

HERALD

OF HOLINESS / CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE



"LIFTING UP CHRIST"



by General Superintendent Charles H. Strickland

CHRIST & THE MODERN HOME

THE HOME is the oldest institution on earth. God created Adam and Eve into a family unit in which Adam declared, "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: . . . Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother and cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh" (Genesis 2:23-24.)

The family and their relationships have thus been the center of so much of life's activities that it may be said to have been the focal point of man's most serious problems throughout history. The home has also been vulnerable to the sweeping tides of social change and economic fortunes, as well as the spiritual and moral declines of the passing years.

Perhaps at no other era in man's history has the family been more threatened than during this modern period. Statistics on marriage and divorce and on family relationships compiled by our social agencies give a discouraging report on the survival of the home as an institution in society. The strain placed upon the family by our modern industrial system and the existing low moral standards of human behavior is cracking the solidarity of family relationships.

Amid this dark background the Christian home emerges to provide an example of family solidarity and survival. Our blessed

Lord sat one day by the side of the road and loved and blessed a group of small children who gathered around Him, saying to His disciples, "Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 19:14).

In so doing, Jesus elevated the position of the child in the home to that beautiful pinnacle felt by all Christian parents who welcome the happy event of the birth of their children. Through His personal redemption of the individual, Christ has also lifted and made meaningful the enduring relationships of the family. The contrast in family life observed in Christian lands and non-Christian areas is abundant evidence of this truth.

Happy indeed are the families who "lift up Christ" in their family relationships—who have established a family altar where they study the Word of God and pray together; who worship together in God's sanctuary; and who share together the common problems of everyday living with Christian understanding.

Theirs is an enduring perseverance that will outlive the social changes, the economic pressures, and the moral decline of our century. Theirs is a victorious unity and a bond of love and understanding which forms the true foundation of enduring happiness. □

Dr. Charles H. Strickland is a general superintendent in the Church of the Nazarene. Prior to his election as general superintendent in 1972, he served in South Africa. He was also the first president of Nazarene Bible College, Colorado Springs.

by AARLIE J. HULL
Centralia, Wash.



LIFTING UP CHRIST IN THE HOME

THE FAMILY MUST BE RESTORED," asserts Dr. Harold M. Voth of the Menninger Foundation. "Men and women who have children must face the facts of life. Creating a child is easy, but the shaping of a child's personality is a career of the highest priority."

Unfortunately Dr. Voth observed that "families are turning out psychologically disturbed children by the hundreds of thousands. Children are being battered psychologically to far more serious proportions than many of the children who are physically beaten."

Dr. Voth was recently in the Pacific Northwest, speaking about the importance of the family. He pointed out that the pressure of economic growth has eroded the family in our society—a disturbing development since the family has always been the cornerstone of civilization.

The pressure of economic growth has forced fathers to spend greater amounts of time away from their families, placed greater pressures on mothers to work outside the home, straining marriages to an alarming degree.

Two out of five marriages fail, with the marriages of young people collapsing at the rate of 50 percent. "Few people understand," states Dr. Voth, "how poisonous the experience of a weak family life can be to babies and young children." Such strains on the family are resulting in severe disturbances within children—neuroses, psychoses, alcoholism, drug abuse, suicide, homosexuality, and criminality.

To prevent this, Dr. Voth believes the American society must reorder its priorities and place the family at the top of the list. The American work ethic must be challenged so that couples can spend more time together and with their families. There must be a reestablishment



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...CHRIST IN THE HOME (concluded)

of male and female roles. Men who have been "copping out of the whole business of family life" must assume their position and restore the order of things, giving women the needed confidence to return to the home.

Sounds familiar, doesn't it? Those who have been around the church very long or have studied the Bible can see the application of biblical truths to Dr. Voth's solutions to the problems of the family.

The Bible is unyielding in its support of the family. Jesus Christ, the human embodiment of God himself, was born into a human family and spent 90 percent of His earthly life fulfilling His responsibility as eldest son. It is commonly believed that Joseph died when Jesus was still a boy. William Barclay feels that Jesus did not begin His public ministry until He was 30 years old because He would not leave home until His younger brothers could take over the family business and support themselves and Mary.

It would appear then that family responsibility was high on Jesus' priority list. Even when He was hanging near death on the cross at Calvary, He was conscious of His earthly obligation to His family, and specifically to His mother. He committed Mary to the care of John, and John to the care of Mary.

But besides Jesus' powerful example of responsibility and service to the family, the Bible has some other very specific things to say about the family.

Marriage is a sacred bond between two people not to be taken lightly. When married, a man is to leave his own mother and father and cleave to his wife (Genesis 2:24). He is to be contented and happy all his life with the wife he chose as a youth (Proverbs 5:18). Husbands are to give honor to their wives so their prayers will be heard (1 Peter 3:7). They are to love their wives as Christ loved the Church and gave himself for it (Ephesians 5:25).

A wife is to look after the affairs of the home and not be lazy (Proverbs 31:27). She is to be loyal and faithful to her husband (1 Corinthians 7:10). She is to allow him to be the head of the house, the leader of the family (Ephesians 5:22; 1 Peter 3:1-6).

Children are the gift of God and are to be highly desired (Psalm 127:3-5). Parents should teach their children about God and godly living (Deuteronomy 6:7; Proverbs 22:6). They are to love them (Titus 2:4) and provide for them (2 Corinthians 12:14). They should exercise control over them (1 Timothy 3:4) and encourage them (Ephesians 6:4).

Children are instructed to honor and obey their parents (Ephesians 6:1-3).

Dr. Armand Nicholi, in an article in the *Christian Medical Society Journal*, fall, 1972, says, "We have marching orders that help us determine our priorities—to love our God and to love our neighbor as ourself. But carrying out these commands in our everyday lives is no easy matter. For it seems to me that our neighbor includes first and foremost our families—those for whom we have greatest responsibility. Once we commit our lives to Christ, we recast our priorities so that there never exists a doubt of who is to be given *first* place in our lives. But *second* place poses a more difficult question. Is it possible that the position ought in most instances be reserved for the family?" □

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GROWING IN THE SPIRIT OF FORGIVENESS

by JACK C. STEPP
Troy, Mich.

ON THE SURFACE there are some things about the Christian life which may not seem fair. Some wrongs are never righted. Some doers of injustice go unpunished. While the Christian lives the disciplined life, others can abuse and mistreat him and seemingly get away with it. Why?

One reason is because these are opportunities for God to nourish within us a spirit of forgiveness. Forgiveness is not only what God does for us, it is what a believer does in his relationships with others. Whenever Jesus spoke of forgiveness, He always included its relation to man's forgiveness of man.

One day impetuous Peter asked Jesus, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?" (Matthew 18:21, NIV).

Actually Peter's suggestion of seven times seemed generous. Some rabbis taught that a person should forgive three times and then the right to revenge was his. Peter may have been expecting Jesus' commendation. Jesus shocked them instead when He replied, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy times seven." In other words, Jesus was saying, "You must not place any limits on your forgiveness of another."

So Jesus did not spend His time condemning the offender in Peter's presence. Instead, He gave Peter, the offended, the guideline of unlimited forgiveness. Jesus removed all limits that would restrict our forgiveness of

others for the wrongs they may do against us. He was the "Teacher of Unlimited Forgiveness."

The natural reaction to personal injury is usually resentment, which leads to retaliation. In fact, retaliation is often the spirit of resentment itself. Unresolved bitterness, or a grudge, can be a devastating thing to our spiritual well-being.

We may live with two unrealistic expectations of our fellow beings. One is the expectation of perfect treatment from others. The other is the pessimistic expectation of the worst from others. Either perspective will open the door to inward bitterness.

The natural tendency of man is to consider any offense cause for retaliation. However, there is good news for the person in Christ. Forgiveness can be as natural for the Christian as it is contrary for the non-Christian. How? A life-style of forgiveness begins with abandoning the "right to retaliate," which is not easy. It is a decision of the will not to return evil for evil, but to show God's goodness instead. The first step is a commitment of the heart and mind not to retaliate.

Nevertheless, it is the inward work of the Holy Spirit that makes the difference. He helps us grow in the spirit of forgiveness. He supplies within us grace sufficient to forgive any wrong by any person anytime.

God has already given us a model of that kind of forgiving grace. Though because of our sin we deserved punishment, because of His grace, or undeserved favor, we receive forgiveness. Just as His forgiveness of our sins is an act of grace, so our forgiveness of others is an act of grace.

Jesus taught us not to give others what they deserve but to give them forgiving grace. A Christian forgives because he remembers that he is forgiven, just as there are no limits to the forgiveness of God, there are no limits to a Christian's forgiveness of others. And the Holy Spirit, given the opportunity, will mature that spiritual grace within us.

There is another dimension to the Christian's spirit of forgiveness. The Bible states that the person who harbors an unforgiving spirit against his brother builds a barrier to the grace and forgiveness of God in his own life (Matthew 6:12, 14-15; Mark 11:25, and Luke 11:4). In fact, Jesus, in telling the parable of the unforgiving servant who was punished, declares, "This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart" (Matthew 18:35, NIV).

Psychologically, when resentment alienates us from other persons, it becomes difficult to give or receive evidences of healthy, wholesome friendship. Healing begins with a healing personality. Spiritually, it would be a moral monstrosity to receive God's forgiveness for all our sins and yet refuse to forgive the wrongs done against us. God is ready to forgive, but an unforgiving spirit is a barrier of our own making to His forgiveness.

So it is for such good reasons that Jesus taught unlimited forgiveness. Growing in the spirit of forgiveness makes one a healing personality who can lovingly restore broken relationships. Is there any sins which Christ will not forgive? No, there is not. Is there any wrong which the person in Christ will not forgive? No, there is not! As the Spirit lives within us, we can say, "By the grace of God I am forgiven—and by the grace of God I will forgive." □

by JOHN C. OSTER
Olathe, Kans.



THE ROOTS OF OUR GROWING CHURCH

DO YOU REMEMBER?

For 12 hours last winter the highways were strangely barren, sales were unusually low, and Americans were almost all thinking about the same thing.

It wasn't the weather that brought us together, although it was quite cold.

Rather, it was a television program called "Roots."

We have not been the same since.

So mesmerized were we by this graphic portrayal of one black man's search through the centuries for his own family origins that we almost stopped normal activities and identified ourselves with him and his search.

It is estimated that more than 130 million of us watched "Roots"—more than watched the Super Bowl, the moon shots, the inauguration, and more than went to church last Sunday.

One result of "Roots" was a renewed interest in genealogy as families of all racial and ethnic origins sought their own "roots."

For the first time, many of us were personally hurt by slavery. We were not hurt physically, but we were hurt in our spirit. For the first time the documented truth of slavery and its brutality was alive in our living rooms.

We saw and felt the hurt to the slave and also to those who came after him as inheritors of his painful legacy. We saw a different kind of hurt to the human sensitivities of slave masters and to each of us who are likewise the inheritors of this legacy.

But for Christians, there is yet another legacy. As joint heirs of Jesus Christ, our legacy runs deep. These "roots" are long and strong.

Our denominational roots are not so long in terms of years, but they are strong.

Deeply imbedded in our Nazarene roots are the principles of church growth. We began as a growing, church-planting people. Our roots are firmly anchored in the Great Commission "to make disciples in all the nations."

We began in the city, among the minorities and the poor. Our vision from the beginning was to reach the lost whether they were around the block or around the world. Home and world missions early became entwined in one conscious response to the needs of our fellowmen.

In the first issue of the *Peniel Herald*, published in Los Angeles in October of 1894, Dr. Phineas F. Bresee wrote, "Our first work is to try to reach the unchurched, the people from the homes and streets where the light from the churches does not reach, or penetrates but little. Especially [we are] to gather the poor to the cross by bringing to bear upon them Christian sympathy and helpfulness."

Very shortly, a laywoman named Mrs. A. F. McReynolds was promoting Nazarene missions and schools among the Spanish-speaking Indians and Mexicans both in the city and county of Los Angeles.

Other lay persons sponsored missions in Chinese and Japanese communities. Cross-cultural ministry has been "our thing" since the beginning.



John C. Oster, editor, joined the staff of the Department of Home Missions in 1970. Formerly he was managing editor of the Scottsbluff, Neb., *Star-Herald*.

In 1901, Rev. J. O. McClurkan, another primary leader among the first Nazarenes, wrote in *Zion's Herald* that "the sanctified heart is absolutely cleansed of all war or race prejudice. Holiness deepens and sweetens and broadens the nature until every man of every section and nationality and color and condition is loved as a brother. There is no North, no South, no Jew, no Greek, no barbarian, to the sanctified."

From roots like these, the Nazarene tree has sprung to life. Such roots produced dramatic growth. There were 228 churches by 1908. This number doubled in four years to 576, and doubled again nine years later when 1,145 churches were reported.

By 1976, there were 6,789 churches worldwide with a total world membership of 605,185.

Those worthy roots are still producing life. From 1972 to 1976, we organized 195 new churches in areas then assigned to the Department of Home Missions. Nine of these were predominantly black, five were Korean, one was American Indian.

The 195 new churches now average 37 in membership, 49 in Sunday school attendance, and are reporting an average of 7.5 members admitted on profession of faith each year.

Combined they have a membership of 6,829, and in the 1975-76 assembly year they admitted 1,279 persons to membership on profession of faith.

In 1975, Rev. Roger E. Bowman wrote in one of the missionary reading books, *Color Us Christian*, that "the Church of the Nazarene was born for days like these, that men everywhere may know of God's love and forgiveness. This is the day for the church to rise up and 'practice what it preaches.'

"Evangelism is so much more than verbalization of the gospel. It is building bridges to people so that we can help them. There is no greater witness than a sermon in shoes."

And in Dallas, Tex., Charles Colson, convicted and converted Watergate personality, told a Christian assembly that in all of the decisions he made while at the center of political power, he never affected one individual life for the better until his own spiritual rebirth. It is "Christ in us," he says, that is the real answer to the nation's problems.

Here is where Nazarene roots are indeed the strongest—when anchored firmly in the fact of Christ's presence in us.

With this understanding we can and will start new churches, reach new communities, and win new souls to the kingdom of God.

Most denominations went through a cycle of neglecting, or postponing, the starting of new congregations. They are now the poorer for this neglect. They are retrenching both at home and on the mission field.

The fact that faces us is that there is a greater variety of opportunities available right now for starting new churches than ever before in our history. There is a responsiveness among people that is a mandate for growth.

Hopefully, in this positive kind of atmosphere, every Nazarene church will reexamine its "roots" and its present opportunities, and in many cases will find that it can reach out with the gospel right now to an entirely new segment of the population through new church planting. □



PEN POINTS

INVEST IN CARING

She was the perfect neighbor. When I was too busy to care for the garden, she would water it. If my wife and I left for a weekend, she kept our mail and newspapers. Even so, she was never nosy, but minded her own business. Could you expect more from a 75-year-old widow?

Last week, Mrs. Graham died peacefully in her sleep. After the initial shock had passed, I began to realize what her life had meant to us.

Mrs. Graham was a living lesson in caring; however, I had ignored her example. Entangled in my daily routine, I had failed to involve myself with others. I had missed chances to share a smile, to comfort and console, to be Christ to someone in need.

On my kitchen wall is a plaque that reads:

This is the

beginning of a new day.

God has given me

this day to use as I will.

I can waste it or use it

for some good purpose,

but what I do with this day

is important because

I have exchanged one day

of my life for it.

When tomorrow comes,

today will be gone forever.

I hope I will not regret the

price I paid for it. . .

Will I waste this day by not caring for the careworn? Or will I use today to lift a low spirit?

If I heed this poem, my routine will not be neglected. Instead, I will use my free moments as precious times of sharing, giving of myself to others. Perhaps someone's garden needs watering—I must water it! Perhaps someone is facing tremendous pressure and needs encouragement—I must encourage him! I must remember that Jesus said, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Matthew 25:40). □

—MARVIN B. CROW
Olathe, Kans.

DAD'S OVERCOAT

by KEITH A. PAGAN
San Diego, Calif.

SHORTLY AFTER RETURNING from my father's funeral, two members of my home church came to me and said, "We're sorry to hear about your father; we always admired him so much!"

My response expressed my surprise, "I didn't realize you knew my father!"

Their reply puzzled me further: "We never really knew him. We were just told about him."

Dad was not a famous or well-known individual. He was a humble, hardworking husband and father who just managed to provide the bare necessities for his family. How would anyone 1,500 miles away know about him?

Their explanation seemed a futile attempt to alleviate my obvious confusion—"A scientist working on the Manhattan Project told us how he helped him go to college." Not wanting to insult my well-meaning friends, I accepted their condolences. I was reasonably sure that it was a case of misidentification.

As I drove home that day after church, my mind began to spin with a flood of memories. A dizzying montage of scenes from my early childhood swept across the screen of my mind. Dad was prominent in all of them. I could visualize him dressed either in the coveralls he always wore for work or in his well-worn suit. I thought of severely cold winters 30 years ago, and yet he never wore a topcoat. As an active child I had scarcely noticed. How did he stand it? I shuddered in sympathy.

In many of my mental scenes, there were non-family members present at our house. Even with its lack of normal amenities, home was "headquarters" for a surprising mix of individuals—relatives, preachers, evangelists, and individuals from "our" college. As a boy I viewed them as family extensions who were always



a welcome part of our family's life. In retrospect, I saw individuals who became college presidents, district superintendents, pastors, missionaries, and other servants of God.

During my last years at home, I became aware that from our meager family resources my father was helping these individuals attend our college. Times were hard. Jobs were scarce. Scholarships were unavailable. Students were on their own.

Why did he do it? In fact, how could he do it on his limited wages? Only his Heavenly Father really knows why and how—I don't. But I can speculate. Perhaps it was a form of compensation for his own limited formal educational opportunities. Though possessing a hungry and searching mind, he was pulled from school in the sixth grade to work in the fields and help his sharecropper-father make it. This did not keep him from becoming a practical theologian with uncanny perception. He was a student of human nature. His insights surpassed those of any other man I have ever known.

There were possibly other motivations. One person Dad helped was a brilliant young man who had just returned from a disillusioning start at a secular university.



Dr. Keith Pagan is dean of Point Loma College, San Diego. Previously he was professor of music at Pasadena College.

Dad convinced him he should give it another try at our college and drove him there with the assurance to both the boy and the college president that he would "see him through." For my dad this was a form of personal evangelism (though this term was not yet in use) and an act of human compassion. He believed in the boy. He believed in the power of God. He believed in our college. His faith was well founded!

The college provided both a thorough education and an opportunity for the young man to become established as a Christian. It prepared him for a life of significant service. God provided the means, strength, and grace for him to pay his school bill. The young man proved the penetrating accuracy of my father's insight into human nature. The successful student became a vehicle that God has used for years of outstanding missionary work in the Church of the Nazarene.

In the tumbling scenes of my mind I saw another potential motivation for my father's help to Nazarene college students. One of the individuals who figured prominently in many of my mental pictures was the preacher who first told my father that he could be freed from the power of sin. This Good News became a bond between the two men like that of brotherhood. Dad's response in helping his "brother" further his formal education was an act of gratitude and thanksgiving springing from a heart filled with divine love.

I don't really know all the individuals my father helped get started in college. I am sure that the monetary amount he was able to contribute was but a small part of the costs they had to meet. And, even as I pulled into my driveway, I was still sure my friends were mistaken in their understanding that Dad had helped the individual they had named.

Sometime later, I was visiting my mother and asked her if Dad ever helped this individual who was a long-time family friend. "Oh, no," she said, "I don't believe he did. He did, however, help his brother." I told her of the incident which prompted the query. She began to reminisce and answered, "Yes, now I remember. When he went off to college, Dad gave him his new overcoat."

I sat there dazed. Now I knew why Dad faced the bitter, cold, Oklahoma wind without adequate protection. In my immaturity, I had never questioned it before.

As a professional educator in one of our colleges, the implications and impact of his actions are more meaningful to me than I could ever verbalize. His unswerving faith in our college, in the value of Christian higher education, and in young people has profoundly influenced my own educational philosophy.

Like hundreds of my colleagues on the staffs of Nazarene colleges, I have found my ministry to Christ and to His Church to be through serving His and our children in our church's colleges.

Lord, help me be willing to sacrifice for the cause of educating our Nazarene youth—in the pattern established before me by my father. Give our ministers and members the burden to give the very coats off their backs, when necessary, to see that our colleges continue to be effective. Help us not to lose the motivation of a compassionate heart which reaches out to the needs of our youth while simultaneously reaching up in gratitude and thanksgiving to God for the change He has wrought in our lives. Amen. □

Bread upon the Waters

THE UNSUNG HEROES

*When you make up your long list of great men
And write down their names and worth . . .
Do not forget those silent heroes who
Are still the "salt of the earth."*

*It is not always the movie idol
Nor the gridiron's superstars . . .
Sometimes it is a crippled citizen
Who valiantly wears his scars.*

*Sometimes it's a withered paraplegic,
Paralyzed in feet and limbs . . .
Who composes the immortal music
And the everlasting hymns.*

*Sometimes it is a tired, widowed mother
Who is "leaven of the bread,"
Who saves her home from disaster and keeps
The teenagers shepherded.*

*Sometimes it's a Sunday morning preacher
In a small, crossroads pulpit . . .
Proclaiming a truth sent down by angels
That reveals the counterfeit.*

*So when you make up your list of heroes,
Include the halt, lame, and blind . . .
And all the other "saints in overalls"
Who have lived and blessed mankind.*

—CHARLES HASTINGS SMITH
Bethany, Okla.

by JIM DIEHL
Atlanta, Ga.

PROVERBS

IN THE STYLE OF THE 70S

THE SAD TIME has come again to retire my well-worn Bible and buy a new one. I hesitate to put my old friend on the shelf since it contains more than the inspired Word of God—her flyleaves are filled with thoughts and sayings I've picked up from people these past 10 years, and they have helped me time after time. Let me share some of these "proverbs" with you before they go into retirement.

"I pull into the gas station—not for repairs—but for refueling. So is prayer—not just in crisis but for regular refueling." Prof. Larry Fine, Mid-America Nazarene College, included this in a chapel sermon and how right he was. Regular prayer refueling will prevent many a spiritual breakdown!

Dr. George Coulter, general superintendent, said, *"Two things I hate: sin and smallness. You can't win if you are small, and you can't lose if you are big."* If Satan can't get you into his camp of open sinners, he will do his best to influence you to keep your faith, your vision, your giving, and your spirit small. But smallness doesn't make winners!

While in conversation with Mrs. Milton Parrish from Kansas City, she asked the question, *"Will God say you were so busy going and doing that you didn't take time to be?"* Since I tend to be too much of a go-type person, this question has stopped me many times, and thank God for it. Yes, it is so important to *be*.

When I pastored the Oskaloosa, Ia., church, we had a men's 7 a.m. prayer meeting every Sunday morning at the sanctuary altar. Layman George Comstock was praying one Sunday morning and said, *"Lord, You know I am just like a sponge; and whatever I'm filled with, when I get squeezed, that's just what comes out. O Lord, so fill me with the Spirit of Jesus today that when I get squeezed this week, Jesus will come out."*

And don't we live in a pressure cooker generation? The "squeeze" is on all of us. As George inferred, the pressure doesn't make us react as we do; it only reveals what we have within. Stephen is a classic example of the truth that the more pressure men exert on a Spirit-filled Christian, the more Jesus they will see. With hateful pressure being applied, Stephen's face radiated *"as it had been the face of an angel."* I'll pay taxes on that kind of religion!

During an administrative team meeting at Mid-America Nazarene College, Dr. Curtis Smith, president, told us of a letter he had just received that hurt. One week later he commented that another letter had come from the person saying she was sorry about the first letter, but she had been misinformed. Dr. Donald Metz raised the question, *"Does being misinformed give one the right to be carnal?"*

Rev. Jimmy Lentz, a stirring missionary speaker with World Gospel Mission, said, *"We are not called to a church or a job—we are called to a man, JESUS. There is never a recall from that!"* No matter how the vote goes, we do not resign from Jesus. No matter how terribly communication breaks down, we do not resign from Jesus. No matter what happens, we do not resign from Jesus! Praise God.

"You can't marry everyone you feel sorry for." This one-line truth came from Dr. Curtis Smith, president, MANC, as he counseled me about wanting to say yes to every needy situation that was laid before me while on the staff of the college. Another one from Dr. Smith that made it to my Bible's flyleaf is, *"Salvation doesn't necessarily have anything to do with goose bumps."* Amen.

While driving through St. Louis on I-70 late one night, I read a billboard message that sobered me. In fact, across the long 250-mile drive from there to Kansas City, I did some deep soul-searching. The statement was simple: *"No amount of success in any other area can compensate for failure at home."* That billboard caused me to change the priority list of my life.

A layman from a southern state called me long distance one Monday to ask if I would consider coming to their church as pastor. I hedged and beat around the bush until finally the layman asked if this was the proper way to call a pastor. "No," I replied, "you must wait and work through your district superintendent."

His answer was classic: *"That's what I thought, but it is easier to ask for forgiveness than to ask for permission!"*

And finally a truth that came to me when I was going through a hard spot: *"We tend to remember the best of the past and compare it with the worst of the present."* Many people believe things are in pretty bad shape now and the best part of life is in our past. That's depressing! And that's another lie from Satan! There were some difficult days in the past, too, but God helped us win the victory. The same God that saw us through then will do it again now and the present will also be victorious. Praise the Lord!

Such is the "book of proverbs" in the style of the 1970s. □



Rev. Jim Diehl is pastor of Atlanta First Church of the Nazarene. Before going to Atlanta, he was assistant to President Curtis Smith, Mid-America Nazarene College. He pastored on the Iowa District for a number of years and served as its district NYPS president for three years.



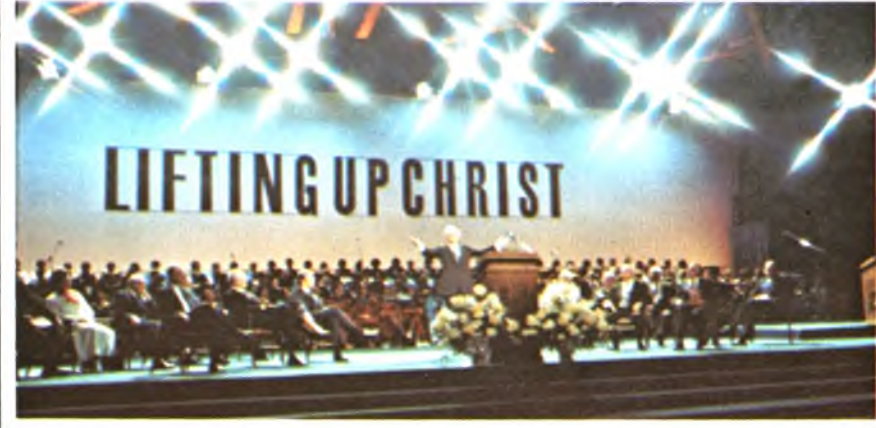
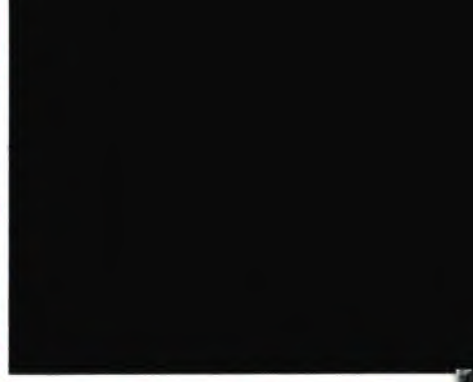
LIFTING UP CHRIST



"The Christ" by Hook.
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"THE LOVE OF CHRIST
CONTROLS US
...HE DIED FOR ALL...
THEREFORE IF ANY MAN
IS IN CHRIST,
HE IS A NEW CREATURE
...WE ARE AMBASSADORS
FOR CHRIST...
WE BEG YOU ON
BEHALF OF CHRIST, BE
RECONCILED TO GOD."

2 Corinthians 5:14, 15, 17, 20, NASB



“If you wish to be disappointed, look to others . . . If you wish to be encouraged, look upon Jesus Christ.” said Erich Sauer. ■ The Church of the Nazarene is committed to Jesus’ words: *As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; that whoever believes in Him may have eternal life* (John 3:14-15, NASB). There is no doubt Jesus spoke of His involvement in a once-and-for-all event of history—His death on a cross lifted high on Calvary. Jesus the Christ is no longer on a cross. He has been lifted from a grave to His Father’s right hand. ■ The benefits of that event are available to all who come to Him in repentance. Today Christ is still “lifted up.” The Bible says: *There is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven . . . by which we must be saved* (Acts 4:12, NASB). Jesus Christ is lifted whenever a believer ministers to someone else . . . He is *lifted up* when a pastor, an evangelist, a missionary presents the Living Word . . . He is lifted in a classroom through the attitude of a teacher or student . . . In the factory, at a service station, from a ball diamond, in an Amazon rain forest. He is wherever there is one who claims His name and proclaims and loves and lives. ■ Nazarenes



LIFTING UP CHRIST



in every walk of life recognize the truth expressed by poet T. S. Eliot: “Christ is the still point of the turning world.” While there are those all around who shout, “Stop the world, I want to get off,” the Christian discovers that there is a brass ring on this merry-go-round, and he keeps his eyes on it: “The prize of the high calling.” “Lifting up Christ” is caring for a low-down world. It’s caring because He cares.



“And He came and preached peace to you who were far away, and peace to those who were near: for through Him [Christ] we have our access in one Spirit to the Father.

So then you are no longer strangers . . . but you are of God’s household, having been built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone, on whom the whole building being fitted together is growing into a holy temple in the Lord: in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.”

Ephesians 2:17-22, NASB

LIFTING UP CHRIST IN THE CHURCH

by JIM BOND
Colorado Springs, Colo.

I'VE ALWAYS HEARD about what one must give up when he becomes a Christian—and it's true! I've given up all kinds of things—nervousness, frustration, anxiety, hatred, envy, and above all else, lack of purpose. And, oh, what I've found in Christ to replace these things!"

That is the testimony of Dr. Tom Forster—retired air force colonel, Ph.D. in aeronautical engineering, and presently the dean of Colorado Technical College. This new life in Christ began for Dr. Forster at the altars of Colorado Springs First Church during a Sunday morning worship service. The events which led to his moment of decision are intriguing.

One soft summer night, college-aged Carol, Tom's oldest daughter, and two young lady friends from First Church decided to camp out in the mountains near our city. It was a cool, clear Colorado night. The star-studded sky shone in all its brilliance. Caught up by the immensity of the heavens, the awestruck girls began talking of the magnificence of the Creator. The subject eventually shifted to the personal love and compassion of the Creator-God, demonstrated in the gift of His Son to be the world's Saviour.

Carol was not unfamiliar with this old love story, but a desire to reciprocate that love stirred within her. That night out under the stars which God had flung into space, kneeling in the dust of the earth which He had spoken into existence, Carol yielded her life to the Creator's Christ.

Eagerly she shared her new life in Christ with others, particularly her own family—father Tom; mother Dale, who teaches first grade; sister Amy; and brother Tom. The Forsters were a nominally religious family, but typical fun-loving people, living mainly for the temporal.

Young Tom's athletic abilities brought pride and joy to his family. An outstanding gymnast, as a high school sophomore he showed promise of being the state champion. In the summer of 1975, a tragedy struck Tom which God used to bring the entire family to himself.



A recurring problem in his left leg was hindering Tom, not only in his gymnastics, but even in the routine matters of life. An accident one afternoon sent him to the doctor's office. X rays revealed an ugly tumor in the hip bone which doctors at Air Force Academy hospital gravely reported was inoperable.

The Forster world fell apart. Struggling to keep alive her newfound faith, a tearful Carol came to my office. Between sobs, she told me of her family and of her concern for them because they did not seem to have the spiritual resources to cope with Tom's tragic news. I encouraged her to believe that God could use this apparent calamity to win the entire family to himself.

The following day all five Forsters, with young Tom on crutches, attended the worship service of our church. The music was soul-inspiring. The prayer time was warmly meaningful. The message was from Mark 9:23: "Everything is possible for him who believes." There was the unmistakable reality of the Divine Presence.



Rev. James Bond is pastor of Colorado Springs First Church of the Nazarene. He is a former missionary to Brazil and also served as general NYPS president.

As the Holy Spirit so often does, He had guided earlier in the week in planning a service that seemed to be tailor-made for someone with a particular need. The service for this August morning was for the Forsters.

Dr. Forster made an appointment with me on Tuesday. He minced no words: "My daughter tells me that you know God; can you tell me how I can know Him?"

What a blessed time we had sharing that morning! We met the Lord in prayer and His presence lingered with Dr. Forster throughout the week.

When the invitation was given during the worship service on the following Sunday, this bright, sincere, questioning man immediately came forward to the altar. With the straightforwardness of a little child, he confessed that he was a sinner, asked forgiveness, and dared to believe that because of the atoning work of Christ, he was forgiven. He became a new creation in Christ; the old was gone, and the new had come.

We informed the congregation of young Tom's physical need, soliciting their prayer support. There was an immediate answer to our prayers. Doctors at Fitzsimmons Hospital in Denver examined the X rays and determined that surgery would be possible—delicate, but possible. They cautiously warned that success was not guaranteed, and even if it was successful, recuperation would be a long process. Gymnastics for the 1976 school year would probably have to be forfeited. There was the possibility that Tom would never compete in athletics again. The potential of a permanent limp existed.

The church surrounded the family with love and prayer. We dared to believe for young Tom's healing, even in the face of the grim possibilities.

It was a triumphant moment when the doctors emerged from the surgical suite, declaring the surgery successful. We all rejoiced in the Lord, giving Him praise for using the surgeon's skills. But the Lord was not through with Tom.

His recovery was supernatural. At every checkpoint, the doctors were amazed with his progress. In fact, when the gymnastic season arrived in early spring, Tom began working out with the team. He competed in all events but vaulting and floor exercise, distinguishing himself as one of the outstanding gymnasts in the state. He is the favorite to win the all-around gymnast title during his senior year, even though the doctors at Fitzsimmons say that what he is doing is medically impossible.

The striking feature of the Forster story is that the entire family has yielded to Christ. Dr. Forster was recently a regional coordinator in a city-wide interdenominational evangelism program. Dr. and Mrs. Forster participate weekly in the evangelism program of our church. Carol and Amy, both in college, attend church regularly and are active in Bible study groups. They are effective "sharers" of their faith.

Reflecting on it all, I exult in the various facets of this "success story"—two young ladies sharing their faith outside the four walls of the church; a church that gives opportunity in public services for people to make decisions to follow Christ; a captivating worship service designed to meet the needs of people like the Forsters; a caring fellowship that "bears one another's burdens"; a loving God who effects mighty miracles for His believing people. That is what the Church is all about! □

Have You ALWAYS Been a

I HAVE BEEN ASKED this question many times. My answer is no. I wasn't "anything" until I was 21. I didn't even know the Church of the Nazarene existed until I was 23 and a student in college.

I must confess I wasn't impressed when I first heard about the church. Two students were talking in my presence about the service the night before. Someone threw a hymnbook, they said. And a band played.

This impression may have lingered in my subconscious, but it didn't seem to bother me then. I had spent too much time previously looking into a variety of denominations and sects and was not ready to begin again. A new world had so recently opened up for me, religiously, that I was intrigued with the possibility of further discoveries. Whether a student was a Baptist or a Buddhist at the interdenominational Bible college I was attending was not important to me. What was, was finding out about Him and me and what He was trying to say about both of us.

When one is 23 and has just emerged from paganism, it is none too soon to begin listening to a different voice talking and teaching about a better way to live.

It wasn't that I had been against Christianity. I just had not been sufficiently aware of its actually being a way of life. An historical movement, yes, but I was totally ignorant about any personal worth in it.

I had not been brought up in a Christian home. I have faint memories of being sent to Sunday school when I was a child. But from the fifth grade, when we



Nazarene?

by ANNA BELLE LAUGHBAUM

Oklahoma City, Okla.

moved to the country, through graduation from high school, I can count on the fingers of one hand the times I attended any type of service.

A high school graduate and a pagan! Graduations have built-in mechanisms for serious thinking. Mine focused on the meaning of life for me; for anyone, for that matter. I suppose I was more ready for that kind of thinking than the average high school graduate is, for I had been away from home for four years.

To try to find meaning, I stumbled onto the idea that religion might help. I say "stumbled"; I'm sure now that God was giving guidance even when I knew nothing about Him. Through working in a rectory belonging to a large formal church in Detroit, I became aware that God really is. And that He is worthy of awe and reverence. My awareness was the result of my intimate acquaintance with the rectory family and with a few of the church services. Those on Good Friday were especially memorable. Although I understood little about the real meaning of the Cross, it had a profound effect upon me. It still does. I shall be forever grateful for that introduction.

The rectory family saw God high and lifted up. Through them, I saw Him that way, too. Two years later when I came to know Him personally, I still saw Him that way.

During those two years I went down several paths, mentally and physically, in an attempt to find inner peace through finding meaning for my life. Making friends with

those my age and discovering how they lived fulfilled lives was one of those paths. I began attending young people's meetings at a church within walking distance. At one of their services on Belle Isle I first heard the chorus that is still my favorite:

*Let the beauty of Jesus be seen in me
All His wonderful passion and purity.
O Thou Spirit divine,
All my nature refine
Till the beauty of Jesus be seen in me.*

Jesus, I learned, was the best and the greatest of all men. If He were more than this, I did not learn it from these young people. They were as restless and discontented as I.

Another path I took was reading about different denominations and sects. One that appealed to me for a time did not believe in hell. This belief was comforting and haunting at the same time. It seemed to me, however, that implicit in justice is the eventual good or bad life dependent upon the way one lived earlier.

Still another path I took was following up an advertisement in the newspaper. It featured a revival meeting across the city of Detroit. The word *revival* meant nothing to me. But the pictures of the evangelist and singer, young men with engaging smiles, and the intriguing words about "changed lives" attracted my attention. I went to that meeting. I should say that I made a desperate effort to get there and did—10 minutes before the benediction. My lateness was due to long waits for a streetcar and two buses, plus long rides, plus not being able to find the church immediately. Although I received little from those few minutes of the service, I received much from the warm, friendly interest and concern of several people, including the pastor. Months later I began attending that little evangelical church and became a member of it.

The path that brought me to the very door of salvation—synonymous as far as I am concerned with inner peace and purpose—was reading a biography of John Wesley. Some parts of his quest matched mine. When I read about his spiritual conversion, I laid the book aside and prayed. It was then that I discovered a new world!

Several years were yet to elapse before I found a real church home. Bible college, liberal arts Christian college, graduate school, doctorate, all came before I found one.

Not until I began teaching at Bethany Nazarene College did I really become acquainted with the Church of the Nazarene. I became acquainted with her, first, through the lives of students, ministers, and faculty members. Then I became acquainted with her doctrines. I was not disappointed with either method.

No, I haven't always been a member of the Church of the Nazarene—just 20 years. I wish I *had* always been a Nazarene. □

Dr. Anna Belle Laughbaum is professor of English at Bethany Nazarene College, Bethany, Okla.

by JAMES HAMILTON
Kansas City, Mo.

LIFTING UP CHRIST IN OUR DAILY LIVING



IT IS REPORTED that Horace Greeley received a letter from a woman stating that her church was in serious financial difficulty. The congregation had tried a number of things to raise money, including oyster suppers, grab bags, and box suppers. All of this was to no avail. She asked the famous editor to suggest some advice to keep the struggling church from disbanding. Mr. Greeley replied, "Try religion."

When Christianity fails, it is because its adherents fail to be Christians. That means, of course, that Christianity has not really failed; it just has not been lived. Humorist Robert Orben asked, "Do you know what's wrong with religion today? There are too many people practicing it and not enough people good at it!"

Nietzsche, the German atheist philosopher, said, "Show me that you are redeemed and I will believe in your Redeemer." The proof of piety is in performance,



Dr. James Hamilton is a professor at Nazarene Theological Seminary, Kansas City, teaching marriage and family counseling, pastoral ministry, and is the director of field education.

not profession. If we would truly lift up Christ, in addition to proclaiming Him as Lord, we must live out His Lordship in our lives. And if we must choose between proclaiming and performing (fortunately we do not), let it be the latter.

A fair question a Christian should ask himself is this: "Is anyone attracted to Christianity because of the way he sees it represented by me?" Too often Christianity is a lifeless creed instead of a living relationship.

Unfortunately we are like the little girl's description of the period of the Crusades which said, "Life for the Crusaders was very hard and many of them died of salvation." Of course, she meant *starvation* instead of *salvation*. Her statement, however, may not have been too incorrect in describing many would-be Christians. They are dying of their own kind of "salvation"—a religion that separates them from sinners in name only, and not in deed.

Halford Luccock said that when Columbus returned to Spain from his first voyage, he had to prove that he had reached another world. His convincing evidence was a new kind of people, American Indians, which he brought back with him. Luccock observed, "The crowning evidence of Christianity is a new kind of people." J. B. Phillips, in a similar vein, said, "... the preaching of Christ crucified accomplishes what all the high

thinking and clever talk could not do—it changes people.”

Some years ago the *Bible Expositor and Illuminator* reported that a traveler in China asked a native, “Have you ever heard the gospel?”

He replied, “No, but I have seen it.” He went on to say that a man in the village had been a terror in his neighborhood. He was a criminal and an opium smoker with a violent temper. The native continued, “But the gospel has made him gentle and good. He no longer smokes opium. No, I have never heard the gospel, but I have seen it and it is very good.”

The tragedy of our times is that fewer people have seen the gospel than have heard it. Not a few family members have been turned away from the Christian faith because one of their number, often a parent, professes what he does not possess. In such a case it makes a farce of his faith and a pretense of his profession. Those looking on are driven from, rather than drawn to, the Christian faith.

To defend poor performance by stating that only God can assess whether one is truly Christian is to deny the life-changing power of the gospel. True, only God can fully know the human heart, but inner transformation will be reflected in outer demonstration. Ben F. Lehmborg said, “The best definition of Christianity is a Christlike person living a Christlike life.”

Our private encounter with Christ will reveal itself in public. Jesus said that one’s life will be known by its fruit (cf. Matthew 12:33). He has called us to be fruit-bearing Christians (cf. John 15:1-16). But to do so is impossible apart from Christ: “. . . without me ye can do nothing” (John 15:5). Fruitless lives are Christless lives.

In a world that is filled with people searching for something in which to believe, Christians have the golden opportunity to demonstrate that Christ can truly make a difference in one’s life. Merely telling them that life can have meaning is not enough. It must be shown to them in ways that are unmistakably clear. This means that they must see Christ’s life lived out in those who call themselves Christians.

A recent convert was asked what it was that convinced him of the validity of the Christian faith. He replied, “The life of a man who never knew I was watching him.” He was not converted by a sermon that was preached, though preaching is both appropriate and necessary. He was converted by a sermon that was lived. The power of a lived-out life for Christ became the Holy Spirit’s means for bringing conviction for sin and creating a yearning for God.

J. M. Pike observed that Christians are to represent God before the world. He said, “Men get their ideas of God from the character of our lives.” It is a sobering thought that our lives are an object lesson in theology, that men see God as they see us. Such a responsibility would be staggering to us were we to try to do this in our own strength. But such is not the case. It is “Christ in you” (Colossians 1:27) that makes it possible.

Here, then, is our task: to reveal to others the Christ who is in us. An unknown writer gathers up this great mission in these two lines:

*So let our lips and lives express
The holy gospel we profess.*

May it be so. □

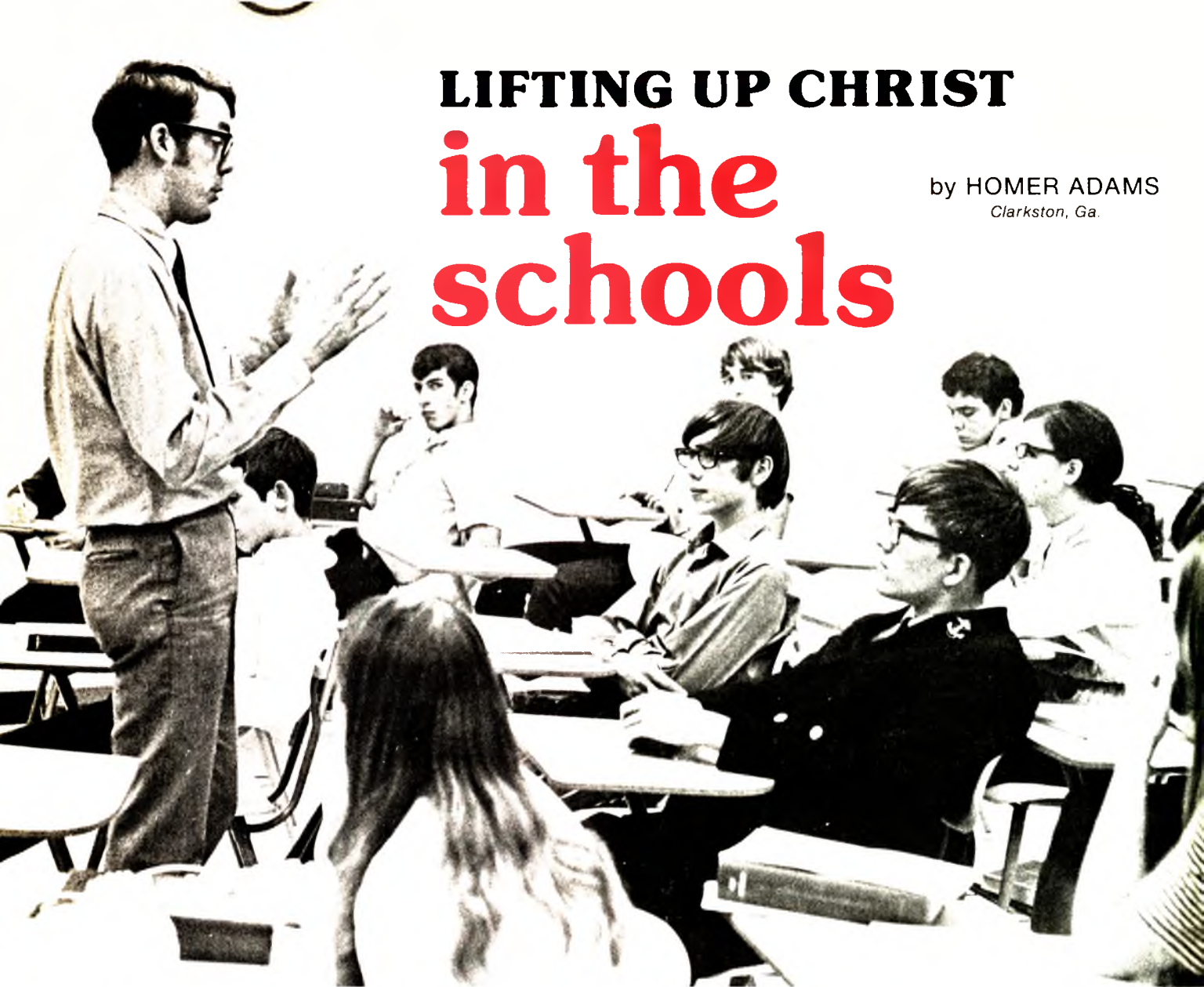
I Touched Heaven Today

*Yesterday I felt depressed
And let down;
Outside I smiled,
Inside I frowned.
I searched for the cause
Of the way I felt,
And discovered the reason—
I hadn’t knelt
In quiet submission
Before Him to pray;
Just a brief, hurried ritual,
Then scurried away.
Today I touched heaven,
And Jesus is near;
Outwardly nothing has changed,
But all fear
And dread of the future
Has vanished away;
What a difference it makes,
I touched heaven today!*

—ALICE HANSCH MORTENSON
Racine, Wis.

LIFTING UP CHRIST in the schools

by HOMER ADAMS
Clarkston, Ga.



LIFTING UP CHRIST" is a noble concept and a worthy goal. He said, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me" (John 12:32). This is both an admonition and a promise from Jesus. It is a twin commandment to "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15).

Schools, by good fortune, is a flexible term, covering every institution from kindergarten to college. More than 45 million children and youth are enrolled in public elementary and high schools, and over 11 million men and women are enrolled in institutions of higher education. What a mission field for Christian teachers and students! In close association with numbers of students in an environment of inquiry for long periods of time, Christians are, in Pogo's words, "surrounded by insurmountable opportunities."

LIFTING UP CHRIST IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Christian young people can let their influence count for God and for good in numerous ways. The low-key, quiet comment of what Christ means and how wonderful it is to share one's needs and problems with Him may often have the greatest impact. At other times,

dramatic opportunities to lift up Christ present themselves as Christian youth achieve in school.

A football game is about to begin. The bands and other performers make a brilliant splash of color on the field. Thousands of spectators in the stadium grow silent, and a teenager steps to the microphone and prays the invocation. As the closing words, "In Jesus' name," echo across the great arena, one realizes that Christ has been lifted up.

Parents have ample opportunity to exert a Christian influence in the schools. Involve yourselves in organizations relating to the school, know what goes on, and let your voice be heard! Parents united to oppose wrong and support that which is right have significant impact.

The Christian teacher has a power of influence which no words can describe. Associated with students for a major portion of the day, in a leadership role, and during an impressionable period of a child's life, the teacher can do great good or harm. He or she will have the students' attention in a way that parents cannot.

Many are concerned about the limitations placed upon religion in the public schools. The *Engel v. Vitale* decision in 1962 did not halt all prayer in the

schools. Rather it declared that students could not be required to recite an officially composed prayer.

The decision on Bible reading is similar. Teachers and students can still read the Bible in public schools, and may the practice grow!

There are countless ways that a Christian teacher can witness for Christ. Someone has said, "You preach a better sermon with your life than with your lips." Perceptive students in a classroom may not fully understand it, but they know compassion, concern, and inspiration when the teacher portrays these. They not only recognize such ideals, they are influenced by them. Thus, a Christian educator can serve as a lengthened shadow of Christ. It has been observed that "the devil is willing for a person to confess Christianity as long as he does not practice it." The instructor has the privilege of practicing Christianity daily.

LIFTING UP CHRIST IN THE CHRISTIAN COLLEGE

There are not as many church colleges as there once were. Some churches have forgotten their colleges, and some colleges have forgotten the church that brought them into existence. The writer attended a regional meeting of representatives of church-related colleges.

A speaker hammered away on the theme that a faculty member should not be required to accept or teach the theology or standards of conduct held by the church that supported the college. He went on to say that even an "honest atheist" ought not to be denied a teaching position in a Christian college. Pro and con sentiments were expressed by others. Then an old college president arose to his feet and declaimed, as no doubt he had done from many a pulpit, "If the banner 'Christ is Lord' does not fly over every Christian college represented here, then we ought to close them down or let someone else operate them." A chorus of "Amens" swelled to support him.

Our voices should be lifted in praise for every college that provides a first-class education in a Christian environment. Here teachers realize that "he who dares to teach must never cease to learn." He can combine his search for truth by sharing that truth with those in his classes. Truly, such teachers are the trustees of civilization. They not only inform, they inspire.

Usually, faculty members in Christian colleges serve at financial sacrifice. They realize that though a Christian is not promised an easy life, he is promised a life full of meaning. They are willing to sacrifice in order to prepare young people to lift up Christ.

LIFTING UP CHRIST IN THE SECULAR COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY

There are thousands of Christian students and teachers in public institutions of higher education. Both

their responsibilities and opportunities are great. College professors serve as role-models, whether they intend to or not. Even at the peak of student dissent, when authority seemed questioned on every hand, the instructor had considerable influence. Thus, a serious responsibility settles upon a teacher, particularly a Christian teacher of college students. Young people have more need of models than of critics. In a sense the task of the teacher is neither to light a candle nor to complain of the darkness, but to show a student how to light a candle.

After years of enjoyable teaching in the sheltered environment of a Nazarene college, the writer took a position in a state university. He felt the need of refraining from advancing his Christian views openly in the history class he taught. It was difficult to keep silent as Christmas drew near. He drafted a Christmas letter to send to the college-age members of his Sunday school class and longed to share the vital truths of the incarnation and atonement of Christ with his secular classes also.

Then as he entered the first university class of the day, just before Christmas, a student spoke up, saying, "I don't want to get you off your subject, but I wonder what importance the characters of history you have been talking about will have 500 years from now." The teacher began to write on the board names of people, past and present, who would be remembered 500 years hence. The class got involved and interest was high. Discussion flowed. Then the same student asked if the name Jesus would still be significant five centuries later. He expressed doubts that it would.

Here was the open door! The remainder of the period was spent trying to answer this student's honest question. The influence and impact of Jesus, the Son of God, was traced in detail. The political philosopher, Machiavelli, was cited as saying Christianity would not survive because it emphasized the weaker virtues—love, mercy, humility. Yet Machiavelli is a name known only by a few students of history, while the name of Christ is lifted up by millions of followers.

In each of the next two history classes, it was natural to say, "You will be interested in knowing of a thought-provoking question a student raised in the first class!" In each case there was interest and response, and the influence of Christ in human lives became the theme of discussion. What an opportunity there was to witness and teach history at the same time! Soon after this, invitations began to come for the teacher to speak to student groups.

In most cases the best opportunity to make one's Christian witness count is to manifest the spirit of Christ. Someone has said, "What you are speaks so loudly that I cannot hear what you say." The instructor who loves God and loves people will be a lasting influence on those whose learning he directs. He realizes the truth of the statement, "I don't care how much you know until I know how much you care."

Lifting up Christ is the calling of every person who confesses Him as Lord. In a sense, we will all be in school the rest of our lives. When we stop learning, death sets in. God not only helps us to gain knowledge, He provides wisdom if we lean on Him. As expressed in the sailor's prayer, we can say, "Lord, Thy sea is so great and my boat is so small." □

Dr. Homer Adams is administrator for Community College Campus, Clarkston, Ga.



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A DIAMOND IN THE ROUGH

by HENRY M. LUNDE

Burlington, Ia.

HA VE YOU EVER THOUGHT of being a father to a 70-year-old man? Being in my late thirties, I had the rich and gratifying experience of just this. I was going to say the unique experience, but that would be too narrow and restrictive because many lay people probably could duplicate this experience.

A few years ago my phone rang as I was watching Dan Rather on the evening news. It was a man from the central part of our state who was in Burlington on business and was told by a mutual friend to call me for an excursion around our little city of 35,000. I was surprised and didn't particularly want to get out of my cozy home to see a stranger. But after a little more talking, I reluctantly told him to drive out to my apartment and we could have a snack at a little drive-in nearby. Then we could proceed with a tour of our town of beautiful parks, excellent industries, and many panoramic views of the mighty Mississippi.

During this drive, I wasted no time in punctuating my conversation with God's creative power in making the beauty and matchless scenery we were seeing. In Romans 10:9-10, Paul tells us in no uncertain terms that we are to confess Him openly before men. I have always given this verse a high priority in my life, as well as Acts 1:8; Matthew 5:13; and 2 Corinthians 5:20. In a sinsick world, we need to use the most palatable, specific, and effective sources possible so people will be drawn unto Him. My whole life revolves around this concept of being His witness and ambassador.

As the evening progressed, I had the opportunity to give Jerry the plan of salvation. The Bible says the Word of God is quick and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword [Hebrews 4:12]. After some discussion of God's Word on the tour, Jerry and I separated. I went to my knees and asked God for this man and his

undying soul. Around 11:30 p.m. I finally turned off the light and slid into a deep sleep. The next awaking moment was a knock, knock on the door. I pushed off the blankets and looked at the clock—it was 6 a.m. I grabbed my bathrobe and went to the door.

To my surprise, there was Jerry. He burst forth with his plight of no sleep and an anguishing night of not knowing where he would spend eternity. He asked if I would explain the plan of salvation again with some elaboration. I did. Realizing his dire need of Christ and the danger of his putting it off, I asked him to kneel by my sofa and accept Jesus Christ as his personal Saviour. He did—with no reservations. In the twinkling of an eye, a new life had been born at age 70—a new beginning and hope had become a reality where otherwise a miserly and bleak future would have awaited him.

A beautiful and wonderful relationship has developed between us over these five years. With God's help, I have helped nurture his soul through the scriptures, music, and encouraging him to tithe and be active in personal soul winning. He is growing and bubbling with God's love and unabashedly sharing his faith with others.

This experience is the third one for me. They show me God's power and God's love. Paul tells about a crown for those who are soul winners. In God's divine plan, I want that crown studded with beautiful diamonds (souls) that He has won through me. Is this your goal and aim, too? I hope so! □

**“By All Means . . .
Save Some”**

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"lifted up" on the cross...
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—W. E. McCUMBER