


Herald of Holiness

SEPTEMBER 1995

CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE



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REMEMBERING NYC '95

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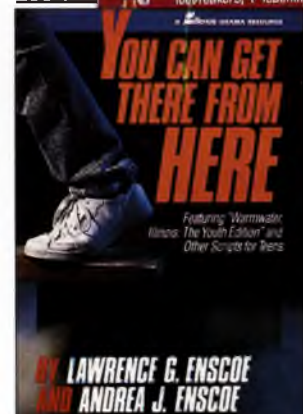
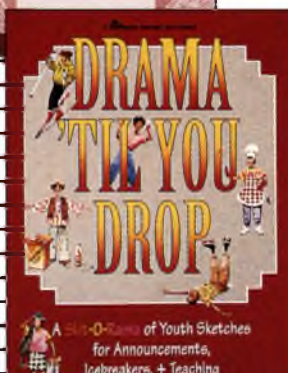
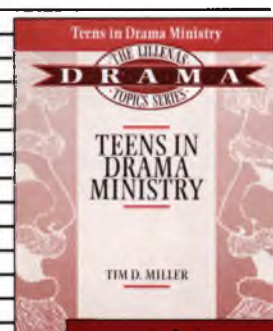
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This special edition of the *Herald of Holiness* focuses on "NYC '95." In the articles and photos that follow, you will get a glimpse of what took place in the lives of teens during that very special week in Phoenix.

I want to express my appreciation to the parents, pastors, district superintendents, district NYI pres-

idents, youth sponsors, and local congregations who worked together to enable so many of their teens to attend NYC '95. The Church of the Nazarene is blessed to have such a wonderful support system for its young people. Research has shown that most students who make a faith commitment to Jesus Christ do so by age 18. The early childhood and adolescent years are pivotal, and the local church must place a high priority on providing effective ministries for children and youth. NYI, the youth auxiliary of the church, is structured to facilitate ministry to youth through the local, district, regional, and general levels of the organization. Each level, working in concert, focuses its energy on assisting the local church to reach and disciple young people.

The Church of the Nazarene has always invested in its young people, and NYC '95 was once again solid evidence of that commitment. As the event has continued to grow, its mission has expanded and adapted to the ever-changing youth culture, while maintaining the core commitment of calling students to discipleship and service. The event has been held at various locations, from Europe to Mexico and the United States, and now the concept has been adopted by every world region of the church. Hundreds of youth have been saved, sanctified, and called to full-time Christian service. And the movement is growing!

What began as a dream in the late 1950s has become a truly international movement in less than 40 years. Praise God for the thousands of Nazarene young people

who have attended, who have been influenced by anointed preaching and teaching, and who have accepted the call to make a difference in their world for Christ.

Our teens, wherever they are in this rapidly shrinking world, are the church of today and emerging leaders for the 21st century. I am optimistic about the future of the Church of the Nazarene! To pastors and parents who read this issue, I urge you to expand your vision for youth ministry in your local church. Give the teens time and opportunity to learn to lead and to exercise their God-given talents. Listen to their ideas and help them to dream God's dream for new ministries to their peers and others in your community. Yes, they will, on occasion, fail. You and I do too. But never give up on them, and continue to invest in them through meaningful relationships and specific challenges.

To the students who attended NYC '95 in Phoenix, may this special edition of your church's chief publication not only call up significant memories of your "Once in a Lifetime" experience but also serve as a reminder of commitments made to God, your peers, and yourself. Pray for those unsaved family members and friends. Be a witness. Walk the talk. LEAD THE WAY! **HH**

Fred Fullerton
Director
NYI Ministries



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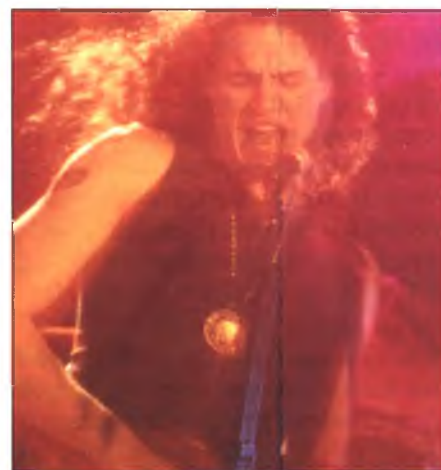
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No Fear

*If you do get out of the boat,
two things will happen . . .*

My heart was pounding and my palms were sweaty, seriously compromising my grip on the ropes I was clinging to for dear life. The fact that the ropes were attached to a hot air balloon gave little comfort, for the passenger basket was barely waist-high, and I was 2,000 feet above the ground. One good lurch and I would be history!

I thought I was the most frightened one in the basket until I looked at my friend, Jimmy—he was turning green! I inched my way over to the pilot of the balloon and asked, “What do you do for a living?” My life depended on the competency and character of this man, and I wanted to know a little about him.

I knew we were in big trouble when he said, “Well, it’s like this, mister. I don’t really have a job; I mostly hang out.” Then he said, “If our descent is a little bumpy, it’s because I’ve never flown this particular balloon before. I’m not quite sure how it will handle as we go down.”

Jimmy looked at me and said, “You mean to tell me we are 2,000 feet in the air with a pilot who has never flown this balloon before and doesn’t know how to get it back on the ground?”

“It looks that way,” I said.

Jimmy yelled back at me, “Well, you’re my pastor, do something!” So I did . . . I took an offering!

Our day hadn’t started this way. When I met Jimmy in the open field where the balloon was being inflated, we were excited. The surroundings were beautiful, and the weather was perfect. As we rose higher into the air, excitement turned to fear. It was our fear that led us to ask the crucial question, *Can we trust the pilot?*

* * *

We live on a great big balloon of sorts that revolves around the sun. Every morning, young people wake up asking the question, “Is there someone piloting this thing, and can that someone be trusted?”

Jesus’ original disciples experienced this type of fear when their boat was caught in a storm. The storm was so fierce that Matthew says the boat was *tormented by the waves*. The disciples, many of whom were professional fishermen, were afraid they wouldn’t make it to the other side.

Jesus suddenly appeared, casually walking on the water. As He approached His storm-tossed disciples, He said to them, “Have no fear.” In other words, He was saying, “You guys can trust My character. You can safely and without reservation place your lives in My hands.”

When Peter called out, “Lord, if it really is You, command me to come to You,” Jesus answered, “All right, Peter, out of the boat!”

Cold, wet, dark, and fearful . . . yet Peter swung his legs over the side and began to walk on the water. When his faith gave way to the waves and he began to sink, Jesus rescued him.

Some may think Peter failed, but actually he experienced the triumph of having walked on the water. Even more significantly, he overcame his fear and learned that when he sank, Jesus was there to save him.

Jesus is still looking for people who will overcome their fears and get out of the boat.

Fear will never go away. Jesus leads us toward new horizons and into uncharted territory. When He does that, we experience fear, a fear of the unknown. But remember Jesus’ words to His fearful and storm-tossed disciples: “Have No Fear!”

If you do get out of the boat, I am confident of two things: First, when you sink (and you will), Jesus will be there to pick you up. Second, every once in a while, you will walk on water! H



Jim Williams
General
NYI President

Gary Sivewright: A Heart for Youth

Photo by Brad Elsberg/Media International



Nazarene Youth Congress is like youth camp to the 50th power: thousands of teen participants, hundreds of adult sponsors, a \$1 million plus budget, high-caliber programming, jam-packed schedule, scores of staff members. Directing such an event is not a task for the faint of heart. That being the case, then Gary Sivewright must have the cardiovascular fitness of a marathon runner. As director of NYI Ministries at Nazarene Headquarters from 1986 to 1991, Gary directed two youth congresses: NYC '87 and NYC '91. In July of this year he returned to another NYC, this time as featured speaker for the evening plenary sessions. (Gary left NYI Ministries after NYC '91 for a position at Mount Vernon Nazarene College.) He says, "It's a kick to watch the NYC dream become real. I just love the event."

Big events aren't the only thing Gary loves about youth ministry. He has invested his entire career in a wide range of youth ministries. Gary says he didn't plan it that way, but as he followed and obeyed God, he found himself in one youth ministry assignment after another.

This was due in part to the Sunday School teachers, youth workers, and pastors who invested their lives in him as he grew up just a few blocks from Nazarene Headquarters in Kansas City.

As an only child from a single-parent home, Gary was influenced by these adults to follow Jesus and to stay involved in church activities.

"It became obvious over the years that my ministry should be in Christian education," Gary says now. This led him to earn degrees in religious education from Bethany Nazarene College (now Southern Nazarene University) and Nazarene Theological Seminary.

After graduating from seminary in 1975, Gary served in youth pastorates at Bethany, Oklahoma, and Shawnee, Kansas. These experiences taught him the value of teamwork. "Nobody can do it by themselves. You need committed parents and laypeople."

These lessons were to stand Gary in good stead in his next assignment in the youth ministries department at Nazarene Headquarters. He was editor of junior high Sunday School curriculum, then *Bread* magazine and *Teens Today*. In 1985 Gary was elected director of NYI Ministries. Inherent in that job is the responsibility for Nazarene Youth Congress.

"The '87 event removed the elitist mentality from NYC and said to Nazarene teens, 'If you are a disciple of Jesus Christ, we want you there,'" Gary says. The result was an increase from 2,000 participants in 1983 to 4,000 in 1987.

Gary remembers the opening celebra-

tion service: "The arena was dark except for one spot of laser light in the middle of the stage. The soundtrack began and you could hear a gasp rise from the crowd. I don't know if you can bring a heavenly viewpoint to high technology, but there were some people there for whom that laser show was a spiritual event." NYC also included workshops for teens and adult sponsors. "The event offered more than inspiration or an emotional high. It became an extensive training opportunity for both teens and their youth leaders."

The 1991 NYC in Orlando attracted 5,000 participants. Gary says, "In Orlando, we streamlined and polished what we tried to accomplish in Washington. The facility was better, we could feed people faster, keep them cooler. We did the same type of event as in 1987, just for more people."

One specific memory of NYC '91 stands out in his mind. "At the close of the last service, all 5,000 participants stood in the darkened arena and waved glowsticks as they sang 'Our God Is an Awesome God.' It symbolized their commitment to Jesus and to carry the impact of NYC home. It was an incredible sight."

Although youth congresses are designed to inspire and train participants,

Gary sees another purpose that is vital to the growth of the Church of the Nazarene. "We wanted teens to know that the Church of the Nazarene knows where they are and can meet their needs. Many of them have an image of the institutional church as being out of step or behind the times. But I believe NYC leaves no doubt in the minds of teens that the Church of the Nazarene knows what appeals to them, knows how to communicate to them, and knows their interests."

Gary views personal ethics and morality as the most important youth ministry issues facing the domestic church. Many of today's young people need a sense of integrity and morality. Gary holds that this is best instilled within the family structure, through Christian mothers and fathers who model the faith and who will be available to their teenagers when they are needed. The church's responsibility is to equip parents for this task and to supply adult mentors and role models for teens who lack parental support at home.

Gary sees promising signs in the youth ministry of the international church, where church growth is being led by young people. "NYI is a natural," according to Gary, to take the lead in establishing and nurturing the church worldwide.

Gary is personally involved in this international expansion as chaplain and director of mission and ministries opportunities at MVNC. He is currently planning for students and faculty to help open the work of the Church of the Nazarene in Hungary, as well as sending teams to work in schools in India.

Gary's other duties include planning chapel services, facilitating on-campus Bible studies and prayer ministries, coordinating mission and ministry groups, and sending teams of students on inner-city ministry trips to Columbus, Cleveland, New York City, and Florida. He has also recently earned an Ed.D. in religious education from

Twenty-three years of professional youth ministry made Gary Sivewright the natural choice as the main speaker for NYC '95.

George Peabody College of Vanderbilt University and now serves as an assistant professor in religious education.

It was this wide range of experience and depth of commitment that made Gary the natural choice to speak at NYC '95 this summer. It has been said that the heart of religious education is the heart of the religious educator. Gary Sivewright's 23 years of professional youth ministry to generations of teenagers is clear testimony that his heart beats loud and strong out of love for God and for the youth of the church. **HH**

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NYC '95 Special Speakers

Nazarene Youth Congress has traditionally been an opportunity for young people to come face-to-face with some powerful and influential speakers . . . and NYC '95 was no exception! Participants were challenged and educated on a personal level every morning by that day's guest speaker. With individuals like these, you can understand why the morning sessions were a highlight of the week for so many participants!



Tony Campolo



Bob DeMoss



Laurie Polich



Marvin Daniels



Jim Diehl

TONY CAMPOLO

He shouts, he's intense, and he moves from one side of the platform to the other while speaking. Why? Because he has a challenge for young people, and he wants their attention! Dr. Tony Campolo certainly had everyone's attention Wednesday morning, challenging the entire youth congress. Campolo is president and founder of the Evangelical Association for the Promotion of Education, an organization committed to ministry via social programs in less-developed countries as well as with at-risk children and youth in urban America. He is also professor of sociology at Eastern College in St. Davids, Pennsylvania. Campolo is a longtime friend of Nazarene youth, speaking at both NYC '87 and at San Diego '89.

BOB DEMOSS

Bob DeMoss Jr., the Thursday morning speaker, challenged young people to get keyed in to the "voices" of popular entertainment culture—music, film, and advertising. Because the "voices" are so loud and strong, DeMoss encourages teens to think critically about them. A former disc jockey and musician, DeMoss has debated the issue of explicit lyrics on national television during appearances on *Donahue*, *Geraldo*, and *Good Morning America*. He is the author of the book *Learn to Discern* and is featured in Focus on the Family's video, *Learn to Discern: Help for a Generation at Risk*.

LAURIE POLICH

With 11 years of youth ministry experience, Laurie Polich understands the transitions teens face as they move toward adulthood. Polich spoke to the congress Friday morning, challenging young people to look their future square in the face and commit to making the best decisions. Currently serving as a director of youth ministry at First Presbyterian Church of Berkeley, California, Polich also is an associate staff member of Youth Specialties.

MARVIN DANIELS

Marvin Daniels is a pastor in the inner city of Boston. He has worked diligently for years to bring about reconciliation between Whites and Blacks within and outside the Church. Besides speaking in Saturday morning's session at NYC, he served as cofacilitator with Jeff Carr in the seminar, "Racism and Reconciliation" at the 23rd General Assembly and at NYC '95.

JIM DIEHL

The fact that Dr. Jim Diehl is a general superintendent for the Church of the Nazarene doesn't keep him from sitting around a table eating pizza with teenagers. His heart is with young people . . . a truth quickly discovered by teens who meet him. He doesn't apologize for his belief that young people can live their lives as Spirit-filled Christians. Dr. Diehl was elected to the general superintendency in 1993 following a four-year pastorate at Denver First Church of the Nazarene. He previously served as a pastor, college administrator, and district superintendent. Dr. Diehl spoke in the Sunday morning service and led the entire youth congress in celebrating Communion.



Miss America

... AND A SURPRISE GUEST!

NYC participants were treated to a surprise on Sunday evening when Miss America 1995 Heather Whitestone dropped by the arena to greet the congress. An active Christian, Ms. Whitestone is also the nation's first profoundly deaf Miss America. Miss America shared about her own spiritual journey and performed a song in sign language before departing.

NYC '95 Guest Artists

GEOFF MOORE AND THE DISTANCE

For more than eight years, Geoff Moore and the Distance has been thrilling fans with some of the most exciting and versatile Christian music—and thrill they did, as guest artists during Tuesday evening's opening celebration!

Following the highly successful album *A Friend Like You* in 1992, the band's most recent release, *Evolution*, extended their success. The title cut from this latest album, *Evolution . . . Redefined*, is the band's response to issues such as evolution. "If you stand up for and live out what you believe, it gives you integrity in the eyes of your peers and adds significance to what you have to say," says Geoff.

BRIAN WHITE AND JUSTICE

One of NYI's own took the stage during Wednesday's Late Night Feature. Brian is a graduate of Mount Vernon Nazarene College and performed at the 1993 General NYI Convention. Brian also wrote this quadrennium's theme song for NYI, "Lead the Way." One of contemporary Christian music's most successful songwriters, Brian has written for artists such as Al Denson, Larnelle Harris, Debby Boone, and 4Him.

With his 1995 debut release, *Livin' in the Sight of Water*. Brian and his band, Justice, moved front-and-center as artists in their own right. "The message we want to convey is one of hope," says Brian. "There's a place where you can stand firm, even in a fallen world. We can allow God to make a radical change in our lives."

POINT OF GRACE

To say that 1994 was an extraordinary year for Point of Grace would be an incredible understatement. In addition to numerous awards, the group saw its debut album achieve six consecutive number one Christian radio hits—an unprecedented feat in any musical genre. "Extraordinary" was the word many NYC participants were using following the group's powerful performance Thursday evening.

Their second album, *The Whole Truth*, keeps alive the group's commitment to sharing the gospel message and the mercy of Christ through their music. As group member Heather Floyd says, "We're so grateful for all the things that have happened, but number one hits and great albums happen all the time. The things that really make a difference in people's lives—the stand on purity, the family issues, the mercy of Christ—that's what will last!"

CHRISTIAN COMEDY NIGHT

NYC participants were treated to a special Christian Comedy Night on Friday, featuring Nazarene comedians Hicks and Cohagan and Chonda Pierce.

"Serious Humor" best describes the ministry of Hicks and Cohagan. Stephen Hicks and Jerry Cohagan have been performing comedy and drama with a Christian perspective since 1980. Believing that we can laugh while we learn and grow, Stephen and Jerry brought wit, warmth, and a message to Friday's presentation.

A licensed song evangelist in the Church of the Nazarene, Chonda Pierce has made a big impact in the field of Christian comedy. Her quick wit and down-home humor have earned her a place on the Comic Belief Tour, as well as regular appearances on the Grand Ole Opry, and an opening spot on a Garth Brooks tour.

. . . AND MORE!

NYC '95 was filled with some of the best Christian talent around! In addition to each evening's Late Night Feature, participants also enjoyed the ministry of several other artists. These included musical performances by Strange Folk, Against All Odds, C.B.E., Larry Campbell and Friends, A. C. Larj and Chelè, and Soul Support, and special drama presentations by Paul and Nicole Johnson. □

SATURDAY NIGHT OUTREACH CONCERT



Newsboys

Picture close to 6,000 Nazarene teenagers descending on Phoenix for a week of motivational speakers and exciting music. Now encourage these same teens to interact with young people from the Phoenix community—many of whom may never have been exposed to the gospel. Add to this mix the chance for both groups of teenagers to take part in a concert with one of Christian music's hottest groups, and you've got the potential for a powerful moving of the Holy Spirit!

As NYC participants interacted with the Phoenix community through their service projects, they were encouraged to invite other young people to Saturday evening's concert by the Newsboys. This was the first time an intentional evangelistic effort has taken place within the context of Nazarene Youth Congress.

Young people were treated to an awesome concert by the Newsboys, with Anointed, a powerful new quartet, opening the evening. Lori Salierno, a Phoenix-area minister with a passion for young people, spoke briefly to the audience, inviting concertgoers to use that experience to make a lifetime commitment to Christ.

wish everyone had the opportunity to experience an event like Nazarene Youth Congress. To witness firsthand thousands of teenagers worshipping the Lord, receiving training to become more effective Christians, and serving their host city through ministry projects would make an eternal impression on anyone. This is especially true for those adults who seem to think that 13- to 18-year-olds, by definition and by nature, are inherently rebellious, self-seeking, and no-good "monsters." Wayne Rice, cofounder of Youth Specialties and author of the book *Junior High Ministry*, calls this description the "Myth of the Teenage Werewolf." It's the perception that at age 12 or 13 an incredible, unavoidable metamorphosis takes place that, along with the "full moon" of puberty, transforms young people into animal-like creatures who stalk the darkness and avoid the light.

Many parents have bought into this myth, and, unwittingly, promoted it as well. A typical gathering of parents of preschool or elementary-age children abounds with stories of the latest "cute" incident or "advanced" accomplishment of their "little darlings." If the parent of a teenager overhears such a conversation, it won't be long before he or she will interrupt with a statement such as, "Just you wait until they become teenagers!" or "You better enjoy them now because your 'time' is coming!" How many parents have quoted Mark Twain's famous axiom: "When a child turns twelve, you should put him in a barrel, nail the lid down, and feed him through a knot hole. When he turns sixteen, plug the hole." They may attempt to strengthen their argument by saying, "Even Sigmund Freud once suggested that adolescence is a temporary mental illness."

The media has perpetuated this myth. When a teenager makes news headlines, it's usually for gang-related activity, drug abuse, or for killing his parents. Bart Simpson, the under-achieving cartoon caricature of adolescence, has become many people's stereotypical teenager. Television programs portray teens as selfish, pleasure-seeking, cultural misfits bent on causing society (and their parents) as much grief as possible.



The Myth of the

BY TOM LYTLE, pastor to families with teenagers

Are today's teenagers *really* any worse than the youth of previous generations? Most adults would be shocked to know the author of the following critique of young people: "Youth today love luxury. They have bad manners, contempt for authority, no respect for older people, and talk nonsense when they should work. Young people do not stand up any longer when adults enter the room. They contradict their parents, talk too much in company, guzzle their food, lay their legs on the table, and tyrannize their elders." The source? Socrates, indicting the youth of Athens, circa 500 B.C.! Ironically, it seems that the more things change, the more they stay the same.

Are these perceptions fair? As you might imagine, teenagers don't think so. In an essay for *Newsweek*, a high school senior, Brad Wackerlin, responded to popular images of today's teenager:

I write this article to show that a teenager can survive in today's society. Actually, I am doing quite well. I haven't fathered any children. I'm not addicted to drugs, I've never worshiped Satan, and I don't have a police record. I can even find Canada on a map, along with its capital, Ottawa. I guess my

family and friends have been supportive of me, for I've never attempted to become one of those teenage runaways I'm always reading about. Call me a rebel, but I've stayed in school and (can it be true?) I enjoy it. This month, I graduate from high school and join the other graduates as the newest generation of adults. I'm looking forward to four years of college and becoming a productive member of society. I may not be America's stereotypical teen, but that only proves there is something wrong with society's preconceived image of today's teenager (*Newsweek*, Special Edition: "The New Teens—What Makes Them Different," Summer/Fall 1990, p. 22).

This is not to say that adults' views are totally unfounded or unreasonable. Barbara Whitehead of the Institute for American Values identifies some legitimate concerns shared by many parents:

What are parents worried about? When parents look at the world from their child's vantage point, they see uncertainty, change, and danger. They sense, in short, that their children are growing up in an increasingly menacing predatory environment. The assaults come in



Teenage Werewolf

Marion, Ohio, First Church of the Nazarene

the form of an aggressive consumer economy that grabs even the youngest child with alluring promises of popularity and success, if only they will buy the right kind of sneakers and stone-washed jeans. It comes in the form of a precocious peer culture where girls want to be thin at age nine and seductive at age twelve; and where sexually transmitted diseases, drugs, pregnancy, and the threat of AIDS are all a part of teen life in America.

She goes on to identify a major source of the dilemma facing today's youth:

It comes in the form of a hands-off, me-first adult society where children are the exclusive "problem" of parents rather than the responsibility we all share—a society that is increasingly unwilling to make those sacrifices necessary to foster good outcomes for children (*Chicago Tribune*, December 1, 1990).

As I reflect upon 13 years of youth ministry experience and keeping up with the leading youth culture-watchers, I want to speak up in defense of today's teens. I love working with and ministering to them. I find them to be the most reachable, teachable, winnable, and just plain fun generation

on the planet. (It's the *adults* I tend to worry about!)

Beyond my personal viewpoint, there is significant research on adolescent culture that supports a positive view of teens. According to Laurence Steinberg, psychology professor at Temple University and coauthor of *You and Your Adolescent*, there are three facts that every parent should realize:

1. *Fact: Adolescence is not an inherently difficult period.* It produces no more psychological or behavioral problems than any other stage in the life cycle. Almost 90 percent of adolescents steer clear of serious trouble. Good kids don't suddenly turn "bad" at the age of 12 or 13.

2. *Fact: The evils of peer pressure have been overrated.* Although adolescents need to fit in, their peer groups are more apt to be a force for good than evil. (Peers may push a teenager to excel athletically or academically.) Adolescents generally choose friends whose values, attitudes, and families are similar to their own.

3. *Fact: The decline of the family has been overstated.* "Despite neighborhood decay, high divorce rates, the youth culture, and the media, parents remain the major

influence on their children through adolescence and into young adulthood" (*Youthworker Update*, September 1991, p. 6).

Similarly, George Gallup, reflecting on data from the Gallup Youth Survey, wrote in the January 1995 issue of *Youthviews*:

As we begin a new year, even closer to a new century, the news that greets us each morning appears increasingly dismal, and we appear to be further from a world of peace. By contrast, our surveys among young people provide hope for the future. Young people tell us:

—that they are enthusiastic about helping others

—they are willing to work for world peace and a healthy environment

—they feel positive about their schools and even more positive about their teachers.

Young men and women alike look forward to challenging careers, significantly less fettered by outmoded stereotypes about what is "appropriate" for them than did teens of even ten years ago. Let us follow their example (p. 2).

It would appear that Brad Wackerlin was not so unusual after all. My exposure to Nazarene teens convinces me that their idealism is intact (although more tempered by reality than past generations). Their awareness of and concern for others is alive and well, and their moral values reflect biblical standards. Daily contact in the ministry and with "mountaintop" experiences like Nazarene Youth Congress only reinforce my convictions that Christian teens are full of promise!

Do you need a fresh, positive, and realistic perspective on today's youth? Volunteer to be a sponsor at Nazarene Youth Congress in 1999! Or, better yet, get involved with teens in your local church now. They'll appreciate any adults who understand and love them, "fangs and all." It will change forever the way you look at teens!

Photography by Brad Elsberg/Media International, makeup by Michael Shew



A Look Back at NYC

BY STEVE BABBITT

Like a locomotive building a head of steam, Nazarene Youth Congress has been getting bigger and better for nearly 40 years. More importantly, the momentum of this premier Nazarene youth event shows no signs of slowing as it moves into the 21st century.

It was 1958 when teenagers from the United States and Canada got together in Estes Park, Colorado, for the first International Institute, the precursor of Nazarene Youth Congress. The founders wanted to engineer a once-in-a-lifetime event that would challenge and equip young people to become lifelong disciples of Jesus Christ. "Institute" became a regular quadrennial event for older teens who occupied leadership positions in their local and district Nazarene youth organizations.

From the start, International Institute had a secondary aim of promoting unity among members of the Church of the Nazarene from around the world. In 1974, Institute made good on its international commitment by traveling to Switzerland under a new name: World Youth Congress.

WYC returned to Estes Park in 1978, then went international again in Oaxtapec, Mexico, in 1983. (The event was postponed in 1982 for a year to put the growing event on a schedule that didn't coincide with the General Assembly.)

Although WYC was successful in bringing together youth from around the world, language barriers and other cultural differences made communication and logistics dif-

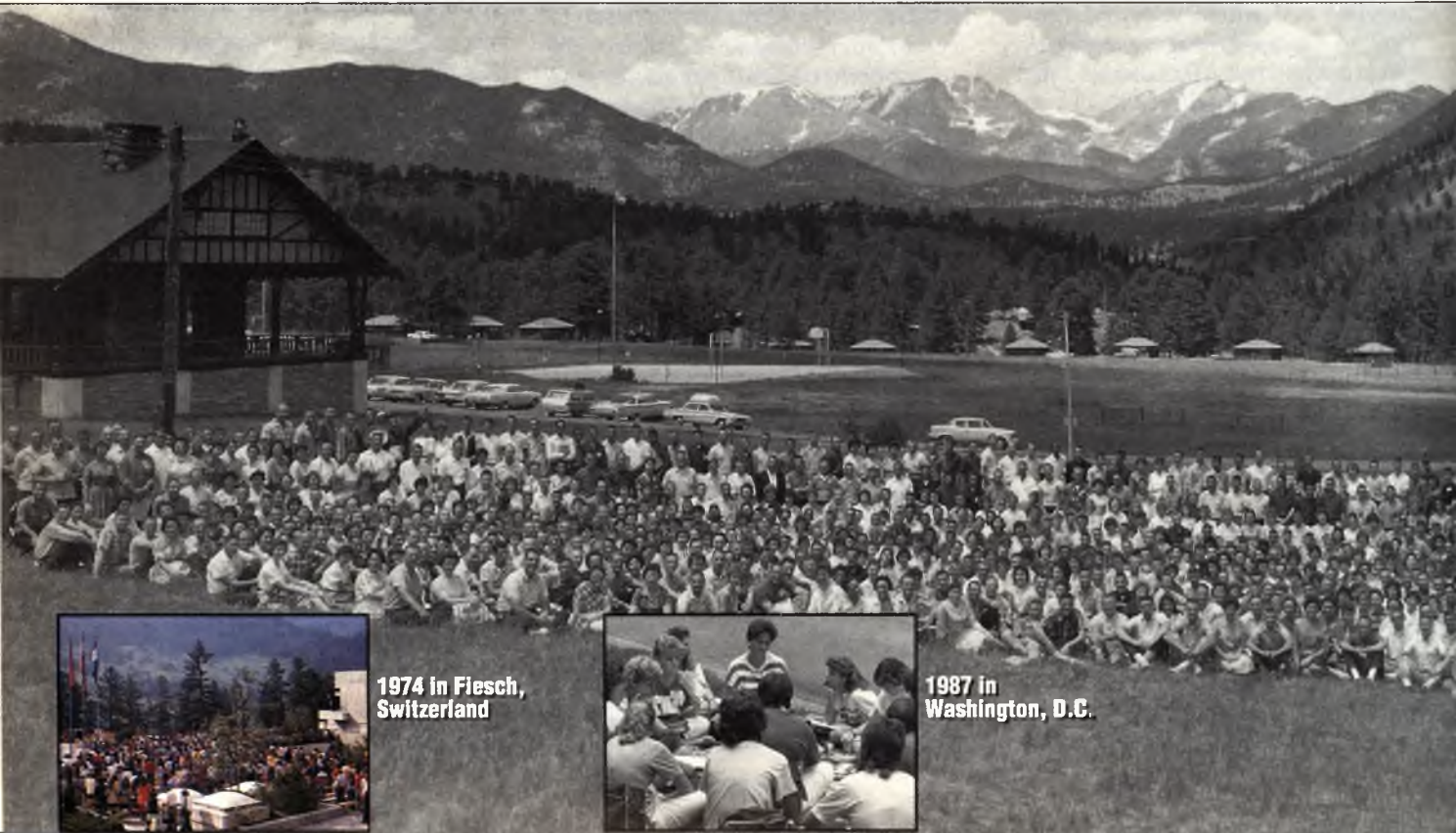
ficult. It was apparent to the leaders of the event that the congress must change to keep it true to its primary purpose of discipleship and leadership training. After careful consideration and prayer, the leaders decided to hold congresses (or conferences) in each of the church's world regions; thus was born NYC as it is today.

The first strictly North American NYC was held in Washington, D.C., in 1987. Participants heard some of Christianity's most influential leaders, including Josh McDowell, Tony Campolo, and Stephen Manley. The second North American NYC took place in 1991 in Orlando, Florida, where Guy Doud, Duffy Robbins, and a host of other national youth leaders challenged participants to live a strong and consistent faith. Top Christian musicians such as Crystal Lewis, GLAD, and Steven Curtis Chapman inspired the '91 congress as well.

These North American NYCs helped support the first regional youth congresses in other world areas. Participants provided start-up funds and trainloads of prayer for the international events.

Since 1991, more than 18 different youth congresses have taken place around the world. In August of this year, the first NYC in the Eastern Mediterranean was held in Amman, Jordan, bringing together Syrian, Jordanian, Egyptian, and Israeli Nazarene youth. In October, Bombay, India, will host the first-ever NYC for the growing Indian

Estes Park, Colorado, 1962



1974 in Fiesch, Switzerland



1987 in Washington, D.C.

church. During the next few months, South Africa, the Netherlands, Argentina, Colombia, and Chile will host NYCs.

Since 1987, service has been a major emphasis of NYC and has given thousands of young people the opportunity to share their faith in Christ through their actions. Projects, ranging from picking up trash to visiting children dying of AIDS to fund-raising for antidrug programs, have not only earned respect from NYC's host communities but have become high points for many of the teenage participants.

Attendance at NYC has increased considerably, especially in recent years. From 2,000 in Oaxtapec in 1983, the number of participants has grown to more than 6,200 in Phoenix this year. Part of this growth reflects a change in the policy for admission. The target audience for International Institute and NYC used to be the top teen leaders of the denomination. Candidates were required to memorize several verses of scripture and go through a series of interviews. Later, the interview process and the number of verses to memorize were pared down considerably. Limits in maximum numbers were raised in hopes that more Christian teens could attend.

The Phoenix congress reflected a further widening of requirements for NYC attendance. Requirements were made more inclusive in hopes that nominally Christian (or even non-Christian) teens would attend. An evangelistic emphasis was added so these teens would have the opportunity to make decisions for Christ at the event.

The next North American NYC will take place in 1999, although a site has not been chosen yet. Regardless of location, however, NYC will once again serve as a powerful tool for shaping teenagers into young disciples and church members. As long as events like NYC remain effective, Nazarene Youth International, the Church of the Nazarene, and the kingdom of God will stay on the right track. **HH**

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Affirming Our Youth as They Share Jesus Christ

by John A. Knight

If we had visited New York City 100 years ago, we would have left the railroad train at Jersey City and crossed the Hudson River through a maze of traffic, and perhaps fog, on a ferryboat.

Those ferryboats served the 19th century well. But early in the 20th century, a group of men, some of them young men, had a new vision for the great metropolis. They realized that the city had been outgrowing its 19th-century plans, transportation systems, and other "ferryboats" of life. They saw a daring vision of tunnels under the Hudson and East Rivers, making it possible for through trains from the south, west, and east to enter the heart of New York City without changing cars.

One of those men was William H. Baldwin Jr., a young engineer and president of the Long Island Railroad. One day as the tunnels under the East and Hudson Rivers were approaching completion, Mr. Baldwin and a neighbor were riding into the city on a ferryboat. The neighbor said, "Won't it be great to live in New York when the tunnels are all finished and one can go in without this waste of lost time?"

"Yes," said the young city engineer with a smile, "I guess it will be great to live in New York *then*; but I would rather live in New York *now*, while the tunnels are being built, and have my part in the building of them."

There speaks the authentic voice of youth.

The 6,000 young people at the Nazarene Youth Congress recently held in Phoenix, Arizona, testify to this high energy and need for challenge. They ask to be spiritual pioneers of their own age, to be trusted and entrusted with a real share in the big projects of God for His kingdom in this world.

Duty to God has too long been a matter of merely attending worship and

placing a few dollars in the collection plates. The youth of the Church of the Nazarene resonate to more than that. They want to be a part of the "Great Commission Movement" as we prepare to move into the 21st century.

Our youth have much to teach us if we will *look, listen, and learn*.

We must not emphasize what the Church has to offer to the point that we neglect what the Church demands of our youth. This is not to suggest that we take less care in making the life of the Church relevant to the needs of our young people. Obviously, the gospel is relevant to the needs of all of us, whatever our age may be. However, it would

IT IS QUITE PROBABLE THAT
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BE THROUGH THE AGENCY
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be a mistake to be trying constantly to show our youth what the Church is doing for them to the neglect of explicitly stating what Christ and the Church *require* of them. Christianity is not simply a means for individual development or even personal salvation. Jesus' life was one of service. Christian consecration must be consecration to service, and our youth are unwilling to accept any other interpretation.

Young people are the chief objective of the scheme of salvation. In youth, the heart is like wax in its impressionableness, like bronze in its retentiveness. Conversion usually occurs between ages 12 and 20. Over 90 percent of

evangelical church members in America were converted before age 23. Less than 5 percent of those who leave college unconverted ever commit to the Christian life. This means that young people must be prime objectives in our evangelistic efforts.

Furthermore, *youth can best win youth.* Christian youth are enthusiastic, aggressive, courageous, and rarely pessimistic. They are the part of the Church most easily mobilized, for high enterprise appeals to their spirit. The youthful are most responsive to the call of God and also most available for service.

The Church has always made a place for youth in its "outreach" efforts. Saul witnessed the stoning of Stephen at 27, and a short time after was commissioned by Christ to bear His name to the Gentiles. Timothy was but 14 when converted, and 18 when called to become the assistant to the great apostle Paul. Adoniram Judson was 22 when he resolved to devote himself to international work and started for India at 24. Robert Morrison was only 22 when he was commissioned by the London Missionary Society to open the Christian work in China. David Livingston was 21 when he answered the call to missions.

One has said, "Wherever in history we mark a great movement of humanity, we commonly detect a young man [or woman] at its head or at its heart. It is quite probable that if this world is ever evangelized, it will be through the agency of young people."

The International Church of the Nazarene salutes her youth who are inspiring the whole Church to renew its mission of introducing Jesus Christ to needy persons on into the new millennium. H



ARE YOU(TH) READY TO DATE?

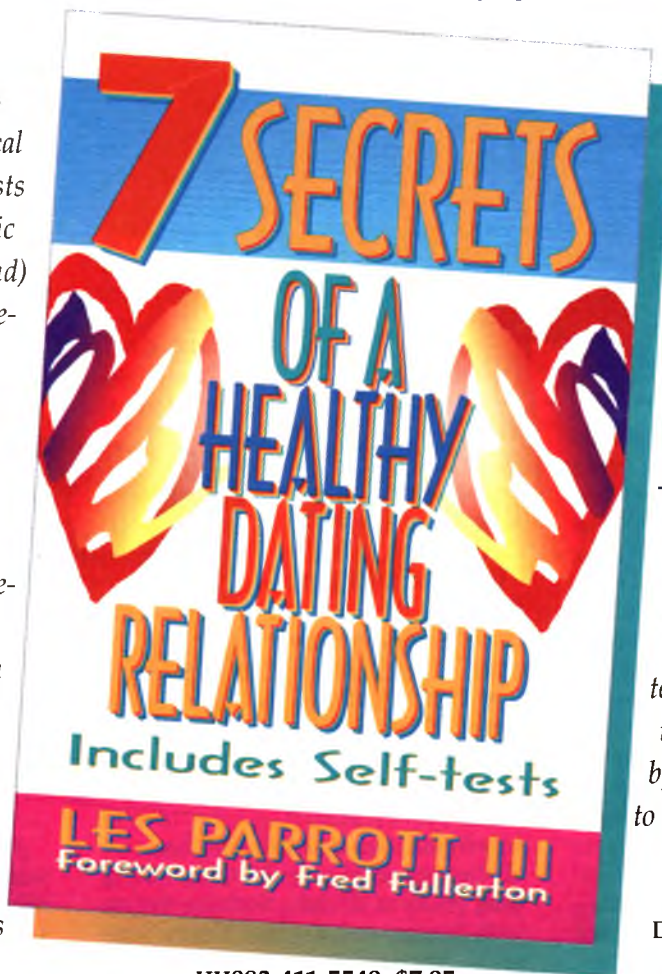
Choosing whom to date – and ultimately finding **true love** – is one of the most **important decisions** teens and young adults will ever make. *7 SECRETS* outlines for youth **seven qualities** to look for in others – and to make part of their own lives – as they **build relationships**. It is written with the **warmth, humor, and keen insight** young people understand and enjoy.

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– **FRED FULLERTON**
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Good Stuff They Said

Quotes from NYC '95

Photography by Brad Elsberg/Media International

4 You might think that young people would grow tired of hearing the many persons who addressed them at NYC '95, but if they did, it didn't show. Speakers in Phoenix talked straight to our young people—about sex, about the stuff they watch on TV or listen to on CDs. They talked to them about their relationships with parents, with peers, and with friends. They called them to relationship with God, with friends, and with the unlovely.

The following quotes represent some of the memorable things said during the plenary sessions at NYC '95.

Tony Campolo

• This is at the heart of the Nazarene tradition—that the same Jesus who died on the Cross was resurrected. He is here. And



now, if you'll let Him, He'll come into your life, and like a sponge, He will absorb out of you everything that's dirty, everything that's dark, everything

that's despicable. He'll cleanse you. He'll make you white as snow. That's what we mean by holiness. Not that you go around piously superior to other people but that you have been cleansed by Jesus, purified by Jesus.

• That's what happens to you not when you just believe in Jesus but when you walk with Jesus, when He's your friend, when you allow

Him to impact your life, when you allow Him to be in you, and change you, transforming you, you end up caring for people. You even end up caring for people you're not supposed to care for.

• The purpose of an education is not to have the credentials to make you rich. The purpose of an education is to be equipped to give yourself away to meet the needs of other people who are in desperate straits.

• The Christian lifestyle isn't just not smoking or dancing and that kind of stuff; the Christian lifestyle is a commitment to give what you have to meet the needs of others.

Gary Sivewright

• Before you were ever created, God had a purpose for you. And with your life you can honor Him by your love and devotion to Him. But when you do your own thing, you shake your fist in God's face and say, "You used to own me. But I call the shots now. I can do anything I want."

• There's nothing intrinsically wrong with doing service projects, good works for the Lord, unless it's replacing something else at which God has challenged us to give. Nothing wrong with going to church. Nothing wrong with coming to Nazarene Youth Congress. Nothing wrong with being an active member of the youth group and going to all the parties. Nothing wrong with all of that. The only thing wrong with it is when it starts taking the place of where God is challenging us in the area of obedience and devotion to Him. And at that point, when



we stop being obedient, slowly but surely, His will and direction for our lives become hazy.

• Of all the choices you have in life, if you would *decide* to follow Him, if you would *decide* to obey Him, then that is real love. And all the things that you said before and all the promises and commitments you made, He understands the failures and defeat, broken promises and commitments, and He says, "Whatever it is that's getting in the way of your devotion to Me, would you be willing to follow again?"

• There's a reason why Jesus will not remove you from this world. Because the truth is, you will never know how holy God is until you see His holiness smack dab up against the conflicts of your life.

• If you linger in the presence of those who have decided that sex is OK, if you watch enough, if you listen to enough, if you think about it enough, it will become a part of who you are.

• The best news I think I can give you tonight is God says there is a reward for those who follow Him. The minute you turn from whatever you are doing, He meets you at your point of need, He forgives, He forgets, He wipes the slate clean.

• You could make a difference in your home. You could make a difference in your church. You could make a difference in the denomination. I don't know exactly what God is going to call you to do, but I do know the Spirit enough to know that it will be very specific. He will not leave you hanging about a ministry. He will tell you exactly what you need to do, and in many cases, He will tell you what you need to say. The question

is: "Do you choose to follow Him?" In the myriad choices you have in life, do you choose to follow? Will you be the one to unwrap the grave-clothes? Will you be the one to bind the wounds? Will you be the one to speak the words of encouragement?

Laurie Polich

● God's love is not based on appearance. He looks straight past your appearance and into your heart.



● It's easy to love when you get something back. But here's a secret—it's powerful to love when you get nothing back. Because then you get to experience the power of God.

● If you want to experience God in your life—love someone.

Bob DeMoss

● MTV tells us day in and day out, as do advertisers, the most exciting sex happens before you get married, with as many possible options as you want to explore.

● Think about who Kurt Cobain was. He sold millions of albums, had lots of cash, finances were not an issue. He traveled first class, was on all the major shows, videos were being played all the time, fame was not an issue. He was bisexual, had a drug habit of up to \$400 a day in heroin, he experimented freely with his



life . . . In the midst of all this, if you think about it, . . . Kurt Cobain had everything according to the world of MTV and pop culture . . . he had everything. What was Kurt Cobain missing? Jesus. He didn't have the

one thing that matters.

● What is wrong with us? How have we allowed so much sin to get into our camp, to get into our lives? And then we wonder why, when it comes to spiritual indigestion, we ain't close with God. We begin to wonder, "Why is my walk so weak? Why don't I have a fire and a passion to change this world?"

Marvin Daniels

● I believe in 1995, right here, right now, that what God wants us to do is become "menaces to society." The word "menace" means to be a threat to or to put someone in danger, and I believe that God has called the Church to be a menace to society.

● In the cities of America, where individuals think that God has left the city . . . He's still there and He's still alive and well.

● Would anybody know that you are a Christian without you telling them? If somebody doesn't say that there's something different about you in the course of your lifetime, something's wrong, because nothing is different.



● Unfortunately, what we're finding in the church among our young people is that the Bible is like crack to you. You use the Bible like a person who is on crack. That is, when you're down, you're feeling kind of low, and you need to be pumped up a little bit, you go to God's Word and you make sure that as you snort it or as you sniff it or as you pop it, it makes you feel good for a while. But then when the high has become low again, you need another fix. There is no consistency.

● What they [non-Christians] are convinced about when they begin to see individuals in the church playing the church game, they are convinced that if you are worshiping this guy named Jesus Christ who has come in

authority upon this earth, if He doesn't seem to be doing anything in your life, what makes you think He'll do anything in mine? If your Jesus can't keep your families together, how can He help me? If your Jesus can't cause you to stand up when you see racial injustice, what good is He for me?

● When you leave here, Mom's gonna be the same way, so is Dad. When you leave here, the neighborhood isn't going to change, and guess what?—neither has your church. What are you going to do when you come down from this mountaintop experience? Are you going to really be a menace to society when you go back into the 'hood? Are you going to be a menace to society? Or are you just going to simply be a part of society?

Jim Diehl

● You'll go home, you are so happy, high, blessed, hyped, pumped, and somebody is going to do something they shouldn't do when you get home. Satan will try to steal your joy. Don't let him do it.

● We love you, we want you in the church. We never ever, never ever, want you nor anybody else to say that our youth are the church of tomorrow. Not on your life! You are a vital part of the church of today.



● I plead with you, I beg you, I urge you, young people, give your life back to the Creator God who gave it to you, then invest your life in people.

● This champion wrestler jumped up [from the altar] and yelled, "He pinned me! He pinned me!" What was he saying? "For the first time in my life, I surrendered to Christ. And He pinned me." I'll tell you this, when Jesus pins you, He doesn't defeat you, He sets you free.

Serving Others in the Valley of the Sun

Service Projects at NYC '95

The tradition of service to others that has been a key part of past Nazarene Youth Congresses was continued in a big way at NYC '95. The 6,000 young people found themselves involved in some 200 separate projects: on the streets handing out packets of toiletry items and water to the homeless; in nursing homes singing and visiting the elderly; at churches, parks, and malls presenting skits and conducting Vacation Bible Schools; constructing playground equipment at churches and parks; roofing, fixing up, and painting houses and churches; and (for the first time) conducting basketball clinics for inner-city youth.

"My question to you is, 'For one small moment, will you allow them to touch you?'" challenged Ed Robinson, Nazarene Theological Seminary professor and consultant to NYI who led the training sessions for the young people prior to the service projects. "If we are going out into the city of Phoenix to give compassion to say, 'We always go and give compassion,' then we are doing nothing more than using this city for our purposes. But if we are willing to say, 'We want to share our spirit with you, we want to share the kingdom of God with you, but we're also willing to listen and to

allow you to share your spirit with us,' then, instead of treating them as objects—as things to be used for our purpose—we engage them as people created by God, and we both grow by the experience."

The projects were coordinated with about 80 agencies throughout the Phoenix area, according to Don Diehl, NYC '95 projects coordinator.

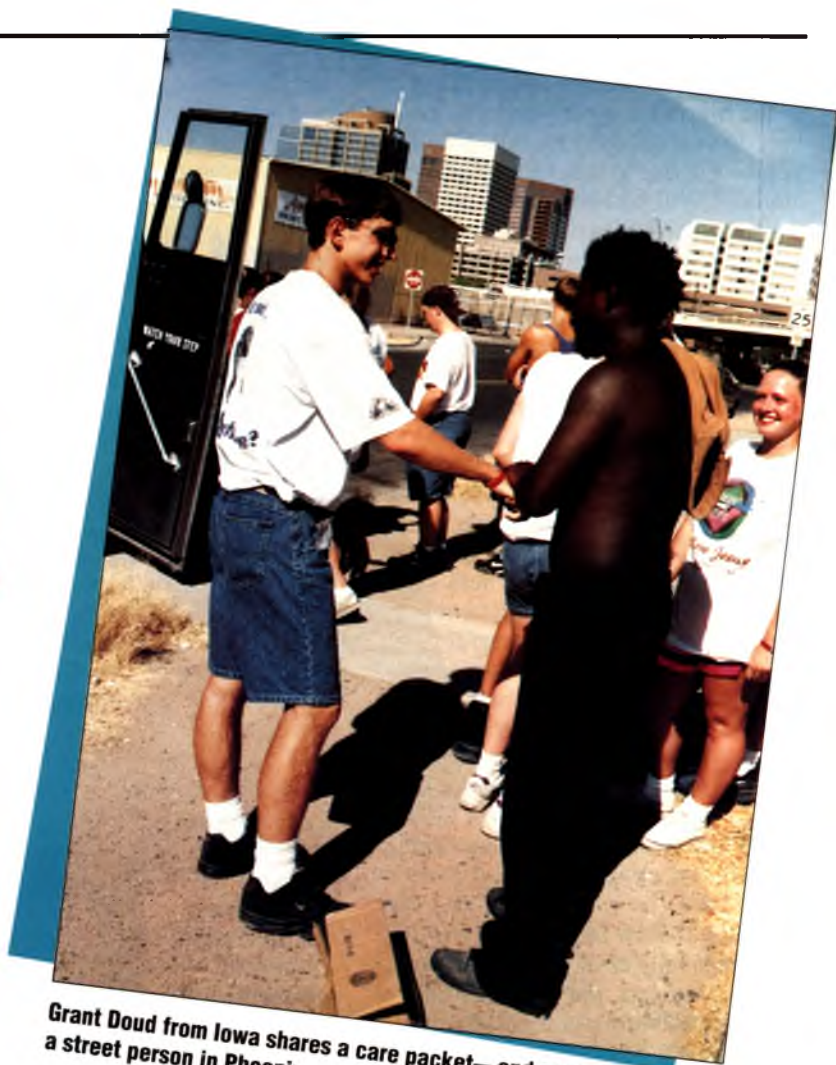
"We [NYC '95 leaders] and the agency people within Phoenix are just thrilled with the job that they did," said Diehl. "We have definitely made an impact on this community. One of the goals that we had when we set out with this was to try to let people know that there are teenagers in this world who do care and who do want to make a difference and are making a positive change in this world. I am so proud of our Nazarene teens. They have just given a great

testimony for Christ and for what God really can do in our lives and what that means as we live that out in the community."

"It was amazing and gratifying to discover that over 6,000 young people were performing more than 200 service projects throughout our community," said Phoenix Mayor Skip Rimsza. "This was important and impressive stuff, and these are important and impressive kids. I extend my heartfelt thanks to them all."

"I want to tell you how proud I was to tell my coworkers that the teens in town were representatives of my church," said Edie Vetter, who works in downtown Phoenix.

Indeed, all of us are proud of the great bunch of kids who served God through service to others during NYC '95.



Grant Doud from Iowa shares a care packet—and some time—with a street person in Phoenix.

*NYC '95
Service
Projects*



"I want to tell you how proud I was to tell my coworkers that the teens in town were representatives of my church."



Service projects were performed across the city of Phoenix.

(Clockwise from top) (1) Teens from the Georgia District construct a playground. (2) Ed Robinson challenges the teens during a training session in preparation for the 200 projects. (3) Three young men from the Kansas City District break ground for the laying of pipe at a Habitat for Humanity site. (4) Natalie Baker from the Joplin District paints an eave at the home of an elderly couple. **HH**



Photography by Brad Elsberg/
Media International

Equipping Seminars

An important part of every NYC is the equipping seminars for teens and adults. A broad spectrum of sessions was available at NYC '95.

For teens, these ranged from basic Bible study-type workshops and how to share your faith, to the hot topics of creative dating, dealing with sexual temptation, getting along with your family, and how to deal with emotions.

“One of the most attended workshops [with well over 1,000 attendees]



One area that received spe-

cial accent at this NYC was that of urban ministry. This included a workshop by that title as well as one on racial reconciliation. “Although it has always been a legitimate form of ministry, we and a lot of churches have neglected urban youth ministry,” said Edwards. “It is an important area, especially in light of worldwide demographics that indicate the biggest population among young people is going to be in urban settings.”

Some of the most popular workshops were those featuring plenary speakers like Tony Campolo, Laurie Polich, and Bob DeMoss.

Young people were required to attend three seminars during the week. Topics were developed based on surveys and from consultations with General NYI Council members and district presidents. More than 85 seminars were conducted during NYC '95.

was ‘Stress Management for Teens,’” said Rick Edwards, executive editor for Nazarene Youth International and coordinator of seminars for NYC '95. “We know that kids are under stress, and it’s a popular topic, but we didn’t anticipate how many would be interested in this workshop. Teens are pressured to be in everything—band, choir, sports, and then there are lifestyle pressures—to make good grades, tensions in the home, dealing with divorce.”

For adults, topics included such areas as mentoring, women in youth ministry, helping the children of divorce, tending to your own spiritual life, and youth ministry in the rural church. For the first time, there was a seminar exclusively for the wives of youth ministers.

One area that received special



More than 85 seminars for teens and sponsors were held at NYC '95. (Above) Wes Meisner talks about ministry on secular campuses. (Below) Penny Tucker led the workshop to help teens in praying for the needs of others.

Photos by Brad Elsberg/Media International

The Sponsors' Eye View of NYC

young lives.”

Danelle M. Brown, who works for a financial services company in Tacoma, Washington but hopes to become a youth minister, said that she came “to explore God’s will for my own life. I don’t like for opportunities to find me; I like to find them,” she said.

Are you glad you came? “Yes,” said the Ringhisers. “This is our fourth NYC. It’s spiritually exciting and mentally stimulating.” “I can’t imagine not being glad,” said Dave Holtz. “The best speakers and musicians, and best of all, seeing youth and their leaders grow in faith.” “I feel like it’s equipping me to rebuild our youth ministry at home,” said April Day. “Absolutely,” affirmed Dan Hilen, “if you love teens, this is the only place to be.”

“I’m glad I came,” said Ruth Holtz. “Even hearing the alarm go off after three hours of sleep is a small price to pay to see these kids growing in worship and service.”

What do you think NYC is doing for the kids you are supervising? “It’s helping them become serious, knowledgeable Christians,” said Danelle Brown. “My kids are being challenged, motivated, and planted in Christ,” said April Day. “NYC is feeding their hungry, searching souls.” According to Ruth Holtz, “NYC encourages teens because they see thousands of other teens who want to serve Christ.” “NYC is helping our kids mature spiritually,” said Carmen Ringhiser. “Some of them are dealing with calls to full-time Christian service. It was at WYC years ago that I settled my call.” “This will be a lifelong spiritual highlight for every teen,” said Dan Hilen.

Have you learned anything new

about Nazarene teens? One thing Dave Holtz noticed was how easily the worldly culture subtly creeps into teen lifestyles. “It is good to see them respond positively when this is pointed out to them.” “They are enthusiastic and teachable,” said the Ringhisers. “There are a lot of them,” said Dan Hilen. “It’s encouraging to them to see that they are part of a bigger family.” “I’m impressed that they are so excited about becoming evangelists,” said Brown. April Day said, “I’ve learned how much our teens really do love Christ and that many are willing to stand up for Him.”

Have you gained any insights to take home with you?

“Definitely,” said April Day. “I’m 26, but a lot has changed since I was a teen.

NYC taught me a lot about what teens are interested in. I’ve also found that there are Christian alternatives to secular rock music.” “Never let up on creativity,” is what the Ringhisers said they learned. “Continually modify ideas to fit our youth.” “Like it or not,” Dave Holtz said, “we are in competition with the world. We must use first-class media and tools to reach youth.” “Be genuine, be real.

Teens searching for identity need honest leaders who genuinely love them,” said Dan Hilen. What Danelle Brown is taking home is a quote from Tony Campolo: “If we lose our teens, it will not be because we made Christianity too hard but because we made it too easy.”

“One thing I’ve learned,” said April Day, “is how important NYI is to the Church of the Nazarene. Our teens are worth all the effort, money, prayers, sweat, and tears.”



Ruth Holtz



Gary Ringhiser



Carmen Ringhiser



Dan Hilen



April Day



Dave Holtz



Danelle M. Brown

NYC couldn’t happen without them!

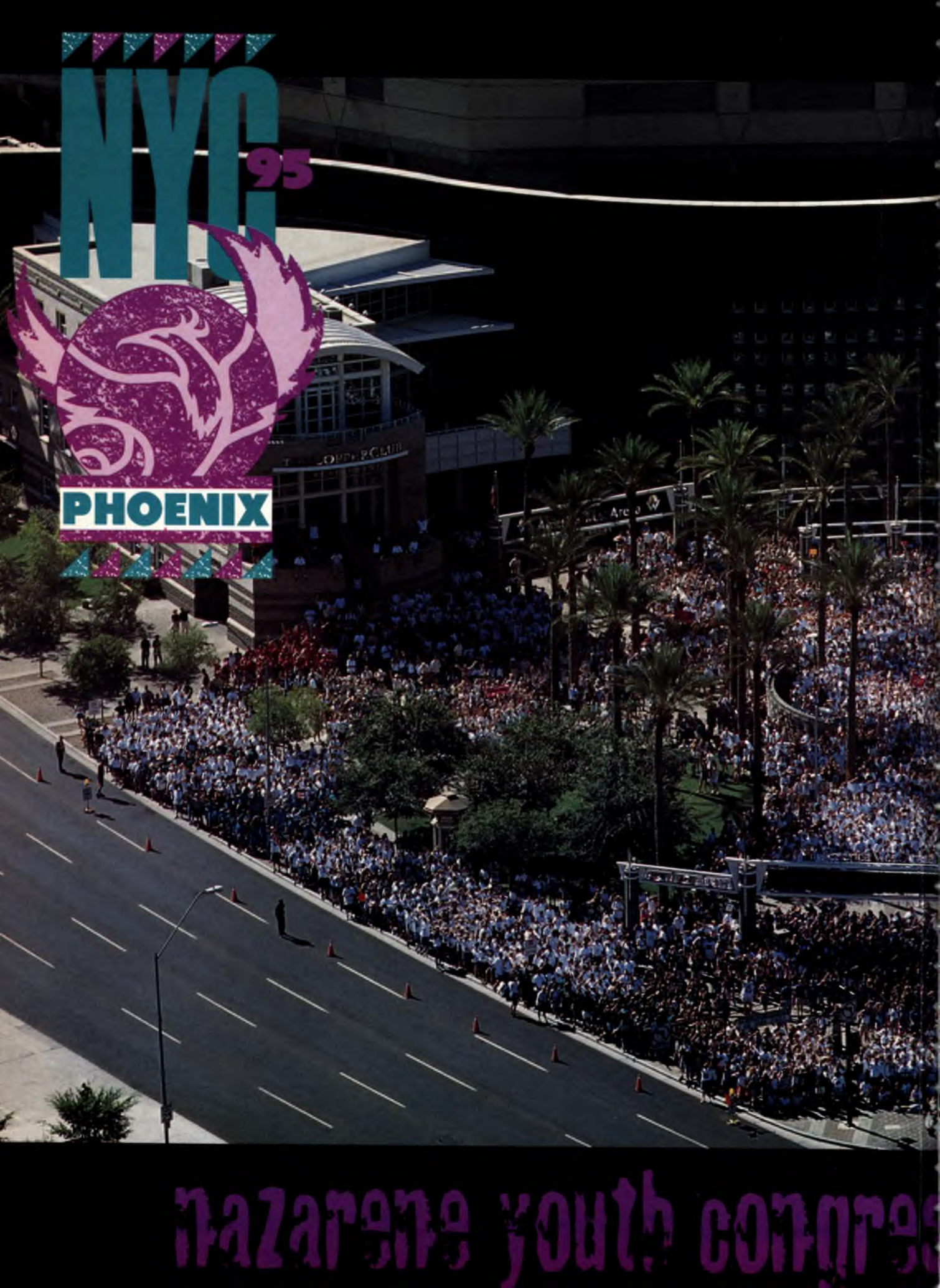
I am talking about the adult sponsors. We asked some of them why in the world they would come to any place where there were 6,000 teens. “I love teens,” said Dan Hilen, a youth pastor in West Chester, Ohio. “I wanted to spend quality time with

teens—get to know them better,” said April Day, a homemaker from Wilder, Kentucky.

For Dave and Ruth Holtz, who are in the banking business in Toronto, NYC ’95 was their fourth NYC. Ruth said, “There was no doubt that I would attend NYC

’95.” Dave and Ruth serve as youth coordinators on their district. Dave said that the first NYC he ever attended (1983) “changed my view of the Church of the Nazarene.”

Gary and Carmen Ringhiser work with youth in Puyallup, Washington. “We came because we believe in NYC. We believe it accomplishes its purpose—making real changes in



NYC 95



PHOENIX

nazarene youth congress



• July 25 - 31, 1995

What Happened to Me at NYC

Lives were changed at NYC '95, no doubt about it! We talked to a cross-section of young people during the week, asking them such things as "How would you describe NYC '95?" and "What did God do for you?" Here's what they told us.

Describe: "Awesome! Seeing all the teens that are Christians here praising the Lord and just being together in worship is great."

Testimony: "It was life-changing. God spoke to me through everything. I've grown so much since I got here. It's really cool."

Taverlee Blanchard, 17
Elmsdale, Canada

Describe: "The worship times have been like an awesome revival."

Testimony: "The past couple of weeks, I have been kind of down on my home church. It's amazing how God lifted me up this week."

Brandon Nakano, 15
Hilo, Hawaii

Describe: "The speakers were great. They knew just what we are going through. I especially liked the dramatic presentations of Johnson and Johnson. They really spoke

to me."

Testimony: "Sometimes I have doubts. I was praying that I would come here and God would speak to me and show me His will. He did. He told me that He loves me, that He died for me, and not to worry, because He'll be with me throughout my whole life."

Mary Avedian, 15
Glendale, California

Describe: "The speakers and the musical artists were both excellent, but I was sad when the time for the speakers ran out. I wanted to hear more."

Testimony: "It was really a time of just recognizing what I believe and reaffirming that Christ is the only thing really worth living for. It was very exciting."

Chris Corwin, 17
Waterloo, Iowa

Describe: "It was a great experience. The altar calls at the end of the evening services were the best part. That's where I really felt the Lord's presence."

Testimony: "One night, I was praying at the altar with a lot of my friends. I reached out my hand to one of my friends and some girl that I had never seen before took my hand, put her arms

around me, leaned her head on my shoulder, and started to cry. All of a sudden, I started to cry. We just sat there and cried together through the prayer and for five minutes afterward. We got up, said our names, and we actually found each other the following morning at breakfast.

It was really moving. God is able to touch you through other people."

Buffie Longmire, 15
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Describe: "Spiritually uplifting, very exciting, and fun."

Testimony: "It changed the way I look at life and made me think more about my life spiritually—of how I need to commit all of it and give it back to God."

Vito Montebalco, 16
Lewiston, Idaho

Describe: "It's been awesome—so many young people loving the Lord and living their lives for Christ and wanting to grow. It was amazing. It gives me strength to know that there are other Christians out there and that I am not alone."

Testimony: "I've been struggling with college issues—where I want to go—what I want to do with my life. I

thought I had given everything to God, but I was still holding on to some things and worrying. I think I know that I shouldn't worry, because God's got a plan for me. He'll open the doors."

Catherine Bowers, 17
Nashville, Tennessee

Describe: "Awesome! It was great. I had a lot of fun."

Testimony: "It really helped me a lot in my spiritual growth. I wish that all teens from our youth group could have attended, because it would have been a good experience for everybody."

Chris Fingerhut, 17
Doe Run, Missouri

Describe: "It was a life-changing experience. It was incredible to see this many kids coming together, all from Nazarene churches."

Testimony: "You could feel the Spirit of God throughout the week."

Sarah Stude, 17
Sitka, Alaska

Describe: "Excellent! The concerts—the speakers—it was great!"

Testimony: "I think I have come to realize what God wants me to do, the areas I need to change. I also have come to know that I am not



alone in the world. There are a ton of teenagers the same as me with the same problems. When I go home, I want to change things. I want to tell my friends more about what I have, and that they need Him too."



Dale Hatchard, 16
Nova Scotia, Canada

Describe: "I think it was very spiritual. I couldn't believe there were so many Nazarene kids out there who would do something like this—pay all this money, then go and work for people."

Testimony: "I renewed my commitment to God. I feel more sure than ever that I can go out there and, even if I'm by myself, I'm not by myself, because



I know there are others like me out there serving God."

Somer Gant, 15
Nairobi, Kenya

Describe: "It was a great gathering of people from everywhere that were here to praise God and learn more about Him and just have a great time—a once in a lifetime experience."

Testimony: "I was encouraged by the great speakers. I want to go back home and witness to others for God."



Joshon Miller, 15
Bethany, Oklahoma

Describe: "It was an incredible experience! It was really uplifting. It was so exciting seeing everyone praising the Lord."

Testimony: "I was a Chris-

tian before I came here, but I made a total—I mean *total*—commitment to the Lord. Most of my friends are leaving for college in the fall, and most of them aren't Christians. I'm ready to tell them what I experienced and what they can experience and how even if they don't fit into their college, they will always have a friend—Jesus will always be there!"



Jill Loftin, 18
Columbia Station, Ohio

Describe: "It was powerful. When you see 6,000 teens gather together for Christ, I think that's awesome!"

Testimony: "The whole week was great. Sometimes, you go to camp and only like part of it, but here the whole week spoke to me. I liked the service projects, because we got out in the community and helped people. It was pretty cool!"



Charles Chaney, 18
Eastwood, Texas

Describe: "Tremendous! It made an impact on my life."

Testimony: "I got closer to God, made a strong commitment to Him, and had a great time getting to know other people who had the same experience."



Amy Gardner, 17
Malawi

Describe: "It was a blast!"

Testimony: "It helped me to realize there's a lot of garbage out there."

Dan Reel, 18
Molalla, Oregon



Photos by Brad Elsborg/Media International

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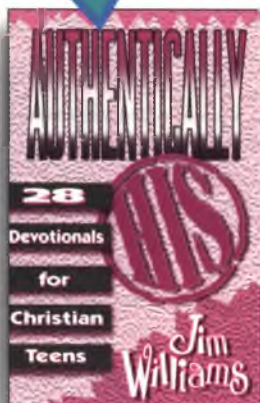
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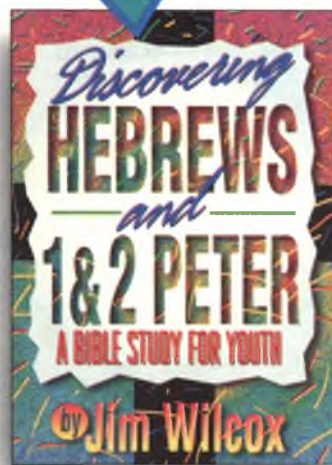


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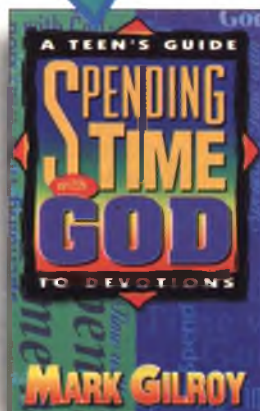
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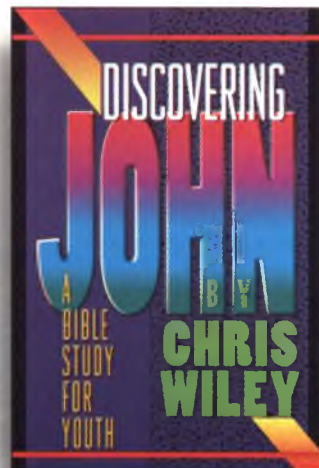


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Nazarene Youth Dig Deep for Outreach to China

Nazarene young people expressed their dedication to missions in a tangible way during NYC '95. They did this through their giving for the special NYI Mission Project for China Ministries. On Wednesday evening, Rick Power, missionary to Hong Kong, spoke to the young people, thanking them for what they have done and for what they were going to do to help extend the gospel to the people of China.

"I have been to the universities of China," said Rick in his challenge to the NYCers. "I have lived on campus and studied among the students there, and I can tell you that the believing students in China today would have no way of imagining the kind of event you and I are sharing in here. It is beyond their comprehension—their wildest dreams.

"Their Christian gatherings take the form of getting together in a dormitory room or an apartment on campus. They sing their hymns very quietly. They pray fervently. They open their Bibles and soak up the teaching of the scriptures like dry sponges. To be a Christian student in China today means that you live with a haunting fear and wonder of what your future

holds. It means that if you witness, you have to overcome the stigma of being strange, of being a little out of balance. And, in fact, if it is known that you are a Christian, you may jeopardize your grades or your future career—you may be putting your whole life on the line to say that you are a believer in Jesus Christ."



Rick Power talks to teens at NYC '95

Rick went on to say that Chinese students don't have a lot of things that western Christians take for granted, but they do have short-wave radios, along with a desire to know more about God. The Church of the Nazarene is working with Trans World Radio to produce a nightly short-wave radio program that will be targeted at university students in the world's most populous nation.

For the past year and a half, teens on districts across North America have been washing cars, selling cookies and pizza—even selling themselves (as "slaves for a day") to raise money for the China Ministries Project. The money will be used not only to provide radio broadcasts to university students in China, but to provide follow-up literature for listeners and support for Rick and Vicki Power as they minister to the Chinese people.

On Wednesday night of NYC '95, NYI President Jim Williams announced that the young people had raised \$106,335 up to that point. He challenged the conferees to contribute \$5 each that night. When the tally was completed, those gathered in the America West Arena had given an additional \$43,000 toward the work in China.

"You will do many things with your money this week," said Rick to the crowd on Thursday evening of NYC



'95. "You'll buy posters, T-shirts, videos, and food. You may even lose some money. But you will do nothing more significant with your money than what you did last night. With this offering, you have reached around the world to make a difference in the lives of some students who really need it, and I say 'thank you!'"

The China Ministries Project will continue through the close of 1995, according to NYI Ministries Director Fred Fullerton. It is a Ten Percent Special. Contributions may be sent in care of China Ministries/NYI, 6401 The Paseo, Kansas City, MO 64131.

Photo by Brad Elsberg/Media International

ONCE IN A LIFETIME—NYC '95

Glimpses from NYC

Scenes from a week of fun, work, and worship

Photos by Brad Elsberg/Media International



Lots of people



David Alexander, NYC music coordinator, leads the PR groups from the North American colleges.



Reflection



A happy face—NYC-style

1995 BIBLE QUIZZING FINALS
Phoenix Youth Congress '95
July 28-31, 1995
Phoenix, Arizona



Paul Skiles receives the first NYI "Timothy Award" for his devoted service to the young people of the church. It was presented by his granddaughter NYCer Kristen St. John.



SNU wins the quizzing championship.



Sing along!



Miss America, Heather Whitestone, "signed" a song and shared her testimony on Sunday night.



Cool!

NAZARENE YOUTH INTERNATIONAL PRESENTS
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Guest: Anointed
Speaker Lori Salerno
29, 1995 8:00 p.m.
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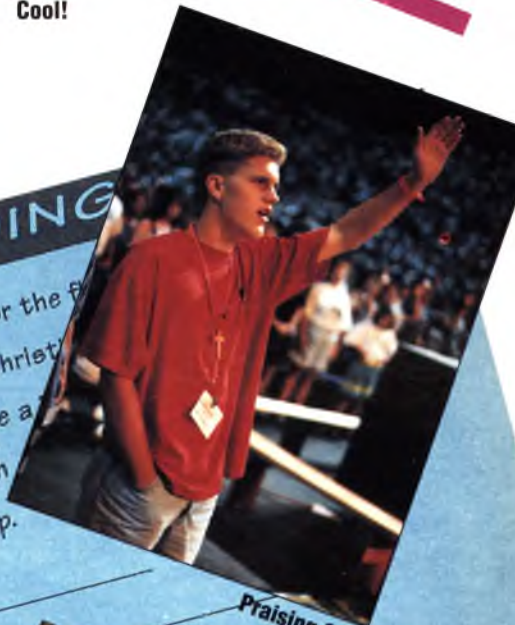
NYC & THE NEWSBOYS
Going Public!

ADMISSION WITH TICKET

Participants celebrated the death and resurrection of Jesus on Sunday morning.



Another happy face



Praising God!

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Although blind, NYCer Janelle Dean honored God with a powerful song and testimony.

Believing that true commitment to God, my friends, my future children from this day on, I will enter a biblical marriage relationship.



Sumo wrestling anyone?

making this commitment the first time.
If you have made this commitment previously, this is a restatement of that commitment.



"Why did I stand up?"



Shelley Phillips of Point of Grace. The group brought beauty and grace (and great music) to Thursday night's session.



Newsboys vocalist John James shines for the crowd.



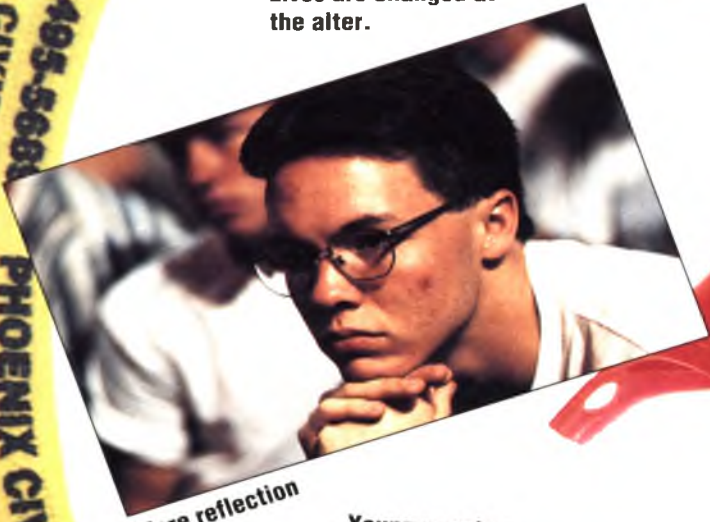
Lives are changed at the alter.



Geoff Moore and the Distance

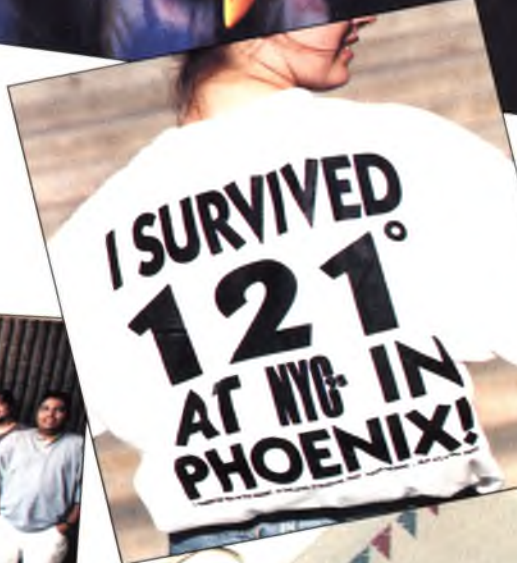


NYCers let their lights shine during Sunday's closing service.



More reflection

Young people and sponsors from world-class cities came together at NYC for an urban summit.



On Friday of NYC, the temperature in Phoenix reached 121—the second highest in history—but we survived!



What, me worry?



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Rock Music:

Why Do Teens Listen?

BY AL MENCONI

As I speak across the country, I find Christian parents fighting with their teens about rock music. Underneath the arguments and demands, dads are asking, "If my kids are Christians, why do they listen to that garbage? Can't they see what it's doing to them? How can I get them to see? How can I make them understand?"

Does that sound familiar? Do you find yourself arguing over rock music with your children? Let me offer some insights that might help you better understand your teens.

I believe the most important question for parents to ask is "Why is my teen attracted to rock music in the first place?"

When asked why they like rock music, most kids say, "I like the beat," or "It's fun. There's nothing wrong with it!"

If the attraction was just the beat, most young people would have loved the windshield wipers on my old '82 Volkswagen Rabbit. Dum-ti-ti-tum, dum-ti-ti-tum, dum-ti-ti-tum. I was always impressed that they had the same rhythm as most of the hits on the top 40 stations.

I believe it's not the beat that keeps kids listening to the empty philosophies in rock music today. My experience tells me the attraction is much deeper. In fact, it has far less to do with the music than you might think. It's more serious. If we are going to

make any progress with teens today, we must understand that the rock star meets three of their basic needs.

Unlimited Time

The first need rock stars meet is unlimited time. They never tell your child to come back when they're not busy. They never say they're too tired to sing. All teens need to do is plug in their favorite cassette or compact disc, and their star will spend as much time with them as they want.

Teens see time as value. They inherently understand that whatever we spend the most time with is the most important. And whatever we spend the least time with is the least important. We may say, "I love you," but it doesn't ring true to them unless we make an effort with the time we have.

Often we feel we give our teens as much time as we can. "I just can't do any more," we say, especially those of us who are single parents. The answer isn't necessarily doing more but what takes priority with the amount of time we do have.

I learned a valuable lesson from my older daughter a few years ago. One evening I was watching my favorite television program as she was going to bed. I normally go to her bedroom and talk about the day, pray, and kiss her good night. On this night, however, she came out of her bedroom before I could get there. "If you have to wait for the com-

If we are going to make any progress with teens today, we must understand that the rock star meets three of their basic needs.

mercial to kiss me good night," she said matter-of-factly, "don't bother."

You can bet I jumped out of my easy chair and followed her into her bedroom to kiss her good night immediately!

She was actually asking, "Do you really love me? Prove it." She wanted to know if she was more important than television.

If we don't show our children love by spending time with them, then the rock stars are always there. They are never late. Nothing else is ever more important.

Unqualified Acceptance

The second need teens' favorite rock stars meet is unqualified acceptance. They never criticize teens. They never embarrass them in front of their friends. They never say, "Be responsible. Pick up your clothes. If you eat that, you'll get pimples. Sit up straight. Do your homework," and so on. They accept teens just as they are.

I don't believe we should never correct teens, but if we communicate criticism better than acceptance, we'll lose them every time.

I have a friend who is a family counselor. He tells of a time when a fellow counselor invited him to lunch, during which he criticized a certain aspect of my friend's counseling. My friend listened, but felt confident in his practice and didn't feel that he

needed to change. The next time they went to lunch, the man criticized another aspect of my friend's counseling. Again, my friend listened.

On a third luncheon, the other counselor criticized a third aspect of my friend's work. My friend who was telling the story leaned over to me and said, "You know, if he asks me to go to lunch again, I'm not going."

Why not? He didn't enjoy the constant criticism. It's in our nature to avoid the critic and turn to someone who will accept us without criticism.

Could it be that we do the same thing to our children? I know it could be a major flaw in my relationship with my daughters. I'm eager to offer my advice, even when it's not asked for. It's tough to just sit and listen. But I see my children pulling back when I come on too strong. This is one area I work on all the time.

I often play catch with my daughters. As a former coach, I find myself "teaching" my daughters how to do it better every time we play. But they want only to play catch!

They've raised the question more than once. "Can't we just play? Does everything have to be a learning experience?" I'm trying, but it's no wonder my girls aren't as excited about playing with their daddy as they used to be.

Reliable research has suggested that for every correction we give a child, we should give 10 posi-

tive reinforcements. What is our purpose when we "play catch" with our children? Is it to "make them better"? Or is it simply to spend time with them because we enjoy being with them? Our perceptive kids know the difference.

We have to ask ourselves, "Is there an atmosphere of acceptance in my home? Or do my kids feel as if anything they do is never good enough, no matter how hard they try?" Maybe that's why Paul warns fathers not to provoke their children, "or they will become discouraged" (Colossians 3:21, NIV).

Understanding and Interest

The third need teens' favorite rock stars meet that parents may not understand. They know the questions teenagers are asking in our godless society. Typically, rock stars are telling our teens, "You need to explore your sexuality. Your parents are out of touch. They don't understand your problems like I do. That Christianity they try to cram down your throat is a bunch of old wives' tales to keep weak people in line."

Why do teens listen to such messages? These rock stars have built up a lifetime of trust. They have earned the right to be heard. How about us?

Say I worked hard at my job for eight hours a day, sometimes working six, even seven days a week when necessary. Say I work at this job for 52 weeks a year for 10 years or more. And I love it. How would I feel if my wife didn't know what I did during the day and showed no interest in finding out?

I would feel that she didn't care for me as a person, wouldn't I? If she cared, she would show some interest in what I'm committed to.

We need to ask, "When was the last time I sat down and listened to my child talk about the frustrations of being a young person . . . without being quick to offer advice or criticism?"

If we haven't given our children time, we haven't

earned the right to be heard by them. If we haven't offered them acceptance, why should they believe we understand their problems? And if we don't understand their problems, why should they accept our solutions?

Axl Rose, lead vocalist of one of rock's most popular bands, Guns 'N Roses, says, "Rock music was my best friend when I was growing up." This same quote could have been made by most of today's rock stars and millions of today's young people.

Yet I ask many of today's parents, "What are your teens' favorite music groups?" Often the response is, "I don't know. I tell them to turn it down and close their door. I don't want to hear it."

What does our lack of interest in our teens' world show? As far as they're concerned, it shows we really don't care for them as people, even if we truly love them.

Meanwhile, rock stars are giving them emotional hugs, something only someone who really cares is able to do. Is it any wonder that our teens scream, "I hate you!" when we forbid their music? We are taking away their best friend.

I'm not suggesting we allow teens to listen to whatever they like. But there's a better way to deal with this issue. If we see rock music as a problem, we need to understand that teens see it as a solution and a friend; it meets their needs!

Before we talk to our teens about changing their music, we have to earn the right to be heard. We've got to replace the artificial emotional hugs they get from rock stars with the real emotional hugs of the love of God shining through us, their parents.

We must ask ourselves, "Do my teens trust me as a friend? When I attempt to take away their 'friend,' am I replacing it with a better one?"

The one they really want is you.

This article is adapted from Media Update, a bimonthly publication of All Menconi Ministries that keeps parents and church leaders informed about the latest trends and personalities in secular and Christian music.

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Between the Routine and the Sublime

MORRIS A. WEIGELT



Morris A. Weigelt teaches spiritual formation at Nazarene Theological Seminary.

AT A RECENT RETREAT focusing on the Lord's Prayer, the leader asked this disconcerting question: "At which phrase in the Lord's Prayer do you normally begin to really pray meaningfully?"

The primary question is: how do repetition and frequency of devotional practice fit into the pattern of spiritual formation?

Frequently, I have noticed persons who lead in public prayer shift from the first person of address to the third person. Instead of praying: "We ask you, O gracious God, to touch and heal and restore," I hear them saying: "We ask that God will come and touch and heal and restore." I can never quite decide to whom the prayer is addressed. I am tempted to believe that routine has replaced reality. The routine seems to have lost touch with the divine.

Howard Tillman Kuist in *Scripture and the Christian Response* tells the story of a person who purchased a beautiful painting because of the vivid depiction of the fire roaring in a fireplace. In just a few years, the brilliant pigments began to lose their vitality and the picture lost its appeal. The buyer took the painting back to the artist and said, "Would you be so kind as to relight the fire?"

Most of us have had the longing to go back and ask that the fire of our spir-

itual lives be relighted. We all recognize the validity of the theme that appears frequently in the writings of Lloyd Ogilvie: "Nothing can happen through us that is not happening to us."^{*}

All of us have had the experience of repeating something very familiar when suddenly the divine presence breaks in and the old becomes new; the ordinary becomes extraordinary; the mundane becomes eternal.

How are we going to maintain the proper balance between the routine and the extraordinary? I would like to use the issue of praying the Lord's Prayer meaningfully as a pattern for addressing the issue.

In which petition of the Lord's Prayer do you begin really praying? When, and how, does routine become spiritual reality?

It is so easy to repeat the opening address without thinking about it. After all, we have prayed the "Our Father" so many times already. But the invocation should shock us: It is radical to pray "Our Father" in the privacy of our own prayer space. Even the use of "Father" was a revolutionary idea when Jesus raised it.

Sometimes "hallowed be Your name" becomes the shocking phrase. What would happen if God were to hallow His name in my immediate environment? How would my life have to change?

Perhaps the awakening comes while you are praying: "Your Kingdom come!" And all the little fortifications we have built for ourselves come crashing down in flames. Do we really want His kingdom to break through into our little self-designed worlds?

Sometimes the crunch will come

when we listen to the words: "Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." What kind of evidence would you require to know that this petition is being answered in your context?

In an affluent world, few come alive at "Give us this day our daily bread." So many of us are so self-sufficient that we don't even begin to think about trusting God for daily bread—much less thank Him for it.

Maybe we only check in when we arrive at the request for forgiveness. But the second half of the petition shakes us out of our lethargy when we realize that God only promises to forgive us as we forgive our debtors. This just might be the most offensive place to check in while praying the Lord's Prayer.

Would it be too late to really begin praying when we arrive at the request that we not be brought to the time of trial? Isn't there something about trusting God to hallow His name and accomplish His will that precedes the request for deliverance and rescue?

There may be days when the outlook is so grim that we are numbed into rote praying until we arrive at the final phrase: "But rescue us from the evil one." What a marvelous God we have that He would condescend to hear our routine praying when we only begin to get serious when we come to the request for deliverance!

How do we maintain the proper balance between the routine and the extraordinary?

Then there are the days when our eyes and hearts only begin to open as we hit the doxology. Let praises ring—and then we go back and pray the Lord's Prayer again and every phrase burns with illumination. The fire is relighted. We are able to give of that which we have received. And the routine and ordinary become the mysterious and the heavenly. Thanks be to God!

^{*}Lloyd John Ogilvie, *Silent Strength for My Life* (Eugene, Ore.: Harvest House Publishers, 1990), 173.

Values, Purpose, Growth.



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—Helen Keller

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PROFILE



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Philip R. Hamner

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ON MINISTRY:

I have discovered in my life that Christian formation occurs when people invest their lives in others under the guidance of the Spirit. I know that is the case with me. When God called me into ministry as a vocation, it became evident that Nazarene Theological Seminary was in my future. Under the direction of my friends, William Greathouse and Chuck Sunberg, I enrolled for the fall of 1992. Since that time, I have become the recipient of God's grace through the lives of the faculty and students of NTS. My wife, Rebecca, and I are better prepared for a career in ministry because of our NTS experience. Jesus Christ is building His kingdom through NTS, where I learned that both heart and head are needed in order to serve our God.

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NAZARENE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY



This We Teach:

PURITY IS FOR GOD'S PEOPLE

William B. Pope

by Tom Floyd

Moses and company busily engaged themselves in learning the rudimentary lessons of being God's chosen people. On their way to the Promised

Land, they camped at the foot of Mount Sinai where God gave them laws, commands, and instructions on how they should live.

Detailed directions about special feasts, sacrifices, construction of the Tabernacle, and dedication of the priests occupied their time. Precise directives regarding duties and ministry of the Levites at the Tabernacle were spelled out.

Early on, rituals of cleansing demonstrated the importance God placed on purity in the life of His people. Certain diseases resulted in expulsion from the camp (Numbers 5:1-4).

When dedicated for ministry, Levites were cleansed ceremonially by sprinkling on them the water of

purification, shaving their bodies, washing their clothes, and offering animal sacrifices for their sins (Numbers 8:5-24).

When Jesus completed His cadre of apostles, He told them to "wait in Jerusalem until" they were filled with the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

Christians are to be a purified people. All impurities are to be "shaved" from the soul, cleansed from the "clothing" of the spirit, and "washed in the blood" of our Savior—Jesus.

We have progressed considerably from the kindergarten days of Israel

in the Sinai. We are much more sophisticated and educated in how to love and worship Him. But the need for purity of heart and life is just as great.

All impure thoughts, habits, actions, and desires can be expelled and the heart made pure by the cleansing power of the Holy Spirit.

Tom Floyd is senior pastor, Liberty Towers Church of the Nazarene, Sacramento, California.

PH

Seeing Jesus

JOHN C. BOWLING



John C. Bowling is president of Olivet Nazarene University.

IT WAS IN AUGUST of 1986 that a woman named Rita Ratchen was driving along Route 12 toward her home in Fostoria, Ohio. Suddenly, as the lights of her automobile played against the side of a soybean oil storage tank, the image of the Lord Jesus Christ manifested itself to her.

She told no one about this sighting for four days. Then she took her friend of 35 years, Dorothy Droll, out on Route 12, and as they approached the storage tank, Dorothy, too, claimed to see the image. The next evening, they took another friend. She also saw the face, became very excited, and began telling others about this vision.

Soon the cars became a caravan. Fifteen cars, then 20, then 100, then 1,000, and before long, *Time* magazine joined the nightly procession and published a picture and story about this image on the storage tank.

The family of my wife, Jill, lives relatively close to the place of this sighting, so I asked my mother-in-law if she had heard about this event.

"Yes," she said. "In fact, I drove over to see it."

"Did you really? What did you think?"

"Well, I was skeptical," she replied, "but I took my friend, Grace,

and we drove over one night. People had stopped their cars and were gathered by the side of the road up ahead. So we pulled over, got out, and started walking toward the crowd. As we drew closer, I looked ahead toward the storage tank and said aloud, "I see it. I do see it!"

Grace asked me, "Where?"

"There on the tank," I replied, only to have a passerby (on his way back to his car) turn and say, "No, no, it's on the other side of the tank."

Such is the power of suggestion.

The *Time* article concluded that rust had oxidized on the side of the tank in such a way as to present what was appearing to many as an image of the Lord Jesus Christ.

There is, evidently, deep within the human heart, a desire to have some sort of visualization of Jesus. While faith is surely the evidence of things not seen, still we would like to see.

Fortunately, we have been given something better than the side of a soybean oil storage tank. We have been given the Bible with its man portraits of God. Among those word pictures is an account that tells of an appearance of Jesus that made an indelible impression on those who saw it.

Matthew chapter 17 opens saying: "After six days Jesus took with him Peter, James and John the brother of James, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. There he was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as the light" (vv. 1-2, NIV).

Jesus took 3 out of the 12 to be with Him, leaving the other 9 at the foot of the mountain. Why just 3? Why these 3?

Evidently there was something about Peter that saw Jesus more clearly, something about James that followed Him more nearly, and something of John that loved Him more dearly.

Whenever I hear of this inner circle of the three, I always ask myself, "Is there a desire in my heart to be in the inner circle of the Lord Jesus Christ?" Surely we can live as closely to Christ as we desire. The Bible gives us the assurance that if we will draw near to Him, He will draw near to us.

As Luke tells of this event, he adds an important note saying, "As he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning" (Luke 9:29, NIV).

It wasn't the mountain that made the difference, it was the prayer. The greatest vision these followers of Jesus ever had of Jesus was when they went apart to pray.

If we are to see Christ spiritually, there have to be times of personal

If we are to see Christ spiritually, there have to be times of personal spiritual focus and devotion in our lives.

spiritual focus and devotion in our lives. Without such times, we join those disciples who did not share in this transforming moment and remained at the base of the mountain.

The question is this: When the headlights illuminate my life or yours, can people see the image of Christ shining forth in us? Others will see Christ in us only as we draw close to the Savior in prayer and allow His grace to make us more like Him. **H**

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Notes from an editor's journal

by Mark Graham, Managing Editor

Shine

With temperatures of 121 degrees and a heat index of about 1,000, you might think NYC '95 in Phoenix wasn't a great place to be in late July, but then, you would be wrong. I have never seen so many sharp young people, smiling, worshipping, working, playing, goofing off, and sweating in my life. It truly was a "Once in a Lifetime" event. All along, the NYI folks had been promising in their promotional literature, "It's Gonna Be Hot!" No one I know who was there will ever charge them with false advertising.

I had the opportunity to chat with a number of teens during the week. Their most common response to "How would you describe NYC '95?" was "Awesome." Then they proceeded to tell me about the part of the week's events that was most important to them, which ran the gamut—the Newsboys concert, the morning speakers, Gary Sivewright, Point of Grace, the chance to help others through the service projects, the food (just kidding), and on and on.

I asked them about the problems that kids face in their communities these days. Almost without exception, they spoke of drugs and alcohol. "There's a lot of peer pressure to be involved in drugs, drinking, and smoking," said Mary Teresa Damata, a 16-year-old junior from Quincy, Massachusetts. "There's always a party going on somewhere."

"Pregnancy," responded 15-year-old Jessica Starbuck of Miamisburg, Ohio, when I asked her about the major youth problems in her city. "Pretty much half of the girls in the freshman class at my school are pregnant."


Scary isn't it? No wonder sex was a hot topic during the week. It was addressed by several speakers. On Friday evening, Gary Sivewright spoke about it and, at the close of the service, gave the young people an opportunity to sign "Love Can Wait" cards. The cards represent a pledge by teens to abstain from sexual intimacy until they are married. Recognizing the importance of accountability, Gary urged the young people to give their pledge cards to friends who will hold them responsible for their actions. It was a special moment to see teens moving through the crowd, handing their commitment cards to friends, youth pastors, and sponsors.

When I was a youth minister, we considered any activity where we made it back to the church with our kids alive a good one. NYC '95 was truly a good event, not because the kids survived, but because they got a chance to see thousands of other kids like themselves—with their hang-ups and frustrations—kids who have problems with parents and teachers or with members of the opposite sex—teens whose parents are divorced. Most importantly, they saw that there are tons of Nazarene kids who love God, who want to do right, and who want to serve others.

I remember growing up in a small Nazarene church in a town of about 12,000 people. Baptists and Church of Christ folks were about as numerous as ants on a Tennessee anthill. It wasn't until I was much older and had the opportunity to attend a Nazarene General Assembly that I came to realize how big our church is. I can't really fathom how important this event was to these young people from the small towns, as well as cities across North America, to see how big our church is, to see how much the leaders of our church love them to spend so much money on an event that is as professionally presented as anything they will ever attend, and to see that God is alive and well and ready to change lives—which He did for thousands of young people (and for older folks like myself) in Phoenix.

The closing service of NYC '95 included a challenge from NYI Director Fred Fullerton for the young people to go from Phoenix and let their lights shine for others to see. As they waved light sticks and sang the chorus to the Newsboys' "Shine," I was reminded of the passage from John's Gospel, "His life gave light to everyone. The light keeps shining in the dark, and darkness has never put it out" (John 1:4b-5, CEV). The kids at NYC '95 were proof positive that God keeps His word. These kids will carry God's light to places you and I will never reach. And that's OK.

**"It truly was
a once in a
lifetime event"**



Psst! Want to Hear Something About Your Pastor?

WESLEY D. TRACY



LIKE A CHOCOLATE ice cream cone, summer is gone—delicious, but it went too fast. One delicious part of my summer was Nazarene Youth Congress. Nothing like Phoenix in July, right? You kids confused me with your taste in music and clothes but impressed me with your commitment to Jesus Christ.

But it was PALCON—Pastors and Leaders Conference—that dominated my summer. I participated in all eight PALCONs, each of them on a different Nazarene college campus. I spent the summer with our pastors. Do I have news for you about your pastor!

1. Listen up, kids, these men and women really care about you. I heard them pray. I know, you sometimes think that they just want to control you. Not so. You see, almost daily they are faced with trying to rescue people who have messed up their lives. You know, drugs, unwanted pregnancies, bitter divorces, AIDS—all sorts of destructive lifestyles. Pastors know firsthand the agony of such things. Believe me, they would do just about anything to keep you from having to go through such pain. They really care for you. Did you know that?

2. Your pastor wants, more than anything, to be close to God. PALCON '95 was not about slick programs and cute gimmicks. It was about being God's person, about being Christlike. I saw your pastors enter into days of spiritual self-examination, including 10 hours of

soul-searching in silence. Imagine, hundreds of pastors silent for 10 hours? But how God broke through upon us. It was more splendid than I can describe. But this I know, at the top of your pastor's priority list is being a man or woman of God. Did you know that?

3. Pastors are human too. I mean, they have strengths and weaknesses. They have feelings too—just like the rest of us. You know how you feel when you pour your heart and soul into a project and all that your friends or parents or teachers see is the part that wasn't perfect. It hurts, right? Pastors are the same way. Did you know that?

Everything they do may be second-guessed: they selected the wrong hymn, preached too long, didn't make enough hospital calls, or failed to notice your new outfit. So why not give them a whack so they will be more careful next time? Pastors are among the most tenderhearted, sensitive persons that God created. The Lord gave them a pastor's heart so that we would have gentle shepherds to guide us when we get careless or reckless. That's smart on God's part, but it makes pastors really vulnerable. When they get gouged, kicked, or lied about, it hurts them a whole lot. Did you know that?

4. The pastor's spouse could use some encouragement. Sometimes the pastor is so busy taking care of everyone else's family that his or her own is neglected. No one feels that more than the pastor's spouse.

Anyone in public life has to field a lot of criticism. Often the pastor's spouse needs a shovel to handle all that comes along.

The pastor's spouse usually has to raise a family in a church-owned house. That's good in some ways. But did you

ever have a landlord? What if you had 100 or 200 landlords? In some churches, nearly every member acts like a tough landlord, always encroaching on the privacy of the pastor's family. If you run out of things to pray for in your next quiet time, pray for your pastor's spouse. You might put legs on your prayers and do an actual deed of kindness (like a night of free baby-sitting, a note of appreciation, or a hug).

The best thing you can do for your pastor is be nice to his spouse. But, you say, my pastor is a woman. Great, double all of the above. The husbands of our women pastors need all the support you can give them. Did you know that?

5. Your pastor is a little weird—at least by the world's standard. You see, he or she is not out to get rich. Your pastor chose to enter a vocation that is notoriously famous for low salaries. But pastors don't put money first. They spend their lives working on the things that matter most. They find fulfillment

Hey, kids, if you only knew what makes your pastor tick . . .

in obeying God, serving people, preaching the gospel, and helping others find Christ. And they think they have the best job in the world. Weird, huh? Did you know that?

I saw a lot of gray and bald heads at PALCON. A lot of ministers my age. We don't have many years left. I pray to God that He will call thousands of you kids to take our places. He will too. Did you know that?

H

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BY RON WHEELER

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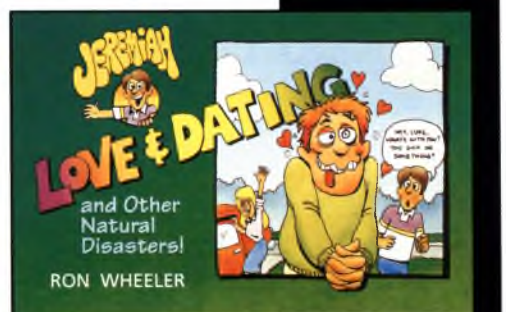
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