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THE

# PREACHER'S MAGAZINE

—proclaiming Christian Holiness . . .

*inside this issue:*

**CELEBRATING THE GOSPEL**

*The Editor*

**KEYS TO SUCCESSFUL MINISTRY**

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**APOSTOLIC SUCCESSION: WHO'S IN IT?**

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**BUILDING RAPPORT WITH CHILDREN**

*James Cockroft*

THE

# PREACHER'S MAGAZINE

**JAMES McGRAW**

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## Celebrating the Gospel



**T**HE SALVATION ARMY drummer was beating rather vigorously on his well-worn percussion instrument, and the noise sometimes made it difficult to hear any of the others in the band. When the leader asked him, for the third time, to tone down the volume just a bit, his classic reply was, "I'll try not to hit it so hard. But when I get to thinking about what Christ has done for me, I get so happy I could burst the blessed thing!"

And so it is when joy floods the souls of God's people. There is cause for rejoicing when a sinner is saved by grace, and there is likely to be continued rejoicing as long as he continues to worship the God of heaven, who has wrought such a work in his unworthy heart. There is celebration in the gospel of Christ.

Next to love, joy is at the head of the list which describes the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22). It is seen by Jesus as the basis for His instructions to His disciples. It is why He teaches them, and it is what He offers them. "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full" (John 15:11).

Jess Moody's sermon "A Drink from Joel's Bar" emphasizes this much needed aspect of Christian worship. People who watched those early Christians worshipping the resurrected Jesus thought they were "full of new wine" (Acts 2:13). Peter set the record straight that day when he declared, "These are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day. But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel" (Acts 2:15-16). A visit to "Joel's bar" may trigger the kind of celebrations that outwardly resemble the uninhibited expressions of the intoxicated. But the similarities stop on the surface. The Christian's joy goes deeper, it lasts longer, and it leaves no ugly hang-overs.

So why the solemn gloom in the worship of so many Christians in our day? No wonder people stay away from our churches. If our faith affects us like this, they want no part in it. We may say we are glad, but we don't act like it. We may sing about joy, but our faces don't reflect much of it. We may be experiencing the awe and reverence in worship, and this is as it should be; but we do not present a very attractive appeal to those whose hearts are searching when we overlook the celebration aspect of our worship.

This is why the holiness people always have sung the gospel songs along with the grand old hymns of the Church. We have been criticized for it, but not always justly so. There is validity in the joyous songs of testimony in our public services. "Floods of joy o'er my soul like the sea billows roll, since Jesus came into my heart" tells the story to those who need just what we have experienced. "When we all see Jesus, we'll sing and shout the victory" says something about the future that flashes brilliant light in the midst of the shadows all around us. For this there should be praise, not shame.

There is a touch of sarcasm sometimes in the observations of those who accuse us of thinking about "pie in the sky by and by." But the future is as important as the past and the present. It is all right there in God's scheme of things. The Apostles' Creed doesn't ignore it. "I believe in . . . the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen." Sociology is related to the Good News, but so also is eschatology. This we must remember, and not let our critics dampen our enthusiasm in the contemplation of our future. Denied many of the comforts and pleasures in this life, we rejoice that we will receive our reward when we can keep it longer and enjoy it more.

Celebration and joy have always been vital ingredients in the associations of God's creatures with their Creator. All the way back to the creation of all things, said God to His servant Job, "The morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy" (Job 38:7). Joy in the worship of God's children is no new innovation of the Jesus freaks and the "now generation"!

When the wise men came seeking the Babe that was born in Bethlehem, Matthew records their celebration of that glorious event: "When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy" (2:10). A half-hearted "Hallelujah," do you suppose? A weak "Amen"? A faint little smile, in the preoccupation with their dignified bearing appropriate to their status in the community? We know better than that. There was rejoicing with "exceeding great joy" when Jesus was born.

And so it was when He arose from the tomb. Those who saw that the grave was empty and heard the good word from the angel "departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy" (Matt. 28:8). Likewise when He ascended into heaven, the disciples "worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy" (Luke 24:52).

It is not a shallow, superficial emotional feeling that can be turned on at will. There is nothing attractive in trying to show it when it just isn't there.

But let us not forget it, the joy of the Lord is our strength. Let all the other elements of worship be present, as they should be. But let joy be there. Put the celebration where it belongs in worship.

God wants every preacher to succeed, and success always comes in doing the things God wants us to do.

## Keys to Successful Ministry

**M**ODERN BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE, with the help of the latest business and industrial research and of approved psychological testing techniques, has come up with a marvelous list of qualities that make a person successful. I have always been interested in success. I have wrestled over this in the past, in my evaluation of ambition and motivation. I have decided that it was all right with God for me to want to succeed as long as success was in the things God wanted me to do—in areas that bring glory to Him. I hope you agree with me. I offer the following as ingredients for success:

1. *Have a dream.* A dream costs nothing, but it is the most valuable commodity in your life. You should try to crystallize in your mind a vision of what you hope to be one year, five years out in the future. Visualize in your thinking what you hope to accomplish by a certain time. Think of it this way: If I knew I could not fail, what would I do? What kind of pastor would I be? What kind of church would we have? Dare to dream big dreams. A pole vaulter

never knows he has reached his highest till he has failed.

Or another way of putting it, “Where there is no vision, the people perish” (Prov. 29:18).

2. *Have a spirit of dedication.* Having crystallized your dream in your mind, give yourself completely to the accomplishment of that dream. Allow yourself to be consumed with a burning desire to do what you feel you should do. Be aware you will have problems. There is no good idea without a problem. But don't let problems stop you. Be prepared for them. Expect them, and when they come pray about them, focus on them, list a number of possible alternatives; then pick the most practical and move ahead.

Or another way of putting it, “No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God” (Luke 9:62).

3. *Have a spirit of enthusiasm.* Modern motivation technique teaches that purpose is like the rudder of your ship of life. Enthusiasm is the power that drives it through the storms. Enthusiasm is contagious. When you approach each day with a spirit of zest, a love for life, and an assurance you are going to succeed in fulfilling your dream, this makes everybody around you love life and want to succeed. Did you know the word *enthusiasm* comes from the words *en Theos*, which mean *in God*?

Or another way of putting it,



by  
**Norval Hadley**

General Superintendent  
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Meeting of Friends  
Newberg, Ore.

“Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might” (Eccles. 9:10).

4. *Have a healthy self-appreciation.* It is self-will, not self-love, that is sin. Be like the daughter that floated down the stairs in a new evening gown, dressed for a date, and said, “Daddy, I’m glad I’m me.” People who have a healthy self-appreciation have a contagious ability to reproduce themselves. They are equipped to change life. They dare to take off the mask and be their true selves; they waste no energy on trying to be what they are not.

Or as Jesus put it: “Ye are the salt of the earth. . . . Ye are the light of the world” (Matt. 5:13-14). Or as Paul wrote, “I want you to realize that God has been made rich because we who are Christ’s have been given to him!” (Eph. 1:18, TLB).\*

5. *Have a passion for excellence.* Don’t be content with the mediocre. Bob Pierce, founder of World Vision, used to say, “The difference between an amateur and a professional is just that extra 5 percent, but that’s a very important 5 percent.” My father taught me that, if a thing is worth doing at all, it is worth doing well. Determine what you feel you should do and then do it better than anyone else.

Or another way of putting it: “Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God” (1 Cor. 10:31).

6. *Have a positive mental attitude.* It really makes a difference how you think. Let your life be characterized by attitudes of trust, not suspicion; of acceptance, not condemnation; of compliments, not criticism; of enthusiasm, not discouragement; of praise and thanksgiving, not complaining; of love, not anger; of redemption, not destruction. Be ego-constructing, not ego-deflating. Someone has said sin

results from wrong mental attitudes; then sin begets guilt, guilt begets illness, and illness begets death. It all starts with the wrong mental attitude. This makes it very important to think right. Robert Schuler’s positive thinkers’ creed is “When faced with a mountain I will not quit! I will keep on striving until I climb over, find a pass through, tunnel underneath—or simply stay and turn the mountain into a gold mine, with God’s help!”

Or to put it another way, “Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice. . . . Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” (Phil. 4:4, 6-7).

7. *Have faith.* If you know your dream is something you ought to accomplish, don’t doubt. Believe you can do it. Don’t ask, “What will it cost?” unless in your value system money is the major thing. Don’t ask, “Will it fail?” unless in your value system your reputation is the major thing. But rather ask, “Is it practical? Will it help where people hurt? Does it need to be done? If the answer to these questions is yes, go ahead with faith that you can succeed.

Or a *better* way of putting it:

“Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you” (Matt. 17:20).

Really to accomplish great things doesn’t take great faith. According to the Bible, it just takes small faith like the grain of mustard seed, but faith in a *big* God.

I guess when you think about it, all these new scientific keys to success are not so new after all.

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Elisha, the man of God, is an example in devotion, in discipline, and in simplicity.

## *Elisha—Man of God*

**S**IDE BY SIDE in the Books of the Kings stand two prophets, each as formidable to his generation as each was different from the other.

Jesus leaves no doubt that the stormy Elijah was a prototype of John the Baptist (Matt. 11:14; Mark 9:13). If Elijah was a type of John the Baptist, would not Elisha be a type of Christ? The Apostle Peter summed up the life of Jesus by saying, "who went about doing good" (Acts 10:38). The same could be said of Elisha, whose whole life was filled with helpful miracles and common deeds of love and kindness to both great and small.

The pastoral life of Elisha exerts a strange but wonderful influence upon the mind of this writer. A portrait is drawn of the prophet in 2 Kings 4:8-10, which is as illuminating as it is simple. In brief, it tells of a woman who lived in Shunem, a village overlooking the large, spacious Valley of Megiddo. She was acquainted with the prophet and observed some simple traits in Elisha's life that did not require a seer to per-

ceive. She saw that he was "an holy man of God," that he "passeth by us continually," and that the simplicity of his life required nothing more than "a bed, and a table, and a stool, and a candlestick" in the "prophet's chamber" which her magnanimous heart was about to provide for him.

A simple outline would describe Elisha as:

### **I. A man of devotion**

The Shunammite woman detected that he was a "man of God." A reputation was already beginning to grow up around this man whose face was often seen. "Take care of your character," someone wisely observed, "and God will take care of your reputation." The holy character of Elisha helped to foster this integral truth about preachers, regardless of the age in which they live.

The perceptiveness of the Shunammite should be an eye-opener to the fact that laymen are not blind. People watch the walk of the man of God more closely than they listen to his talk. After all, a man's preaching is but the echo of his life. If his life is consistent, there will be a clear ring and a certain sound in that echo. In a world fraught with hypertension and bustling activity, there is still enough perceptiveness in many to detect the genuine article of a tranquillity born of a right and holy relationship with God.

Whether the minister is gifted and accomplished or beset by faults and failures, he should be able to evoke



by  
**Garth Hyde**

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this response, "There goes a man of God." One dear German lady in a community where I once pastored used to say with conviction as she spoke of another minister in town, "Hee's a man from Gott!"

Aside from the conscious effort we put forth to identify ourselves with God and to preach His gospel, people are still going to take their true knowledge of us in exactly the same manner as did the Early Church of the apostles: "They took knowledge of them, *that they had been with Jesus*" (Acts 4:13). This is still the vital ingredient, and if it's missing, the simplest fool will discern it.

But the Shunammite was not content to abbreviate her judgment of Elisha, as we're apt to do. She said, "I perceive that this is an *holy* man of God." Other reputable ministers may earn the respect of the community and be labeled "a man of God." But there should be that about the holiness preacher that would evoke the added adjective "*holy*." Let us remember that we are not just "holiness preachers." We are first and foremost, holy men of God. And this can result only from the certitude of being entirely sanctified and maintaining the fullness of the Spirit. Holiness is not one of the fringe boxes on the ever widening phylacteries of our modern ministerial endeavors. Holiness is the heart of both the man and the message. It should be as natural to live holiness in the streets as it is to preach it from our pulpits.

When Peter wrote of the mighty conflagration that is to engulf the whole earth in the last days, he brushed aside all temptation toward speculation concerning the events of that day by driving straight to the point—"Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, *what manner of persons ought ye to be* in all holy conversation and godliness" (2

Pet. 3:11). Whether it be in the reasonable tranquillity of the present scheme of things or when the world's on fire, holy character is the only thing that is going to matter.

## II. A man of discipline

An accompanying remark in the mind of the Shunammite as she observed Elisha was that "he passeth by us continually."

Where was Elisha going? Was he doing his pastoral calling? Was this during the period when he was a college professor, or even the president, making his regular trips to the classroom or to the office in the "school of the prophets" he'd helped to found? At any rate, there was a degree of regularity and well-orderedness about this life that prompted the woman's comment.

Elisha was not so careless as was the military man who was responsible for firing the cannon each morning at eight at the base where he was stationed. He stopped each morning at a jewelry store and set his watch by the clock in the window. One day he stopped and inquired as to the accuracy of the jeweler's clock.

"Well," he replied, "you know the cannon that goes off down at the base each morning at eight? Well, I set my clock by it."

No, Elisha was a man by whom you could accurately set your watch each morning. Elisha was practical-minded enough to know that he must couple ardent devotion with down-to-earth, grass-roots, nitty-gritty *discipline*.

*Discipline* is a word largely out of vogue anymore. But it is still the secret to true, enduring discipleship. And it is no accident that the two derive from the same root word. The man of God must come to the conviction that he must discipline his life, with all its moods and temperaments. He knows that he must get "mind over mattress" every morning

if he is to have any quiet time with his Master, much less an unhurried morning in his study.

Regularity and discipline in former college professors and pastors have made a profound impression on this writer. In their lives discipline was as regular as the four seasons and the rising and setting of the sun. Harmony and orderliness speak of the beauty of the vast universe and her Creator God, so why should it not be so with the man of God?

It is said that when St. Francis of Assisi invited a young hopeful, "Let us go down to the village and preach to the people," he eagerly accepted. On their way they stopped to play with children, talked with different persons, and exchanged greetings with passers-by. When they started back home, the friar asked, "But, father, when do we preach?"

"Preach? Every step we took, every word we spoke, everything we did has been a sermon." Every holiness preacher, like Elisha and St. Francis, ought to be "a sermon in shoes." With Whittier, in our fevered days, we might well pray,

*Take from our souls the strain  
and stress,*

*And let our ordered lives confess  
The beauty of Thy peace.*

### III. A man of simplicity

Simplicity is another lost quality in the affluence and sophistication of our age. Yet a remaining taste for the simple things of life is still a savor in the mouths of many. Behind the facade of pretense there lie, in the heart of many, an aching void and a deep yearning for simplicity. And simplicity in the manner and bearing of the holiness preacher will still impress some and will be the unmistakable sign of an even deeper "simplicity of intention."

The simplicity of the life of Elisha is eloquently spoken in the fact that the Shunammite needed only to fur-

nish his humble apartment with a bed, a table, a stool, and a candlestick. He did not need a portable TV or radio to keep tab on the current ball game. These simple furnishings suggested the singularity and the simplicity of his intention. He was the prophet of "the single eye." If "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all" (1 John 1:5), then certainly there should be in the man of God a single eye and his "body shall be full of light" (Matt. 6:22).

Someone has wisely observed that "there are two ways to be rich—one is in the abundance of our possessions, and the other is in the fewness of our wants." Thomas a Kempis wrote that one of the "Four Things That Bring Much Inward Peace" is to "choose always to have less rather than more." The simplicity of Elisha's chamber provided simply man's basic needs—for rest, for food, for study, and for illumination. Bud Robinson said, "A man ought to stand up eight hours, sit down eight hours, and lie down eight hours—that's how his Creator made him."

Passing continually before and among men was a vital part of Elisha's ministry, but he was effective there *only* as he was faithful to his quiet and secluded times. Seneca said, "As oft as I have been among men, I returned home less a man than I was before." The man of God needs those times of aloneness with God and His Word to reorient himself and to receive those "mid-course correction" instructions to ensure his safe flight from earth to the Celestial City.

In his classic *Testament of Devotion*, Thomas Kelly stated what must have been Elisha's abiding conviction: "All discoveries are a reduction from complexity to simplicity." And in his sermon "On the Single Eye," John Wesley puts in the abstract the very simplicity with which the an-

cient prophet went about doing good: "Simplicity and purity are the two wings that lift the soul up to heaven: simplicity which is in the intention,

and purity which is in the affection." These two wings are still waiting to be tried by the modern-day Elishas—true men of God.

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Organization need not be pitted against the personal leadership of the Holy Spirit. Pastor Metcalfe aims toward both goals.

## Body-Life Concepts and Corporate-Life Commitments

(A book report and personal reaction to *Brethren, Hang Loose*, authored by Robert C. Girard, Zondervan, 1972)

**T**HE CHALLENGE to worship may be welcome or it may be extremely distasteful. But such a challenge is present reality. The book *Brethren, Hang Loose*, by a Wesleyan pastor, Robert C. Girard, is a prime example.

More than just a conversation starter for holiness ministers, over 50,000 copies of this book now in print say that *Brethren, Hang Loose* is having an impact on the entire evangelical community.

A too brief, secondhand introduction, such as this article, often has the effect of polarizing pastors into two opposing camps. Those who are happy with things much as they are may tend to stoutly condemn any innovation before they hear all the

facts. Those who feel the need for changes here and there may see the methods outlined in *Brethren, Hang Loose* as a panacea.

Just what is the challenge of this book? The best answer, or course, is to buy, read, and honestly react to the book itself. However, a too brief, secondhand summary (my own) for the purposes of this article follows:

Bob Girard sees a wide dichotomy between organization and organism. He sees conflict all too often between promotional emphases and the needs of his individual church members. He deplores having the pastor do all the ministering while the congregation for the most part is passive. He maintains that too much energy is spent in the average church in just maintaining machinery. He says: "We know in our hearts that most of what we are doing to build our churches is geared to appeal to the carnal mind" (p. 69).

Mr. Girard was not embittered by "failure." As a dynamo of a young minister, he had started his church (Our Heritage Church, Scottsdale, Ariz.) from nothing, with denominational backing, and had built it to



by  
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200 members when he began his new departure. Putting his convictions on the line, he began to abandon organization that existed for the sake of organization, determined to let the Holy Spirit lead, even to the most practical application of the concept. His basic premise, as I read it, was the concept of the trustworthiness of the Holy Spirit. Not a bad basic premise, I might add.

A thumbnail (and probably unfair) summary of results of this decision would be to say that results are inconclusive. Holding nothing of mere tradition as sacred, Girard's church has no Sunday evening or Wednesday services. His total membership is still about 200 members. However he claims that involvement in prayer services are increased *20 times over* on a regular basis, and several other local churches have been "mothered" by his congregation. He says that personally he could never go back to doing things the way he did before his "hang loose" departure.

My personal opinion and reaction after reading and discussing *Brethren, Hang Loose* with other holiness ministers is generally positive in spirit, although mixed in evaluation of his methods. I do not feel that organization by its very nature must be pitted against the personal leadership of the Spirit. Yet the motivation of Robert Girard comes through to me clear and strong. He is trusting the Holy Spirit in a way that he did not before—and in a way that challenges, and even rebukes, me.

So what do I, personally, propose to do about such a challenge? Is the concept of letting the Holy Spirit have absolute right of way in my life any contradiction to the budgets and programs inherent in denominational life? Is pressure from district and general programming valid motivation for fulfilling my call? When shall I joyfully go off to the district center

for workday? Is Girard an absolute heretic?

As the dust settles, I find that I am still more or less pointed in the direction I was heading before I read this book. But I am convinced that Girard is not in any sense heretical. Far out, perhaps. But he has challenged me, and I see the need for doing the following things (at least):

1. I will endeavor to amplify the *concept* of the trustworthiness of the Holy Spirit in *my own life*. I believe He is capable of caring for His Church. My tension and striving and busywork must give way more and more to a greater personal emphasis on devotion and living in the Word of God. Nothing outwardly may undergo great change, but this *concept* must reorder my priorities until if, in the squeeze of time-pressure, something has to give, it won't be my prayer time. Nor the time spent waiting on God for direction in the worship services.

2. I will endeavor, if I see the need for making any changes, to *begin lovingly where my people now are*. Retired old saints, problem people (people with problems), and fence-straddling, fringe people are just as much my pastoral responsibility as eager, bright young converts. I do not feel it is a moral compromise to serve milk instead of meat, even when I would prefer to serve meat—at least when I am dealing with infant appetites. It is my conviction that if the full variety of diet is presented as appetizingly as possible, weaning and maturation will follow at a generally satisfactory pace. (Have you ever tasted Pablum?) The answer to spiritual immaturity is not so much "Let 'em eat steak" as providing mouth-watering alternatives to Pablum.

3. I will seek ways to challenge my people to the point of *their* adoption of the concept of the trustworthiness

of the Holy Spirit. They must see for themselves the necessity for *their* ministering in the body of Christ. In practice this may be identical to the "Use 'em or lose 'em" philosophy propounded by Ron Lush in the book of the same name (*Use Them or Lose Them*, Ron Lush, Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City), but hopefully the reason that more and more people are active in the services will be because they feel something of the same inner compulsion I feel. I will actively seek ways to help them share their faith. Prayer meeting is a good place to emphasize the idea of ministering one to another. Often we can pray for individual requests *as they are made*, with a different person voicing each intercession.

I will never innovate just for the sake of innovation. But I will not hesitate to break new trails if the Spirit prompts by pointing out areas of need to which we may minister.

4. Last, I will continue to seek to make my ministry more and more Bible-centered. I have a big barrel of fine topical evangelistic sermons that represent years of hard work.

But I refuse to lean back on those labors in the light of the present challenge of the Word. By God's help I will be an expository preacher of the Bible, because it is the only tool the Holy Spirit can use to direct both me and the church I serve.

I will not be satisfied to fill my Sunday school and *not* fill the minds of boys and girls and men and women with the Bible. I will nag and prod and push the teachers and leaders of church and Sunday school until *they* know their Bibles so well they are literally pulling Bible sermons out of me.

All this challenge from *Brethren, Hang Loose?*

In my situation, as no doubt in yours, there is a lot of life left in the local church. I don't intend to throw out any babies as I change bath water. I'm not sure that I intend to DO anything that Pastor Girard DID—and in all fairness he never proposed his church as a model. But I do pray that the freshness and honesty of the challenge in *Brethren, Hang Loose* will not die. There never has been a baby that never needed a change!

*Dear Lyle:*

*That was a very good article in the July, 1973, "Preacher's Magazine" entitled "Keys to Continuous Revival." You may be interested in how I used it.*

*At the monthly church board meeting I had xeroxed copies, so that every board member had a copy. Then we had an evaluation of our church in each of the 10 categories. On a scale from 1 to 10, each one placed the number he felt represented where our church now stood as far as that single item was regarded.*

*Now we will find the average for each category and then we will mail to each board member the results. All have been urged to read the article, and I believe they will.*

*Blessings on you in your ministry.*

Yours sincerely,  
EARL LEE

After his first year in the pastorate, how does a young preacher feel about the Lord's work?

## Slowing Down to Smell the Flowers

By Howard Culbertson\*

**O**H, YOU'RE TAKING a home mission church, so you'll have plenty of time for study and writing?" That's the reaction of one young minister when I told him I was moving to Uvalde, Tex.

That flooded me. My call from God never included any fine-print clauses about year-long vacations, and certainly nothing concerning prosperous congregations, luxurious parsonages, and comfortable salaries. To me it had always meant ministry—"caring for God's people as a shepherd does his sheep" (Eph. 4:11, *Living Bible*).<sup>1</sup> And that's exactly what I intended to do.

Very quickly I discovered that pastoring my congregation of two dozen was no recipe for "plenty of time for study and writing." In fact, after the first month I was ready (if I could have afforded them) to start recruiting associates to direct our church's ministries in Christian education, music, and visitation. To keep my ministry at its peak productivity, I early discovered it necessary to establish a "normal week" work schedule. Time-gobblers such as sermon preparation, reading, correspondence, long-range planning, service planning, and administrative details tended to get out of hand. I also learned that a few minutes spent each morning outlining the priorities

of the day (on paper) kept me from bogging down. I use a pad provided by a local bank as an advertising gimmick, which has emblazoned across the top, "Things I Gotta Do Today."

### Perspective

Satan really knows how to work on me. When a new convert begins to falter, he quickly dims the memory of a new Sunday school bus full of children; reconciled marriages; new hymnals; a growing youth group; new public-address system; new tables, chairs and blackboards; and a baptismal service at the river. Then that "master of deceit" makes those problems loom like ghostly shadows on a child's bedroom wall. I should have listened to Mrs. Edward Lawlor's advice to "keep a dairy of your first year." It would serve as an excellent reminder to the devil of the great things God has done for us.

Naturally, I have some built-in defeat mechanisms. For instance, I'm always going out to pick the ears of corn two days after I've planted the seed. It is frustrating to see that the stalks haven't even come up. But things—vegetable or spiritual—just don't happen that fast.

To create a sense of continual forward movement for both me and my congregation, I have adopted a policy of making something new happen each week—even if it's only adding door stops in the rest rooms.

In these first 12 months following

\*Pastor, Church of the Nazarene, Uvalde, Tex.

1. *The Living Bible*, copyright © 1971, Tyndale House Publishers, Wheaton Ill. Used by permission.

seminary, I've learned to listen to my wife. It's amazing the kind of perspective she can give me on a problem or situation that I feel closing in on me—such as the financial shoe-string our congregation operates on. And she seems to sense—long before I do—when I need to take a break and “slow down to smell the flowers.” In addition, she keeps an eye on my eating habits, public appearance, actions, and speech. That's not really ego-building. But then God didn't call me to erect monuments to my ego.

### **Simon Stylites Complex**

At times a home mission pastor begins to feel a close kinship to that medieval pillar-sitter, Simon. Much of what happens—or does not happen—in our congregation necessarily focuses on me. As a result, a real feeling of loneliness and public exposure develops. Our limited personnel prevents us having a multifaceted program for every member of the family, or even a great music ministry. In spite of all my prayers to the contrary, at times it is very much a one-man show. Under that kind of pressure, taking a day off to slow down and smell the flowers has been a hard discipline.

Pastoring in a small town (10,000 population) serves to intensify the feeling of living in the spotlight. Wherever I go in Uvalde, I'm still the Nazarene pastor, and every person I meet is a potential member of my congregation. While in town, it is almost impossible to get my mind out of “church gear.” But I have discovered the relief of escaping for an afternoon or evening to San Antonio—90 miles away.

### **Devotional**

To imply that a crammed schedule has devoured any study and writing time would be misleading. Most every morning I'm in the office with

about half that time set apart for reading, study, and writing. That reading time has nurtured my love for good books into an insatiable appetite. However, the effects of inflation, plus needs at home and church, have drained away any book budget there might have been. Fortunately, the widow of a Christian and Missionary Alliance pastor has graciously made available her husband's library. His complete collection of E. Stanley Jones, plus works by Niemöller, Torrey, and A. B. Simpson, has made rich reading. One of my members belongs to an excellent evangelical book club and is always sharing the latest. The local public library has volumes by J. B. Phillips, Peter Marshall, Elton Trueblood, and Norman Vincent Peale.

In the midst of all that rich diet, the Lord began to talk to me about my reading of His Word. He was right. I was spending so much time reading *about* the Bible that I found little time to read it. I was expecting to feed my flock from the rich pastures of the Word when I myself was ill-nourished. I'm attempting to balance the scales. Instead of always picking up the nearest newspaper, I now reach for the Bible. I may read through a book of the Bible from several translations on successive days. I'm amazed at the wealth of material which I'm discovering for the first time!

### **Formal Schooling**

“There's a lot of things you'll never learn in the classroom!”

“They just teach you a rosy ideal in there. You'll find there's a real world outside waiting for you.”

I heard a lot of well-intentioned advice like that during my eight years of college and seminary. Some fellow ministers seriously attempted to get me to see the folly of throwing away those years while a lost world awaited me. Some of my classmates suc-

cumbed to the temptation to “get out into the work” because they “weren’t learning that much in school anyway.”

After 12 months as a pastor, I have come to place a high value on every hour I spent hunched over a desk taking notes, or doing research in a library, typing term themes, or rapping over a Coke in the lounge. I’m convinced that without my formal schooling I’d have been blown out of the saddle long before now. Particularly valuable were the years at seminary. The introduction to the great religious classics, the grasp of God’s Word, a knowledge of how people learn, an evangelistic strategy, and the picture of the ideal church have all helped me retain a balance of ministry plus a sense of progress.

You can’t learn it all in books, it is true. But unless you start there, you’re not going to learn anything.

### Epilogue

Well, what great lessons have I learned in my first 12 months of pastoring?

One is that ministry is measured in persons, not statistics. Statistical progress is only a secondary measuring stick. You’ve got to keep your eyes off the attendance and offering board and riveted on Keith, who’s fighting a terrible temper, a cigarette habit, and has two broken marriages . . . and on Frank, who has just triumphed over a narcotics addiction . . . and on Pat, who tried to commit suicide before she came into contact with the church . . . and on Jeanne, who has discovered peace and joy where there was only frustration and meaninglessness.

The second and most important lesson is: If you know that you are abiding in Christ, that you are controlled by the Holy Spirit, and that you are praying according to the Word and will of God, you can expect God to answer your prayers.

## Practical Points

*that make a difference*

### He Ate Ice Cream with Him— and Won Him to the Saviour

Dear Son:

I never saw the likes of it! Our new pastor is quite a man! You see, he attended an ice-cream fellowship for the men on a Friday night before his first Sunday and got acquainted with all of us. John was one of them.

John was having a difficult time. He moved west, lost his tenure at work, moved back, and started all over again. His discouragement affected him spiritually, and he was on the “edge of things.” But he “clicked” with the pastor who ate ice cream and cake with him.

The following Wednesday, John testified that the Lord had touched him and renewed his life. Sunday night he was at the altar asking God to forgive him for his lack of faith. Saturday he was on the bus line contacting new families for Christ and his church. What a transformation!

Our pastor said nothing to him about spiritual matters—he just befriended him. He identified with John, and let the Holy Spirit do the rest.

It doesn’t always work that way, but many times it does. God uses *everything* at His disposal—even ice cream.

The pastor tells me that there is hardly a week goes by but that there is a new family to call on. That’s a good way to keep a pastor busy. It all started with ice cream!

Love,  
*David*

Evangelism which stops with conversion is incomplete, and has not accomplished its ultimate purpose.

## Follow-up Evangelism

By Paul Lorenzen\*

### Part I. Background

ONE OF THE MOST remarkable aspects of the early Christian Church in the New Testament is the rate and effectiveness of its growth. It was so outstanding that the Apostle Paul could say to the Romans, "Your faith is being proclaimed throughout the whole world" (Rom. 1:8, NASB).<sup>1</sup> In Thessalonica the people declared, "Paul and Silas have turned the rest of the world upside down, and now they are here disturbing our city" (Acts 17:6, *The Living Bible*).<sup>2</sup> Time after time in the New Testament and in Early Church history, one can see the phenomenal growth and dedication of the early Christian Church.

But what was it that caused this rapid and effective growth of the Church? What was it that caused the new Christians to be so outstanding in their faith that they could be spoken of in such a manner? Among the reasons that can be given for this growth, two of the most important are: (1) every member of the Church was expected to witness and evangelize—it was the exception rather than the rule to find a Christian who did not evangelize (Acts 8:1, 4); (2) Every member was given follow-up care following his conversion to Christ. Each convert was taught how to become a disciple, not just a con-

vert. The Early Church was careful to conserve the results of its evangelistic efforts.

The Church today has begun to bring into focus again the first of these two aspects—that every member should be an evangelist for Christ. Personal evangelism is gaining prominence in sermons and books. Courses in personal evangelism and witnessing are being taught in many churches today. Laymen are being given the training needed to actually bring another person to a saving faith in Jesus as Lord and Saviour. With this new interest, however, there is a noticeable lack in understanding and application of the second aspect mentioned above—the follow-up of the new convert. The results of "every member evangelizing" will not produce the desired results until we see "every convert disciplined" also.

C. E. Autrey has said, "True evangelism is not merely concerned with an experience of soul salvation, but it is interested in keeping the convert in proper relation to God and leading him into rich Christian living. Evangelism which stops with conversion is *incomplete and has not accomplished its full, intended purpose*" (italics mine).

When the church sees a person accept Jesus Christ as his personal Saviour and Lord, the obligation to that person has just begun.

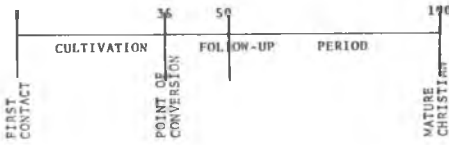
It has been well said that if evangelism could be visualized on a scale

\*Minister of Evangelism, Orangewood Church of the Nazarene, Phoenix.

1. From the *New American Standard Bible*, copyright © The Lockman Foundation, 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971.

2. *The Living Bible*, copyright © 1971. Tyndale House Publishers, Wheaton, Ill. Used by permission.

from zero to 100, the different phases would look something like this:



Evangelism which is properly done will include: (1) a proper amount of cultivation, (2) the point of conversion, and (3) a thorough period of follow-up with the convert. Any evangelism which does not include the follow-up in some manner is incomplete evangelism.

All Christians are in the so-called apostolic succession as they maintain the beliefs and practices of the apostles, and as they give witness to God's offer of grace through Jesus Christ

## *The Apostolic Succession: Who's in It?*

**A** 12-YEAR-OLD BOY bishop ordained a 10-year-old boy as bishop, at a time when the office of bishop could be purchased and given to almost anybody.

Not only were both of them on the youthful side; the 12-year-old was too drunk to know what he was doing.

Anglican Bishop Charles Core, who refers to this (*The Church and the Ministry*, N.Y., Macmillan, 1886, p. 39), believes, of course, that the apostolic succession was maintained even in this instance. He believes also that, although some bishops in the second century were Gnostics, the apostolic succession was maintained when they consecrated others as bishops.

The usual Anglican understands that, as there is an unbroken succession, since the time of the apostles, between those consecrated bishops and the ones doing the consecrating, the ministerial genealogy with Christ's first apostles is maintained. This kind of genealogy is something objective, something that obtains regardless of the beliefs and ethical practices of the persons involved. Admittedly, the Anglicans believe that the Church should maintain the pristine faith and practice of the apostles, and they believe that this kind of genealogical succession helps the Church to maintain such; but the apostolic succession is maintained whether or not the pristine faith and practice are. And Anglicans do not by any means exhaust those interested in a literal apostolical succession.

As I see the matter, the interest in this kind of succession as such is post-New Testament in its origin. Insofar, however, as we may maintain such an interest, and still be in harmony with the New Testament,



by  
**J. Kenneth Grider**

Professor of Theology,  
Nazarene Theological  
Seminary,  
Kansas City

the kind of succession we would legitimately seek to maintain is of an evangelical nature.

This evangelical succession has several elements in it. For one thing, a born-completely-new person helps another to be born again, and so there is a succession in the matter of being born again.

Also there is a succession from the apostles onward in doctrine. As each generation of Christians teaches such doctrines as that Christ was conceived by a virgin and raised from the dead, a theological genealogy with the apostles is maintained. Besides, a lineage can be traced from generation to generation in the area of Christian fellowship and in the Lord's Supper, and in prayer. These "successions" are referred to when it is said of the Early Church: "And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers" (Acts 2:42, RSV).<sup>1</sup>

Furthermore, since Peter the Apostle was given the keys to the kingdom of heaven, and told that he would be the one to determine whether or not certain persons would be admitted into heaven (Matt. 16:19), anyone would be in the apostolic succession who is likewise given those

keys. And, as I see it, Christians in all generations are given them. By witnessing to God's grace in Christ, we help people to receive God's pardoning grace. If we do this, people are justified by faith; if we do not, people do not turn to Christ. Since all Christians, clergy and lay persons, may do this witnessing, all are given the keys for opening the doors of heaven to people. All Christians, therefore, are in the apostolic succession, because all, by our witness or our lack of it, figure in whether people will be saved.

Who, then, is in the apostolic succession? As I see it, a person might or might not be in it if, between him and the apostles, an unbroken lineage has been maintained between "consecrated" and "consecrator." A person is in it, minister or lay person, if he maintains the beliefs and practices of the apostles, and if, along with them, the person is sent as a witness to the world of God's offer of grace through Jesus Christ. Even the Roman Catholic theologian Hans Küng agrees with this, basically, when he writes, "Who succeeds the Apostles? There can be only one basic answer: It is not a few individuals but the whole Church which enjoys apostolic succession" (quoted in Johannes Remmers, *Apostolic Succession*, edited by Hans Küng, Paulist Press, 1968, p. 41).

1. Revised Standard Version of the Bible, copyrighted 1946 and 1952.

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**Empty altars have a way of looking up at the minister to haunt him. What shall it profit a church if it succeeds in the secondaries but fails in its primary mission? We must recapture the burden for souls. There is not enough heartbreak over the lost, not enough soul burden in our pulpits, not enough groaning and weeping for souls in our prayer life, not enough praying and fasting on the part of the church. Halfhearted members and sinners are too comfortable in our services; shallow devotion among our own people is too commonplace; love of money and position has crept into our churches. We have begun to measure churches by salaries, comfortable parsonages, expensive buildings; weighing the minister in the scales of the world, rather than by God's measuring rods.**

—*Carl B. Clendenen*

● **General Superintendent Strickland**



## MEETING THE TIME CHALLENGE

**W**E ALL seem to be confronted by the challenge of time. No matter how hard we try, there seems to be more work to do and more people to see than time allows. Facing these pressures has become a way of life for busy pastors. This accounts, in part, for the increase of heart attacks and physical breakdowns.

How can we meet this challenge of time in our ministries? We suggest a few ways briefly.

1. **SELF-MANAGEMENT**—We learn to delegate many functions to the automatic control of habit. We shave, dress, drive to the office, and perform many functions in a familiar set of circumstances without a great deal of thought. Our habits thus play an important role in relieving us of the routine. If we are not careful, however, our habits can cause us to lose our freedom of time by preoccupation and loss of alertness. Some improvement in this area could save us some valuable time through better self-management.

2. **SELECTIVITY**—We soon realize that our time will not allow us to do all the things we desire. We must, therefore, recognize a priority of assignments and select the more important tasks for our primary concern. This selectivity calls for an analysis of our priorities in the ministry. If we make an analysis of an average workday by keeping a time record of several days, we would be able to determine where our time is being spent. We could then determine our priorities and ease the pressure on our total time.

3. **DELEGATION**—Many of our routine tasks could be safely delegated to others, and valuable time saved for the larger assignments. There are more "willing hands" in many of our congregations than we have supposed; and if we can put them to work, we can delegate many routine assignments and ease the pressure of our time.

4. **MULTIPLY OUTPUT**—Our ultimate answer to larger assignments is to find ways to increase our output. The use of modern office machinery can assist our pastors with a refinement of *quality* of the administrative processes. As mentioned, we can refine our routines through an analysis of our time over a given period. Time spent in planning ahead can space our assignments and assist in a program to multiply our output and meet the challenge of time.

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## **. . . IN WITNESS**

*We do not know all that we should about witnessing, but we can tell what Christ has done for us.*

## **. . . IN SERVICE**

*We have no time unless God gives it to us. We must serve Him and mankind.*

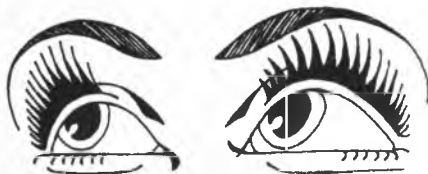
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*All that we have comes from God. The least we can do is to be faithful in our tithing.*

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<b>N</b>	20/200
<b>W M S</b>	20/100
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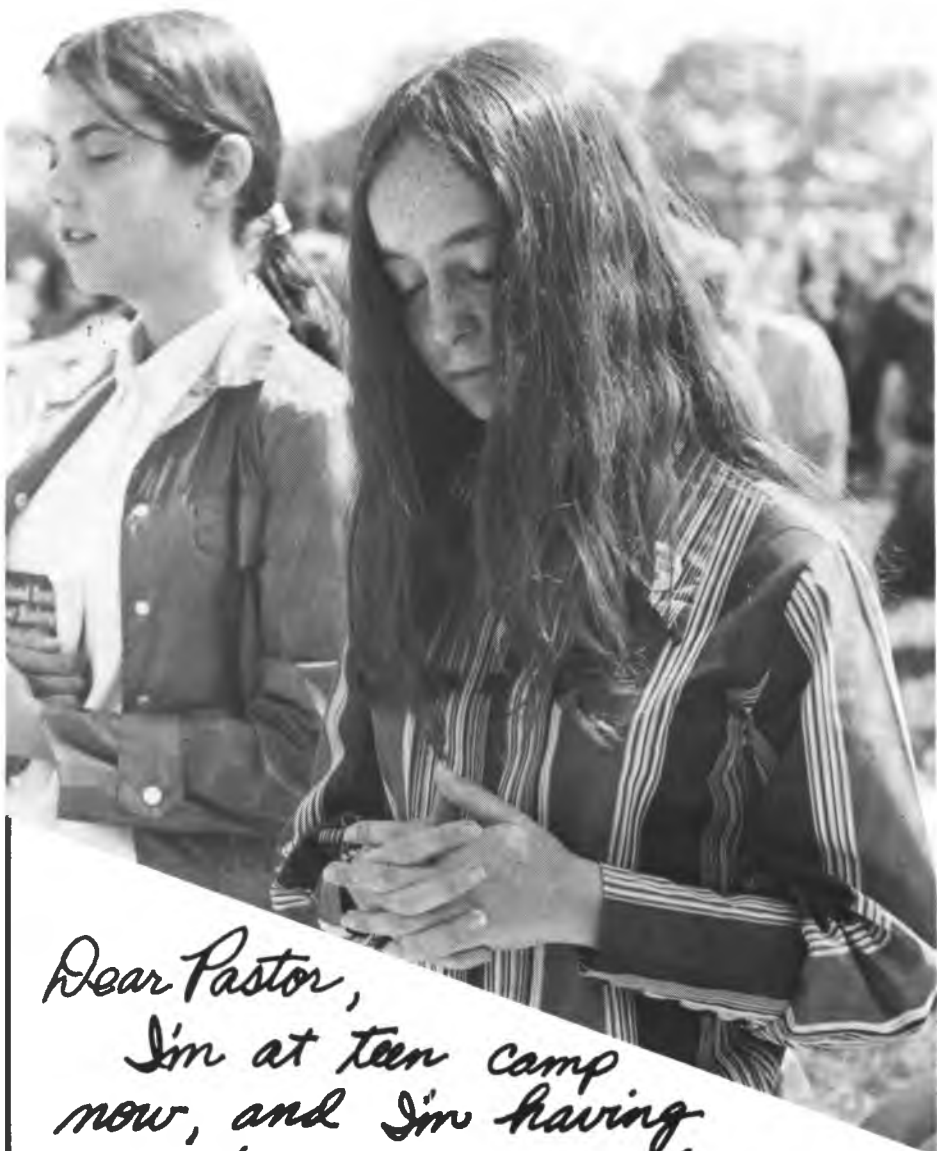
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Dear Pastor,

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Sally

Photo by Fussle

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(1) \_\_\_\_\_  (3) \_\_\_\_\_

(2) \_\_\_\_\_  (4) \_\_\_\_\_

(5) \_\_\_\_\_

2. Place a check in the square behind each individual you have *personally* recruited for the service of visitation.

4. Have you personally reviewed each call to be made?

Yes  No

3. The best time and day for these people to visit:

5. List the places you can publish the results of your calling team's efforts and successes.

- Sunday
  - Monday
  - Tuesday
  - Wednesday
  - Thursday
  - Friday
  - Saturday
- (Circle one or more.)



(Draw in hands.)

(1) \_\_\_\_\_

(2) \_\_\_\_\_

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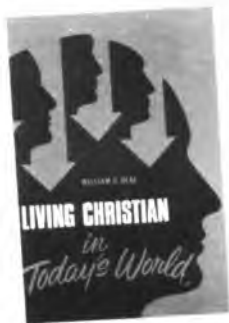
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## *The Facts About Pastors' Wives*

### Part Two: Age, Education, and Size of Church

WHILE FULFILLING the requirements for a master of arts degree, I did a research project on Nazarene pastors' wives. Although the thesis does not make very good reading, the results are most interesting.

After taking considerable time in the development of a useful questionnaire, it was administered to captive audiences of pastors' wives in Nazarene district preachers' meetings. Although the results do not account for the women who did not attend these sessions, it is a fact that participation by attendance was pushing the 100 percent level on each district. It is a fairly safe thing, then, to generalize the results to cover most pastors' wives on other districts.

Of immediate interest is the profile of the pastors' wives by age, education, and size of church being served. More than half of the pastors' wives were under 35 years of age. I guess this should not have surprised me, but it did. Whatever else this means, it indicates that the young people of the denomination are being called into the ministry. The colleges, the seminary, and the Bible school must be doing their job. The great difficulty in filling many small, part-time churches is not the lack of young men and women in the parsonages. Only 25 percent of the pastors' wives

were over 50 years of age.

This youthful cut of pastors' wives means that most parsonages have children in them. And, quite likely, most pastors' wives have to cope with financial pressures. Also, if these children can be saved to the denomination, the future for lay and clergy leadership seems bright, since pastors' children traditionally have done better than average in life. This youthful cast in the parsonage also means that most pastors' wives are carrying a heavy load of work at home and in the church.

The report of the educational achievement of pastors' wives is less than encouraging, since 40 percent of them have 12 years of education or less. Only 35 percent have some college. But only 25 percent graduated from college. This means that 60 percent of the pastors' wives have never been to college. This figure is all the more discouraging since a great proportion of the pastors' wives are young.

There may be several reasons why a small proportion of the pastors' wives graduated from college. They may have worked to help their husbands graduate. Their husbands may be older than themselves, and therefore college was interrupted for marriage. And there is another reason. Many ministers in the church are

first-generation college graduates. This means that their parents did not attend college, so they are the first generation to enroll and graduate. Actually, many students in Nazarene colleges are first-generation students. And one of the characteristics of a first-generation college family is a reluctance to send girls to college, especially if times are hard. And first-generation girls in college often see marriage in preference to further education.

Some problems naturally arise from this educational profile. Non-college wives may emphasize their skills as homemaker and wife and mother. College girls may be motivated to teach or otherwise use the "advantages" of their degree. If a noncollege girl has a husband who is a seminary graduate, she may have feelings of guilt or inadequacy about her own level of educational achievement. Most specialists would say the difference in educational achievement tends to push couples apart instead of together. This makes it all the more important for the wife to

develop her own area of skills.

The final phase of this profile relates to the size of church the pastor's wife is serving. These results follow the denominational statistics since 80 percent serve churches of no more than 150 members. The breakdown is as follows:

Under 50 members: 23 percent

From 51 to 150 members: 57 percent

Above 150 members: 20 percent

These statistics mean that 80 percent of the pastors' wives who serve churches of no more than 150 members probably have a very heavy work load both at home and in the church. Since few, if any, of these churches would have paid assistants, it is likely the pastor's wife fills one or more of those roles in music, Christian education, youth, or secretarial. Many of these same women are likely to have small children at home, entertain church groups, and keep themselves well groomed—all on an ordinary income.

*(Next Month: "The Pastor's Wife and the Telephone")*

*On Monday she lunched with a Housing Committee;*

*With statistics and stew she was filled.*

*Then she dashed to a tea on "Crime in Our City,"*

*And dined with a Church Ladies' Guild.*

*On Tuesday she went to a Babies' Week lunch*

*And a tea on "Good Citizenship";*

*At dinner she talked to the Trade Union bunch.*

*(There wasn't a date she dared skip).*

*On Wednesday she managed two annual dinners,*

*One at noon and the other at night;*

*On Thursday a luncheon on "Bootleg Sinners,"*

*And a dinner on "War: Is it Right?"*

*"World Problems We Face" was her Friday noon date*

*(A luncheon address, as you guessed),*

*And she wielded a fork while a man from New York*

*Spoke that evening on "Social Unrest."*

*On Saturday noon she fell in a swoon,*

*Missed a talk on the youth of the land. . . .*

*Poor thing, she was through! She never came to,*

*But she died with a spoon in her hand.*

—AUTHOR UNKNOWN

Blessed is that church whose pastor appreciates the importance of making friends with the children.

## *Building Rapport with Children*

By James Cockroft\*

**D**ADDY, PASTOR REED knows my name!" our four-year-old Bethany exclaimed as we walked toward the car after church.

For any pastor, knowing a child's name is an important first step toward establishing rapport with the child. It takes effort, of course. But successful pastors make the effort with adults. Why not with children too?

No pastor may consider himself successful if he does not reach out to the children in his care. He need not be a certified children's worker. He need not be a specialist in child development. But he must master some basic steps toward building rapport with children, and practice them.

If knowing a child's name is primary, showing genuine concern comes next. One pastor met a Sunday school child in the supermarket. "Hi, Dennis. How's the new puppy?" Dennis warmed to the question, but before he could answer, his pastor was talking over his head to a woman pushing a grocery cart.

Sociability can be faked, but not genuine concern. When a child senses a lack of interest, he loses interest too, and rapport suffers a serious setback.

\*Director of Christian education, Free Methodist church, McPherson, Kans.

Friendship with children, as with adults, must be cultivated. The pastor should make it a point to chat with children informally. He should know what's going on in their Sunday school classes and midweek meetings. He should attend some of their school functions.

Words spoken by Jesus can serve as a spur in this endeavor. "Beware that you don't look down upon a single one of these little children. For I tell you that in heaven their angels have constant access to my Father" (Matt. 18:10, *The Living Bible*).<sup>1</sup>

Pastors should be especially alert to the needs of the shy and quiet child. Draw him out; make him know he's important to you and God.

Pastor Cooper was trimming his hedge with electric clippers when three of his Sunday school lads came by. They stopped to watch. John soon asked, "Is that hard?"

"Here, you try it, John. Just keep the sides of the hedge straight." Soon Pastor Cooper turned to Kevin, guiding him through a few movements also. He commended both, and thinking of his meeting in one hour, was about to take leave of them. Then he noticed Joe waiting uneasily for John and Kevin. Joe

1. *The Living Bible*, copyright © 1971, Tyndale House Publishers, Wheaton, Ill. Used by permission.

also attended Sunday school. His parents came on special occasions. But unlike John and Kevin, Joe had little to say—in or out of class.

Pastor Cooper checked himself. “Here, Joe, would you like to try your hand at hedge clipping?”

“I’ve never tried it before,” Joe mumbled, slowly stepping forward. But he began to brighten as Pastor Cooper coached him.

The following Sunday, it was Joe who got to Sunday school early and planted himself shyly near Pastor Cooper’s study, hoping he would be seen by him in his comings and goings.

Pastors can learn about building rapport with children from good teachers in their acquaintance. These teachers are often as near as their own Christian education programs. For example, one pastor was quietly watching the progress of a class of five-year-olds. Sue Sanders, the medical student’s wife, had a way with children.

On this morning, a five-year-old had brought a doll from home. She continued to play with it, instead of paying attention to Mrs. Sanders’ story. Finally, Mrs. Sanders said gently, “Mandy, I think your baby is sleepy now. Let’s put her over here to rest.”

Sue carefully picked up the doll, cradled it in her arms as though it were a real baby, and laid it on a shelf, patting it as she did so. With scarcely a ripple of distraction she continued the lesson and Mandy settled down to listen, content that her “baby” was well cared for.

This kind of sensitivity to a child’s feelings can easily be overlooked by the busy pastor. But the pastor who pays attention to the needs of children will discover that they in turn feel near to their pastor.

Is the place where the little ones worship God cheery and comfortable?

Are the chairs and tables the right size? Do teachers and helpers radiate God’s love? These are perennial questions to be asked.

The pastor may show his awareness of children’s needs also by the establishment of a children’s church. This is neither a baby-sitting service—a program to get little wigglers where they will not spoil the sermon—nor a scaled-down version of adult church.

Children should know their pastor wishes them to have opportunities to pray and praise God, to hear the message of Christ in language they can understand, and to learn what reverence means at their own age level. These are his reasons for providing a children’s church program.

Even if children’s church is not an immediate possibility, the pastor can show his awareness of the lambs in his flock by occasionally planning something for them in the regular service. One pastor I know sets aside a part of the service especially for children. He uses object lessons, gospel magic, or a well-told story to present a biblical truth.

The children in that church show joy when they meet their pastor on the street. He’s their friend and they know it. He counts this friendliness as one of the clearest signs that his work is succeeding.

An expert in the field of Christian education returned to his hometown to preach. A long-standing friend heard he was coming and went to the service, accompanied by his nine-year-old granddaughter.

At the close of the service, the granddaughter was introduced to the expert. Shyly, she volunteered, “I could understand everything you said.”

“That,” said the professor, “was the greatest compliment I ever got.”

Whether the pastor ever gets such an overt compliment or not, he will

be talked about favorably behind his back by children who are his friends. This is a strong reason for him to build rapport with the children under

his care. But the strongest reason of all is that his rapport with them will influence their attitude toward Christ and His Church.

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What would happen if millions of Christians would begin using their Bibles more effectively?

## *How to Use the Bible*

By Joseph T. Larson\*

**A**LLOW THE BIBLE to speak for itself. The Bible is Food for the soul: "I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food" (Job 23:12).

The Bible gives spiritual life. "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life" (John 6:63).

The Bible is God's Message to mankind. "But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you" (1 Pet. 1:25).

God's Word is a Light unto our path. "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" (Ps. 119:105). "The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple" (Ps. 119:130).

God gave His Word to be published. "The Lord gave the word: great was the company of those that published it" (Ps. 68:11). "The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach" (Rom. 10:8).

We are born again by faith in the Word of God and by the operation of the Holy Spirit. "Being born again,

not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever" (1 Pet. 1:23).

God's Word is like a sword. "Above all, taking the shield of faith . . . and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (Eph. 6:16-17).

God's Word is like a hammer, and is a "discerner" of hearts. ". . . like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces" (Jer. 23:29). "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit . . . and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Heb. 4:12).

The Bible reveals God's Son and His love; how Christ died for the sins of mankind. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

The Bible reveals the only way of salvation. "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father,

\*Tucson, Ariz.

but by me” (John 14:6).

God’s Word is unfailing in all of its promises. “There hath not failed one word of all his good promise, which he promised by the hand of Moses his servant” (1 Kings 8:56). “For ever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven” (Ps. 119:89). “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away” (Matt. 24:35).

### **What to Do with the Bible**

Taste the Word of God. “Desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: if so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious” (1 Pet. 2:2-3). “And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come” (Heb. 6:5).

We should hide the Word of God. “Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee” (Ps. 119:11). We should have the Bible in the home, in the hand, in the head, in the heart, and in daily life as our heavenly Guide.

We should reverence the Word of God. “My heart standeth in awe of thy word” (Ps. 119:161). “But to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word” (Isa. 66:2).

We should hear and trust in the Word of God. “Many of them which heard the word believed” (Acts 4:4). “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Rom. 10:17). Receive “with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls” (Jas. 1:21).

### **Six things Christians should do with the Bible:**

1. Live by the word of God daily. “Man doth not live by bread only,

but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live” (Deut. 8:3; Matt. 4:4).

2. Study the Word of God carefully, prayerfully, and faithfully. “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Tim. 2:15).

3. Preach and teach the Word of God. “Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine” (2 Tim. 4:2).

4. Hold forth the Word of God to all men. “Holding forth the word of life” (Phil. 2:16).

5. Be doers of the Word of God. “But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves” (Jas. 1:22-23).

6. Obey His sure Word. “Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you”; “If ye love me, keep my commandments” (John 15:14; 14:15).

The Word of God should be digested, assimilated, and used in the daily life of the Christian. Spiritual growth comes by putting into daily practice the Word of God until it becomes part of our lives. Allow the Word of God to speak to members of the home, in the Sunday school class, from the pulpit, and in every department of life.

What would be the result if millions of Christians would observe these admonitions and obey them? Untold blessings would be realized. God’s will would be performed in many lives, and His kingdom would come in everlasting power.

What will you do with your Bible study today?

THE

# STARTING POINT



By C. NEIL STRAIT

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

## A Personal God

Psalm 46:1

ANY PSALM could serve as a “starting point,” for the psalms contain so much of what you and I are interested in—life, with all its distress and despair, and the Lord, with all His power and possibility. These come together in a wonderful way in the Psalms.

This month let me pass along some “starting points” from Ps. 46:1.

First, we see a *PERSONAL GOD*. “God is *our* refuge and strength.”

It is so hard for us to compute God in personal terms. We conceive of Him as Creator, with all that creation implies, and we picture Him as omnipotent, with all that power implies. Then it is almost too much for us to picture this kind of God as a personal, caring God, interested in us individually. But throughout the Bible, and especially in the Psalms, we are reminded of a personal, caring God.

Ps. 23:1 is among the most familiar reminders—“The Lord is *my* shepherd.” Phrases in Isaiah 41 lift this thought out very clearly: “I am *thy* God: I will strengthen *thee* . . . I the Lord *thy* God will hold *thy* right hand, saying unto *thee*, Fear not; I will help *thee*” (vv. 10, 13).

No age has ever needed the awareness of a personal God like our age. With despair thick around us and gloom knee-deep, I can hardly ima-

gine a thought more meaningful and more comforting than the glad realization that God cares for us.

You and I minister to people who are rubbing shoulders with a cruel, cold world. Mostly that world is impersonal and indifferent. To remind them, ever and again, that God loves them, cares for them, and can be a personal Companion to them in all of life’s experiences is the shepherd’s privilege and responsibility.

To build on this thought, add another dimension—a *PROTECTING GOD*. “God is our refuge . . .”

Again, one of the psalms speaks to us. Ps. 91:1-2 reads: “He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust.”

To know that the God of power and might is our Protector is comforting. To know that the bitter plans of the enemy will not destroy our lives is consolation.

Again, people in a workaday world need to know that a strong power—the power of God—attends their daily living. Each needs to know that the God of might and miracle stands as Protector at the door of his soul.

A third thought can add yet an-

other dimension to the personal God whom we try to convey—a *PROVIDING GOD*. “God is our refuge and strength.”

Isaiah 40:29 states: “He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength.”

God is seen most clearly as a providing God. He is the great Giver. Giver of life, of love, of salvation, of health, of land, of blessing—the list is exhaustless.

For the man in the pew to realize his God as Provider establishes a number of things in his life. He sees God as Provider of mercy when he

needs mercy. He sees God as Provider of forgiveness when he needs forgiveness, or Provider of guidance when he searches for a way.

When man knows he has a providing God, he ventures forth with trust and with faith, knowing there is a great depository of resources to back him up.

This verse, then, will help you to show your people a personal, protecting, providing God. And whatever else they may need in uncertain times, they need to see their God as One interested in them; caring daily in the small, but important, areas of life.

# IN THE STUDY

## Meditating with the Master in Matthew

*August 4*

### THE PRICE OF PERFECTION (19:21)

SCRIPTURE: Matt. 19:16-26

INTRODUCTION: Jesus spent much of His time ministering to multitudes—teaching, preaching, healing. But some of the most fascinating accounts in the Gospels consist of personal interviews. Here we have Jesus’ conversation with a rich young ruler. Matthew’s account indicates that the man was rich (v. 22) and young (v. 20). Luke says that he was a ruler (18:18), which probably means the ruler of a synagogue.

#### I. A LEGALISTIC QUESTION (v. 16)

On the surface, the question of the young man seems commendable: “What good thing shall I do, that I may have

eternal life?” Here was an earnest seeker after spiritual truth.

But the form of the question suggests a legalistic approach to religion. The inquirer wanted to know what *thing* he must *do* in order to have eternal life. The truth is that we cannot earn our salvation



**By Ralph Earle**

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by our own good works. This is the heart of true religion: God is the One who saves us, as we trust in Him. We cannot save ourselves.

## II. A LIKE ANSWER (vv. 17-19)

Jesus told the young ruler: "If you want to enter into life, keep the commandments." This was the Old Testament way of salvation, as the inquirer well knew.

We do not know the attitude of the young man as he asked, "Which?" Was he trying to be evasive? Or was he saying: "But, Teacher, there are so many! Which ones do You especially have in mind?" Probably we should give this fellow the benefit of the doubt and assume that it was the latter.

In reply Jesus cited the sixth, seventh, eighth, ninth, and fifth of the Ten Commandments. It will be remembered that the Ten Commandments were written on two tablets of stone. On one were inscribed the first four (longer) commandments, setting forth duties to God. On the other were written the last six commandments, spelling out duties to our fellowmen. Jesus knew that the rich young ruler lacked in his relationship to God, as was evidenced by his coming and seeking help. But He was first meeting the man on his own ground of human relationship.

## III. A FURTHER LACK (v. 20)

The young man replied, "All these things have I kept from my youth up." Was he telling the truth? Partly so. Doubtless he had kept all the five commandments cited above. But Jesus added one more: "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (v. 19). As the sequel shows, the man had not passed this test.

We must commend this inquirer for pressing his case further. He asked, "What lack I yet?" This shows amazing humility for a man in his position. He still had a hunger in his heart.

## IV. A FINAL CHALLENGE (v. 21)

Jesus said: "If you want to be perfect, go and sell what you have and give the proceeds to the poor. That will guarantee you treasure in heaven. Then come and follow Me." The simple truth is that the price of perfection is putting everything we are and have at God's disposal.

Is it required of us that we give up all our private possessions? The biblical answer is no. But this man had made gold his god. Because his possessions were his first love, he had to surrender them. We have to give our all to God in order to be perfect in His sight.

**CONCLUSION:** The sequel was a sad one indeed. The young man walked away, unwilling to part with his possessions (v. 22). He was not ready to pay the price of forsaking all to follow Jesus. And so he lost eternal life.

Are we putting anything ahead of God in our lives? If so, we cannot know "the peace that comes by giving all" (see "His Way with Thee," second stanza).

---

## August 11

### REWARDS FOR SERVICE (20:16)

**SCRIPTURE:** Matt. 19:27—20:16

**INTRODUCTION:** The disciples were amazed by their Master's statement that a rich man can hardly get into the kingdom of heaven (19:23-24). They asked, "Who then can be saved?" (19:25). It was widely held in Jewish circles that material prosperity was a sign of divine favor.

Then Peter asked a selfish question: "Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore?" (19:27). It was in answer to this that Jesus told the parable of the workers in the vineyard (found only in Matt. 20:1-16).

#### I. THE DIFFERING PERIODS OF TIME (vv. 1-7)

It was the time of the grape harvest. The grapes were now ripe and needed to be picked immediately. So the owner of a vineyard got up early and went in search of workers. He agreed to pay them the regular day's wage of a "penny." This was the common Roman silver coin called a *denarius*. It was worth about 20 cents.

Near "the third hour" (9 a.m.) he found others "standing idle in the marketplace"—the agora, the central place in town where the people gathered to "shop and swap." He urged these men to work in his vineyard, promising them:

"Whatsoever is right I will give you."

At the sixth hour (noon) and the ninth hour (3 p.m.) the man did the same thing. Finally he went to the agora at "the eleventh hour" (5 p.m.). Finding some still standing idle there, he inquired, "Why stand ye here all the day idle?" They replied, "Because no man hath hired us." He made them the same promise as to the others.

## II. THE SAME PAY (vv. 8-15)

When evening came, the owner asked his manager ("steward"—literally, "house manager") to pay the laborers, "beginning from the last unto the first." To the surprise of everyone, the eleventh-hour workers each received the full day's wages of a denarius.

Naturally the ones who had been hired early in the morning expected more, but they all received the same amount. This angered them and they protested. Why should those who had worked only one hour receive as much as they did for bearing the "heat of the day"?

On the surface this does look unjust. But several factors need to be considered. Perhaps the later workers put forth extra effort and so earned their pay. They probably showed a better attitude. In any case, they all needed a denarius to buy food for their families, so that they wouldn't starve. The owner was showing real kindness, and was operating on the basis of the highest justice. The protester had an eye that was "evil" (v. 15), that is, envious. The employer's eye was "good," or "generous." We all need to remember that God is better to us than we deserve.

## III. THE APPLICATION (v. 16)

A comparison of 19:30 with 20:16 underscores the close connection between Peter's question and this parable. He asked, "What are we going to get out of this?" The parable Jesus told was a rebuke to this selfish, mercenary attitude. Salvation is all of grace, not of works. None of us deserves anything, but Christ gives generously to all of us. We should not be envious of the good fortune of others, but rather rejoice. If we love our neighbor as ourselves, this will be the attitude of our minds and hearts.

One application of this verse is that recent converts ("the last") often show a

better spirit and do more than old-timers in the church ("the first"). It's our attitude that counts.

---

August 18

## THE PERIL OF PERSONAL AMBITION (20:21)

SCRIPTURE: Matt. 20:20-28

INTRODUCTION: Personal ambition is the bane of politics. But this hideous monster raises its head in every area of society. It shows its ugly form not only in the office and classroom, but on the ball field, and even in church. Godly ambition can be the motivation for the highest and most productive life. But selfish ambition is a demonic curse that defiles and destroys.

### I. A MOTHER'S REQUEST (vv. 20-21)

Mark's Gospel (10:35) says that James and John, the sons of Zebedee, made this request. Here it is their mother. But Matthew notes that the three came together. Obviously there is no contradiction. It is simply a case of Matthew describing the incident a bit more fully and precisely. Mothers are often ambitious for their children. At its best, this can be a noble desire that they will be a great blessing to humanity. But here it was ambition for position, not for usefulness. And this is carnal selfishness.

This proud mother wanted one son to sit at Jesus' right side—the place of greatest honor—and the other at His left when He set up His kingdom and sat on His throne. In spite of the three predictions of His passion (16:21; 17:22-23; 20:17-19), these followers of Christ were still looking for Him to set up an earthly kingdom when they arrived in Jerusalem. Their request was entirely a matter of self-seeking, of looking for self-gratification.

All of this emphasizes the fact that the essence of sin is self-centeredness. It is seeking our own glory rather than God's glory. It is exalting self rather than exalting Him. It is wanting to have our way rather than His way.

### II. A MASTER'S REPROOF (vv. 22-23)

Gently Jesus reprimanded these self-seekers. "You don't know what you're

asking for," He told them. To be closely associated with Him is costly business. The two disciples would like to have sat on two thrones beside Him. But would they be willing to hang on two crosses beside Him at Calvary? Could they drink His cup of agony or be baptized with His baptism of overwhelming sorrow? That was the crucial question with which Jesus now confronted His disciples.

The pitiful lack of spiritual understanding which these disciples still had is revealed by their glib answer, "We are able." But how much do we suffer with Christ, that we may someday be glorified with Him (Rom. 8:17)?

Jesus declared that His two ambitious disciples would share His sufferings (v. 23). But it was His Father who would assign the places of honor in the Kingdom.

### III. A MOTIVE OF JEALOUSY (v. 24)

When the other 10 apostles heard about the selfish request of their two colleagues, "they were moved with indignation." Probably they took self-righteous pride in the feeling that they would never do such a thing!

But they did not recognize the depths of carnality in their own hearts. The truth is that they were probably jealous of the two sons of Zebedee for getting ahead of them in making their request. We quickly condemn in others what we sense in ourselves. The old saying is, "It takes a thief to catch a thief."

Jesus said, "Judge not, that ye be not judged" (7:1). When we judge others harshly, we sometimes give away the secret of our own inner thoughts and feelings. The good man is apt to assume that others are good. The person who possesses many faults is always spotting these faults in others. So—be careful how you judge your neighbor.

---

## August 25

### THE SIN OF SAYING YES (21:30)

SCRIPTURE: Matt. 21:28-32

INTRODUCTION: Everybody appreciates a person who is quick to cooperate, who always seems willing to help and to please others. But the expression *yes-man* is a

term of reproach. We have such a person described in Jesus' parable of the two sons. It might also be called the parable of two brothers. For here we see two very different brothers in the same home—a phenomenon that is certainly familiar.

#### I. THE SON WHO SAID NO (vv. 28-29)

A man had two sons. Coming to the first, he said, "Son, go work to day in my vineyard." The boy replied, "I will not." This could be translated, "I don't want to." It is not the verb *boulomai*, which shows a set determination after careful consideration. Rather it is *thelo*, which means "wish" or "want." The boy answered impulsively, without stopping to think. It was his immediate reaction to a request that he do something he didn't feel like doing.

Afterward he "repented" and went to work. The Greek verb (*metamelomai*) literally means that "it was a care to him afterward." That is, when he really stopped to think what he had done, he knew it was wrong. The verb also means "regret," which fits well here (vv. 29, 32) as well as in 27:3 and 2 Cor. 7:8. In Heb. 7:21 it means "change His mind." These are the only places where the verb occurs in the New Testament.

#### II. THE SON WHO SAID YES (v. 30)

When the other brother received the same request from his father, he answered, "I go, sir"—literally, "I [*ego*], sir." But having said this, he did not go to the vineyard.

There are many like him today. They are quick to respond, but they fail to carry through on what they promised to do. They make a good impression in public by their seeming willingness, but in private they are abject failures.

#### III. THE APPLICATION (vv. 31-32)

When Jesus asked which of these two sons carried out his father's wishes, the immediate answer was, "The first." Then the Master made the application to His hearers, "the chief priests and the elders of the people" (v. 23). He said to them: "I tell you the truth, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God ahead of you" (v. 31, NIV).<sup>1</sup>

1. From *The New International Version*, copyright, 1973, by New York Bible Society International. Used by permission.

They had repented of their past life under the preaching of John the Baptist. But the proud religious leaders of the nation rejected John's message.

The modern-day application is clear. Many of those who are far out in sin are now repenting and being saved. But too many church members reject this "revivalism" and evangelism. They said yes with their lips when they joined the church, but they are not doing God's will in their daily lives. Are we guilty of the sin of saying yes and then not fulfilling our promise to God and the church?



## Things We Do Not Know

**TEXT:** *For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known*" (1 Cor. 13:12).

### INTRODUCTION:

A. The conversation of man always seems centered about things he knows with certainty.

B. The attitudes of man are in relation to that which he knows and understands.

C. What man does not know, he cannot reflect upon, thus seldom thinks or talks of.

D. However what we do not know and fully understand is *much greater* than that which we do know. "We see through a glass, darkly. . . . [We] know in part."

Of things which we do not know, there are four which stand out prominently from the Word of God:

- I. WE DO NOT KNOW AND UNDERSTAND ALL THE MYSTERIES OF GOD'S WORLD. "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put IN HIS OWN power" (Acts 1:7).

- A. The greatness of God's world
  1. God's system of seasons—winter, spring, summer, fall
  2. God's meticulous system of time—day and night
  3. God's perfect care of His world
  4. God's world was perfect—only man marred its beauty.
- B. The mystery of man's creation
  1. All elements of the body to function with perfect coordination and precision
  2. Man made in God's own image and likeness
- C. The great mystery of God himself
  1. "Great is the mystery of godliness" (1 Tim. 3:16).
  2. If we try to know God through the course of reason, we will never know Him.
  3. God's great personal love is a mystery to man.

## II. WE DO NOT KNOW THE REAL BEAUTY OF HEAVEN OR THE TRUE TORMENTS OF HELL.

"And I John saw the holy city . . . coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband" (Rev. 21:2).

A. The true beauty of heaven is inexplainable.

1. John's description in Revelation touches on some of its beauty.
2. Yet we do not know the blessing of a face-to-face presence with the One who died for our sins.
3. We do not know the wonderful joy we will have in rejoicing with the saints of God about the great throne.
4. We do not know any full explanation of that which God has prepared for them that love Him.

B. The great torments of hell are not fully known.

1. The parable of the rich man and Lazarus gives us only a brief glimpse of hell's possible realities (Luke 16:19-31).
2. It is "where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched" (Mark 9:44).

3. We do not know what the wailing company of a lost world will be like.
4. We do not know the meaning of being separated eternally from friends and loved ones.

### III. WE DO NOT KNOW WHEN WE SHALL MEET DEATH.

- A. Death comes to the innocent and to the guilty.
- B. Death comes to the young and old.
- C. Death comes to the weak and strong.
- D. We can be happy with life only if we are prepared for the unknown hour of death.
- E. But thanks be to God, we may say with Paul:
  1. "O death, where is thy sting?" (1 Cor. 15:55).
  2. "Death is swallowed up in victory" (1 Cor. 15:54).

### IV. WE DO NOT KNOW WHEN OUR LORD SHALL RETURN AGAIN.

- A. But we do know that through justice He must return, rather than permit sin to reign.
- B. "Of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels in heaven, but my Father only" (Matt. 24:36).
- C. "The day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night" (1 Thess. 5:2).
- D. "Be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh" (Matt. 24:44).

### CONCLUSION:

- A. Our knowledge is extremely limited.
- B. Of the thousands of languages in our small world, we learn but a few.
- C. Realizing the many things we do not know should draw us closer to deep faith in a personal Saviour.
- D. There is assurance of one great thing that we can know with certainty: "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day" (2 Tim. 1:12).

J. WALTER HALL, JR.

## No Greater Joy

TEXT: *I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth* (3 John 4).

INTRODUCTION: Though the Apostle John did not face martyrdom with all the other apostles, yet he did suffer much for the gospel's sake. In his last Epistle, affectionately written to Gaius, the heart of his concern for the gospel is noted, especially in the fourth verse.

### I. THE GREATEST JOY—*I have no greater joy.*

There are always plenty of prophets of pessimism who see nothing but gloom and doom for the Church. But John could see, in spite of all, the gospel prevailing. And it did. Not many years later Christianity had covered the entire known world. This Beloved Apostle had great faith in the power of the gospel; therefore it was his greatest joy to see it conquer.

### II. THE GREATEST NEWS—. . . *to hear*

Like a general hearing of the triumph of his armies in battle, John was glad to hear of eager and earnest saints walking in the light. The sweetest sounds that giants of faith like John, Luther, Wesley, and others longed to hear were the shouts of victory from saints marching to Zion.

### III. THE GREATEST RELATIONSHIP—. . . *my children*

We see that sin causes separation. Christianity brings a bond of unity that exceeds all other relationships and earthly ties.

John seemed to be telling Gaius the extent of his love for the souls he had brought to Christ and the churches under his care when he referred to them as his children.

### IV. THE GREATEST WALK—*walk in truth*

When asked how he conquered the world, Alexander the Great replied, "By not wavering." John's greatest joy was to see his children in Christ going steadily heavenward.

### V. THE GREATEST WAY—*truth*

Christ had said that He was the Truth. The prospect of truth is so wonderful that Christ proclaimed it to be pure joy. So the loving apostle, who was so close

to Christ, found the greatest joy in seeing the joy of Christ in the lives of his children.

**CONCLUSION:** Jesus told how all may have this joy of salvation and sanctification. "Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full."

The Church today can share the Apostle John's optimism of a bright and glorious future by "walking in truth" as it is in Christ.

JOHN D. HANSEN

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## God's Poems

**THESIS:** Every saint is one of God's poems.

**SCRIPTURE:** Ephesians 1—2

**INTRODUCTION:** God is a poet. Look at the splendor of His creation. Listen to the poetic utterances of His emotions in the Scriptures. Think of the intricate designing of His plan for man's redemption.

"We are his workmanship" (Eph. 2:10). The word here translated "*workmanship*" is the Greek *poiema*, the basis for our English word *poem*. In classical Greek it meant either "a thing made" or "a poem."

### I. THE PLANNING OF THE POEM (1:4a)

- A. Protempore aspect of the plan (1:4a)
- B. Moral and spiritual aspect of the plan (1:4b)

### II. THE WRITING OF THE POEM (2:5)

- A. The manner of writing
  1. The parchment—the soul of man "slain" by trespasses and sins (2:1)
  2. The means of writing—the lifeblood of Christ (1:7)
- B. Content of the writing—man's pardon (1:7)
- C. Result of the writing—the parchment lives (2:5)

### III. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE POEM

- A. Theme of the poem—Christ (1:12)
- B. Poetic expression of the poem—riches of grace (2:7)

### IV. PURPOSE OF THE POEM

- A. Personal delight of the Author (1:4). The original language shows a picture of God looking long and intently into the innermost being of His saint and delighting to find Christ's image reflected there.
  - B. Eternal blessing to other readers (2:7)
  - C. Furtherance of the work of the Kingdom—good works (2:10)
- R. BRIZENDINE

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BULLETIN



BARREL

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### What Makes a Church Great?

**NOT** soft seats and subdued light,  
**but strong, courageous leadership.**

**NOT** the sweet tones of the organ,  
**but sweet personalities that reflect Jesus.**

**NOT** tall towers with chimes and bells,  
**but lofty vision of its people.**

**NOT** big budgets, but large hearts.

**NOT** the amount of finance received,  
**but the amount of service rendered.**

**NOT** the large membership, but God's presence and direction and power.

**NOT** what it has done in the past,  
**but what it is doing now and planning to do tomorrow.**

\* \* \*

*I always watch the words I say,  
To keep them soft and sweet.  
For I don't know, from day to day,  
The ones I'll have to eat.*

—Selected

\* \* \*

### Definitions:

1. An atheist is a man with no **INVISIBLE MEANS OF SUPPORT.**

2. An atheist is like a man who builds a house without windows and then blames God because he has to live in the dark.

A fool's tongue is always long enough to cut his throat.

\* \* \*

Naturalists who claim that America's wildlife is disappearing don't stay up very late at night.

God's house is a hive for workers, not a nest for drones.

\* \* \*

The most disappointed people in the world are those who get what is coming to them.



Conducted by the Editor

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### **Egypt in Biblical Prophecy**

*By Wilbur M. Smith* (Baker Book House, 1957. Paperback, 1973, 256 pp., \$2.95.)

This book was written right after the Suez crisis of 1956. England and France had supported Israel in an invasion of Egyptian territory. But under United States pressure against such a war of aggression, the plan was terminated.

Now, since the Six-Day War of 1967, Egypt has been much in the news again. At the present, the government of that country is much more friendly to the United States than it has been for years. Hence the relevancy of this book.

As many readers know, Dr. Wilbur Smith is a genius, with an encyclopedic mind and a prodigious memory. He is perhaps the greatest bibliographer in evangelical circles today. This book shows exhaustive research.

The first chapter, "Geographical Factors in Biblical Prophecy," sounds an important keynote. The messages of both redemption and prophecy are firmly rooted in the geography and history of the ancient Middle East.

This book is not only valuable in relation to the fulfillment of prophecy in our day and at the time of the Second Coming. It also gives an extended commentary on many passages in the prophets, particularly Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel.

Dr. Smith is widely recognized as a leading authority in the field of prophecy. Some years ago he compiled the standard bibliography on this significant subject. He himself has made valuable contributions in such books as *This Atomic Age and the Word of God*. His conclusions are sane and sensible, and

his observations on other works are penetrating. As always, he is readable and thorough.

RALPH EARLE

### Don't Divorce the Holy Spirit

By Knofel Staton (New Life Books, 1974. Paper, 112 pp., \$1.50.)

Even though this book is only 112 pages, it contains a wealth of material. The author has written it as a textbook for Bible study groups, with a leader's guide included. He has taken the entire Bible, beginning at Genesis, and attempted to weave the story of man's sinfulness and God's great love into one comprehensive treatment. The focus of this study is Israel. The author does try to point out the way in which the Church is the New Israel and how the Holy Spirit is at work among God's people today. Over 1,000 references to the Scriptures are used in the book. A number of good insights in the book will make sermon starters for the preacher who enjoys the historical study of Israel with current, up-to-date spiritual lessons.

PHIL RILEY

## Preachers' Exchange



FOR SALE—*Biblical Illustrator* in 57 vols. (last vol. a complete index), excellent condition. \$2.50 a vol. or \$142.50 for the set (would cost \$275 if new).—George P. Woodward, R.D. 2, Erma Box 149C, Cape May, N.J. 08204.

FOR SALE—Kittle's *Biblia Hebraica* and Weingreen's *Hebrew Grammar* (2nd edition). \$15.00 for both, or best offer.—Dorance D. Calhoun, 207 E. Knox St., Morrison, Ill. 61270.

WANTED—*Expositions of Holy Scripture*, by Alexander Maclaren, printed originally in 1942 by Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.—R. E. Rogers, 21150 Moross Rd., Grosse Pointe, Mich. 48236.

WANTED—Vols. 1 and 2, bound copies, of *Christianity Today*. Will pay top price.—Clayton J. Schletewitz, 400 N. Sunset Ave., La Puente, Calif. 91744.



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The excuses you hear would make a book full of interesting but pathetic cop-outs you could name an "alibiography."

#### ● The Awakening We Need

A straight-from-the-shoulder, hard-hitting appraisal of our need to "get with God and go with God" in evangelism.

#### ● Starting Point

Ideas from Neil Strait keep coming, as he sees possibilities for the development of a sermon on the subject "Guaranteed for Life."

#### ● Now I Eat the Half-Thing

The problems of an overweight clergyman come very close to the needs of many of us who struggle every week to "think thin."



## AMONG OURSELVES

Robert C. Girard's much discussed book, *Brethren, Hang Loose* (Zondervan, 1972), is discussed by Russell Metcalfe in the article "Body-Life Concepts and Corporate-Life Commitments" (p. 8). It is heartening to sense a young pastor's sane, solid feelings in the heat of his own battles as he snatches bits of wisdom without embracing every single idea from a writer. This is heartening because it is as refreshing as it is rare. Some miss the point as they either go all the way with a book's thesis or else reject everything the author suggests because they disagree with one or more of his points. A good example, and hopefully it will not go unnoticed by our esteemed readers everywhere. It is so much easier to just burn with the chaff whatever small portion of wheat may be present. But the challenge is to gather the wheat and burn up the chaff, as does the Lord when He comes on the scene. To remember this may bring more "celebration" to our gospel (p. 1), and it may help us slow down to "smell the flowers" along the way (p. 12). Did you ever wonder why the children had to be restrained in their enthusiasm to be near Jesus? They sensed His love for them, and children everywhere respond to love. But more, they sensed His joy. They do want to be where the gloom is all gone and the atmosphere is one of joy. Think about this as you build your rapport with the children (p. 19). If we succeed in this matter, our church of the future will indeed be as "fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners."

*Yours for souls,*

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