

DECEMBER 1997

Herald of Holiness

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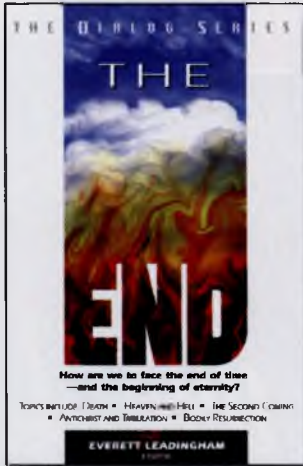
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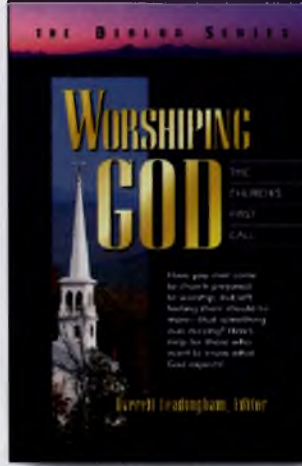


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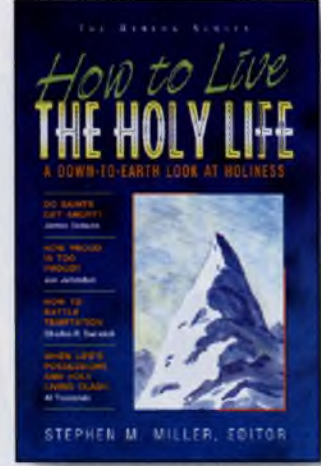
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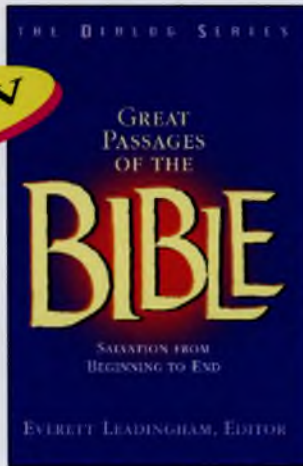


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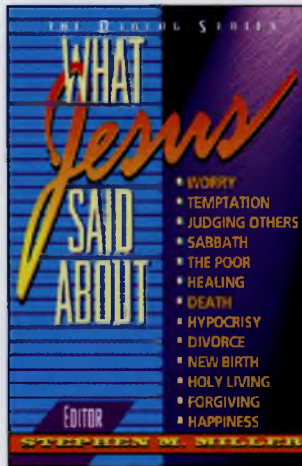


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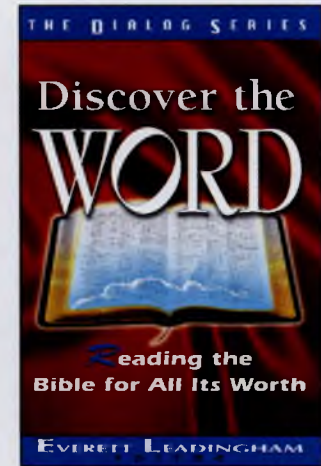
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FEATURES

- 2** **DIVORCE—It Never Should Have Happened**
JANE A. COLE
- 4** **So You Want a Divorce**
RICHARD MAFFEO
- 16** **Does the Bible Contain a Secret Code?**
H. RAY DUNNING
- 20** **Desires of the Heart**
LEANORE M. BUTTON
- 22** **Carols of Christmas**
KATHLEEN BUEHLER
- 24** **Five Christmas Witnesses**
DAVID C. SHULTZ
- 28** **I Give You Back Your Christmas**
COMMISSIONER ROBERT E. THOMSON
- 46** **Faith and the Learning Disabled Adult**
NANCY O. WILSON



4



22



24

POETRY

- 36** **Birthday Greetings**
KAY RICHTER

CONTINUING COLUMNS

- 8** **General Superintendent's Viewpoint**, *JERRY D. PORTER*
- 19** **Words of Faith**, *ROB L. STAPLES*
- 29** **Creative Brooding**, *DEAN NELSON*
- 31** **Over 60**, *C. ELLEN WATTS*
- 33** **Into the Word**, *ROGER L. HAHN*
- 34** **In a Woman's Voice**, *SUSAN HANSON BATES*
- 35** **Masculine Journey**, *MARK METCALFE*

DEPARTMENTS

- 7** **Late News**
- 9** **The Readers Write**
- 10** **Editor's Choice**, *WESLEY D. TRACY*
- 11** **The Unheralded**, *J. WESLEY EBY*
- 12-15, 18, 42-43** **News**
- 18** **NCN Broadcast Schedule**
- 36** **Evangelists' Slates**
- 37** **The Question Box**
- 38** **Annual Index**
- 40** **Nazarene Family**
- 42** **December's 10-Point Quiz**



DIVORCE— It NEVER Should Have Happened

by Jane A. Cole

Our family was wrenched by divorce last year. Although families all around us have been breaking up, our immediate family had never been personally involved in a divorce.

And we should not have been now, either.

It began with my daughter's history of depression, accelerated by the birth of her first baby and hospitalization for postpartum depression. Jim and Stacy had been married almost five years and to all outward appearances were doing well. The baby was planned and happily anticipated. Then it all began to fall apart. I live halfway across the country but went to help during their crisis. What I discovered during my visit was appalling and left me in a state of shock.

I encountered Stacy's psychiatrist, who intimated that it was the marriage that was causing her problems. I spoke to her psychologist, who told Jim, in my presence, that he should not feel trapped in this marriage and that he had "choices." The hospital social worker suggested divorce. Friends, neighbors, and even their church family advised the couple to

"call it quits" if they were having severe problems.

Every direction these two people turned edged them toward divorce. Five weeks later and after a mere 10 minutes in court, the divorce was final, and Jim had custody of their six-month-old baby, Molly.

Where was their pastor, their church family, their doctors from a

S STACY'S PSYCHIATRIST INTIMATED THAT IT WAS THE MARRIAGE THAT WAS CAUSING HER PROBLEMS.

Catholic hospital, their neighbors, their relatives, and their so-called Christian counselor? Nowhere to be found when Stacy stood in shock on the courtroom steps with a piece of paper in her hand and empty arms that should have been cuddling her baby daughter.

There may be times when divorce cannot be prevented, but this was

not one of those times. There was no alcohol or drug abuse, no infidelity or physical abuse. What was present was misunderstanding, illness, financial concerns, and a lack of support to stay together. After five years of marriage there was boredom and laziness combined with immaturity.

It was easier to walk away than to work at keeping their family together.

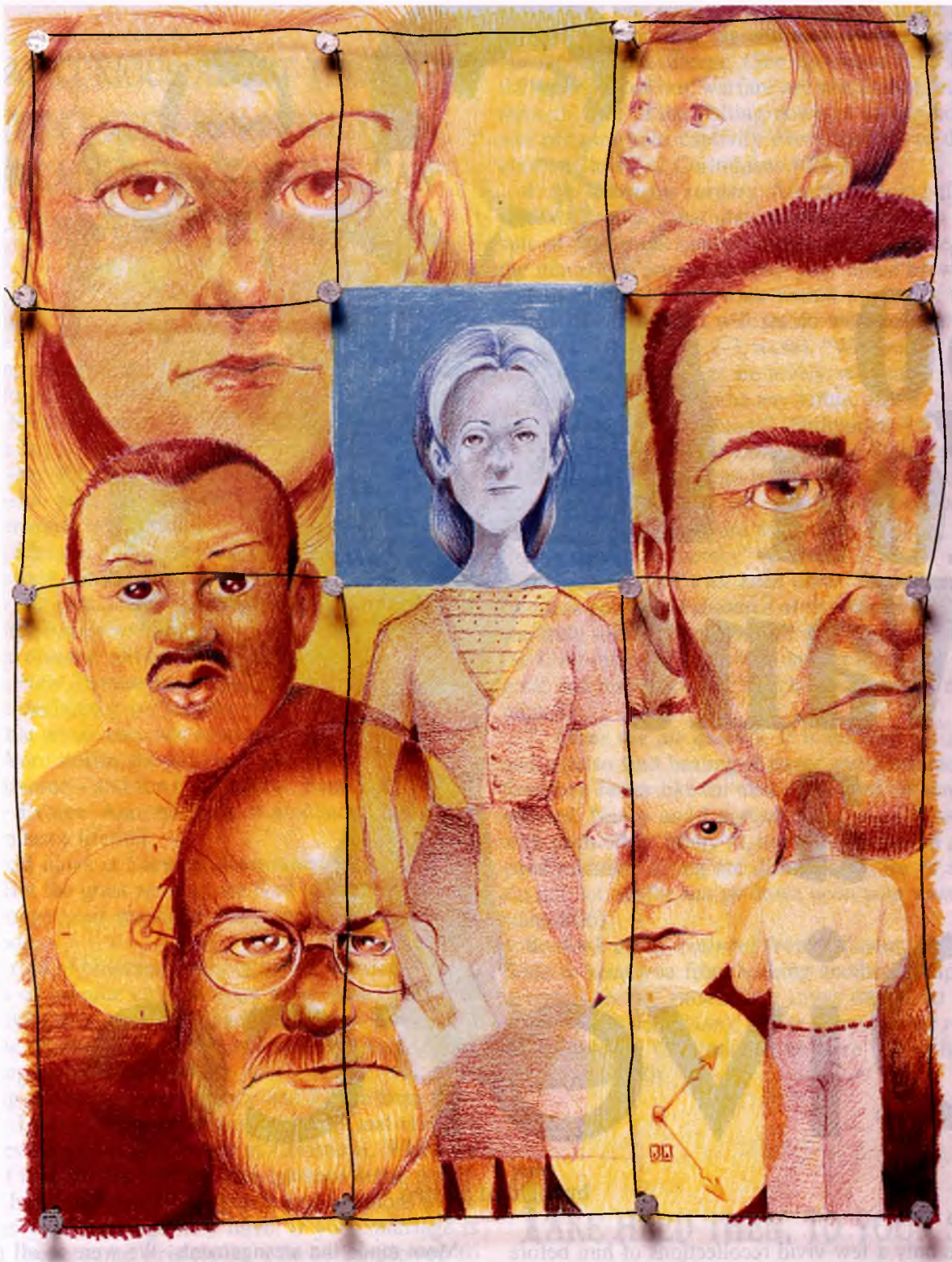
However, the worst part of all was that nobody was encouraging this couple to work to hold their marriage together.

Nobody came forward and said, "Yes, marriage can be tough. It can be extremely hard work, and it can be discouraging, but if you work at it, things will get better." Nobody said, "Let us help you work together to try to save your family." And nobody said, "Let me pray with you, for you, and about you.

I'm here to guide you and support you through these most trying of times."

And the very worst part is that the husband in this marriage was a pastor himself! Where was everyone? What were they thinking in not helping these two young people keep their marriage intact?

When marital problems arise with couples who belong to the Bahai religion, they are required to wait one



Stacy stood in shock on the courtroom steps with a piece of paper in her hand and empty arms that should have been cuddling her baby daughter.

Illustration by Jeremy Collins

year before they file for divorce. It is called a "Year of Patience." During that time the couple live separately while officials of the temple counsel with them and urge them to seek whatever means are necessary to stay together. How many Christian cou-

ples receive this type of assistance?

How many couples would save their marriages if they were offered a year of patience? One year of working out compromises, seeking professional help with their problems, praying, and reestablishing

their priorities. Aren't vows made and promised before God worth a year of patience? Aren't all of us required to reach out to couples during their troubled times?

Continued on page 6

So You Want a Divorce



by Richard Maffeo

I have only a few vivid recollections of him before he left. A silly rhyme he would say, the wall he and a drinking buddy painted maroon, and visiting him with his new girlfriend.

I was five years old when he left us to find himself. Andrea, my younger sister, and I saw him infrequently for the first year or so, and eventually the visits stopped altogether.

When I was 18, I was curious about this man I hadn't seen for more than a decade. Why had he abandoned Andrea and me? Why would a man leave his children?

Mom made the arrangements. We were to all meet at my paternal grandparents' house. Al was already there when we arrived. My hands were like ice as I shook his. Here was my father whom I hadn't seen since kindergarten—now I was graduating from high school.

He was shorter than I expected and had shaved the goatee I remembered. We chatted; then after what I thought was an appropriate time, I focused on the matter at hand.

"Why did you leave me and Andrea?" I asked.

He was brutally honest. No attempt to justify what he

I WAS CURIOUS ABOUT THIS MAN I HADN'T SEEN FOR MORE THAN A DECADE. WHY WOULD A MAN LEAVE HIS CHILDREN?

had done, not even the hint of regret. He thought a moment before he responded: "Because I wanted to."

It has been more than 40 years since Albert abandoned my mom, my sister, and me. I can still remember some of those days as if they were yesterday.

Television programs and glamour magazines popularize the breakup of the home by avoiding or trivializing the heartache and bitterness it causes.

In contrast, God's Word is direct and straightforward about the subject: "Take heed then, to your spirit, and let no one deal treacherously against the wife of your youth. For I hate divorce" (Malachi 2:15-16, NASB).

In the New Testament, Jesus focused on the subject when He declared it is "because of the hardness of [our] hearts" that we divorce one another (Matthew 19:8).

The Word defies the philosophies of the world that preach divorce—and for good reason. Families are shattered by divorce. And the trails of brokenness left in its wake can last a lifetime.

The bad news is Satan is determined to destroy our homes. But the great news is our God is divinely powerful to rescue your marriage and mine from destruction and despair.

Has a root of bitterness crept into your marriage? Have thoughts of divorce crossed your mind with disturbing regularity? Or is your marriage strong, but you would like some biblical principles to follow that it may be further strengthened?

During the two decades Nancy and I have been married, the Lord has taught us some valuable and timeless principles about living together as Christians. While we have not reached the perfect state, perhaps some principles He has taught us will help you find solutions to the problems your marriage may have. If your marriage is strong, these same principles can be employed to strengthen the bonds between you.

1. Recognize the true enemy of marriage. Your spouse is not the enemy—Satan is. "Awake! be on the alert! Your enemy the devil, like a roaring lion, prowls round looking for someone to devour. Stand up to him, firm in faith" (1 Peter 5:8-9, NEB).

2. Recognize the battle against your marriage is spiritual. "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against . . . the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places" (Ephesians 6:12).

3. Wage war with spiritual weapons. If we recognize the battle as spiritual, we will seek spiritual weapons for our defense and offense. (See Ephesians 6:10-18.) "(For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) . . . and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (2 Corinthians 10:4-5).

4. Do extensive surgery. A surgeon going after a cancer cuts deeply. Treat your marriage problems as the result of a spiritual cancer invading your home. Monitor the things you permit to enter your home by way of TV and literature. "I will walk within my house in the integrity of my heart. I will set no worthless thing before my eyes" (Psalm 101:2-3, NASB). "Whatever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things" (Philippians 4:8).

5. Open the Word of God together. Start regular family devotions. "Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, as newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby" (1 Peter 2:1-2).

6. Pray for and with each other. Prayer taps into the limitless power and resource of the eternal God. Only He can truly solve the problems in marriage. "Call unto me," the Lord invited, "and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not" (Jeremiah 33:3).

7. Clear the air quickly. It is difficult for a husband and wife to find healing if anger and resentment are allowed to fester like an abscessed sore. When we were married, Nancy and I agreed never to go to sleep angry with each other. Many nights we have stayed awake beyond midnight airing our differences. "Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath" (Ephesians 4:26).

8. Seek godly counsel from a pastor. Don't permit pride to keep you from seeking another's help. "GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE" (James 4:6, NASB). "Hear counsel, and receive instruction, that thou mayest be wise in thy latter end" (Proverbs 19:20).

Continued on page 6

TAKE HEED THEN, TO YOUR SPIRIT, AND LET NO ONE DEAL TREACHEROUSLY AGAINST THE WIFE OF YOUR YOUTH. FOR I HATE DIVORCE" (MALACHI 2:15-16, NASB).

DIVORCE—SHOULD NOT HAPPEN

Continued from page 3

The result of all this lack of support for my daughter's marriage is that now there is one more child in this world who will never know what it's like to sit down at a table for breakfast with both Mommy and Daddy. She'll never have the opportunity to spend Christmas with two parents gathered around the tree. She'll never sit in church between her mother and father, feeling loved and secure. She'll never have a brother or sister, and her cousins will never meet her daddy.

Is this what God meant to happen to families? Is it right for people to make these decisions about a child's life? Is it fair to deny a child a normal childhood? Who stands accountable—just her mother and father, or all the people who not only allowed this divorce to take place but encouraged it? Then they went their own way and never gave a thought to the destruction they helped create.

My heart weeps for baby Molly, for her parents who don't even understand what happened because it all took place so quickly. However, my real concern is that every day, everywhere, this same scenario is being played out by so-called committed Christians who stand idle, allowing it to happen.

What can we do to help to prevent divorce? After considerable thought and prayer, I have come up with some suggestions.

1. Listen. We can listen when our

friends complain about their mates—not just with our ears but with our hearts as well. We can ask, "Does this couple need some quality time alone?" We can offer to baby-sit so they can have an evening out or possibly even an uninterrupted weekend without the children.

2. Spend time with the troubled couple. Often being exposed to a

SHE'LL NEVER SPEND CHRISTMAS MORNING WITH TWO PARENTS GATHERED AROUND THE CHRISTMAS TREE.

couple who is happily married will give them hope. Shared laughter and a relaxing evening can change a person's perspective.

3. Pray. Offer prayer not just *for* but *with* a couple during troubled times. Join hands and cry with them. Encourage them to seek professional help either from their pastor or a Christian counselor. Offer to find ways to help them if they cannot afford it financially.

4. Be honest. Admit that your marriage is not always perfect either. So often we put on our happy masks so that in comparison a marriage going through troubled times seems hopeless. I am quick to admit to younger couples that my 35-year marriage has had many peaks and valleys. Then I am quick to say that

climbing out of the valleys made the peak times even more wonderful. "It is worth the struggle to receive anything worthwhile—even a happy marriage," I tell younger couples.

5. Offer physical assistance. If daily responsibilities are overwhelming, offer to help with the car pools or pitch in and clean house with your friend. Cut your neighbors' lawn after you have mowed your own. Help them see a way out from underneath their burdens.

6. Share a meal. Don't just drop off a casserole. Invite the family in trouble to join you. Show them by example that families can work together and enjoy themselves. Offer hugs, and stay with them until their lives get back on track. Make them accountable to you as you guide them back to a healthy relationship.

7. Do not encourage divorce. Divorce has become too acceptable. We need to remind others that marriage is sacred. Homes need to stay intact so families can form long-lasting histories together. It is a beautiful experience to grow old with the same person, to share years and years together.

We are our brother's keepers. We need to make ourselves approachable and not judgmental. Our actions and words need to say, "I care about you and your family, and I am willing to inconvenience myself to save your family." It is going to take all of us in secure marriages to help protect others during their darkest days. ❧

SO YOU WANT A DIVORCE

Continued from page 5

9. Protect your time together. Periods of quality time won't just happen. Plan them. Share, listen, laugh, cry together. Just "hanging out" together strengthens a marriage, so plan time for long walks, fireside chats, giggling at each other over coffee and doughnuts. Watching television when the only time you touch is when you both reach for the potato chips doesn't count. Time together is part of the

loving that husbands are commanded to do and the respecting that wives are directed to do (Ephesians 5:15-33).

These biblical principles can help. God loves us. He wants our marriages to work, and He has given us the tools to make them work. No child or adult should have to endure the heartache of divorce.

Bring your marriage back to Christ, and go on with your lives as a family. He will honor your faithfulness to Him, and He will honor your faithfulness to your vows. Do it for yourself, your children, and for the sake of Christ. ❧

Nazarenes Participate in Promise Keepers in Washington, D.C.

Several thousand Nazarene men attended the recent Promise Keepers (PK) "Stand in the Gap" rally in

Woodbridge Nazarenes provided evening snacks and "sack" breakfasts for their guests at no charge. Several



Part of the Promise Keepers assembly near the Washington Monument.

Washington, D.C., according to reports received by NCN News and the *Herald* office.

The Woodbridge, Va., Church of the Nazarene opened its facilities for men to spend the night before the PK rally. Approximately 425 men, primarily Nazarenes, accepted the church's invitation, according to Gary Hutcheson, senior pastor.



Friday evening worship and praise rally at Woodbridge Church of the Nazarene.

The men came from Florida, Tennessee, South Carolina, North Carolina, Alabama, Ohio, and Michigan.

A worship and praise rally was held at Woodbridge on Friday evening with Chaplain Larry Racster, assigned to the Pentagon, as special speaker. "It was a powerful evening," Hutcheson said. "Some of the men felt this service was the highlight of the weekend."

women came and helped with the meals, Hutcheson indicated.

"I believe Promise Keepers is a movement of the Holy Spirit," Hutcheson said. "It was a humbling experience to observe a million men lying prostrate on the ground, praying for our nation."

Paul Gant, the director of men's ministries at the Fairfield, Ohio, Church, indicated that they partnered with the Israel Baptist Church, a predominately Black congregation in nearby Hamilton.

Men from the two churches traveled together, toured the nation's capital, and attended the PK rally.

"The experience of prayer, confession, and repentance was especially memorable because we had traveled together and because of our differences," Gant said. "Those of us in our church who have lived on the 'privileged side' of race issues in America had the opportunity to learn what it is like in the lives of our Christian brothers who have had less appealing experiences."

District Superintendents' Orientation Held

District superintendents from the United States and Canada who have been elected or appointed within the past year met for orientation sessions in Kansas City September 15-17.

The event, sponsored by the Board of General Superintendents and the general secretary's office, included

meetings with the general superintendents and International Center directors that provided information regarding general policies and services. Other activities included meetings with veteran superintendents about district procedures and a visit to the Nazarene Publishing House.



District superintendents attending the orientation sessions were (l. to r.): Curtis Lewis Jr., Northern Michigan; Orlando Serrano, Western Latin American; Wesley B. Frederick, West Virginia North; Brian E. Wilson, Chicago Central; Carlton D. Hansen, Southwestern Ohio; Stephen W. Dillman, Pittsburgh.

Several hundred men from the Kansas City area, including employees at the International Center, traveled by bus, plane, or automobile.

Lyle Working, coordinator of men's ministries for the Kansas City District, was part of a group from Topeka, Kans., that made the 20-hour bus trip. According to Working, they arrived at the Mall in Washington about 4 hours before the program was scheduled to begin, yet the Mall was already filled with men. "I was struck by the sense of unity and obedience among the men," Working said. "We all joined together in wonderful

songs of praise and worship to our loving Lord and Savior."

Working indicated that he was impressed with the "demeanor and spirit of the men. . . . In spite of the huge crowd and press of people and length of time the men had been at the Mall, there was never a sense of hurry or frustration, but simply men standing together in worship and seeking the face of God."



A few of the 80-plus men from College Church in Olathe, Kans., who attended the "Stand in the Gap" PK rally in Washington, D.C.

Why Celebrate Christmas Anyway?

by Jerry D. Porter

Christmas—the worst time of the year if you are experiencing family separation, personal loss, or financial ruin. For many hurting, lonely people, Christmas is a time of

depression,
family fights,
and even suicide attempts.

Most of us would confess that Christmas is a time of excess: too many calories, too much credit-card debt, too many activities to attend.

Christmas glows as the best time of the year if you are a member of a loving family, celebrating a new and precious gift, or if you just got a promotion and a raise! Christmas can be refreshing, fun, happy.

Why celebrate Christmas anyway? It is the birth remembrance of our Lord. We celebrate His birthday by coming together, decorating the Christmas tree and our homes, exchanging gifts, sending Christmas cards, preparing special programs at church, and singing heartwarming Christmas carols. All of this is fine and good, but why did Almighty God send His only Son? Why did our Lord become “God in our flesh”? Why do we sing of “Immanuel”—God with us? Why did the Babe wrapped in rags in a cow stable come in the first place?

Jesus answers the question in His own words: “For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost” (Luke 19:10, NIV). *Christmas is primarily for the lost.* Christmas is not primarily about church folk gathering to honor Baby Jesus. It is primarily about the church “fleshing

out” the Father’s love and connecting with our lost family and friends. Christmas is not primarily about gathering our loved ones to ourselves for the holiday season. It is primarily about reaching out to lonely, lost “outsiders.”

My last day as superintendent for the Washington District, following my election as general superintendent a couple of months prior, was a beautiful August Sunday morning. My wife and I joined in the worship at Community of Hope Church of the Nazarene in downtown D.C.,

LET'S MAKE SURE OUR CHRISTMAS PLANS INCLUDE BRIDGE BUILDING TO OUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS WHO NEED THE LORD.

where Pastor Oliver Phillips was celebrating three years as pastor of this, for the most part, African-American congregation. We were deeply moved by his vision for the future. On the back cover of the church bulletin, Brother Oliver described his passion:

- The unchurched people’s needs will determine our programs.
- The unchurched people’s hangups will determine our strategy.
- The unchurched people’s culture will determine our style.

• The unchurched people’s population will determine our goals.

Some would be quick to point out to Rev. Phillips that the saints need love, nurture, and care too. Why change our church and our lives to reach “those people”? If our only concern is the lost sinner, then we will fail to provide discipleship that challenges the Christian to mature into the full image of Christ. That is correct, and precisely Oliver’s concern. It is not a matter of *either/or*. We must reach the lost *and* nurture the saints. Both are indispensable. The dangerous “comfort zone,” however, is to care for the church and not care for the unchurched. Christ’s chief concern becomes our chief concern: “It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance” (Luke 5:31-32, NIV).

Who is Christmas for anyway? Why did God’s Son interrupt human history two thousand years ago? *Christmas is primarily for hurting, lonely, lost sinners!* Let’s make sure our Christmas plans include bridge building to our family and friends who need the Lord. Let’s design our local church programs, strategy, style, and goals mainly for the lost. When we wish someone a “Merry Christmas,” may it be *merry* because the Baby in the manger has interrupted hurting people’s lives once again, bringing “peace to men on whom his favor rests” (Luke 2:14, NIV).





Holiness Going Mainstream

The March 1997 *Herald* was a super issue. I especially want to thank you for the article "Entire Sanctification: The Questions You Asked."

The Lord has clearly led me into a local non-Nazarene church. (There is no Church of the Nazarene in Bloomfield, and my husband is content where we attend.) I am often told that the Nazarene teaching on sanctification means people who are in the experience would have no temptation to sin, no human error, and no need for further growth. This article is good backup when I try to explain what it does—and doesn't—mean.

Once, many spoke of the "Baptistification" of the Evangelical movement. I believe we live in a day when the concepts of entire consecration and God's work of heart purity are becoming mainstream ideas. What a revival we will see when the majority of the saved are also cleansed by, filled with, and led by the Holy Spirit!

*Linda Schroller
Bloomfield, N.Mex.*

Question Box

Thank you for "The Question Box." Your monthly answers are a great blessing and help to me. The ones in the May 1997 issue are so good. I feel that you get them directly from the Lord.

I am not a member of the Church of the Nazarene. I am a retired missionary to Africa under World Gospel Mission. In my retirement . . . I have retained my lifelong membership in the United Methodist Church in response to the Lord's leading and my personal desire to help some UMW members find a true relationship with the Lord. I get sweet supportive fellowship in fellowship with the local Church of the Nazarene as often as is possible. Jesus is my Savior of 60 years' personal relationship and my Sanctifier. All glory to Him.

*Jeanne M. Saeger
Shelton, Wash.*

Blended Family

I just finished the article "Whose Child Is This?" (August). I also come from a blended family. I wish someone had given us some advice at that time. It may have saved us from a lot of problems. But there is another type of family on the rise in our society today—that is, single parents. A few of the pointers in the article would also help them.

1. It takes time to redefine your new status. Please try to remember you're not alone. Prayer and support from your church, family, and friends will help keep you stable.

2. Try to keep your relationship with the absent parent cordial for the sake of the children. They don't need to be pushed for information or caught up in the problems between parents.

3. You may think you have to do it all, and you'll try, but you have limits, and you need to accept that.

4. Guilt from past failings may make your best efforts seem futile.

As single parents, a failed relationship does not mean Jesus loves us any less. It doesn't make us any less worthy to serve Him.

*Christine S. Dutcher
Fallsburg, N.Y.*

Christianizing Sex

Thanks for the July issue with its emphasis on Christianizing sex. Thanks especially for the article "Working Toward a Theology of Sexuality." Perhaps it should be printed and distributed to each Nazarene annually along with the *Manual* section in an effort to encourage holiness in life.

K. Clem

High Standards and Compassion Too

I appreciate the *Herald's* brighter, more interesting format. I often find myself commenting on a recent article. The ques-

Continued on page 34

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“Power is the supreme law,” said a Adolf Hitler in *Mein Kampf*.

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We love power. A lot of people would like to be God if it were possible. Some folks find it difficult to admit the impossibility.

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Presidential power . . .

Persuasive power.

“Political power grows out of the barrel of a gun,” declared Communist Chairman Mao (*Quotations of Chairman Mao Zedung*).

The Bible says that God “is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the *power* that worketh in us” (Ephesians 3:20, emphasis added). So, instead of a power lunch or power politics, let’s go all out for a power Christmas.

What, you don’t have any power? A friend told me that she didn’t even have prayer power. “Even God puts me on hold,” she said.

I think you do have power. The power to change a life—this Christmas. I’m talking about the kind of power that you see in an ordinary schoolteacher. I found this report somewhere, and it was attributed to Spencer Morgan Rice and had the credit line, “The Drama of God,” Trinity Church, Boston.

Mary Ann Bird wrote a story titled, “The Whisper Test.” It was a true story from her own childhood.

“I grew up knowing I was different, and I hated it. I was born with a cleft palate and cleft lip. When I started to school, my classmates made it clear to me how I must look to others: a little girl with a misshapen lip, crooked nose, lopsided teeth, and garbled speech.

“When schoolmates would ask, ‘What happened to your lip?’ I’d tell them that I had fallen and cut it on a piece of glass. Somehow it seemed more acceptable to have suffered an accident than to have been born different. I was convinced that no one could love me.

“There was, however, a teacher in the second grade whom we all adored—Mrs. Leonard by name. She

was short, round, happy—a sparkling lady. Annually we would have a hearing test. I was virtually deaf in one of my ears; but when I had taken the test in past years, I discovered that if I did not press my hand as tightly upon my ears as I was instructed to do, I could pass the test.

Mrs. Leonard gave the test to everyone in the class. Finally it was my turn. I knew what the test was like. With the whole class looking on, the student stood against the door and covered one ear. The teacher, sitting at her desk across the room, would whisper something and the student would have to repeat it back . . . things like, ‘The sky is blue’ or ‘Do you have new shoes?’

“It was my turn. I waited for those words that God must have put into her mouth, those seven words that changed my life.

A word gift, anointed by the Living Word of Christmas, can turn a shrinking acorn into an arboretum.

“With the whole class listening to see if I could pass this year, Mrs. Leonard whispered,

‘I wish you were my little girl.’” So, how about a power Christmas?

Wouldn’t that be better to give or to receive than a power pack camera or a power shaver or a power screwdriver?

Power Christmas. Pray about it. **H**



THE UNHERALDED



by J. Wesley Eby

WORK AND WITNESS HANDS

Cook. Dishwasher. Cleaner. Clothes launderer. Painter. Helper. These are the jobs—along with countless others—that Ruth Jones assumed on 15 Work and Witness trips in less than 15 years. As the wife of Harold, she willingly and cheerfully accompanied him, going literally “to the ends of the earth” in obeying the Great Commission (Acts 1:8, NIV).

Ruth, a *longtime* Nazarene who lives in British Columbia, has served the Lord for a *long time*. Sunday School teacher. Church treasurer. NWMS president. Camp counselor and cook.

But her service did not stop with what is often viewed as traditional “ministries.” Ruth loved to entertain missionaries in their home, and her hospitality often included doing their laundry. She was the church cook for numerous years, never murmuring about the itty-bitty kitchen in which she prepared meals for fellowships and dinners. “Auntie Ruth” and Harold helped several teens and college students, often bailing them out of scrapes with gifts of money and love.

In 1974 this 50-year-old-plus woman suffered a stroke. This unwelcomed physical setback slowed her down for a while, but only for a time. She regained her health and went right on serving the Lord.

Harold, a roofer by profession, owned a small business in southwestern Canada. He used his skills in construction at various times in most of the churches on the Canada Pacific District. Church buildings, roofs, additions, and remodeling were a part of his special ministry. And Ruth was right beside him—assisting, cheering, upholding.

The lure of travel, along with the need for his skills in world mission areas, compelled Harold to organize and lead a district Work and Witness team to Western Samoa in 1977. Ruth’s doctor, however, advised her not to participate. Though disappointed, she stayed at home to care for the family business.

The Work and Witness bug bit Harold on this trip to the South Pacific. That little nip caused an infection from which he never was cured. When he returned home, he

sold his business—with Ruth’s approval, of course—so he would have time to scratch his Work and Witness itch.

Harold never viewed Work and Witness as a ministry. Yet, for the next 14 years before his death in 1991, he led many teams to several world areas. And Ruth went with him on every trip except two or three.

Harold’s favorite Bible verse was “Here am I. Send me!” (Isaiah 6:8, NIV). And Work and Witness projects, along with some NIVS assignments, sent him traveling on two additional expeditions to Samoa, three to Papua New Guinea, three to Hawaii, two to Australia, two to New

Zealand, two to Cuba, and single trips to Haiti, Mexico, and the Lamb’s Club in New York City. Often the Joneses stayed at the project site for one or more additional weeks, even months, to ensure that loose ends were tied with a secure knot.

One of their last trips was to Australia to construct a balcony in the Melbourne Thornbury Church of the Nazarene. Ruth remembers that upon their arrival the steel beams for the project had not been delivered. Several team members grumbled, showing impatience about this unexpected delay.

When the steel company officials were contacted, they indicated that they

didn’t believe the “elderly and unskilled” crew from Canada could do the job. They also expressed astonishment that the team members would come and do the work “for free.” Finally, the beams were delivered, and with them came a group of local, *young* workers. But, to the Australians’ surprise, the *old* folks from North America showed both their skills and mettle, finishing the job—on time—with only minimal assistance from the youthful laborers. Ruth praises the Lord for answering prayer and intervening on their behalf.

Mrs. Jones’s favorite scripture is “The LORD your God has blessed you in all the work of your hands” (Deuteronomy 2:7, NIV). Ruth feels that she had done nothing worthy of being honored as one of the *unheralded*. Yet, the heavenly hosts have taken note of her service, and God has blessed the work of her hands—Work and Witness hands—in British Columbia and to the ends of the earth.



Ruth and Harold Jones

H

Louisiana District Once Again Leads in *Herald* Campaign

The Louisiana District led all districts in the United States and Canada in the annual *Herald of Holiness* subscription campaign, according to Wesley Tracy, editor of the *Herald*.

"The churches in Louisiana not only reached their goal," Tracy said, "but surpassed it, obtaining 126 percent. And this is the seventh consecutive year the district has led the denomination. This is a remarkable accomplishment, and the district *Herald* coordinator, Daniel Mappus, and District Superintendent Ralph West are to be commended."

For the annual subscription drive, the districts in the U.S. and Canada are divided into three groups based on average Sunday morning worship attendance: group one (7,301 and up); group two (4,501 to 7,300); and group three (up to 4,500).

Besides Louisiana (the top district in group three), other winners were Southwest Indiana, which led group one for the third year in a row, and Illinois, which has led group two for the fourth



Daniel Mappus

consecutive year.

Each group has three winners, and each of the nine winning district coordinators received gift certificates from Nazarene Publishing House.

The winners in each group are as follows:

Group 1—First place: Southwest Indiana (Rev. Gary Williamson, coordinator, and District Superintendent M. V. Scutt). Second place: Kansas (Rev. Timothy Gates, coordinator, and District Superintendent Edmond P. Nash).

Third place: Philadelphia (Rev. Mark Justice, coordinator, and District Superintendent Talmage N. Haggard).

Group 2—First place: Illinois (Rev. Ken Mitchell, coordinator, and District Superintendent Allen H. Dace). Second place: Northwestern Illinois (Rev. William Selvidge, coordinator, and District Superintendent Crawford M. Howe). Third place: Pittsburgh (Rev. Richard Jones, coordinator, and

then-District Superintendent J. Roy Fuller).

Group 3—First place: Louisiana (Rev. Daniel Mappus, coordinator, and District Superintendent Ralph E. West). Second place: Alabama South (Rev. Jerry Cline, coordinator, and then-District Superintendent R. Phillip Sessions). Third place: Southwest Oklahoma (Mrs. Margie Johnson, coordinator, and District Superintendent Carl B. Summer).

"We are grateful to these district coordinators and their superintendents for the special efforts they gave to conducting the 1996-97 subscription campaign and promoting the *Herald*," Tracy commented. "These coordinators, along with a host of others, have helped our people to 'Discover the *Herald*,' which was the theme for that campaign.



Ralph West

Without their diligent work, the *Herald* would not have a ministry."

The theme for the current campaign now in progress is "The *Herald* Speaks Your Language."

Lillenas Announces Annual Music and Drama Conference

Lillenas Publishing Company will conduct its annual Music and Drama Conference February 5-7, 1998, in the greater Kansas City area, according to John Mathias, Lillenas director.

"This yearly event will draw more than 1,100 pastors, ministers of music, choir directors, vocalists, pianists, drama directors, and actors from across the country for a time of inspiration and education," said Paulo Barros, coordinator of Lillenas conferences and music clinics.

The music conference will be held at College Church of the Nazarene in Olathe, Kans., while the drama conference will run concurrently at First Church of the Nazarene in Kansas City, Mo.

The music conference will in-

clude choral reading sessions, practical workshops, and piano master classes. The drama conference will feature workshops in directing and administration, acting, stagecraft, as well as script-

writing sessions, peer-group sharing times, a teen track, and consultations with experienced drama specialists.

Nationally known conference leaders will include: Tom Fettke, Derric Johnson, Dennis and Nan Allen, Steve Bowersox, and Marty Nystrom (in music); and Martha Bolton, Deborah Craig-Claar, Robert Rucker, Paul Miller, and Paul McCusker (in drama).

A special concert and a drama performance will highlight conference programming. Custer and Hoose, writers and performers, will be featured on Thursday evening. Point of Grace will perform on Friday evening.

For more information, call toll free 1-800-877-0700, and ask for a free conference brochure.



Custer & Hoose

Nazarene Laymen's Conference Committee Meets at Opryland Hotel

The Nazarene Laymen's Conference (NLC) committee recently held an on-site planning meeting in Nashville, Tenn., at the Opryland Hotel. Charles Davis, chairman, conducted the one-day meeting, which included a tour of the Opryland complex, one of the largest hotel facilities in the United States.

The next NLC will be held July 1-5, 1998. Usually held every four years, this particular conference comes after just three years. NLC was moved up one year to avoid conflict with the Nazarene Youth Congress (NYC), which will be held in 1999, and to assist laypersons who may have teens attending NYC.

Under the banner of "Celebrating Hope," the committee has planned a diverse program of worship, workshops, music, recreation, and fellowship. Featured speakers will include Jill Briscoe, Tom Hermiz, John Maxwell, Les and Leslie Parrott, General Superintendent Jerry Porter, and Diana Swoope.

Music, under the direction of Don Reddick, will include many individuals and groups, such as Bill and Terri Cobb, Marvin Jones, the Steve Adams Trio, Ann Downing, the Bohi Family,



Nazarene Laymen's Conference committee (Row 1, l. to r.): **Vernon Lunn, Charles Davis, Bettie Woodcock, Talmadge Johnson;** (Row 2, l. to r.) **Wayne Rice, Barbara Hornbeck, Debbie Weisen, Jeanne Hubbs, Mark Brown;** (Row 3, l. to r.) **David McClung, David Caudle, Gary Streit, Mark Parker, and Don Reddick.**

Sara Paulson, Mark Murphy, the Burchfield Brothers, Promise, Spirit Bound, and Brian Arner.

NLC is sponsored by Sunday School Ministries, Talmadge Johnson, director. This quadrennial event is designed for the nurture, inspiration, and enjoyment of Nazarene laypeople.

According to Johnson, laypersons are encouraged to register now. Information and a registration form were included in the November 1997 issue of the *Herald of Holiness*. For additional information, call toll free at 800-221-6317, or use the E-mail address: <nlc@nazarene.org>.

Detroit Mayor Attends Nazarene Youth Program

Dennis Archer, mayor of Detroit, Mich., was on hand to support "Youth Spirit," an Olympics-type program sponsored

by the Eastern Michigan District. According to Jeffrey Collins, reporter for the district and pastor of Sterling Heights Community Church, the event drew about 70 children and teens, ages 6 to 13, from Detroit's inner city. When the planners asked Mayor Archer to participate, he willingly accepted. He attended the daylong competition and encouraged the youth as they took part in the events.

All participants in the various competitions received ribbons. Winners were awarded special prizes, which included autographed team photographs of the Detroit Pistons, a team in the National Basketball Association.

Youth Spirit was a part of Detroit Impact, a year-round urban ministry of the Eastern Michigan District. "Its purpose is to have an impact on the city of De-

troit," said Collins. He indicated that the program, directed by Calvin Colbert, includes tutoring and computer training for Detroit's youth.

Youth Spirit was held at Doan Park, located behind the Detroit Impact Center. A few years ago, Detroit Impact began to revitalize the park. "A bad element had moved in, so we reclaimed the park for young people," said Colbert, director of Detroit Impact and member of Detroit Grace Church.

"Nazarene volunteers from both urban and suburban churches give their time to reach the youth of the city of Detroit with the love of Jesus Christ," Collins said. Eastern Michigan District, under the leadership of Superintendent Stephen Anthony, helps Detroit Impact with financial and resource support.



Dennis Archer, mayor of Detroit (left), and Calvin Colbert, director of Detroit Impact, at Youth Spirit.

News from Around the World

Woman, 100, Walks to Church Twice Each Sunday

Aurelia Maldonado definitely places a priority on being in church. At age 100, this small woman makes a three-kilometer trek each Sunday morning to attend Sunday School and worship at the Church of the Nazarene nearest her home in northeast Mexico.

Following the morning services, Maldonado retraces her steps, this time uphill. Then she repeats the journey for the Sunday evening service, making a total of 12 kilometers (about 7.5 miles) each week.

Maldonado was honored at a Sunday School Ministries convention in

Monterrey, Mexico. The superintendent of the Mexico Northeast District, Miguel Zapata, made the presentation, commending her for her faithful Sunday School attendance and punctuality during the 1993-97 quadrennium.

"She has only missed four Sundays in four years," Zapata said, "and that was because relatives took her away for a vacation."

Of the extraordinary effort Maldonado expends to attend church, she admits that sometimes her feet hurt after her walk to church, but she states, "It is always well worth the effort."



Aurelia Maldonado with District Superintendent Miguel Zapata.

Papua New Guinea Experiences Extreme Drought

Papua New Guinea (PNG), usually a tropical paradise, is experiencing a drought that is the worst in recorded history, according to Dave Hane, Nazarene missionary in the Asia-Pacific regional office.

Hane says that the lack of rain, combined with a rare frost in some of the mountain areas, has destroyed gardens and created a serious food shortage.

Nazarenes have been hard hit by the crisis. In some areas, churches have

closed as people have migrated to areas that have water. Some pastors and their families have been forced to leave their churches because food is inadequate to sustain them. Students at the Nazarene Bible College in Mount Hagen have been affected as well. The gardens many students depend on for food are dying.

Nazarene Compassionate Ministries, the Asia-Pacific regional office, and individuals are helping to provide relief in addition to the PNG government.

Fires in Indonesia Burn out of Control

Recent satellite images show an apparent increase in the number of fires in Indonesia, adding their smoke to a thick haze over Southeast Asia, according to Robert McCroskey, Nazarene missionary. A government report indicated that the number of fires increased from 40 to 62 in just a few days.

McCroskey said that the "burning is an annual happening," but the fires are usually extinguished by the onset of the rainy season. He indicated that El Niño, reportedly the worst El Niño in 150 years, is making the situation critical.

As in Papua New Guinea, Indonesia

is experiencing extreme drought conditions. Because no rain has fallen, the fires are burning totally out of control.

McCroskey reports that several Nazarenes have been impacted by the thick haze. The Central Kalimantan area, one of two new districts organized last year, has three churches that have been affected. Residents say visibility is only a few yards until well into the morning, and some areas have not seen the sun for weeks because of the heavy smoke.

Nazarene Compassionate Ministries is monitoring the situation.

Former D.S. Dies

Paul H. Garrett, 89, died August 6 at his home in Erick, Okla. Garrett, a graduate of Bethany Nazarene College (now Southern Nazarene University),



began his ministry in 1937. After pastoring for 12 years at Central Park Church in Houston and Texarkana, Tex., First, he was elected superintendent of the Dallas District, where he served for 21 years. After serving as an evangelist for 3 years, he retired in Erick. In 1980 he took the pastorate of the Sayre, Okla., Church for 2 years.

Garrett is survived by his wife, Sylvia, and two daughters, Gaylia Dreier of Albuquerque, N.Mex., and Pauly West of Erick.

Nazarene Institutions Excel

Mount Vernon Nazarene College (MVNC) was recently recognized as one of 134 colleges and universities named to the John Templeton Foundation 1997-98 Honor Roll for Character Building Colleges. According to a MVNC press release, the school was the only Nazarene institution to have been named to the list.

Selection criteria included the extent to which an institution inspires students to develop and strengthen moral reasoning skills, encourages spiritual growth and moral values, and advocates a drug-free lifestyle.

Northwest Nazarene College (NNC) reports that 1997 graduate tests for psychology, education, and business departments show that the average scores were equal to or higher than 90 percent of the departments that took the tests nationally. Also over 90 percent of the graduates of the nationally accredited social work program passed the national board of examination for state licensure on the first try.

NNC was recently recognized by the *U.S. News and World Report* for quality and affordability. For the second year in a row, NNC was rated on the best values list, and for the fourth straight year NNC was listed among the Top 10 liberal arts colleges in the West.

Children's Alabaster Boxes Now Available

The General Office of the Nazarene World Mission Society (NWMS) recently announced the production of an Alabaster box specifically for children. It was designed to be visually appealing and inspire children's participation in Alabaster offerings for buildings and land worldwide.

"This creative piece will help develop children as world Christians," said Nina G. Gunter, general NWMS director. "Its striking appearance will motivate children to be partners in this much-needed mission ministry."

The full-color Alabaster box has a "Noah's ark" theme, which, according to Gunter, provides a story line for parents to teach the Alabaster story to their children, reminding them of God's provision for His people around the world.

The idea came from Gunter's

son, Dewayne, who is the Alabaster secretary and a church board member at College Hill Church in Nashville. According to his mother, Dewayne has always been interested in Alabaster. "As

a kid he would put coins in his own Alabaster box," Nina Gunter said. "When he went to college, he took his Alabaster box with him and faithfully sent his offering back to his home church.

Today, even as a vice president of finance for a major business and adjunct professor at Trevecca Nazarene University, he still promotes Alabaster giving."

Dewayne Gunter, 31, and his wife, LeighAnn, with two children of their own, desired to pass on their strong interest in Alabaster to their sons, Joshua and Jacob. At Dewayne's suggestion, Nazarene Publishing House (NPH) was contacted about designing the new Alabaster box, and the product became a reality.

The children's Alabaster boxes can be ordered from NPH at their toll-free number, 1-800-877-0700.



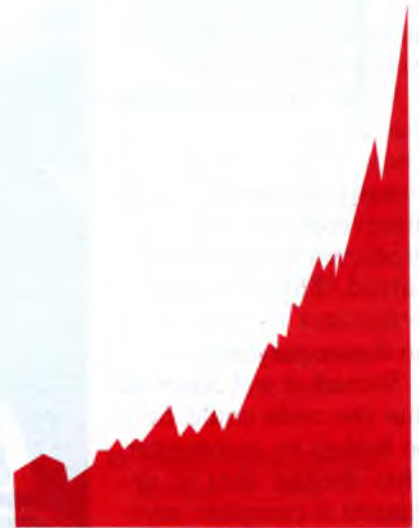
Dewayne Gunter (right) with his mother, Nina Gunter, and his two children, Joshua, 4, and Jacob, 7 months. NPH presented the first two children's Alabaster boxes off the press to the Gunters.

High Riding Market Enhances Giving Opportunities

This has been a good year for investors—including Nazarenes—who have benefited as the stock market reached all-time highs. "Many Nazarenes have seen their assets increase by 20 percent or more this year because of the bullish market," said Roger Alexander, Planned Giving Services coordinator. "The most exciting thing about this growth is the opportunity it affords Nazarene stewards for ministry to others. God's kingdom will be enhanced by the gifts of donors to their local churches, their districts, the general church, or Nazarene educational institutions. At the same time, contributors may receive tax benefits—something many are thinking about at this time of year."

For more information without obligation on how you can give stocks, mutual funds, or other assets to benefit God's kingdom through the ministries of the Church of the Nazarene, contact Stewardship Development Ministries, 6401 The Paseo, Kansas City, MO 64131, 1-800-544-8413, or E-mail us at steward@nazarene.org.

8,000
7,500
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4,000
3,500
3,000



During the past five years, the Dow-Jones industrial average has jumped to almost 8,000. Now is an excellent time to use assets from this growth to benefit Nazarene ministries.

Does the Bible Contain a Secret Code?

Gnosticism for the Computer Generation

by H. Ray Dunning

When a nonfiction book makes a national best-seller list, it is obviously impacting a large number of people. A book titled *The Bible Code* has done just this and needs a Christian response.

After having read the book, I could see how it might impress a certain kind of mentality. The claim was made that the Bible contains a secret code, and when this code was broken, it predicted numerous major events as well as some minor events in this century. Such claims seem to always attract the curious and convince the gullible.

While we can only open the issue in this short article, there are a number of fatal flaws in this claim as well as some devastating theological consequences. Two overt claims were made in the book.

First, it was admitted that the searcher needs to know what to look for. Usually the prediction is discovered only after the predicted event has occurred. This, of course, evaporates its value as a predictive prophecy.

Second, it was admitted that the code could only be broken by a computer. This means that it remained a complete mystery until the invention of these marvelous devices. In this sense, the Bible would have had no value

until the 20th century *if this is the primary purpose of whoever produced the text of the Old Testament*. Actually, only the Old Testament was used, which within itself should cause Christians to have questions.

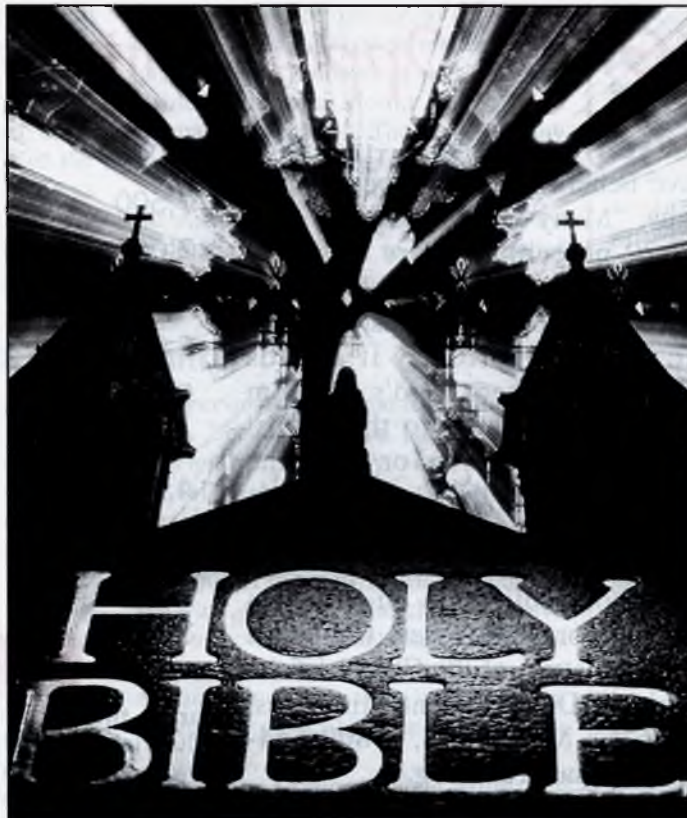
If the purpose of Scripture was to provide information about world events that have no distinctive redemptive significance, what do we do with the words of Jesus to the Jews in John 5:39—"You search the Scriptures [OT], for in them you think you have eternal life; *and these are they which testify of Me*" (NKJV, emphasis added)? And yet, this book has no significant word about the

Old Testament's testimony to Jesus Christ.

When we look at the samples of the contemporary events "predicted" or "encoded" in the Old Testament text, we can see how ludicrous this claim is and recognize it basically to be a fraud. The Hebrew text is manipulated so that the words that have carried intelligible meaning to the people of God for centuries disappear. What now presents itself as the Old Testament text is a stereotyped format of letters looking something like a filled-in crossword puzzle. Using a computer-generated program, the various letters that spell out the

words the computer is asked to locate are found in various configurations in the text: horizontally, vertically, or on a slant like an anagram. In a few cases, they appear in a random fashion on the page, revealing no intelligible pattern. Only a computer, given what to look for, could locate the letters of such an artificial construct.

Another clue to its concocted nature is the actual use of the Hebrew letters. In some cases the approximate sounds of the letters are used to spell English words, not Hebrew words. Apart from the manipulation of the text referred to above, this means that the "code" was intended for an English-speaking audience and would have excluded anyone, including



Jesus, who had any connection whatsoever with the writing and preserving of the sacred text.

Why do I connect all this with the ancient heresy of Gnosticism? The essence of Gnosticism was the belief that there was a secret knowledge granted to only a select few. Instead of a revelation open to all, there was esoteric information available to an elite group, who alone possessed the *gnosis* (knowledge) to interpret the mysteries.

To apply this view to the Bible is to cheapen and trivialize the Word of God. It contains God's self-revelation, a disclosure that was open for all to understand and receive.

In one sense, the motive for seeking to find a "secret code" in the Bible may be commendable. If it is prompted by a desire to make the Bible relevant to the present situation, it is a worthy goal. However, such a way of doing this is misguided.

The Hebrew-Christian Scriptures were all written within, and to, a definable historical context. And as early biblical scholar John Bengel said in one of history's most influential works on biblical interpretation (*Gnomon of the New Testament*), the original recipients of these docu-

ple experience in reading the Bible is not that it is a cryptogram to be deciphered but that they lack an awareness of the historical context. Identifying this setting requires help in most cases. This is why study helps (of which many are available) are crucial for the average person, even though many passages of Scripture may come alive because the words address in a very personal way the existential situation of the reader.

God *does* speak through His written Word, but in-depth Bible study interfaces with the contemporary situation, not by deciphering some supposed secret code, but by having that meaning mediated to the present via the original meaning of the writing. And that original meaning is discovered through historical, grammatical, and theological exegesis under the guidance of the Holy Spirit within the context of the community of faith. H

IN SOME CASES THE APPROXIMATE SOUNDS OF THE LETTERS ARE USED TO SPELL ENGLISH WORDS, NOT HEBREW WORDS.

ments did not need a commentary to understand them. They certainly did not need a computer. This was because they were living out the circumstances to which the documents were addressed.

The difficulty that too many peo-

Maturity Has Its Advantages . . .

***Plan to attend one of our unique NIROGA events—
designed especially and only for mature adults.***

NIROGA is a retreat program sponsored by Nazarene Adult Ministries for adults 55 and above. Its goals are to provide a setting for spiritual and personal enrichment, relaxation in a beautiful setting, fellowship, and preparation for Kingdom service. Our retreat program features special services, interesting workshops, crafts, and tour options.



Spring 1998 NIROGAS

Lake Yale, Florida

March 2-6, 1998

Retreat Director: Marge Owens

Featuring: Dr. Bud Scutt, Dr. Nina Gunter, Rev. Bob Taylor, and Lee Lynch

Deep in central Florida, near Orlando, lie the secluded campgrounds of Lake Yale. The inviting climate and peaceful lake setting make this a welcome retreat from the harsh winter of the northlands. This NIROGA is within one hour's drive of popular Florida attractions.

Branson, Missouri

April 27—May 1, 1998

Retreat Director: Marge Owens

Featuring: Dr. Donald Owens, Dr. William McCumber, President Harry S. Truman impersonated by Robert Neal, and The Steve Adams Family Musicians

Set in the heart of the rolling Ozark mountains, Branson is noted for its music talent from around the country. The inspiring Christ of the Ozarks and the world-famous Passion Play are within easy distance of this quaint town and reflect the spiritual tone of this NIROGA experience.

FALL 1998 NIROGAS

Glorieta, New Mexico
September 14-19, 1998

Schroon Lake, New York
September 21-25, 1998

St. Simons Island, Georgia
November 2-6, 1998

**For detailed informational brochures about our 1998 NIROGAs, check the appropriate box(es), clip this ad, and mail to:
NIROGA, 6401 The Paseo, Kansas City, MO 64131**

NEWS OF RELIGION

Cross-Denominational Ministries and Churches Establish Gospel Hot Line

Nineteen cross-denominational, para-church ministries—including the Luis Palau Evangelistic Association, In Touch Ministries, Life Line Productions, and the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association—have banded together in an unprecedented coalition to bring concise gospel messages to American radio and television audiences, according to Drew Dickens, president of NEED HIM. Each public service announcement (PSA) invites interested audience members to call 1-888-NEED-HIM for more information about a personal relationship with Christ.

More than 300 volunteers nationwide have been trained through the NEED HIM network to receive telephone inquiries. The organization has plans to develop a national database of more than 1,200 volunteers to answer calls. Each caller receives a copy of the Book of John from the American Bible Soci-

ety as well as a *Beginning Your Christian Life* pamphlet. With consent, the caller's zip code and denominational preference are cross-matched with a local church. Through NEED HIM's partnership with several denominations and national networks, the hotline has access to more than 8,000 Evangelical churches nationwide.

Currently, 100 Christian radio stations and 3 satellite networks run NEED HIM spots as PSAs. Plans are under way for spots to be sent to secular radio and television stations in the future.

"It's been amazing to see so many different ministries and denominations come together to work on this project," Dickens said. "Despite diverse church backgrounds, they all agree on NEED HIM's basic message and the urgency of disseminating it to as many people as possible."

Presidential Directive on Religion in the Workplace

Does a Bible on the desk or witnessing to a coworker really violate the First Amendment? No. That is the clear-cut message of a new Presidential Directive that contains guidelines relating to religion in the federal workplace, which is not to be a religion-free zone, according to the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE).

The guidelines were drafted principally by Marc Stern of the American Jewish Congress and Steven McFarland of the Christian Legal Society. Diverse religious and civil rights groups, including NAE, reviewed the draft regulations, made suggestions, and endorsed them. According to NAE, the guidelines are a far cry from the disastrous regulations once proposed by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), which were withdrawn after the NAE and others met with EEOC officials and protested. The guidelines can be a model for state governments and private employers as well.



Nazarene Communications Network
Broadcast Services

Satellite Broadcast Schedule January 1998

Sunday, January 4	NCN Presents: "Girls Night Out" with Chonda Pierce	4:00 P.M. EST
Tuesday, January 6	Leadership Today with Stan Toler	9:00 P.M. EST
Tuesday, January 6	Profile with Gary McIntosh	10:00 P.M. EST
Tuesday, January 6	Compassion NOW!	10:30 P.M. EST
Tuesday, January 13	World Mission Video Magazine*	9:00 P.M. EST
Tuesday, January 13	NCN News in Review	9:45 P.M. EST
Saturday, January 17	Discover the Word—Sunday School Ministries	11:00 A.M. EST
Saturday, January 17	The Great Mate Race—for Youth	11:30 A.M. EST
Sunday, January 18	NCN Sunday—Bethany First Church	4:00 P.M. EST
Tuesday, January 20	The Question Box with Wes Tracy	9:00 P.M. EST
Tuesday, January 20	NPH Presents	9:15 P.M. EST
Tuesday, January 20	Pastors' Forum	9:30 P.M. EST
Tuesday, January 27	World Mission Video Magazine	9:00 P.M. EST
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Advent

ROB L. STAPLES



Rob L. Staples has made a career of teaching the Christian faith as a pastor and as a professor at Southern Nazarene University and Nazarene Theological Seminary.

ADVENT IS THAT SEASON of the Christian year when the Church turns its gaze in two directions—past and future. It looks backward as it prepares to celebrate the birth of Christ in Bethlehem, and it looks forward as it engages in self-examination in preparation for Christ's second coming in glory to judge the living and the dead.

The word "advent" comes from the Latin *adventus*, which means "coming" or "arrival." Thus, in certain contexts, its meaning is the same as the Greek *parousia*, discussed last month in this column. However, the latter term occurs in the New Testament only with reference to the *Second Coming*. During the Advent season, both these "comings" of Christ are embraced in the Church's worship—His coming in the Incarnation and His coming at the end of the age. The Advent hymns blend the joy of the good news of Christ's nativity with the expectation of the Second Coming.

Christian prayer during Advent might be summed up in one word: "Come." It is the "Come, Lord Jesus" with which the Book of Revelation ends (22:20). Although Christ has been present in the world all along (Matthew 28:20), we pray for His

presence to take on a special intensity during Advent.

Advent always includes the four Sundays preceding Christmas. The commercialism that marks this time of year would lead us to think that the main focus of the season is the spreading of Christmas cheer through the buying and giving of gifts. But Advent is primarily concerned with preparing for Christ's second coming, in the light of the hope made clear to us by His first coming.

Advent is a season of tension and paradox. In the Church's calendar, the first Sunday of Advent is called the beginning of the Christian year. Yet it plunges us headlong into the tension between the "already" of Christ's coming in the flesh and the "not yet" of the consummation of all things in Christ at the end of the age. We begin the Christian year reflecting on the end of all human history.

Advent is the time of thanksgiving for God's "unspeakable gift" of Christ (2 Corinthians 9:15), which has already taken place, and a time of anticipation of the Second Coming for which we pray and hope. We rejoice in the angels' song of "peace on earth" (Luke 2:14, TEV) and the "good news of great joy" (v. 10, NIV), which they announced to the shepherds. We also pray: "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven" (Matthew 6:10).

The prophetic note is especially strong during these days of Advent. We pray for the destruction of all evil powers, for the triumph of the righteousness and justice of God, and for the dawning of God's peace over all the nations. This glorious prospect was illuminated by Christ's first com-

ing at Bethlehem where "the hopes and fears of all the years" were met on that holy night. Thus our worship, praying, singing, and celebrating the gospel during these weeks should joyfully focus on the Christian hope for the future.

This sheds light on our Christmas celebrations. Christmas is far richer and deeper than a mere sentimental remembrance of the birth of Jesus. Of course, we should value the intimacy and tenderness of the image of the "sweet little Jesus boy, born in a manger," but Christmas means much more. "Joy to the world! the Lord is come" is a reminder that the One who came to Bethlehem is indeed our Redeemer—the One into whose dying and rising we are baptized (Romans 6:4), just as He was baptized in the Jordan and into our human condition. When we understand Christmas this way, our worship will speak to our deepest needs and connect with our most profound experiences.

God's advent among us is so profound that we can never fully grasp the

Advent is primarily concerned with preparing for Christ's second coming.

mystery of incarnate Deity. So we must continue to remember and experience anew, year after year, the reality of light in the midst of the world's darkness. At Advent we experience the fear and joy and hope that Christian worship expresses in the story of God's coming to judge the world in the form of a helpless Child lying in a manger made of wood, which foreshadows the wooden Cross on which He gave His life to "save his people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21, NIV). **HH**

My Bible was being repaired. I took an old Bible

from the shelf in my husband's study. As I did, the picture of a little girl fell out. She was holding a black and white accordion and wearing a yellow dress. So long ago, I thought. So long ago.

Another world. Ozzie and Harriet's world where people didn't have to be afraid to go out at night or when we had never heard of drive-by shootings.

I looked at the picture again. The years fell back, and I remembered.

I had been peeling potatoes for dinner when Lennie came into the kitchen after school. She took an apple from the bowl on the table and chewed on it reflectively.

"Mom, Tom has a new accordion. He let me play it. Mom, do you suppose . . . ?"

"I wish we could buy you a new instrument," I told her, "but the money isn't there."

"I know." She grinned at me. "It doesn't cost anything to wish, does it? And it doesn't cost anything to pray. I am going to ask God to provide a new accordion for me in time for the choir banquet."

Lennie was 13 with deep, dark eyes and reddish-blond hair streaked with gold.

"The banquet is only three weeks away," I told her.

She jumped up from the table and put the remains of her apple on the sink. "If God can get me a new accordion, He can do it in three weeks."

I sighed. The accordion was needed. Years ago we had bought Lennie a small, used, red-and-white accordion. As the years sped by, she had developed a lovely

*"I'm so sorry,
but I just sold
the instrument
you looked at."*

singing voice and accompanied herself in most of her songs. The choir banquet, planned by her school, was to be held just before Christmas in a posh Beverly Hills restaurant. Lennie was to bring a solo.

For a second, I had a vision of Lennie in her new, yellow dress, holding the black-and-white accordion. She was so beautiful and so talented. I sighed and came back to earth.

When my husband came home from work, I told him what had happened. "I just don't see how we can afford to get her a new instrument," I said. "She is going to pray

for one. I think she believes God will provide."

"Don't you?" my husband asked.

"Of course. But is it something she needs or just something she wants?"

"You don't think the accordion is a real need?"

"Oh, John! You are confusing me. I don't know. I just don't want her to be disappointed if she doesn't get it for the choir banquet."

"Let's go to the music store and check out the accordions," John suggested.

"But if she has her heart set on a particular one and we can't afford it?"

John laughed. "Aren't you forgetting God?"

The music store was located on Pico Boulevard in Los Angeles, where we lived. There were a number of accordions on display, and the clerk was kind enough to let Lennie try them all.

"This is the one!" she exclaimed at last. "Isn't it beautiful?"

"That one is \$258," the clerk informed us. "It happens to be the last one of that kind in the store."

"I think we had better look a little longer," John told the clerk.

"Just remember, sir. It is the Christmas season, and this instrument may not be here when you make up your mind."

"We will see what we can do," John promised.

Reluctantly, Lennie turned the instrument over to the clerk. I

Desires of the Heart

by *Leanore M. Button*

could see she wanted to take it home. In the car she said, "Don't worry about it, Mom. It's OK. No one will buy it. It is the one I want, and I know it will be there."

At home, John and I discussed our finances, or lack of them. How could we possibly get that much money in a few weeks?

"There is the power mower in the garage. That could bring in \$50."

"How would you cut the grass?"

John shrugged.

"Good old hand power. There is an old push mower in the garage."

We placed an ad in the throw-around paper. The mower sold easily and brought in the expected \$50. That left \$208—an impossible amount!

"Don't worry, Mom," Lennie reassured me. "Leave it to God."

But worry I did. Her faith took my breath away.

I called the clerk at the music store and asked about a trade-in. I described her present accordion.

"I think I can probably get you \$100 for it," he informed me.

So we had \$158 and a week remaining to raise the balance. Lennie wasn't worried or anxious. *How wonderful the trust of a child*, I thought.

John usually received a small bonus from his boss at Christmas, but this year nothing was said about it. He was disappointed, having counted on it for the accordion.

"What if we can't get it for her?" I asked. "She is telling all her friends she is getting a new



accordion for Christmas."

On the Wednesday before the banquet, I opened the mail to find an envelope from John's father. He usually sent Lennie a small money gift, and this time it was there—\$10. There was also a check for John—\$100 to be used for the purchase of a suit.

"There it is," John said quietly.

"But the suit. Your father said it was for a suit."

"My old one will do. Call

Lennie, and we will pick up that accordion."

We piled into the car and headed for Pico Boulevard. The streets were crowded with shoppers, and Christmas carols were blaring over their heads. But in spite of all the noise and commercial atmosphere, God had added His little touch of beauty in the lighted decorations along the street. As we trooped into the store, the clerk looked up.

Continued on page 32

Carols



of Christmas

An Advent family worship guide

prepared by Kathleen Buehler

WEEK 1

Jesus as the Light: "O Little Town of Bethlehem"

This carol is more than 100 years old. Bishop Phillips Brooks, who wrote the words, traveled in the Holy Land in 1865. The day before Christmas, he rode on horseback from Jerusalem to Bethlehem. He visited the fields where tradition says the shepherds watched their flocks, then went to a Christmas service at the Church of the Nativity until early the next morning. From his vivid memory of the trip, three years later he wrote the words of this carol for the Sunday School children of Holy Trinity Church in Philadelphia, where he pastored.

Brooks asked the church organist, Lewis Redner, to write a tune for his words. The night before Redner was to have a tune ready, he was awakened in the night with what he called an "angel strain" sounding in his ears.* He wrote down the melody on the spot and added the harmony the next day.

In stanza one, we find a city sleeping, unaware that a great event is happening; a light has come. Stanza two gives us a brief telling of the birth of Christ and the proclamation of that birth. The third stanza switches from the historical event to what Christ can do in the human heart, making way for stanza four, which is a prayer of repentance and acceptance.

*Herbert H. Wernecke, *Christmas Songs and Their Stories* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, © 1957 by W. L. Jenkins), 92.

For your family worship:

1. Look at or sing the first verse of the carol. Explain unknown words to younger family members. Notice the reference to the "everlasting Light."

2. Think about light. Ask family members to name the types of light you know. You might bring some examples of light to the worship time—flashlight, light-bulb, night-light. What does light do for us?

3. Find Isaiah 9:2 and John 8:12 in your Bibles. Ask someone to read these out loud. The verse in Isaiah looks forward to a time when the "great light"—Jesus Christ—would come. In John 8:12, Jesus referred to himself as light. Discuss what these verses mean. How does Jesus as light compare with other lights we know?

4. Sing or listen to a tape of the carol, using the last stanza as a beginning to your prayer time.

O little town of Bethlehem, How still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep The silent stars go by.
Yet in thy dark streets shineth The everlasting Light;
The hopes and fears of all the years Are met in thee tonight.

For Christ is born of Mary; And, gathered all above,
While mortals sleep, the angels keep Their watch of
wond'ring love.

O morning stars, together Proclaim the holy birth;
And praises sing to God, the King, And peace to men on
earth.

How silently, how silently The wondrous Gift is giv'n!
So God imparts to human hearts The blessings of His
heav'n.
No ear may hear His coming; But in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will receive Him still, The dear Christ
enters in.

O holy Child of Bethlehem, Descend on us, we pray.
Cast out our sin, and enter in; Be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels The great glad tidings tell.
O come to us; abide with us, Our Lord, Emmanuel.

Continued on page 44

Two hundred people were aboard the DC-10 jetliner as it lifted off from O'Hare Airport in Chicago, bound for sunny Los Angeles.

In Seat 17A, a businessman un-snapped his leather briefcase, removed a laptop computer, and busied himself with graphs and reports. He had a business confer-

**The innkeeper
was oblivious
to the glory
spilling around
him.**

tate the next day in court. Her view of Los Angeles would consist of the interior of two rooms: her \$500-a-day suite at the Century Plaza Hotel, and the courtroom where, in the next 10 days, her family would destroy what few common bonds they had left.

In seat 53J, a young man in faded jeans and sweatshirt ate his dinner with gusto. A smile lit his face continuously. With his mouth full of chicken, he announced to his seat-

Five **C**hristmas **W**itnesses

by David C. Shultz

ence at 8 A.M. the next morning on Century Boulevard, in the financial district. The Los Angeles he would experience would be limited to the inside of a couple of taxis, some spectacular views through hotel windows, the walnut paneling of corporate conference rooms, and dizzying projections for the company's new venture in Mexico.

In Seat 28D, a woman wearing a mauve wool suit, \$80 shoes, and carrying a Gucci handbag talked nervously with her attorney. She and her siblings were contesting her father's multimillion-dollar es-

**Herod and
Christmas do
not go together.
Yet Herod did
have a view of
Christmas:
dread.**

mate, "I'm on my way to see an identical twin brother I've never met before!" His Los Angeles would be seen through rose-colored glasses, the warm California air better than a breeze from Hawaii.

In seat 53H, a teenager hunched with headphones on, halfheartedly picking at her tossed salad. Her California visit would be spent at the City of Hope Hospital, where her 11-year-old brother lay critically ill with leukemia. His only hope was a bone marrow transplant, and she was the only suitable donor. Her life would be at



risk, she knew, but a smile flickered across her face as she remembered her impish brother. The only Los Angeles she would see would be the operating room of a cancer hospital filled with dying children.

Four passengers on the same



plane to the same city would have no common memories. They traveled for different reasons, as do we. We cannot divorce our background or experiences from our perception of God and the way He works any more than our four travelers could see Los Angeles through the same eyes. So it must be that those who experienced the first Christmas saw it through different eyes. How did four people who were alive at the time Christ was born witness His birth?

Witness 1: The innkeeper, so famous in Christmas pageants, is never actually mentioned in Scripture. We assume that someone directed Joseph and Mary to the stable where Jesus was born. How did he feel that special night? He was a busy man in a town clogged with travelers. Hotel rooms were at a premium. Bethlehem, less than six miles from cosmopolitan Jerusalem, had swelled to twice its size, and accommodations were taxed to the breaking point. Beds, food, and even water were scarce. People camped noisily alongside the roads and in the fields, their fires twinkling in the purple twilight.

Did our innkeeper have any idea that this night would go down in history? He had turned people

away for hours when yet another couple arrived at his door. When we imagine he somehow should have known these were extraordinary people, we forget he could not know. They wore no name tags that proclaimed, “Mary, mother of the Messiah” or “Joseph, surprised but faithful husband.” Later the wise men would follow a star, but tonight there was only confusion.

Did the innkeeper forget Mary and Joseph once they were settled? Did anyone ever tell him, when the angels exploded over the nearby hillsides and the wondering shepherds stood in awe near the improvised crib of the Son of God, that something extraordinary had happened? Probably not.

Christmas arrived in his own backyard, yet the innkeeper never saw it, heard about it, or suspected.

Simeon had learned the deep satisfaction of worship and adoration.

He was oblivious to the glory spilling around him. History changed forever on his doorstep, and he missed it. It wasn't even his fault.

Witness 2: Herod the Great, described in Matthew 2:1-16, was a tormented, demented man whose capacity for evil far surpassed the biblical account. Historians of the day reveal him as a vicious, coldhearted fiend whose own insecurities fueled the carnage he inflicted on the cream of Jewish leadership. Tradition recounts horrifying examples. At the Roman games in Jerusalem, for instance, he suddenly ordered that innocent spectators be thrown to the wild beasts.

When the wise men came from

the east, inquiring about the “King of the Jews,” Herod was “disturbed” (NIV). Matthew also adds, “And Jerusalem with him.” Rightly so. Who could tell what horrible reprisal would be unleashed this time? “Find him,” ordered this maniac; “I want to worship him too.” But Herod was lying. Caring only to eliminate his competition, he ordered the slaughter of all male babies aged two and under. What atrocities Bethlehem and its young mothers had to endure!

Herod and Christmas do not go together. We place no figure of Herod in our Nativity scenes. We sing no carols about his faith. Yet Herod did have a view of Christmas: dread. While the coming of a Messiah would mean freedom to the world, it meant losing a kingdom to him.

Witness 3: Simeon, a godly and devout man, lived in a vastly different world than Herod's. Through eyes of faith, he saw a new world of peace and joy. Luke describes him as “righteous and devout” (2:25, NIV). His ears were tuned to the song of God's Spirit, for it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die “before he had seen the Lord's Christ” (v. 26). A daily visitor to the Temple, Simeon spent his later years in extended periods of prayer for his people and his na-



tion. He was a student of the Scriptures, and he prayed fervently that the Messiah would come soon.

Perhaps it was at night as Simeon lay in bed that God spoke. In our

imagination, we can hear and see his response. "Is that You, my Lord?" Joy flooded his ancient heart at this awareness of the Lord's presence. Immediately the saint was on his knees. Somehow his heart understood God's wonderful news. Tomorrow the Messiah would come to the Temple! It would be his privilege to pray for the God child and His young parents.

Simeon hardly slept. Dawn found him kneeling in prayer, praise pouring from his lips. A candle flickered nearby, but it was God's Spirit who illuminated his small room.

"Moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts" (2:27, NIV). At God's prompting, he approached Joseph and Mary when they entered. God's light radiated from his face.

"When the parents brought in the child Jesus . . . Simeon took him in his arms and praised God" (vv. 27-28, NIV). Surely grace and peace emanated from this kindly man as he gently reached for the Baby Jesus. He must have cradled Him reverently. Did tears glisten on his cheeks? Did those around him grow still in that holy moment?

We can only imagine how Simeon's act of blessing that day stayed with Mary and Joseph all of their lives. Surely that singular experience became a pillar of affirmation in the confusing years ahead. Why



did Simeon experience God's joy and grace so profoundly? Before there was a Christmas, Simeon had learned the deep satisfaction of worship and adoration.

Witness 4: How does God view Christmas? The most sublime human thoughts can, at best, only guess what passed through the mind and heart of the Almighty on that first Christmas. The writer of Hebrews tells us that "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son" (1:1-2).

What did God say through this Son? John, after watching Jesus closely for more than three years, summed it up with these words: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). The same intelligence and love that masterminded the universe and peopled our

God came home for Christmas—to the human heart

world also created Christmas, the consummate gift.

We invest months in planning and weeks in rehearsing Christmas programs that last an hour or two. If we lovingly invest so much time and effort for short-lived events, certainly God the Father carefully thought through just how Christmas would take place! In "the fullness of the time," He sent His Son to be our Savior (Galatians 4:4).

The people and places are meaningful to us, but the important point to remember is what it made possible: God came home for Christmas—to the human heart. The joy God felt would be only slightly tinged with the poignant foreshadowing of the Cross. God's passion for us all focused in the unspeakable gift of

himself, vulnerable and willing to be scorned, so some of us could be His own.

I doubt if any of us have experienced the intensity of God's exquisite joy at Christmas: a gift long planned, costing everything,



and presented at just the right moment! The mystery is mirrored by Christ's own words, "For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it" (Matthew 16:25, NIV).

Witness 5: You. Neither you nor I were present at that first Christmas, but there was a first Christmas for us both. Do you remember? When did you first hear the story of a virgin miraculously pregnant, of bright angels and silver stars spangling the skies, or wise men with gifts? When did you first gaze at the Nativity scene, your mind stretching to fit around the fact that the little One in the straw was your Creator? Did words fail you? Did heaven's shimmering music drown out the dirge of your everyday?

What will you see *this* Christmas? "Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:11). Whose song will you hear? "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men" (v. 14). "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth" (John 1:14).

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HH

I Give You Back Your Christmas

by Commissioner Robert E. Thomson

Eve Gordon had a tough assignment. A special nurse in a London hospital in the early 1940s, she had been given the Christmas Eve responsibility of caring for a desperately ill German student. The young man had contracted pneumonia and was listed in critical condition. Staff physicians at the hospital held out little hope for his survival.

The student was aware of his dire condition and pleaded with his caregiver to keep him awake.

"If I go to sleep," he said, "I'll never wake up."

Throughout the long hours of the night, Eve kept her charge from sleeping. She told him, with painstaking detail, the biblical Christmas story—the journey to Bethlehem, the birth in a stable, the adoration of the shepherds, the visit of the magi, the flight into Egypt.

She sang to him every carol she could remember, including "Silent Night," "Stille Nacht" in its original language. When her patient seemed ready to fall asleep, she gently shook him back to consciousness.

Christmas morning dawned, and the student was still alive to cele-

brate the day. Miraculously, he recovered completely and soon was released from the hospital.

Several years passed, and the world was engulfed in war. Eve, now a doctor, had been conscripted into the service of her country. Because of her knowledge of the Norwegian language and her skill as a skier, she was serving as a secret agent in Nazi-occupied Norway.

One morning the German occupation troops made a sweep of the area where Eve was living. Along with scores of Norwegian civilians,

She was shoved into a small room by a Nazi soldier, who reached for his pistol.



she was taken into custody. Knowing her true identity would be discovered, she prayed that death would come quickly and that she would not be subjected to torture.

She was shoved into a small room by a Nazi soldier, who reached for his pistol. "My prayer is answered," she thought.

Then their eyes met, and they recognized each other. The German student and the English nurse of the past were now face-to-face again.

Replacing his gun in its holster,



the soldier pointed to a back door. "Go," he said. "I give you back your Christmas."

Because she was willing to go the second mile to serve on a Christmas Eve several years earlier, Eve's life was spared.

In a much less dramatic but very important way, thousands of grateful Americans this month are "giving Christmas" to others in gratitude for the fact that sometime in the past, someone gave Christmas to them.

A card sent to a lonely individual; a toy purchased for a disadvantaged youngster; an invitation given to a forgotten senior to share a holiday meal; a contribution placed in a Salvation Army kettle—each of these is meaningful both to the recipient and the giver.

The marvelous truth is that each of us can give Christmas to others in a multitude of ways. Even more marvelous is the truth that a Christmas given will always be returned with blessings multiplied by the One who gave us the very first Christmas. H

CREATIVE BROODING

Myths

DEAN NELSON



Dean Nelson teaches journalism at Point Loma Nazarene College.

A STORY ABOUT ME has circulated throughout my family for more than 35 years.

Whenever it comes up, I feel like the male character in Flannery O'Connor's short story "Everything That Rises Must Converge." In this account, whenever his mother starts talking about a particular subject, he sees himself on a train leaving the station; he knows every bend in the track, every lurch in the engine, every stop along the way, because he has heard it so many times.

The story about me goes like this: On a family vacation through Yellowstone National Park, we came to a roaring waterfall. My brothers and dad watched from one vantage point while my mom took pictures with an old Brownie windup movie camera. I, on the other hand, wanted to get a closer look, so I climbed through the fence and leaned toward the falls, teetering toward my destruction.

All of this was caught on film, including the parts where concerned bystanders pointed and shouted, similar to JFK footage, and where my dad plucked me from the cliff's edge the second before my certain doom. Then came the gratuitous swats to my back-

side for scaring everyone so. But I clearly had cheated the hangman on that one.

No one ever questioned the accuracy of this story. There were so many witnesses, a film record, and years of retelling.

Last summer, my parents had their 50th wedding anniversary, so my brothers and I got together with them to celebrate. We got out home movies of their wedding and showed them on our still-working Revere silent projector.

And in the box was the reel from the Yellowstone trip.

"That's the movie where Dean was almost killed," someone said. "Let's watch it."

Everyone had commentary to add to the whirl of the projector. When we got to the part where we were at the falls, my mom took over.

"See, there goes Dean to the fence—now watch as he nearly loses his balance—another second and we would have never found his body," she said.

Silently, we watched me approach the fence, pick up a rock, lean my arm over the top of the fence, and toss it toward the falls. Then

my dad takes my arm, and we walk away.

"That's *not* how it happened!" said my mom, brothers, and even my wife (who was not, by the way, at the original scene).

But there it was. A little disappointing. Not nearly as exciting as our collective memories had re-created it. The saga was dull on its own, so I guess it needed a little embellishing. Layers of legend had made it camp meeting material.

Lots of stories are like that. Except one. It's in Luke. We'll hear it a lot this month. The only thing we need to add to it is gratitude. H

The saga was dull on its own, so I guess it needed a little embellishing.



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Best Christmas Ever

C. ELLEN WATTS



C. Ellen Watts is a freelance writer living in Nampa, Idaho.

MY BEST CHRISTMAS EVER happened the year I married the light of my life, invited the Light of the World into my life, and bought our first in a long and fizzling string of tree lights.

Before that, my best Christmas had to be the year my friends all got Shirley Temple dolls and Mama gave me a dollar with which to buy gifts.

To folks who deal in credit cards faster than I could ever shuffle a deck of Old Maid, I must explain. We were not poor. Like countless families surviving the Great Depression, we simply had no money.

So when Mama handed me a worn dollar bill in the middle of Chatta Kester's Variety and said, "Seven is old enough to think about presents for someone other than yourself," you could have blown me over with a tin whistle.

Long after Mama had gone across the street to Vic's Grocery, I walked those creaky board aisles, deciding how best to spend such wealth.

The trouble was, while Mama

had said I needn't worry about gifts for my away siblings, our at-home family numbered nine. Buying the 25-cent box of embroidered handkerchiefs for Mama and green rubber car for my baby brother left but 50 cents for the remaining six. Six, because I had already raided Mama's scrap bag to make pen wipes for Papa.

Using a blunt stub pencil or a pen dipped in royal blue ink that sometimes blotted, Papa always wrote in calligraphy. No matter how many lint-free wipes we made him, Papa could always use more.

By the time Mama returned, the handkerchiefs and rubber car lay in a bag alongside fake red nail polish (Mama never allowed us to use real) and a celluloid doll for the sisters just older and younger than myself, and some kite string.

At home, divided by only a supper table from the four for whom I had no gifts, I decided to wrap IOUs and, in March, share my kite string. Later, watching Mama pick meats from a pan of cracked hickory nuts, I came up with a better idea.

While we all liked nuts, my brothers were lazy about cracking their own, and my older sisters hated hunching over the cracking block in a frigid winter woodshed. Besides, hickory nuts grew on our timber-covered farm and were free.

Three cold afternoons and a couple of thumb-numbing triple

whammies later, I sat beside Mama and pretended to help pick out nuts for the aunts. Since my fingers were not as deft as Mama's, by Christmas Eve day I had only a half cup of nut meats to show for my efforts.

Dumping the picked-out nuts into an empty baking soda box, I divided what remained (shells and all) into three lumpy packages. As I tucked those homely gifts beneath the tree alongside Papa's pen wipes and my store-bought packages, my heart swelled. I think I knew at that moment that "the best gifts are tied with heartstrings" (*Apples of Gold*).

That night, for the first time, I sat with legs dangling off an unfamiliar pew and watched a Sunday School junior department pantomime the story of Jesus' birth. As the pastor prayed and thanked God for giving to all the gift of His only Son, my offerings beneath a lopsided cedar tree suddenly seemed puny. Namely, those nuts still stuck in their cracked little shells.

The next day, my brothers ex-

I knew at that moment that "the best gifts are tied with heartstrings."

changed glances and said, "Uh . . . thanks," the sister holding the soda box murmured, "Yum," the other, "Wow, already cracked, no less," and I returned to the bliss of having spent my dollar wisely and given my seven-year-old best.

Today, with multiple dollars to spend, "God's gifts [still] put man's [my] best dreams to shame" (Elizabeth Barrett Browning). ❧

DESIRES OF THE HEART

Continued from page 21

"I'm so sorry, but I just sold the instrument you looked at. You remember I told you it might not be here."

For the first time, I thought Lennie's faith showed signs of wavering. She didn't say anything. We went to the car, and when she arrived home, she went to her room and closed the door.

But at dinner, Lennie seemed her old, cheerful self.

"You know, Mom, I don't really need a new accordion; my old one plays well enough."

But wouldn't it be nice, I thought, if God really did provide one?

Just then the phone rang. It was the clerk at the music store.

"You know the instrument you wanted? The man who purchased it returned it. Would you like me to hold it for you until tomorrow?"

"What's the matter with tonight?" I asked.

We didn't finish dinner. We dashed down to the music store and bought the accordion. Lennie was very quiet on the way home.

"Aren't you going to play it?" her father wanted to know.



She grinned. "Of course! But thinking about Christmas and all, I feel that maybe I have been looking at this the wrong way. I was thinking of myself—you know, how I would look in my yellow dress, how my friends would see

me holding a beautiful new accordion. But down deep, what I really want, Mom, is for them to see the Lord and hear the Lord when I play. Know what I mean?"

Yes, I knew. I, too, had been thinking how she would look, how others would admire her, my child. Pride? Indeed. I had forgotten that the heart was the thing that mattered, the inside, not the outside. God had provided for all of us a new outlook, a different viewpoint, and I smiled as I tucked the picture back into the Bible.

Lennie is grown now with children of her own. That Ozzie and Harriet world is gone, too, along with many of its good qualities that often seem to have disappeared in our violent technocracy of a culture that we now have to cope with. But every year at Christmastime, Lennie and I recall the accordion Christmas. Like a Christmas carol, it reminds us that even in these complex and confusing times, there is hope. That is the message of Christmas, isn't it? H

N
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Satan will leave those people alone who are content with a status quo of doing little if anything to build God's kingdom; but he ferociously—as well as subtly—attacks those who wish to accomplish something great for Him.

Bottom line: Even if you're not certain that God is leading you to help start a new church, begin right now to pray for His direction, protection, and blessing.

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Devotion and Duty in Deuteronomy

What Story Does Christmas Tell?

ROGER L. HAHN



Roger L. Hahn is professor of New Testament at Nazarene Theological Seminary.

*Take the book of this Law, and put it beside the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, and it will be there for a witness against you. For I know your obstinacy and your stubbornness. If you are always so obstinate while I am alive with you today, how much more will you be with the Lord after my death. Assemble all the elders of the tribes and their officers. Let me speak all these words in their hearing, and let me call the heavens and the earth as witnesses against them (Deuteronomy 31:26-28).**

HOW DO YOU KEEP A MEMORY ALIVE? So many cute sayings of our children, which my wife and I were sure we would never forget, are lost or garbled in our memories. Fortunately, the details that my wife and I remember from our children's earliest years are not identical. I can remember one son's funny saying as we drove to church. My wife remembers another's comment on his second birthday. But sometimes neither of us can remember the words we thought we would never forget.

As Moses neared the end of his life, he became concerned with how Israel would remember what God had done for her. The relationship the Lord had begun with Israel by bringing her out of slavery in Egypt had been described as a covenant after Mount Sinai. Exodus

20—23 presented that covenant in a form very similar to the treaty forms often used in the Ancient Near East. Many scholars believe that the entire Book of Deuteronomy was organized as a suzerainty treaty. This was the form of treaty a conquering nation would impose upon the nation it had conquered. Using this treaty form as the outline for Deuteronomy showed that God and Israel were not equals. God was the superior Party offering covenant relationship to Israel.

After a brief introduction, the treaty form began with the historical background. This recited the events that had led to the treaty being put in place. Most of Deuteronomy 1—4 provides the historical background of Israel's relationship with God. Treaties then contained both general and detailed stipulations of what the conquered people would have to provide to the superior covenant party. The Ten Commandments in Deuteronomy 5 and the general laws of Deuteronomy 6—11 correspond to the general stipulations of the covenant in treaty form. Deuteronomy 12—26 spelled out God's requirements of Israel in a more detailed way.

Ancient Near Eastern treaties also described the treaty consequences. These were benefits to be enjoyed when the treaty was kept and punishments that would come if the treaty were broken. The blessings and curses laid out in Deuteronomy 27—28 correspond to the treaty consequences. Finally, the treaties contained provisions for periodic public reading of the treaty and where the document would be stored. The point of this was that the conquered people should never forget the treaty. They would hear it read regularly, and they could go to the place it was kept to

check on its requirements. The readings and the document itself served as a witness to the treaty.

Deuteronomy 31:9-13 contains the provisions for the public reading of the covenant law of God before Israel. Deuteronomy 31:25-29 describes how the Book of the Law is to be stored beside the ark of the covenant. The key word in verses 26 and 28 is "witness." The copy of the Law beside the ark in the Tabernacle would be a perpetual witness to Israel of the covenant she had made with God. When Israel obeyed, the copy was a witness of the blessings that God would send Israel's way. When the people disobeyed, the Book of the Law became a witness against them. Every seven years, the whole Book of the covenant Law was to be read and the covenant renewed.

The celebration of Christmas is a witness of the incarnation of Christ. Repeating the same story of Christ's birth every year is not old hat, as some people think. Rather, it is a reminder of what God has done for us. It also calls us to accountability for our response to the greatest gift of all. Hearing the Christmas story again reminds us of something we must never forget. It also is a witness for or against our faithfulness in living up to God's purpose in sending Christ.

Repeating the same story of Christ's birth every year is not old hat, as some people think.

For further study: (1) Study Deuteronomy 32, the Song of Moses. What witness does it give of Israel and of God's faithfulness in covenant? (2) Study Matthew 2. What witness does that chapter give of the wise men, of Herod, and of Joseph? (3) What witness does the Christmas story give of you and your life? Ask the Lord to help you live this coming year so next Christmas will witness well for you.

*Scripture quotations are the author's own translation.

Buffaloed?

SUSAN HANSON BATES



Susan Hanson Bates is a freelance writer and a frequent speaker at Christian Women's Clubs. She attends First Church of the Nazarene, Flagstaff, Arizona.

WE HAVE A DOG NAMED BUFFALO. We christened him that, innocently enough, in salute to the classic folk song "Home on the Range." Remember the lyrics? Something about a home where the buffalo roam and deer and antelope play? Well, from our porch, we often spy delicate doe and frolicking antelope, but no buffalo. Until we adopted this dog. And roam he does.

Our yard is a perfect place to keep a dog. Spacious and shady, it even has a cute, little house with Buffalo's name. There is also a five-foot, chain-link fence around the entire perimeter to make sure the dog stays put. It is truly the "Attica" of dog pens.

Unfortunately, Buffalo is the "Houdini" of dogs. No matter what we do to try to keep him in the yard, he finds a way to escape. As a puppy, he simply burrowed under the fence. We retaliated by fortifying it with boulders and buried chicken wire. So, Buffalo figured out how to open the latch on the gate. We, in turn, wired it securely shut. Following that move, he taught himself how to climb over the fence. I watched him do this one day in utter

disbelief. It was difficult and painful for Buffalo as he scraped his feet and belly on the wire. But he was undaunted. He wanted freedom more than comfort, more than security, more than anything.

Despite my frustration, I have learned a lot from Buffalo, for every Christian has an enemy whose goal is to imprison. Satan's strategy is to erect walls of deception so that we never live in the glorious freedom Christ died to give us. As long as the enemy can keep us barred in by misunderstanding, jealousy, insecurity, resentment, and a myriad of other walls, he never has to worry about us becoming all that God designed us to be. Satan gleefully watches as these lies blind us to truths that would restore relationships, heal hearts, and encourage us forward as messengers of the Good News.

Bible-toting Christians everywhere remain in bondage.

We know how to escape this prison. John 8:32 reads, "Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free" (NIV). Note that Jesus does not say that if we just *have* the truth, we will be free. Bible-toting Christians everywhere remain in bondage. It is not enough to *listen* to the truth. Churches are filled with believers who struggle with everything from addiction to lack of zeal. To acquire spiritual freedom, we must seek God's truth with tenacity, perseverance, and oblivion to pain, and to *know* it in a life-changing, thought-transforming way.

God has given us the Holy Spirit to help us find freedom (John 16:13). The journey begins when you ask Him to guide you into the truth that will set you free. Then determine to follow His leading regardless of how long it takes or how difficult the way becomes. It is worth the struggle. Just ask Buffalo. If you can find him. **H**

tion and answer page is often very informative, as well as "Words of Faith," "Into the Word," and "General Superintendent's Viewpoint." You have held high the standards of holiness and caring for others. Keep up the good work!

Shirley Brandon
Pefferlaw, Ont.

Once a Mormon

I want to comment on the April '97 article "Mormonism: Mainstream or Extreme?" You did a fine job explaining a very complex system. I was raised from the age of nine years old (1953) in the Church of the Nazarene. My dad was Sunday School superintendent and on the church board for many years. I attended Pasadena [Nazarene] College studying for the mission field (Paul Orjala was my hero!) and taught Sunday School at Temple City Church. I did not finish my studies and married a non-Christian, stopped attending church and reading Scripture, and isolated myself from God. With two small children and a floundering marriage, I was ripe for someone to knock on my door with information about eternal families . . . I spent 13 years as an active, temple-worthy Mormon before I was saved and left the "Church" in 1985. I am currently a member of Fairfield Church of the Nazarene in Eugene, Oreg.

I have a few observations . . . Mormons do not consider the Book of Mormon equal to the Bible; they consider it superior. They hold that ancient scribes deliberately distorted the Bible, so when there is a conflict between the two, the Book of Mormon is to be considered correct, in fact "the most correct book on earth." . . . You're absolutely right, proclamations are not to be questioned. We were told, "When the General Authorities speak, the thinking has been done." . . .

Mormons are, for the most part, loving and kind people who sincerely believe what they know of their doctrine. My heart is stirred when I read Paul's letter to the Romans when he speaks of the Israelites going about doing good, seeking to establish their own righteousness and not submitting to God's righteousness. That describes the LDS folks I know. In addition, the Third LDS Article of Faith states, "We believe that through the atonement of Christ all mankind may be saved by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel [*LDS Church*]."

notice the "may," as LDS have no assurance of their salvation until they stand before Elohim, Jesus Christ, and Joseph Smith for judgment.

When the young Mormon elders and sisters come to our door, it is not necessary to contest doctrine with them. . . . They are people first and Mormons second; if you can't witness to them in love, then don't witness to them at all. We can also ask their names and tell them we will pray for them, and then do it.

Thank you for writing this article. On the surface, Mormons are so appealing and wholesome, and Christians need to know that the doctrines of Mormonism are decidedly unchristian so they can protect themselves.

*Kay M. King
Eugene, Oreg.*

Social Concern

Please accept this letter of appreciation for recent issues of the *Herald*, especially July '97. I especially appreciate the articles addressing the social ills of our day.

Also, I'm glad you included the letter sent to the Disney Company from our denomination. My only concern is whether Disney will know what we believe is "immoral," especially since they are so committed to the radical homosexual movement. Personally, I believe we should join the boycott that other groups are calling for.

*Mrs. Howard Hull
Bridgeton, Mo.*

General Assembly Issue

I have been a reader of the *Herald* for many years and approve wholeheartedly of many changes.

Most especially, I want to congratulate you on the June issue, which gave a wonderful history of the Nazarene church plus where we are going. . . . It was very professionally presented.

*Jane Mikulec
Columbus, Ohio*

June Editorial

General Assembly is a time to rejoice in the accomplishments of His church. Equally so, God is blessing and touching lives in many non-Nazarene institutions. How unfortunate that we suffer from tunnel vision. It seems one of the ways we lift ourselves up is by tearing others down.

If that's the kind of "enthusiasm" you want to propagate, please keep it to yourself.

*Paul Sarsany
Massillon, Ohio*

MASCULINE JOURNEY

Making the Best of Things

MARK METCALFE



Mark Metcalfe is a husband and father of four who lives in Pepperell, Massachusetts, and can be contacted at [<metcalfe@cadence.com>](mailto:metcalfe@cadence.com).

ONE CHRISTMAS A FEW YEARS AGO, after I had gotten a raise and life was getting a little more comfortable for us, Joy and I decided that we would give the children their best Christmas ever. We wanted to make up for some of the Christmases when we couldn't afford to give them much. We bought them each several gifts, wrapped them in bright packages, and assembled an impressive, overflowing display under the Christmas tree.

The kids were little more than toddlers back then, impatiently awaiting their day of "wreck"-oning on the packages. Finally, Christmas morning came, and they gleefully tore the wrapping paper into tatters, revealing their booty. In addition to their individual gifts, Joy had bought one "big" gift, a toy kitchen set, for them to share.

After all the pictures were taken and the paper cleared from the floor, our girls set about the task of playing. Curiously, they spent most of their time playing in the big cardboard box in which the stove had come. All that preparation and expense lavished on the children, and they played with the package!

Our children taught us some lessons

about Christmas. How often have we missed the fact that God poured out His most extravagant Gift on us, only to find us playing with the decorations, programs, and packages that we associate with Christmas?

On another Christmas, during the Great Depression, my grandparents could only afford to give their son one gift, a set of colored paints. That Christmas, Sonny got his present early so he could help decorate walnut shells, which his family hung as ornaments on the tree. Even the tree was given to them. They made the best with what was available to them. They didn't seem to mind about their circumstances, because it was Christmas. Together they painted Christmas in colors of simple beauty.

On the first Christmas, Joseph and Mary scrambled for a place to give birth. All the rooming houses were filled to capacity. Labor was intensifying; Jesus was on the way. All that was available to receive the King of Kings was a stable and a manger.

God painted the meager surroundings of Christ's birthing room with a simple beauty of its own.

The scene was very unlike the attractive crèches we enjoy during the Advent season. The accommodations for Mary, Joseph, and Jesus were common, ordinary, and downright dirty. But Jesus didn't seem to mind. God painted the meager surroundings of

Christ's birthing room with a simple beauty of its own. That's because the presence of God sanctifies the common, ordinary, and downright dirty.

Christ identifies with the most humble among us and yet deserves the kingly gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Whether we have plenty or very little, Jesus can take what we have available to Him and make the best of it. He brings beauty and value into our lives by His sanctifying power—if we don't get too caught up playing with the package. **H**



Ⓞ **ARMSTRONG, LEON AND LINDA—THE ARMSTRONGS:** Indianapolis, IN, Evangelists' Gathering, Dec. 8-10; Swainsboro, GA (First), Jan. 27—Feb. 1

BAILEY, J. D.: Monrovia, IN, Dec. 3-7

BENSON, MICHAEL W.: Fort Worth, TX (Meadowbrook), Dec. 10-14; Muncie, IN (South Side), Jan. 4-7; Ironton, OH (First), 11-14; Austin, TX (South), 18-21

BROWN, ROGER N.: Indianapolis, IN, Evangelists' Gathering, Dec. 8-9; Lakeland, FL (Lake Gibson), Concert, Jan. 4; Plant City, FL (Wagoner Memorial), Concert, 11; Clearwater, FL (Central), Concert, 18; Bartow, FL (First), 24-25

Ⓞ **CANEN, DAVID:** Hinesville, GA, Dec. 2-7; Tullahoma, TN, Jan. 21—Feb. 1

CERVANTES, RUDY—HEAVENLY TRUMPET MINISTRIES: Topeka, KS (First), Concert, Dec. 7-A; Topeka, KS (Oakland), Concert, 7-P; Prescott Valley, AZ, Concert, 14-A; Prescott, AZ (First), Concert, 14-P; Camarillo, CA, Concert, 21-A; Simi Valley, CA, Concert, 21-P; Vancouver, WA (Liberty Bible of Hazel Dell), Concert, 28; Woodward, OK, Concert, Jan. 4-A; Enid, OK (First), Concert, 4-P; Colorado Springs, CO (Crossroads Chapel), Concert, 11; Cardington, OH, Concert, 18-A; Gallion, OH, Concert, 18-P

CLAY, D. E.: Punta Gorda, FL, Dec. 14* and Jan. 11*

CRABTREE, J. C.: Indianapolis, IN, Evangelists' Gathering, Dec. 8-10

DELL, JIMMY: Cheyenne, WY (Grace), Dec. 3-7; Phoenix, AZ (Emmanuel), 12-14; Coolidge, AZ (Valley Community Fellowship), Jan. 4; Globe, AZ, 11-14; Orangeburg, SC (Memorial), 18-22; Yuma, AZ (First), 25-28

Ⓞ **DENNISON, MARVIN:** Marietta, OH (First), Jan. 6-11

DIEHL, ROB AND DEBBIE—DYNOMIGHT MINISTRIES: Fairfield, OH, Children's Revival, Jan. 23-25

DOVE, KENNETH: Lawrenceburg, TN (Grace), Dec. 7; Gallatin, TN, 28

Ⓞ **FADER, WES AND MARY:** Federalsburg, MD, Nov. 30—Dec. 3*; Indianapolis, IN, Evangelists' Gathering, 8-10; Avon Park, FL (First), Jan. 14-18; Zephyrhills, FL, 21-25*

GESSNER, DON AND SHIRL: Spiceland, IN, Dec. 3-7; Indianapolis, IN, Evangelists' Gathering, 8-10; Salem, IL (Grace), Concert, Jan. 4; Brooksville, FL, 9-18*; New Castle, IN (First), Zone Crusade, 28—Feb. 1

GRAY, BOB AND BECKY: Muncie, IN (South Side), Jan. 4-7; Ironton, OH (First), 11-14; Temple, TX (First), 28—Feb. 1

Ⓞ **HAINES, GARY:** Wray, CO, Dec. 4-7; Indianapolis, IN, Evangelists' Gathering, 8-10; Pueblo, CO (Belmont), 10-14; Ocala, FL (First), Jan. 3-7; Carlsbad, NM (Church Street), 9-11; Tyler, TX (Lakeview), 17-21; Richmond, TX (Southwest), 22-25

HANCOCK, TIM: Wellston, OH, Dec. 7-10; Fostoria, OH (First), Concert, 14-A; Lancaster, OH (Gloryland), Jan. 11-14; Bethel, OH, 18-21; Mount Vernon, OH, North Central Ohio District Laymen's Retreat, 23-25; Powhatan Point, OH, 28—Feb. 1

HICKS, JOHN DAVID: Renton, WA, Dec. 7-10; Nampa, ID (Bethel), Jan. 11-14; Oregon City, OR, 18-21; Baker City, OR, 25-28

JORDAN, JOSEPH R.: Waterloo, OH, Dec. 1-7*

JUNEMAN, JOHN AND TRINA: Edmonds, WA, Washington Pacific Zone Crusade, Jan. 28—Feb. 1

KEENA, EARL E.: Indianapolis, IN, Evangelists' Gathering, Dec. 8-10; Philippines, Metro Manila District, Jan. 14—Feb. 13

Ⓞ **LECKRONE, LARRY AND TAMLA:** Dunkirk, IN, Dec. 3-7; Indianapolis, IN, Evangelists' Gathering, 8-10; Columbus, IN (Calvary), 10-14; Sharpsburg, GA (First), Jan. 3-7; Tifton, GA (First), 10-14; Fort Myers, FL (First), 24-28

LEWIS, CHRISTOPHER: Ensenada, Mexico, Jan. 4-11*; Needles, CA, 14-18; Reedley, CA, 21-25

Ⓞ **MANLEY, STEPHEN—CROSS STYLE PROCLAMATION:** Cartersville, GA (First), Dec. 3-7; Angola, IN, 10-14; Marion, IN, 21*; Prescott, AZ, Cross-Style Conference, Jan. 2-4; Phoenix, AZ (Biltmore), 4-7; Jacksonville, FL (University Blvd.), Jan. 11-13; Jacksonville, FL (University Blvd.), Citywide Holiness Crusade, 14-18; Leigh Acres, FL, 21-25; Homestead, FL (Princeton), 28—Feb. 1

McWHIRTER, STUART: Columbia, SC, Dec. 3-7; Indianapolis, IN, Evangelists' Gathering, 8-10

Ⓞ **MILLHUFF, CHUCK R.:** Traverse City, MI, Dec. 3-7; Kansas City, MO (Blue Hills Community), 12-14; Ashburn, VA, 28*; Casey, IL, Jan. 14-18; Lincoln, NE (First), 25

MILLS, CARLTON—SECOND TOUCH EVANGELISM MINISTRIES: Bonifay, FL, Dec. 2-7; Indianapolis, IN, Evangelists' Gathering, 8-10; El Cajon, CA, Jan. 6-11

MONCK, JIM: Leesburg, FL, Jan. 25-28

OYLER, CALVIN AND VIRGINIA: Kansas City, MO (Kansas City Rescue Mission), Dec. 28—Jan. 4

PALMER, MIKE: Greenfield, IN (First), Dec. 7-10; Waynesville, MO, Jan. 18-21; McKinney, TX, 25-28

Ⓞ **PERDUE, NELSON S.:** Spiceland, IN, Dec. 3-7; Indianapolis, IN, Evangelists' Gathering, 8-10; Greenville, OH (Bradford), Jan. 2-4; Lynchburg, VA, 7-11; El Paso, TX (First), 14-18; Valparaiso, IN, Northwest Indiana District Indoor Camp, 25—Feb. 1

PETTIT, ELAINE C.—EVANGELISTIC MINISTRIES: Indianapolis, IN, Evangelists' Gathering, Dec. 8-10; Cincinnati, OH (Springdale), Jan. 11-14; Joplin, MO (Calvary), 18-21; Waldron, AR (First), 25-28

ROACH, JERRY AND BARBARA—ROACH EVANGELISTIC MINISTRIES, INC.: Roberts, IL, Dec. 3-P*; Watska, IL, 4-P*; Lafayette, IN (First), 7-P; Radcliff, KY, 10-P; Waynesville, NC (Lakeview),

29; Palham, TN (Chapman's Chapel), Jan. 11

Ⓞ **ROSE, WAYNE—ROSE GARDEN:** Indianapolis, IN, Evangelists' Gathering, Dec. 8-10

SCHOENER, MALCOLM—HEART AND HOPE MINISTRY: Indianapolis, IN, Evangelists' Gathering, Dec. 8-10

SHERWOOD, SCOTT AND SHERRY: Oakwood, IL, Dec. 3-7; Danbury, CT (First), 7-10; Griggsville, IL, 14-17; Bethany, OK (Calvary), 19-21

Ⓞ **SMITH, DUANE:** Des Moines, IA (First), Nov. 30—Dec. 3; Indianapolis, IN, Evangelists' Gathering, 8-10; Thomasville, GA, Jan. 14-18; Baton Rouge, LA (First), 21-25; Biloxi, MS, 27—Feb. 1*

SMITH, MICKEY G.: Pahokee, FL, Jan. 11-14; West Palm Beach, FL (First), 16-18

TAYLOR, ROBERT: Fairborn, OH (Wrightview), Dec. 7; Indianapolis, IN, Evangelists' Gathering, 8-10; Guyana, Africa (Missionary Crusade), Jan. 4-7; Kenneth City, FL (St. Petersburg), 11-14; Tampa, FL (First), 18-21; Tampa, FL (Faith), 25-28

ULMET, BILL: Indianapolis, IN, Evangelists' Gathering, Dec. 8-10; Manteno, IL, Youth Revival, 28-31; Natchitoches, LA, Jan. 6-11; Hennessey, OK, 18-21; DeRidder, LA, 25-28

VECCHI, PETE: Trenton, OH (Hamilton Williamsdale), Dec. 3-7; Indianapolis, IN, Evangelists' Gathering, 8-10

WADE, E. BRUCE: Tell City, IN, Dec. 3-7; Indianapolis, IN, Evangelists' Gathering, 8-10; Paoli, IN, 10-14

Ⓞ **WELLS, LINARD:** Tell City, IN, Dec. 2-7; Indianapolis, IN, Evangelists' Gathering, 8-10; Paoli, IN, 10-14; Brunswick, GA (First), Jan. 13-18; Dothan, AL (First), 20-25; Longview, TX (First), 27—Feb. 1

WESLEY, RONALD E.: Haines City, FL, Jan. 11-14

Ⓞ Tenured Evangelist is recognized by the church as a lifetime assignment. See Manual 407.3

*Denotes Non-Nazarene Church.

Birthday Greetings

Happy Birthday, Friend
You waited for me, didn't you?
Waited a lot of years.
Patiently, expectantly,
Knowing all my fears.

You cared.

Happy Birthday, Brother
Calling me by name one day
I felt Your hand in mine.
Assuring me that in our Father's house
Eternally I would dine.

With you.

Happy Birthday, Teacher
Wandering through this Holy Book
I craved knowledge of God's every word
Softly, slowly You spoke to me
And with awe each time I heard.

And obeyed.

Happy Birthday, Son of Man
Do You look at the people You have saved,
Do You ever ask yourself why?
Can I do a better job for You,
Can I do more than just get by?

My humanness.

Happy Birthday, Mighty God
You know us all by name.
Calling every sinner one by one
You lead us to Your Father's house
To praise and worship the Son.

True Love.

Happy Birthday, Savior
I find myself in constant thought
Wanting to know that place
Where I will kneel before You
And see Your glorious face.

Someday soon.

Happy Birthday, Prince of Peace
My Friend, my Brother,
My Lord, my Light.

For generations You have loved us
You have equipped us for the fight.
I'm ready.

Happy Birthday, Lamb of God
The sacrifice You made for me
As You suffered on the Cross,
Can never be repaid by me
Except to tell others of their loss.

And salvation.

Happy Birthday, Jesus
The years have been hard on You
By glancing you really can't tell.
But something around Your eyes and mouth
Tells me that You have fought hell.

And won.

So, because I know You have no needs
And our hearts are Your only desire.
I give You for Your birthday, Lord
A commitment to always look higher.

Happy Birthday.

—Kay Richter



THE QUESTION BOX

CONDUCTED BY WESLEY D. TRACY, *Editor*

Q. No one in our 50-person Sunday School class could name a single example of Sabbath desecration. Can you?

A. Never far from my *Manual*, I turn to paragraph 27.2. There I learn that desecrating the Sabbath is a matter of “participa[ting] in unnecessary secular activities” that “deny its [the Sabbath’s] sanctity.” I take that to mean choosing secular activities that make the Lord’s Day something less than a day of rest and worship. If required to make a list of specifics, topping the list would be: Missing church to watch a professional football game!

Q. Do membership standards count anymore? In my Sunday School class a young couple who recently joined the church say that they still go out drinking in bars because they were first invited to church at a bar, and they then found Christ. I guess they invite their drinking buddies to church. Last Sunday in the early service, our pastor took a man into church membership. I was more than a little frustrated and confused when I saw him step out on the church steps, smoke a cigarette, and then come back in for Sunday School. Is this standard operating procedure for the church now?

A. I certainly hope not. The cases you cite raise the issue of the nature of the church. There are two major views. One is that anyone and everyone should be taken into the church, and once in, the church should start working to upgrade their moral and spiritual life. Some mainline, liberal Protestant churches practice something like this.

The other view is what is called the “believers’ church” tradition. This vision of the church is that only those who have been saved by grace are eligible for church membership. To quote Stan Ingersol, “Believers’ churches’ have a distinctive way of being the church. They are voluntary fellowships of those who have experienced the regenerating power of divine grace. Their members form a covenant between God and one another and are active in Christian works. They do not allow obvious sin among the clergy and the laity to slide, but practice church discipline” (*Herald of Holiness*, June 1997, 16).

The Church of the Nazarene has, from its first moment, been a believers’ church in the Wesleyan tradition. Thus, standard procedure for Nazarenes is to enforce and abide by membership standards. This is not to be done harshly or self-righteously, but in harmony with Paul’s counsel to Timothy: “Proclaim the message; be persistent . . . convince, rebuke, and encourage, *with the utmost patience in teaching*” (2 Timothy 4:2, NRSV, emphasis added).

Wallace Thornton Jr. cites three motives for keeping membership standards that he has noted among Holiness

people in different eras. In the early days, Wesley and his people kept certain standards of conduct and dress out of a sense of *stewardship*. They wanted to give their hearts, minds, and bodies to the things that mattered most—service, worship, and witness for Christ. A sanctified Christian would live without wasteful extravagance, would not loiter away precious time, would not clutter the mind with vulgar entertainments. It was a matter of stewardship.

In the 19th century, during the Holiness revival, two new motivations came into the picture, Thornton believes. One was *submission*. Codes of dress and behavior became a way to show that you had submitted to the church, the denomination, or the evangelist. When my mother bowed at an altar of prayer nearly 70 years ago, her wedding ring was stripped from her finger and given to the evangelist to be sold and the proceeds given to missions. She did not ask for a receipt. She was too busy proving that she was willing to submit to the then current code in order to be a Nazarene Christian. Cults do that sort of thing a lot. Examples: the Hare Krishna hairdo and the Heaven’s Gate requirement to submit to castration.

In the next era, some Holiness people used the codes for dress and behavior, according to Thornton, as a way to prove their *separation* from the world. There popped up regions, districts, and churches where, for example, the seriously holy women all wore wrist- and ankle-length garments and wore their hair in buns. At a glance, one could see that she is separated from the world—at least from the fashion world.

Predictably, keeping church standards of dress and behavior from the motives of submission and separation wore very thin when it clashed with today’s do-your-own-thing culture. Soon a whole breed of Holiness folks arose who would submit to nothing or no one—except the Lord, of course. Keeping the rules for the sake of submission was merely a challenge to people who have been swept along in the populist rebellion against all hierarchies.

Keeping membership codes for the sake of separation from the world soon produced a generation who pointed out that you could wear the uniform and still be very worldly at heart. When they weren’t saying that, they were proving to anyone who cared to watch that they could do some of the no-nos and still be good Christians. Some in each of these categories went too far.

The answer, according to Thornton, is to get back to membership standards motivated by Christian stewardship. Though submission and separation from the world have value, they are not strong enough motivations. Let us agree on membership standards that are based on stewardship and not on something less. I’m quite sure that stewardship-based rules would not embrace drinking and smoking. You don’t even have to be a Christian to know that they are bad. I hope that your own local church will take a serious look at these principles.

January Through December 1997

FEATURES

Allure of the Holy, The.....Paul S. Rees, Sept., p. 22
Can You Be a Christian and a Scientologist?.....Chad Wilks, Sept., p. 24
Carols of Christmas.....Kathleen Buehler, Dec., p. 22
Child Abuse and the Church.....Dan Casey, Jan., p. 25
Christian Morality in an Amoral Age.....Tim Keller, Feb., p. 22
Church That Christ Builds, The.....William M. Greathouse, Apr., p. 40
Come Share the Dream.....Howard Culbertson, June, p. 26
Convincing Power of the Cross, The.....Mark S. Copley, Mar., p. 20
Cross-Gender Friendships: Are They Dangerous to Your Marriage?.....Marlo M. Schalesky, Nov., p. 24
Desires of the Heart.....Leanne M. Button, Dec., p. 20
Devotions for Pentecost.....Gene Van Note, May, p. 3
District Superintendent's Name Is Rosa, The.....Jeanette Gardner Littleton, Aug., p. 24
DIVORCE—It Never Should Have Happened.....Jane A. Cole, Dec., p. 2
Does God Make Deals?.....Gene Van Note, Apr., p. 28
Does the Bible Contain a Secret Code?.....H. Ray Dunning, Dec., p. 16
Drug-Proof Your Kids.....Steve Arterburn and Jim Burns, Mar., p. 2
Easter: The Heart of the Faith.....Calvin Miller, Mar., p. 24
Entire Sanctification: The Questions You Asked.....Frank Moore, Mar., p. 30
Evangelicals and “the Homosexual Problem”.....J. Grant Swank Jr., Feb., p. 27
Faith and the Learning Disabled Adult.....Nancy O. Wilson, Dec., p. 46
Fire!.....Christi-An C. Bennett, May, p. 2
Five Christmas Witnesses.....David C. Shultz, Dec., p. 24
Five Marks of Wise Stewardship.....Carl Bangs, Sept., p. 42
From Mother Teresa's Orphanage to Nazarene Theological Seminary.....J. Wesley Eby, Nov., p. 4
God's Aloha.....Joanne Martin Walker, May, p. 46
Grab the Opportunity.....Mark R. Littleton, Oct., p. 22
Heart to Heart, Passion to Passion.....Dan Schaeffer, Feb., p. 30
HELP! The Doctor Says It's Alzheimer's Disease.....LeAnn Campbell, July, p. 2
Holiness and Mountain Climbing.....Victor Schreffler, Oct., p. 8
Holy Living: Our Highest Destiny.....Bob Haslam, Jan., p. 8
I Give You Back Your Christmas.....Robert E. Thomson, Dec., p. 28
I Just Don't Fit.....John W. May, Feb., p. 44
I Want the Right to Believe in Abstinence.....Marianne Moody Jennings, July, p. 34
In Search of Guidance.....Lonni Collins Pratt, July, p. 26
Is Moral Fog Engulfing the Church?.....Richard S. Taylor, Sept., p. 20
Is Someone Out to Get Us?.....Gene Van Note, Jan., p. 20
It's Good to Be Here.....Joseph Coleson, Jan., p. 39
It's Not Too Late.....E. Ruth Glover, Nov., p. 32
Life on the Narrow Path.....Lois Hoadley Dick, July, p. 24
Life Without Jerry.....Elaine Cunningham, Feb., p. 16
Listen, the Teacher Is Talking.....Mark K. Gilroy, Apr., p. 21
Make Worship an Adventure of the Spirit.....Victor M. Parachin, Sept., p. 19
Mary Lou Carney: Missionary to Children.....Priscilla Raue, Feb., p. 2
Message of the Cross, The.....Thomas L. Cook, Mar., p. 46
Mom's High Calling, A.....Becky Hancock, Aug., p. 8
Mormonism: Mainstream or Extreme?.....Wesley D. Tracy, Apr., p. 8
My Resurrection Story.....Cathy Mogus, Mar., p. 22
New “Manners”: An Excuse for '90s Immorality?.....Tina Krause, Mar., p. 13
New Shoes for Old.....Joe Seay, Aug., p. 30
1967-1997: Thirty Years That Made a Difference.....Hiram E. Sanders, Oct., p. 36
NPH Sunday—An Interview with Bob Brower.....Jan., p. 10
One.....John A. Knight, May, p. 7
One More Block.....Joyce L. Holscher, Oct., p. 29

Other Woman, The.....Jim Peters, Nov., p. 21
Painter of Light.....Marlo M. Schalesky, May, p. 22
Parable of the Burger Battle, The.....Chad L. Wilks, Jan., p. 40
Pastoring the Pastor's Family.....Frances R. King, Oct., p. 38
Peace—65 Years Late.....Lynn Woods as told to Marion Duckworth, May, p. 26
Reckless Living.....Victor Schreffler, Nov., p. 2
Saved—to Tell Others.....Jay Richard Akkerman, Oct., p. 26
Secret of Holy Living, The.....William M. Greathouse, June, p. 34
Seminary Without Walls, A.....Gordon Wetmore, Jan., p. 36
Sexual-Purity Challenge, The.....Stephen Arterburn and Jim Burns, July, p. 22
Shattered!.....Doris Louise Seger, Apr., p. 18
Sin We Don't Like to Talk About, The.....Chip Ricks, Oct., p. 20
Sin-onyms.....Bob Haslam, Oct., p. 25
So You Want a Divorce.....Richard Maffeo, Dec., p. 4
Songs of Spiritual Experience.....Keith Schwanz, Nov., p. 28
Summer Detour.....Margaret Houk, Aug., p. 36
They Shared a Dream.....Stan Ingersol, June, p. 14
They Will Never Follow a Stranger.....Mike Barton, Aug., p. 38
Through the Storm.....Carolyn Gookins as told to Martha Martin, Aug., p. 20
Treasures and Promises.....Jerald D. Johnson, June, p. 8
Unbudgeted Church Expenses.....Bill D. Hallsted, Sept., p. 44
Untamed God, The.....Neil B. Wiseman, May, p. 28
We Live in Privileged Times.....Donald D. Owens, June, p. 10
What Have You Done with Our Dream?.....Neil B. Wiseman, June, p. 20
What Makes a Marriage Christian?.....Jeren Rowell, Sept., p. 2
When Arshad Met a Miracle.....Donald E. Lindman, Sept., p. 46
When Your Child Visits a Nursing Home.....Marilyn Fanning, July, p. 44
Whose Child Is This?.....Tim Bunn, Aug., p. 10
Working Toward a Theology of Sexuality.....Carolyn Holderread Heggen, July, p. 20

POETRY

Dewdrop.....Marlo Michelle Schalesky, Apr., p. 38
Faith.....Katherine Short, Apr., p. 38
Filled.....Dale Evans, Nov., p. 47
Hymn to God.....Nancy Spiegelberg, Apr., p. 38
Listen, Poets!.....Elva McAllaster, Apr., p. 38
Ode to the West Wind.....Percy Bysshe Shelley, Feb., p. 48
Peace of God, The.....Eula Lindsey Maurice, July, p. 47
Shaft of Light, A.....Alice Crane Behr, Apr., p. 38
Streams in the Wasteland.....Marlo Michelle Schalesky, Nov., p. 47
When?.....Marcia Krugh Leaser, Nov., p. 47

CONTINUING COLUMNS

Creative Brooding

Are You All Right?.....Dean Nelson, May, p. 41
Bridge Repair.....Dean Nelson, Oct., p. 30
Crossing the Line.....Dean Nelson, Aug., p. 41
Falling Off the Wheel.....Dean Nelson, Mar., p. 32
Hope, Fairness, and Chance.....Dean Nelson, Nov., p. 36
Jesus at Dupont Circle.....Dean Nelson, Feb., p. 18
Lesson from Heaven's Gate, A.....Dean Nelson, July, p. 29
Myths.....Dean Nelson, Dec., p. 29
Thinking Small.....Dean Nelson, Sept., p. 39
Two Coincidences.....Dean Nelson, June, p. 29
Vantage Point.....Dean Nelson, Apr., p. 36

The Family Album

Barking Dogs and Our Father.....Jerry and Lynda Cohagan, Jan., p. 30
Big Piece, The.....Jerry and Lynda Cohagan, Nov., p. 34
Cowlicks and Salt Licks.....Jerry and Lynda Cohagan, Mar., p. 17

Lesson from Balking

- Computers, A**.....Jerry and Lynda Cohagan, May, p. 18
Standing Together.....Jerry and Lynda Cohagan, Sept., p. 32
Thank Heaven for Little Girls.....Jerry and Lynda Cohagan, July, p. 38

General Superintendent's Viewpoint

- Cosmic Dividends**.....Paul G. Cunningham, Jan., p. 2
Developing a Corporate DNA in the Church of the Nazarene.....Donald D. Owens, May, p. 9
In Quest of Belonging.....Paul G. Cunningham, July, p. 10
Intentional Thanksgiving.....Paul G. Cunningham, Nov., p. 10
Lay Revolution, The.....John A. Knight, Aug., p. 1
Lord, Teach Us to Pray.....William J. Prince, Apr., p. 4
Spiritual Opportunities of Lent.....John A. Knight, Mar., p. 16
Thanks for the Journey.....Jerald D. Johnson, Feb., p. 9
We Love You, Pastors!.....James H. Diehl, Oct., p. 4
Where Do We Go from Here?.....James H. Diehl, June, p. 30
Why Celebrate Christmas Anyway?.....Jerry D. Porter, Dec., p. 8
Would You Be Rich?.....William J. Prince, Sept., p. 7

In a Woman's Voice

- Buffaloed?**.....Susan Hanson Bates, Dec., p. 34
Come As You Are.....Rebecca Laird, Aug., p. 18
Daily Choice, A.....Rebecca Laird, Nov., p. 18
Gift of Simplicity, The.....Rebecca Laird, Apr., p. 5
God's Greening Power.....Rebecca Laird, Feb., p. 35
Hopeless?.....Susan Hanson Bates, May, p. 33
It Is Enough.....Susan Hanson Bates, Mar., p. 36
No Proof for God?.....Rebecca Laird, June, p. 32
Recorded Word, The.....Susan Hanson Bates, Jan., p. 29
You Are What You Wear.....Susan Hanson Bates, Sept., p. 34

Into the Word

- Better than Practical—Generous**.....Roger L. Hahn, July, p. 18
Biblical Perspective on Leadership, A.....Roger L. Hahn, Aug., p. 29
Cost and the Grace of Love, The.....Roger L. Hahn, Feb., p. 15
How Can You Know God Has Spoken?.....Roger L. Hahn, Oct., p. 18
Joy in Worship.....Roger L. Hahn, Apr., p. 41
Memories of Worship, The.....Roger L. Hahn, June, p. 43
No Choices Without Consequences.....Roger L. Hahn, Mar., p. 14
Protecting the Inheritance.....Roger L. Hahn, Nov., p. 44
Stronger than Resolutions.....Roger L. Hahn, Jan., p. 33
What Price Purity?.....Roger L. Hahn, May, p. 14
What Story Does Christmas Tell?.....Roger L. Hahn, Dec., p. 33

Masculine Journey

- Blessed Assurance**.....Mark Metcalfe, Oct., p. 13
Brothers in Conflict.....Mark Metcalfe, Jan., p. 5
Do Wednesdays Count?.....Mark Metcalfe, July, p. 37
Fast Forward.....Mark Metcalfe, Nov., p. 19
Good Grief.....Mark Metcalfe, Sept., p. 35
Good Investment, A.....Mark Metcalfe, Mar., p. 37
Home Authority.....Mark Metcalfe, Aug., p. 19
Making the Best of Things.....Mark Metcalfe, Dec., p. 35
Men Ministering to Pastors.....Mark Metcalfe, Apr., p. 30
Redeemed at a Discount?.....Mark Metcalfe, Feb., p. 34

Nazarene Roots

- Whatever Happened to Fannie McDowell Hunter?**.....Stan Ingersol, Sept., p. 18

Observer at Large

- Come and Dine**.....John C. Bowling, Apr., p. 47
Look Up.....John C. Bowling, Jan., p. 47
Sauntering Saints.....John C. Bowling, May, p. 44
"Traveling Light!".....John C. Bowling, Feb., p. 37
What Are You Looking For?.....John C. Bowling, Mar., p. 35

Over 60

- Best Christmas Ever**.....C. Ellen Watts, Dec., p. 31
Caller A.D......C. Ellen Watts, July, p. 40
Dust—Thou Art.....C. Ellen Watts, Mar., p. 18
Foxed Out.....C. Ellen Watts, Apr., p. 7

- Fringe Benefits**.....C. Ellen Watts, Oct., p. 31
Ice Pick.....C. Ellen Watts, Aug., p. 34
Missed Manners.....C. Ellen Watts, Sept., p. 16
Mom to Moms.....C. Ellen Watts, May, p. 39
Paper Tale.....C. Ellen Watts, Feb., p. 19
Reunion Notice.....C. Ellen Watts, Nov., p. 43

Rhythms of the Spirit

- Care for Soul and Care for Sabbath**.....Morris A. Weigelt, Apr., p. 37
Returning to the Altar.....Morris A. Weigelt, Jan., p. 6

When You Pray

- Many Thanks**.....E. Dee Freeborn, Feb., p. 33

Words of Faith

- Advent**.....Rob L. Staples, Dec., p. 19
Angels.....Rob L. Staples, Apr., p. 31
Assurance.....Rob L. Staples, Feb., p. 20
Baptism.....Rob L. Staples, June, p. 46
Eucharist.....Rob L. Staples, Aug., p. 48
Hell.....Rob L. Staples, Sept., p. 15
Infant Baptism.....Rob L. Staples, July, p. 12
Parousia.....Rob L. Staples, Nov., p. 20
Providence.....Rob L. Staples, Oct., p. 5
Resurrection.....Rob L. Staples, May, p. 19
Sacraments.....Rob L. Staples, Mar., p. 34
Trinity.....Rob L. Staples, Jan., p. 24

DEPARTMENTS

Editor's Choice

- Bedtime Parable**.....Wesley D. Tracy, July, p. 8
Haircut.....Wesley D. Tracy, Jan., p. 4
Hell Has Been Deleted.....Wesley D. Tracy, Feb., p. 7
Hic Jacet.....Wesley D. Tracy, Mar., p. 8
I Have the Nazarene Enthusiasm.....Wesley D. Tracy, June, p. 4
It's Time.....Wesley D. Tracy, Nov., p. 38
Missionary Wilma.....Wesley D. Tracy, Oct., p. 1
Power Christmas.....Wesley D. Tracy, Dec., p. 10
Some Things You Don't Forget.....Wesley D. Tracy, May, p. 17
Thoughts While Scraping My Face.....Wesley D. Tracy, Apr., p. 1
What About UFO Cults?.....Wesley D. Tracy, Aug., p. 6
"What Ought to Be, Can Be".....Wesley D. Tracy, Sept., p. 8

Signs

- Bangladesh**.....Michael R. Estep, May, p. 16
Book of Acts—African Style, The.....Michael R. Estep, July, p. 48
Bruno.....Michael R. Estep, Mar., p. 47
Cecil Paul—A Man of Vision.....Michael R. Estep, Oct., p. 3
David.....Michael R. Estep, Feb., p. 47
Do What You Can.....Michael R. Estep, Sept., p. 9
Dr. Don: Friend and Witness.....Michael R. Estep, Apr., p. 2
Mrs. Duncan.....Michael R. Estep, June, p. 3
Orsourn Home—
All Are Welcomed Here, The.....Michael R. Estep, Nov., p. 48
Postman, The.....Michael R. Estep, Jan., p. 1
Who Is He?.....Michael R. Estep, Aug., p. 3

The Unheralded

- Curt Ammons—Unheralded Servant**.....J. Wesley Eby, Mar., p. 28
From Drug Addict to Minister
"By the Grace of God".....J. Wesley Eby, Apr., p. 25
Gordon Wong—A Dreamer.....J. Wesley Eby, July, p. 28
Hilda Watchorn—Godly Matriarch.....J. Wesley Eby, Aug., p. 22
Maria Rodriguez—Blessed to Be
a Blessing.....J. Wesley Eby, May, p. 20
Rev. Keith Smith—Undaunted by Challenges.....J. Wesley Eby, June, p. 44
Ruth Sumner—Centenarian
Extraordinaire.....J. Wesley Eby, Sept., p. 28
Stanley Moore—From Barbados to Brooklyn Beulah.....J. Wesley Eby, Oct., p. 12
Work and Witness Hands.....J. Wesley Eby, Dec., p. 11

NAZARENE FAMILY



(Above) 1997 Kentucky District ordinand (l. to r.): District Superintendent Lowell T. Clyburn, Rev. and Mrs. Greg Ryan, General Superintendent Donald D. Owens.



(Above) 1997 North Arkansas District ordinand (l. to r.): District Superintendent David G. Roland, Rev. and Mrs. Ron Birdsong, General Superintendent Jim L. Bond.



(Above) 1997 Southeast Oklahoma District ordinand class (l. to r.): District Superintendent Ark Noel Jr., Rev. and Mrs. John Hughes, Rev. and Mrs. J. Dale Wesley, General Superintendent Paul G. Cunningham.

Ordinations



(Above) 1997 Kansas City District ordinand class (Row 1, l. to r., spouse seated): District Superintendent Keith Wright, Rev. and Mrs. Daniel Newburg, Rev. and Mrs. William Haworth, Rev. and Mrs. Brian Weigelt, Rev. and Mrs. David Allison, Rev. and Mrs. John Bondy, Rev. and Mrs. Kent Pitcher, Rev. and Mrs. Roger Jolley. (Row 2, l. to r.) General Superintendent James H. Diehl, Rev. and Mrs. Jon Stoe, Rev. and Mrs. Patrick Sampson, Rev. and Mrs. John Pierre, Rev. and Mrs. Samuel Yangmi. (Row 3, l. to r.) Rev. and Mrs. James Spears, Rev. and Mrs. Craig Laughlin, Rev. and Mrs. James M. Pennington, Rev. and Mrs. Brent Massey.



(Above) 1997 Dallas District ordinand class (l. to r.): General Superintendent Jerry D. Porter, Rev. and Mrs. Neal Gray, Rev. and Mrs. Warren Brent, Rev. and Mrs. Earl Gray, Rev. and Mrs. Ron Hart, Rev. and Mrs. Randy Harrell, Rev. and Mrs. Michael Estep, Rev. and Mrs. Steve Hazelton, Rev. and Mrs. Matt Rice, District Superintendent David F. Nixon.

(Right) 1997 Joplin District ordinand class (l. to r.): General Superintendent William J. Prince, Rev. and Mrs. Bob King, Rev. and Mrs. Eric Atnip, Rev. and Mrs. Dan Paxton, District Superintendent Pal L. Wright.



(Left) 1997 South Carolina District ordinand class (l. to r.): General Superintendent James H. Diehl, Rev. and Mrs. Glenn S. Sherman, Rev. Leverne and Rev. Veronica Williams, Rev. and Mrs. William Harmon, District Superintendent James M. Bearden.

Ordinations



(Above) 1997 Illinois District ordinand class (l. to r.): Rev. and Mrs. Brian Sorensen, General Superintendent Jim L. Bond, Rev. and Mrs. Stephen Gocking, Rev. and Mrs. Kevin Sneed, Rev. Rebecca and Thomas Parks, Rev. and Mrs. Ronald Linder, District Superintendent Allen H. Dace.



(Above) 1997 Pittsburgh District ordinand class (l. to r.): District Secretary Stephen Dillman, District Superintendent J. Roy Fuller, Rev. and Mrs. Keith Ritter, Rev. and Mrs. Robert Larimore, Rev. and Mrs. Harold Altemus, Rev. and Mrs. John Stubbs, General Superintendent Jerry D. Porter.



(Above) 1997 Michigan District ordinand class (l. to r.): General Superintendent John A. Knight, District Superintendent C. Neil Strait, Rev. and Mrs. Robert Thomas, Rev. and Mrs. Steven Campbell, Rev. and Mrs. Stephen Shook, District Secretary Randall Hartman.



(Above) 1997 West Virginia South District ordinand class (l. to r.): District Superintendent Mervin Smith, Rev. and Mrs. Mayford G. Witt, Rev. and Mrs. Christopher A. Griffin, Rev. and Mrs. Daniel L. Williams, General Superintendent Paul G. Cunningham.



(Above) 1997 North Florida District ordinand class (l. to r.): District Superintendent Moody Gunter, Rev. Melba Gay, Rev. Avis and Michael Murray, Rev. and Mrs. Bill Higgins, Rev. and Mrs. Kevin Angel, Rev. Dana and Byron Brown, Rev. and Mrs. J. R. Deetz, General Superintendent John A. Knight.



(Above) 1997 Northwest Oklahoma District ordinand class (l. to r.): District Superintendent Jerry White, Rev. and Mrs. Herbert Berkley, Rev. and Mrs. Kenneth Campbell, Rev. Kelley and Chris Yates, Rev. and Mrs. David Hane, General Superintendent William J. Prince.

NAZARENE HIGHER EDUCATION OFFERS OPPORTUNITIES FOR MINISTRY!

The Church of the Nazarene, from its inception, has been committed to higher education. The church provides the college/university with students, administrative and faculty leadership, and financial and spiritual support. The college/university educates the church's youth and many of the church's adults, guides them toward spiritual maturity, enriches the church, and sends out into the world thinking, loving servants of Christ. The church college/university, while not a local congregation, is an integral part of the church; it is an expression of the church.

—1997—2001 Nazarene Manual

The International Board of Education invites those who are preparing to teach in a Nazarene college, university, or seminary to submit a current vita, which will be made available to the undergraduate and graduate institutions of the church. Listed below are known needs for the 1998-99 academic year. Since all needs cannot be anticipated, other openings may occur in teaching, administrative, or staff roles. Nazarene colleges are equal opportunity employers.

Accounting	Management and Organization
Art History	Mathematics Education
Athletic Director/Kinesiology	Music (Department Chair)
Communication Studies	New Testament and Greek
Computer Science	Nursing
Education	Political Science
Education/Painting	Practical Theology
Finance	Public Health
Instructional Technology	Teacher Education
Library Science	

For further information please contact:

Dr. Jerry D. Lambert, Education Commissioner
International Board of Education
Church of the Nazarene
6401 The Paseo
Kansas City, MO 64131
816-333-7000, ext. 2226

The Resource Institute for International Education maintains a registry for educators and education specialists. Members of the registry are available for volunteer and part-time service to Nazarene higher education either as teachers or consultants. Information regarding the registry can be obtained from Dr. Al Truesdale, Nazarene Theological Seminary, 1700 E. Meyer Blvd., Kansas City, MO 64131.

VITAL STATISTICS

Deaths

JACK BIERCE, 87, Nazarene song evangelist, Sept. 23. Survivors: wife, Berniece; daughters, Iris Dilling, Carol Cowan, Jacque McPherson.

JOHN H. CHAMBERLAIN, 85, Newberg, Oreg., Aug. 11. Survivors: wife, Ada; son, Paul; sisters, Naomi Schneider, Martha Perm; three grandchildren.

JAMES SHACKLETT CHERRY, 88, Portland, Tenn., May 31. Survivors: wife, Lucille; son, Claude; daughters, Yvonne, Alice; nine grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren.

DOUGLAS DEZOTELL, 14, Haysville, Kans., Sept. 28. Survivors: parents, Rev. Steve and Rhonda Dezotell; brothers, Gary, Brian, Chad; grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. Calvin Smith, Mr. and Mrs. Darrell Dezotell.

REV. R. H. "BUDDY" DRESSLER JR., 60,



pastor, evangelist, and educator, Oklahoma City, Sept. 3. Survivors: wife, Florence; sons, Randy, Mark; daughters, Noni Dressier, Cindy Baker; mother, Lucy Dressier; brothers, Francis Dressier, Waddell Burge, Edison Burge; sisters, Honore Faithe Burton, Georgeiane Compton; seven grandchildren.

BERTHA BLANCHARD BRANSON HARDMAN, 96, Hemlock, Oreg., Mar. 26. Survivors: husband, Claude; four stepchildren.

FREDA L. (TAYLOR) HOFFMAN, 88, Brookville, Pa., Feb. 1. Survivors: sons, James, John; daughter, Connie Johnson; brothers, Rev. Robert, James; sisters, Grace Hetrick, Dora Key, Naomi McClellan, Nancy Jackson; 10 grandchildren; 2 great-grandchildren.

REV. CHARLIE L. LOGSTON, 85, Garden Grove, Calif., Aug. 25. Rev. Logston pastored in West Virginia, Nevada, and California. Survivors: son, James; daughters, Eva Paget, Ruth Ann Coe; sister, Ruth Harris; four grandchildren; two great-grandchildren.



OPAL PAGAN, 92, Bethany, Okla., June 25. Survivors: sons, E. C., Keith; daughters, Reeda Tyler, Patsy Thanscheidt; 10 grandchildren; 19 great-grandchildren.



REV. MARTHA M. REED, 96, Midland, Mich., Aug. 21. Rev. Reed pastored several churches on the Michigan District. Survivors: cousins, Dona Van Steinburg, Norma Wonsitler, Charles Wonsitler.

REV. LAYTON G. TATRIE, 82, pastor of many years throughout Canada, Medicine Hat, Alta., Apr. 29. Survivors: wife, Iola; sons, Howard, Ray, Bob,



Dick; brothers, Howard, Newton; sisters, Christine, Jessie; seven grandchildren.

JUDITH A. TRUMP, 51, Newton Falls, Ohio, Aug. 13. Survivors: husband, Rev. Dwaine; son, Rick; daughters, Rachel, Susan, Ranisha; foster mother to 47 other children over 14 years.



MARJORIE MacKELLAR WESCHE, 81, Nampa, Idaho, July 30. Survivors: husband, Dr. Percival Wesche; daughters, Joy Martinez, Jody Wesche; six grandchildren; one great-grandchild.

Anniversaries

REV. and MRS. R. B. (DOLLY) ACHESON will celebrate their 60th anniversary Dec. 20. Rev. Acheson is an associate pastor at Indianapolis Westside Church of the Nazarene, where he previously pastored for 18 years. Greetings may be sent to 314 Welcome Way E., Apt. A302, Indianapolis, IN 46214.

DR. JOHN and VENITA HANCOCK, Clearwater, Fla., will celebrate their 50th anniversary Jan. 8. A family celebration will be held in the Orlando area between Christmas and New Year's. Greetings may be sent c/o Rev. Michael Hancock, 455 Broadmoor Dr., Nashville, TN 37216.

REV. UDELL and DORIS MOSS celebrated their 50th anniversary Nov. 27 with an open house at the Ferguson, Mo., Church of the Nazarene. Greetings may be sent to 123 Calverton Rd., Ferguson, MO 63135.

Announcements

FRESNO (CALIF.) GRACE CHURCH celebrated its 50th anniversary Oct. 12 with special guests District Superintendent Wil Spaite and the Watchmen.

SELMA (IND.) HARRIS CHAPEL CHURCH celebrated its 80th anniversary in September with special guests General Superintendent Jim Diehl, District Superintendent Tom Bailey, and the Pfeifers.

SUMNER (MICH.) CENTER CHURCH will celebrate its 50th anniversary Feb. 20-22 with a Friday evening Founders Day potluck supper, Saturday evening concert, and 10 a.m. Sunday service followed by dinner.

Former pastors, members, and friends are welcome. For more information, call 517-463-4543 or 517-833-2342.

FOR THE RECORD

Moving Ministers

DAVID D. BAILEY, from Hart, Mich., to Manistee, Mich.

JAMES E. BAUGHMAN, from Milford, Del., to Lewiston (Idaho) First

DAVID E. BOWEN, from pastor, Petersburg, Pa., to chaplaincy

LAMAR BRANTLEY, from Norwood, N.C., to Sandersville, Ga.

TIMOTHY M. BRUNK, from associate, Midland Valley (S.C.) First, to pastor, Wrens, Ga.

THOMAS CAHILL JR., from pastor, Canastota, N.Y., to associate, Plattsburgh, N.Y.

December's

10-Point Quiz

1. Christians who observe "saints' days" celebrate St. Nicholas Day on:

- A. December 6 B. January 6 C. December 25

2. The organization promoting inspections into homes to see if children are being spanked or abused and that wants to require parents to give written contracts to their kids not to spank but only use methods that help kids feel good about themselves is:

- A. Children's Defense Fund
B. National Committee to Prevent Child Abuse
C. Focus on the Family
D. The Philadelphia Ethical Fellowship

3. Homosexual activists have now targeted the laws of which state for legal challenges since several gay couples were denied marriage licenses?

- A. New Mexico C. Vermont
B. Georgia D. Minnesota

4. Which of these athletes has recently testified to a dramatic Christian conversion experience, announcing plans to become an evangelist?

- A. Gary Bonds C. Dennis Rodman
B. Tom Watson D. Deion Sanders

5. According to USA Today, 14 percent of children ages 12-17 in England go to church at least once a week. The figure for Germany is 11 percent; France, 8 percent; and Japan, 2 percent. What percentage of U.S. children attend once a week or more?

- A. 55% B. 35% C. 15% D. 6.8%

6. Which Protestant denomination has the most ordained women ministers?

- A. The Lutheran Church in America
B. Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
C. United Methodist Church
D. Southern Baptist Convention

7. In medieval tradition, the patron saint of "hopeless causes" is:

- A. St. Loyola C. St. Nicholas
B. St. Jude D. St. Bartholomew

8. Which corporation that sponsors "gay days" at some of its places of business also owns the network that produces the prolesbian television show *Ellen* and Hyperion Press, which published the children's book *Growing Up Gay*?

- A. Warner Brothers C. United Technologies
B. Sony Corporation D. Walt Disney Co.

9. A new book about encounters with God by country music stars is called *Yes, Lord, I'm Coming Home*. It was published by:

- A. Doubleday C. Abingdon
B. Guideposts D. Assembly of God Press

10. Barbara D. Whitehead wrote the *Atlantic Monthly* cover story in 1993 "Dan Quayle Was Right." Her recently released book is:

- A. *My Dad Lives in a Downtown Hotel*
B. *The Divorce Culture*
C. *Daddy Doesn't Live Here Anymore*
D. *Two Homes to Live In*

Answers:

1-A; 2-B; 3-C; 4-D; 5-A; 6-C; 7-B; 8-D; 9-A; 10-B, but the other titles cited are intriguing books about divorce from the children's point of view.

DANIEL E. CAMPBELL, to pastor, Kansas City (Mo.) Summit View
 ROBERT D. CLARK, from Vermontville, N.Y., to Horseheads (N.Y.) Grace
 LARRY COMPTON, from Morehead, Ky., to Augusta, Ky.
 JUETT R. COOPER, to pastor, Portsmouth (Ohio) Highland Bend
 QUENTIN CRUM, from Paintsville, Ky., to Inez, Ky.
 BRYAN S. CUTHILL, to pastor, Carson City, Nev.
 WAYNE L. DAWSON, from associate, Wichita (Kans.) First, to associate, Colorado Springs (Colo.) First
 WILLIAM R. DILLON II, from Kent, Ohio, to Akron (Ohio) Kenmore
 KEVIN A. DONLEY, from Rochester (N.Y.) Calvary to Nelsonville, Ohio
 DAVID L. DORSEY, from associate, Charleston (W.Va.) Campbells Creek, to pastor, Seth, W.Va.
 MARK A. DUPLER, from Reedsville (Ohio) Fellowship to The Plains, Ohio
 GARRY EDWARDS, from associate, Owosso (Mich.) First, to pastor, Westland, Mich.
 BRIAN L. FARMER, to pastor, Morehead, Ky.
 BERT FERGUSON, from Olive Hill, Ky., to Catlettsburg (Ky.) Twin Fork
 PHYLLIS FULLER, from associate, Orlando (Fla.) Union Park, to pastor, McGehee, Ark.
 JEFF R. GEE, from student to associate, Garden City, Kans.
 LAWRENCE W. GOLDEN, from Nikiski, Alaska, to Wasilla Lake, Alaska
 ERNIE GRAY, from Atlanta (Ga.) Riverside to Hueytown, Ala.

ERNEST R. HAFLEY, from Cadillac (Mich.) Cherry Grove to Burlington, Ky.
 LELAND J. HAGENS, from Catlettsburg (Ky.) Twin Fork to Richmond (Ky.) Rosemont
 THOMAS G. HALE, from pastor, West Helena (Ark.) First, to associate, Nacona, Tex.
 BRENT A. HARDESTY, from associate, Council Bluffs (Iowa) First, to Oklahoma City (Okla.) Trinity
 JAMES E. HARVEY, from Escanaba (Mich.) Lighthouse to Homer, Alaska
 CONNIE L. HEIGES, to associate, Provo (Utah) New Beginnings Fellowship
 ROBERT L. HIGHLEY, from Germantown, Ohio, to Cincinnati (Ohio) Carthage
 TIMOTHY F. HILDRETH, from student, Nazarene Theological Seminary, to pastor, Canastota, N.Y.
 JEFFREY T. JOHNSON, from pastor, Council Bluffs (Iowa) First, to associate, Oklahoma City (Okla.) Trinity
 WILLIAM O. KAUFFMAN II, to Bath, N.Y.
 MICHAEL P. KEFFER, from associate, Parkersburg (W.Va.) Broadway, to associate, Mount Vernon (Ohio) Lakeholm
 MILES KNUTSON, from Chickasha (Okla.) to Columbia (Ill.) Waterloo
 WILLIAM V. LOWE, from Manistee, Mich., to Escanaba, Mich.
 ROBERT E. MILBURN, from education, Trevecca Nazarene University, to pastor, Marietta (Ga.) First
 RODNEY Q. MURPHY, from associate, Hamilton (Ont.) Mountain, to associate, Nampa (Idaho) Fairview
 MARK OLIVER, from student to pastor, Douglas, Ga.
 JERRY PEACOCK SR. to pastor, Cochran, Ga.

CLYDE O. PRITCHETT JR., from pastor, Kansas City (Mo.) Summit View, to special assignment, Nebraska
 JEFFREY A. ROLLISON, from pastor, Cincinnati (Ohio) Carthage, to associate, Cincinnati (Ohio) Springdale
 HANS C. RUSKA, from student, Trevecca Nazarene University, to associate, Hernando, Fla.
 ANDY L. RUTHERFORD, from associate, St. Louis (Mo.) Overland, to associate, Clarksville (Tenn.) First
 JAMES D. SHEARER, from Chrisman, Ill., to Indianapolis (Ind.) Greenwood
 LLOYD D. SIMPSON, from Collinsville, Ill., to Chrisman, Ill.
 PRESTON SMITH, from Waterloo, Iowa, to Montrose, Iowa
 ROBERT ST. CLAIR, from associate, Springfield (Ill.) First, to associate, Bloomington (Ill.) First
 CLINTON STRICKLEN, from Erlanger, Ky., to Irvine, Ky.
 ALAN THOMPSON, from associate, Olathe (Kans.) College, to associate, Hermitage, Tenn.
 WILLIAM TOBEY, from student, Nazarene Theological Seminary, to pastor, Cadillac (Mich.) Cherry Grove
 GARY L. WALLER, from pastor, Enumclaw, Wash., to education, Northwest Nazarene College
 GERHARD F. WEIGELT, from student, Nazarene Theological Seminary, to associate, Mason, Mich.
 GARRY W. WILSON, from Irvine, Ky., to Charlotte (N.C.) First

Moving Missionaries

BULLON, HUMBERTO and DOROTHY, from Costa Rica to the United Kingdom
 COOPER, DAVID and JODI, from Houston, Tex., to Guatemala
 COURTNEY-SMITH, FRANCES, from South Africa to Temple City, Calif.
 FIRESTONE, BRAD and NANCY, from St. Charles, Mo., to Dominican Republic
 HAINES, JOHN, from Marietta, Ga., to Switzerland
 HAZELTON, STEVE and JEAN, from Ontario, Calif., to South Africa
 JOHNSTON, GORDON and PATRICIA, from Clarksville, Tenn., to Jordan
 KARAHADIAN, MILTON and MICHELLE, from Santa Rosa, Calif., to Russia
 LAIRD, CHARLES and PATRICIA, from Kenya to Scotland
 PELTON, KENT and KATHLEEN, from Papua New Guinea to Madison, Ala.
 SAVAGE, KATHRYN, from Homestead, Fla., to Swaziland
 SCHAFFER, BRIAN and DEBBIE, from Owego, N.Y., to Dominican Republic
 SHALLEY, MICHAEL and JULIE, from Namibia to Fort Wayne, Ind.
 SMITH, JIM and PATRICIA, from South Africa to Gosport, Ind.
 TROUTMAN, PHILIP and PAULA, from Mozambique to Bethany, Okla.
 WEISEN, JAN and SHERYL, from Spokane, Wash., to Romania

It's Almost Here!

It seems we were just celebrating the beginning of a new year, but 1998 will be here before you know it. Have you considered making a year-end gift to benefit God's kingdom? A year-end gift would be a blessing to your local church or another Nazarene ministry—such as a regional college or university, a denominational project, or your district. Additionally, a year-end gift would be a blessing to you and could mean tax savings.

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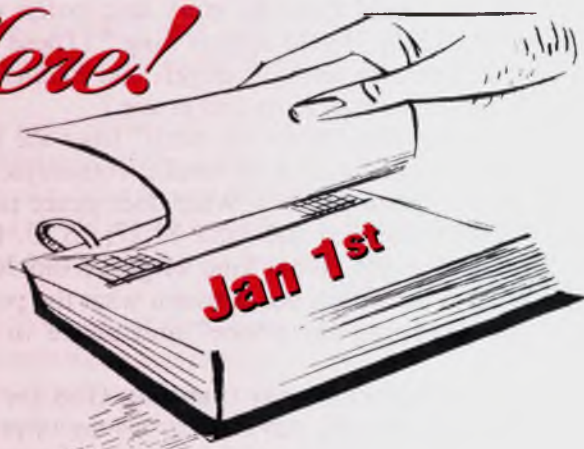
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WEEK 2

*Jesus as Our Peace:
“Hark! the Herald Angels Sing”*

The words to this carol were written before 1739, shortly after the English author, Charles Wesley, became a Christian. He wrote more than 6,500 hymns, but this is among the top 10 in popularity. The carol had been used for 120 years before it was put to the tune it now has, a tune adapted from a composition of Felix Mendelssohn.

“Hark! the Herald Angels Sing” is a triumphant song of praise and adoration to God. It begins with the angels’ song to the shepherds, the shepherds’ visit, and their return, “glorifying and praising God” (Luke 2:20). Stanza two speaks of Christ’s leaving the majesty of heaven, of laying aside His splendor, to come to earth as a human—God made flesh. Stanza three proclaims Christ’s mission: to give us second birth, “that whosoever believeth in him should not perish” (John 3:16).

For your family worship:

1. Read (and possibly act out) the account in Luke 2:1-20 of Christ’s birth and the shepherds’ visit.
2. Look for words from the story that match with words in “Hark! the Herald Angels Sing.” (These will include such concrete terms as *angels* and *Bethlehem*, as well as words such as *glory* and *peace*.)
3. Note the phrase “peace on earth” from the first verse of the carol, and find its similar counterpart in Luke 2:14 (“on earth peace”). What does peace mean to you? Read Isaiah 9:6 and John 14:27; 16:33. Discuss Jesus and peace. What kind of peace did Jesus bring? What is the difference between what the police might call “keeping the peace” and peace in our hearts?
4. After a time of prayer thanking God for the peace Christ brings, sing this carol as a song of praise to God.

Hark! the herald angels sing, “Glory to the newborn King!
Peace on earth, and mercy mild—God and sinners
reconciled.”
Joyful, all ye nations, rise; Join the triumph of the skies.
With th’angelic host proclaim, “Christ is born in
Bethlehem.”
Hark! the herald angels sing, “Glory to the newborn King.”

Christ, by highest heav’n adored! Christ, the everlasting
Lord!
Long desired, behold Him come—Offspring of the Virgin’s
womb.
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see; Hail th’incarnate Deity,
Pleased as man with men to dwell, Jesus, our Immanuel!

Hark! the herald angels sing, “Glory to the newborn King.”

Hail, the heav’n-born Prince of Peace! Hail, the Sun of
Righteousness!
Light and life to all He brings, Ris’n with healing in His
wings.
Mild He lays His glory by, Born that man no more may die,
Born to raise the sons of earth, Born to give them second
birth.
Hark! the herald angels sing, “Glory to the newborn King.”

WEEK 3

*Jesus as God’s Gift:
“We Three Kings of Orient Are”*

“We Three Kings of Orient Are” is one of the few carols based on the wise men. The words and music were written by John H. Hopkins Jr. in 1856, while he was a pastor at Christ Church in Williamsport, Pennsylvania.

Though Matthew 2 does not tell us how many wise men visited Jesus, we do know that the three types of gifts were gold, frankincense, and myrrh. This has led to the tradition of three wise men carrying three different gifts.

The type of gifts brought by the wise men point to different aspects of Christ’s nature, and the carol brings out these aspects. The gold signifies royalty; Jesus is King (see verse 2). Stanza three tells of the use of frankincense to worship God; Jesus is God. Myrrh points to Jesus’ role as a sacrifice, suffering for our sin (verse 4). Stanza five proclaims all three aspects of Christ and resounds in “Alleluia.”

For your family worship:

1. Talk about the three gifts brought by the wise men. Explain to younger family members what these gifts were. (Frankincense was an ingredient of the incense that was burned in worship to the Lord. Myrrh was an ingredient of oil used for religious anointing purposes.) Family members might make or find three items ahead of time that would represent the three gifts.
2. Make a list of words in stanza two that help describe “King.” Do the same for stanza three with “God” and stanza four with “Sacrifice.”
3. Read the biblical account in Matthew 2:1-12 of the wise men’s visit. Discuss how these people from another country had faith to make a journey to worship Jesus, when many people of Jesus’ own country who knew the Scriptures did not believe (see John 1:10-12). How is Jesus a gift to us? (See John 3:16.) What does Jesus want from us?
4. Together sing or read out loud the carol. Thank God for the gift of Jesus.

We three kings of Orient are; Bearing gifts we traverse
afar—
Field and fountain, moor and mountain—Following yonder
star.



Refrain: O star of wonder, star of night, Star with royal beauty bright,
Westward leading, still proceeding, Guide us to thy perfect light.

Born a King on Bethlehem's plain, Gold I bring to crown Him again—
King forever, ceasing never, Over us all to reign.

Frankincense to offer have I; Incense owns a Deity nigh.
Prayer and praising, all men raising—Worship Him, God on high.

Myrrh is mine; its bitter perfume Breathes a life of gath'ring gloom—
Sorr'wing, sighing, bleeding, dying, Sealed in the stone-cold tomb.

Glorious now behold Him arise—King and God and Sacrifice.
Alleluia, alleluia! Earth to heav'n replies.

WEEK 4

Jesus as the Source of Joy: "Joy to the World"

Isaac Watts was an English hymn writer and preacher. While growing up the oldest of nine children, he found the singing of the congregation dull. He complained about it, whereupon his father challenged him

to write better hymns. Thus, he set out to do that, writing several at the age of 15. The words of this carol come from Psalm 98 and were part of a collection of paraphrased psalms published in 1719 as *The Psalms of David in the Language of the New Testament*.

This carol is a song of triumphant joy and proclaims several affirmations of faith: "the Lord is come," "the Savior reigns," and "He rules the world." Therefore, "Let earth receive her King," "Let ev'ry heart prepare Him room," and "Let men their songs employ."

For your family worship:

1. Ahead of time, prepare a shoe box with a slit in the top. Write the words "The Joy Box" on the lid. Give slips of paper to family members, and ask them to write down before worship one or two things that bring them joy. Then put these in the box. At the beginning of your worship time, open the box and read the slips, discussing them together as you read.

2. Look at the words of the carol. How many times is the word *joy* used? About what are we called to be joyful?

3. Read some scriptures about joy: Psalm 98; John 15:9-11; Luke 2:10; Matthew 2:10. How is Jesus our Source of true joy?

4. After a time of prayer, participate in a candle-lighting service. Remember Jesus as the everlasting Light, as our Peace, as God's Gift, and as the Source of joy. As each person lights the next person's candle, say "Joy to the world! the Lord is come." Hold the lighted candles and sing several Christmas carols, ending with "Joy to the World."

Joy to the world! the Lord is come;
Let earth receive her King.
Let ev'ry heart prepare Him room,
And heav'n and nature sing, And heav'n and nature sing,
And heav'n, and heav'n and nature sing.

Joy to the world! the Savior reigns;
Let men their songs employ,
While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains
Repeat the sounding joy, Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

No more let sin and sorrow grow,
Nor thorns infest the ground.
He comes to make His blessings flow
Far as the curse is found, Far as the curse is found,
Far as, far as the curse is found.

He rules the world with truth and grace,
And makes the nations prove
The glories of His righteousness,
And wonders of His love, And wonders of His love,
And wonders, and wonders of His love.

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FAITH and the Learning Disabled Adult

by Nancy O. Wilson

One spring, during the early years, Todd's younger brother was invited to a series of family renewal evenings at another church. Todd dearly loved church gatherings, and he couldn't understand why he wasn't included.

We tried to explain the invitation was for his brother, that he had friends and activities in his own church. Nothing helped. He still wanted to change his religion.

Like intelligent, physically disabled people who know when they are left out, Todd felt the exclusion. Even at 10, he could sting us with his questions.

But as a learning disabled person, he is absentminded and impulsive, in addition to dyslexic, all those troubling qualities that mar his relationships. As a grown but still young man of 25, he wants most of all to meet other adults, to be a part of fun-loving groups.

Social Difficulties

It is a recognized fact that as children with learning disabilities and attention deficit disorders

(ADD) grow up, their serious problems are social, not academic. With Todd, there is an added dimension. Since the early years, he has accepted Jesus as a steady companion. What's more, in recent months, he has adopted his own congregation. He did change his religion. He goes to a new church, to Sunday School, and to Friday night youth meetings.

As his parents, we are proud and a little overwhelmed that he found all this without our help or even our guidance. We are like other parents whose special kids have at last exerted some independence—relieved, but afraid to let go.

Like Todd, I, too, believe in the companionship of Christ. How vividly I remember painful high school years when he thought Jesus was his only friend.

His social experience has been rocky. Todd is sensitive to the remarks and opinions of others. He is so easily hurt that I almost dare not comment on this new endeavor for fear of upsetting the delicate balance between his religious and emotional selves.

Employment Possibilities

It is the bane of learning disabled (LD) people to have an invisible disability in an otherwise normal appearance. In spite of recent news, dyslexic celebrities



such as Tom Cruise and Cher are few. Many young people with misdiagnosed or misunderstood learning disorders drop out of school. Other LD adults are generally unemployed or underemployed because of their poor reading, writing, and perceptual skills. A clearinghouse on adult education in Columbus, Ohio, reports that high school dropouts have twice the unemployment rate of graduates and three times the unemployment rate of college graduates.

Teaching LD Adults

If you are a Sunday School teacher or church counselor to young people, you can recognize an LD person by the characteristics of his or her disorders. It is important to understand that LD people are not retarded or emotionally ill, although some suffer emotionally from the effects, especially if their disabilities are misunderstood. Todd's IQ is in the normal range, and many LD people are gifted.

LD people are different because they receive mixed messages

through their senses. Communication in any society is subtle. When we talk about impaired perceptions, we mean that people with learning disorders *perceive* their world differently. An ordinary person can read facial expressions, but an LD person misses the cues.

LD PEOPLE ARE NOT RETARDED OR EMOTIONALLY ILL. MANY LD PEOPLE ARE GIFTED.

For instance, if your class of young people is laughing at a joke, they know when it's time to get serious for devotions. An LD person may miss that group feeling to settle down and still be laughing for the same reasons that kept him or her in high school hot water.

A learning disabled young

woman may retain the spontaneity of her childhood. She may astound you with her creative comments, often very funny. You can be moved to tears by her blessing before the meal. But Sharon, an LD woman of 22, sometimes asks inappropriate questions if she asks any at all. Some LD young people have been put down so often by students and teachers, they take refuge in nonparticipation. A minor speech problem can add to this silence.

It is the nature of LD people to be literal and quite opinionated. In areas of religion or world affairs, they see few gray areas, just black and white ones.

At the same time, they make innovative living adjustments. Sometimes an LD person finds a new way to solve a problem, make the lawn mower run, or even read better. Then he or she hangs on tooth and nail because it worked at least once. Dogged persistence is a survival tactic.

Sharon surprises you with her spontaneity and creative wit. But she also may ask inappropriate questions and not know when to be reverent rather than funny.

Jamie Moffet



A dyslexic person has trouble reading the Bible, even easy versions. It may not be words that elude him or her, but their meanings. Todd reads a word at a time and makes embarrassing vocal sounds when he reads to himself. Unless he really wants to, please don't ask Todd or other LD people to read aloud.

From the earliest years, reading aloud has been painful and humiliating. Todd will read aloud in "safe" environments, but rarely outside the house. In Bible study, Todd understands and can follow along with people who read clearly and not too fast.

Is your young adult on time some Sundays, late others? A young person with learning problems may have a poor time concept. Sharon, acutely aware of this problem, is rigidly on time and worries about being too early or late. This young adult still mixes days of the week and confuses May with March.

When Todd is experiencing a stressful situation, in noisy crowds, or he is pressured to carry out tasks, he may stop and stare into space. When he was a child, we suspected seizures, then learned "sensory overloading" is common. When outside messages (confusing noises, busy crowds) tend to smother, he tunes them out.

LD Adults and Self-esteem

LD people have poor opinions of themselves. The general picture is a young person with few successes. For Todd, his saving achievement was running. In high school, he lettered in track and won several local trophies.

If an LD person you grow to love does accomplish something and you say, "You did a great job," this person may not believe you, thinking he or she isn't so great and finding it hard to accept

praise. Your acknowledgment of this person's successes, whatever they are, will do much for his or her self-esteem.

It isn't hard to reach the LD person in your class. You can touch him or her with patience, understanding, and humor (as long as you laugh *with*, not *at*). Can you teach the Sunday School lesson with shorter sentences? Can you make your points clearer and

explain them again for those who don't always think in abstractions?

Encourage eye contact if possible. Todd complains about a Sunday School teacher who "talks over my head," although he tells us details of the Sunday ser-

mon. Pastors who want their congregations to remember "just one point" should know that LD adults trained in auditory recall will probably remember the whole thing.

Does your young person still come to Sunday School? Draw him or her out with a couple of questions about personal interests. Is he or she having trouble getting a driver's license? Is he or she working? Although reluctant to discuss learning disabilities, he or she feels happy that you are not embarrassed but truly interested.

LD youngsters can be impulsive and often totally without fear, traits that give their parents sleepless nights. These same qualities, which add to the spontaneity of LD adults, also need direction. I pray that, as an adult, Todd will continue to channel his interests constructively. And now that Todd has changed his religion, I want him to find joy in his new church home and the companionship of his Savior after we are no longer here. "For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matthew 18:20, RSV). H

IT IS THE NATURE OF LD PEOPLE TO BE LITERAL AND QUITE OPINIONATED.

Herald of Holiness

December 1997 • Whole No. 3561 • Vol. 86, No. 12

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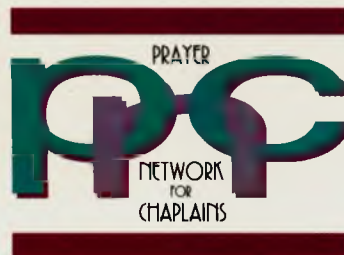
Herald of Holiness (ISSN 0018-0513) is published monthly by the **NAZARENE PUBLISHING HOUSE, 2923 Troost Ave., Kansas City, MO 64109**. Editorial offices at 6401 The Paseo, Kansas City, MO 64131 (816-333-7000, ext. 2302). E-mail: <herald@nazarene.org>. Address all correspondence concerning subscriptions to Nazarene Publishing House, P.O. Box 419527, Kansas City, MO 64141-6527. Phone: 1-800-877-0700. E-mail: <subscriptions@nph.com>. Copyright 1997 by Nazarene Publishing House. Subscription price: \$12.00 per year. **POSTMASTER:** Please send change of address to Herald of Holiness, P.O. Box 419527, Kansas City, MO 64141-6527. Periodical postage paid at Kansas City, Mo. Canadian GST No. R129017471.



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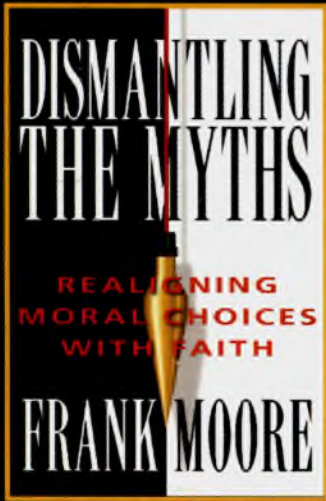
Chaplaincy Ministries, through the district chaplaincy directors, has



executed a new and powerful Prayer Network for Chaplains (Operation PNC) to build ties of prayer and encouragement from

local churches to our Nazarene chaplains and families. Nazarene chaplains represent our denomination in such diverse fields of ministry as correctional facilities, hospitals, industry, and the military. Your district is requesting each of you to pray for your adopted chaplains during the next two years.

NO COMPROMISE



Individual rights, tolerance of all things—these are but a few of the rallying cries for today's no-holds-barred society. How do we navigate the tough questions of right and wrong? Ethics professor Frank Moore offers an in-depth understanding of the prevailing philosophies of our day and a moral

compass to guide us—one that adjusts to changing times without compromising timeless truths.
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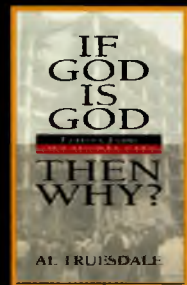


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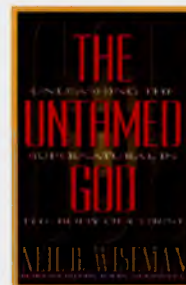
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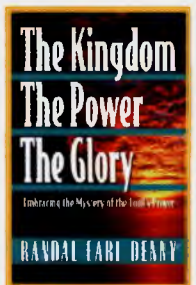
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