matters into their own hands. The couple chose Hagar, Sarai's Egyptian maid, to be the means of providing for the promise. But their action resulted only in pain and sorrow. These 24 years had been filled with fear and doubt, yet with a lingering hope. Abram was now 99 years old, and he and Sarai were well past the time when they were able to have a child. It is into this scenario of fading hope that God reveals himself in a new way to Abram.

Abram's world is not all that different from ours. We too have noticed the seeming contradictions between the word of promise and the experiential realities of weakness, confusion, and failure. All too often, we have used our own "Hagars" to help God "save face." Rather than living in the hope of promise, we have learned how to justify our sin and hide from our failures. Though we have detached ourselves from our past, we have given up on the promise that called us. We too need God to reveal himself to us in a new way; a way that would revitalize the promise in us.

What does it mean for God to reveal himself as El Shaddai? In the patriarchal tradition it meant that the promise was secure. This security of the promise can be seen in the continual repeating of the name throughout this tradition (Gen. 17:1; 28:3; 35:11; 43:14; 49:25; Exod. 6:3). But why did this name give that type of security? Because through it the patriarchs understood that God was sovereign over all things. His sovereignty is seen not only in His control over the promise but also in His claim and control over the people of promise. Abram could never understand himself as he once had. He was marked and named by the Almighty One forever.

To be aware of living before the Almighty One is to be called to a life of complete surrender, *tamim*. This did not mean that there would be no struggle for Abraham, as can be seen as his story continues, but it did mean that he would live in faith-keeping obedience. The greatest challenge life brought Abraham is recorded in Genesis 22. In this chapter, God calls Abraham to sacrifice his son, Isaac, back to Him. It is interesting to notice the complete surrender and security of Abraham in that chapter. Why? Because it was El Shaddai who called him. The Almighty One who controlled his life also controlled the promise. To understand God as El Shaddai is to respond to His guidance in both submission and security!

### POSSIBLE PREACHING HELPS

How does one go about preaching this passage? I first established the problem of the text: unrealized promise. This was done first by using the Abraham story and then by finding points of correlation in contemporary life. After the problem has been established, try to diagnose why this takes place. Then present the good news, God's revelation of himself as El Shaddai. To accomplish this, it only makes sense to go back to the Abraham story. Finally, express the result of the encounter. The only possible response any of us can have is submission and security. Naturally, you will want to make this type of sermon your own.

Though I don't use obvious points in my sermons, this text may be preached using this style also. A sermon on the whole Abraham story may go as follows:

- I. The Call (chap. 12)
- II. The Challenge (chap. 22)
- III. The Commitment (17:1)
- IV. The Change (chap. 17)

A sermon on chapter 17 may go as follows:

- I. Costly Grace (vv. 1-2)
- II. Costly Change (vv. 3-16)
- III. Challenge to Grace (vv. 17-21)
- IV. Certainty of Covenant (vv. 22-27)

A sermon on verses 1-2 may go as follows:

- I. The Revealed God (El Shaddai)
- II. The Realized Self (submission)
- III. The Remembered Promise (security)

### NOTES

1. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1949), 47.
2. Walter Brueggeman, *Genesis, a Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1982), 154.
3. W. Gunther Plaut, *The Torah, a Modern Commentary* (New York: Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1981), 118.
4. Translation is the author's own.
5. Gerhard VonRad, *Genesis, a Commentary* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1972), 198.

# JOHN WESLEY AND ESCHATOLOGY

by James B. Bross

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John Wesley was a prolific writer and an avid reader about topics as diverse as theology and medicine. He published books on a variety of topics for the edification of his Methodist preachers and laypeople. Highly educated for his time, he held a master's degree and a fellowship at Oxford University, where he lectured off and on for many years.

Wesley the university scholar was overshadowed by Wesley the practical theologian, evangelist, organizer, and pastor. In 1768 he cautioned an aspiring scholar, "An ounce of love is worth a pound of knowledge."<sup>1</sup> Wesley was more concerned about the spiritual and physical welfare of those he and his societies contacted than he was about speculative theology. On the whole, Wesley's theology was traditional, committed to an Arminian understanding of the Church of England's Thirty-nine Articles. He was determined to be a man of one book, the Bible, in all his theology. This biblical foundation is evident in all his works.

Wesley's practical bent is evident in most of his sermons, letters, and treatises. The sermon titles are related to the condition of the lost, the hope of salvation, and the Christian life. Following his practical approach, Wesley is modest in his treatment of eschatological themes. Generally those themes are designed to produce repentance and godly living. In the standard series of 52 sermons, the only eschatological title is sermon number XV, "The Great Assize," a sermon on the last Judgment.<sup>2</sup> The second series of 55 sermons has more titles of reflecting eschatological themes: "On Eternity," "The General Deliverance," "The Mystery of Iniquity," "The New Creation," and "Of Hell." The third series includes "The Rich Man and Lazarus," and the fifth series includes "On the Resurrection of the Dead."<sup>3</sup> Dispensational speculation is absent from these sermons; instead they affirm practical living of a holy life. That only 8 out of 141 sermon titles treat eschatological subjects demonstrates that Wesley was not inclined to end-time speculation. He saw little practical value in such matters and left them to others who were more speculatively inclined. These sermons, along with his *Notes on the New Testament*, give us the bulk of Wesley's end-times theology.

## Death

Wesley addresses this subject frequently in sermons, letters, and other treatises. However, it is interesting that no single sermon is entirely devoted to the topic. The deterioration

of the body leading to death is discussed in Sermon LVII, "The Fall of Man."<sup>4</sup> The miraculous reversal of that process is treated in Sermon CXXXVII, "On the Resurrection of the Dead."<sup>5</sup> Other aspects are treated incidentally in various sermons.

Perhaps the most extensive treatment of death as a state is found in Sermon CXII, "The Rich Man and Lazarus," based on Luke 16 and preached in Birmingham in 1788.<sup>6</sup> Wesley discussed paradise and Hades as places of the dead awaiting resurrection. He affirms that after death there is no hope of repentance or purging. Again, he urges practical applications: compassion for the poor and amendment of life while there is still opportunity. He briefly discusses the final conquest of death in Sermon LXIV, "The New Creation."<sup>7</sup>

Further treatment is found in *Notes on the New Testament* relative to Rev. 20:14. Death and Hades "were abolished forever; for neither the righteous nor the wicked were to die any more; their souls and bodies were no more to be separated. Consequently, neither death nor hades could any more have a being."<sup>8</sup>

## Resurrection

Wesley deals with the resurrection most extensively in Sermon CXXXVII, "On the Resurrection of the Dead." The sermon was originally written by Benjamin Calamy, D.D., and published in 1704. Wesley abridged and revised it in 1732.<sup>9</sup> It is based on 1 Cor. 15:35, "But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come?"

The sermon argues "that the resurrection of the self-same body that died and was buried, contains nothing in it incredible or impossible."<sup>10</sup> God keeps all bodies unmixed, possibly through miraculous methods. He then reunites the same soul with the body it formerly inhabited. The glorified body will be changed, immortal and incorruptible, raised in glory and in power as a spiritual body. According to the sermon, a spiritual body is one that serves the spirit rather than vice versa as at present. In this purified body, lusts and appetites will be controlled by the Spirit. Wesley then makes practical applications urging discipline of the body and its affections in this life, which will produce greater glory in the resurrected body.

## The Judgment

Wesley gives brief accounts of the Great White Throne

Judgment in Sermon LI, "The Good Steward"<sup>11</sup> and in Sermon CX, "The Discoveries of Faith."<sup>12</sup> However Sermon XV, "The Great Assize,"<sup>13</sup> gives a more complete discussion of eschatology in general and the resurrection in particular than perhaps any other compact treatise by Wesley. His *Notes on the New Testament* certainly give more information on his eschatological views, but not in a systematic arrangement.

"The Great Assize" was first preached at the Assizes held in Bedford, March 10, 1758.<sup>14</sup> The text was Rom. 14:10, "We shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ."

Wesley tells us there will be signs in earth, in the air, and in the heavens. All will be resurrected to stand before the Great White Throne. Wesley makes no distinction between the resurrection of the righteous and that of the wicked. Angels will gather all humankind to stand before the Judge, Jesus Christ. Reason dictates that the day of the Lord, the day of Judgment, may last several thousand years. It will be held on earth before the Great White Throne, which will be elevated above the earth, possibly farther away than the planets.

All persons who have ever lived, small and great, all now equal, will be judged. Every man must give account of his deeds, words, thoughts, and inward dispositions of soul, including appetites and passions. Those on the right hand will be rewarded, their good revealed to all. Wesley also believed their evil deeds will be revealed in order to show God's power of deliverance in their lives (Matt. 10:26). The righteous will rejoice in their deliverance as acquittal is pronounced. Those on the left hand will also face all their deeds, then be sentenced to condemnation forever. The blessedness of the righteous and the horror of the condemned will surpass description and will last forever. Then the heavens will depart and the earth with its works will be burned up. There will be new heavens, and the righteous will see God's face in perfect happiness. There will be no more night. God's name will be placed on the foreheads of the righteous.

Wesley closes with an application, urging all to come to God and to live righteously.

### Heaven and Hell

Wesley devotes one entire sermon to the subject of hell, Sermon LXXIII, "Of Hell."<sup>15</sup> On the other hand, none is specifically devoted to the subject of heaven. Both subjects are treated briefly several times in other sermons and letters. In a letter to a Miss Bishop, dated April 17, 1776, he briefly describes heaven.<sup>16</sup> The description is drawn from Revelation 21.<sup>17</sup> In his *Notes on the New Testament*, he inserts a word of caution typical of his conservative approach: "In treating of all these things a deep reverence is necessary; and so is a measure of spiritual wisdom; that we may neither understand them too literally and grossly, nor go too far from the natural force of the words."<sup>18</sup>

Wesley treats the subject of hell more extensively, warning his hearers and readers of the horror awaiting those under condemnation, urging them to repent. The most complete discussion is found in Sermon LXXIII, "Of Hell."<sup>19</sup>

Based on Mark 9:48, "Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched," he describes the punishment of the wicked as being twofold, involving both loss and pain. The loss will remove all pleasures of senses and imagination. There will be no beauty, light, nor honor, only horror, shame, and contempt. Human friendships and loving relationships will be gone forever. Spirits created for fellowship with God will instead be permanently banished from God's presence.

The never-dying worm of conscience, and all unholy tempers will torment the lost. The fire of hell will be the same for all, but the worm of conscience will differ according to the kinds and degrees of wickedness engaged in during life. Wesley affirms the traditional beliefs that the fire of hell will be both material and eternal. He questions those who speculate that punishment will be variously suited to the crimes of the wicked. He admonishes: "Let us keep to the written word. It is torment enough."<sup>20</sup> Furthermore, the company of wicked persons will have no restraint, and there will be no intermission in the endless punishment. He closes with practical admonitions. "What a guard may these considerations be against any temptation."<sup>21</sup>

### Other Eschatological Themes

Some of the themes often emphasized in modern approaches to eschatology do not appear in Wesley's writings or if they do, they receive short shrift. The Marriage Supper of the Lamb announced in Rev. 19:9 is briefly noticed by Wesley's *Notes* as meaning the saints are "called to glory."<sup>22</sup>

The millennium is discussed as involving two distinct thousand-year periods, the first while Satan is bound and the second while the saints reign. According to Wesley, "By observing these two distinct thousand years, many difficulties are avoided. There is room enough for the fulfilling of all the prophecies, and those which before seemed to clash are reconciled; particularly those which speak, on the one hand, of a most flourishing state of the church as yet to come; and, on the other, of the fatal security of men in the last days of the world."<sup>23</sup> Other than this interpretation the brief treatment Wesley gives is not particularly noteworthy.

Regarding antichrist he acknowledges, "The whole succession of Popes from Gregory VII are undoubtedly antichrist."<sup>24</sup> Wesley uses the small "a" to begin antichrist here and in the only indexed reference to antichrist in his *Works*. That reference alludes to "the Romish antichrist" who "is already so fallen, that he will not again lift up his head in any considerable degree."<sup>25</sup>

The term *Rapture* was not known to Wesley, probably coming into use since his time. In his comment on Matt. 25:40-41 Wesley writes, "One is taken—Into God's immediate protection; and one is left—To share the common calamities."<sup>26</sup> Being caught up into the air was apparently an interpretation foreign to him. In commenting on 1 Thess. 4:17, Wesley writes, "In the air—The wicked will remain beneath, while the righteous, being absolved, shall be assessors with their Lord in the judgment."<sup>27</sup> Again he does not elaborate. The term *Tribulation* was also unknown to Wesley though he certainly acknowledged the biblical predictions of fearful times filled with suffering and trouble.

### Notes on Revelation

In introducing his notes on Revelation, Wesley clearly acknowledges his dependence on J. A. Bengel (or Bengelius), the great German biblical scholar, for much of his understanding of the book. In the *Notes* and other places, he more than once offers disclaimers regarding his opinions about chronology and the millennium. For example, in a letter dated in 1788, he says: "That Bengelius had given it as his opinion, not that the world would then end, but that the millennial reign of Christ would begin in the year 1836. I have no opinion at all upon the head: I can determine nothing at all about it. These calculations are far above, out of my sight, I have only one





"They say we do this to relieve anger and tension, neither of which I have until I come out here."

thing to do, to save my soul, and those that hear me."<sup>28</sup> This statement is interesting since Wesley uses the date 1836 in his notes on Revelation.

Quite clearly, he did use Bengel's interpretations very extensively. In the introduction to notes on Revelation he states the following,

It is scarce possible for any that either love or fear God not to feel their hearts extremely affected in seriously reading either the beginning or the latter part of the Revelation. These, it is evident, we cannot consider too much; but the intermediate parts I did not study at all for many years; as utterly despairing understanding them, after the fruitless attempts of so many wise and good men: and perhaps I should have lived and died in this sentiment, had I not seen the works of the great Bengelius. But these revived my hopes of understanding even the prophecies of this book; at least many of them in some good degree. . . . The following notes are mostly those of that excellent man.<sup>29</sup>

In his introduction to Chapter 4 he writes: "The whole Revelation may be divided thus:

The first, second, and third chapters contain the introduction:

The fourth and fifth, the proposition;

The sixth, seventh, eighth, and ninth describe things which are already fulfilled;

The tenth to the fourteenth, things which are now fulfilling:

The fifteenth to the nineteenth, things which will be fulfilled shortly;

The twentieth, twenty-first, and twenty-second, things at a greater distance."<sup>30</sup>

Wesley does not connect the letters to the seven churches in Revelation 2 and 3 with certain ages of history though he does suggest that some of the events mentioned in those letters were connected to particular persecutions of the Early Church by Rome. For example, Rev. 2:10 and 13 are tied to the persecution under Domitian.<sup>31</sup> In his comments on Chapters 4 and 5, Wesley discussed some of the symbolism that

recurs in the book: the 4 living creatures, the 24 elders, the 7 seals, the 7 trumpets, and the 7 vials. He then suggests: "St. John has in view, through the whole following vision, what he has been now describing, namely, the four living creatures, the elders, the angels, and all creatures, looking together at the opening of the seven seals."<sup>32</sup>

In his comments introducing Chapter 6 Wesley lays down four principles of interpretation.

- 1) No man should constrain either himself or another to explain everything in this book. It is sufficient for everyone to speak just so far as he understands.
- 2) We should remember that, although the ancient prophets wrote the occurrences of those kingdoms only with which Israel had to do, yet the Revelation contains what relates to the whole world, through which the Christian church is extended.
- 3) We should not prescribe to this prophecy, as if it must needs admit or exclude this or that history, according as we judge one or the other to be of great or small importance. "God seeth not as a man seeth;" Therefore what we think great is often omitted, what we think little inserted, in scripture history or prophecy.
- 4) We must take care not to overlook what is already fulfilled; and not to describe as fulfilled what is still to come.<sup>33</sup>

Wesley interprets the events associated with the first four seals as fulfilled under Emperors Domitian and Trajan. The latter three seals deal with the "invisible world." He believes Rev. 4:11 refers to martyrs under heathen Rome and later under papal Rome in "The crusade against the Waldenses."<sup>34</sup> In general his interpretation of the symbolism is very curious and conservative.

When he comes to the seven trumpets, he tells us that the seals are not complete until the trumpets begin and the trumpets are not complete before the "phiales" begin.<sup>35</sup> The first trumpet affected the Jews under Trajan and "Adrian." "The second trumpet affects the Roman heathens . . . the third, the dead, unholy Christians; the fourth, the empire itself."<sup>36</sup> These four trumpets are tied to the period down to ca. 476 when, according to Wesley, the Roman Empire ended. As with the

(Continued on p. 34)

# How Do We Say THANKS?

by Albert F. Harper

*Professor of Christian Education Emeritus  
Nazarene Theological Seminary, Kansas City*

**H**ow do we say thanks for a talented life dedicated to God and to the work of the church?

## **Business Executive**

In 1946 Bud Lunn resigned as an executive with General Motors to become the assistant manager of the Nazarene Publishing House. His sister recalls Bud's first employment by NPH as a boy of 12. In the basement of their home he painted dowel rods at a penny each to be used in calendars manufactured by the publishing house. His father, M. Lunn, had been an accountant for the House since 1913, and its manager from 1922. Long before M. Lunn's retirement in 1960, there was clear consensus that his son, Bud, was the right man to follow his father as manager. For 26 years the wisdom of that choice has been evident.

Bud Lunn has business ability. Under his leadership sales from the publishing house grew from \$2,065,000 in 1960 to \$16,015,000 in 1985. This growing business has required repeated purchase of new property, erection of larger buildings, and rearrangement of work space. NPH has been a growing institution at the heart of a growing church.

Part of this success has been the manager's wisdom in maintaining modern facilities over a quarter century of rapidly changing techniques. Production has gone from one-color, single-impression presses to high-speed four-color rotary equipment; from the linotype machines to electronic typesetting.

Bud's business insight has served the denomination even beyond the guidance of the publishing house. Throughout 26 years as manager he has also served on the investment committee of the general church.

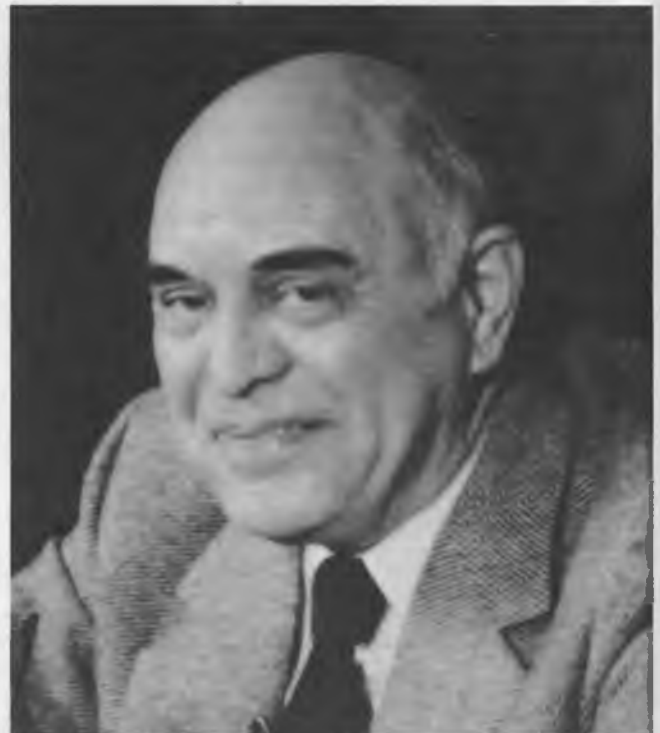
## **Christian Steward**

But more important for the Kingdom than his business ability, Bud Lunn has been a consistent Christian steward of the business he has managed. He knew that money sent to Kansas City to pay for literature meant that much less to invest in God's work locally—and often the literature payments came from small, struggling churches. NPH policy has therefore been to keep prices as low as possible for the local church. In

pursuit of this goal Mr. Lunn has consistently declined to market periodicals through independent bookstores. To sell through these channels meant offering dealer discounts of 40 percent. To price merchandise high enough to permit these margins meant that local churches would have to pay more than necessary for their literature. This Mr. Lunn was not willing to permit. A lifelong friend and college president wrote of Bud: "I know very few people in public Christian service who even rivaled his ability to think consistently from the point of view of the people he was serving."

## **Committed Churchman**

But Bud has also known that money earned through publishing can be used as a tool to advance God's work through the whole denomination. The last time



M. A. "Bud" Lunn

Nazarene

# Update

UPDATE EDITOR, MARK D. MARVIN, PASTORAL MINISTRIES

## DISCIPLING

The command of Christ to His Church is, "Go . . . make disciples." To be a disciple is to be a learner, a follower, one who by testimony and life points others to Jesus Christ. The task of the minister is never finished when someone is converted. That person must be "discipled."

We do not work with "objects," like wood, or marble, or clay—all of which can be shaped and "finished." Rather, we work with human personality, which is not always predictable and often responds in ways totally unexpected. Certainly, the growth of a person never arrives at a point where we can say "completed."

The minister may assist in bringing a new Christian to a level of significant growth and then permit fellow Christians to pick up the task of promoting maturation. He then will turn energies to newer Christians who are still novices in the faith. The pastor, then, must always be about the task of discipling.

Numerous materials have been produced in the past two decades to enable the pastor to disciple new Christians and members of the congregation. By using these aids, adapting them, or by devising one's own discipling plan the pastor can conserve the fruit of evangelism, enhance the productivity of the believer, and fulfill the commandment of our Lord to "make disciples."



by General Superintendent  
John A. Knight

To disciple a new convert is not only to enrich the quality of that person's faith but also to prepare one for service and to equip for ministry. A primary function of the pastor, along with preaching, is to teach, "to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ" (Eph. 4:12-13, NIV).

To accomplish this the pastor must help each new convert and church member gain an adequate understanding and acceptance of the privileges and responsibilities of membership in the Church. Each must be helped to become a growing participant in the Christian fellowship.

Specifically, the pastor must teach the basic elements of Christian faith (through preaching and social classes), Christian ethics, the major movements of Christian history, and church polity and organization. No one is being discipled adequately who is not being taught to worship, witness, learn, and minister daily in the ordinary circumstances of life.

As this is done, potential church leaders will be discovered who can then be recruited for further training for specific roles in the Body of Christ. There is no more fulfilling assignment than that of observing new believers find their gift for ministry and become integrated into the active life of the Church's ministry.

If 60% of the Nazarenes have been brought into the Church in the last decade, as is claimed, then the "discipling" task of the pastor is a monumental one. May God give us vision for this thrilling assignment in order that the newest disciples may bring the knowledge of Christ to others—"that the world may know." □

# 50 Largest Nazarene Metro Areas

## Nazarenes Throughout the Metropolitan United States

Churches of the Nazarene can be found in 273 of the 277 metropolitan areas defined by the United States government, according to data just released by the Church Growth Research Center. After analyzing pastors' reports compiled by the general secretary's office, 50 metropolitan areas were each found to have 1,900 or more Nazarene members. These areas, shown on the map and listed in the table below, are scattered throughout the United States. For Nazarenes, this means that every area of the country has at least one major concentration of resources for evangelism.



Metropolitan Area	Nazarenes	Metropolitan Area	Nazarenes
Atlanta, Ga.	2,032	Miami-Fort Lauderdale, Fla.	4,049
Bakersfield, Calif.	2,097	Muncie, Ind.	2,000
Birmingham, Ala.	2,624	Nashville, Tenn.	6,916
Boston-Lawrence-Salem, Mass.-N.H.	3,307	New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island, N.Y.-N.J.-Conn.	5,419
Canton, Ohio	1,914	Oklahoma City, Okla.	11,414
Charleston, W.Va.	4,737	Orlando, Fla.	3,320
Charlotte-Gastonia-Rock Hill, N.C.-S.C.	2,771	Philadelphia-Wilmington-Trenton, Pa.-N.J.-Del.-Md.	4,821
Chattanooga, Tenn.-Ga.	2,194	Phoenix, Ariz.	5,091
Chicago-Gary-Lake County, Ill.-Ind.-Wis.	7,282	Pittsburgh-Beaver Valley, Pa.	2,861
Cincinnati-Hamilton, Ohio-Ky.-Ind.	8,063	Portland-Vancouver, Oreg.-Wash.	6,926
Cleveland-Akron-Lorain, Ohio	5,192	Sacramento, Calif.	3,360
Colorado Springs, Colo.	3,020	Saint Louis, Mo.-Ill.	5,111
Columbus, Ohio	6,752	Salem, Oreg.	2,789
Dallas-Fort Worth, Tex.	6,659	San Diego, Calif.	3,159
Dayton-Springfield, Ohio	5,669	San Francisco-Oakland-San Jose, Calif.	5,927
Denver-Boulder, Colo.	5,357	Seattle-Tacoma, Wash.	5,440
Detroit-Ann Arbor, Mich.	5,818	Spokane, Wash.	1,941
Flint, Mich.	2,531	Steubenville-Weirton, Ohio-W.Va.	2,223
Houston-Galveston-Brazoria, Tex.	3,780	Tampa-Saint Petersburg, Fla.	3,741
Huntington-Ashland, W.Va.-Ky.-Ohio	3,958	Tulsa, Okla.	3,362
Indianapolis, Ind.	5,638	Visalia-Tulare-Porterville, Calif.	2,098
Kankakee, Ill.	1,921	Washington, D.C.-Md.-Va.	2,832
Kansas City, Mo.-Kans.	8,711	Wichita, Kans.	3,073
Little Rock-North Little Rock, Ark.	3,905	Youngstown-Warren, Ohio	2,229
Los Angeles-Anaheim-Riverside, Calif.	24,968		
Louisville, Ky.-Ind.	2,457		

This is another sample of the way the Church Growth Research Center is attempting to help the Church of the Nazarene understand its resources and potential for mission. How may we serve you?

# NEW

# TEACHING INSIGHTS

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**T**eaching Insights is an all new video-assisted training series planned to help workers in a variety of church ministries become more effective. With each video package there is a tape, a leader's guide, student work sheets, and a video guidelines booklet all contained in an attractive vinyl notebook.

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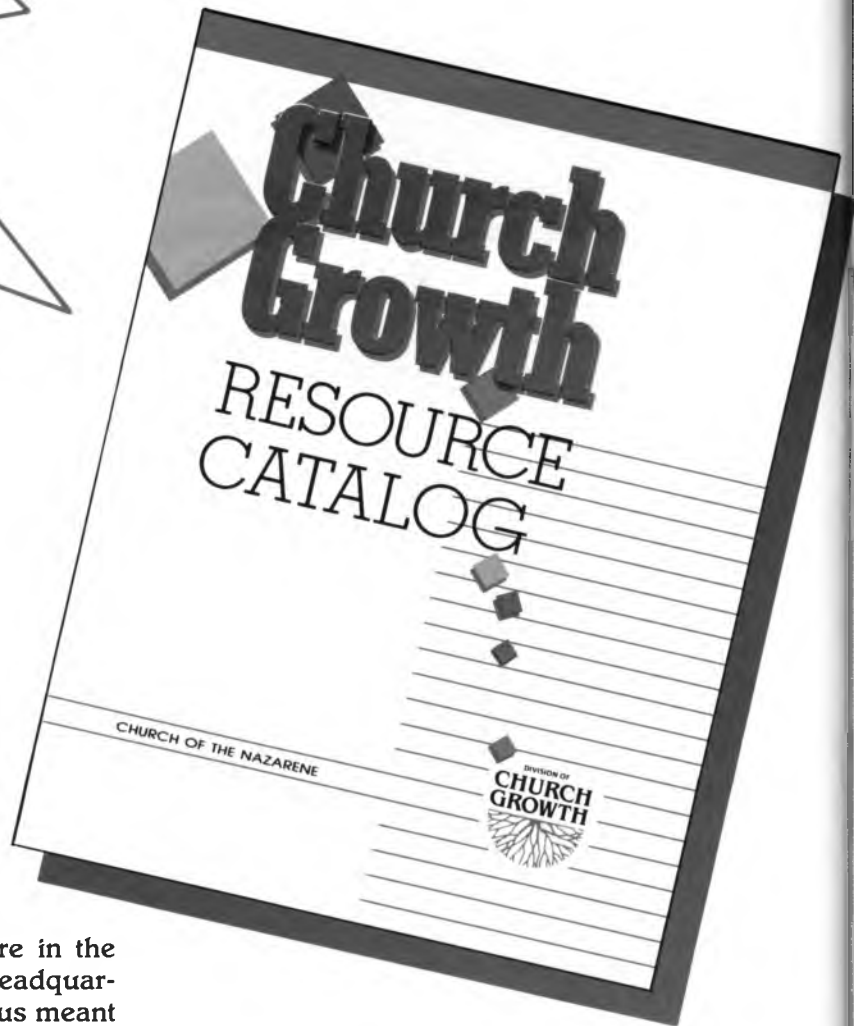
WATCH FOR ANNOUNCEMENT OF ADDITIONAL TAPES IN SERIES



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# NAZARENE PUBLISHING HOUSE

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Dear Church Growth Friends:

Our perception of "church growth" here in the Church Growth Division at Nazarene Headquarters is substantially what we believe Jesus meant when He said, "... I will build my church ... ." (Matthew 16:18). It is obvious that when Jesus gave the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-19), He had in mind a resultant numerical increase. But many other expressions reveal His concern for the nurturing and strengthening of His followers. Thus, a balanced view of church growth must include concerns for both numerical increase and spiritual strengthening of the church. In other words: quantity and quality.

As an organization that exists to serve the local church and the district, the Church Growth Division provides and makes available growth resources in four categories:

1. Internal Growth
2. Expansion Growth
3. Extension Growth
4. Bridging

This catalog combines the listings in the Nazarene Publishing House general catalog with the free materials available from the Church Growth Division. The listings are categorized according to the four kinds of church growth, with a fifth section on church growth studies.

You will find subgroupings within these categories, such as children, youth, and adult, and public, personal, and process evangelism.

We hope you will find this handy catalog a useful expression of the Church Growth Division's desire to serve you and your church.

Bill M. Sullivan  
Church Growth Director

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*We want to be a part of it!*



# NEW YORK NEW YORK

And through "Thrust to the Cities," the denomination's decadal outreach plan, the Church of the Nazarene will have a big part in impacting the Big Apple for Christ in 1988!

Proposed methods of reaching New York include:

## EVANGELISTIC CRUSADES

Crusades are an important part of every "Thrust." Those planned for New York include:

- Haitian Crusades
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- Queens Days Multi-Ethnic Crusade

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Proposed programs include:

- Substance Abuse Programs
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- Children's Outreach
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## CHURCH PLANTING

During the New York Thrust, a projected 23 new churches will be planted. These include several new ethnic congregations, including:

- Chinese (Mandarin)
- Hispanic
- Haitian
- Arabic
- Indo-Pakistani
- Korean
- Filipino
- Portuguese
- Multi-Ethnic

*Be a part of it!*

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

# Los Angeles

*Keeps Calling Us Home*

Los Angeles. It's considered by many to be the birthplace of the Church of the Nazarene; the place we first got our name.

## GOALS FOR THE 1988 THRUST TO LOS ANGELES

### Church Planting

30 new congregations  
60 ethnic congregations by 1990

### Compassionate Ministries

Planned compassionate ministries programs include establishing centers to provide: food, clothing, health care, counseling, legal services, employment opportunities, and language training.



One pop song describes Los Angeles like this: "L.A.'s fine, the sun shines most of the time, and the feeling is laid back." But there's nothing "laid back" about what the Church of the Nazarene, through "Thrust to the Cities," wants to do for its old hometown in 1988. We want to make a significant difference in this town, in the name of

Jesus Christ. When you stop and think about it, we're just getting a second wind on what started all those years ago:

*We seek the simplicity and the power of the primitive New Testament church. The field of labor to which we feel called is in the neglected quarters of the cities and wherever else may be found waste places and souls seeking pardon and cleansing from sin. This work we aim to do through the agency of city missions, evangelistic services, house to house visitation, caring for the poor, comforting the dying. To this end we strive personally to walk with God and to invite others to do so.—Minutes, Meeting of the Congregation of the First Church of the Nazarene, October 30, 1895, Los Angeles.*

For more information, contact

**Rev. Mike Estep  
Thrust to the Cities**

6401 The Paseo  
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# WE HAVE IT ALL

For Your Discipling Needs

Discipling began early in the life of the Church. New believers needed teaching, encouragement, and training. Today, a variety of plans and a vast supply of literature is available for discipling believers. The age and spiritual

maturity level appropriate for use are indicated in the Discipling Tracks and Resources Chart. Every Nazarene church should be able to find material to assist with their discipling needs.

—Bill M. Sullivan

## DISCIPLING TRACKS AND RESOURCES

Four steps are necessary for a new convert to become a mature follower of Christ, spiritually reproductive and prepared for total involvement in the Body of Christ. The first step is usually best accomplished by working one-on-one with the new convert while the balance may be achieved in group settings. Below, in each color bar, are the resources available for achieving each step.

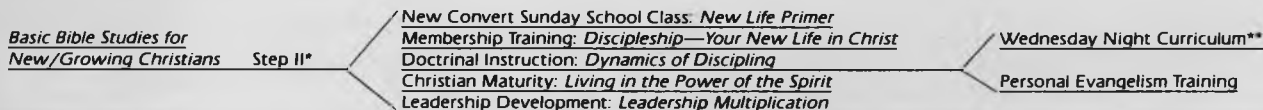
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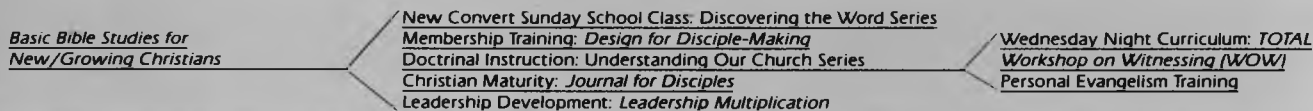
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CONTINUED DISCIPLING

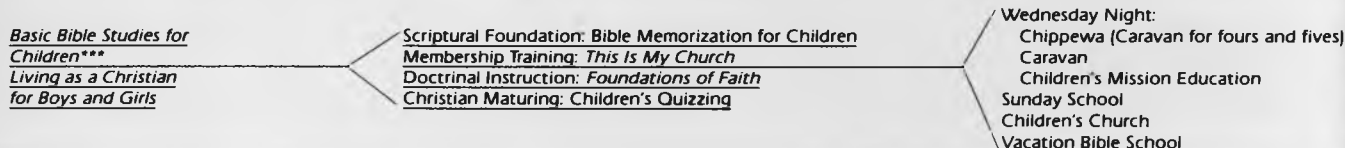
### ADULT



### YOUTH



### CHILDREN



\*Available 1988

\*\*Available March 1988

\*\*\*Available Spring 1987

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# EVANGELIST'S DIRECTORY

EVANGELISM MINISTRIES, CHURCH OF THE  
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(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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### MATERIALS AVAILABLE FREE UPON REQUEST TO HELP YOU DISCIPLE WOMEN:

- \_\_\_ List of good Bible studies and women's books.
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- \_\_\_ I would like to receive the name of our district director of Women's Ministries so we can contact her for more ideas for our church.

Check desired items and mail to:  
 Lillian Johnston, Women's Ministries  
 CL/SS, Nazarene Headquarters  
 6401 The Paseo  
 Kansas City, MO 64131

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# DISCIPLING SERVICEMEMBERS

Many Nazarene congregations near military installations have so many members in the service that no one thinks of them having special needs. Other churches' servicemembers are stationed far away so that it's hard to remember they're a part of the flock. A woman called me some time ago and said she has three sons in the service, and "they're Christians *in spite* of the

church, not *because* of the church." Their church has done nothing to keep them. Thank God this is not true for the majority of our churches! If we maintain the philosophy that we pastors are not building our's but Christ's kingdom, then ministry to our service persons will be a delight rather than a drudge. Military personnel, like everyone else, thrive on friendliness and acceptance.

November 8 is Military Personnel Appreciation Day. Our churches need to be sensitized to minister to our Nazarene servicemembers who are sacrificing to serve our nation and protect our freedoms. A home-cooked meal or a potluck at the church will bring many servicemembers flocking to your worship services. Here are some other proven methods of ministry to servicemembers:

## MINISTRY TO THOSE ASSIGNED NEAR YOUR CHURCH ON A MILITARY INSTALLATION

- A. If you're near a military base, establish relationship with a Nazarene service person who can in turn assist in identifying Nazarene servicemembers assigned there.
- B. When a base/post is near a smaller community without these denominations, you may receive references from the Wesleyan and Free Methodist churches. Follow up on these to assist our sister denominations in ministering to their servicemembers.
- C. Help new Nazarene military couples coming into your community find a home to rent or buy. This will endear you and your congregation to them and will probably unleash a fervent desire to assist in your church and become involved in ministry.
- D. A parish visitor program, reaching out to lonely wives and children who sometimes need emergency aid, transportation, counsel, and friendship, will be worth the energy and expense. Develop drop-in centers where wives of deployed servicemembers can meet together for crafts and informal chatter. Perhaps some of the older women in the congregation can become







## SPECIAL THANKS

This MILPAD Day, Chaplaincy Ministries says a special thank-you to our Nazarene clergy around the world who serve as military chaplains, and to our 200 host pastors here in the States and overseas.

substitute grandmothers for the children.

- E. Use the leadership and experience of our seasoned Nazarene military members to assist in Kingdom-building programs and church administration. When you visit servicemembers, find out what they did in their last church and what their interests and talents are. Our church mentality often dictates a lesser role for these transient members. However, tapping into their experiences of service in other churches and the freshness of a newcomer can often help revive and revitalize church programs or policies.
- F. Remember how it feels to be away from home for a long time. Military men and women need a fellowship and a family away from home as well as young college students.
- G. Honor Nazarene veterans and those presently serving in the military, including our Nazarene chaplains on Military Appreciation Day, November 8. Gather them at the altar for special prayer. Encourage them all, active servicemembers and veterans, to wear their uniforms for the service. Display the National Colors. Invite a Nazarene or another denominational chaplain from the installation near you to speak.
- H. Meet the installation chaplain personally. Build rapport with him if you're a host pastor, bi-vocational pastor, or a pastor near a military installation. He can help you locate Nazarene servicemembers.

### THOSE WHO ARE MEMBERS OF YOUR CHURCH BUT ASSIGNED TO MILITARY INSTALLATIONS ELSEWHERE.

- A. Plan to involve the congregation in public recognition of its military members. Call attention to depart-

ing members, people on leave, or returning to stay at a worship service or a special fellowship. Include items about military in your church newsletter or bulletin board, such as photographs of service people in your church showing a specific face in a specific place.

- B. Send free *Herald* subscriptions to those in your congregation who are displaced persons experiencing loneliness, boredom, temptations, insecurities, and dangers. Since April 1979 the general church does not send complimentary *Herolds* to our service personnel because of the prohibitive cost of postage.
- C. Help pay expenses for a servicemember in your church who is stationed abroad to attend the Nazarene Servicemembers' Retreats. Some denominations pay half the cost of their servicemembers' retreat (European Retreat in Germany; Far East Retreats in Korea and Okinawa).
- D. Assign a person who is well acquainted with everyone in the church as address coordinator for mobile families. This person would keep the addresses current and let the congregation know where their mobile families are as well as calling Chaplaincy Ministries **800-233-8962** or writing the Chaplaincy Ministries director in Kansas City.

- E. Assist and train Nazarene servicemembers in methods of personal evangelism. Pray not only for our servicemembers' safety and courage to stay faithful to Christ but for revival in the military as well.
- F. Send birthday and Christmas gifts from your congregation to those you know are on isolated tours of duty.
- G. Plan a program to acquaint young people in your congregation with the opportunities and problems involved in military service.

Associate Pastor Jim Tusant and Lynn Powers have formed "The Light Brigade" at Pasadena, Calif., First Church of the Nazarene for supporting their service people and families. Their premise is that these families will eventually be coming home to the church that loved them while they were away. They send out monthly newsletters and special letters from time to time, as well as a questionnaire to publish a monthly profile of servicemembers and keep the congregation aware of those who serve our country. They prepared a multimedia presentation for worship one MILPAD day. At Christmas they send homemade cookies. To those who are new enlistees, they send Nazarene Chaplain Dave Grosse's book *Now That You're in Military Service*. □



# THE SHEPHERD'S LIFE

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

LEADERSHIP • INSPIRATION • FULFILLMENT • ENRICHMENT

## I WONDER...

### WHAT IF...

- ... silence really was gold and we were given an ounce per minute; how long would we listen to it?
- ... people did not think of prayer as non-work; would we spend more time communicating with God?
- ... we could just "come apart [withdraw] awhile;" would relief from time pressures be used for a higher consciousness of a divine vision?
- ... permission as given for a private retreat in prayer; would positive benefits come to your church?
- ... prayer as more than petitions; could planning with God make a difference in our ministries?

### I'D GUESS...

- ... we would get scared at first; anxious about people's opinions and what new expectations would be placed on us for making spirituality a priority.



Wilbur W. Brannon, Director  
Pastoral Ministries

- ... our feelings of security might be threatened if our ministry would be brought into question by the Lord.
- ... new adjustments would be made in our personal and professional lives.
- ... priorities would be shifted so that the truly important things would be done; secondary matters would be delegated; tertiary concerns would be done last, if at all!
- ... new latent energy would be released; motivation would be elevated; morale would improve.
- ... a purposeful ministry would be enhanced by a God-given vision.

### SO...

- ... let's pray together. This work of ministry is not just a professional responsibility. God has called us! Anything of eternal significance will be done only as a result of our relationship with Him. The mundane, mechanical, tedious activities must be sanctified, or spiritualized, if we are to avoid becoming mere functionaries or hirelings.

Our work is dignified as we are conscious of who has called us. I carry a card with me that asks the question, "Whom do you supremely serve?" It reminds me of my identity as well as my responsibility. Jesus Christ has me registered as His minister. That "ID" determines how I feel about myself and my work.

Let's keep in touch . . . with Him!

## INTERACTIVE VIDEO FOR COURSE OF STUDY

Pastoral Ministries is developing a video format for exam courses in the Course of Study. *The Master Plan of Evangelism* has been developed by Dr. Stephen Manley. *Alive in Christ* has been developed by Dr. Morris Weigelt. Dr. C. S. Cowles has consented to do the course on *Exploring the New Testament*.

The concept is to provide sixteen 15-minute segments of on-screen presentation by the instructor. He will guide the students through the material that accompanies the tape. The format is also designed so that a facilitator can interact with a small group of students in response to the presentation.

Students will benefit from the group process; but even if done alone, students will have the aid of visual and written materials for better understanding and practical outcomes.

## PASTORAL MINISTRIES COOPERATES IN ETHNIC MINISTERIAL TRAINING

A special committee, named by Church Extension Ministries and Pastoral Ministries, will work with the Course of Study Advisory Committee to develop courses for those with limited mastery of the English language. This has the application potential of being used by a variety of language groups who use English as a second language. An ESL theological dictionary has been developed and is now available from NPH.

Pastoral Ministries works with Nazarene Bible College in Colorado Springs, Colo. (which is developing ethnic ministerial training centers as extensions of their school), to train ministers.

A Spanish Course of Study Committee has functioned for three years developing a course of study that corresponds to the English program. The members are: Wilfredo Canales, Sergio Franco, James Hudson, Carlos Martínez, José Rodríguez, and Jonathan Salgado.



## MANAGING YOUR MINISTRY VIDEOTAPE AVAILABLE

Dr. Ponder Gilliland, president of Southern Nazarene University, facilitated this video-based continuing education course for clergy who want to increase ministerial effectiveness.

Dr. Gilliland speaks to pastors with authority and credibility, giving them helpful information on managing their ministry.

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- Managing Your Preaching**
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## HEARTLINE

The General Board's Department of Church Growth was profoundly moved by learning what the Heartline is doing for our pastors. We paused for a moment in the midst of a heavy agenda just to pray for our ministers.

Rev. Danilo Solis, a department member from Guatemala, expressed his gratitude for what is being provided in the U.S. for our ministers through Heartline. He reflected on the number of ministers in his country that have given up because they had no one to whom they

could go. He was proud and deeply moved that his church had begun this special service.

The discussion that followed was almost a spiritual experience. Strong support was given to sustain this program and a statement was made a part of the record of the General Board. It reads: "On motion, a request that our Division Director give careful attention to a proper balance in our Division's programs so that the support structures for our Nazarene clergy are enhanced and expanded was approved."

The CoNET Heartline is sustained by both Pastoral Ministries and district funds. District subscriptions range from \$575 to \$875 per year, determined by

the size of the district. It is a nominal sum for such a critical ministry to our ministers, but the participation of each district is essential to its continuance.

We hope that the effective work being done by Heartline will continue for years to come. A growing number of pastors are seeing its tremendous value as a consulting resource when trying to deal with difficult counseling cases. They just pick up the phone and dial 1-800-874-2021 (Tennessee residents; 1-800-233-3607).

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## MINISTRY INTERNSHIP UPDATE

More districts are initiating Ministry Internship to enhance pastoral recruitment and give support to new ministers. Those entering the pastorate are happy to find themselves linked up with experienced ministers as their mentors. These relationships provide non-judg-

mental feedback for skill-building and practical helps for dealing with current issues in pastoring.

New districts becoming involved are North Carolina and Wisconsin. There are now 23 districts who have initiated the program at one level or another. Many of them are sustaining Ministry Internship (MI) as a part of the ordination process.

We are currently doing a six-month feedback session to upgrade the program and monitor the progress of the MI teams. *Ministry Intern Fellowship* newsletter is sent to all interns and mentors. This is a communication link to focus on central ministry issues, and to provide some direction to the mentor/intern relationships.

If your district is interested in an orientation workshop, contact Pastoral Ministries. Director Wilbur W. Brannon will be glad to come at no cost to the district. □

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July 11-15	Trevecca Nazarene College
July 18-22	Mid-America Nazarene College
August 1-5	Northwest Nazarene College
August 15-19	Point Loma Nazarene College
August 22-26	European PALCON, site TBA*

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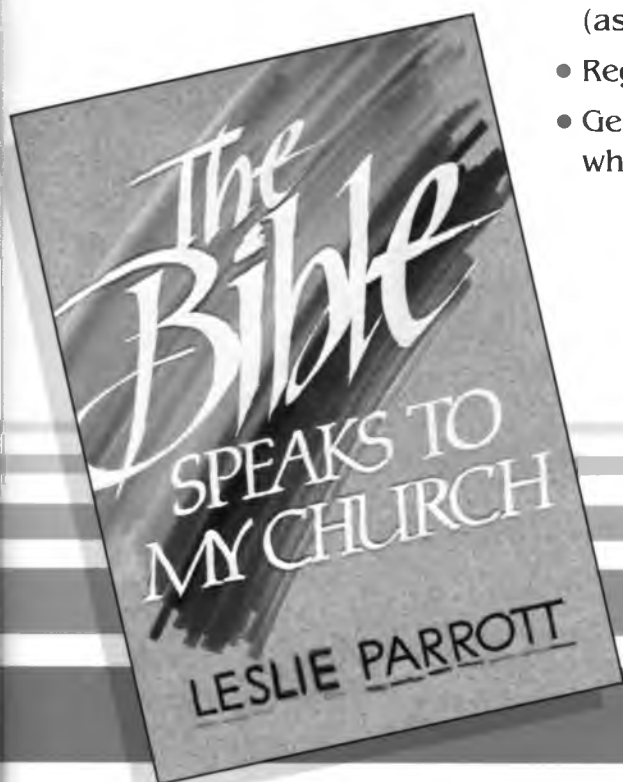
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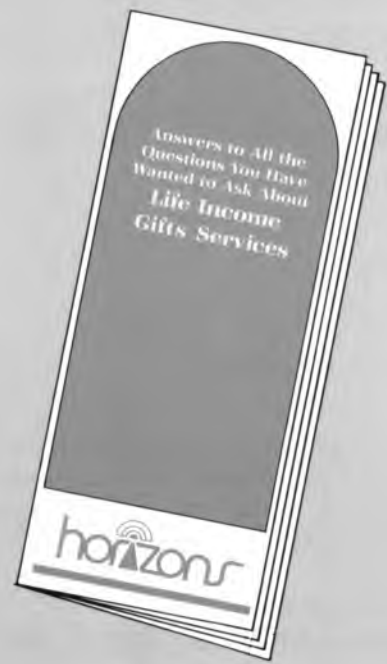


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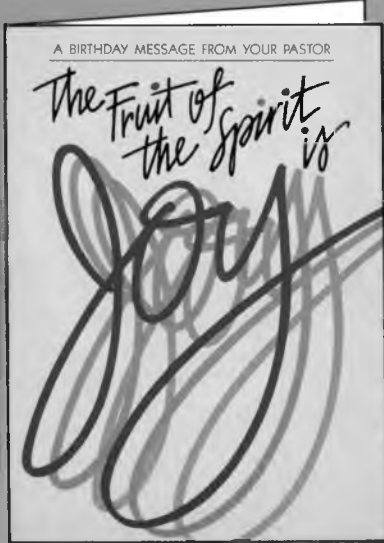
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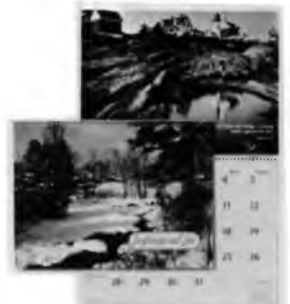
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THE PREACHER'S MAGAZINE

SEPTEMBER, OCTOBER, NOVEMBER 1987



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# THE EDITORIAL BOARD



WESLEY TRACY  
Editor  
*The Preacher's Magazine*



MARK D. MARVIN  
Assistant Editor  
*The Preacher's Magazine*

**DISCIPLING.** The term has become the catchphrase of contemporary evangelical circles. It can have as many definitions as the number of people defining it. Perhaps, for our purposes, the best synonym would be "SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT."

Recently, a group of experts on the subject met with the *Preacher's Magazine* editorial staff. Together, they served without pay as the editorial board for this issue on

**DISCIPLING.**

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the general church was asked to raise money for its infant publishing house was 55 years ago. Since 1922 the business has operated debt free. The policy has been to charge only what materials cost, plus a profit that permits growth, a reasonably safe operating balance, and some funds to support needs of a growing denomination.

For 29 of the early years the publishing house made year-end contributions to the minister's retirement funds. Later the House subsidized the annual Superintendents' Conference (now Leadership Conference). Still more recently they have underwritten major costs for the quadrennial theological conferences.

We readers of the *Preacher's Magazine* have all been beneficiaries of these thoughtful ministries of our publishing house. When first launched, this magazine like other church periodicals was sold on a subscription basis. But not all preachers could afford to subscribe. The beginning pastor in the small church who needed its help most could often afford it least. In 1964 the publisher therefore proposed: "Let's make this periodical our contribution to the ministers of the denomination." For 23 years the *Preacher's Magazine* has been sent free of charge to all ministers of the Church of the Nazarene. In addition, one-third of each printing is sold at cost to several other denominations as a service to preachers of the holiness movement.

This thoughtfulness of others must have been learned early. The younger children in the family remember how their employed older brother sometimes took them out for sodas and White Castle hamburgers.

### Fair-minded Manager

Those who worked most closely with Bud and knew him most intimately held him in highest regard. I came to Kansas City as editor of church schools (now CL/SS) periodicals one year before Bud came as assistant manager. For 29 years my assignment, with the staff, was to decide what teaching literature was needed by the church. The manager's assignment was to determine if it was feasible to publish what was proposed.

For 29 years we conferred on annual budgets. We sat together in the book committee and with the Christian Service Training Commission (now CLT). Our task was to explore what teaching material could help the church, how much it would cost, and how that cost could be covered.

In any solvent business the manager must have final decision on costs. But in 29 years Mr. Lunn never used his veto on a project that we felt was important for the church. Our publisher-churchman often asked for our rationale. The publisher-businessman sometimes pushed us to weigh costs over against expected benefits. Under his probing we sometimes took a second look, and we sometimes modified our proposals. But in 29 years he never refused to undertake what we recommended. A colleague of 40 years wrote recently: "There was never a doubt that Bud Lunn has always

wanted the best for the church of which the Nazarene Publishing House was a part."

### Informed Christian Publisher

In boards and committees where final decisions were not his, Bud was an alert listener, always interested to understand the issues and to know how his colleagues felt; but slow to express his opinion. On the other hand, if the conference involved a publication decision where he must give a judgment, we could count on one of two reactions. If the proposal were new, he would say, "Give me a few days to check it out." If the issue had already been under discussion, he was ready with an answer—sometimes even before we had made the last of our presentation! He had studied the proposal in detail and had already thought through the data we were considering.

Bud has a mind that quickly discerns the bottom line in any issue, and he consistently does his homework before any meeting in which he is required to make a decision.

Our manager was always more than an effective business administrator. He was deeply concerned for every concern of the church. When theological questions were involved, he consistently sought the counsel of skilled theologians whose judgment he respected—but he usually knew the answer before he asked the questions. He made it his business to be informed.


### And for the Future?

Sometimes NPH has been criticized for concentrating too exclusively on popular paperback Christian publications. But Bud has also consistently encouraged major theological works—and has put the financial resources of the House behind these long-range projects: The 10-volume *Beacon Bible Commentary*, 1962-69; a major biblical theology text, *God, Man, and Salvation*, 1977; *Beacon Bible Expositions* (12 vols.), 1974-85; *Beacon Dictionary of Theology*, 1983; *Exploring Christian Holiness* (3 vols.), 1985; and *Great Holiness Classics* (6 vols.), 1983-88. These are monuments to the publisher's vision, and they will shape thinking of the Wesleyan holiness movement for the next half-century.

Now that retirement has come, Mr. Lunn releases to his successor and to the holiness movement a business equipped to serve the church well; dedicated to publishing "the whole gospel to the whole world."

How shall we say thanks? Paul wrote to his beloved friends in Philippi: "I thank my God every time I remember you" (Phil. 1:3, NIV). We, too, say: Thanks, Bud. And we say thanks to Reba, your wife, because she shared deeply in the ministry of those long hours that you have given to us.

In the days that lie ahead, may both of you continue to enjoy the fellowship of Him whose example you have followed so well—the example of the One who "loved the church and gave himself up for her" (Eph. 5:25, NIV).



# WESLEY AND ESCHATOLOGY

(Continued from p. 31)

seals, Wesley believes the latter three trumpets deal with the invisible world of the spirit; yet he ties trumpet five to the Persians, and six to the Moslems. He believes the idolatry of Rev. 9:20 is the Roman Catholic worship of images, and alludes to the iconoclastic controversy leading into the latter part of the ninth century.

In connection with the seventh trumpet, Wesley discusses a so-called non-chronos derived from Rev. 10:6, "there should be time no longer." He believes this is the period from 800 (Charles the Great) until 1836. The events of the seventh trumpet are connected with the two witnesses who prophesy 1,260 days.

Wesley dates the events of Chapter 12 from the 9th century down to the 18th. The woman clothed with the sun, representing the church, is threatened by Turks and Saracens, and takes refuge "in Europe . . . chiefly Bohemia . . . till God provided for her more plentifully at the Reformation."<sup>37</sup> Here Wesley loses some of his caution and states, "We live in the little time wherein Satan hath great wrath: and this little time is now upon the decline." Also, "God has not given this prophecy, in so solemn a manner, only to show his providence over his church, but also that his servants may know at all times in what particular period they are."<sup>38</sup>

Wesley discusses Chapters 12 and 13 more extensively than any other part of the entire book, emphasizing medieval papal chronology. He sees Gregory VII, who began his reign in 1073, as initiating the period of the beast, a period that lasts approximately 666 years down to 1721 when Gregory VII was "canonized anew."<sup>39</sup> Babylon is identified with Rome. The seven heads of the beast represent historical periods in the papacy. In Chapter 14, "many good men are taken from the earth by the harvest; then many sinners during the vintage."<sup>40</sup>

In Chapter 15, the seven vials appear and Wesley notes that the events of the vials move swiftly, not slowly; like the seven trumpets. Commenting on verse 10, Wesley writes "The four first phials are closely connected together; the fifth concerns the throne of the beast, the sixth the Mahometans, the seventh chiefly the heathens."<sup>41</sup>

Wesley identifies the great whore of Chapter 17 as the city of Rome. Chapter 18 continues describing Rome as Babylon under God's judgment, particularly because of her blood guilt due to so many martyrs killed by Christian Rome.

Chapters 19 through 22 are explained quite routinely. The final defeat of Satan and all evil forces and the consummation of righteousness and peace are discussed, generally in the most obvious way except for his interpretation of Chapter 20 as teaching two distinct thousand-year periods.<sup>42</sup> Gog and Magog refer to "the innumerable northern nations toward the east."<sup>43</sup> Death and Hades will be destroyed.<sup>44</sup> The new Jerusalem will be eternal.<sup>45</sup> Wesley notes that the new Jerusalem is to be extremely large.<sup>46</sup> Comments on the last two chapters are primarily elaborations of the text, explaining unusual words but little more.

## Tentative Conclusions

John Wesley was a practical theologian. Though his interests were wide-ranging, he generally focused on matters with practical implications. His introductory comments on the Revelation demonstrate that inclination on his part. He thoroughly appreciated "the beginning" and "the latter part of the Revela-

tion." Those parts are easily understood and highly applicable to life. The more symbolic and obscure parts of Revelation interested him less. Speculative eschatology was not very attractive to the pragmatic Wesley.

Wesley did treat the standard eschatological topics in his sermons, treatises, and letters. There his approach was traditional and conservative with practical concerns generally foremost.

In his *Notes on the New Testament* he was hardly able to avoid eschatological themes and interpretations if he treated Revelation at all. Thus he turned to a scholar he respected, J. A. Bengel, using Bengel's notes extensively. Occasionally, therefore, the comments are more speculative than we generally expect from the conservative Wesley. I suspect that most of those comments reflect the work of Bengel. Certainly Wesley acknowledges his debt to that great German biblical scholar.

Generally, Wesley's reluctance to engage in eschatological speculation may be reflected in later movements that originated with him. Methodists and other Wesleyans are not noted for such emphases. If we take seriously the thesis of Ernest Sandeen in *The Roots of Fundamentalism*, that thesis may help explain why most Wesleyans do not consider themselves Fundamentalists. Sandeen believes premillennialism is the key emphasis distinguishing Fundamentalists from other evangelicals. Wesleyans seem to march to a different drumbeat—a beat followed by their namesake before them.



## NOTES

1. *Works*, 12:409.
2. *Works*, 5:171-85.
3. *Works*, vols. 6 and 7, Tables of Contents.
4. *Works*, 7:221 f.
5. *Works*, 7:474 ff.
6. *Ibid.*, 244-55.
7. *Works*, 6:295 f.
8. *Notes on the New Testament*, Rev. 20:14.
9. *Works*, 7:474-85.
10. *Ibid.*, 475.
11. *Works*, 6:144.
12. *Works*, 7:234-35.
13. *Works*, 5:381-91.
14. *Standard Sermons*, 138.
15. *Works*, 6:381-91.
16. *Works*, 13:30 f.
17. *Notes on the N.T.*
18. *Notes on the N.T.*, Rev. 21:15.
19. *Works*, 6:381-91.
20. *Ibid.*, 387.
21. *Ibid.*, 390.
22. *Notes*, Rev. 19:9.
23. *Notes*, Rev. 20:4-7.
24. *Notes*, Rev. 17:11.
25. *Works*, 12:427.
26. *Notes*, Matt. 25:40.
27. *Notes*, 1 Thess. 4:17.
28. *Works*, 12:319.
29. *Notes*, no pagination is given.
30. *Notes*, Revelation 4.
31. *Notes*, Rev. 2:10, 13.
32. *Notes*, Rev. 5:13.
33. *Notes*, Revelation 6.
34. *Notes*, Rev. 4:11.
35. *Notes*, Rev. 8:2.
36. *Notes*, Rev. 8:7.
37. *Notes*, Rev. 12:7.
38. *Notes*, Rev. 12:12.
39. *Notes*, Rev. 13:1.
40. *Notes*, Rev. 14:14.
41. *Notes*, Rev. 16:10.
42. *Notes*, Rev. 20:4.
43. *Notes*, Rev. 20:8.
44. *Notes*, Rev. 20:14.
45. *Notes*, Rev. 21:2.
46. *Notes*, Rev. 21:15.

Second in a Series

# WHEN PEOPLE NEED A PASTOR

by Jerry W. McCant

*Professor of Religion, Point Loma Nazarene College, San Diego, Calif*

**E**ffective pastoral visitation requires pastors to establish priorities. Since the pastor cannot always be present, it is necessary to ask, "When do people need a pastor?" This effort at identifying these times is intended to be suggestive rather than exhaustive. Imaginative men and women will revise the list and make their own. What is most important is that there are untold opportunities for ministry through pastoral visitation.

God experiences all of life with us. Because a pastor is a representative of God, His presence reassures us of God's presence. What a pastor says is not as important as his presence. People need a pastor who brings them the consciousness of God's grace through the medium of pastoral visitation.

## OBVIOUS TIMES

*Times of spiritual commitment.* Anytime a person makes a spiritual commitment, the need for a pastoral visit is obvious. New converts need a pastoral visit the following week. A new convert needs guidance, encouragement, and spiritual reinforcement. After he has met God in the holy place, he needs the loving presence of a pastor in his home. Discipling and nurturing the new convert conserves the fruits of evangelism.

*When people visit the church.* When people visit a church, it is imperative that the pastor visit in their home the following week. Visitors are often seeking spiritual help or a church home. An intimate, informal atmosphere of privacy in the home allows individuals to be open, express needs, and ask for help. Sometimes visitors are Christians seeking a church home where they can worship and serve. They are just waiting for God, in the person of the pastor, to come and "call" them into His service!

*Times of absenteeism.* Chronic absentees should not consume all of the pastor's visitation time. However,

many absentees could be saved to God and the church through pastoral visitation. In a computerized, number-oriented, impersonal culture, people want some reassurance that the pastor knows their names and faces. They want to be more than a name on an enrollment card and a number in an attendance report. Absenteeism always has a cause; pastoral visitation may reveal it. Pastoral attention and care expresses God's loving concern; neglect leaves people to wonder how important they really are.

## JOYFUL TIMES

There are some important "rites of passage" in our culture, when individuals need to be assured of God's presence and care. No layman can take the pastor's place effectively in such joyful moments.

*The birth or adoption of a child.* When a young couple has their first baby, the moment is often a mixture of jubilation and fear. It is a tender moment. Together, they have been cocreators with God. Joy may diminish as the responsibility stares them in the face. The ambivalence is repeated each time a baby is born. Likewise, adoption (and, to some extent, even taking in foster children) is a moment when a couple needs the presence and blessing of the pastor—not to say the baby is cute, but to ask and pronounce God's benediction of this holy, joyful event. The pastor's presence reminds new parents that God shares this joyful moment with them.

*The baptism of an infant or believer.* Baptism should always be a celebration of God's grace, and it should be celebrated properly. A prior pastoral visit confirms that this ritual is important. To fail in pastoral visitation ministry at such a crucial moment is to miss an opportunity for nurturing the presence of God in the lives of His people.

*The ritual of joining the church.* A well-planned pastoral visit before one joins the church may maximize the spiritual significance of the event. Persons uniting with the church should be instructed that this public act is more than merely joining an organization. It is a conscious and deliberate act, identifying with the Body of Christ. Pastoral presence may intensify the spiritual reality of this mystical union with the Body of Christ and the people of God. The pastor is responsible to see that this moment is not squandered or lost because of failure in pastoral care.

*The graduation exercise.* In the United States, all other exercises pale when compared with high school graduation. The pastor should participate in the celebration of this accomplishment. A brief visit from the pastor with appropriate congratulations and a prayer invoking God's blessings reinforces the spiritual as well as the academic significance of the event. Pastoral presence affirms that one is to love God with all one's mind as well as with all one's heart. The pastor's presence is a reminder that the pursuit of knowledge is, at heart, religious in nature.

*The wedding ceremony.* If Roman Catholics go too far in making marriage a sacrament, then evangelical Protestants go too far in trivializing the wedding ceremony. A prewedding pastoral visit may help a couple understand that the wedding ritual is a religious experience, not merely a legal or a civil ceremony. This is certainly a joyous occasion, and celebration is both expected and appropriate. However, the festive nature of the event should not eclipse the fact that it is also an event of

grace. Pastoral presence can create an awareness of divine presence at the marriage altar. Emphasizing that it is God who unites them in holy matrimony, and the permanency of Christian marriage. "Therefore what *God* has joined together, let man not separate" (Matt. 19:6, NIV, italics added).

### STRESSFUL TIMES

Stress has become an ever-present reality in our culture. Professionals in all areas of expertise are trying to find ways to relieve the stress under which people are living. Christians are not immune to stress, but in such times they need to know that God is near. Stress and pain can only be measured by the person experiencing them. No pastor can remove stress or its causes from the lives of his people, but pastoral presence can make it more bearable.

*A family member leaves for college.* For some parents, the departure of a family member for college can be an extremely stressful time. An offspring's increasing autonomy can be both frightening and painful. If the last child is leaving home, parents are susceptible to the "empty nest syndrome," which may cause the onset of the "blues" or even serious depression. Parents fear that their children who leave home will not take care of themselves. Christian parents worry that their "almost adult" children will not keep their faith while away at school. There is the factor of not wishing to be separated from one in whom they have invested so much. What better time for a pastoral visit? Standing in Christ's stead, the pastor may invoke God's blessing on the de-



"If you want me to resign, why don't you just say so?"

parting youth and pray for him to know God's guidance. Parents may be led to a renewed committal of their offspring to the providence of God.

*A family member enters military service.* Having a son or daughter leave for the military can be a moment of heightened stress. The stress is even more intense if a family member enters the military during a time of war. A pastor does not have the right to promise family members that God will return this person safely home. However, in the name of Christ and in His stead, a pastor has the privilege of assuring them that God will go everywhere with this young person.

*A church member is ill.* Illness in the family creates stress both for the afflicted and those who must care for the ill person. Stress can become almost unbearable if the illness is prolonged. Panic strikes when an infant or a child is ill, even if the condition is not serious. No, the pastor should not be present every time someone in his congregation has a headache or a bad cold. Times of serious illness do, however, demand the ministry of pastoral visitation. The pastor needs to be present regularly as long as the illness persists, or until death comes. While a pastor has neither the obligation nor the right to promise divine healing, he does have the privilege of assuring the sick as well as the family that God is with us! A pastor should not overly worry about what to say to a seriously ill person. It will be enough for most seriously ill people to have a presence of grace.

*A church member is hospitalized.* Illness, even "minor" illness, that necessitates hospitalization, requires the presence of a pastor. Most people are uncomfortable with, if not frightened by, hospitalization. Medical and surgical procedures are threatening and depersonalizing. Surgery is never "minor" for the person facing it. A pastor may help the patient to pray with the Psalmist: "What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee" (Ps. 56:3). Allow a person to express his fears, even of dying. Sometimes it may be necessary for the pastor to verbalize the patient's fears if the patient cannot. Be willing to take the time to work through the "stages" a dying person goes through. The pastor is there to remind the hospitalized person that Jesus promised, "Lo, I am with you always."

*A person is facing death.* When the prognosis is death, it is unpardonable for a pastor not to be there. What does one say to a person who knows he is going to die? At first, a pastor need not say anything. Pastoral presence is enough. The time does come, however, when words are necessary. First, allow the patient to speak, always being careful to listen. Reassure, but never promise divine intervention and do not deny the imminence of death. Be aware that most people facing death must work through some fairly definite stages. Elizabeth Kubler-Ross has identified the stages as denial, bargaining, depression, resignation, and acceptance. As appropriate, gently remind the dying that the Lord accompanies us when we "walk through the valley of the shadow of death" (Ps. 23:4). Be accepting when a dying person expresses anger or fear. It may be necessary to allow and help him reminisce and put his house in order. After a patient accepts the inevitability of death, it may be necessary to help make funeral and burial

arrangements. When one is dying, God's presence is assured by pastoral presence. When it is possible, it is good for the pastor to be present at the time of death. This may help the dying as well as the survivors, and it will surely have an impact on the pastor.

## TRAUMATIC TIMES

Trauma is difficult to define. An event or situation is usually considered traumatic if it is life-threatening, though the term *life-threatening* need not necessarily be understood as a threat to physical life. A traumatized person needs the pastor's reassurance and support.

*Death in the family.* A few months ago I was with a friend when his mother died at his home. I called his pastor to tell him she had died. Imagine my shock when the pastor asked, "Is there any reason why I should come?" Even an extended illness doesn't prepare a family for death. After months or years of illness, survivors speak of "shock" or "surprise" at the news of death.

Death brings sorrow because a loved one is gone, but there is also fear. Death is frightening because it reminds survivors of their own mortality. What does a pastor say to survivors? At first, pastoral presence should speak for itself. Every temptation to give grieving survivors pious platitudes about God's will and how He knows best should be resisted. Allow mourners to deal honestly with the reality of death.

Encourage authentic expressions of grief. Funeral plans will need to be made; most people appreciate the guidance of a pastor at such an hour. Accompany the family to the funeral home when they view the body of their loved one for the first time. Pastoral visits in the home during the interim between the time of death and the funeral service will be comforting to the family. Following the memorial service, the pastor will need to see the family periodically for some time. He will want to constantly reassure mourners in the face of the ultimate trauma that God is with them and that Jesus came to "heal the brokenhearted" (Luke 4:18).

*Suicide in the family.* Death by suicide is undoubtedly the most traumatic event a family will ever have to deal with. Members of the family are simultaneously angry with the deceased for committing suicide and filled with guilt that they did not prevent it. Worse, they often believe that they *caused* the suicide. Fear, despair, depression, and hopelessness may linger for weeks and months to come.

Despite psychiatric advances and sophistication, suicide still carries stigma. What can a pastor do? Above and beyond everything else, he can be there. This is no time to discuss whether a suicide victim can be saved and go to heaven. Theological arguments, syllogisms, and philosophical speculation are not only useless but also are cruel when a family is dealing with the suicide of a loved one. If persons wish to pursue these issues, there will be time after the pain subsides.

What survivors of a suicide need and what the pastor can provide is a loving and compassionate presence that speaks volumes about the love of God for people who are hurting too much to go on living. Eternal destinies are determined by God alone. What a pastor needs to give is support and reassurance. When the pastor does speak, it should be about the love and mercy of

God. A pastor will act in a priestly role to remind people of the mercy of God—mercy that reaches even a suicide victim and his survivors.

Again, funeral plans have to be made and assistance will be needed. A funeral service for a suicide victim is not the appropriate time for an evangelistic sermon! Every effort should be made to comfort the mourning and offer hope for healing. Before and after the funeral the family will need the supportive presence of the pastor. Family members will not remember much of what the pastor says in their tortured bereavements, but they will remember that he was there, reminding them of a good and merciful God. Do not try to provide clever answers to the many “whys?” the mourners will pose. It is enough to provide the healing presence of Jesus Christ through pastoral presence.

*A member is involved in a serious accident.* Accidents are always traumatic for persons involved, as well as for the family. Sirens, ambulances, police investigations, emergency rooms, doctors, and nurses create bewilderment and fear. There is fear of death or convalescence, loss of employment, total dependency, and bills that cannot be paid.

Increased stress over the traumatic complications can cause an accident victim to wonder if recovery is worth the effort. A pastor's presence does not pay the bills, but it does give a person the hope and courage to face difficulties. The pastor's presence should regularly be felt as a healing influence in the person's life; one visit will not do the job. Perhaps the pastor will need to help the person discover financial resources to deal with insurmountable bills. Despite all efforts, the greatest single contribution a pastor can make is the power of a presence; a listening ear and heart and a reminder of the sufficiency of God's grace.

*A family member goes to prison.* For those who remain to pick up the pieces of their lives, a prison sentence for a family member may seem like the end of the world. No matter how saintly people are, members of their families may get into legal difficulties. When a loved one goes to prison, family members are filled with shame, rage, and disgrace. They may want to go into seclusion. Brokenhearted parents wonder what went wrong; children whose parents go to prison may want to disown them. They may wonder what chance they have in life. When one parent goes to prison, the other is left not only with the disgrace of the event but also with children who still need food, clothing, and shelter.


At such a crucial moment in a family's life, a pastor's presence speaks of love, forgiveness, and unconditional acceptance. The pastor need not condone crimes in order to minister to the criminal's family. Parents and children need to be reassured that they are neither responsible for nor tainted by the actions of other individuals. Despite the nature of crimes committed by one member, the family needs the pastor to be Christ to them in their distress.

*A member is being divorced.* A pastor no longer has the option of deciding whether to concern himself with the issues of divorce. The tragedy has reached into the holy precincts of the Christian home. Feelings of shame, failure, anger, rage, despair, and hate overwhelm the person who is being divorced. Legal, emotional, financial, custody, and property settlement decisions have been thrust upon a person who is often unprepared to make such decisions.

However much one may protest against divorce, if one member of the partnership wishes a divorce, there will be one. The one who is being divorced is traumatized by rejection, identity crisis, and often by financial crises that will persist for years to come. In the church, some fail to realize that not everyone who is divorced wished to be. The pastor's task is not to decide who is “at fault” or whether there are biblical grounds for the divorce.

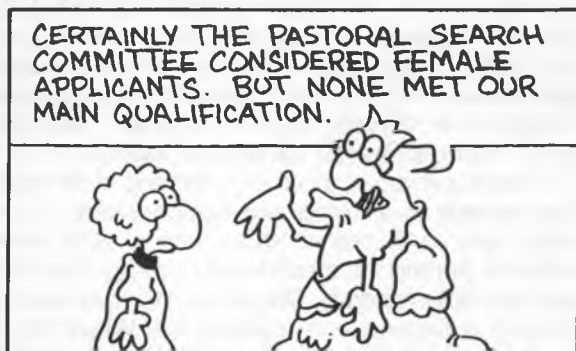
Men and women are traumatized when they are divorced by persons whom they still love. When a person is forced into divorce court, there is no place for pastor's prophetic voice. What a person being divorced needs is a pastor's presence to objectify God's merciful, forgiving presence. Biblical exegesis of “divorce passages” is not needed or wanted; supportive, loving pastoral presence is.

## CONCLUSION

*Presence* is the key word in pastoral visitation. Lonely, sick, and discouraged people need a pastor to be there. After the stress and trauma, people may not remember what the pastor said, but they cannot forget his presence. After two years in the pastorate, my brother died tragically, and I returned home for his funeral. At the graveside, I saw a former pastor who embraced me and allowed me to weep unremittently. Afterward, we had a lengthy discussion. To this day, I cannot remember anything the pastor said. But his presence at a traumatic moment of my life is a memory I shall never forget! 



## Pontius' Puddle





# I REMEMBER

by Coe Neil Cabe

*Pastor, Peace Chapel, Brethren in Christ, Ravenna, Ohio*

**M**y fourth year of ministry has passed busily into the fifth, and my first year at a brand-new church has begun. All of my naive, preconceived notions about the ministry have faded into pleasant memories. The realities of funerals and broken hearts, basement floors to be painted and furnaces to be replaced, crying babies to be dedicated and Sunday School programs to be scheduled, have supplanted the notion that my only priorities were souls to be saved and sermons to be preached.

Those who write about the phases in a minister's life tell us that the first three years are the most difficult, when we experience the greatest attrition. They are learning years, certainly. From the standpoint of the tentative wisdom of my first five years, let me offer this: The primary thing we learn as novice ministers is our place in the lives of real human beings. We dare not forget that place.

I remember some of the things that taught me my place as minister in others' lives. I mean in the day-to-day existence of my members, slogging along day by day; Christians in a world so given over to sin.

I remember my first hospital visit as a pastor. Heading from bright sunlight into the fluorescent light of our local hospital, it occurred to me that I was somehow God's representative. The man I had gone to visit was slowly and painfully dying from a brain tumor. In some mystical fashion, I was bringing the presence of a living God into that room with me, and he would cling to that—not to me, but to God.

I performed over 75 funerals in my first five years as a pastor. I performed so many I stopped recording them in my graduation copy of *My Pastoral Record*. I remember the

grief of a wife of almost 50 years over the death of her husband. I remember explaining death to a 12-year-old boy whose father had died of a heart attack. I remember holding him as he wept in confusion and pain. I remember praying with a family who agonized over the decision to disconnect a young mother's life-support systems. I remember closing the eyes of one woman in her own bedroom, thankful for her release from suffering. I remember the joy of knowing that the dead in Christ shall rise, and how that hope lingered with some who listened so intently in rooms bathed in soft light and the sweet scent of flowers.

I remember the whispered truth of a Christ who came to comfort all who mourn; of One who came to heal the brokenhearted. I remember knowing that somehow that truth would linger.

I remember a Father's Day present from two fatherless boys. One shyly handed me a picture of himself. The other offered a key chain, a kiss, and his little arms around my neck.

I remember a domestic violence call from the sheriff's office at 2 A.M. in mid-February, when the snow swirled and the temperature fell to 10 degrees below zero. In an unlit kitchen, a man with whiskey on his breath held a shotgun to my chest as we talked about Jesus.

I remember a teenager's guilt over his drunkenness and his first sexual relationship, and I remember praying with him as he asked God for forgiveness and moral strength.

I remember a call from a 19-year-old. He cried into the phone, "Talk to me. Please talk to me." We talked about love and about hope for the future.

I remember our first Communion service. It was a candlelight service

at Thanksgiving. You could fairly feel the presence of Christ.

I remember the unspeakable joy of real conversions. Men and women, boys and girls had come to know the presence of Jesus Christ in their lives for the first time.

I remember saved marriages, saved lives, and saved souls. I remember difficult surgeries performed successfully, heartaches healed, and friendships restored.

I remember the light of hope shining in eyes once dimmed by sin.

Of course, there were difficulties: Arguments over curtains, the colors of paint, and the size of gravel for the newly graded driveway. There were budgets that wouldn't stretch and issues that refused to die. There were tearful confrontations and misunderstandings at board meetings. But through it all, there remained a sense of hope—hope for the present and hope for the future.

What is our responsibility as ministers in the lives of those with whom we come in contact? It is to bring us all into contact with Christ. It is to comfort those who mourn, bring justice to the oppressed, and forgive as Christ forgave. It is being willing to risk our lives for the sake of the Incarnate One. It is to be a living example of love, of peace, of caring, of hope. Most people will never know Christ until they first know Him in the life of another person.

Ministry is more than good preaching and altar calls. It is living victoriously in a world given over to sin, administering the love and saving grace of Jesus Christ in the lives of all with whom we come in contact.

We are privileged to touch lives at their most sentient points, and we touch them with the hand of Jesus Christ. We must remember that. And I remember.



# A TALE OF THREE STAFF MEMBERS OR, "HELP! I'M AN ASSOCIATE"

by Luther McGill

**F**red Wilson\* was enthusiastic about his job as minister of music at a large church in the Southwest. He had been called to the church three months earlier, following a three-year stint in a similar position at a smaller church in another state. He was already carrying out plans for graded choirs, special music, and cantatas. As he walked through the door of the pastor's office, he could sense something was wrong. The pastor, unsmiling, asked him to sit down. "Fred," the pastor began, "the board has voted to eliminate your position, effective 30 days from now. We just ran out of money."

Jerry Lawrence\* had been a popular youth pastor for two years. The youth program had grown under his leadership until it reached approximately one-third of the church membership. His colorful style was tempered by his deep commitment, concern, and loyalty. After a board meeting one Tuesday night, the pastor pulled him aside. "Jerry, I've decided I need a staff member whose image fits this church better. Do you think you could find a position at a church more in tune with your interests and abilities?"

Bill Allen\* appeared to be depressed and worn out as he sat across the desk from his district superintendent. Bill, too, had been dismissed following an all-too-brief term as an associate minister. He had been the third associate at the church in four years. Finally, the compassionate superintendent spoke up. "Bill, it may not be much comfort, but

you're not alone. There are far more bad staff relationships in the church than good ones. I'll do everything I can to help."

Unfortunately, the experiences of Fred, Jerry, and Bill are all too common. As our churches have grown, the needs and opportunities for staff ministries have blossomed as well. Sometimes these opportunities have developed for churches and pastors who have been ill-prepared for them. (Anyone looking for an exercise in pastor-bashing can stop reading now. My purpose is constructive and hopefully helpful.) Some studies have focused on specific components of this problem (finances, personality, job description, etc.), but I would like to focus on a more systemic approach to a system-wide problem. First, the foundation. God's call to the full-time career associate is as real and significant as any other call to ministry. Our church must begin to take that fact seriously. God's choices are neither accidental nor capricious. He has called some to specialized ministry to help pastors carry out the broad goals of saving the lost and building up the saints.

The words of an older gentleman at a recent board meeting illustrate the problem. As the two associates present calmly kept quiet, he opined, "We'd better always remember we only have *one* pastor, and we'd better take good care of him!" However reassuring the pastor may have found his statement, it was less than comforting to the staff members. God's design for associate minis-

try is as redemptive in purpose as the more general call to pastoral ministry. This design must be constantly kept before the people.

A second, equally critical concern is wrapped up in the term *education*. This, too, is a systemic problem demanding a systemic solution. First, pastors need to be better educated about the demands of multiple staff, but with even modest success, it is a possibility. Specifically, this concern translates itself into a clear-cut call for the inclusion of a required course on multiple staff ministries in the Minister's Course of Study, as a part of the ordination process. Since such courses are already offered at each Nazarene undergraduate institution and Nazarene Theological Seminary, this need could be relatively easily addressed in that denomination.

This proposal, of course, does not meet the needs of those presently in ministry. For those already struggling with this issue, an expanded emphasis at various continuing education opportunities for ministers could help. The greatest single contribution, however, could be greater effort on the part of individual pastors to become knowledgeable concerning the dynamics of multiple staff ministries. Intensive reading and positive interaction with others should focus on strategies and objectives, rather than persons and problems. By anticipating needs, the local pastor could build a framework for success in a multiple staff setting.

(Continued on p. 60)

# LET MY PEOPLE GO!

by Wilbur W. Brannon

Pastoral Ministries Director, Church of the Nazarene

**H**ave you been thinking about making a change in churches lately? Maybe it is a change in the church instead of a change to a church that is needed. You can effect congregational change if you want to.

You can begin by seeing what others do not see. This does not require some special gift. It only means a quick scan will not be our final look. A casual glance may miss a critical detail. Others look at the obvious and are satisfied. We must look for the hidden and be revived.

I must see my church as more than the brick and mortar at 4th and Main Streets. My church is like my mother. She birthed me. I came to life because of her. She nurtured and protected me. That is to say, without the church I would not be alive.

I came to know my grandparents were a part of my mother and they had families. After becoming a Christian I began to see the church

as an extended family! It was more than a pastor, an interested Sunday School teacher, and teen friends. I was drawing strength from a fellowship that reaches literally around the world.

Considering the Scriptures and my Christian heritage there is no way for me to maintain a pinched and parochial view of the church. The church exists for the world and embraces it as its field of operation.

This is my vision of the church. How do you see it? What you see is what you get! That is, you create what you envision.

If your vision of the church is restricted to its membership and its location, your ministry will be mostly confined within those limits. On the other hand if you see the church including the surrounding community, your evangelistic mandate will be relentless.

Only a wide-angle worldview of the church can support a biblically based missionary enterprise.

It may take an on-site Work and Witness project to give your people a wide-angle view of the church. A "Faith Promise" missionary convention brings real live missionaries to play with children and eat pizza with teens.

There is another dimension to my vision of the church. As pastor I must let my *wide-angle* view keep me from focusing close up on individuals. My missionary commitment loses credibility without a corresponding love for the people of my flock. To paraphrase St. John, "If a man says, 'I love the black South African,' and hates his brother, he is a

liar. For if he does not love the brother before his eyes (even if he is a pain in the neck!), how can he love the one beyond his sight?" (cf. 1 John 4:20, Phillips).

The law of love makes strong demands on our response to our enemies as well as neighbors. Not everyone who says he is a Christian acts like one, but as ministers we are obligated to act on the strength of Christ's life in us.

## FOCUSING ON LEADERSHIP

Our survival rate as ministers is greatly affected by the way we see our laymen. They may be worthy opponents, gifted leaders, or centers of creative conflict.

### A. Worthy Opponents

Those in leadership deserve our respect. Strong laypersons are influencers. The way we respond to them creates attitudinal ripples throughout your church that can be very positive. Do you see disagreement with a lay leader or an obstructing layperson as an adversary or an opportunity to demonstrate Christ's love?

I had a "worthy opponent" whom I took to the Lord. In prayer God reminded me that His Spirit could not have control in my life as long as I was permitting the spirit of this layman to control me.

So I opened up to the Holy Spirit, who showed me how much this man needed my love. We both agreed he did not deserve it. But He reminded me, "You don't deserve it either. Still I love you." With the Spirit's help I began to see this man victimized by one of sin's most vicious cancers:



Wilbur W. Brannon

bitterness. The infection was destroying the man's moral integrity. It was not difficult to love him when I saw him through God's eyes. And before I left that place his respect for me was confirmed. In those circumstances that was enough.

### **B. Gifted Leaders**

Perhaps the greatest challenge to pastoral leadership and the greatest potential for pastoral effectiveness is our relationship to gifted lay-persons. More and more people are becoming a part of our churches who are well educated and highly skilled in honorable professions.

The fear of appearing incompetent in their presence is a treacherous trap for the unwary minister. Their competence in certain areas, however, does not credential them in every area.

I got caught once in that trap, and it is humiliating. But to admit they had me psyched out was the beginning of my recovery. It was a lesson I thought I had learned, for in a different situation I had escaped that trap.

The respected strong leader can be our most valued ally. The secret is to appreciate his strengths that others see. We gain his confidence and support when he sees we need his expertise and are willing to learn from him. However, he (or she) will quickly lose respect for us if we respond with a sentimental servility—a sign of weakness. He does not want a pastor bowing and scraping before him but one who is emboldened by his example to “take charge.”

### **C. Creative Conflict**

That does not mean the chances of conflict are diminished. It could mean the stage is set for new confrontations because we are asserting leadership. Sometimes our best ideas are created in the conflict of opposing positions. Refinement takes place and others feel a part of the final resolution.

As a young pastor I had just been called to a well-established church with a long history. Among the core of lay leaders was one who was especially gifted. He was a highly respected businessman among civic leaders and active in community affairs. He had this same pervasive influence in the church.

Two things had to happen: (1) I had to respect him if I was to learn from him; and (2) he had to respect me if he was to be my ally in the work of the church. I was determined to be a good student and make him my friend.

This was accomplished, and I will always be in his debt. We did not see eye-to-eye on everything. Early in our relationship he remarked, “Preacher, I won't say we will always agree, but if we agreed on everything that would show one of us had quit thinking.” In our disagreements we remained friends and both of us were enriched.

In the process of earning our right to lead we establish the parameters of our credibility. The pace of establishing ourselves with our people quickens when they see we are not trying to be something different from who we are. It is rather out of our unselfconscious authenticity that they take courage to open up to us. In that interchange of vulnerability we are bonded in friendship.

Some will never respond authentically. But generally our people are relieved when they can see us as accessible “earthen vessels” to be molded rather than remote “gilded relics” to be admired. The fear of being put down is dispelled by the confidence of being accepted in spite of imperfections.

## **A LIBERATION MOVEMENT**

Have you ever imagined what would happen if we really started working together? How would your laity feel if they felt they were really free to express their faith in any way they could? Sound dangerous? George Bernard Shaw said, “In this world there is always danger for those who are afraid of it.”

### **A. Freeing Leadership Potential**

Our times are calling for men and women of vision, faith, and courage. It takes vision and courage to create; faith and courage to demonstrate. Faith is risky business, but faith is our business.

It is easy to excuse our lack of courage out of a frustration with the bureaucratic system. However, we would not apt to be so preoccupied with “the system” if we were consumed with a passionate faith. The sparks of such a flame in the pulpit

are bound to ignite enough pews to make a difference.

There are enough people in our churches who would like to make a difference in their world . . . even in their church . . . if given the opportunity. I am convinced that people want to know God better. That places an awesome assignment on us ministers. We cannot afford to be recreant to that duty or abandon our flock. To desert our people in the fight of faith is to throw them into confusion and contradiction. At the same time we sacrifice our personal integrity.

Our laity want answers to their questions. Yet we do not have to impress them with an aura of omniscience. If only they know we are struggling with the same questions, they will feel better. This honesty makes it possible to work on the solutions together. Ultimate answers will always be elusive. Process is the goal. It's on the journey we find new discoveries.

### **B. Pastoral Freedom**

In a shared ministry our pastoral work becomes lighter. Not because there is less to do but because we are liberated and stimulated to do it. Frustrations are not eliminated, but they are reduced because of the exhilaration of lay involvement.

We don't have to feel out of control just because we are not doing everything. Let God take control and look for the “new thing” He is doing.

One of the greatest frustrations to pastors is indifference among the laity. Could it be that a part of the problem is a ministry that does not touch their most urgent needs? We cannot be all things to all people, but an important part of our assignment is to learn where people are. Our people like to know that we care enough to take an interest in them.

When people feel cared for they will do almost anything for you. It will motivate them to sacrificial commitment like nothing else will. Therefore, the first step to shared ministry for you may be to love your people better. You are then freed from many distractions to minister effectively. Morale is lifted. Difficulties fade as the power of love moves mountains.

There is a renewed appreciation for you as you find ways to inspire, train, lead, and release your laity to do their ministry. As a spiritual

## Pontius' Puddle



leader you have helped them discover a new dimension of their faith and a new level of discipleship. When we are successful in bringing people to God they are sincerely grateful.

The Holy Spirit is operative in these relationships. He inspires "love [that] casts out fear." He blends our personalities and bonds us in His love. Lay leadership is released. New ministries are begun. The church is encouraged. Our calling is being fulfilled as we work through others, and God is glorified.

### *Urgent Priorities*

New energy is released to the pastor who has freed his laity for ministry. Some may call it effective delegation. I prefer to keep it in the language of the divine mandate: "Let my people go!" Or Jesus' startling command: "Loose him and let him go!"

#### 1. New Living Cells

We should not get hung up on authority issues. We do not relinquish some of our power by releasing our laity. That is precisely what frees them to do what they are capable of doing under power of the Holy Spirit. The body that ceases to make new cells quickly dies. Churches die for lack of new living cells too. Effective release of lay ministry is a starting point.

Laypersons have a distinctive work to do. You may be able to do it better, but it is not your job. Give yourself to preaching the Word, doing the work of an evangelist, and equipping disciples. They will accomplish the necessary

tasks and improve their skills as they are involved. Such people have value not merely for what they do but for who they are.

New relationships are renewed as they become involved in interdependent ministries. Just as the physical body cannot function on one or two systems, so the church must fulfill its mission with all systems providing strength for the health of the entire body.

The divine design for all of this comes from the Spirit of God. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is there is freedom." We are being drawn into the stream of His liberating Spirit. He brings liberation to His church by new creations within the church. His creativity not only regenerates the old life but also generates more life. It is generation by cellular multiplication.

Therefore it is incumbent on all clergy at every level to facilitate the Spirit's "new works." A part of that is granting the lay leadership the permission to become new living cells of ministry.

#### 2. A Released Laity

How can pastors release their laity? The first thing is to understand that not all laypersons who say they want freedom really do. It is much like those who say the greatest need of the church is more committed laypersons but resist their "intrusion" when the old guard's power is threatened.

Exciting new experiments exact their price. Those involved feel the weight of new responsibilities and the squeeze of more time demands. Others shrink from the pressure of expectations and the fear of failure. But you will need to give yourself to those who will love you for the opportunity to make their faith count. They will carry the day with you.

In any creative challenge you can expect new and strange ideas to emerge. Some will want to strike out on their own. They will react against structure and organizational restraints. That is acceptable. Once their ideas are identified you can deal with them and even capitalize on them for organismic renewal.

#### 3. Commitment to a Broader Ministry

Our concern is usually with building "our" church and protecting our turf. We don't like to admit our fear of the pastor across town. So secretly we think of him as our competitor. Is that the attitude Jesus was dealing with when His disciples were ambitious for certain positions in the Kingdom? He did not take too kindly to them. And He will not excuse us.

We are very sensitive about statistics, too. What if we started an extension Sunday School class or Bible study group and it eventually developed into a nucleus for a new church? What would it look like on my statistical chart? We

*(Continued on p. 60)*

# Home at Last

by Janice Hamilton

It was the end of a beautiful worship service. The foyer was filled with people. It was an exciting time for me. My husband's message had been just what God wanted us to hear, and there were many new people in the congregation. The Lord had been at work in such a "neat" way.

There was one hug after another as those precious people filed out. I stooped down to the little ones and tiptoed up to those taller than me. For almost four years I had stood alongside my husband as we greeted people after the services. Why was this Sunday so different?

A huge white mum was being carried toward the door by a church member. My husband had just conducted the funeral for this man's mother-in-law on Friday. I watched as his wife made her way toward me. I knew how she must be hurting deep inside today. I squeezed her hand as they made their way toward the parking lot.

The thought crossed my mind, "In the last four years, I have come to love and appreciate these people, Lord. When they have hurts and concerns, I feel them, too." This certainly wasn't true when we first arrived here. My thoughts were interrupted as another family approached.

"It was just like being at home," the wife, Teresa, said. They had moved across country months earlier. Ours was the last church they had decided to visit. Praise the Lord, they felt "at home!" I remembered the talk the Lord and I had concerning new people, how I wanted them to feel just that way. He was being faithful.

"I really hate to ask you for prayer again, but we have a new situation in our family," Delores whispered. She had been on my prayer list recently. Her 27-year-old daughter had suffered a brain tumor that was successfully removed. It had happened so quickly. God had placed the pastor and me close, so we were able to pray for the daughter—and for the family—immediately. There was a break in the line of people filing out, so Delores and I drew off to the side to talk. She shared the

details, and I assured her that I would hold her family up in prayer. "Thank You, Lord, for having Delores share her burden with me," I whispered to myself.

"Are those new glasses?" I asked an elderly lady.

"Yes, they are," she replied.

"They really look extra nice on you," I remarked, leaning over to give her a hug. Talk about special people! "This is one of your choicest, Father," I thought. She and her husband had been in the ministry for many years before their retirement. What a blessing to have them with us. I learned a few moments later that they were going to live in a nursing home soon. Their daughter shared, with tears in her eyes, that it was one of the hardest decisions she had ever had to make. Just the week before, God had prompted me to spend time in prayer for her.

The rest of the people passed by. We exchanged handshakes, glances, smiles. Suddenly it hit me. These people were sharing with me in a way they never had before. I had been so homesick when we first moved to this pastorate. I cried, felt sorry for myself, and prayed—begging God to send us back closer to home. Why did I feel different today? It was as if He was looking down at me and saying: "Child, they have gotten to know you, and you have finally accepted them into your heart." I had no doubt that the Lord had called us here. But it had taken me almost four years to feel at home.

Perhaps there are others who do not feel at home where they are serving. I've learned we must hold steady and trust in the Lord. He will be faithful. It may not strike everyone the same way it did me. It may take others less time to become adjusted to new surroundings. But now my heart is full and overflowing. This Sunday was different from others because I realized that God had performed a miracle in the heart of this pastor's wife. I am connected to this congregation. I understand, now, that "home" is where the Lord places us to serve.



R. GREEN



# Respite Care: An Outreach Ministry

by Fred Wenger

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

**I**t started innocently. John called and said, "Chaplain, I'm in charge of setting up Respite Care Programs in southeast Kansas. In Independence, Kans., the Nazarene church allows the community use of its building once a week. You know the churches in town. Do you know of any that might want to become involved in Respite Care by providing the place and/or workers?"

We talked awhile to clarify what he meant by Respite Care, "An opportunity for the family of a handicapped person to have a deserved and needed break from the constant care of their special-needs person." I could identify with the need. During high school I had to leave friends and rush home to be with my kid brother, Stanley, in time for Mother to work her second-shift job. Though I loved Stanley and knew he could not be left alone, I also resented having to leave my friends, who were talking, having Cokes, or playing ball. I decided to present this opportunity for ministry to my pastor.

Talking with my pastor began a process that stirred several key persons in the church. They sat up front, unkempt, crude at times, and if anything, too responsive to altar calls. A trip to an established Respite Care Program that ran a week-night and Sunday morning program independent of the regular church services, convinced him to give it a chance. The next hurdle was the church board. Here we found key support, but we also found some unexpected strong opposition. The challenge was finally worded, "I know it sounds like a good thing to do, but we all know we need help in visitation and other spiritual areas, so how can we justify using the time and talents of Christians in a social work program?" That statement actually helped, for it provoked a response that made the purpose of Respite Care clear. "Respite Care is

a ministry to the handicapped of our community and their families. If we do not offer it in the name of Jesus Christ, then I, a leader of the program, do not want any part of it. Many handicapped people have dropped out of church for various reasons. Their families have also dropped out in order to care for them. Respite Care can be used of God to bring them back." On a strong yet split vote, we proceeded. The challenger said, "We'll see."

We don't have much organization. We seldom have business meetings. Little money is spent. The director is appointed by the church board and runs a relaxed, low-key program. Two mental retardation professionals and several volunteers staff the operation. A typical night goes like this:

6:20-6:45 People gather. A small pot of coffee is made. Informal conversations take place. Two begin playing the piano. Table games begin (almost always several play Uno or Pit).

7:00 A cup of coffee is served. (We have a one-cup rule.)

7:30-8:00 Some always go hear the choir practice.

8:00 Begin refreshments. Families in the church take turns bringing refreshments about once a year. Sometimes goodies are left over from another group function. We share requests and pray. Each person does what he can to serve himself. We call it a "sin" to help someone who can do something for himself. Several do much more than at home. We have accidents, but overlook them, often singing a chorus, "I'm Not Perfect." Each person cleans his own mess.

8:30 Families arrive. Those who need rides are transported home.

For refreshments, we often serve cupcakes and have the clients ice it.

We let their families furnish the cake for birthdays. They make their own sandwiches and pour their beverage with as little help as they can manage. A few times a year we plan a special event. We always take in at least the musical part of revival services.

As you can see, our Wednesday night group has a nice social time while their families have a break for a couple of hours. The religious aspect is low-key. We aim more to be Christlike in all our conversations and relationships than to preach sermons. The families deeply appreciate us. They speak highly of us in our community. One family of three started to attend church and have been saved, baptized, and joined the church. Another young man attends regularly on Sunday mornings. He fits into older grade school classes in Sunday School and stays with them for children's church. The adults call him a "helper," but the 20-year-old young man who is retarded and has cerebral palsy is really the children's mascot. They love each other. The young children are learning to relate to a handicapped person.

Results are difficult to assess. I think one indicator is the attitude of our board member challenger. As we began he dropped in to see us a few times. He said, "I couldn't work with these people myself." Progressing from just "passing through," he has stopped in for a cup of coffee a few times. Now in church he helps open doors for the young man in the wheelchair. The handicapped are beginning to offer us their ministry now. One of the piano players has played offertories and sung in our services. The children's "helper" will be in their musical. I think the handicapped, their families, and the whole church has been helped in these attempts to offer the love of Jesus to "bruised reeds."

# Church Employees or Independent Contractors?

by Rev. Paul D. Fitzgerald

*Administrative Assistant for Pensions and Benefits Services USA  
Church of the Nazarene*

"Dear Sirs:

*The only employee we have besides our pastor is a part-time custodian (or secretary). Do you know of any way we could pay them by contract and save the trouble of withholding income taxes and Social Security (FICA) taxes?"*

In one form or another, this question has been asked literally hundreds of times in financial seminars, correspondence, and telephone conversations. Fortunately, the answer is fairly straightforward. However, it is usually not the answer desired by the questioner.

## **WHO ARE EMPLOYEES?**

There are basically two types of employees defined by the Tax Code: statutory employees and common-law employees. Statutory employees have specifically defined jobs that on the surface might appear to be self-employed positions were it not for the statutes that define the work as that of an employee. The common-law employee is the category that affects local churches most often.

The Tax Code defines a common-law employee generally as anyone who performs services that can be controlled by the employer. That is, the employer has the legal right (even if not enforced) to control the means, methods, and results of the services provided. If the employer/employee relationship is deemed to exist based on the facts in each case, it does not matter what it is called, nor how the payments are measured or paid, nor if the services are performed full-time or part-time.

The employer must determine any taxable amounts paid, withhold appropriate taxes, and pay and report those taxes to the IRS. Virtually all church custodians, church secretaries, paid choir directors, paid nursery workers, etc., are viewed by the IRS as common-law employees.

## **WHO ARE INDEPENDENT CONTRACTORS?**


Some local churches do hire independent contractors who offer specific services to the general public. Generally, in a year's time an independent contractor will have more than one organization to whom he offers services. Examples would be services provided by a janitorial service, snow removal service, roofing contractor, etc., that are advertised city-wide. No employer/employee relationship exists between the church and persons performing such services as an independent contractor; therefore, no withholding is required. However, the local church may still be required to report to the IRS those payments made to an independent contractor. The Tax Code provides that payments for services to an independent contractor in excess of \$600 per year must be reported to the IRS on Form 1099 MISC.

## **WHAT IF WE DON'T WITHHOLD AND REPORT?**

There are criminal and civil penalties for willful failure to comply with requirements for withholding and reporting! In addition, the amount of certain taxes not withheld at the time of payment from an employee's

salary (that must later be paid) becomes the responsibility of the employer! The employee has no obligation to later reimburse the employer for such amount. Further, in some cases, an officer or responsible employee may become personally liable for the taxes and penalties involved.

## **WHAT IF WE ARE NOT SURE IF WE HAVE AN EMPLOYEE OR AN INDEPENDENT CONTRACTOR?**

The local church should carefully consult IRS Publication 15 "Circular E—Employer's Tax Guide" and the free Publication 539 for examples that might be similar to the church's situation. (Both are available from the IRS office. See your telephone directory for listings in your area.) Consultation should be made with a local tax counselor for advice. If questions still arise, a special form is available from the IRS to request that they determine if such person has an employment relationship with the local church. In no case should the question be ignored, nor should there be willful failure to abide by legal requirements for withholding and reporting either wages paid to employees or payments in excess of \$600 to independent contractors. 

(Nazarenes may request further information on how this applies to their churches by requesting Memos on Church Management Nos. 3, 6, and 7 from Pensions and Benefits Services USA, 6401 The Paseo, Kansas City, MO 64131.)

The information contained in this article is of a general nature. It is not offered as specific legal or tax "advice." Each person, local church board, and district should evaluate their own unique situation in consultation with their local legal and tax advisers.



## THE WESLEYAN WAY (Continued from p. 5)

Renty, Gregory Lopez, and David Brainerd.

That Wesley took seriously the matter of reading widely can be seen in his advice to Margaret Lewen. Wesley told Lewen that beside the two hours per day in Bible study, "Your studying hours . . . might be five or six hours a day." Three hours in the morning and two or three in the afternoon was recommended. The early hours were to be given to books that require a "strong and deep attention." When such study by afternoon begins to tire the mind she was advised to "relax your mind by interposing history or poetry."<sup>17</sup>

Margaret Lewen, a new convert, was then referred to some 100 volumes for serious study in the fields of grammar, mathematics, geography, drama, logic, poetry, history, moral philosophy, metaphysics, history, science, and divinity.<sup>18</sup> No one knows how far Margaret Lewen got in this reading plan. What is known is that she made a gift to Wesley of a carriage and a team of horses, and that Wesley prescribed the same reading list to Ann Granville, Samuel Furdy, and Sarah Wesley.

### 4. Christian Service

Wesley looked upon Christian service as a spiritual discipline. The person engaging in Christian service received as much benefit as the person or persons served. This Wesley declared to such correspondents as Mrs. Bennis, Mary Stokes, Sarah Rutter, Ann Bolton, Mary Bishop, and Elizabeth Ritchie.

The Methodists were not their own, they were to live for others. Wesley said, "[We do not] acknowledge him to have one grain of faith who is not continually doing good, who is not willing to 'spend and be spent in doing all good, . . . to all men.'"<sup>19</sup>

The community of faith was one object of service. The poor, sick, and imprisoned were to be served as well. "Go and see the poor and sick in their own poor little hovels. Take up your cross, woman." Wesley urged the gentlewoman, Miss March.<sup>20</sup> Several months later Wesley writes, saying, "I want you to converse more, abundantly more, with the poorest of the people, who, if they have not taste, have souls."<sup>21</sup> Wesley goes on in the same letter: "Creep in among these in spite of dirt and a hundred disgusting circumstances, and thus put off the gentlewoman."<sup>22</sup> Less

than three weeks later Wesley pushes the issue again to Miss March. He advises her to "frequently, nay, constantly to visit the poor, the widow, the sick, the fatherless . . ." This she is to do even though such persons "have nothing to recommend them but that they are bought by the blood of Christ." She is to expect a "thousand circumstances" to "shock the delicacy" of her nature, but this must not keep her from the blessing to be found in this labor of love.<sup>23</sup>

Others received similar advice. Theological student Samuel Furdy was told in three different letters to break away from academic pursuits and regularly visit the sick. Brian Bury Collins, also a theological student, was advised, "You have seen very little of the choicest part of London society: I mean the poor. Go with me into their cellars and garrets, and then you will taste their spirits."<sup>24</sup> "I bear the rich, and love the poor," Wesley wrote to Ann Foard, "therefore I spend almost all my time with them."<sup>25</sup>

The study also revealed in Wesley's discipling

## THESE THEMES

### 1. Self-denial and Self-surrender

Wesley clearly taught in the *Letters* that self-annihilation and abnegation taught by the mystics was a mistake. Nevertheless a scriptural doctrine of self-denial was central in Wesley's counsel. He regularly sent self-examination exercises for his correspondents. We need to know the truth about ourselves, Wesley believed. If self-examination revealed inward sin, the believer was not to despair. God does not reveal our sinfulness to us to condemn us, but to heal us. The Christian's role becomes that of happy self-surrender.

In this study I read works on the spiritual life from nearly every century since Christ. Every spirituality I encountered included self-denial. Even Matthew Fox's "sensate spirituality" proclaims self-denial. This is in remarkable opposition to the "I gotta be me" syndrome touted by modern self-esteem addicts.

### 2. Christian Perfection

There can be no doubt that Christian perfection is at the heart of Wesley's work in spiritual formation. It is the organizing principle around which Wesleyan spirituality is built. We see him constantly working to bring persons into sanctifying grace or trying to help them grow in perfection. Wesley neglected neither the process nor crisis aspects of the work. To the devout persons to

whom he wrote, the crisis aspect received particular stress. These persons, already models of devotion and piety, were ready to receive sanctifying grace at any moment. Peggy Dale, Mary Stokes, Ann Loxdale, Lady Maxwell, Jane Hilton, Joseph Benson, and many others were so advised. Ann Foard was told that if she could believe, sanctifying grace might come at once, "Yea, while you have this paper in your hand."<sup>26</sup>

In the *Letters* Wesley defined Christian perfection as "neither more nor less than pure love—love expelling sin and governing both the heart and life of a child of God."<sup>27</sup> In another letter he calls it "the love of God and our neighbour; the image of God stamped on the heart . . . the mind that was in Christ . . . that deep communion with the Father and the Son, whereby they are enabled to give Him their whole heart, to love every man as their own soul. . . ."<sup>28</sup>

By developing a course on this study aimed at understanding and implementing Wesley's ideas, we discovered

## THESE RESULTS

By way of a pre-test and a post-test, perceived progress in the skills and practices of the spiritual life were measured in the lives of the class members. As a group the class's perceived progress in a three-week period was approximately 30 percent. This device plus our informal discussion brought us to *this conclusion*: A study of Wesley's way to spiritual formation can help us be better Christians, better persons, and better ministers of the gospel of Christ. ✠

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3. *Letters*, 8:9.
4. *Letters*, 5:56.
5. *Letters*, 4:58.
6. *Letters*, 6:239.
7. *Letters*, 5:287.
8. *Ibid.*, 349.
9. *Ibid.*, 335.
10. *Letters*, 8:246.
11. *Letters*, 3:219.
12. *Ibid.*, 221, September 6, 1757.
13. *Letters*, 4:71, August 19, 1759.
14. *Ibid.*, 225, December 15, 1763.
15. *Letters*, 6:233, October 1776.
16. *Letters*, 8:99.
17. *Letters*, 4:247-49.
18. *Ibid.*
19. *Letters*, 2:39.
20. *Letters*, 6:153.
21. *Ibid.*, 206.
22. *Ibid.*, 207.
23. *Ibid.*, 208-9.
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25. *Letters*, 4:266.
26. *Letters*, 5:11.
27. *Ibid.*, 223.
28. *Ibid.*, 101-3.

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CONNER, James D.	
Wednesday Prayer and Share . . . . .	DJF 79-80:18
CORNELL, C. E.	
How to Make the Midweek Service Popular and Profitable . . . . .	DJF 79-80:26
MICHAEL, Randy	
The Midweek Service as an Arena of True Fellowship . . . . .	DJF 79-80:10
NEES, Tom	
The Missing Link in Congregational Life . . . . .	DJF 79-80:17
RICH, Harry A.	
Ten Surefire Ways to Kill the Midweek Prayer Meeting . . . . .	DJF 79-80:12
STAPLES, Rob L.	
The Wesleyan Roots of the Midweek Service . . . . .	DJF 79-80:19
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WETMORE, Gordon	
What Makes the Midweek Service Work? . . . . .	DJF 79-80:8
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The Pastor and His Prayer Meeting . . . . .	DJF 79-80:22

#### Sunday Night

What's Working Sunday Nights . . . . .	SON 81:14
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Climate, Expectation, and Spirit . . . . .	SON 81:8
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How to Build Your Sunday Night Attendance . . . . .	SON 81:18
NOEL, Ark, Jr.	
Sunday Night: Biblical Preaching and Inspired Singing Help . . . . .	SON 81:21
RASER, Harold E.	
The Sunday Night Service: Where Did It Come From? . . . . .	SON 81:10
YOUNG, Richard	
The Sunday Night Service: Why Have It? . . . . .	SON 81:13



# TODAY'S BOOKS for TODAY'S PREACHER

**Basic Bible Studies for Children**, by Donna Fillmore and Robert D. Troutman, Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1987

It's high time the church had a tool to reduce the attrition rate of children lost because of inadequate follow-up after salvation.

The two pieces *Now That I'm a Christian: Basic Bible Studies for Children (PAVE-50)* and *A Guide to Using Basic Bible Studies for Children (PAVE-51)* are a terrific salvation follow-up curriculum, and they can be used interdenominationally. Though published by Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, there is no denominational reference in the material.

The authors give five reasons why children do not develop spiritually:

1. lack of assurance of salvation
2. conditions in today's world
3. peer pressure
4. no parental support
5. lack of clear teaching

The guide and packet are designed to help parents and concerned Christian adults instruct children in their new life in Christ in these areas:

1. Assurance of salvation by faith, not feeling
2. The benefits of being God's child
3. Developing a relationship with God through prayer and Bible reading
4. Recognizing Satan's tactics and defeating him with God's power
5. Living the Christian life-style of love
6. Taking part in the Christian family —the church

There are six lessons in the child's packet, plus a "Certificate of Recognition" and a "Record of Progress" envelope that holds completed leaflets. Attractively printed on heavy stock, leaflets are easy for the child to handle.

—Nina Beegle

**Word Biblical Commentary: Exodus**, by John I. Durham, Word Books, 1987 (PA084-990-2029)

The second book in the Bible might well be called "Genesis," according to

Dr. John I. Durham, author of *Exodus*, the latest volume in the *Word Biblical Commentary*.

His reasoning is that *genesis* simply means "beginning"—and it is the Book of Exodus where Israel's history as a people begins. Exodus records Moses' call to Sinai, where he was told to be the Hebrews' first leader, the first unified action of the Hebrews (the flight from Egypt), and the first long-term test of faithfulness as God's people (in the wilderness).

Volume 3 in Word's acclaimed scholarly commentary, *Exodus* builds on recent work in "canonical criticism." Formerly, scholars emphasized the diversity of this ancient material. Dr. Durham holds that it was accepted as authoritative Scripture in Israel because of a single theological purpose.

The author fairly examines this material's separate narratives, sequences of laws, various systems of religious symbols, and shifts of style and emphasis. But he warns that to become distracted by this diversity is to miss the fact that the material has the common purpose of assuring Israel that Yahweh, the hidden God who spoke through Moses, was in the midst of them, His chosen people.

Dr. Durham, who is professor of Hebrew and Old Testament at Southeastern Baptist Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C., calls the Book of Exodus "a trip across holy ground."

The commentary's structure enables both highly trained technicians and those interested in more popular studies to find material suited to their purpose.

—Ian Firstall

**We Have Met the Enemy, and They Are Partly Right**, by Anthony Campolo, Word Books, Inc., 1985 (PA084-990-3688)

It has been said that in criticism there is often an element of truth. Perhaps that is what hurts when one reads Campolo's latest book, *We Have Met the Enemy, and They Are Partly Right*.

Campolo explores the backgrounds and claims of several criticisms against middle-class Christianity. The reader is given an overview of the charges presented by Hegel, Nietzsche, Kierkegaard, Freud, Marx, and Dostoyevsky.

After presenting the arguments formulated by these spokesmen, Dr. Campolo clearly and rationally shows both pros and cons of the critics' theories. In Campolo's view, each of these critics may be partly right in their comments concerning middle-class Christianity. However, Campolo asserts that contrary to popular belief, neither Protestantism nor the bourgeoisie needs to pass away, but can triumph and flourish by heeding this "constructive" criticism from their opponents.

The book is certainly not light reading, but one that could be recommended for all of bourgeois Christianity to read. Criticism is hard to deal with. We often take the comments as a direct charge to our personhood and at times it may in fact be. As our blemishes are exposed we tend to forget that there are strong points still vibrantly alive within us. However, bourgeois Christianity will show wisdom in attempting to comprehend the areas of validity brought by their opponents.

—Fred D. Brown

**The Wesley Century**, by T. Crichton Mitchell, *Great Holiness Classics*, Vol. 2, Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1984, 498 pages, including bibliography (PA083-410-9107)

*The Wesley Century*, volume 2 in the *Great Holiness Classics* series edited by T. Crichton Mitchell, reprints writings that originally appeared from 1725 to 1825. These are works of William Law, John Wesley, Charles Wesley, Adam Clarke, Richard Watson, John Fletcher, and Francis Asbury and several of his associates in America. An interesting sidetrack is that in his introduction to the volume, Mitchell includes "Benson" and "Hunt" with Law, the Wesleys, Fletcher, Clarke, and Watson as persons who will always "head the list" of "New Testa-

**Clergy Malpractice**, by H. Newton Malony, Thomas L. Needham, and Samuel Southard, Westminster Press, 1986 (PA066-424-5919)

Not that the minister needs another stress point, but there sure enough is one—malpractice. It looms as a fear in the life of many ministers. This book may tell you more than you want to know about malpractice, but at least it covers the bases and you get your money's worth.

This book is written by professionals, versed and competent to write on the topics they cover. This compilation brings together good research and a process that weds rationale and principle. It is not easy reading. A law dictionary at your side might be helpful. I not only learned something about malpractice but picked up bits and pieces about legal matters as well. Because of the depth of the chapters, one gets not only the dimension on the malpractice problem but also a glimpse of the social climate/attitude pervading our age—which, by the way, is cited as the leading reason for clergy malpractice suits.

This book begins with a good in-depth overview of the factors surrounding the crisis. The authors cite consumer protection consciousness as a factor—"There was more protective legislature passed in the '70s than in the preceding seven decades combined" (p. 11). Another factor is the contemporary attitude toward professionals. Both competence and dedication are now openly questioned. This has come about, in part, from a "failure in the professional education process—failure to develop moral character and to provide training in how to make moral decisions" (p. 12). Such a failure, interestingly enough, is stated

by the authors as "the secularization of American life and values to accommodate the rights and needs of a religiously pluralistic society" (p. 12). So "the loss of Christian foundations is at the heart of religious pluralism and secularization so that 'official and public concepts of common life are fundamentally informed by a theological vision'" (pp. 12-13). In short, when man throws away moral guidelines he throws away the very glue that holds life, and man, together. Then mistrust breeds and every man's word is questioned.

Other causes for the malpractice crisis are given. One is the clash of conservatives with psychology. The author suggests that where there is a categorical rejection of psychological knowledge and technique, there is a vulnerability to legal action. The other extreme is the "pastoral counselor" who has divorced himself from theology and ethics—and biblical foundations.

Throughout this book, the well-known 1980 *Nally v. Grace Community Church of the Valley* suit is discussed. It is the catalyst for much of what is written, serving as a backdrop from which to gain perspective of the problem. The case is discussed in a number of instances, but especially on pages 18-22.

In the chapter "What the Law Says," there is reference to responsibilities, both on the part of the counselor and the counselee. There is also the question of how the courts would resolve the dilemma, if a "standard" process were to be designed for all counselors. The conclusion is that the courts would find this nearly impossible. This, the authors point out, puts the burden of competence on the counselor not

only to know the law and his limits, but to be biblically and ethically based.

The writers never back off from their commitment to ethical soundness and theological rightness. One helpful section is "How Can We Care Carefully?" in which 10 guidelines are given: (1) develop a formal counseling policy for your church, (2) develop adequate selection, training, and supervision, (3) avoid misleading claims, (4) make a thorough evaluation of the problem, (5) learn to benefit from testing, (6) determine your level of intervention, (7) make use of consultation and referral, (8) take advantage of continuing education, (9) guard records and information, and (10) provide follow-up care (p. 96). These are fleshed out over several pages.

Strengths of the book include its breadth of subject matter and research. Clarification of issues involved not only in counseling but also in all matters pertaining to malpractice, and respect and place for theology, ethics, morality, and the Bible. It also shares fairness in seeing both the pros and cons in various cases. Practical suggestions are given throughout, and it has a good word for discipline and the biblical format of reconciliation. Though dealing with a negative topic, the overall tone of the book is positive.

This book is not without its weak spots. It is heavy on legal matters; it may be a bit "preachy" in sections, making some value-judgments; and it may weigh a bit toward the counseling aspect of the malpractice crisis.

Hopefully, this is a book you would profit from reading but would never need. But should such a need arise, this would be the first book I would recommend.

—C. Neil Strait

ment holiness" advocates, and yet does not include any of their writings in the volume. One suspects that perhaps they had been but were edited out somewhere along the line.

The volume opens with two or three pages from the 15th century Thomas à Kempis; à Kempis's *Imitation of Christ*, with its call to purity of intention, was so helpful to Wesley and his fellow Methodists. Mitchell is one of the most knowledgeable persons of our time on John and Charles Wesley and their century, and his introductions reflect this acquaintance.

Mitchell, who does not interpret John

Wesley the way Timothy L. Smith does as associating Pentecost with the entire sanctification of 120 disciples, views Fletcher significant for that association (see Mitchell, "Response to Dr. Smith on the Wesleys' Hymns," *Wesleyan Theological Journal*, 16 [Fall 1982]: 48-58). Mitchell writes, "Fletcher's great concern was that God's people should experience that Pentecostal baptism of the Holy Ghost which marks arrival in 'the land of Perfection'" (p. 386). Mitchell also writes, "Increasingly Fletcher's nomenclature of Pentecost in relation to entire sanctification receives closer attention. This Fletcher nomenclature

makes him extremely important with reference to the current [1980] debate on early Methodism and the relation of Pentecostal terminology in the teaching of entire sanctification" (p. 386).

Persons now in the holiness denominations are in groups formed more or less directly out of America's holiness movement starting ca. 1835. Yet John and Charles Wesley and their contemporaries whose selected writings are reprinted and commented on in this volume, constitute an important part of the holiness heritage in which so many of us take pride today.

—J. Kenneth Grider

## LET MY PEOPLE GO!

(Continued from p. 43)

find it hard to believe that a decline is usually temporary. For creating new cells breeds new life in the congregation. You need to try it to believe it.


Remember, our ministry is broader than the one congregation. Our world commitments must not blind us to our immediate community field. Before you ask how many churches you need to start, ask: "How many unchurched folk are in my city?" There are effective methods to get the answer to that and other important questions. With all the available information tools at our fingertips God expects us to know.

He says, "Look on the fields!" Most of us only get a glimpse, and it scares us half to death. We pull the sheets over our heads and pray, "Even so, Come, Lord Jesus!" Then enter a cycle of defeat. Our vision needs to penetrate beyond that superficial level. Only then will we see enough to become free and challenged to take seriously our assignment.

As pastors we should appeal to those whose vocational interests take them into the world beyond the church but whose Christian commitment to the church remains strong.

We must appeal to those who enter our community with needs unmet by their nearest denominational church. We

must appeal to those who need permission or affirmation and encouragement to start something creative within their denomination for their new set of friends. We must appeal to leader types who are willing to take some risks in a challenging adventure to meet human needs, and to those who will become dedicated to initiate a spiritual movement in the church that will make it strong and effective in the coming years.

God is calling. Some will be lay leaders; others will be ordained leaders. All share in the responsibility of extending Christ's church. It is our pastoral duty to sensitize our laity to what God is saying to His church: "Let my people go!" 

## "HELP! I'M AN ASSOCIATE"


(Continued from p. 40)

Another component of the educational concern relates to educating the local church. Before staff members are hired, the local church should be made fully aware of how the church's goals and objectives mesh with the abilities and interests of the proposed staff members. The church should also clearly understand the financial and physical commitments involved in hiring new staff members.

The final educational component relates to the staff member himself. Prospective staff members should have an understanding of dynamic relationships, to complement a broad range of specific skills. Conversely, they should cultivate a sense of humility about their own lim-

itations. One of the weaknesses of the man who claims to do everything is that frequently he is unable to do anything well. Fundamentally, the education of the staff member must begin with a willingness to be a servant of Christ and His Church, wherever that servanthood leads.


My final concern is a brief focus on follow-through. Multiple staff ministry, if successful at all, requires the development of a healthy team relationship. Styles and personalities will vary, but a ministry built on the essentials of shared vision, open communication, visible planning, hard work, and mutual accountability and trust, has the best chance of success. No one is perfect in this field. In the New Testament we read that a determined Paul would not tolerate an immature John Mark on his ministry team (Acts 15), but years later, we

find John Mark helping Paul carry out his work as he sat in chains (Colossians 4). Clearly, the Holy Spirit had transformed a flawed relationship. Perhaps our perceptions in this area can change as well. 

\*The names in the stories have been changed. The incidents are true. One of the stories is mine.

## PREACHER'S EXCHANGE

**WANTED:** Copies of the *Manual* for the following years: 1907-15, 1923-32. Contact Garry M. Wright, 202 N. Taylor, El Dorado, KS 67042.

**WANTED:** Pastors using computers for telecommunications; can access a Christian BBS for sharing of information. Call: BBS No. 614-775-1231. 

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# SERMON ILLUSTRATIONS



## THE MEASURE OF SUCCESS

Chuck Colson writes of his reflections during a prison chapel service:

"As I sat on the platform, waiting my turn at the pulpit, my mind began to drift back in time . . . to scholarships and honors earned, cases argued and won, great decisions made from lofty government offices. My life had been the perfect success story, the Great American Dream fulfilled. But all at once, I realized that it was not my successes God had used to enable me to help those in this prison, or in hundreds of others just like it. My life of success was not what made this morning so glorious—all my achievements meant nothing in God's economy. No, the real legacy of my life was my biggest failure—that I was an ex-convict. My greatest humiliation—being sent to prison—was the beginning of God's greatest use of my life. He chose the one experience in which I could not glory [to be used] for His glory."

### SOURCE:

*Loving God*, by Charles Colson, Zondervan, 1983.

### TRUTH, CONCEPT, OR DOCTRINE ILLUSTRATED:

God chooses to reveal His glory in our failures and our weaknesses. Human accomplishments "mean nothing in God's economy."

### SUPPORTING SCRIPTURES:

1 Cor. 1:26-31  
Phil. 3:4-9

—Submitted by Christi Clifford

## THE LIMIT OF THE LAW

"I have very little faith in the ability of the law to change the human heart or eliminate prejudice."—Dwight D. Eisenhower.

### SOURCE:

*Time* magazine, April 4, 1969

### TRUTH, CONCEPT, OR DOCTRINE ILLUSTRATED:

Of itself, the law does not change us.

### SUPPORTING SCRIPTURES:

Heb. 7:11-19  
Rom. 8:3

—Submitted by Chris Northey

## SOLD INTO FREEDOM

A young mulatto girl was being sold at auction one day in the early 19th cen-

tury. She was a beautiful girl, tall and slender. The bidding was keen, and quickly mounted higher and higher until at last only two men were left bidding to own her. One was an uncouth fellow who swore every time he raised his bid over the other, a quiet man of refinement. Finally, the bidding ended, and the gentleman was given the paper that made him the lawful owner of the girl. The auctioneer shoved her toward her new master. She stood before him proudly and defiantly, hating him with her whole heart. Suddenly a change came over her countenance. First, there was a look of amazement on her face, followed by one of utter disbelief. Her new owner was ripping up the papers of ownership, and with a smile, said to the trembling girl, "My dear, you are free. I bought you that I may free you."

Too stunned for speech, the girl cast herself at the man's feet. Then, with a cry of happiness, she exclaimed, "Oh, Master, I'll love you and serve you for life!"

What the law and the papers of ownership could not do, the man's kindness and mercy accomplished.

### SOURCE:

Unknown

### TRUTH, CONCEPT, OR DOCTRINE ILLUSTRATED:

The Lord Jesus Christ loved us and paid the price to buy us from slavery to Satan. We are set free from sin because of the price He paid for us.

### SUPPORTING SCRIPTURES:

John 8:36  
1 Cor. 6:19-20  
1 Cor. 7:21-23

—Submitted by Chun Sup Chung

## WORSHIP IS SERVICE

The purpose for filling up a car's gas tank is more than for the pleasure of driving to the service station, but to be able to travel to other places. If driving to the pump to fill the tank was the extent of one's transportation needs, the effort is really wasted.

Why, then, do so many Christians' spiritual lives tend to revolve around the Sunday morning service? It's merely a pit stop, the necessary preparation for

the larger part of worship. For we only truly worship when we spend our lives in service to God and others.

### SOURCE:

Original

### TRUTH, CONCEPT, OR DOCTRINE ILLUSTRATED:

Worship has more to do with *service* than it does with an Order of Service.

### SUPPORTING SCRIPTURE:

John 4:24

—Submitted by Scott Meador

## PERSPECTIVE

"Knowing God without knowing our own wretchedness makes for pride. Knowing our own wretchedness without knowing God makes for despair."

### SOURCE:

Blaise Pascal, quoted in *Does God Exist? An Answer for Today*, by Hans Küng, Vintage Books, 1981

### TRUTH, CONCEPT, OR DOCTRINE ILLUSTRATED:

We are truly sinners, yet we are saved by grace.

### SUPPORTING SCRIPTURES:

John 3:16  
Rom. 3:23

—Submitted by  
J. Nathan Rovenstine

## FORGIVENESS

Abraham Lincoln was once asked how he was going to treat the rebellious Southerners once they were finally defeated and reinstated into the Union. The questioner expected Lincoln's answer to wreak vengeance. Instead, the president answered, "I will treat them as if they had never been away."

### SOURCE:

William Barclay, in *The Gospel of Luke*, Daily Study Bible, Westminster Press, 1975

### TRUTH, CONCEPT, OR DOCTRINE ILLUSTRATED:

God's forgiveness is so complete that He treats us as though we had never been away from Him.

### SUPPORTING SCRIPTURES:

Ps. 103:12  
Luke 15:11-32

—Submitted by Paul Whiteford

# SERMON OUTLINES



## SERMON OUTLINES ON THE SEVEN CHURCHES IN REVELATION

by Richard Knox

Sermons 1-3 in a series of 7

### YOUR FIRST LOVE

Rev. 2:1-7

#### INTRODUCTION

1. Remember your first crush?
2. Remember when you were first converted?
3. What is your first love? What is most important to you?
4. Jesus' words to the church at Ephesus include a commendation, a condemnation, and an exhortation. Let's put them in the form of three questions:

#### I. ARE YOU PRACTICING YOUR FIRST LOVE?

- A. The city of Ephesus
1. The most well known city in the province of Asia.
  2. A flourishing, commercial city. Trade between East and West passed through Ephesus.
  3. The center of the worship of the most sacred goddess in Greco-Roman culture—Artemis, Diana. The temple of Diana was the seventh wonder of the ancient world. The worship was a kind of hysteria when the people worked themselves up into frenzies of sexual mutilation.
  4. The third center of Christianity. Paul had spent nearly three years in Ephesus. Timothy was stationed there for a while. John spent the last years of his life at Ephesus.
- B. "I know your deeds, your hard work, and perseverance."
1. It was an active and energetic church.
  2. "Hard works" is a strong term. It describes labor to the point of exhaustion; working at a cost. They were pouring their lives into the church.

3. "Perseverance" (patience) is triumphant fortitude and turns them into grace and glory. They were tireless workers.
  4. No matter how the Ephesian Christians were beaten down, discouraged, or persecuted, they did not quit. They stayed with the work.
- C. Ephesus was an orthodox church.
1. They were careful in matters of discipline. They would tolerate no sin or false doctrine.
  2. They were zealous in holding true to doctrine, ethics, and standards.
- D. Ephesus sounds like an extremely successful church.
1. Well-planned and executed services.
  2. Lots of programs and activities.
  3. Committees and boards that functioned well.

#### II. WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR FIRST LOVE?

- A. "You have forsaken your first love?"
1. Not lost; rather willful neglect.
  2. Christ was no longer the center of their lives.
  3. The abounding joy and the old enthusiasm were no longer there. Their services were mechanical; their devotions, routine.
- B. The "Ephesus problem" happens quietly and by gradual shift of focus.
1. A subtle shift in the life-style until Jesus is no longer the center of our beings.
  2. We have lost the joy and gladness and enthusiasm and the drive. We do our service out of duty. We are no longer content with just the things of God.
  3. So many things crowd in until we are preoccupied, by church politics, organization, or programs.
  4. The first love has been abandoned, and church work takes its place.

- C. How can it happen to us?
1. It happens in denominations
  2. It happens in churches
  3. It happens in marriages
  4. It happens in friendships
  5. It happens in the life of discipleship

#### III. WILL YOU RETURN TO YOUR FIRST LOVE?

- A. There is no easy solution for Ephesus.
1. Remember
    - a. Recall the days of spiritual blessing.
    - b. This church had *fallen*, not merely stumbled.
    - c. The prodigal son remembered and went back.
  2. Repent
    - a. Change your mind; turn around.
    - b. The preaching theme of John the Baptist, Jesus, and Peter.
    - c. Rediscover Jesus as the true Center of our lives.
  3. Do the things you did at first
- B. Refusal to repent is costly.
1. "If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place."
  2. The church at Ephesus would no longer exist.
    - a. This finally happened later.
    - b. The church was given a reasonable opportunity to repent.
  3. This letter to the Christians of Ephesus does not explain the downward fall, instead it abruptly shouts out the warning to the church about the result.
- C. When we turn in genuine repentance toward the Lord, the result is victory. We shall be overcomers.

#### CONCLUSION

This letter found the Ephesians where they were and called them to return to the Source of life, to the good beginning from where they started.



## THE SUFFERING CHURCH

Rev. 2:8-11

### INTRODUCTION

1. The city of Smyrna is one of the truly great ancient cities of the world.
  - a. The harbor was one of the finest in the world.
  - b. Smyrna was a political center.
2. Smyrna was also one of the most beautiful cities in the ancient world.
  - a. The model Greek city.
  - b. It claimed to be the most beautiful Greek city in the world.
3. Life was centered around theater, athletic contests, festivals, and worship in beautiful temples.
4. The church at Smyrna stood in the midst of paganism.
  - a. Economic and social life was organized around guilds in which the Christian refused to participate.
  - b. Smyrna was a center of Caesar worship.

### I. I KNOW THE PRESSURE

- A. Greek: *thlipsis* = pressure
  1. Execution by placing a heavy boulder upon a man
  2. Grinding millstones
- B. Pressure in Smyrna
  1. Deprived of the right to work and make a living
    - a. Every worker belonged to a guild with its own patron god or goddess.
  2. Caesar worship
    - a. Every subject of the Emperor was required to confess that "Caesar is Lord."
    - b. Because he refused, the Christian was marked as a traitor.
  3. Yet you are rich
    - a. Root word for "rich" (*plousios*) is "filled" (*pletho*).
    - b. Filled with the fullness of God.
    - c. God in you is able to withstand pressure.
    - d. C. S. Lewis: "The man who has everything plus God is not one wit richer than the man who *only* has God."
- C. Pressure in your life
  1. Emotional pressure
  2. Family pressure
  3. Financial pressure
  4. Time pressure

### II. DO NOT BE AFRAID

- A. You are going to suffer.
  1. We might have expected the Lord to say, "There will be no more suffering."
  2. Persecution, testing, and suffering will continue.
- B. In spite of testing, do not be afraid.
  1. Jesus says, "I know."

- a. He has been through it all.
- b. He goes before us in suffering.
- c. He promises that the suffering will be temporary.

2. Ps. 23:4
3. Rom. 8:38-39

- C. Some of you are going through trials.
  1. God knows.
  2. There is nothing for a Christian to fear.
  3. The resources we have in Christ are fully adequate.

### III. BE FAITHFUL

- A. Unto death  
Polycarp, the pastor of the church at Smyrna, was martyred.
- B. The crown of life
  1. Not *diadem* = royal crown
  2. *Stephanos* = victor's crown

### CONCLUSION

1. I know the pressure  
Do not be afraid  
Be faithful
2. The promise of God (v. 11)

## DO NOT BE ENTICED

Rev. 2:12-17

### INTRODUCTION

1. City of Pergamum built on a high hill
2. Capital city of territory under the Attalid kings
  - a. Territory covered most of Asia Minor
  - b. Bequeathed to Roman Empire in 133 B.C.; provincial capital for 250 years
3. One of the most famous libraries of antiquity; over 200,000 volumes
4. A temple to each of the four great Greek gods
  - a. Zeus: the father of all Greek gods
  - b. Dionysius: god of wine and drama
  - c. Athena: god of wisdom in war
  - d. Aesculapius: god of healing
5. The most famous medical center in the world
6. Pergamum was a well-educated, cultured, intellectual city.
7. Jesus' pattern of address to the seven churches: (1) commendation; (2) condemnation; (3) exhortation

### I. I KNOW WHERE YOU LIVE (v. 13)

- A. Satan's throne
  1. Pergamum was the provincial center for Caesar worship
  2. Jewish maxim: "Where the law of God was not studied, there Satan dwelt."
    - a. Renowned intellectual center
    - b. Studied many Greek gods, but not the One True God

3. Evil society
  - a. We live in self-centered, moral-less society.
  - b. Jesus is saying to us, "I know where you live."

### B. Yet you remain true

1. Remain = take hold of; hold fast
  - a. The word is sometimes used as a synonym for "arrest" meaning "take hold of and not let go."
  - b. The root word means "might, power, sovereignty."
  - c. In the midst of an evil society, you take hold of the truth and you hold fast with might and power.
2. Witness = martyr
  - a. Antipas gave his life because he held fast.
  - b. "Witness" in the Greek is the same word from which we derive the English word *martyr*.
  - c. Remaining true costs.

### II. DO NOT BE ENTICED (v. 14)

- A. Doctrine of Balaam
  1. Balaam and Balak (Num. 22:1—24:25; 31:8, 16)
  2. When God did not permit Balaam to curse His people, the prophet suggested an indirect way of bringing divine curse upon Israel.
    - a. Introduced Israelite men to Moabite women
    - b. Greek indicates a stumbling block; trap; snare
- B. Conformity to pagan customs
  1. Live as everyone around you lives.
  2. The social customs were a threat to the Christian faith.
- C. Do not be enticed to compromise
  1. Ethics
  2. Morality
  3. Standards of the Church

### III. REPENT

- A. Change of direction
  1. Genuine sorrow
  2. Five of the seven churches are told to repent.
- B. Recognizing His authority
  1. Sword (2:12b; 1:16; 19:13-16) = symbol of the Son of Man's judicial authority
  2. Play on words: authority of the provincial governors was expressed as "right of the sword."
  3. We are to submit to His authority.

### CONCLUSION

- "To him who overcomes, I will give . . ." (v. 17)
1. Hidden manna = intimate communion with Christ
  2. White stone = imperishableness of His name



# THE ARK ROCKER

## AND THE CHURCH WAS NONE THE WISER

Sidney Glick was filled with wonder the day he graduated from NANU (Not Another Nazarene University). No one else could believe it—Sid Glick, a college graduate! When his name was called, Sid slinked across the stage almost apologetically, fearing that the dean would change his mind at the last minute. His wife, Erla Mae, took no chances. She used her roll of film by the time Sid crossed the stage. It was just the beginning, the speaker assured them, of great things to come. "Expect a miracle!" he thundered. And Sid did. He believed in miracles. It was miracle enough that he was getting his degree!

Sid had felt for some time that he should go on to seminary for further study. But his dad scoffed at the idea, maintaining that too much learning wasn't good for a soul like Sid's. Sid succumbed to the pressure and made himself available for pastoral assignment.

By the end of the month, Sid quit his janitorial job at an elementary school to accept his first pastorate. It wasn't much, but Sid was delighted. The board offered him a small house and a meager salary. The church building was a little run down, but it was fine for the three or four families who made up the church.

"Pastor Sid," they called him. And Sidney was thrilled. He had a place to preach, a home to live in, and a salary. He and Erla Mae dressed modestly and drove an older sedan. They were typical first-year preacher-types.

Sidney's peers didn't expect him to amount to much. Oh, they liked him well enough. After all, the church needs guys like Sid for the highway and byway work. "Praise God for Sidney," they'd say. "He's right out there on the firing line" (they had no smell of gunpowder on their suits). Sidney was pleased to get recognition.

It wasn't unusual for Sidney to go a week or two without pay. "Gotta keep the lights burnin'," the board reasoned. Sid didn't complain. When things got rough, he went to the local bank to negotiate a loan. There was no negotiation to it. He was flat refused. He had no credit history and not much of a job. Besides, his predecessor had left town hurriedly, leaving more than one unhappy creditor behind. Sidney left the bank a bit downtrodden, his worn sport coat flapping in the wind. No credit. No money. No salary. But at least he had a place to preach and a home to live in!

That day, Erla Mae went for the mail, as was her cus-

tom. Suddenly, Sidney heard her scream. He couldn't imagine what could have happened, unless the Widger kids had put a snake in the mailbox again. But there was no peril. Erla Mae had screamed from pure joy. The mail had brought them the miracle they had been expecting. It was a Preston Brothers credit card.

Preston Brothers, one of the most prestigious chains ever to hit Hagio County, had randomly sent out credit cards to lure new customers. Sid and Erla couldn't believe it. Imagine. Now they had a degree from NANU, a place to preach, a house to live in, and a *credit card!*

They agreed to use it only in dire circumstances. But they also agreed that needing clothes was a dire circumstance. And buy they did! They bought shirts, dresses, suits, shoes, and designer ties. They could barely manage all the boxes and bags. Their old sedan was like Santa's sleigh on Christmas Eve—in more ways like one. Just like a sleigh, the car wasn't about to go on its own power. It had picked this time to give out. No choice but to buy a new one, Sid reasoned.

At the bank, the banker sneered down at Sid. "Have you any credit?" Sidney confidently displayed his new Preston Brothers card, and the banker changed his tune. By the end of the day, a new Buick Century graced Sid and Erla's driveway.

Sidney's peers took notice. "Perhaps we misjudged the boy," they surmised. "He must be doing well." Official church pooh-bahs took notice, too. At the annual conference, Sid was appointed to three committees and was elected to NANU's Board of Trustees.

Soon a call came from Dr. James Montezuma Hall, superintendent of the Best of the West District. Rev. Glick (as Sidney was now known) was being offered one of the largest churches in the region. It seems a prominent board member had seen Sid's picture in the denomination's paper.

Years have passed. Sidney now holds one of the top spots in the denomination. His memory is quite creative. His first church, *Dr.* Glick recalls, went from 10 to 850 members in just 13 months (though the records seem to have been lost). In his study, an odd plaque hangs on the wall. Nestled in among his honorary degrees and ordination certificate, Sidney has framed a—a credit card. PRESTON BROTHERS. And the church was none the wiser.



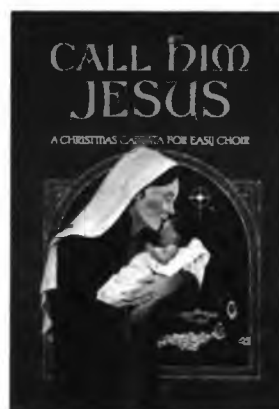
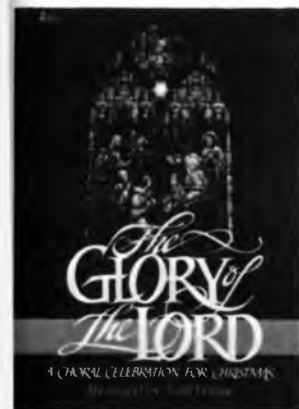
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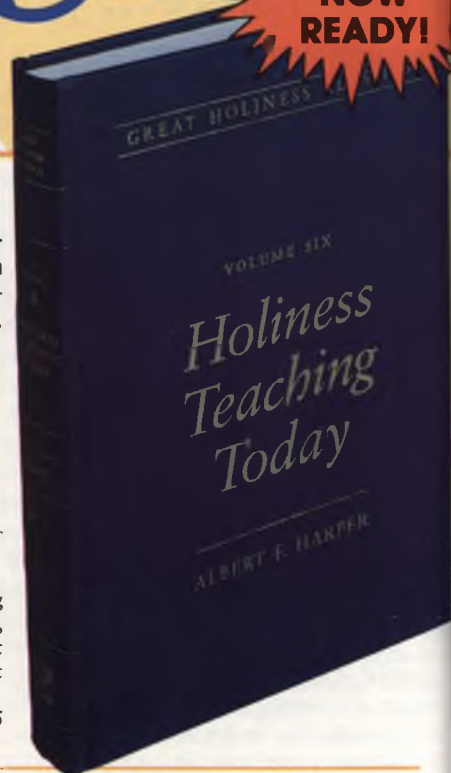
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