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—proclaiming Christian Holiness . . .

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DECEMBER, 1974

VOLUME 49 NUMBER 12

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Christmas and the Christian



CHRISTMAS IS A CHRISTIAN CELEBRATION!

That statement seems rather unnecessary, but it does need to be made, and it needs repeating. Christmas is slowly but certainly moving through times of change. It is in peril of losing its meaning. It could go the way of many other Christian festivals and become just one more occasion for thoughtless revelry and extravagant commercialization.

The apostolic admonition to the Roman Christians was "Be not conformed to this world" (Rom. 12:2). In J. B. Phillips' pungent style, this verse applies very directly to Christians today in their observance of Christmas. "Don't let the world around you squeeze you into its own mold."* Now, as never before, Christians need to heed this warning and be different. They must observe Christmas as Christians, rather than as other people on this planet who either do not believe in Christ or have never heard of Him.

The world has some strange ways of celebrating the birthday of our Lord. Liquor sales skyrocket as people prepare for plenty of drinks in all the variety of ways they can serve them. Having polluted their bloodstreams and inhibited their brainpower, they will go right ahead and climb into their automobiles to endanger their lives, and the lives of their victims, with drunken driving.

In America, more than 40,000 traffic accident deaths are recorded each year, and at least half that number have been attributed to driving while under the influence of alcohol. Alas, more of this happens during the Christmas season than at any other time of the year!

This is but one example of the kind of mold into which the Christian does not permit the world to squeeze him. And there are ways of maintaining his nonconformity that he has hardly realized.

Today's Christian can be different from the non-Christian world by letting Christmas joy saturate his spirit. If there is any season of the year when "the joy of the Lord is your strength," it should be when His birth is celebrated. The world seems to be missing this point completely.

*From *The New Testament in Modern English*, copyright © by J. B. Phillips, 1958. Used by permission of the Macmillan Co.

Watch their faces as they trudge grimly from store to store, hurrying to finish the shopping list. Hardly a smile anywhere, and not much notice of other persons. These human beings all around them are but a nuisance in the path, things to get in the way, and sources of impatience.

Sense the world's attitude toward the Christmas season, and wonder how they ever lost its true spirit. Clerks are inefficient and impertinent, the world seems to be muttering. You can't get good help these days. Prices are sky-high. What are we coming to? And look at this merchandise. It is as shoddy as it is expensive. It will likely fall apart before it is wrapped and delivered.

Furthermore, the world fumes, yearly taxes will soon be due to add to the misery of Christmas expense. This year they are higher than ever. Highway robbery, that's what it is!

Will today's Christian be squeezed into that mold?

He need not be. He must not be drawn into the secular spirit of the Christmas celebration. He can resist the impulse to go along with the crowd, missing the meaning of this glorious season. He can keep Christmas as a Christian celebration.

For one thing, the Christian can refuse to let Christmas coerce him into extravagant spending. Stewardship works here, as it works elsewhere. True, there are financial obligations during this season, but they need not be cumbersome and irksome to the point of destroying the spirit of joy. It is trite but true, the spirit of love makes the gift precious, not the price tag. The homemade sweater a grandmother knits is a delight to the recipient because he knows it was conceived and made with him in mind, every stitch an expression of love.

The Christian can "remind his face" that he is redeemed. Everybody around him may be glum, but he need not be. He can move about the street, through the shops, and among the crowds with a pleasant expression on his countenance. He might even smile as he drops a coin in the Salvation Army kettle. He is a child of the King, a sinner saved by grace, and a pilgrim traveling to a better world, and he can remember to act like it.

What better way to celebrate Christmas like a Christian than with a time for worship on that day of all days? One pastor always schedules a worship service in the church on Christmas Day. While some people believe families want to be together and no one would attend such a service, he goes ahead with one of the richest worship events of the year. There is an appropriate time for it—usually a vesper service in the late afternoon. It is not too long, just an hour. But there is special music, some of the finest that has been heard during the entire year. Families sit together in the sanctuary. The message is right to the point, and it sounds like good news. There is warmth and fellowship in the greetings of the members for one another as they leave.

The Christian need not permit himself to be squeezed into anyone's mold. He can, in more ways than he realizes, do his part to keep Christmas as the Christian celebration that it is. His song is:

*Joyful, all ye nations rise:
Join the triumph of the skies;
With th' angelic hosts proclaim,
"Christ is born in Bethlehem."*



After four centuries passed without any biblical revelation, God broke the silence and Jesus Christ was born in Bethlehem.



When God Broke the Silence of Four Hundred Years

By Joseph T. Larson*

FOR FOUR HUNDRED YEARS God had been silent before His people. There had been no written revelation from God during that period. Malachi had given God's final message of the Old Testament to Israel. It was God's challenge to Israel for holy living in view of the coming of Jesus Christ the Messiah.

During the 400 years of silence that followed this book, Israel had suffered much at the hands of Gentile rulers. Civil wars prevailed, and five Maccabean brothers aided Judea against much oppression. In 165 B.C., Judas Maccabaeus and his brothers gained possession of Jerusalem and rededicated the Temple. After the death of Judas Maccabaeus, Judea was again ruled by Jewish rulers under the Roman Empire. Civil war followed, and Jerusalem, with Judea, was conquered by Pompey in 63 B.C. Later Herod was made governor of Galilee.

After the death of Julius Caesar, Herod fled to Rome. While there, he was made king of the Jews. Upon returning, he conciliated the people by marrying Marianne, and appointed her brother, Aristobulus III, as high priest.

Jesus Christ, the promised Messiah and King, was born in Bethlehem. "For unto us a child is born, unto us

a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, the everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace" (Isa. 9:6).

God chose Mary, a virgin, to be the mother of the Son of God. His was a royal birth of ancient lineage with a divine mission to all the world. Christ's birth was in the flesh, an incarnation, but the Son of God came from heaven. Joseph was the legal husband of Mary, but God was the Father of Jesus Christ, the Child of Mary. She was with child before their marriage by supernatural conception of the Holy Spirit (Matt. 1:18-21).

There was no little stir that night in Bethlehem when Joseph and Mary arrived, "because there was no room for them in the inn" (Luke 2:7). Christ's birth fulfilled the prophecy of Micah: "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting" (5:2).

There were several witnesses of Christ's birth: the angels announced it, the shepherds saw Him, and the wise men came to worship Him, pre-

*Chaplain, Tucson, Ariz.

senting gifts of various kinds. Anna, the prophetess, praised God for His birth (Luke 2:36-38).

Simeon, a godly saint, came and took Jesus in his arms and blessed God, saying, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: for mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel" (Luke 2:29-32).

There was joy in heaven and earth as men and women gave glory to God in the highest. The Messiah had been born.

But Herod sought to slay Jesus. Herod believed that Christ was a rival for the throne of Judea. God warned Joseph and Mary in a dream to go into Egypt, where they remained until the death of Herod. Later they returned to Nazareth, where Jesus lived with them (Matt. 2:13-15). The silence had been broken by God.

Through Christ has come salvation with melody of song and music, filling hearts and homes through the centuries. This has become our Christmas season for almost 2,000 years.

Every Christmas is a confirmation of these events in the birth and life of Jesus Christ. He is God's final Word to the whole world, shouted over hill and plain, over radio stations, and by gospel workers over the whole earth. No more should God's people be silent about this great event. "Joy to the world, the Lord is come!"

Jesus Christ offers salvation to all who will trust in Him. As God broke the silence, He spoke words of life to all who would listen to Him. Real communion and fellowship has come to millions of people during almost 20 centuries. No one should allow anything else to supplant Christ's birth and its vital message to all nations. As obedient children of God, we must *break the silence*, proclaiming Him Lord of our lives.



The Sunday Evening Service

Have you ever wondered why or how the Sunday evening service was initiated into church life?

In the early part of the nineteenth century, many evangelical ministers were sensitive to the need of evangelizing the last man, woman, boy, and girl in their communities. They used any available device to make contact with unbelievers. In 1792, William Murdock developed a coal-gas light which was soon put into use in factories, stores, and public places. Because gas lights were yet too expensive to be used in the home, people flocked to buildings where this new invention made the room as "bright as day."

Clergymen were quick to take advantage of this new fad, and installed gas lights in their sanctuaries. They began Sunday evening services, attracting large audiences who were not interested in religion per se, and who did not attend Sunday morning services. Using the fad of the gas light, along with human curiosity, they were able to proclaim the redemptive message to people unreachable through other means.

MICHAEL SELLARS



That's Christmas

By Byron C. Ford*

Christmas is decorating the tree in an old-fashioned way—with popcorn and cranberries strung together.

Christmas is receiving packages with faraway postmarks—Indiana, Kentucky, Ohio, FPO, U.S.A.

Christmas is making gifts for loved ones and friends with our own hands. It is decorations not made in a factory on an assembly line.

Christmas is making candy, and date breads, and fruitcakes.

Christmas is meeting children at the airport, a hug, a kiss, a tear, the laughter of a grandchild.

Christmas is sending and receiving the greetings of friends afar, yet close for the holiday.

Christmas is shopping in busy stores, hurrying feet, shuffling of packages, tired arms, and cold noses.

Christmas is the little lady on the corner, or the blue-and-red-uniformed man of the Salvation Army, ringing their bells.

Christmas is the church play; the cantata; the treats of candy, nuts, and fruits.

Christmas is open house to our friends, a time to exchange our glad feelings.

Christmas is children begging to open the gifts under the tree, trying to guess what is in each wrapper of gold, red, blue, and green.

Christmas is a new dress, new shoes, or a new coat.

Christmas is a record player or radio sounding forth music of the newborn Saviour. It is a group of carollers going from door to door.

Christmas is a boy home from college; a phone call to loved ones.

Most of all, Christmas is a *story*—a story that tells of a shining star, a manger, a town called Bethlehem, angels, shepherds, a newborn Child called Jesus.

Without this story, there would be no reason—no reason at all—for all of the ideas mentioned above.

This is Christmas: "Mary . . . brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn. And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:5-11).

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It is when we are rushed that we get confused.
When we are confused, we confuse others.
When all are confused, bedlam breaks out, and
the wheels of progress turn backwards.

There Are No Conflicts in the Divine Assignments

THEORETICALLY, the Christian desires to be led of God, and would like to believe that he is.

Yet, even when he claims that his life is guided by the Lord, conflicts seem to appear in duties. One often hears such expressions as "I can't possibly find time to do all that I ought to do" or "Life is too short for one to fulfill his mission."

Something is radically wrong here. If an all-wise God is directing the life, there is all the time that is necessary to fulfill His purposes. One cannot say honestly, who is thus directed, "I am too busy, and have too many things to do, to do all that I should do."

The fact is that the things such a person is referring to are not all in the will of the Master for that life—at least at that time. Such a one should listen to the rebuke of the

Master to Martha, "Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things" (Luke 10:31)—too cumbered to please Him. He was alluding to the same thing when He spoke of the "cares of this life," and the destructive effect they have upon one.

One might as well face the fact that, if he is too busy to do all that he thinks he should do, he either thinks he should do more than he should or he is trying to carry on the Lord's assignments in his own strength.

"God is not the author of confusion" (1 Cor. 14:33). Anyone who is confused is certainly not in tune with the Unconfused. The most important thing for the confused to do is to get in tune with the "meek and lowly" One who is the essence of peace and quietness. The maddening "rat race" of our day will engulf us if we are not careful, and will drive us mad in the belief that we are "wearing out for God," when in reality we are but trying to keep up with the demands made upon us by others, or desiring to "keep up with the Joneses." God is not in a hurry! He has time for everything that He desires to do, or feels He ought to do.

It further simplifies the matter when we remember that God makes



by
T. W. Willingham

Kansas City, Mo.

no duplicate assignments. His commands are clear, simple, and integrated. He is not in a mad rush to keep up with anyone else or to get there first. He moves with ease, and desires that we do likewise.

I remember from youth the old adage "Haste makes waste." It does! Certainly there should be no haste to do that which we are not sure that we should do. If we should do it, there will be plenty of time for the doing. "In quietness . . . shall be your strength" (Isa. 30:15). It is when we are rushed that we get confused. When we are confused, we confuse others. When all are confused, bedlam breaks out, and the wheels of progress turn backward instead of forward.

In the Christian life, there is no place for envy or jealousy; for no one else has the task that God has willed that you have, and you should have no desire to have what does not belong to you. What God gives to you He does not give to another. He makes no double assignments.

If only every individual would get the mind of God for his own life and fulfill that plan, there would be perfect harmony and satisfaction everywhere and in everything. Our greatest need is to understand God well enough to be directed by His Spirit, that we may know and do His will. This would settle the matter of personal ambition and position seeking. No one would desire or reach for anything but the divine will for his own life, and thus living, he would have no desire to reach for anything that God had in mind for another.

Certainly this kind of life would be pleasing to God. Following this pattern of doing the will of God, one lays aside the feverish race to amount to something in the world, and seeks only to fulfill the plan and purpose of God for his own life. He is no longer in competition with anyone else. He

is not in a race to stand at the head of his class, be the best farmer in the community, or to have the largest Sunday school on the district. He is not chagrined when his neighbor receives the highest awards that the group can give. He looks for one approval, and when received, he is perfectly satisfied. This is the pattern of life that removes the ulcer-producing sickness and sets one free for effective and loving service.

If someone objects that this kind of living is "too good to be true," I answer that it is both good and true. It is the New Testament standard of living. This is taking "no thought for the morrow," as the Master commanded. It is being "careful for nothing" that Paul tells us about. It is the life of faith that the Word so urgently presses upon us.

This is not a life of idleness, nor is it a life of non-accomplishment. On the contrary, the achievements of such a life will be greater and more enduring than those of any other type.

If one could erase all the needless care and worry of the past, eliminate all the steps that had to be retraced, redeem all the days that he spent preparing for that which never came, and had used only one-half of that time in seeking and obtaining guidance from above, he could have done twice as much in life, and would have had time for other things that he wanted to do but for which he found no time.

God moves on a straight course. He does not zigzag on and off the main path. If He changes His plans, as the record states that He has done, He changes to meet some of the freedoms which He has given to His creatures. But no such changes are reversals of His ultimate intentions. His plans were made from all eternity, and He will execute them—man and the devil notwithstanding.

Since it is the nature of God to move forward without variation, it is His desire that His children do likewise. He wants us to keep a single eye and have it ever on the goal that He has set for us individually. This is necessary if we are not to collide with His plans for others.

In dedicating oneself to the plan that we are advocating, one must strike a death blow to his most powerful foe—the self. His own wisdom and understanding must be set aside. He must seek and follow the mind and the will of Another. Here the very center of man's nature must be changed. By nature he is self-willed. He wants to direct his own life. He would rely upon his own thinking. He would guide his own bark to his own selected harbor, and in his own strength.

To accept the divine assignment is to relinquish all personal desire and to desire nothing more nor less than to know and to accomplish the will of God. One becomes a slave—a love slave—bound by the strongest ties known to God and to man—the ties of divine love.

If such a life appears to be one of self-abnegation—it is just that. But it may be as truly affirmed that it is the only way to attain self-realization. It is the surrender that brings freedom—the losing that saves—the death that brings life. This is as strange as it seems. God does strange things, and in so doing He lifts us to a path that is strange to the worldly-minded and sin-bound. Herein is the

Christian unlike the world.

One who is following the divine assignments runs counter to those who are not. Here is where the warfare comes in. The two orders are in conflict. The kingdom of God is now in the territory of Satan. He, at present, is “the god of this world.” All of the divine plans and orders are in conflict with those of His enemy—hence the eternal and continuous conflict. One who would execute the divine plans must accept the scorn, ridicule, and hostility of those who are under leadership which is hostile to his Master. This hostility is clearly taught in the Word, and must be expected by all who would live godly.

While the conflict of the Christian will never be over in this present life, if he is true to his divine assignments, there will be no conflict, but perfect unity, between him and other Christians. The conflict and tensions are with those of the other kingdom, not with the followers of God; for God does not cause internal conflicts.

No one need be without an assignment from God. He has something for everyone to do. There will be no idle persons in the Lord's kingdom if all listen for His orders and stand ready to obey them. There is a place for everyone—the largest and the smallest, the wisest and the most unlearned—and every assignment has significance.

There is a task that exactly fits me and you, and it is our glory to find it and to fulfill it. We can if we will!

Taking God seriously means taking him at his word and giving him the chance to act the way he has said he will act. We can never receive anything with closed fists or drooping hands.

—Helmut Thielicke

The more time that passes between the decision to receive Christ as Saviour and Lord and the beginning of the follow-up of that decision, the more difficult is that follow-up. It should begin immediately.

By Paul Lorenzen*



Follow-up Evangelism

Part 5. Establishing the Ministry

The previous four articles of this series have attempted to establish the theoretical basis for follow-up evangelism. We now turn to the practical side and set forth the steps that one would take in establishing the follow-up ministry in the local church.

The first aspect of an effective follow-up ministry is to *start small and to start slowly!* A follow-up ministry grows, and growth takes time.

I. RECRUITING THE SPIRITUAL ADOPTIVE PARENTS

People are the most important part of the follow-up ministry. The laymen who will be involved in this ministry will be working directly with new Christians in a one-to-one situation. They will build solid, positive relationships, and they need to be solid, mature Christians themselves. They will produce Christians "after their own kind," so they must be chosen carefully.

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Recruiting of the spiritual adoptive parents should be done on an individual basis. Public announcements will seldom produce the results needed. (1) Begin on your knees. Pray much for God's choice in your personnel. (2) Recruit follow-up workers in person, and on an appointment basis. Never catch a person walking down the hall and say, "Hey, how about being a follow-up worker?" (3) Always state clearly and thoroughly what will be expected of the person. (4) Let the person know that he is making a *commitment* to the church, to the new Christian, and to Christ. (5) Give the person time to think and pray about it before he gives a final answer. (6) The persons working in the follow-up ministry should not be burdened with other heavy church responsibilities.

II. TRAINING THE SPIRITUAL ADOPTIVE PARENTS

People who are willing to serve in this ministry often do not have the know-how. To give a Christian some

Bible studies and turn him loose with a new Christian can sometimes be disastrous. Training is *important*. Those who are *willing* must be trained before they are *able*.

The training of a follow-up worker should involve three parts: (1) classroom instruction, (2) homework assignments, and (3) on-the-job training.

1. *Classroom instruction* should include a series of classes in which the theory and biblical basis is presented to the worker. He must be motivated in this course to take his task seriously. He must become familiar with the tools that he will be using in his work with new Christians.

2. *Homework assignments* should consist of scripture memorization of verses most likely to be used in follow-up sessions, completion of the actual Bible studies that will be used with the new Christians, and some reading in a good-quality textbook.¹ The follow-up worker should be required to do everything that the new Christian will do, plus more, to prepare him for this task.

3. *On-the-job training* is an indispensable part of the training. Each worker trainee should be exposed to three or four actual sessions with a new Christian under the guidance of an experienced worker. At first this will need to be done by the pastor, but eventually there will be enough trained laymen to give this on-the-job training to the new workers.

III. ASSIGNING THE SPIRITUAL ADOPTIVE PARENTS

When a person is converted through the local church, that church is responsible for "making a disciple" of

1. For example, *New Testament Follow-up for Pastors and Laymen*, by Waylon B. Moore (Wm. B. Eerdmans Co., 1963. \$1.95). The Nazarene Publishing House has published a packet-form book of follow-up, *Basic Bible Studies for New Christians* (VE-80), by Chic Shaver; 75¢ each; 6 or more, 50¢ each.

that person. The task of follow-up should begin immediately. If the person is converted at the altar of the church, there should be materials available at the altar for this. If he is converted in his home, the follow-up should begin in the home *within 24 hours* of his conversion. The more time that passes between the decision to receive Christ as Saviour and Lord and the beginning of the follow-up of that decision, the more difficult is that follow-up. It should begin immediately.

The person who prays with the convert should be the person who *starts* the follow-up, but he is not necessarily the one who should continue through. When deciding who should be the one to follow up a particular convert, the following principles should serve as guidelines.

1. The person instrumental in winning the person to Christ would be the logical person, assuming he has been trained in the follow-up ministry.

2. Match the new Christian with the follow-up worker as well as you can as to age, sex, occupations, children, interests, church background. The more similarities between the convert and the worker, the better working relationship they are likely to establish.

3. When the worker is to be someone other than the person who prayed with the convert, the one who prayed with him, or the pastor, should have at least one session with the new follow-up worker and the convert together to make the transfer smoothly.

4. No worker should be expected to have more than one assignment with a new Christian at a time. If a husband and wife have been saved, one worker could work with both of them together, but he should not be expected to work with two individuals not related. Also, a husband

and wife working in follow-up should not be assigned to different converts. They should always be considered a unit and work with the same individuals.

5. Seldom should a worker be assigned to relatives who have been converted. Workers with no previous intimate contact with the new Christian seem to work better. The relationship is then established for the purpose of spiritual growth, and both parties know it and respond to it.

6. If needed, a change of follow-up personnel can be made. This should be done hesitantly, and only if the spiritual growth of the new Christian can be helped by the change.

It is also helpful to arrange for a "prayer partner" for the follow-up worker. This is a person who agrees to pray daily for both the worker and for the new Christian. He "undergirds" the follow-up effort with prayer.

IV. RECORDS AND COMMUNICATIONS

If the pastor or one layman were the only one doing follow-up with new Christians, records and communications would not be necessary. But since this follow-up ministry involves, eventually, as many as several dozen laymen working with different new Christians, records are needed, and communication is essential for an effective, overall follow-up ministry.

Record systems will vary, but the information should include: (1) personal data about the convert—age, race, date saved, etc. (2) Name of follow-up personnel assigned. (3) Record of current progress—Bible studies completed, etc. (4) Evaluation of progress made. (5) A communication system between the follow-up personnel and the follow-up director. This communication is vital. It should be on a weekly basis, and should inform the director of the current status of the new Christian.

Any problems that occur can be handled immediately.

V. INVOLVEMENT OF NEW CHRISTIANS IN CHURCH MINISTRY

The involvement of the new Christians in the ministry of the church is the goal of this basic follow-up ministry. After spending 8 to 12 weeks learning from the Word of God and experiencing the fellowship of Christ through the spiritual adoptive parent, the new Christian usually is able to begin participating in some meaningful ministry in the local church. He should, of course, continue growing spiritually, and there should be some sort of continued small-group Bible study and fellowship for him, but he is usually able to become a contributing member of the congregation upon completion of the studies.²

VI. MATERIALS TO USE IN FOLLOW-UP

There are many different kinds of materials that can be used in new Christian follow-up. This author uses and recommends the *Basic Bible Studies for New Christians*, published by the Nazarene Publishing House, as the basic format. Other materials are used in addition to these Bible studies. For more information concerning materials and instructional methods, write the author in care of the *Preacher's Magazine*.

Using the principles set forth above, the average church can develop and maintain an effective follow-up ministry in which each convert is given adequate spiritual nurture and care. The church which conserves its evangelistic efforts by careful follow-up will find itself a growing, dynamic, exciting part of the body of Christ.

2. This author uses a "Discipleship Training School" for "graduate" work beyond this basic follow-up. This is a small-group, "class meeting" type of approach which can continue as long as three years after conversion.

Needed:



Three Kinds of Preachers

By Jon Phillip Johnston*

"Some of us have been given special ability as apostles; to others he has given the gift of being able to preach well; some have special ability in winning people to Christ [i.e., evangelists], helping them to trust him as their Savior; still others have a gift for caring for God's people as a shepherd does his sheep, leading and teaching them in the ways of God" (Eph. 4:11, TLB).¹

Proclaiming the unsearchable truths of scriptural holiness must ever be the crowning mission of the Nazarene clergy! However, as the preceding verse declares, there exists a divinely ordained assortment of tasks related to this goal. God's "called-out ones" must respond by becoming involved in certain crucial

Editor's note: *A summary of recent research related to the author's Ph.D. dissertation at Ohio State University. Although the research was limited to ministers in the Church of the Nazarene, it is published here with the belief it may be of interest to our readers in sister denominations.*

*Professor, Mid-America Nazarene College, Olathe, Kans.

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

role-assignments, based on their special abilities and the Master's guidance.

To be sure, each pastor characteristically seeks to include all such roles in his total ministry. However, typically, each tends to gravitate toward one "pet" role more than (and even at the expense of) the others. Many conceive of the latter as their "calling within a calling."

Several basic assumptions can safely be stated in regard to this important subject. They are as follows:

1. One role should not be considered to be inherently superior to any other, for each legitimately falls within the purview of the Church's total mission. (Cf. 1 Cor. 3:6.)

2. The roles are not to be seen as competitive, but complementary; not divisive, but mutually supportive and unifying. (Cf. 1 Corinthians 12.)

3. The clergy of a healthy church must contain all of these roles working effectively together. (Cf. Eph. 4:11.)

With these thoughts in mind, a doctoral study was recently completed which focused on the existence (and implications) of the various pastoral roles within our Zion. The results from a questionnaire sent to 20 percent of this nation's full-time Nazarene ministers revealed the presence of three distinct roles. The researcher termed the latter "doctrine-centered" (*D*), "community-centered" (*C*), and "group-centered" (*G*). As defined, these types generally correspond to "evangelists" (term implied), "apostles," and "shepherds" described in the scripture above.

Again, remembering that each pastor embodies all three roles in varying degrees, the latter are outlined in the following manner:

1. *Doctrine-centered*: strong reliance on evangelism through preach-

ing (revivalism); perceives church as a "lighthouse"; sees self as most closely resembling the prophet-type; tends to be isolated from community concerns and non-Nazarene religious functions; seeks to build protective "walls"; and is more conservative theologically than the other two types.

2. *Community-centered*: heavy reliance on evangelism through contacts (outside the church) and Christian education (inside the church); perceives church as a "school"; sees self as most closely resembling the parson-type; is greatly involved in community concerns and non-Nazarene religious functions; seeks to construct "bridges" into the world; and is the least conservative theologically of the three types.

3. *Group-centered*: primary reliance on evangelism through well-organized, efficient programing; perceives church as a "business"; sees self as most closely resembling priest-type (i.e., administrator); tends to be isolated from community concerns and non-Nazarene functions, though not on the basis of theology (like *D* type); seeks to construct a "model" institution for the secular and religious worlds to behold; and ranges between *D* and *C* types (depending on the "local climate") in theological conservatism.

As defined by the preceding dimensions, and as investigated by the previously described analysis, the three roles were found to exist among our clergy. To be more specific, approximately 60 percent of the sample was predominantly *D*, 25 percent *C*, and 15 percent *G*. Such a blend strongly suggests institutional diversity and flexibility, as well as an ordering of role-priorities that parallels our stated doctrinal tenets. Also, it implies that particular churches needing a pastor who is strong in a

specific role-area will probably have an adequate number of candidates from which to choose.

In addition to examining the actual existence of the roles, this study related the latter to other kinds of information. First, the question was posed: Is there a significant relationship between a pastor's role-type and his background? This was answered in the affirmative, provided one compares *C* and *G* types (which tended to be very close) with the *D* type. In contrast to the other two groups, the *D* role was characterized by: less education for self and spouse (post-high school); more experience in and preference for small towns; later conversion; more likelihood of being a first-generation Nazarene (i.e., convert); later and more instantaneous call (and more influenced in the latter by an evangelist versus parents/pastor in the other two groups); and slightly higher percentage of own children converted.

Finally, the investigation related role-type to various facets of the preacher's occupational style. Again, in comparing *C* and *G* categories with the *D* type, some noteworthy relationships emerged. The *D* group tended toward: smaller and slower-growing church memberships and Sunday school averages; lower salaries and "fringe" allowances; less involvement with social projects and organizations in the community, non-Nazarene pastors, and district boards/programs; less recognized "serious stress" (28 forms were listed, and looking at the total sample, Nazarene pastors recognized less than clergy of 21 denominations in a parallel study); more incidence of giving "Nazarene doctrine," "meaningful traditions in our denomination," and "evangelism" as primary reasons for remaining in the Nazarene pastorate; and if forced to discontinue pastoring, more incidence

of stating "become an evangelist" as a first alternative (compared to "college teaching" and "entering business," which were given by the C and G groups respectively).

In summary, it appears as though the clergy within our denomination are well-distributed among the three

role categories outlined above (though not equally). Also, a preacher's role-type tends to suggest factors related to his background and occupational style.

Finally, this is seen as structurally sound and in accordance with the roles mentioned in Ephesians 4:11.

A modern-day Christian can no more live victoriously without the Comforter than the apostles could succeed without the support of the Lord's physical presence.

Motivation to Seek the Comforter

STATISTICS SHOW that one out of every three persons who make a decision for Christ drops out of the church within three months. No doubt many more drop out within one year. It is an exercise in futility to win souls for Christ and then lose them in so short a time. The best guarantee against dropouts is the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit. This study aims to accomplish two things: (1) to broaden the base of our appeal to seek the Comforter, (2) to encourage the new converts to begin immediately to seek the Comforter.

The strength of the motivation to

seek the Comforter depends more or less upon the breadth of the appeal. I believe that there is a relation—within reason—between the strength of motivation and the number of sound reasons we give for seeking the Comforter. Traditionally, the appeal has been based largely upon the need for cleansing. This is a very narrow base for the appeal. A much broader one is available.

The greatest of all appeals is the Lord's promise to send another Comforter. No one who has experienced the goodness and grace of the Lord in the forgiveness of sins should hesitate to seek this Gift. The abiding Comforter can do more for the believer than the physical presence of the Lord. This is why it was expedient for Him to go away (John 16:7). The new convert should be encouraged not to neglect or reject the Comforter, his special Helper and personal Representative of the Lord Jesus Christ. Surely the ultimate in presumption and ingratitude is to neglect or reject



by
**Ralph A.
Gallagher**

Fort Wayne, Ind.

the Comforter.

Another great appeal is to seek the Comforter for His own glorious self. Nothing greater can happen to a man than that his heart should become the temple of the Holy Spirit. How can one adequately describe the sin that leads a professed child of God to close his heart against his Lord's wonderful Gift? We must proclaim the heavenly joys of His presence, and we must not neglect to point out the losses and defeats incurred through our neglect and rejection of Him.

The new converts must be urged and encouraged to seek the Comforter because of what He does when He comes in to abide.

1. He cleanses the heart. The apostles were conscious of this work in their own hearts (Acts 15:9). We should help the new babe in Christ to see the necessity of the Spirit's purifying work. An unclean heart is the root cause of backsliding.

2. When the Comforter comes in to abide, He provides strength to live for Christ by strengthening with might the inner man (Eph. 3:16). The joy and victory of the newly converted may blind him to his need of this strengthening. He needs to be warned of the subtlety and power of the enemy. Only the Comforter can save him from the blight and scars of defeat at the hands of the enemy.

3. The young convert needs to learn a great many things. We can recommend no greater teacher than the Comforter. Jesus said that He would teach us all things and bring all things that the Lord spoke to our remembrance (John 14:26). When the truth is difficult to ascertain, the Comforter will guide into all truth (John 16:13).

4. Young Christians usually have a strong desire to glorify Christ. The Comforter is the ultimate Authority in this special work. He testifies of

Christ (John 15:26), and He has a special assignment to glorify Christ (John 16:14). Only the Comforter can impart the ability to see and understand the true greatness and glory of the Saviour.

5. It is the Comforter that imparts those characteristics to the Christian life that distinguish it from the best that we can do in our own strength. When He sheds abroad the love of God in the heart (Rom. 5:5), He also imparts to the heart all the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23). A life that bears an abundance of this fruit glorifies the Father (John 15:8).

It is imperative that we impress the new convert with the importance of immediately seeking the Comforter that Jesus promised.

1. It is inconceivable that a successful Christian life can be lived without Him. A modern-day Christian can no more live victoriously without the Comforter than the apostles could succeed without the support of the Lord's physical presence.

2. There never can be a more favorable time to consecrate and seek the Comforter than immediately after reconciliation with God. The spiritual tide is running high and in the right direction. The heart is aglow with love for God. The desire to please God and the sense of victory are strong. Also carnal defeats have not weakened his faith.

3. He desperately needs the Comforter's help to make a successful transition from the old life to the new life in Christ. The seeds of success or failure are planted in this period. Jesus cannot be present in the physical to comfort and help, but He has sent another Comforter, God the Holy Spirit. He is abundantly able to keep those whom the Father has given unto the Son (John 17:12).

4. There is no such thing as a reasonable or acceptable excuse to delay or neglect to seek the Comforter.

Everything, except the carnal mind, counsels the new babe in Christ to begin immediately to seek the Comforter.

To implement a program seeking to strengthen the motivation for seeking the Comforter, I would suggest three steps as a beginning: (1) In our general preaching program, emphasize the above suggestions for a broader appeal. (2) Set up special study or instruction groups for new converts after revival meetings. (3) If numbers do not warrant group meetings, try to have counseling sessions with each convert.

At all times keep in mind that we are endeavoring to lead them to the Comforter. Do not confuse them by urging them to seek something that will be remedied when the Comforter comes in to abide. In assisting them with their consecration, always keep in mind that the central idea of consecration is the presentation of themselves to God to be His love slaves forever.

CHRISTMAS COMMANDMENTS

1. Thou shalt do honor to Christ the Lord on Christmas.

2. Thou shalt not spend and be spent before Christmas, until thy money is all gone and thy strength is all gone, and thou comest to the day bowed in weariness, debts, and regrets.

3. Thou shalt not take the Christ out of Christmas.

4. Remember Christmas Day to make it holy.

5. Thou shalt make Christmas Day a home day, when the family gathers together and family fellowship takes precedence over all; when father and mother and brother and sister are more closely bound in Christian love.

6. Thou shalt not fuss and stew.

7. Thou shalt not give to anyone more than thou art able.

8. Thou shalt not forget the needy.

9. Thou shalt declare, "Merry Christmas," to thy neighbors and mean it.

10. Thou shalt so conduct thy life during Christmas that there will be no hangover—either mental or physical, moral or spiritual, or financial. For the Lord will not hold him guiltless who lives this day in vain.



He Threw the Book at Us— And Missed!

Dear Son:

Well, I have seen it all! Sunday, in many respects, was a great day. The choir sang under the anointing of the Spirit. The "open altar" was filled with humble followers of our Lord, and the sermon was excellent.

But you know, I noticed something that might help you. The emotional climax came early in the service, and the people were not ready for a second.

Following the sermon our pastor did everything he could to pull us up to another moment of blessing, but we had feasted once in the service and were not emotionally ready for a second.

Now you may criticize my observations. Am I right in assuming that any one service can take only one emotional climax, and when it comes early in the service the preacher ought to thank God and move in another direction—awaiting another day?

There are "moods of the Spirit" which are observed by a discerning spirit. Please be sensitive to His direction.

Love,
Dad

● **General Superintendent Lewis**



Holiness Forevermore

WHOM SHALL he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine?" asked Isaiah. He then answered his own question and proclaimed that it (the doctrine) shall become known by "precept upon precept, line upon line."

When we add to this inspired call of the prophet the definition of precept, "a prescribed rule of conduct, instruction regarding a given course of action," we realize the magnitude of our assignment as holiness preachers.

We must continue preaching the doctrine and experience of entire sanctification. The emphasis properly generates with the preacher. He shall "teach knowledge." Here is the preaching of the doctrine. Both must be done over and over again, "line upon line." Some other denominations that once preached, believed, and witnessed to the reality of the baptism with the Holy Spirit have forgotten it. They did not blot it out of their doctrinal statements. They just left it there unnoticed and unproclaimed.

It all began with the preachers. They neglected to heed Isaiah's pleading, and soon it was forgotten in the pew. Great holiness revivals begin by preaching the doctrine and urging the experience on the people.

Spiritual fervor fades through preaching that ignores the doctrines of redemption. It must not be said of us that we allowed the reality of the precious experience of sanctification to disappear in our church.

We must preach it to the many, many new people who have joined and are joining our ranks. They are precious in the sight

of God. He has led them to us and us to them that they might know Him in saving and sanctifying power.

We need to preach it because we must have our people ready for the return of our Lord. Let us urge on them all the necessity of full preparedness for the second coming of Christ. *They must be ready now!*

We shall preach it to maintain our priceless heritage of this great gospel and its fullness.

We will preach holiness of heart, for it is scriptural and real. We must possess it. It is a vital part of our call to proclaim divine truth.

We will preach it, for the world we live in needs it so desperately.

Let us center our worship and evangelistic services around this wonderful truth. Let's sing about it, pray for it, and present the doctrine precept by precept, line upon line.

Back in the 1800s, the couriers would go from the king's court throughout the countryside to issue the decrees of the king and to bring news to the people of the country. The people would listen eagerly and observe the couriers closely. After they had passed by, the people would imitate their manners and attire. So it was the couriers of the king who set the customs of the day.

In righteous living our people can carry the great decrees of the King and the customs of the "good life" to this generation. So the holiness pulpit's ministry is multiplied and becomes light and life to the people.

*From this standard we will not depart,
Holiness forevermore!*

*'Tis the song of the purified in heart,
Holiness forevermore!*

*Holiness forevermore! Holiness forevermore!
We will sing it, shout it,
Preach it, and live it,
Holiness forevermore!**

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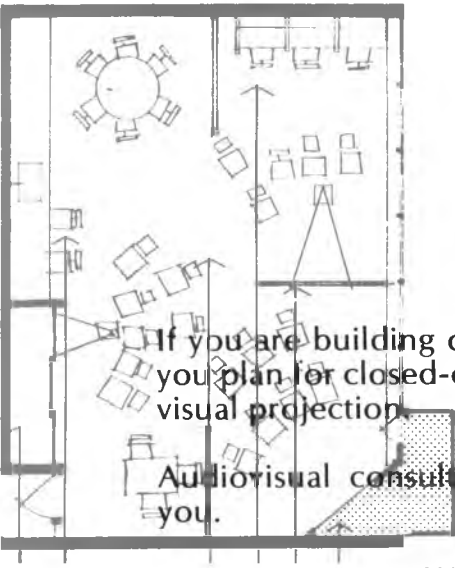
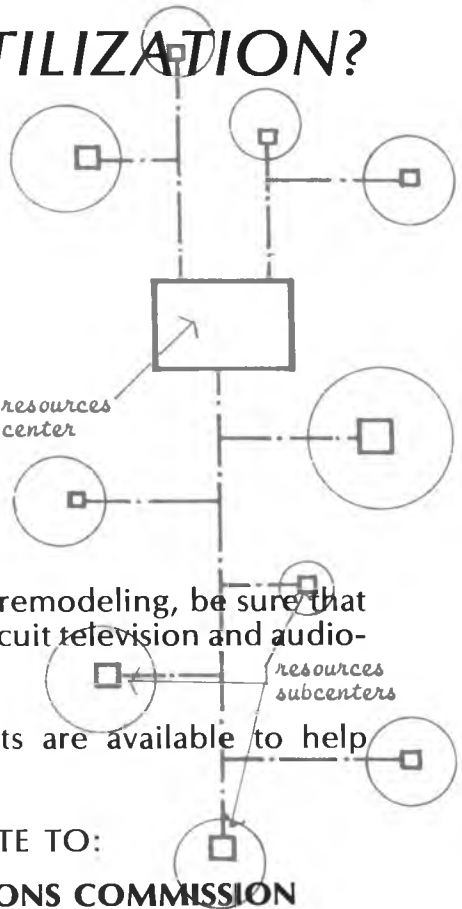
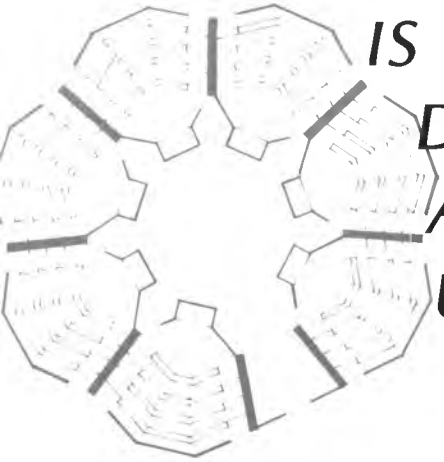
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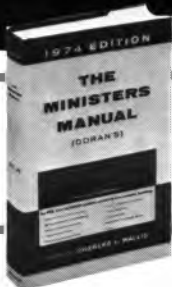
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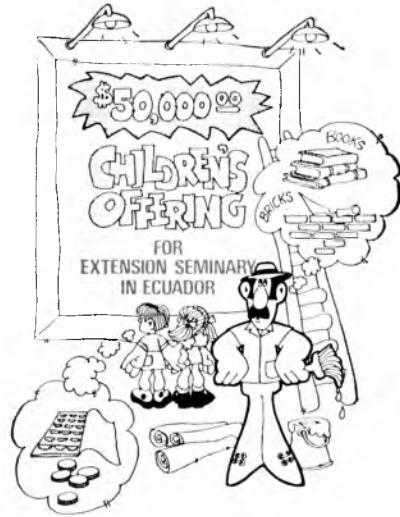
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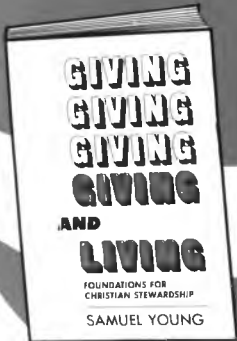
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All Christians suffer on behalf of others, but the minister does so on a sort of full-time basis.

The Minister: A Sufferer

THE MINISTER OF Jesus Christ is a sort of professional sufferer—along with all the exhilarating experiences that come his way.

Suffering seems to hunt him out. It intrudes into his sleep when an accident occurs and the smell of it is all over somebody to whom he is a “carer.” He empathizes with people who suffer, builds and delivers sermons to help sufferers. Perhaps he runs a taxi and bellboy service for them. To him “it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake” (Phil. 1:29).

Paul the Apostle, as Christ’s minister, suffered aplenty; but he rejoiced in his sufferings, realizing that they are redemptive. He writes, “Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I complete what is lacking in Christ’s afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church, of which I became a minister . . . to make the word of God fully known” (Col. 1:24-25, RSV).*

This does not mean that the sufferings of Christ on the Cross were

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

incomplete without Paul’s sufferings, so that Paul’s suffering has infinite redemptive efficacy the way Christ’s does. It means that Paul’s suffering helped to get the infinite redemptive worth of Christ’s sufferings implemented. Paul completed the sufferings of Christ because, by his own sufferings on behalf of others (jail, stripes, shipwreck), he illustrated what God did through Christ.

An interesting thing about suffering is that, as in the case of Christ’s suffering on the Cross, an innocent party often suffers on behalf of a guilty party. Christ was sinless, hence guiltless; so when He suffered, it was “the just for the unjust” (1 Pet. 3:18). Today the righteous often suffer for the unrighteous. When we lock our cars and houses, and have to unlock them on returning, we suffer a little because of the unrighteous people in our society who would rather steal than work. When a wife has no grocery money because a husband drank it up or gambled it away, the innocent is suffering because of the guilty. In numerous ways, this happens.

All Christians suffer on behalf of others, but the minister does so on a sort of full-time basis. On his dismal Mondays, when he might get to wondering how much more of it is in his tomorrows, he would do well to remember that, although redemption is through Christ’s suffering, it is often by his own that he helps people to realize what Christ did, and to accept for themselves the benefits of Calvary.



by
J. Kenneth Grider

Professor of Theology
Nazarene Theological Seminary
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The minister is first a messenger of God, a preacher of the truth. What he uses to transmit that truth is language, and the language must be commensurate with the message



The Minister and the Language

By Larry L. Finger*

WHY SHOULD A MINISTER try to master the language? Some of the reasons are obvious—at least they are to some ministers.

A minister should know the language in order to communicate effectively. Your message demands it. Most of you, if not all of you, feel a call to the ministry. That is one of the high callings, if not the highest calling, from God to man. And what are you called to do? *To preach*. Yes, I suppose you are called to pastor; that is the term I keep hearing today. We even have senior pastors, so I guess we have junior pastors, too. But I think there's something to be said for the old-fashioned term *preacher*. (I remember well my father being called "Preacher Finger" by some of his church members.) The minister is first a messenger of God, a preacher of the truth. What you use to transmit that truth is language, and the language you use must be commensurate with your message. That's the main reason, as I see it, a

minister must be a student of the language.

And now to be a little more practical. *How* does a minister go about trying to write well? I'm not at all sure. Writing is frustrating; at least for me it is. (Marriage is frustrating too, but I love my wife and children and will go on living with them. Tennis is frustrating, but I keep playing.) No, I don't have easy answers, but I will make some suggestions. You will notice that some of the statements apply to public speaking as well as writing.

(1) Avoid the worst grammatical errors. That's the least you can do. For example, you should know how to use *lie, lay, lain, lay, laid*, although there aren't many people who do. There are dozens of other grammatical goofs you should try to avoid.

(2) Know the distinctions between frequently confused words—*affect, effect; sensual, sensuous; continual, continuous; farther, further; imply, infer*. If you do something continually, you're not doing it continuously. Appetites can be sensual and,

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we're told, some blonds, too; but Keats's poetry is sensuous. Writers imply; readers infer. Careful distinctions. They're worth making.

(3) Keep your writing simple. Use a lot of ordinary words. Don't say *delve*, say *dig*; don't say *cease*, say *stop*; don't say *endeavor*, say *try*; don't say *sever*, say *cut*. Simple, ordinary words make your writing sound alive.

(4) To balance the everyday words, use less familiar words carefully, cautiously, and use them only when they are functional. Use them because you need them, not because you want to impress somebody.

(5) Read. Reading improves writing. I don't know of any proof off-hand, but I believe if you read good English prose your writing will improve, although you may not be reading for that reason at all.

(6) Write. Write a lot. If you hate to write, you really ought to do something else. Don't preach.

(7) Subject your writing to criticism, your own and somebody else's as well, even if it's your wife's or husband's. We think we write what we intend to. But we don't. Not always. Somebody else's questions about our intentions can help us see just how unclear our writing frequently is.

(8) Revise what you write. There is no substitute. Delete unnecessary words and phrases, even whole sentences and paragraphs. Add necessary details. Rewrite unclear passages. Rearrange sentences and paragraphs. Tighten coherence. Rewrite and rewrite and rewrite.

(9) Be honest. Make sure your words suit what you're describing. To do this you'll have to avoid Madison Avenue writing, words like *fan-*

tastic, stupendous, colossal, great. The word *great* is so misused it has no meaning. We say he's a great guy when we know he's hardly ordinary. We say we had a great time when it was in fact hardly a good time. The minister says he had a great service when he knows he's really not telling the truth. As one writer put it recently in a *National Observer* article, lying has become the life-style of today. We have lied so long I'm not sure we can recover. But maybe we can—if ministers lead the way.

(10) Remember to say something. *What* you write in your sermons is, after all, more important than the *way* you write it. Pretty words won't cover up a worthless sermon.

Finally, a note on pronunciation. When someone else's pronunciation differs from yours, check a dictionary to see who's right (not in his presence, of course). Regardless of how educated the person is, don't assume he is right. Be especially careful with frequently mispronounced words like *grievous, solace, affluence, mischievous, heinous.*

Thoreau made the following statement about the poet, but it's good advice for anyone who writes:

He would be a poet who could impress the winds and streams into his service, to speak for him; who nailed words to their primitive senses, as farmers drive down stakes in the spring, which the frost has heaved . . . whose words were so true and fresh and natural that they would appear to expand like the buds at the approach of spring, though they lay half-smothered between two musty leaves in a library—ay, to bloom and bear fruit there, after their kind, annually, for the faithful reader, in sympathy with surrounding Nature.

True and fresh and natural—these qualities the minister can at least work toward in his writing.



The Facts About Pastors' Wives

Section Five: The Personal Problems of Pastors' Wives

IT MAY BE SAID in general that pastors' wives enjoy being pastors' wives. More than 75 percent of all women in the parsonage, regardless of age, like their role "very much." Education does seem to make a difference in the degree of enjoyment in being a pastor's wife, since women with less education are well below college women in their level of enjoyment. And women in churches of 51-150 members enjoy their role as pastor's wife significantly more than women in both smaller and larger churches.

But enjoyment does not exclude personal problems. Women of all ages in the parsonages see church-related problems as their first concern. Women under 50 see interpersonal relationships as their second most important problem, while older women see physical health as their second most important personal problem. The third most significant problem for women under 50 are "emotional and spiritual," while older women face the problems of "finance and employment." Women in all levels of education see church problems as their first con-

cern, as do women in churches with more than 50 members.

However, in smaller churches, physical health and financial problems are their first and second most important concerns. Home and family, along with love and sex, do not appear to be significant problems except among pastors' wives who have been to college and serve the larger churches.

There are some interesting reports concerning physical and mental health. None of the pastors' wives had been to a professional counselor in the past three months except for one significant group—women under 35. Eighteen percent of these younger pastors' wives had visited a counselor recently. About half or more of all women in all categories had visited a doctor in the last three months, with one exception. Of women in churches with less than 50 members, only half as many as others visited a doctor. This may be because they are healthier, but is more likely to be the result of limited finances.

A sizable proportion of pastors' wives admitted to misunderstandings with their husbands "some-

times." But a somewhat smaller proportion said they "almost never" had misunderstandings with their husbands. Women with less than 12 years of education reported misunderstandings more often than others. In general, pastors' wives must be well adjusted in their marriages. Almost none reported "very serious" misunderstandings in their parsonages. The largest proportion was only 3 percent among the less educated wives. About 10 percent of the women 35 years of age in churches above 150 members report "serious" misunderstandings.

Most pastors' wives report they receive positive feelings from their congregations. This acceptance is checkered among women above 50 with less education, in churches of less than 50 members. Ten percent or more of these report negative feelings from their congregations. However, the feelings do not flow back toward the congregation in the same way. Except for the pastors' wives in churches of more than 150 members, a portion of every other category of women saw their congregations as "not very spiritual."

With the exception of pastors' wives in small churches, a great proportion of women like living in the parsonage "very much." Almost none were willing to say, "I do not like it."

Divorce may seem like a strange question to ask ministers' wives. But the question was raised and they responded. Most women had "never given it serious thought." A minimal number—about 5 percent—of women under 35 with a high school education or less, in churches of 51 to 150 members, have "given it serious thought." Some wives—never more than 14 percent—had "thought about it some."

Finally, pastors' wives tend to have positive feelings about the advantages children have growing up in parsonages. Only older women with less education tended to see disadvantages in the parsonages. Women under 35 who are still raising small children accented "special problems in the parsonages" in an equal proportion with wives in churches of less than 50 members. All other women saw children in the parsonage as "just like other children" or as "having advantages."



What Is Beauty?

A beautiful person, the dictionary tells us, is one who "is delightful to the senses." But whose senses? Here is one reason why feminine beauty is so hard to define. "Beauty" depends on WHO is looking at it.

THE

STARTING POINT



By C. NEIL STRAIT

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

Who's Behind the Product?

(1 Thess. 5:15-23)

WHEN ANYTHING with grand promise is offered, we inquire: "Who's behind the product?" For we know the product is only as good as the firm behind it.

When we encounter the holy life, we know that the God of the universe stands behind the promise and the product—the sanctified life.

In the Scriptures, we see a *saving God* (1 Thess. 5:9)—One who forgives our sins. A *keeping God*—sanctifying God—(5:23). One without the other is unreasonable.

Thus, in the Scriptures, we have the promise of God for sanctifying, cleansing power. It is the promise that God can help a man live a holy life.

The phrase "holy living" or "the holy life" is a broad concept, and not too easily translated into language the average man would understand—especially if he has no background in scripture or acquaintance with the Church.

Perhaps a working definition of the holy life would be "God-pleasing living." When a man gets an idea of what God-pleasing living really is, he has the idea of the holy life pretty much in mind.

It is our belief, in the Wesleyan holiness tradition, that a man can be saved from his sins (past), and from sinning (present/future). And that the processes that follow these works of grace evolve into God-pleasing living. We see all of this redemptive/sanctifying work of grace as fulfillment of God's promise. In response, of course, to man's repentance, belief, yielding, and obedience.

Examine the promise of God for the holy life from two areas: scripture and logic:

1. The scriptural promise of the sanctified life is seen in a number of areas. Matt. 1:21 says, "Thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins." John 1:29, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." 1 Pet. 3:18 reminds us that "Christ . . . suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God." Titus 2:14 says that Christ "gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people" (a people for His own possession).

Other scriptures, along with the text, that support this promise are:

Eph. 5:25-27; Rom. 6:6; 8:3; Heb. 7:25; 13:12; 1 Pet. 2:21-22; and John 1:9. And perhaps the key verse is Acts 1:8, "Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you."

2. The promise of the holy life is deducted from logic.

A. See the promise as a follow-through to creation. Would a holy God create man, equip him with freedom, watch him fall, and be powerless to help him? Or would a holy God create man and then, because of sin, leave him at evil's mercy, without a plan to help?

No! Logic concludes that the creation powers of God are operative in a creating way—after the fall of man—creating victory over sin and deliverance from sin.

B. See the promise as a follow-through to the Cross. Would Christ's death be only a deterrent to sin? No! Logic forces us to assume that Christ's death was for atonement—our at-one-ment with God. And to be at one with God is to conclude the cleansing from sin.

The very term *redeem* implies that full value is received when redemption or the redeeming act is completed.

Logic, thus, forces us to believe that God has the power to deal with sin in the human heart in such a way

that it is conquered—for us—and that His conquering power becomes our staying power and the strength for our God-pleasing living.

Just as any product is as good as the firm behind it, so the sanctified life is only as good as the power—the God—behind it. And the strength of the holiness message is the God who promises it and provides it.

The value and reliability of the promise of the sanctified life are in the nature of God. His attributes (characteristics, being, etc.) reveal to us a God of power and possibility. When you get a glimpse of God—who He is and what He is—the promise of the holy life is not too much to expect.

These attributes are: self-sufficiency, eternity, immutability (unchanging), omnipresence, omnipotence, and omniscience.

When you add these up, you have a God who could promise and who could provide resources for holy living.

Would a doctor, seeing a child possessed with poison, use only a pain-killer? No! He would do everything to drive out the poison and bring healing to the child.

Our God is a God of hope and healing. He does not provide only a deterrent to sin. He provides deliverance. Man can be delivered from sin-serving living to God-pleasing living.



Grace does not force unnatural and distorting obligations on the human personality but asks only that the powers inherent in humanness, and called into alertness by the Holy Spirit, be exercised about the lordship of Christ.

—Mildred Bangs Wynkoop

IN THE STUDY

Meditating with the Master in Matthew

December 1

THE MESSAGE OF THE EMPTY TOMB (28:6)

SCRIPTURE: Matt. 28:1-10

INTRODUCTION: The Home Moravian Church in Winston-Salem, N.C., has four stained-glass windows at the rear of the sanctuary, two on each side of the main entrance. The two on the left portray Gethsemane and Calvary, the two on the right the Resurrection and the Ascension. The sun never shines on the two left ones, but each afternoon in clear weather the other two are beautifully illuminated.

Gethsemane and Calvary were dark hours. But on the Resurrection morning the sun broke through again, and the Ascension resulted in the full sunlight of Pentecost. Everything depended on the Resurrection.

I. THE MYSTERY OF THE EMPTY TOMB (v. 6a)

"He is not here." What a mystery! Friday afternoon the women had seen the body of Jesus laid away in Joseph's sepulcher on the rocky hillside. Now the angel startled them with the shattering announcement, "He is not here." Where was He? What had happened to Him? It was a tense moment of anxiety.

Too often today people do not find Jesus where they seek Him. They look in vain, for He is not there. They have heard He was, but He has escaped them somehow.

This, however, was a deeper mystery. How could a dead man leave a sealed,

guarded sepulcher? It was impossible! But it had happened.

We look back at the empty tomb from the vantage point of nearly 2,000 years of Christian history. But we must remember that the two Marys had none of this background.

II. THE MIRACLE OF THE EMPTY TOMB (v. 6b)

"He is risen." This was still more startling. An empty tomb might mean a grave robbery. But this was a resurrection. Jesus was alive! The question now was not, What was happened to Him? but, How did it happen?

The answer was: A miracle! This was the only possible explanation. His enemies circulated the rumor that His disciples had stolen His body during the night. But a sealed tomb and Roman guard would have made this impossible. God had raised His Son, the Messiah. The evidence was incontrovertible.

III. THE MEANING OF THE EMPTY TOMB

The New Testament indicates that there was a threefold meaning:



By Ralph Earle

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A. An Accepted Sacrifice (Rom. 4:25)

The Resurrection was the divine validation of the Crucifixion. Without the former, the latter would have been in vain. How do we know that Christ's death on the Cross atoned for all our sins? Because the Father raised the Son from the dead and thereby declared that His sacrifice was accepted and sufficient. Calvary and the empty tomb belong together. Jointly they guarantee the salvation of all who believe.

B. An Abiding Presence (John 20:16-17)

Jesus told Mary Magdalene not to cling to Him, but to let Him go. Then He would return to her in the person of the Holy Spirit to be with her everywhere all the time—no longer limited by time and space. He would be an abiding spiritual Presence.

C. An Appointed Judgment (Acts 17:31)

The Resurrection is God's guarantee that there will be a final day of judgment. We have no excuse for being lost.

CONCLUSION: Acts 4:10-12

December 8

THE GREAT COMMISSION (28:19-20)

SCRIPTURE: Matt. 28:16-20

INTRODUCTION: Jesus said, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." The regular Greek word for *power* in the New Testament is *dynamis*, from which we get *dynamic*, *dynamo*, *dynamite*.

But the Greek word here is *exousia*, which means "authority." The correct translation is: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me" (NIV).^{*} Because Jesus has this authority, He can command us to go to all nations in His name.

I. MAKING DISCIPLES (v. 19a)

"Teach" in verse 19 and "teaching" in verse 20 are two entirely different verbs in the Greek. The latter is *didasko*, which properly means "teach." But the former is *matheteuo*, which comes from *mathetes*, "disciples." The followers of

^{*}From *The New International Version*, copyright © 1973, by New York Bible Society International. Used by permission.

A Christmas Confession

... a manger; because there was no room (Luke 2:7).

Lord, things haven't changed much. Room for You was tight from the start. I suppose You expected that. I mean, the inn was full, and I'm sure You didn't really want anyone to move. Just think of the inconvenience. And the innkeeper's reputation. Besides, all their minds were on important things—like their families, and local politics, and religion. Surely You didn't want to intrude on all that.

And, Lord, if they'd let You in and given You the best room, who would have paid? After all, You didn't want people to run themselves short, did You? Not at Christmastime, anyway.

But that manger, Lord. That's the thing that really bothers me. You see, Lord, I think . . . I mean . . . maybe I have put You in a manger too.

—MICHAEL CASSIDY

Jesus were commanded to go and "disciple" all the peoples of the earth by pointing them to Christ.

II. BAPTIZING (v. 19b)

Water baptism has been especially significant in missionary work, where it usually involves and indicates the fact that the candidate has renounced his pagan religion and turned to God. In the first century, of course, it was also used for those who turned from Judaism to Christianity.

It should be noted that no particular mode of baptism is prescribed. Furthermore, in other passages in the New Testament we do not find the Trinitarian formula used, but simply baptism in the name of the Lord Jesus (Acts 8:16; 19:5). The modern insistence on a particular mode or liturgy is unbiblical.

III. TEACHING (v. 20)

After people have become disciples of Christ and have been baptized, they must be taught. Taught what? Jesus said:

"To obey everything I have commanded you" (NIV).^{*} This is a long assignment. New converts need to be grounded in the Word.

The Great Commission is for all of Christ's disciples today. We cannot all go as missionaries to distant lands. But we can all pray and give so that others may go and get the job done.

CONCLUSION: If and when we obey the Great Commission—and only then—we can claim the glorious promise: "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." The Greek says: "I am with you all the days"—the bad as well as the good—"until the end of the age." The "lo" is for those who obey the "go"—bodily or in their prayers and giving.

Looking at Our Lord in Luke

December 15

THE VIRGIN BIRTH (1:35)

SCRIPTURE: Luke 1:26-38 (Read NIV.)

INTRODUCTION: For many years it has been popular to question the doctrine of the virgin birth of Jesus. But it is very clearly stated in both Matthew and Luke. At this Christmas season it is good to look at the subject again.

I. THE ANGEL'S ANNOUNCEMENT (vv. 31-33)

We are told that the angel Gabriel appeared to a virgin named Mary, who lived in Nazareth. His greeting (v. 28) startled her. But there is nothing in his words to suggest or support the worship of Mary. She was highly honored to be chosen as the mother of the Messiah. But that certainly did not make her the "mother of God," as she is widely acclaimed. She was the mother of Jesus' human nature only.

The angel then specifically told her that she would give birth to a Son and was to call Him Jesus, which signified that He was to be Saviour. This Child would be called "the Son of the Most High" (NIV).^{*} He would also be the Son of David and would rule forever over God's people.

II. THE ANGEL'S EXPLANATION (v. 35)

When Mary protested that she was a virgin and so could not have a child, the angel told her precisely how it would come about. The Holy Spirit would take the place of a human father in bringing about conception. "So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God"

(NIV).^{*} Though this is a supreme mystery, the language is clear and plain.

III. MARY'S ACCEPTANCE (v. 38)

This is an important part of the story. Mary's submission was immediate and complete.

We must realize that it cost a great deal of suffering for Mary to accept this role. Without doubt she was slandered and ostracized by her neighbors at Nazareth. But Mary humbly said, "I am the Lord's servant" (NIV).^{*} If we are to have a part in God's redemptive work, we must have the same attitude.

CONCLUSION: Are we willing to say, "I am the Lord's servant," no matter what the cost?

December 22

THE BIRTH OF JESUS (2:7)

SCRIPTURE: Luke 2:1-20 (Read NIV.)

INTRODUCTION: The King James Version has "taxed" three times (vv. 1, 3, 5) and "taxing" once (v. 2). Actually, the Greek indicates that it was a census preliminary to taxation.

I. THE BIRTH IN A MANGER (v. 7)

Joseph had to go to David's hometown, Bethlehem (nearly 100 miles away), to register. While there, Mary gave birth to Jesus. Since there was no room in the inn, she placed Him in a manger. Tradition says that this was a cave-stable. Probably it was warmer for the newborn Baby and His mother than the unheated caravanserai would have been. So what

looked like a disappointment was actually "His appointment."

II. THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE ANGEL (v. 11)

"I bring you good news" (v. 10, NIV)* is all one word in Greek—*evangelizomai*, from which we get *evangelize*. It literally means "announce good news." The birth of the Saviour of the world is the best news that mankind has ever heard.

Christ means "Messiah." In the Septuagint translation of the Old Testament the Greek word for "Lord" (*kyrios*) is used to translate Yahweh (or *Jehovah*). So here we have a divine Messiah and Saviour.

III. THE CHORUS OF THE ANGELS (v. 14)

As the angelic spokesman finished his announcement, suddenly a host of angels chimed in with this beautiful couplet:

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests" (NIV).*

The late Greek manuscripts have "good will toward men." But the best Greek text, based on the early manuscripts, has "to men of goodwill," or "to men of God's good favor." Peace comes only to those who accept God's grace and so enjoy His favor. That seems to be the thought here.

Both the political and religious leaders in Palestine missed the announcement of the good news. It was humble shepherds who heard it and then hurried to see the Babe in Bethlehem. And it is still humble, trusting folk who find the Saviour.

December 29

THE BOYHOOD OF JESUS (2:52)

SCRIPTURE: Luke 2:39-52

INTRODUCTION: The so-called Infancy Narratives are found only in Matthew and Luke. In Matthew they are told from the standpoint of Joseph, in Luke from the standpoint of Mary.

Matthew tells how Joseph took the baby Jesus to Egypt to escape Herod's wrath, and how he brought Him and His mother back and settled in Nazareth. But only Luke gives us anything about the boyhood of Jesus. And often Mary's

reactions are noted.

Luke begins with Jesus' circumcision when He was eight days old (v. 21). That is followed by His presentation to the Lord when He was 40 days old (vv. 22-25). In this connection we have the fascinating account of the adoration of Simeon (vv. 25-35) and of Anna (vv. 36-39). There is perhaps a suggestion here that Christian parents should dedicate their children to the Lord at an early age.

I. HIS STRENGTH AND WISDOM (v. 40)

Jesus was a strong boy physically. The portrayal of Him as weak and anemic has no foundation in scripture. He could not have stood the strenuous regimen of His public ministry if He had not had a rugged constitution. It should be noted that "in spirit" (KJV) is not in the good Greek text. The boy Jesus was strong in body.

He was also "filled with wisdom," keen and alert. Best of all, "the grace of God was upon him."

II. HIS SPIRITUAL INSIGHT (v. 46)

Luke alone relates this interesting incident that took place when Jesus was 12 years old. His parents took Him up to Jerusalem for the Feast of the Passover. This may very well have been the nearest passover to His thirteenth birthday and so the time of His bar mitzvah, when He became a Member of the male "congregation of Israel." This would explain why the parents traveled one whole day back toward Galilee before they discovered His absence. Joseph thought of Him as still staying with the women and children. Mary assumed that He had now taken His rightful place among the men.

Returning to Jerusalem, they found Him sitting among the "teachers" (NIV)*—"doctors" (KJV) always meant teachers in earlier English. Jesus was both listening to these religious teachers and asking them questions. Everyone was amazed at His "understanding and answers." He was an intellectual and spiritual Prodigy.

When His mother chided Him for causing them to search a long time for Him, He replied, "Why were you searching for me? Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?" (NIV).* Verse 50 indicates that they did not possess the spiritual understanding that He had.

III. HIS NORMAL DEVELOPMENT (v. 52)

In this verse we are told that Jesus had a normal development in four ways: physically, mentally, socially, and spiritually—to use the order we would use today.

Jesus was our Example. As a true human being, one of us, He had to have a truly human development. He had to

grow in mind and body. He had to develop in spiritual apprehension as well as in social graces.

This verse is a challenge to both parents and children. And it is also a challenge to pastors and new converts. Growth is the law of life. We should be interested in all aspects of the lives of our children and the babes in Christ.

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EDITOR'S NOTE:

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HERE AND THERE



AMONG BOOKS

Conducted by the Editor

All books reviewed may be ordered from
your Publishing House

Courageous Jernigan

By *Johnny Jernigan and Margaret Jernigan Ramsey* (Nazarene Publishing House, 1974. Paper, 77 pp., \$1.00.)

A brief biography such as this cannot go into all the minute details of a busy preacher's life; but by the same token, a biography this brief has the advantage of giving a quick view of a long life. It is an intimate view, through the eyes of two of his daughters. This pioneer of the holiness movement blazed a trail for God and holiness across 25 states. He organized 130 churches, established the Church of the Nazarene in 7 states, and founded the

city of Bethany, Okla., the home of Bethany Nazarene College. Dr. Orval Nease called him "the Daniel Boone of the Church of the Nazarene."

Nazarenes, of course, will especially want this book, but members of all sister holiness denominations will find it inspiring and exciting.

J. M.



Preachers' Exchange



FOR SALE—*Quit Your Meanness*, by Sam P. Jones, published in 1886, 505 pp., good condition; *Primitive Piety Revived*, or "The Aggressive Power of the Christian Church," by Henry C. Fish, published in 1856, fair condition. Will send to best offer.—Hobert I. Basham, 11 E. Roney Ave., North East, Md. 21901.

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Our generation has all but de-emphasized the sermon in the total task of the ministry. More men like Charles John Vaughn could reverse this trend.

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A layman shares his thoughts about prayer and faith in behalf of his pastor, and it heartens us all to realize this source of our stability is there in the pew.



AMONG OURSELVES

How do you send sincere best wishes for a season of joy and blessings to readers all over the world, most of whom you have never met and do not know, without making it seem mechanical and formal? Do you think about those you have met and you do know, some of whom have taken the time and trouble to write words of encouragement and appreciation during the year? That might help some, but it would not be inclusive enough for a genuine word of greeting for all the others. There is no way, really, that mere words can do it. Needed is a deeper level of communication, a spiritual one. That is what we hope comes through to every one of you as you pick up this issue and browse through these pages. The message, we hope, is clear: Merry Christmas to our colleagues and fellow ministers, and may all of us take the leadership in making it so also for our flocks. Celebrating a Christian Christmas, may our people be reassured that God does lead His children (p. 6); that He does break His silence and reveal himself (p. 3); that He needs us, all of us, every type of us (p. 12); and that our suffering is for His sake and theirs (p. 17). The editor and his staff are praying that the message will be received and understood. Who you are, and what you are doing, matters! The world needs you and others like you! That you "hear" this is our prayer for your Christmas season, and this is our way of wishing you a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Yours for souls,

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