



THE

PREACHER'S MAGAZINE

—proclaiming Christian Holiness . . .

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Legalism, Laxity and Love



LEGALISM ABOUNDED in the land when Jesus was calling Matthew and Peter and John. It stiffened against the impact of His teaching; it resisted every attempt He made to penetrate its facade; and it helped put Him to death on the Cross.

Laxity was just as prevalent. It was more passive than legalism, but no less destructive. It never stiffened nor resisted, but merely ignored and remained aloof. Its strategy was to avoid commitment. It evaded decision. It compromised; it washed its hands in a basin of water; and it assumed everything would come out all right.

But love was there too. It bridged the chasm between God and man, and it opened a fountain for the cleansing of the inhabitants of Jerusalem. It took the form of a Person, and His mighty act on Calvary spoke more eloquently than 10 trillion words. Mercy, forgiveness, redemption! God's only Son is with us. Love finds the way.

Legalism, laxity, and love. They are still with us. Legalism requires its strict observance of the rules. It means, as it is commonly understood, an *excessively* strict adherence to law. It drove the Pharisees to their endless, meaningless repetition of feasts and rituals and rules. They had them by the hundreds. Rules about duties and about diets. Rules for weekdays and rules for sabbaths. Laws about business and about pleasure, laws for men and for women, laws for friends and for strangers. There is a list of 613 laws in Leviticus. The legalistic Pharisees observed every one of them, and they added many more of their own.

The parade of piety, under the banner of legalism, continues in our day. Unable to learn from history or unwilling to understand the meaning of the gospel, some still insist on achieving "goodness" by means of multiple commandments and taboos. And the taboos usually outnumber the commandments, because it is much easier to be negative than posi-

tive. It is simpler to point out a mote in another's eye than to remove the beam in our own.

Satan, of course, is cunning enough to take advantage of all this and encourage division among the people of God. He must be pleased to see them wrestle over each detail of behavior and appearance. To be sure, rules are necessary if anarchy is to be avoided. But their excessive use to cover every single situation cannot be God's way to Christian living.

Even more dangerous than legalism is the over-reaction to it. This results in laxity. In utter revulsion against what they see as "petty strictness" to a rigid set of rules, some people fall into the snare of looseness in conduct. It is good that they see the futility of attempting to work out their salvation through strict adherence to a set of rules, but it is tragic when they fail to see the danger of drifting into a state of ethical limbo where nothing is wrong.

The Russian novelist Dostoevski portrays what this kind of religious thinking can produce in human behavior. In *The Brothers Karamazov* a devoted daughter practices prostitution in the streets to earn money for the support of an aging father. That, suggests the author, is love, and it is beautiful. To commit adultery because one is motivated by the desire to use the money for a good purpose somehow erases all the guilt and changes all the biblical commandments.

Is it no longer sin when a deed, however vile, is motivated by "love"? This is the popular opinion in these days, but this concept is based on a rather vague idea of "love." Love for whom and for what? Not love for God, since sin cost Him His Son. Not love for Christ, since sin sent Him to Calvary. Not love at all, really, but a substitute we spell the same way.

It does not require superior intelligence to label something "the Puritan ethic" because we think it is too strict, and then because it bears that label to reject it.

Christians who reach a point in their lives where nothing troubles the conscience anymore would do well to shun laxity as vigorously as they avoid legalism.

Thank God, there is another choice. One does not need to take either way—legalism or laxity. There is the way of love. This is the way Jesus takes. It is the way of holiness.

Love answers the objections to legalism without falling over backwards into laxity. To love God with all the heart, soul, mind, and strength—and to love your neighbor as you love yourself—solves the problems of adherence to law. How can we violate God's law when we love Him perfectly? Will we steal from our neighbor if we love him as we love ourselves? How can we do anything that would grieve or disappoint our Heavenly Father, or offend one of our brethren, if *agape* love is our compelling guide?

The next time we sing, "They will know we are Christians by our love," we might remember what love really means. It does not lead us into legalism, but neither does it permit us to lapse into moral laxity.

If there were some way we could stand on Mount Calvary and turn the clock back 2,000 years, we would find our view of things undergoing a change.

The View from Calvary

By Kenneth L. Dodge*

And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified him (Luke 23:33).

Just *where we stand* on certain issues has a great deal to do with *how* we view those issues. It is probably safe to assume that a "worm's-eye view" of the world is considerably different from that of a "bird's-eye view." Efforts to view events from an elevated place in order to get a better view are not new. This is what Zachaeus was doing when he climbed that tree. This is what prompts people to pay money to ride elevators to the top of towers, or seek top floors in high-rise apartments, or pay extra money for building lots that have a view.

The reverse of our opening statement is also true—that is, *How* we view an issue depends on *where we stand*. If there were some way by which we could stand on Mount Calvary and turn the clock back 2,000 years, we would find our view of things undergoing a change.

I. WE WOULD SEE THE SERIOUSNESS OF SIN.

Why men should *jest* about sin may be a mystery to those who have had to deal with its effect in the lives of many people. Not too long ago, I talked to a man about his need of Christ, and he refused to take any of it seriously. "The devil would be downright disappointed if I didn't

come down to shovel coal for him when I die," he said. Beneath the surface of his attempted humor there lurked a realization that it was not really funny, but a refusal to seriously face his condition was rooted in a lack of an adequate view of the seriousness of sin.

Sin is a debt, a burden, a thief, a sickness, a leprosy, a poison, a serpent, a sting. Sin is the spade that digs a man's grave, steals his virtue, damns his soul.

*Weep not for the treasures lost;
Weep not for fair hopes crossed;
Weep not when limbs wax old;
Weep not when friends grow cold;
Weep not when death must part
Thine and thy best-loved heart.
But weep, yes, weep all you can,
Weep and cry because thou art a
sin-defiled man!*

Man calls sin an accident

God calls it an abomination.

Man calls sin a blunder;

God calls it blindness.

Man calls sin a chance;

God calls it a choice.

Man calls sin a defect;

God calls it a disease.

Man calls sin an error;

God calls it enmity against God.

Man calls sin fascination;

God calls it fatal.

Man calls sin an infirmity;

God calls it iniquity.

Man calls sin luxury;

God calls it leprosy.

*Pastor, Church of the Nazarene, Richmond, Calif.

Man calls sin liberty;
God calls it lawlessness.
Man calls sin a trifle;
God calls it a tragedy.
Man calls sin a mistake;
God calls it madness.
Man calls sin a weakness;
God calls it willfulness.

Stand on Mount Calvary. See the wounded, buffeted, bleeding, ridiculed, and dying Son of Man. The sin of the world put Him there. By His stripes we are healed; by His blood we are cleansed; by His death, we are offered life. Stand on Mount Calvary; see the picture; you'll never be able to view sin lightly or indifferently again.

II. WE WOULD SEE LIFE'S SUPREME VALUES.

Our value systems desperately need rearranging. It was said of the Early Church leaders, They "have turned the world upside down." Their preaching enabled people to see that the things that were at the top of their value scale belonged at the bottom, and those at the bottom of their value scale belonged at the top. In our world of "image-making" and "keeping up with the Joneses," we could do with some of that same rearranging of values.

What is the most valuable thing in the world? In your life? For what would you be willing to lay down your life? Are we skilled at making a living, but unable to make a life—one worth living, anyway? There needs to be a development of character as well as an acquiring of skill. It is reported that, when a master artist died, there were dozens of lesser artists who wanted to buy his brushes. But the element that makes it all worthwhile is never in the brush—it is in the hand that wields the brush. This is another way of saying that life's supreme value consists of what we *are*—not what we have, or even

what we do! For years the Church has been proclaiming the message of transforming faith in Jesus Christ to make us into new creatures! It is still the need of the hour. Go to Calvary; view life from its perspective.

He died that we might be forgiven;

He died to make us good,

That we might go at last to heaven,

Saved by His precious blood.

III. WE WOULD SEE THAT LOVE FINDS A WAY.

Whatever needs doing in our world can be done—if we are able to go the route of love. Man's predicament before the Cross was hopeless. The law had the power to reveal our sin, but not to take it away. Man could substitute the blood of animals as a sacrifice for his sin, but he could not find a way into fellowship with the living God. But God, in love that has no explanation, bridged the chasm and provided both a remedy for sin and restoration to fellowship with God.

In doing so, love has shown us the answer to the problems of our world and our own lives. It is the love of God shed abroad in our hearts. To the Jews it may be a stumbling block, and to the Greeks it may be foolishness; but to those who are saved by it, the Cross is the power of God flowing through our lives in a love for our fellowman that transcends *all* barriers. We have tried money, education, welfare, training, and a host of other approaches. But since they have been devoid of the love of God, they have only aggravated the problems. It is time to return to Calvary to see again the love of God outpoured; to realize that it is the *only* way—not only for our salvation, but for the salvation of the world!

Is there a problem in your life that

stems from a "personality conflict"? Let the love of God show you the way! This is a transforming love that changes everything with which it is allowed to come in contact. If it flows through you and touches the lives of those around you, there will be some changes made. You can rely on it.

Of course, just "going to Calvary" is not the complete answer. It is possible to squander opportunities and so concentrate on trifles that opportunities of a lifetime are lost.

Pussycat, pussycat, where have you been?

I've been to London to look at the queen.

Pussycat, pussycat, what did you there?

I frightened a little mouse under the chair.

A child's nursery rhyme. But it is so

descriptive of life that it is hardly to be confined to the nursery. Too often we have lost our opportunity to experience life-transforming experiences because we have concentrated on trifles. It is reported that a man who had stood for hours waiting for the parade to come by, so he might catch a glimpse of the king, lost his opportunity because, at the moment when the king passed by, he had bent down to tie his son's shoelaces!

If our journey to Calvary's hill is to result in a new point of view, we must be looking diligently for the Lord himself to open our eyes and show us what He wants us to see. When a man is willing to take that journey to Calvary, led by the Son of Man, the place where he stands will so enlighten, inspire, and educate that his viewpoint will be forever changed.

Among young people of America, suicide is the second greatest cause of death, and the rate is climbing. What can the pastor do?

Dealing with the Problem of Suicide

By Howard A. Kuhnle*

CHUCK, AGE 31, was killed instantly while driving his car at a high speed when he ran into an abutment of the railroad bridge not far from the downtown area.

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Eyewitnesses said among themselves, "Another fool has been killed by driving too fast." But they did not know that the real cause was that Chuck and his beautiful wife had had a fight in their handsome, suburban home over what Chuck termed "your extravagant spending." Frustrated,

and fortified with liquor, he had stormed out, driven off at high speed, and crashed into the bridge abutment.

Even though the death certificate listed "accidental death," was this a real accident, or did Chuck die as a suicide?

After conducting what was termed as "psychological autopsies" on drivers in 28 consecutive fatal crashes in Houston, the Baylor College of Medicine reported that 4 (almost 15 percent) were "conscious, goal-directed suicides." This proportion matched study of 86 fatalities in Kansas City. Thus, as many as 8,000 of the nation's reported 55,000 annual deaths in auto accidents might be added to the 22,000 annual recorded suicides, estimates the American Association of Suicidology.

Among young people, suicide is the second greatest cause of death—accidents being first. Of the estimated 75,000 persons between 15 and 24 who attempt suicide in the United States each year, about 4,000 succeed. And the rate is climbing. The figure of 4,000 does not include deaths from the overdose of drugs.

Dr. Michael Peck, director of youth studies at the Suicide Prevention Center in Los Angeles (a pioneer agency), said inability to communicate with their families and peers, feelings of isolation and loneliness, and pressures at home were chief factors leading to self-destruction. Fewer than 30 percent of successful suicides leave notes.

Other authorities cited depression and lack of good example as factors in the rising rate. "Many young people who commit suicide have never had one person they can trust and admire. . . . The child is apt to become a loner," according to Calvin Frederick, formerly with the National Institute of Mental Health.

The World Health Organization

reports that at least 1,000 people commit suicide every day, and other thousands attempt it. The organization, which calls for an increase in the number of special prevention centers, said that most suicide victims announce their intention beforehand—either explicitly or implicitly—and that those who fail usually try again later. A fall in the number of suicides by gas has seen an increase in the number who use drugs. The Health Organization found it difficult to be precise about the factors prompting suicides, but cited bereavement, loneliness, sickness, psychosis, alcoholism, and drug addiction as the major problems. It is believed that an attempted suicide, successful or not, is usually an urgent call for help.

Even the organized liquor interests are aware of the problem of suicide by means of cars, and of their own responsibility due to drunken drivers. The studies of Baylor University, already cited, were reported in detail in the January, 1973, *Newsletter* of the Licensed Beverage Industries, Inc., which lists itself as the National Public Relations Organization of the Distilled Spirits Industry.

As we deal with suicide, we are indeed dealing with a difficult and even threatening theme, one that many would like to sidestep.

Although suicide by means of cars is cited here, there are many other types of incidents that could be mentioned, indicating the motives and prevalence of suicide. Furthermore, though many causes of suicide are known, and though many people are aware of them it is difficult to know what to do—even when members of the family or friends see suicidal tendencies.

What can be done?

What can you, as a Christian—especially the lay people—do? For

there is a new and renewed stress on the work of the laity, and properly so.

Even though there are extenuating circumstances which people try to understand, suicide is never to be condoned from a Christian standpoint. A note of regret should always be clear, even though it is not shouted from the housetops. On the other hand, merely to denounce suicide is completely negative, since this does not help either the successful or the unsuccessful victim or his family.

The first and most important item is to be open, frank, and candid in all your relationships. This is especially true of parents and children. The Book of Proverbs puts it well, "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it" (22:6). This seems elementary and obvious, yet it is hard to live up to this teaching. Constant care and diligence are necessary. In many instances, people do not fully realize the wrong training they are giving their children.

From birth on, people must be made to feel a vital part of the Christian family, and an important part of the community, the church, the state, and the world. This idea must be cultivated with increasing understanding at all ages from infancy to old age. That does sound commonplace, doesn't it? But there are millions of people who feel left out of everything—they are extremely lonely. Among these are many candidates for suicide. Some of them even give warnings in such phrases as "Nobody pays any attention to me," or "Life isn't worth the bother," or "Nothing matters." These sentences are a signal of depression, and possibly even suicide.

Members of the family should not hesitate, if they suspect that someone is inclined toward suicide, to consult ministers, family physicians, or psychiatrists. There is no stigma

in being troubled. This includes mental illness.

The church as an organization—and ministers especially—can help those who might be inclined to suicide by teaching children from the earliest years that every person is precious in the sight of Jesus Christ. "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God" (Mark 10:14).

More specifically, teachers, leaders, and pastors must be the first to understand rather than to condemn. Suicide may occur when the individual—his mind overwrought—sees no other course open because he views the future as hopeless and himself as worthless. In these circumstances, the church should stress Christian faith, optimism, forgiveness, and emotional support. "And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you" (Eph. 4:32).

On the other hand, it is of no value either in the home or the church to admonish, "Don't commit suicide." This negative attitude is useless and might even be suggestive to some.

The final and inclusive word is total commitment to Jesus Christ, upon the part of all Christians, in their families and in their churches. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house" (Acts 16:31).

Such commitment is needed and could have a real effect in preventing suicide in those who are inclined. This must not be simply teaching people that they are precious in the sight of Jesus—a formal lesson to be learned in a theoretical manner in a Sunday school class—but there must be a vital new birth. "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3).

Wednesday evening can be changed from a night of boredom to a time of blessing and excitement.

Midweek Innovations

By Mike Norris*

THE GREATEST INNOVATION that most of us could make on Wednesday night is to dismiss the service. At least that would break the monotony of what we normally do, and would spread joy to the hearts of the laymen who have faithfully trudged off to service to be browbeaten, blasted, begged, badgered, bored—but seldom blessed.

Most of us do not evidence enough interest in Wednesday night services to make it interesting to others. We rush in from a busy day of pastoral duties and hurriedly snatch up some idea that we hope will get us through the hour. Or as we dash out the door of a fellow pastor's office, where we have delayed his work all day, we ask, "Got an idea I can use for tonight's service?" Or we just finished vacation Bible school demonstration Sunday—expecting 200 in Sunday school, and only 148 showed up. We preached poorly both services last Sunday; Monday night's board meeting was a near-fight; and the only one who showed up for Tuesday night visitation was the crippled, 81-year-old man that we prayed would stay home.

So what do we do? Aha! We will

get them on Wednesday night! We will let them know that they should have been in Sunday school last week instead of visiting Grandmother. We will blast them from the Word until they feel backslidden for missing Tuesday visitation. We will let that argumentative board member know that God is on the side of the pastor, and that he must not knock that special program we submitted last week.

Results? We vent our frustrations on Wednesday night, but our people go home disappointed and hungry. Perhaps this does not happen in your church. But it is typical of far too many these days.

How does one innovate on Wednesday night? Since I wanted to get the feelings of the average laymen, I asked them to write out suggestions—unsigned—and drop them in the church suggestion box. My feelings were confirmed by the suggestions I received. Combining these suggestions with my own feelings, which stem from my years as a layman (before pastoring), I have arrived at some ideas that may help both our people and ourselves.

May I suggest some things *not* to do.

1. *Don't preach.* "But my people expect me to." Great! Surprise them.

*Pastor, Montana Avenue Church of the Nazarene, Cincinnati, (Paper presented to S.W. Ohio Preachers' Retreat)

Two sermons a week are enough—for you to prepare, and for them to have to listen to.

2. *Don't teach CST lessons.* I was a layman for years. Although I realize the importance of Christian Service Training, you couldn't raise a thimbleful of Christian faithfulness, even today, to get me to sit on Wednesday night, when my soul is hungry, to hear someone plow through a CST lesson, even if the course is on raising the preacher's salary! Don't tell me that laymen enjoy it.

3. *I don't like Bible studies.* "Heretic!" you cry. Wait a minute. I did not say that you should not have them. Some Bible studies are interesting and helpful. I just said that I don't like Bible studies on Wednesday night. They tend to get too technical and mechanical. In most cases, the only person that really studies is the leader, and the rest end up being spiritually spoon-fed. Few people get any edification from the discussion of what some Greek term means in the context of some passage they haven't read anyway.

I believe in the old idea that Wednesday night is *people night*. That's old-fashioned, but I like it. Our people are taught at in Sunday school, sung at in worship hour, preached at in services, and pulled at in altar calls. Except for the choir, there is little time or place for group involvement in most Sunday services. To feel a part of something, people need to feel that they have contributed something, and that they receive something for that contribution.

Why not innovate and involve on Wednesday night by starting with a visitation program? Crazy? Not really. Have your people come at evening mealtime to the church fellowship hall (in our case, it is the parsonage basement), and fellowship together over an evening meal. Afterwards go

out two by two and make calls on absentees or prospects. The fellowship is helpful, and you provide a way for laymen to get involved in visitation without taking another night of the week. Most important, your laymen return from visitation more conscious of definite areas of prayer need, for they have been in homes and seen those needs for themselves.

Make Wednesday night a night for all age-groups. Many of our churches have already moved youth meetings from the traditional Sunday night slot to Wednesday night. Teens and juniors have their own programs. This brings the entire family to church. We eliminate having teens and juniors sitting bored through adult services—teens and juniors that usually end up whispering among themselves and causing distractions.

Make your adult session a discussion group at times. Talk about things they need to discuss. We will quickly find that our job is more than just keeping a discussion going. More importantly, we must be willing to lay aside our prejudices. We must be willing to face the issues squarely, without pious answers from a theological textbook. We must be willing to come down from our pastoral ivory towers and face the nitty-gritty of life. Our people must know that we are transparently honest, and that we are vitally concerned about their needs. We cannot dodge troublesome issues. We must face them. We must be willing to say, "I am wrong." When we get to this place, our people will open up, and our discussions will help both them and us.

I was amazed to find in group discussion that people who had been in the church all their lives—people who had heard holiness preaching from the best of ministers—could not quite fathom the fact that resentment is wrong. When we discussed

criticism, we had questions from sincere people. When we discuss family relationships, children, money, attitudes, interchurch relationships, and other personal subjects, the interest is keen, and the questioning is revealing. The man that sits in our pews has problems and misconceptions that he needs answers for.

You see, it seems that much of what we say from the pulpit does not register on the laymen that sit and listen. When we realize that they have unanswered questions, we can help.

Involve those laymen in a discussion about things that bug them. Then we can make Wednesday night a time to reinforce the truths that we have preached on Sunday.

Is there a provision in the *Manual* that states we cannot use special music on Wednesday night? We can, and should, integrate special music into these services. Schedule the choir to sing; use the junior choir, teen choir. Do you have some budding quartets, trios, or soloists in your church? Use them! One Wednesday night each month could be effectively built on a music program. This will require time and imagination, but it will pay off in exciting services and involve some who otherwise may not come.

How often do we use special-feature nights? We could feature some segment of the church, perhaps the youth. We could invite a youth group from some neighboring church to sing, or we could have a special youth speaker. We could feature the juniors, senior citizens, young adults. Advertise the services with enthusiasm.

What about showing a good gospel film occasionally? If we use the film

just as a filler, we are missing the point. But if we use it to touch hearts and turn it into an opportunity for an altar service, we are making an interesting and attractive—as well as helpful—Wednesday service.

What about prayer? You say I have left no place for a prayer service. Not so! The suggestions I offer should make prayer more meaningful. What man can't pray more effectively after visiting in a home where there is a need? How much better we can pray for each other after we have discussed problems that concern us all! Prayer burns in hearts set aglow by Spirit-anointed music. We can pray more effectively for our teens, juniors, or senior citizens after we have featured them in a service.

The reason that most Wednesday night services are dull—and people stay home—is that *we* have made the services what they are. We haven't carried through the ideas we already have. We have hidden behind our excuses, and have told our crowd by our attitudes, Well, it's just a Wednesday night prayer meeting.

I firmly believe that our people will go where the fire is. Unless *we* institute reforms, unless *we* innovate, Wednesday night will always remain a flicker instead of a fire. Our people will continue to get more excited about "Bowling for Dollars" than fishing for men. We will waste celestial oratory on the faithful few and wonder why.

By implementing a few simple suggestions that our laymen have voiced for years, we can turn Wednesday night from a night of boredom into a night of blessing. We can give our faithful laymen a reason to anticipate something fresh, new, and thrilling instead of "just another prayer meeting."

A tongue-in-cheek appraisal of some devices which are not going to get any church problems solved.

How to Dodge a Church Problem

By Asa H. Sparks*

MOST PROBLEM-SOLVING discussions in the church become—sooner or later—a desperate attempt to escape from the problem. This is often clumsily done, causing embarrassment, and leaving the church without the comfortable feeling of having disposed of the problem. This is unnecessary; some church leaders long ago worked out adequate techniques for dodging the issue.

Over the years I have seen several eminent practitioners of this art, and have compiled a list of their devices. The list is only tentative and partial, but it should give pastors a command of alternative modes of retreat, and enable them to withdraw gracefully, leaving the problem unsolved.

1. Find a scapegoat and ride him. Pastors can blame board members; board members can blame department heads; department heads can blame teachers; teachers can blame everybody; and everybody can blame the pastor.

2. Profess not to have *the* answer. That lets you out of having *any* answer.

3. Say that we must not move too rapidly. This avoids the necessity of getting started.

4. For every proposal, set up an opposite, and conclude that the “middle ground” (no movement whatever) represents the wisest course of action.

5. Point out that an attempt to reach a conclusion is only a futile “quest for certainty.” Doubt and indecision promote growth.

6. When in a tight place, preach a sermon that no one can understand.

7. Look slightly embarrassed when the problem is brought up. Hint that it is in bad taste, or too elementary for mature consideration, or that any discussion of it is likely to be misinterpreted by outsiders.

8. Say that the problem cannot be separated from other problems. Therefore no problem can be solved until all other problems have been solved.

9. Rationalize the status quo—there is much to be said for it.

10. Point out that those who see the problem do so because they are unhappy—rather than vice versa.

11. Ask what is meant by the question. When it is sufficiently clarified, there will be no time left for the answer.

12. Discover that there are all sorts of dangers in any specific formulation of conclusions: exceeding authority or seeming to; asserting more than is definitely known.

13. Look for some philosophical basis for approaching the problem, then a basis for that, then a basis for that, and so on.

14. Move away from the problem into endless discussion of various

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ways to study it.

15. Put off recommendations until every related problem has been definitely settled by the scholars at the seminary.

16. Retreat into general objectives on which everyone can agree. From this higher ground you will see that the problem has solved itself, or you will forget it.

17. Find a face-saving verbal formula like, Let's write headquarters to change the rules.

18. Carry the problem into other fields. Show that it exists everywhere; hence everyone will just have to live with it.

19. Introduce analogies and discuss them rather than the problem.

20. Explain by making it perfectly clear over and over again what you have already said.

21. As soon as any proposal is made, say that you did it five years ago in a previous pastorate.

22. Appoint a committee to weigh the pros and cons (these must *always* be weighed) and to reach tentative conclusions that can subsequently be used as bases for further discussions of an exploratory nature preliminary to arriving at initial postulates on which methods of approach to the pros and cons may be predicated.

23. Wait until the district superintendent can be consulted.

24. Say, "That is not on the agenda; we'll take it up later." This may be extended ad infinitum.

25. Conclude that we have all clarified our thinking on the problem, even though no one has thought of any way to solve it.

26. Point out that some of the greatest minds have struggled with this problem, implying that it does us credit to have even thought of it.

27. Be thankful for the problem. It has stimulated our thinking and has thereby contributed to our growth.

Practical Points

that make a difference

He Sacrificed Nothing— and Saved a Couple!

Dear Son:

It was a beautiful service yesterday morning! Our pastor, though not a Bible scholar, is a Bible student. He saw something in 1 Corinthians 2 that made a difference in the serving of the sacrament.

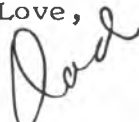
He recognized that Paul saw "unworthiness" within the context of excess (v. 27) rather than the usual generalization that divides a congregation between the *sheep* and the *goats*. As a result, the sacrament became a moment of reconciliation as well as a memorial of celebration.

John and Mary walked down the aisle hand in hand, husband and wife, to partake of the elements together. We knew that there was tension in the home. But our pastor handled the service so wisely and so scripturally that "love" became the motif and the fellowship of reconciliation the end.

There was rejoicing both in the church and in heaven last night because of a united home—promoted by a discrete pastor and an open altar.

Son, it came to me how important it is to lead with a spirit of compassion—even at the expense of law. The end result is the fulfilling of the law in love.

I understand you will be leading your congregation in the sacrament next Sunday morning. Lead with grace, finesse, and love. You may have a family that needs the ritual more than your sermon.

Love,


"I'm still not quite sure I know what a rapid growth cycle is, but for whatever it is that we are experiencing, I am praising God and hanging on."

Rapid Growth—Pleasures and Pitfalls

By Donald J. Schlough*

IT IS CALLED a rapid growth cycle. If you find your church in it, about the only thing you can do is praise the Lord and hang on.

In our small church, growth came rapidly. Sunday school attendance increased nearly 100 in the six-week period between October and Christmas. It happened through the outreach bus ministry.

There are many pleasures associated with rapid growth. One of those pleasures is trying to gain enough vision for the task. Just how much of an increase shall we plan for? Our mistake was in limiting what we could do. Physical facilities seem to place some limitations on how many we can profitably minister to, but God has given insight to see past these limitations. When attendance surpasses our capabilities to handle in present space, double sessions will double our space. We can increase our ministry by multiplying sessions and staff.

The smaller churches have difficulty in believing they can do something "big." They believe that First Church up north, or Calvary Church in the South can, but their fear of failing keeps them from doing anything innovative in their situation. We have proved, at least to our satis-

faction, that rapid growth can come to the small church willing to risk something.

Two buses were purchased from the state for less than \$1,000. This investment was perhaps the greatest faith move. It meant the risk of putting \$1,000 on the possibility of failure. But it meant trusting God for the outcome.

Many a smaller church will have a task raising the initial funds for the outreach bus. It will not be easy, because the people have not yet seen what can happen. Raising funds for the second or third will be considerably easier. But even most small congregations can be challenged to raise six or seven hundred dollars to buy and insure the first bus. A bus can cost as much or as little as the supply and demand. In most metropolitan areas the demand is great; hence the price is fairly high. We bought our buses from a rural school district at an attractive price. Others have paid a thousand dollars more for a vehicle that will do the same job as ours—provide a means of evangelizing the community.

Many hesitate to enter the evangelistic bus ministry because they do not feel qualified. Neither did I. But I did have enough sense to read almost everything in print on bus ministry, and then to attend a Bus

*Pastor, Faith Church of the Nazarene, Jacksonville, N.C.

Ministry Conference where *enthusiasm* as well as *knowledge* was dispensed in large doses. If you are going to do it, *do it right*. Learn how to do it properly and you will be well on your way to keeping failure away from your program.

A few pitfalls ought to be mentioned. Perhaps the first pitfall is to think that it is your hands or head that has accomplished this growth. Remember it is God's doing. The evangelistic bus ministry is the sincere attempt to respond to New Testament commands. So the problems and successes of the ministry are His.

Then one must be aware that rapid growth will call for organization and reorganization. The Sunday school will need more teachers, more equipment, more literature. If there is only a handful of people in the congregation to begin with, they must be forewarned that great demands will be laid upon them. Don't scare them, but do assure them that God will also provide laborers for the harvest field.

Children's church is an absolute

must. Sunday school alone is not sufficient for evangelism. The Sunday school will have to become a lot more evangelistic than it has been, but still you will need the added help of the graded children's services. Children's church is not an added hour of baby-sitting. It is worship and evangelism. Children must be saved in the Sunday school and children's church. If you don't plan for it, it won't happen.

One final word about faith. When we began the bus ministry, it was felt we could not do many things to upgrade our facilities and equipment. But the opposite has been true. We have done more to provide adequate facilities and equipment for the many than we did for the few. The layman will give if he can see that his money is needed, and is being used to touch lives. Give your people the opportunity to do something BIG with God's money.

I'm still not quite sure I know what a rapid growth cycle is, but for whatever it is that we are experiencing, I am praising God and hanging on.

Sanctified by Faith

The perfect sanctification of believers is the very object for which the Holy Spirit is promised. If it is not a practicable duty to be holy in this world, then it will follow that the devil has so completely accomplished his design in corrupting mankind that Jesus Christ has no way to sanctify His people but to take them out of the world.

How many are seeking sanctification by their own resolutions and work, their fastings, and prayers, their endeavors and activity, instead of taking hold of Christ, by faith, for sanctification, as they do for justification!

It is all work, work, work, when it should be by faith in Christ Jesus, who is *made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption*. When people take hold of the strength of God, then they will be sanctified. Faith will bring Christ right into the soul, and fill it with the same Spirit that breathes through himself. It is faith that must sanctify; it is faith that purifies the heart.—C. G. Finney.

The acid test of theological theory is:
Will it preach, and will it change
the lives of persons as it becomes the
Word through the event of preaching?

The Preaching Event as a Change Agent

CONTEMPORARY PREACHING is experiencing a greatly needed revival within our modern over-structured and over-analyzed Christian community. It is predicted that this resurgence of God's ancient means of communication within the community will cause another great revival of true religion. Many pastors, young and old, are daring once again to declare from their pulpits the good news of Jesus, which alone has power to change the attitudes and actions of a sinful man in a secular city.

Back in the troubled sixties, many professors were so bold as to say that they were presiding over the death of preaching. However, in the midst of the turbulent seventies, we see that preaching has never been more needed. God is overriding the false doom of the professors, and continues to use "the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe" (1 Cor. 1:21).

God has always seen fit to use preaching as the chief change agent

within the life of the community of communication. John the Baptist preached (Matt. 3:1). Jesus went all about preaching the gospel (Matt. 9:35). The apostles fulfilled Jesus' commission to preach everywhere (Mark 16:20).

Preaching was a mark of the genuine existence of true Christianity within the apostolic era. The missionary impulse of the Early Church was to preach the gospel to everybody everywhere. It is not by accident that every great revival has been led by anointed preachers. There will never be another revival without the realization by preachers of their urgent mission and ministry to an otherwise lost world. If persons are to be saved or changed in this day, it will come chiefly through a renewed sense of urgency on the part of God-called instruments of communication.

Essentially, preaching is the event of communication from God through man to man. The house of God is therefore a community of communication. It is this communication from God which has power to change the feelings and behavior of a sin-oriented people. Thus the proof of God's activity within culture is in the changed lives of persons, who in turn are able to effect change within society itself.

In our age the preaching event is a way in which the preacher-theologian



by
C. Robert Allred

Pastor, County Line
United Methodist Church
Kennesaw, Ga.

is continually called upon to integrate theory with truth. The acid test of theological theory is: Will it preach? Or: Will the theory effect change in the lives of persons as it becomes the Word through the event of preaching? Thus, preaching is pragmatically the accepted mark of the work of the Spirit within the community of faith. Preaching can be called true communication only if it issues in modified behavior and attitudes in the lives of the hearers who are made doers of the Word.

As a change agent, the sermon is the one act of ministry which has the most potential for preventing polarization and managing inevitable conflict within an active congregation. Persons naturally resist change, but as a part of a "captive audience" they are most vulnerable to experience the Word of God, which has the power to change and mold them into Christlikeness.

The preacher also becomes vulnerable through the act of preaching in that he, along with his people, lays himself open to the same communication. The preacher has more to offer than detached insights; he offers the healing participation of his human heart. It is this vulnerability which enables the pastor to combine the dual roles of sensitive counselor and fearless prophet. The Word-event not only offers the possibility of change to the hearer; it offers corrective admonition to the preacher also.

If change does take place through the event of preaching, then it must be God-directed. The faithful preacher must never fail to preach the full message which the Lord lays upon his heart. Often it would be more popular to modify—and thus nullify—the message from God. Perhaps the distinctive difference between professional and nonprofessional preaching is the ability to distin-

guish between personal sympathy and professional objectivity. It is in his own openness to the fullness of the message that the preacher finds strength in vulnerability. If the hearers understand that the essence of the message is from God, then they will feel free to continue to come to their pastor with their confessions and personal problems. The vulnerable preacher is a man that also stands, along with his people, in the fear of God.

The current revival of interest in the sermon as a potential tool for calling our people back to authentic religious experience may not be any great surprise to many holiness preachers; for few within holiness circles ever doubted that it was mainly through the means of the sermon that God compels persons to a higher plane of living. Indeed, the probable reason that most ministers gave up on the sermon was that they knew of no higher plane to which they could direct their people. It is generally assumed in Wesleyan-Arminian circles that every sermon is a change event.

However, it is encouraging to experience the larger clergy's "new" discovery of the use of the sermon to modify the actions and attitudes of persons and culture. If another great revival does occur within our fallen society, it will have to have the participation, if not the leadership, of the total force of the Christian community.

The holiness movement has a strategic leadership role to play in the coming preacher-led revival. The methodology and special competencies of holiness preachers and evangelists need to be communicated to the total sphere of Christian communicators. Holiness preachers have a great deal to share with other preachers who are now getting into change-oriented preaching.

● **General Superintendent Lawlor**



Ministers of God

CALLED TO BE MINISTERS—ministers of God in an immoral age! Superstition is rampant. A tragic preoccupation with the occult is growing daily. Perverted moral values seem to represent the norm of our day. Multitudes die in sin, many crying out, "No one cares!"

As ministers of God in a holiness church, we dare not let that lament go unheeded. The redemptive, life-giving cure—"the double cure"—is ours to give NOW in the person of the Holy Spirit, whose mission is pardon and cleansing.

Our call from God "to serve the present age" is His command to lead men in our day from sin to holiness through the power of the Holy Spirit.

We must be sure of our call and keep its surety clear—personally experiencing the fullness of the Spirit of holiness, basking in and constantly instructing ourselves in the nature of holiness. Then we must go forth in 1974 proclaiming and testifying to the gospel of the grace of God for all who live in our needy, sin-sick world today.

Loyalty to the doctrine of heart holiness in presenting the truth of the blessing with zeal, defending it with courage, and urging it upon all who are truly justified is so necessary in our day! Such loyalty exalts Jesus Christ, whose representatives we are, and recommends the Holy Spirit in all His power and purity.

Let us give thanks at the "remembrance of his holiness" (Ps. 30:4), being loyal to our church, and living so as to bring no blame on our distinguishing doctrine. We are to be ministers who pray much, learning the secret of waiting upon the Lord to renew our strength. We are to read and study extensively. We are to labor hard and have immeasurable faith in the holiness of God as it is revealed in His majesty, in His moral purity, and in the communicability of His divine nature through the blessed Holy Spirit, who makes the believer holy and pure.

We must not stagger at preaching the glorious truth of Christian perfection. Anything less than this would be dishon-

orable to the atonement of Jesus Christ and the operation of the Holy Spirit. He who denies a second crisis experience denies the full scope and design of the mission of Jesus Christ to our world. Our age, enmeshed in sin and self-centeredness, gripped by evil, and infected by fear, reveals the fact that our task is to declare the greatest need of our time—holiness.

May every Nazarene preacher go from his knees to his pulpit carrying with him the authority to declare the whole gospel of Jesus Christ; never being inconsistent in his message or his life; trusting the Holy Spirit to convict and convince the sinner of his need for forgiveness and the believer of his need for cleansing. May we as ministers of the gospel in the Church of the Nazarene bear the seal of Pentecost and the Holy Spirit, so that God may use us to tell His truth, to uphold it, and to declare it with scriptural accuracy in these later years of the twentieth century.



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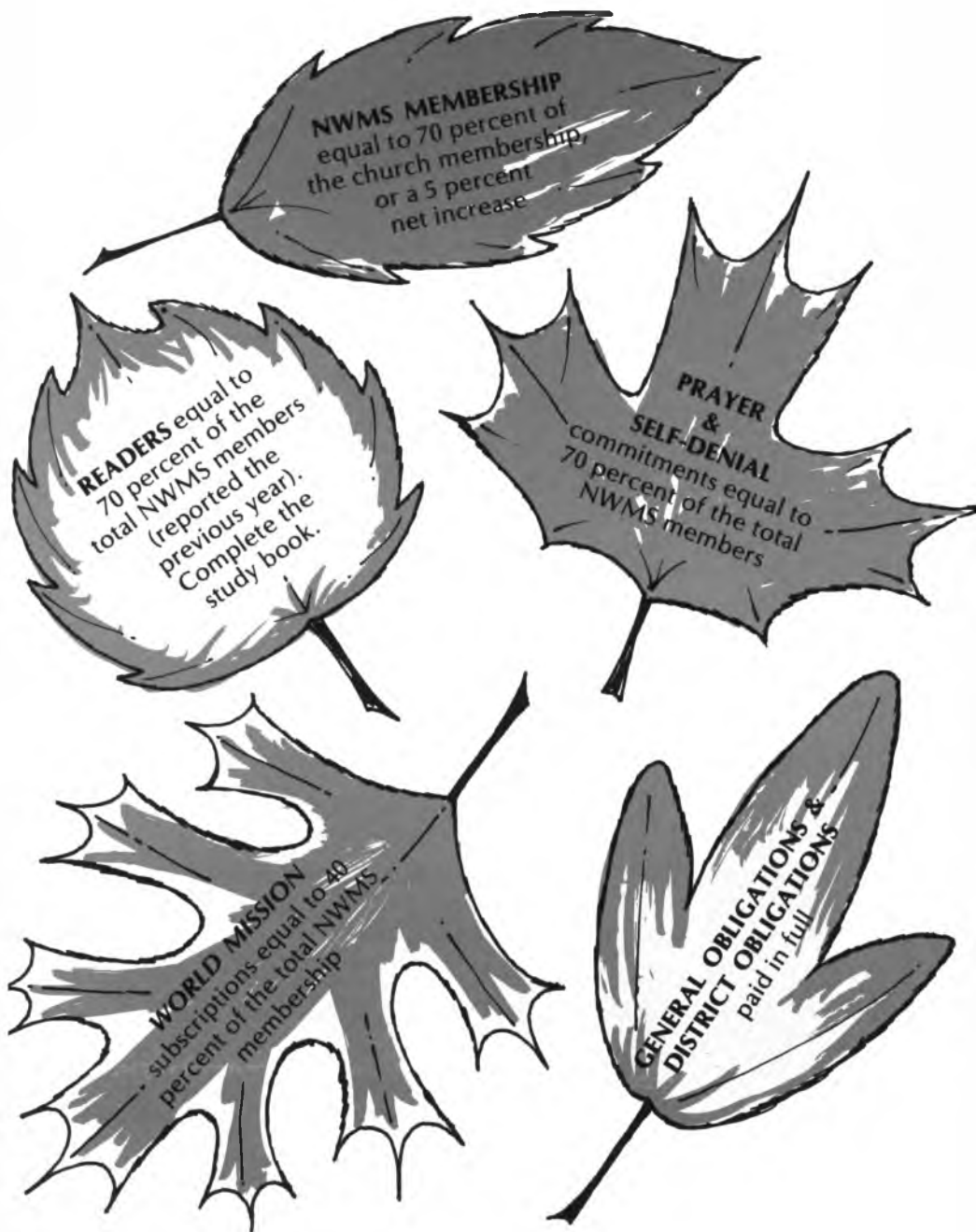
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READING LAYMEN BUILD AN ALERT, GROWING, EFFECTIVE CHURCH!

AS CERTAIN AS THE LEAVES THAT FALL . . .



... this "fall-age" will make you an **AWARD SOCIETY!**

Mrs. Floyd H. Pounds
General Council Member

Planning for New Members

by Profession of Faith?

Ask yourself and your board every month: Who has recently accepted Christ and who are the ones that can be won to Christ this month and brought into the sacred fellowship of the church?



1. Review the results from your fall revival. How many can be added to the membership?
2. Check your Sunday school enrollment. How many are saved but haven't joined the church?
3. Take a good look at your Nazarene families. Urge each developing youth to become part of the membership.
4. Evaluate your fringe-area families. Could they be won (this month) if you made a special effort?

Any church can grow if it will pray about growing, set goals to grow, make growth a part of every board meeting, and utilize the programs of the church to that end.

***The sacred fellowship of the church
is part of the Good News!***

HOME DEPARTMENT SUNDAY

November 3

★ **START A NEW HOME DEPARTMENT.** Over half of our Sunday schools do not have one. Report it to your district H.D. director.

★ **Sponsor SPECIAL VISITATION** for shut-ins unable to attend your special Home Department service.

★ **SURVEY** your neighborhood to find new Home Department members.

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66 Years and

GROWING!

October 13, 1974
Laymen's Sunday

October 13, 1908
Birth of the Church of the Nazarene at Pilot Point, Tex.



IN THE 66 years since the Church of the Nazarene was born as a national church at Pilot Point, Tex., it has demonstrated a vigorous growth from 288 churches and 6,198 members to its present status as a truly international church with 6,532 churches and 538,081 members and more than a million in Sunday school enrollment.

This growth was in large part the result of an active and sacrificial team effort by both clergymen and laymen who felt compelled by their own salvation to reach out to the next town and around the world building the kingdom of God by leading men and women, boys and girls to Christ.

Today's world calls for a renewal of that dedication of both laity and clergy to the completion of the great mission which they so boldly began.

On Laymen's Sunday, October 13, honor your laymen for their part in the mission of the church.

DEPARTMENT OF HOME MISSIONS

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Frankly, the Department of Pensions and Benevolence has a standing policy: We are ever ready to negotiate with any company that can give you a better dollar return on your annuity investment. For a number of years *the Department has found nothing that compares with your present Nazarene Tax-sheltered Annuity.*

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Let the serviceman
in your life know
he can "sing the
Lord's song in a
strange land."

Psalms 137:4*

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★ **NOVEMBER 11-15, 1974** ★

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*Retreat theme.

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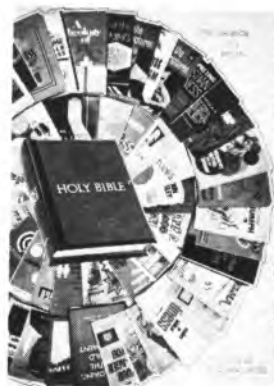
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Dear Pastor:

Now is the hour when your high school seniors are beginning to think about what college to attend next year.

Now is the hour when high school counselors may be recommending that your ablest young people attend non-Nazarene colleges or universities.



Now is the hour when you should send the names of your high school seniors to your Nazarene college and invite a college representative to come to your church and interview all prospective students.

Now is the hour when you may be able to forestall a wrong life-decision by pointing out to your young people the advantages of attending a Nazarene college.

Don't forget to remind them that many of their finest friends will also be going to a Nazarene college . . . that on every Nazarene college campus there will be hundreds of young people from backgrounds just like theirs who also will be seeking and finding God's will for their lives . . . and that all eight Nazarene colleges are **fully accredited** . . . that they will find faculty members who will be personally interested in them and who will share their concerns as they choose their careers . . . that, although it is difficult to work one's way through college, it actually requires less hours today than it did a generation ago . . . that their Nazarene college has a director of student aid who can give them complete information with regard to the many scholarships and loans which are available to help them financially.

Finally, how about suggesting that your church will give them at least a small "send off" gift as they begin their career on a Nazarene college campus?

Sincerely yours,

Edward S. Mann

EDWARD S. MANN



They work "to win a blue ribbon or a silver cup,
... we do it for a heavenly reward ..."

(1 Corinthians 9:25, TLB)*

EVANGELIZE IN NOVEMBER

The ultimate goal of "Big E" months

Receive members by profession of faith

(Honor School Goal—5 percent of Sunday school average)

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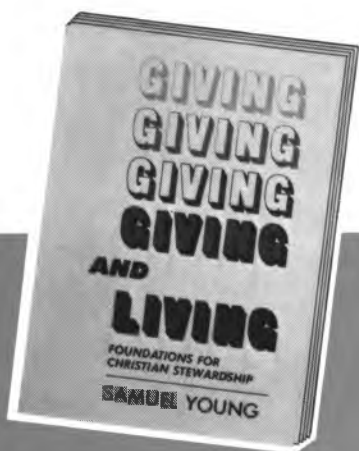
DEPARTMENT OF WORLD MISSIONS

MEMO FROM WORLD MISSIONS

This is to introduce to you an information sheet that we plan to send periodically to all district NWMS presidents and district superintendents, and to all pastors who request this MEMO.

The purpose of the MEMO FROM WORLD MISSIONS is to furnish our districts and pastors with information concerning furloughing missionaries, approved special projects, and approved tours to the various mission fields.

Please advise us if you would care to be on the permanent mailing list to receive our MEMO FROM WORLD MISSIONS. Please address your request to Department of World Missions, 6401 The Paseo, Kansas City, Mo. 64131.



Dr. Samuel Young writes with depth and clarity about the basic issues of Christian stewardship. This new book contains terse statements that are characteristic of Dr. Young's writing. Many fine quotations will be found in this text. It will help us be better stewards and better Christians.

Denomination-wide Study
February—March, 1975

Unit 113.1a, "Christian Stewardship"

Text: Giving and Living

See page 16 I for registration blank.

O Saviour, I pray . . .

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People react more to a pastor's attitude than to his message

The Power of the Positive

By Warren Foxworthy*

Pastor, when you step into the pulpit, walk into that hospital room, minister from behind the counseling desk, what do the people you are dealing with feel? What kind of vibrations do they receive?

Why is it that contact with some men leaves people breathless and awed, while contact with other men leaves them untouched and unmoved? Why is it that when some men rise to speak, a charge of excitement pulsates through the meeting place, anticipation hangs like clouds in the air?

It is the power of the positive that draws the line of separation between the nominal pastor and the extraordinary man of God. The ability to be positive in the midst of troubled board meetings, in times of personal and interpersonal conflict, in circumstances that are threatening, is an unusual but an attainable trait.

Let us face the truth squarely. Preaching is more than skin-deep. Many books are currently being offered that would help a pastor to be a positive preacher. However, more basic than being a positive preacher is being a positive person. A positive message is surely an outgrowth of a positive attitude.

Remember, pastor, your people react more to your general attitude than they do to your message if the two are consistent. Your cry for a positive movement of your church toward victory may be either enhanced and enlivened by your own buoyant outlook or dulled by a deep-seated, personal negativism. If you want to teach your people to love, give them affection. If you want to help them to have confidence, give them encouragement. If you want them to be generous, share. If you want them to be truthful, tell the truth. If you want them to be patient, be tolerant. If you want them to be happy, give them understanding. And if you would have them be winners rather than losers, warriors rather than quitters, accentuate the positive in your own life and ministry.

The size of your church is not the important thing. Many big men pastor small churches. Rather it is what you make of your given assignment. The truth remains that many small churches have blossomed into spiritual empires because of a positive preacher.

That is the power of the positive and it works—for you!

*Pastor, First Church of the Nazarene, Norfolk, Va.

The Facts About Pastors' Wives

Part Four: The Pastor's Wife Person to Person

ALTHOUGH PASTORS' WIVES do not think of themselves as counselors, they systematically have several persons, usually four or five, who seek them out each week for personal help. These persons who come are almost exclusively women of the congregation. However, pastors' wives with less education and under 35 reported more than one of each 10 persons who comes to them for help is a man. About 30 percent of the visitors are single, and the rest married. None of these statistics is surprising.

However, it is surprising to find only 1 percent of the persons visiting pastors' wives under 35 is a senior citizen, while 22 percent of the visitors to women over 50 years of age is a senior citizen. Older people like to counsel with other older people, it seems.

More than twice as many teenagers go to pastors' wives under 35, in churches of more than 150 members, than to any other group. The same tendency holds for young adults. Level of education does not seem to matter. This must mean that most people who seek out a pastor's wife for help choose someone they believe identifies with their age and status. And the quality of the person

is more important than her formal education.

The response in person is the same as the response on the phone as it relates to the level of serious problems brought to pastors' wives. Younger pastors' wives tend to see parishioners' problems as less serious than older women. And women with less education see most of the problems as "not very serious," while college women have more than twice the proportion of "very serious" problems as do other pastors' wives. The same proportions hold for wives in churches under 50 members as those above 50. All of this must mean that more experience, more education, and the larger size of church bring greater confidence, and thus more serious problems, to the pastor's wife.

Although health was a serious problem brought on the phone, it gave way to home and family as a serious problem to be discussed in person. Some choices are less definite. The three problems dealt with most in person-to-person ministry are in order as follows:

1. Emotional and spiritual
2. Church-related problems
3. Home and family

And again the response to these

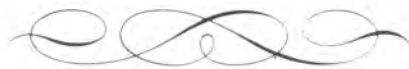
persons who need help is predictable, as follows, in order:

1. Try to listen and understand.
2. Try to get them to talk to my husband.
3. Straighten them out.
4. Refer them to a professional counselor.

In conclusion, pastors' wives do not seem to have the same level of "enjoyment" in person-to-person ministry as they do on the phone, though the difference may not be significant.

This may be because the wives feel the phone is more their place, while person-to-person help is more the domain of their pastor-husbands. A greater proportion rejected the person-to-person ministry as "not their obligation" than rejected the telephone ministry.

Without exception all of the wives see the "general attitude toward people who came in person" as positive. Pastors' wives must be good people who want to help others to the extent of their ability.



About the Books You Read—

Recently in a group where we were sharing books that had been helpful, our leader impressed me with this statement: "I never read a book with the idea of trying to analyze or criticize it. I always say as I open a new book, 'Now, Jesus, what do You have to say to me from this book?' That's my attitude. I look for that which the Lord has for me and my needs, and just let the rest slide off."

Sometimes we find something that really speaks to a need in our lives, then discover the writer to be of some other theological persuasion than our own, so toss it all out. Understandably, we are careful about giving new or immature Christians books which might confuse or detour them. But as preachers' wives, we can lift out so many "nutmeats" and reserve them. When I read a worthwhile book, I make it mine. It is usually so underlined, scribbled, and indexed that it's hardly fit to loan. I try to type out those portions which speak to me, or I feel will be useful.

Most recently I read a new book, *Stop Playing Pious Games*, by Jo Kimmel (Abingdon Press, 1974. cloth, \$3.95). The author is director of family devotional life for the *Upper Room*. The book deals with problems like being honest with God, judging others, escapism.

One chapter I thought to be particularly helpful was titled "Grow Where You're Planted" and dealt with the "if only" game. If only my husband . . . If only I were in better health . . . If only we lived . . . "Everything would be all right if someone else or something would change." Many have discovered "that they can grow just where they're planted, in the very soil of relationships and situations that they'd complained about before. . . . But as long as you put the blame anywhere but on yourself, you're going to lack the life that's available to you to grow and to produce fruit"—*right where you are planted!* You cut yourself off from the Vine when you grow discontented with your circumstances.

Next time you start a new book, pause first and ask, "Jesus, what do You have for me in this book?"

—Kathryn Johnson

Women were first at the cradle and last at the cross of Jesus. He gave them His forgiveness and His respect.

Women Are a Part of the Body of Christ

By Jeanelle Call*

THE VISION OF MEN and women as co-sharers of God's grace and co-workers in Christ's kingdom is timely for this Sunday which features the lay people of the church.

Christianity is a public matter, not something to be hidden away. Jesus wants His good news to spread. He has clearly spoken against burying talents and hiding one's light under a bushel. As Christian laywomen, we need to reevaluate our roles, talents, and expectations. Here is a task of eternal significance, because we are engaged in God's business and not just our own. As followers of Christ, we want our lights to shine brightly for our Lord and not be smothered by a bushel marked "woman's place."

We have a ready source of instruction, of reference, and example in our Bible that will prepare us at every point, and equip us to do good to others and to ourselves.

God created both male and female in His own image, and gave them joint dominion over the earth. Woman, at creation, was given the same honor, privileges, and responsibilities as man. God intended companionship between men and women as equal moral and intelligent beings, alike in their dignity and worth before God.

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The lives of more than 50 women, who were in the foreground of God's history, are recorded in the Bible. There was Miriam, Deborah, the prophetess Hulda, Priscilla, Phoebe, and Lydia, to name a few, who did not remain docilely behind the scene, serving in silence. These women had public ministries and duties. They had been guided by God to undertake such responsibilities. The lives of these women furnish so varied a range of spiritual excellence that no one can fail to find in them an abundance of spiritual profit. Each of these women—be she queen or prophetess, saint or former sinner, active or contemplative—achieved in very different circumstances her own particular spiritual triumph. Each meets a different challenge, and manifests the spiritual qualities required to answer the challenge in her own special circumstance. Their lives furnish us with a catalogue of widely ranging virtues—love, dedication, piety, fortitude, loyalty, repentance, wisdom, faith, and zeal for God's religion.

Jesus treated men and women followers equally during His earthly ministry. Perhaps it is no wonder that the women were first at the cradle and last at the Cross. They had never known a man like Jesus. A Prophet and Teacher who never nagged at them, never flattered, or

coaxed, or patronized. Who rebuked without condescension; who never mapped out their spheres for them, never urged them to be feminine, or jeered at them for being female. Who took them as He found them. Who made them know they were important to Him.

There is no act, no sermon, no parable in the whole gospel that borrows its pungency from female perversity; nobody could possibly guess from the words and deeds of Jesus that there was anything "funny" about woman's nature.

I would like to refer to three women of the New Testament—women who were in far different spheres of living.

Mary Magdalene was one of the devoted women who followed Jesus and ministered to Him. Scripture identifies her as one who had been cleansed of evil spirits. "Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils." Simon, the Pharisee, objected to Jesus' attitude toward this woman, a public sinner. In Simon's view, Jesus should have nothing to do with her. In reply, Jesus contrasted the sinful woman's deep affection with Simon's frigid hospitality. "Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little." Mary had turned from her sin to Jesus, and loved Him deeply thereafter. To Mary Magdalene was granted one of Jesus' greatest privileges—the first recorded appearance after His resurrection. This proves the depth of Jesus' forgiveness. He does not ask us what we have been in the past. He knows that, and He will forgive.

Martha, often remembered as the woman who complained to Jesus, should be remembered for another reason. She was a most conscientious and worthy woman, and Jesus loved

her. During His ministry on earth, the response He most yearned for was faith. Martha made one of the most earnest professions of faith recorded in the gospel. At the time of Lazarus' death, Jesus revealed to her that He is the Resurrection and the Life; whoever believes in Him, even though dead, shall live. He asked Martha, "Believest thou this?" Without a moment's delay, she professed her belief and declared, "I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world." Above all, she was a woman of faith—one of the few who declared, unservedly, that Jesus is the Son of God.

Lydia was a successful and influential businesswoman of Philippi. But more than that, she was a seeker after truth, and thus became Europe's first convert. It took a fervency of spirit, deep humility, keen foresight, and courage for Lydia to accept the story of the new gospel. Without hesitation she made her decision to follow Christ. Lydia became a great spiritual leader who helped Paul spread the gospel. She will always stand among the immortal women of the Bible, for she picked up that first torch from Paul and carried it steadfastly.

We want to share with Lydia the spreading of the gospel. As women, whether we have found our sphere in a business career, as a professional calling, or as a homemaker, we have almost unlimited opportunities to share our faith with others.

Most of all, we want to share with Mary Magdalene and Martha, to know that our sins are forgiven and forgotten by Jesus. We want to say to Jesus, "I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God," not because we have read it in the Bible, not because we have heard it from the pulpit, but because Jesus himself has revealed it to us personally.

The new Christian, like any baby, has certain basic needs that must be met if he is to develop to spiritual maturity.

Follow-up Evangelism

By Paul Lorenzen*

Part III—Today's Need

JESUS' ANSWER to Nicodemus in John 3:1-8 was that one needed to be "born again" to "see the kingdom of God" (to become a Christian). In 1 Pet. 2:2, young Christians are likened to "newborn babes." Paul refers to Timothy and his other converts as his children. John calls the Christians to whom he writes "little children" (1 John 2:1). Throughout the New Testament, new Christians are thought of as spiritual babies or infants.

As such, they need to be cared for, nurtured, loved, and protected. The spiritual infant needs parental care in the same manner that the physical infant does. As Waylon B. Moore has stated so well:

Babies do not grow automatically; they must have good care and training. When children are born into the physical world, God's plan is that each should have two parents. Most newborn children of God do not have even one spiritual foster father or mother who will give them parental care. It is unnatural and unhealthy for a new Christian to have to spend years in church without any consistent individual training outside a group situation. Neglected children usually become delinquent, and neglect of spiritual parental care is one reason we have

thousands of delinquent members on our church rolls.

A child needs to be led into a life of maturity over a period of time by careful and loving discipline if he is to become a good citizen. In the same way, a person's fruitfulness for Christ is almost always in proportion to the consistency and maturity of the spiritual parental care he has received. It is God's will that all believers should become mature. Follow-up will develop spiritual maturity in the church membership.*

As an infant, the new Christian has certain basic needs that must be met for him to grow to spiritual maturity. They are basically the same needs as for a physical baby. These needs have been well defined by Moore as (1) the need for love: "Christlike love is to be the foundation of all attempts to give parental care to spiritual babies"; (2) the need for nourishment—as a physical baby needs physical food, so the spiritual baby needs the proper spiritual diet; (3) the need for protection—"One of the major duties of a spiritual parent is to teach his child how to meet temptation with the Word of God"; (4) the need for training—"Walking in victory and witnessing for Christ com-

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*Waylon B. Moore, *New Testament Follow-up for Pastors and Laymen*, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. Used by permission.

prise the New Testament objectives of the training of new believers" (Moore, pp. 24-27).

Without a well-executed, personal follow-up effort given to the spiritual infant, the chances that the new Christian will develop and become a spiritually mature person are greatly reduced. There are some new Christians who are able to have these needs satisfied to a certain extent without a great deal of personal attention. These are able to grow because of the principle of the "survival

of the fittest" concept. They happen to be strong enough to develop on their own. This kind of new Christian is rare, though, and there are many more who are not able to find the nurture, care, love, and attention needed for development. Without spiritual parental care, they become spiritually stunted in their growth and usually become a liability rather than an asset to Christ and the church. It is this majority of new spiritual babes who need careful and prayerful follow-up.

THE

STARTING POINT



By C. NEIL STRAIT

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

Formula for Living

HERE'S FOOD for thought from a noted source, Earl Nightingale: "If you learned this was your last day to live and you were asked to write a formula for living to leave to your children, what would you write? What would you say to give them a wise and true course to follow for the rest of their lives?" (Earl Nightingale, "What Would You Tell Your Child?" *Success Unlimited*, April, 1974, p. 20.)

Consider Nightingale's thoughts and Deuteronomy 6. At least three questions present themselves: What must be said? What authority would you give? What examples would you cite?

Second thoughts about an atheist

The Greek word for *atheist* is *atheos*, meaning "without God."

We have used the term *atheist* to define those who deny that God exists.

Charles Whiston, in his book, *Pray: A Study of Distinctively Christian Praying*, says: "Whenever and wherever we live with no conscious reference to God, then we are living atheistic lives" (p. 114).

Let the Son shine in

Reuben Welch has written a delightful book, *We Really Do Need Each Other*. Listen to what he says in reference to 1 John 1:7. "To walk

in the light is to walk with the roof of my life open to the shining of God. . . . Open up the ceiling and let the Son shine in" (Impact Books, p. 56).

Any preacher, with a little study, can run a long way with a start like this.

A new cure

The Septuagint renders Ps. 37:4 in this way: "Indulge thyself with delight in the Lord, and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart."

If the Christian were to indulge himself with delight in the Lord, it would solve a lot of things—from the material impulse to spiritual indifference.

An indulgence in the Lord would do something for a man's material needs. It would rearrange his priorities, and it would reshape his attitudes toward things, opportunities, and people.

There's enough in this verse to generate a revival. Feast on it awhile.

When men touch Christ

In Mark 5:25-34 is the story of the woman touching the hem of Christ's garment and being healed. It puts one to wondering. What might happen to careers, to churches, to homes, to lives, to marriages—to a host of

crises—if people would but reach out and touch the healing of Christ?

This beautiful story ends with these words: "Your faith has made you well" (RSV).*

Jesus always writes a good ending to the tragic experiences of life, where men reach up out of their crises and touch the hem of His garment. Where there is the touch of Christ, and a bit of faith, there healing is taking place.

The new birth

In Gabriel Marcel's diary, there is a thrilling entry. "I have no more doubts. This morning's happiness is miraculous. For the first time I have clearly experienced grace. A terrible thing to say, but it is so. I am hemmed in at last by Christianity—in, fathoms deep. Happy to be so! . . . feel I am stammering childishly . . . this is indeed a birth. Everything is different." (Quoted by David Redding, *God Is Up to Something*, Word Books, 1972, pp. 144-45).

What a comment about the new birth! Refreshing and revealing!

The new birth is man's clearly experiencing grace, opening life to it, and letting its transformation blow into every corner of life.

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



Mine Not to Reason Why

Mine not to reason why
Unanswered seem my prayers.
Mine not to try to shun
The load my sad heart bears.
Mine not to borrow from
Tomorrow's rainbow bright,
E'en though the day be dark
And ever long the night.

Mine to believe His Word,
To trust, to seek, to pray;
Follow where'er He leads,
For He will point the way.
Then when His will is done,
His plan is made complete,
Joys will abound again,
While resting at His feet.

Mary Lou Johnson

IN THE STUDY

Meditating with the Master in Matthew

October 6

SIGNS OF THE SECOND COMING (24:3)

SCRIPTURE: Matt. 24:1-14, (NIV)*

INTRODUCTION: The only long discourse of Jesus that is given in all three Synoptic Gospels is the Olivet Discourse. And its subject is the Second Coming. This is very significant. It shows that both Christ and the Early Church considered His return to be of supreme importance.

The occasion of this discourse is described in the first three verses of our scripture lesson. As Jesus was leaving the Temple, His disciples called His attention to its beautiful buildings. The sanctuary building itself was about 150 feet high, with glistening marble walls and a gilded dome. The disciples were proud of it.

Then Jesus made a shattering announcement (v. 2). A little later, when He was sitting on the Mount of Olives overlooking the Temple area, the disturbed disciples came to Him. "Tell us, when will this happen?" they asked. But they also went on to ask a further twofold

*From the *New International Version*, copyright 1973 by the New York Bible Society International. Used by permission. (NIV)



By Ralph Earle

Professor of New Testament
Nazarene Theological Seminary
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question: "What will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?" The Olivet Discourse, so-called because given on the Mount of Olives, is Jesus' answer.

I. FALSE CHRISTS (v. 5)

Josephus, the famous Jewish historian of the first century, says that the revolt against Rome in A.D. 66 was due to messianic expectations. This resulted in the destruction of Jerusalem and its Temple in A.D. 70. Bar-Cochba was heralded as Messiah in A.D. 132. When he was overthrown three years later, the Holy City was destroyed again. This time the Romans turned it into a Gentile city, Aelia Capitolina, and said that no Jew could ever enter it from that time on. But the Roman Empire disappeared, and after all these centuries Jerusalem is once more the capital of Israel!

Today we have more false messiahs. Probably Maharaj Ji is the latest example.

II. WARS AND RUMORS OF WARS (v. 6)

There have been wars in every generation and century since Christ spoke these words. But these have increased in intensity and frequency as time has gone by.

Soon after 1925, some Harvard historians conducted a research and came out with the statement that the first quarter of the twentieth century was the bloodiest quarter-century of human history. That included the First World War. But what about the second quarter, with World War II? And in the third quarter the United States fought the longest war in its history. One is constrained to ask this question: In spite of the present talk of "peace in our generation," is it not pos-

sible that the last quarter of this century may be the bloodiest yet? We are warned in the New Testament: "While people are saying, 'Peace and safety,' destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape" (1 Thess. 5:3).

III. FAMINES AND EARTHQUAKES (v. 7b)

Again we must admit that these have occurred in every century. But we call attention to the fact that these, like wars and rumors of wars, have increased in intensity and frequency in our day. Of this there can be no question. One thinks of the Japanese earthquake in 1923 that destroyed nearly 100,000 lives and over half a million homes.

Verse 8 says: "All these are the beginning of sorrows" (KJV). But the Greek says, "All these are the beginning of birth pains." The Jews used to talk about "the birth pangs of the messianic age." That is what the troubles at the end of this age will be.

IV. WORLD EVANGELIZATION (v. 14)

Only in our generation have we seen the gospel preached to "all nations." If we take the term *nation* in its usual sense, we can say that the gospel has been preached to all nations, even though not to all tribes. Such countries as Tibet and Nepal have been opened to Christianity only within the last 10 or 20 years. We have a right to expect Christ to come at any time, for He said "and then the end will come."

Meanwhile missionaries, national workers, and Wycliffe Translators are keeping busily occupied until He comes. And we should join them by personal witnessing where we are.

October 13

SIGNS OF THE END (24:27)

SCRIPTURE: Matt. 24:15

INTRODUCTION: One of the important principles of biblical interpretation is what is called the telescopic principle of prophecy. This means that many, if not most, of the predictions in the Old Testament had a nearer, partial fulfillment in the general period of the prophet but a

final, complete fulfillment in connection with Christ—at His first or second coming, or both.

Applied to the Olivet Discourse, it means that many of the signs Jesus mentioned had a partial fulfillment in connection with the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, but also look forward to the end of this age for their final fulfillment. It is not a case of either/or but of both/and. This approach solves many problems.

I. THE ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION (vv. 15-22)

What we have just said applies meaningfully to this sign that was first mentioned in Daniel (9:27; 11:31; 12:11). It had its initial fulfillment in the Jewish war against the Romans (A.D. 66-70). Josephus said that Daniel's prediction referred to a tragic event that took place during the final siege of Jerusalem. The militant Zealots accused the leading Jews of being too "soft" with the Romans, and killed many of them in the Temple courts. This spilling of their brothers' blood in the sacred place Josephus said was the abomination that caused Jerusalem to be made desolate in A.D. 70, and the Temple destroyed.

At any rate, the Christian Jews in Jerusalem remembered Jesus' word of warning. Eusebius in his *Eccelesiastical History* (A.D. 326) tells us that, before the Romans tightened the siege to prevent all escape, the Christians fled down the Jericho Road, crossed the Jordan River to its east side, and then went far northward to Pella. That became the center of Jewish Christianity for the second century.

The Book of Revelation discloses what the abomination of desolation will be at the close of this age. It will be the setting up of the image of the Antichrist in the Holy City (Rev. 13:14-15).

II. FALSE PROPHETS (vv. 23-27)

There never were so many false sects calling themselves Christian as we have now. Even some of "the elect" are being deceived and led astray. Some say that Christ is already here.

But we are told that His second coming will be sudden, like a flash of lightning across the sky. So we must wait until the true event.

III. THE CARCASS AND THE VULTURES (v. 28)

George D. Watson wrote about *God's Eagle Saints*. He said that the carcass here is the body of Christ, to which all the eagle saints will gather at the Second Coming.

But he was wrong on two points. The Greek word for *carcass* means a fallen body, and so a dead body. And *eagles* means vultures.

John Wesley said the meaning was that the Jewish nation was "already before God a dead carcass, which the Roman eagles will devour." Adam Clarke agreed. And doubtless this may have been a partial fulfillment.

Langue gives us the application to the end of this age: "At last the judgment will extend to the whole morally corrupt and spiritually dead world." This ties in with what we find described as "the great supper of God" (Rev. 19:17). It will be a terrible time of destruction.

October 20

THE REVIVAL OF ISRAEL (24:32-33)

SCRIPTURE: Matt. 24:29-35

INTRODUCTION: The signs of the return of Christ are both negative and positive, and we find both in the scripture lesson we have just read. The negative signs are the increasing darkness and distress morally and spiritually. The positive sign is the revival of Israel.

I. DARKNESS AND DISTURBANCE (v. 29)

The question has often been debated as to whether the language of this verse, and of similar passages in 2 Peter and Revelation, should be taken literally or figuratively. We know that apocalyptic language is usually characterized by signs and symbols. But in this atomic age we realize that there may be greater catastrophes in nature than we had hitherto envisioned.

II. THE SIGN OF THE SON OF MAN (vv. 30-31)

What is meant by this phrase? We cannot give a dogmatic answer. Some have thought that there will be a visible sign in the sky, perhaps a mammoth cross.

The Greek may be an appositional genitive: the sign which is the Son of Man (cf. Dan. 7:13).

At His coming His own people will be gathered "from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other"—that is, from all directions and distances.

III. THE LESSON OF THE FIG TREE (vv. 32-34)

"Now learn this lesson from the fig tree: As soon as its twigs get tender and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near" (v. 32, NIV). It has often been pointed out that the fig tree is a symbol of the nation of Israel. So when Israel comes to life again, the time of Christ's return is nearing. ("It is near" can just as accurately be translated "He is near")

All our lives we have been told that before the second coming of Christ the Jews would return to their Promised Land and set up their own nation. At the close of the First World War, after General Allenby had taken Jerusalem from the Turks, the British government issued the Balfour Declaration, permitting the Jews to return to Palestine. It seemed that the buds of prophecy were beginning to appear.

Then came a freeze—a white paper that practically closed immigration. But in November, 1947, the United Nations passed a resolution favoring the establishment of a Jewish homeland in Palestine. On May 14, 1948, the British Mandate ended, and the State of Israel came into being that very day. Today Israel occupies all of Palestine (since 1967), and nearly 3 million Jews are living in the Promised Land.

October 27

THE SUDDENNESS OF THE SECOND COMING (24:44)

SCRIPTURE: Matt. 24:36-51

INTRODUCTION: Across the years there have been many speculations as to exactly when Christ might come. Some people have even set precise dates. In so doing they have rejected Jesus' specific statement in v. 36. They have earned the em-

barrassment that came as a result of their folly.

I. THE DAYS OF NOAH (vv. 37-39)

There was nothing wrong about the things mentioned in v. 38. The sin of the people was that of ignoring God and rejecting His warning through Noah. And that is the common sin today. People may be living good lives outwardly and yet be totally unprepared for the coming of Christ.

II. WATCH AND BE READY (vv. 42-44)

Because we do not know when Christ will come, we must be ready at all times. The keynote of the Olivet Discourse is found in these verses. The signs are interesting and important. But the essential thing is to watch and be ready.

The basic meaning of the Greek verb for "watch" is "keep awake," and so, "Keep on the alert"! That is what we must do at all times if we are going to be ready for Christ's return.

III. THE FAITHFUL SERVANT (vv. 45-51)

Christ has given each one of us a task to do for Him. We must be faithful all the time, every day, if we are going to be ready for His return. If He comes and finds us unfaithful and unready, we shall suffer the awful fate described in v. 51.



In the Spirit

SCRIPTURE: Phil. 2:1-9

I. MEDITATION IN THE SPIRIT (vv. 1-2)

"If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels [compassion] and mercies, fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind."

II. UNITY IN THE SPIRIT (v. 2b)

"... likeminded . . . one accord . . . one mind."

III. UNSELFISHNESS IN THE SPIRIT (v. 4)

"Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others."

IV. HUMILITY IN THE SPIRIT (v. 8)—By example

"He humbled himself."

V. EXALTATION BY THE SPIRIT (v. 9)—By example

"God also hath highly exalted him."

The Name of Jesus

SCRIPTURE: Phil. 2:10-13

I. POWER IN THE NAME OF JESUS (v. 10)

"... every knee should bow . . ."

II. PROFESSION OF THE NAME OF JESUS (v. 11)

"... every tongue should confess."
(If done now, it is done willingly; then, compulsion.)

III. PERSONAL ACCOUNT TO THAT NAME (v. 12)

"Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling."

IV. PLEASURE THROUGH THAT NAME (v. 13)

"For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure."

ED IRWIN

The Lukewarm Church

SCRIPTURE: Rev. 3:14-22

TEXT: Rev. 3:20

INTRODUCTION:

1. In the first three chapters are seven letters from Jesus Christ himself.

2. These are addressed to the seven leaders of seven churches in Asia Minor.

3. Laodicea was once a thriving city having much wealth, commerce, and trade.

4. Also once a center of religious faith with a strong Christian church. Paul had

written letters to them and asked that letters to Ephesus be exchanged with them and read.

5. They were guilty of tragic compromise. Their greatest was obviously in their devotion to God.

6. Our age has been called by many the seventh, last, or Laodicean period in the history of the Christian Church.

7. That being true, it makes this letter from our Lord, infinitely more personal. It means it is addressed to you and to me as a warning at _____ Church in _____ (city), in _____ (date). Let us read it again in that way:

I. CHRIST TELLS US OUR SPIRITUAL CONDITION—"Lukewarm" (v. 16).

- A. "... neither cold nor hot" (v. 16)
- B. A wish for one or the other (v. 15)
- C. "I will spue thee out of my mouth" (v. 16).

II. HE NOTES OUR UNAWARENESS OF THIS SPIRITUAL CONDITION (v. 17).

"Thou sayest"—

- A. "I am rich . . ."
- B. "Increased with goods . . ."
- C. "Have need of nothing;
"And knowest not that thou art"—
- D. "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked."

III. HE GIVES US COUNSEL FOR A CORRECTIVE TO THIS CONDITION.

- A. "Buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich" (v. 18).
- B. "... white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear."
- C. "Anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see."
- D. "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent" (v. 19).
- E. "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." (This opening of door spoken to whole church)
- F. "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne" (v. 21).

ED IRWIN



God loves you every moment;
He never takes time out.
He hears your smallest whisper
As clearly as a shout.
His tenderness goes deeper
Than we can understand.
He loves you, and your future
Rests firmly in His hand.

—Selected

Certain Proof

"Mother," said a young lady noted for her troublesome ways, "what am I going to do about John? He refuses to believe in the existence of a personal devil."

"Well, dear," the mother said, "don't bother him too much about it now. I'll come and spend a few days with you next month, and I'm sure that, between the two of us, we can convince him."

To realize the worth of the anchor,
we need to feel the storm.

The love of Jesus should shine through us like sunshine through a pane of glass, so that people would say, not, "What a beautiful pane of glass!" but rather, "What a beautiful day!"

If there is righteousness in the heart,
there will be beauty in the character.
If there is beauty in the character,
there will be harmony in the home.
If there is harmony in the home,
there will be order in the nation.
If there is order in the nation,
there will be peace in the world.

—Selected



HERE AND THERE

AMONG BOOKS



Conducted by the Editor

All books reviewed may be ordered from
Nazarene Publishing House, Box 527, Kansas City, Mo. 64141

HIDE OR SEEK?

By Dr. James Dobson (Fleming H. Revell, 1974; 159 pp., cloth, \$4.95)

Parents, teachers, all who are involved with youth will want to read this perceptive analysis of the epidemic of inferiority raging among our children. How do we counteract the false value-system of our society which places undue emphasis on good looks and high intelligence?

Dr. James Dobson, author of the best-selling *Dare to Discipline*, believes that "there are ways to teach a child of his genuine significance, regardless of the shape of his nose, the size of his ears, or the efficiency of his mind." And he outlines these very effective strategies in this book.

One regional director of special education plans to have all his teachers read this book.

This book is psychologically sound without using all the psychology jargon, and includes a fine Christian witness.

Do you want your child to HIDE behind feelings of inferiority or to SEEK the best life has to offer?

When the Ceiling Is Zero

By Robert D. Foster (Moody Press, 1974; 160 pp., paperback, \$1.95)

Here is one of the finest devotional books I have ever read. It is written especially for men. The author deals with the subjects and issues that confront every man. He deals with such issues as depres-

sion, money, honesty, and morality. He bases his thought on Job, Isaiah, Psalms, Proverbs and Ecclesiastes.

The title, *When the Ceiling Is Zero*, is considered throughout the book, and men are shown that, at the worst times of their lives, the low ceiling does not limit God.

PAUL NEAL

We Have This Ministry

By Leonard Griffith (Word Books, 1973; 122 pp., cloth, \$3.95)

This book is exceptional in its perspective for the ministry of the Church of Jesus Christ in today's world. I believe it to be a clear exposition of the central issues with clear examples for the Church in today's society. The book is constituted by a series of sermons given in a lecture-ship which has attracted a line of distinguished clergymen of our day. It will bring a clearer perspective of the Christian ministry to all who read it.

DONALD W. HALL

Divorce and Remarriage: A Perspective for Counseling

By John R. Martin. (Herald Press, 1974; 136 pp., \$4.95)

Martin shows how one can absolutely oppose divorce, and believe that it rarely solves problems, without becoming harsh and critical of those caught in its tragedy.

As a Mennonite, Martin writes from a conservative theological perspective with-

in a group which has traditionally opposed divorce. He examines the biblical evidence as well as the social situation, and tries to give guidance to ministers who seem caught in the middle of a hopeless situation.

He concludes that, while one should do all possible to solve problems short of divorce, he cannot live as if the evil did not exist. In counseling, a pastor should help orient those who have been divorced and forgiven to the future without excluding him from the Church. In working with couples on the verge of divorce, he urges going beyond Rogers' client-centered approach and actively engaging in suggesting and working out solutions.

The book certainly has deficiencies. It is, however, something which addresses a pressing need and may help some pastors with counseling ministries.

The Twelve Who Walked in Galilee

By Woodrow W. Smith (Revell, 1974; 128 pp., cloth, \$3.95)

This book offers much background material on each of the 12 disciples. The author first preached these messages as a series in the church where he was pastor. After that time, he developed them into what is now this book.

It is well written, has good content, develops interest in each disciple, and would make a good source-book for any minister's library. Pastors could use the material presented here as background material for a series of sermons on the 12 disciples.

PHIL RILEY

DON'T SIT ON THE BED!

William C. Justice (Broadman Press, 1974; 64 pp., paper, \$1.95)

This book is exactly what it is represented to be, a handbook for visiting the sick. I found it to be very readable in that it moves along rapidly without skipping over necessary concepts so fast as to leave the reader without sufficient details. I would recommend it for reading for all new pastors or those without much experience in hospital visitation in particular.

DONALD W. HALL

Understanding Mental Illness

By Nancy C. Andreasen (Augsburg, 1974; 110 pp., paper, \$2.95)

This is a very interesting work on a subject where help is always welcome. It is well written. The author does not go into too much technical description, but uses a basic, elementary approach—telling “what” and “how to deal with” as well as some “religious” information. It deals adequately with a section on the problem of evil. Although the author makes no claim to be a theologian, she does a fair job.

The book may be of little value theologically, but is certainly helpful in understanding human behavior. It would be profitable for ministers and Sunday school teachers. The book makes good use of case studies, testimonies, and illustrations.

HUGH SMITH

My Third Reader's Notebook

By Gerald Kennedy (Abingdon, 1974; 208 pp., cloth, \$7.95)

As Churchill apparently said, “My tastes are simple; I like only the best.” This book is it—a writer's and preacher's dream. I wish I had his first and second—this is the third and probably, he says, the last.

While it is illustrations and gleanings intended for the preacher, the book would be of great value to the well-educated, reading man. Most of the illustrations are from secular sources. They are wonderful seed thoughts for a writer. The average preacher may consider the price too high for its value to him.

E. STENBOCK

A Charismatic Approach to Social Action

By Larry Christenson (Bethany Fellowship, 1974; 122 pp., \$3.95)

Christenson believes both Evangelicals and social activists have failed to find an adequately Christian approach to social issues. Evangelicals have so emphasized individual salvation that frequently they have ignored social problems, and even been a part of oppressive institutions. Social activists have frequently devised

programs along lines established by humanitarians or alleged experts without concern for the direction of the Holy Spirit.

By a "charismatic approach" Christenson means allowing the Holy Spirit to determine when and how a believer should become involved in social issues. He thinks we are all "social activists" by virtue of living in our world; the question is how we will touch and transform it. To gain direction, he contends we need to open our minds and hearts to the Holy Spirit, who will direct us in new and creative ways.

Basically, Christenson thinks the most effective social work is done through building the Church. As a genuine community of believers is established, manifesting New Testament *koinonia*, the social issues of our time will be addressed and alleviated. "The most essential service which the church offers to the world is that of *example*" (p. 103).

The book is readable and takes a position of social concern without abandoning the New Testament Way.

Preachers' Exchange



FOR SALE—A pastor's library of 2,000 volumes; many holiness classics.—R. C. Johnson, 26036 Carlisle Dr., Mt. Clemens, Mich. 48043.

WANTED—Copy of *The Sermon, Its Homeletical Construction*, by R. C. H. Lenski, published by Baker, 1968 reprint, original in 1927.—Rev. Edward Stovall, 2140 Robert, Granite City, Ill. 62040.

WANTED—*Twice Born Men*—Dale E. Hilkert, 6219 Chestnut St., Painesville, Ohio 44077.

WANTED—Copy of the *Nazarene Preacher* magazine, April, 1970, issue.—Gene A. Haynes, 1218 E. 5th, Lacon, Ill. 61540.

COMING
next month

● **Think Thankfully**

Jesus "took the cup, and gave thanks"; by His help let us take ours, and think thankfully.

● **Christ's Prayer Life—Luxury or Necessity?**

The hours that the Son spent with the Father in prayer were absolutely indispensable if He was to fulfill His earthly task; and prayer is a necessity for the Christian today.

● **The Promise of Blessing**

Faith in Action—reports from two congregations of God's unusual blessings as a result of the public readings from the Book of Revelation.

● **The Cutting Edge**

While the world totters on the brink of destruction, this is no time to replace the power of the Holy Ghost with any of its substitutes.



AMONG OURSELVES

It is an unpleasant subject, any way you look at it, this problem of suicide. The average healthy, normal Christian has no idea how a person could be so depressed as to wish himself to be dead. Inconceivable! But the prophet Elijah felt this way languishing in the wilderness under his juniper tree. Many of the sermons preached from that portion of the Scriptures afford an opportunity for harsh criticism of Elijah and the displeasure of God toward such conduct. A different approach, perhaps needed more, is an attempt to understand what happens to people to bring them to such depths of human emotion; and better yet, how they can survive and be better for having overcome the experience through God's grace. In either case, a better understanding of the problem of suicide should enable today's pastor to meet any need of his congregation (p. 5). The view from Calvary, of course, is the clear view of this and all other problems. It comes to focus in Kenneth Dodge's article (p. 3). The pieces all seem to fit. Facing the problems rather than dodging them (p. 10), doing something creative in the church, even on Wednesday evening (p. 8), sensing the enthusiasm of a young pastor watching, almost like a spectator, as God works a few miracles and a small church grows (p. 13); and most important, the high office of preaching as a "change event" (p. 15). All of which makes our calling absolutely the most exciting challenge possible under heaven: "Do the work of an evangelist"!

Yours for souls,

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This warm and moving story by MABEL LANGEHOUGH portrays the effect Christ's birth has on one family. The innkeeper, allowing Mary and Joseph to stay in his stable, realizes a life-changing experience. Love and forgiveness found by his family result in their adopting three homeless children. Requires six men, two women, and three children. Performance time approximately 20 minutes. Minimum of 10 copies needed.

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CHRISTMAS PROGRAM BUILDER No. 27

Another collection of GRACE RAMQUIST'S fantastic ideas, better than ever. This complete guide includes five pages of music, four plays, readings, exercises, recitations, and new material to get the kids involved in the true meaning of Christmas. A rewarding source of work and timesaving material. Suggest minimum of three copies.

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