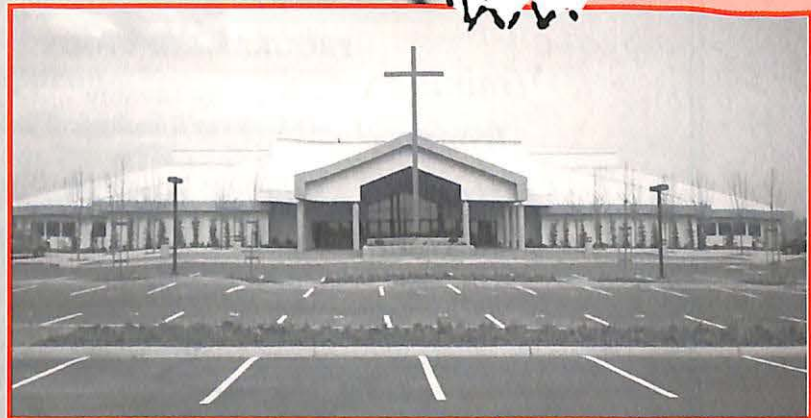
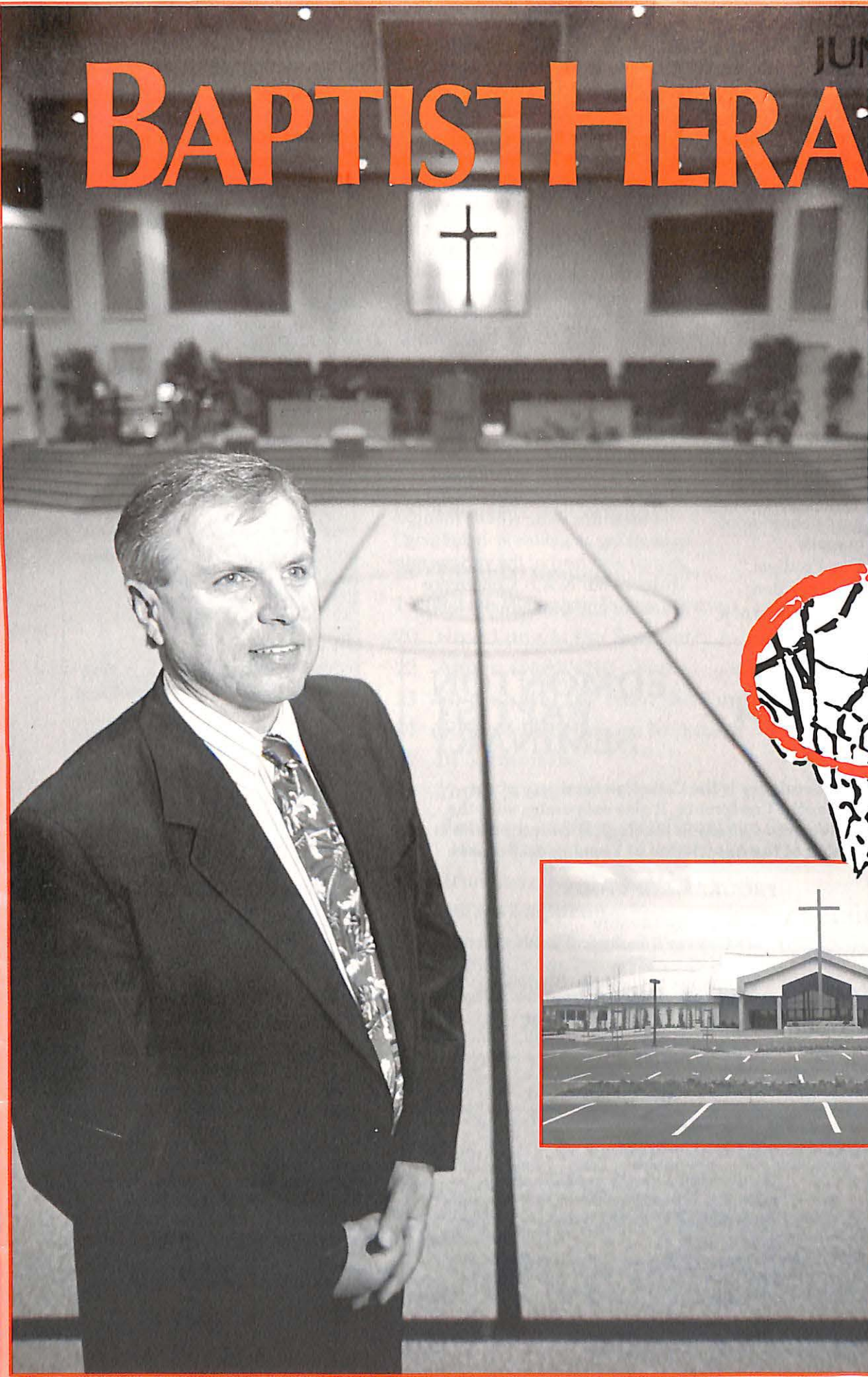


JUNE 1994

# BAPTIST HERALD



## HOOP HEAVEN

(see page 16)

This issue of the **Baptist Herald** features several articles focusing on fathers and their relationships to their children. The article, "Returning to the Father," by William Gaultiere tells the moving story of the Prodigal Son and demonstrates the deep love of God the Father for His children. Gaultiere pleads with those who are estranged from God the Father as well as their own fathers to make the journey of reconciliation . . . and not remain trapped by resentment or destructive behavior.

To those like the Prodigal's brother, busy trying to prove themselves worthy of God's love, he points out they miss out on the celebration of the Father's gifts of grace.

In "A Modern Day Prodigal," you'll read the story of the deep love, patience, and forgiveness of a

father, Robert Rapske, for his son Phil. The story leaves you with "the profound truth that Christ continues to work, even in the lives of modern day prodigals, and especially with the commitment of parents who place their children into God's hands forever," says Lyle Schrag.

"Good communication takes a lot of work . . . but if you think the cost of encouraging your children to be open is too high," says Bobbie Reed, "don't forget the cost of not allowing openness." In "Open Mouth, Closed Ears," Reed gives guidelines on talking with and listening to our children.

I hope this issue will be thought-provoking as well as enlightening as you also read of the various ministries of our N.A.B. Conference churches and individuals. —BJB

### Looking for Ideas for a Caring Exchange Page

During 1994, the N.A.B. Conference is launching the sixth Biblical Imperative: Commanded to Care. We think it would be helpful to others if you would share your ideas and illustrations on ways you care for others or meaningful ways others have shown a caring spirit to you. A photograph of the caring ministry and a brief article from you would be great.

We are also looking for articles and photographs on caring ministries in our churches.

Don't delay, send your ideas or article and photos to the Editor, **Baptist Herald**, 1 So. 210 Summit Ave., Oakbrook Terrace, IL 60181-3994.

### On Change

Change is constantly occurring at the North American Baptist International Office.

During 1993, the **Baptist Herald** went through change. New subscription fulfillment software was purchased and installed. Along with that came challenges. Lack of funds to program the software properly caused complications and frustrations for subscribers and staff. We are still working on this change.

This year, 1994, brought with it another change in electronic publishing. An old software package, a dying personal computer, and an obsolete Linotronic 100 printer forced us to change. With this June issue, we, as well as our designer in Grand Rapids, MI, are learning the new software, QuarkXPress; becoming acquainted with a new personal computer, and are sending the **Baptist Herald** by disk to the printer in Grand Rapids. The new process is taking longer while we learn. We appreciate your patience. □



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*Focus  
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Ministry*

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# RETURNING TO THE

# FATHER

by William Gaultiere

The stirring of the chickens in the barn awoke Father early in the morning. He sat up on the edge of his bed and squinted to see in the dim early morning light. He stretched his arms toward the ceiling, straightened his toes up and then down, and flexed his thighs and calves. Rubbing his eyes and then yawning, he considered lying back down.

Finally, after hesitating some time, he rose to his feet. He lost his balance and almost fell backwards into the bed. "My, I feel like a stiff, wobbly old man in the morning!" he moaned.

Father walked to the dining room area and sat down at the table. Out the window, he could see the sun rising. "Oh, what a beautiful morning it is!" Father exclaimed. "I wish Elder and Prodigal were at my side to enjoy it with me. But I see Elder's dishes in

the washing area. He must already be working in the fields. And Prodigal is still away. But maybe he'll come back today. What do you think, Phillip? Is today the day?"

Phillip was just entering the dining area carrying a freshly baked pastry, cheese, and orange juice for Father's breakfast. He sighed, "Prodigal come home today? You know you've been saying that for months. Sir, I'm sorry, but I don't think he'll ever come home!"

"Come, now, Phillip, where is your faith?" Father replied. "If you don't believe in Prodigal, at least believe in Yahweh."

Later that morning, Father went out to check on his vineyard. He pulled one of the ripe grapes off the vine. A lump formed in his throat, and his eyes began to tear as he thought about how much Prodigal loved those grapes.

Father tasted the juicy grape and looked north. Just in front of him, the cattle were drinking at their trough. Phillip was working in the vegetable garden. A neighbor's ser-

vants were working in one of the fields which Prodigal had sold. Beyond, Father could see that the village was just beginning to stir with people in the street. And beyond the village, way in the distance, Father could barely see some servants working in a field. But Prodigal was not to be seen.

Prodigal was on his way home. He had taken the coastal route along the Mediterranean Sea. His trip across the desert had been nothing like his series of nightmares. It wasn't sweltering hot; his bare feet hadn't blistered; and he hadn't run into any huge hissing snakes or crazy cackling birds. Further, he had gotten rides on carts for most of the 300 mile trip home from Antioch. The last ride dropped him off just ten miles outside of Nain!

So far, Prodigal's home trip had gone quite well. But the worst of his horrible nightmares was just ahead—entering the village. Just the thought of approaching the village sent chills through his body.

His heart would begin to thump. His stomach would churn; his breathing would become shallow and rapid.

His mind would race. *How will I make it down the street past the gang of boys and the people in the village? Elder is going to beat me to a pulp if he gets his hands on me. And Father—what will he do? What if he doesn't accept me back as a hired servant? I don't know where I'd go!*

The more Prodigal thought about all that could go wrong, the more apprehensive he felt. His legs were becoming heavier as he neared the village. He wanted to turn around, but he had no where else to go. He had to face his father, Elder, and the others in the village; he couldn't escape the consequences of his actions.

So Prodigal shuffled forward with his head dropped in shame. He repeated to himself again and again, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired men. Father, I . . ."

Father had gone out to the garden to see how the onions, cucumbers, beans, and other vegetables were looking. Phillip was still there, plowing the dirt between the rows of plants. Suddenly, Father yelled out, "He's home! He's home! It's Prodigal!"

Phillip looked up and started to laugh at the old master. But then he stopped. He saw a figure in the distance. And then he saw Father running across the fields. Phillip was so startled that he dropped the hoe on his foot and fell backwards into an eggplant!

Phillip couldn't believe his eyes. He had never seen his master run.

He had never seen any man of such distinction, nor any man of his age run anywhere for any reason. But there went Father, tearing up the vegetable garden, then pushing through the cows, and then kicking up dust on the street! He was literally sprinting down the street as if he were in a foot race!

Phillip squinted to see the approaching figure in the distance. *How does he know that's Prodigal? But he must know, or he wouldn't run like that!*

Phillip jumped to his feet, kicked the hoe out of his way, and ran after Father. *What would Father do? Would he beat Prodigal right there on the street? Why doesn't he just wait for Prodigal to get to the house?*

Just then, up ahead in the village, Sarah, one of the gossipy women of Nain, shouted out, "Look, it's Prodigal! The fool is returning home! He must be out of money! Ha! Ha! Ha!"

A small crowd of gapers began to gather and point at Prodigal. They could see him shuffling his way towards them down the street. His head was dropped in shame. His clothes were tattered and disheveled. He was covered in dirt from head to toe. And his hands were empty. The crowd made quite a chatter as they voiced slanderous thoughts about the town fool.

Others who heard Sarah scream were also gathering in the street to look at Prodigal. Among them were Joshua, the town mayor, and Rabbi Benjamin, the town priest.

Everyone's attention was on Prodigal until Sarah, who had turned around when she heard racing footsteps coming towards her from the other direction, howled in disbelief, "Oh, my goodness! Look over there! It's the Father of

Prodigal running! He runs like a mad man! He's huffing and puffing and sweating! And look! His robe came untied! He's exposing his undergarments!"

Everyone turned to look at Father.

Tears were forming in Rabbi Benjamin's eyes, and there was a crack in his voice as he exclaimed, "See how he loves his son!"

This thought perturbed Joshua, who vehemently shook his head at the rabbi and corrected him in his deep, gravel-sounding voice. "No, no, no! You don't understand!"

Then, pointing his finger at Prodigal and waving his Torah in the air above his head with his other hand, he angrily insisted, "This boy deserves to be punished severely! Justice must be enforced!"

Rabbi Benjamin was calmly stroking his long, gray beard as he responded, "No, Joshua, my friend. You are wrong. See the way the Father runs? See how he shames himself? He has mercy on his face."

The boys in the street were also watching these events. Quickly they had put sticks in their hands, ready to poke, push, and punch "Prodi-gool the fool." But as Father came near, they turned their attention upon him instead, and a chant went up:

*Silly old man.*

*Why do you run like a mad fool?*

*Silly old man.*

*Why do you expose your undergarments to all?*

*Silly old man.*

*How can you love your stupid son?*

But Father kept running toward Prodigal. The crowd was following behind him to see what would happen. But none of them ran. Even Phillip, anxious as he was to see Prodigal and as much as he was

curious, had gotten too tired to keep running. Only Father ran to Prodigal. He was gasping for air . . . tears streamed down his cheeks.

Prodigal had stopped shuffling and was standing still. He had raised his hanging head and was looking with wide-eyed amazement at his father.

*He's running! The villagers are mocking him, and his undergarments are exposed! But his arms are open to me. How can he love me this much?*

It was as if he was seeing Father for the first time.

**H**ave you seen the Father? Have you seen him running out to welcome you home? If you follow in the penitent Father's footsteps, you will meet your Heavenly Father like never before.

He comes running to you, not with a fist but with arms outstretched. Not with a frown but with tears of compassion in his eyes. Not with anger but with forgiveness filling his heart.

And the Father brings an entourage of gifts: a hug and a kiss, a robe, a ring, and a pair of sandals. He even hosts a welcome home party for his once wayward son! These fatherly gifts change Prodigal's life. Indeed, they are the things that every son or daughter yearns for from their father. The gifts bring with them fatherly blessings of affection, approval, encouragement, affirmation, and honor.

I thought Sandra wanted to know a father like this. I met her a number of years ago when I was her college pastor. One day in my church office, I prayed for her that God would be her Daddy and hold her in His lap, look into her eyes, and say "I love you."

"I don't want him to touch me!"

she sobbed. "My father molested me!" I stopped my prayer and looked into Sandra's tear-filled eyes. Then I listened to her story of how her father had abused her sexually when she was a girl. No wonder it didn't feel good to her for God to be "Father."

I've learned that Sandra's experience is not as rare as one would like to think. Studies suggest that as many as ten percent of fathers either physically or sexually abuse their children. And it isn't only those who were abused by their



fathers who have trouble relating to God as Father. Others also do because they were severely wounded by fathers who were critical, perfectionistic, emotionally detached, or absent.

A few months after Sandra let her secret out to me, she sought my help, saying she had decided that she needed to forgive her father's incest.

Beginning that day, she spent month after month with me, processing painful memories and working through her fear, shame, and anger about her childhood. Furthermore, she told me that later as a young adult, she perpetuated the pattern her father started—she had sexualized many of her relationships with men. Sandra confessed to me her father's sins and her own sins, and in time, she found God's healing and forgiveness.

Through taking steps of honesty and trust in her healing journey

with me, Sandra began to see herself and others differently. Then she found that there were men who would treat her differently from her father, men who weren't abusive, controlling, and manipulative, men who had their anger and their sex drive under control.

Courageously and carefully, she began to form healthy relationships with other men, including her best friend's husband, and a boyfriend.

Sandra began to see her heavenly Father's love more clearly, and she felt closer to Him.

Like Prodigal, Sandra left her pigsty of shame, isolation, resentment, and sin, and made the long, hard journey across the desert to go home to the Father.

**U**nfortunately, most people don't take Prodigal's journey. Many

are lost in the far country—lonely, wounded, and struggling. They may be trapped there by resentment or destructive behavior patterns.

Others, like Prodigal's older brother, are stuck slaving away in the Father's fields. They are busy trying to prove themselves worthy of God's love, and they miss out on the celebration of the Father's gifts of grace.

Whether you're in the far country or in the fields nearby, you can return to the Father. If you step into Jesus' Parable of the Prodigal Son and take the Prodigal's healing journey, you will encounter the Father's love in a new way! □

*William Gaultiere, Ph.D., is a psychologist and program director for the Minirth-Meier Clinic West in Orange, CA. This article is adapted from **Returning to the Father: A Healing Journey with the Prodigal Son**, Moody Press.*

# A M O D E R N D A Y P R O D I G A L

by Phil Rapske as told to Lyle Schrag

**In a moment of reflection, Martin Luther wrote, "I have held many things in my hands and lost them all, but whatever I have placed in God's hands, that I always possess." That has to be the first lesson learned by any godly parent. It is also one of the hardest. We may dedicate our children to the Lord at birth, but it doesn't end there. Dedication becomes a part of the parental lifestyle that requires constant, rigorous, and sometimes painful commitment. In 1972, Bob and Ruth Rapske of Vancouver, British Columbia, found out just how difficult that commitment could be. Their second son, Phil, began an odyssey of rebellion that would last over eight years. Any parent who has ever witnessed a straying child knows how painful those years can become. What follows is an encouragement to any parent in such pain. On March 5, 1994, Bob Rapske succumbed to a long bout with cancer. At his funeral, his son, Phil, read this tribute.**

**A**s we took turns holding Dad's hands while he lay in a coma last Friday night, a lot of thoughts passed through our minds. When I asked the others what they were thinking about Dad, nothing could come to mind except good thoughts and memories. Dad meant something special to each one of us. I would like to share times with you when Dad made an impact on my life at a crucial time. Once there was a father who had two sons and a daughter. The younger of the sons said, "Father, I shall take the share that I have earned in your family business and leave home." The father cautioned him, but the son gathered what he had earned and departed from his family on a motor-cycle. He journeyed to another part of town, where he squandered his time and possessions on loose living.

He did what was right in his own mind. And yet, whenever the son would let him, the father would visit the son and take him out for coffee or lunch to keep the lines of communication open.

One night, after eight years of

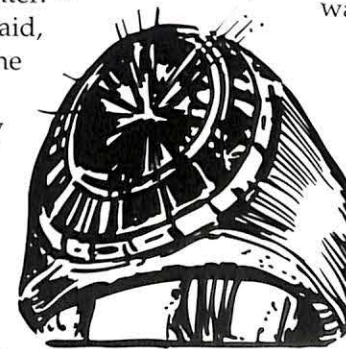
this kind of living, and after his son had spent the evening contemplating suicide, his father came to him and talked with him. He told him that no matter what happened, he would always be his father and would always love him.

His son was moved by these words and decided to change his path in life. The son went back to his church one Sunday. As he sat listening, he realized where his life had been and where he now wanted to go. Tears came to his eyes as he sat there next to his mother. He

was still confused, and still on a long journey back, but the father had compassion for him and welcomed him home.

His father took him to Tip Top Tailors and bought him a new suit, and put a ring on his finger, and gave his son

his own shoes to wear. He had his wife bring forth the roast from the calf they had just slaughtered from their cattle in Calgary. They ate and had a good time getting to know each other again. His father said, "For this is my son who was dead, and is now  
(Continued on page 27)



# BRAZIL

# Sonlight

by Wally Kanwischer

Forty-five N.A.B.ers from the prairie provinces, Ohio, and California experienced an exciting and rewarding three week ministry on the island of Florianopolis, Santa Catarina, Brazil. The ministry involved building a church and showing the JESUS film.

Twenty-four men and women worked tirelessly in Inglesis with three Brazilian bricklayers to complete the church project. Ron Klettke of Edmonton served as supervisor.

In 10 days, we laid about 16,000 bricks, poured a cement floor, installed the ceiling and some doors and windows, and erected all internal walls. We completed what we thought was an impossible task in record time. Joyful, anticipatory, and sacrificial... this described the workers.

Missionaries Ralph and Martha Nelson work in Inglesis to build up a witness to reach a previously unreached people's group for Christ and with the goal to plant a Baptist church. Due to the work of this team, a church building is now available for this ministry.

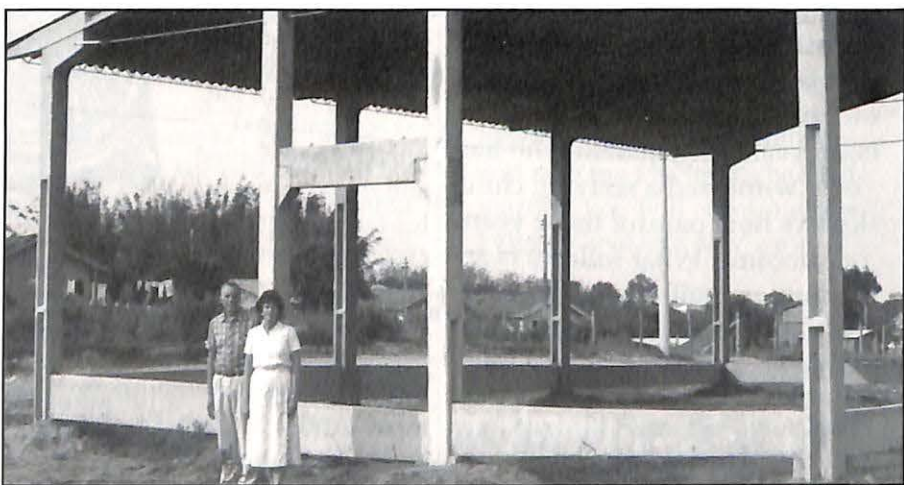
The other half (23) of the tour group showed the JESUS film. (See May issue of the *Baptist Herald*,



"Available and Flexible.") After the building project was completed, we visited our missionaries in Brazil. Our people were overwhelmed with the beauty of the country and openness of Brazilians to the

Gospel. We are ready to go back to serve again. □

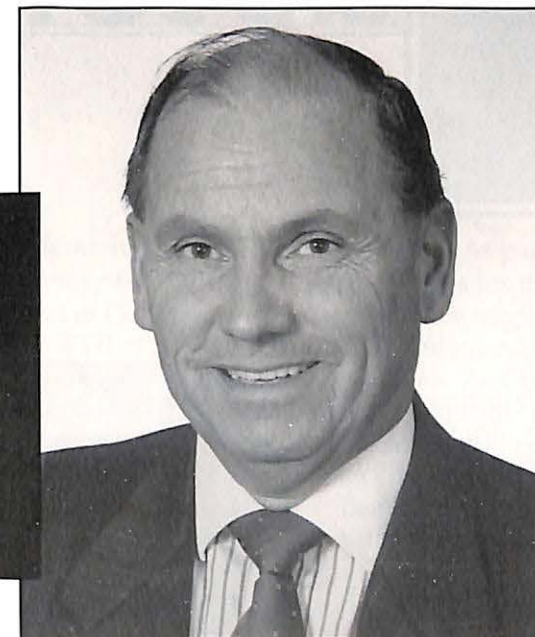
Wally Kanwischer is a member of Brentview Baptist Church, Calgary, AB.



Missionary Ralph Nelson and Boots Blackwell, erected the prefabricated columns and roof in Inglesis prior to the coming of the Kerber team. Nelson installed the electrical and hydraulic systems. (Ralph and Martha Nelson are pictured.)

# WHERE WERE YOU ?

For the past 12 years, Dr. Egon Nikolai, a member of Bethany Baptist Church in Vancouver, BC, has been an alderman in the Vancouver suburb of Burnaby. Often Nikolai gets calls from Christians demanding action.



"It's ten times more difficult to change the law than to be part of the process while you're making the law," says Nikolai.

by Bramwell Ryan

**M**y response usually is "Where were you when these laws were enacted? Where were you when people stood for election?"

A recent example of the impotence of the Christian community, Nikolai recalls, was in 1990 when the "Gay Games" took place in Vancouver.

Although Vancouver is outside of his jurisdiction, Nikolai knew of the angst among Christians as the date of the games drew closer.

"People were praying and saying, 'I hope the Gay Games don't take place in Vancouver.' To me that's totally wrong," he said. "They asked God to intervene, but where were they? Why didn't they have somebody on council to prevent the games from coming to Vancouver? After the fact, they come and ask God to intervene when they've been totally neglect-

ful in preventing this in the first place."

Nikolai has always been an advocate of Christian involvement. In university, he noticed that Christians usually seem to be in the background and seldom take leadership in institutions or organizations outside of the church. This concerned him then, as it does now, because laws are made constantly without any input from Christians. Nikolai is a firm believer in prevention.

"It's ten times more difficult to change the law than to be part of the process while you're making the law," he said.

He advises anyone considering involvement in municipal politics to do lots of homework and to find out exactly what is required if elected. It takes a lot of time to be an effective politician. Nikolai, who has a dental practice, is out on city

business practically every night of the week. The demands are so great that he cautions would-be politicians to be adept at setting priorities and sticking with them. And do not expect much praise from the Christian community.

"Most of the time, it's non-Christians who come forward and say, 'Hey, you're doing a good job.' Support from the Christian community is often not forthcoming."

He also stresses that holding office means representing all constituents.

"As a Christian, you have to be careful; you can't get up there and constantly preach on council. You can't be radical and be branded, 'Here's another eccentric.' We see a lot of stuff like that in the media." □

Reprinted by permission from *Faith Today*, September/October 1993, Evangelical Fellowship of Canada.

# Pastors,

by Dana L. Goodnough

## Don't Lose the Joy of the Ministry

Let's face it. Pastoring a congregation of any size is no day at the beach! Every pastor knows the frustrations of demanding schedules, late-night meetings, strained family time, limited personal finances, and the everyday struggles of church life. Research shows that pastors face unprecedented hazards in ministry today.<sup>1</sup>

In the midst of these pressures, it's all too easy to lose perspective. The joys of pastoral ministry seem elusive at best. But let's step back and see again the pastor's unique blessings. By reviewing the joys of ministry, we might find new strength in overcoming ministry hurdles.

### Pastors Have a Unique Level of Prayer Support

As a pastor, I depend on the prayers of my church family for effectiveness in the ministry. Occasionally, someone will remind me, "Pastor, I pray for you every day." Obviously, people who are enduring special trials will receive daily prayer support from many church members. But who, other than the pastor and his family, receives consistent, daily, loving prayer support from so many people in the congregation? As pastors, we tend to be "obvious" objects of prayer. That's a blessing!

When I became a pastor, I enlisted the prayer support of several



"I attended a premiere showing of 'Jack and the Beanstalk' with my son's kindergarten class. Not many dads could free up a couple hours on a weekday morning, but I had the privilege of sharing that time with my son."

older women in our church. This personal prayer team lifts me—and my family—before the Lord every day. And I can sense the difference. Pastors need prayer, and we do have faithful members praying for us regularly.

### Pastors Have Flexible Time Schedules

"You've got to be kidding! I don't have an ounce of time to call my own!" At least, this is what most pastors would conclude. But the reality of it is, we have more flexibility in our schedules than many of our church members. With a measure of advance planning and discipline, pastors can reserve time for special occasions.

Recently, I attended a premiere showing of "Jack and the Beanstalk" with my son's kindergarten class. Not many dads could free up a couple of hours on a weekday morning, but I had the privilege of sharing that time with my son.

Once a month, I reserve a day to spend time quietly with the Lord. Many church members would find it difficult at best to set aside an entire day for Bible reading, prayer, and reflection. But as a pastor, my time is more flexible.

I also enjoy eating lunch at home with my wife—a time luxury that helps make up for some of the other demands of the ministry.

### Pastors Have Sharp, Growing Marriages

Most do, at least. Of course, we hear all too frequently about pastors who let their marriages go sour. A failed ministerial marriage makes headline news. But in reality, most pastors find that being in the ministry is actually beneficial to their family life.<sup>2</sup> In spite of the pressures, pastors can find great marital satisfaction in the midst of the ministry.

Why is this specifically a benefit of pastoral ministry? I suspect it has, at least in part, something to do with the pastor's counseling ministry. When I review basic principles of marriage for couples planning a wedding, or when I "coach"



"Pastors are rich! We have the high privilege of studying God's Word in detail on a daily basis."

along a man and woman who are struggling in their marriage, I often go home with a new appreciation for my wife. In fact, she looks forward to my leading those premarital counseling classes. She knows I'll be a more sensitive husband (at least for a few weeks).

In addition, pastors and their wives often share the ministry load. Working together as a team in spiritual ministry can build a stronger marriage bond. After all, serving on the front lines together establishes a deep sense of commitment to one another.

### Pastors Have the High Privilege of Regular Bible Study

In *Fiddler on the Roof*, one of Tevye's greatest joys (if he were a rich man) would be to "discuss the Holy Books with the learned men seven hours every day."<sup>3</sup> Pastors are rich! We have the high privilege of studying God's Word in detail

on a daily basis. Sermon preparation is really a matter of studying the mind and heart of God as found in His Word. What a joy it is to open its pages, pull some "teachers" off the bookshelf, and pore over the pages of divine truth! Without a doubt, in every congregation there are men and women who would give anything to have this opportunity.

Along with the study of God's Word comes, of course, the personal spiritual challenge pastors face each week in applying the sermon's thought to their own hearts. Pastors cannot effectively preach truth that has not first been ingested personally. It's a great privilege to have God challenge us so richly.

### Pastors Find God's High Mark of Approval

First Peter 5:4 promises a special crown for Christ's shepherds. Appreciation goes a long way. Many pastors don't find the encouragement from their congregations that they often need. But don't forget, God recognizes the sacrifices pastors make every day. Jesus Christ Himself holds pastoral ministry in

high regard. As pastors, we touch people's lives for time and eternity. The evidence might not be so evident to you now. But God rewards faithfulness. As Charles Spurgeon said, "The meanest work for Jesus is a grander thing than the dignity of an emperor."<sup>4</sup>

Being a pastor carries its risks. But it also has its joys. It has its privileges. It has its rewards. I think we can cheerfully echo Paul's words in 1 Timothy 1:12. "I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has given me strength, that he considered me faithful, appointing me to his service." □

<sup>1</sup> See *Pastors at Risk* by H. B. London, Jr. and Neil B. Wiseman (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1993).

<sup>2</sup> London and Wiseman, p. 100.

<sup>3</sup> Harnick, Sheldon. *Fiddler on the Roof*. New York: Pocket Books, 1964.

<sup>4</sup> Cited in *Gathered Gold* by John Blanchard (Welwyn, Hertfordshire, England: Evangelical Press, 1984), p. 284.

The Rev. Dana L. Goodnough is pastor of Pittsford Community Church in Pittsford, NY.



"This personal prayer team lifts me—and my family—before the Lord every day. And I can sense the difference. Pastors need prayer."

# Open Mouth, Closed Ears?

## Learning to Talk to Our Children

by Bobbie Reed



©CLEO PHOTO

communicating openly with parents. Sometimes when they do share, we "punish" them. Have you caught yourself saying:  
"That was a dumb thing to do!"  
"You shouldn't feel that way!"  
"How dare you say that to me!"  
If we do not create an open climate for our children, they will not choose to be vulnerable to us. If we can learn not to punish our children for sharing these things with us, we can assist them in developing good communication skills which are critical to all relationships.

### Hidden Messages

Every time we talk with children they are receiving two messages: the verbal message—the words we say and a hidden message—what they perceive us to be saying.

"I can never depend on you" implies that we don't think they have any character, and possibly never will.

"Don't bother me now" conveys that the child isn't as important as what we're doing.

"Here, let me do it for you" implies that the child is incompetent.

If our hidden messages are basically negative, our children will suffer a loss of self-confidence and low self-esteem. Parents who want to develop self-confidence and positive self-esteem in their child can give *positive hidden messages*:

**A**ngrily (but deliberately quiet so we wouldn't be heard), I confronted my son in the kitchen. "Michael, you are embarrassing me in front of my friends." Each word was hissed through clenched teeth and accompanied with a glare.

"Stop yelling at me!" Michael screamed loudly.

I snapped, "Michael, I am not yelling. I haven't even raised my voice!"

"It feels like you're yelling at me!"

He was right. Except for the fact that I was nearly whispering—I was yelling at him! So often what our children respond to is not so much the words we say, as the feeling they get from what we say or how we say it.

### Sharing Can Be Risky

All too frequently children have very good reasons for not commu-

"You are very good at . . ." says the child is competent and reliable.

"I enjoyed doing . . . with you" communicates that the child is likable and fun to be with.

"It was nice of you to . . ." lets children know that they are caring individuals.

### Empathize with Feelings

Often when we most want cooperation from our children, we trigger angry or resentful feelings by what we say to them. Adele Faber and Elaine Mazlish, authors of *How to Talk So Kids Will Listen and Listen So Kids Will Talk*, have a list of unhelpful statements we often make. We blame. ("You broke it, now fix it!") We lecture. ("I've told you a hundred times before...") We deny. ("You can't be thirsty; you just had a soda!")

One solution is to use empathetic statements. Acknowledging their feelings does not mean that we condone them, or approve of their wishes. It merely signifies that we recognize where they are.

Tami stubbornly refuses to go to bed on time and starts crying. You say, "Seems like you really want to stay up so you can play longer. You are very upset about having to go to bed right now." As Tami responds by sharing her angry feelings, she learns that it is acceptable to express feelings and be understood.

The next time your child confronts you with an angry or hateful statement, acknowledge the feeling behind what he or she is saying.

To "I hate you!" say, "Sounds like you're very upset with me over this."

To "You never listen to my side," say, "You must feel ignored; I'll listen now."

To "You never do anything I ask you to do!" say, "Sounds as if you don't feel that I really care about your wishes. Tell me more about that."

### Expressing Our Feelings

Sometimes we want to express how we feel to our children. We may be angry, hurt, disappointed, or feel let down.

The first rule is to use "I messages." Starting a sentence with "I feel . . ." rather than "You make me feel . . ." goes a long way toward communicating in a non-threatening manner.

A second rule is to state our reasons clearly. "Please wipe your feet before you step on the clean floor" is much better than yelling, "If you had any sense you would have noticed that my floor is clean!"

### Asking Forgiveness

It is often hard to ask our children to forgive us when we have failed to communicate lovingly and honestly with them. But it is a necessary step for several reasons. It reopens the channels of communication. You are practicing what you are teaching. You are serving as a role model. You become more accountable for what you say when you know that you might have to apologize to the kids if you don't do it right.

### Notice Growth

A few years ago, my son came into the kitchen after school. "I am really angry," he said. "I think my

teacher is wrong. She wrote on my referral slip that I did not try to do the work in class. I do so try. I am mad—very mad." Although expressive, he didn't raise his voice.

I was so busy preparing supper that I merely nodded, making a comment here and there. That night, it hit me! My son, the one who had never expressed anger verbally, who was better known to smash a wall, or clam up and seethe inside, had finally made a breakthrough—and I had almost missed it!

The next morning I complimented the way he had put his feelings into words. I radiated parental pride.

"I know. Guess I'm growing up, huh?" he responded.

The good news is that they do grow up! The question is, will we have taught them good communication skills and maintained an open relationship with them along the way?

Good communication takes a lot of work, and sometimes we hear things we wish they hadn't said. But if you think the cost of encouraging your children to be open is too high, don't forget the cost of not allowing openness. The first might cost us some hurt feelings; the second, might cost us our children. □

*Dr. Bobbie Reed has authored several books on single parenting and stepfamilies and is a frequent convention speaker. Reprinted by permission of David C. Cook Publishing Co.*

One of the Baptist distinctives and a primary goal for the North American Baptist Conference is religious freedom . . .

Larry Chesser continues his report

# Religious Freedom Advances Are Mixed

## PART II

**R**eligious freedom had a mixed outcome in 1993, according to an annual report by the U.S. State Department. Part I of this report appeared on pages 8 and 9 in the May 1994 issue of the **Baptist Herald**. Among the countries listed in the report are

**RUSSIA.** Religious freedom continued to expand during a year of political turmoil that resulted in a newly elected Parliament and referendum for a new constitution.

Missionaries from virtually every religion are present in Russia.

The Orthodox Church, however, has enhanced its relationship with the government. In July 1993, it prompted the legislature to approve a new law that would restrict the religious freedom of other faith groups. The law, vetoed by President Yeltsin, would have required all non-Russian organizations to register with the government before engaging in religious activity.

The number of clergy and places of worship remains inadequate for the population, but churches continued to open in record numbers. Seminaries and other religious edu-

cational institutions expanded enrollment, and religious materials are on sale in major cities with no restrictions on the importation of religious materials.

While the government no longer condones anti-Semitism, it continues throughout various regions in Russia, the report says. Jewish cemeteries have been desecrated, while rocks have been thrown through windows of Jewish schools.

Jewish leaders have called on the government to respond.

**SRI LANKA.** Evangelical Christians have been under attack for proselytizing followers of the state religion of Buddhism. While Christians have faced physical threats from a radical group and negative press reports, there is no evidence of "official" or state persecution.

The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, an organization fighting the government for a separate state for the country's Tamil minority, have expelled Muslims from the northern areas under its control; taken Muslim lands, homes, and businesses; and threatened to kill them if they return.

**SUDAN.** The dismal human rights picture in the Sudan saw no improvement in 1993. Muslims may proselytize freely, but non-Muslims may not. A recent law makes apostasy by Muslims punishable by death—there are no known cases in which this sentence has been carried out. Some Muslim converts, however, were harassed by local authorities this year.

Two villagers were arrested in August, imprisoned, and threatened with death if they did not convert back to Islam.

**SYRIA.** Ruled by an authoritarian regime, Syria loosened exit permit issuance to Syrian Jews, released some political prisoners, and ended periods of indefinite detention, but there was no basic change in the human rights situation in 1993.

Nearly two-thirds of Syrians are Sunni Muslim. While there is no state religion, the constitution requires that the President be Muslim and refers to Islamic jurisprudence as a source of legislation. Otherwise, official preference is not given to one religion over another. The government officially

observes Christian and Muslim holidays.

Most religious groups largely are free to practice their faith, but the government controls fund-raising and construction of worship sites.

Jehovah's Witnesses and Seventh-day Adventists are the exception to the government's tolerance. Those two groups are forbidden to organize or own property. Adherents to those two groups may practice their faith privately.

**TURKEY.** Police maintained surveillance and detention of evangelical Christians. In July 1993, prosecutors urged a court to send 14 members of a Protestant sect to prison for singing hymns and passing out pamphlets outside a mosque during Muslim prayers. Charged with disturbing the peace, they were released on bail and ordered to stand trial.

**UKRAINE.** Obstacles to complete religious freedom exist at the local level in the Ukraine. Religious groups are required to register with local authorities, and in some places, the bureaucracy has delayed the process. While technically no registration can be denied, the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church has had its registration application pending for more than a year over a property dispute.

Religious groups may proselytize, distribute Bibles and literature, and maintain relationships with believers in other countries.

Jews, the second largest minority in the Ukraine, are discriminated against despite government statements denouncing anti-Semitism. Anti-Semitic posters and literature have increased in the past year.

**VIETNAM.** Reports indicate

religious groups have freedom to the extent that they cooperate with the government. For example, Buddhists had freedom until they launched a protest against the government's control. The tension increased in 1993 when many Buddhist leaders were imprisoned.

While restrictions may be harsh, they vary by locality, the report says. Since 1975 most people say they have been able to attend worship services. To ensure religious groups do not become competing centers of influence within society, the government has tried to divide and control them and to impede publication of materials.

Religious leaders from all faiths have been detained, arrested, and restricted by the government on political grounds. Several Catholic and Buddhist clergy remain in jail. One American citizen reported that police broke up a prayer meeting with about 30 Vietnamese and three foreigners.

**ZAIRE.** Zaire has no legally favored church, but the government regulates religion. A 1971 law grants civil servants the power to establish or dissolve religious groups. Officially recognized religions are free to worship and train clergy.

In March, the country's Supreme Court overturned President Mobutu's order banning Jehovah's Witnesses. The Court said the president had the authority to ban the church under the constitution but that he had not sufficiently demonstrated any national interests for doing so.

Generally, the government does not interfere with missionary endeavors. □

*Larry Chesser is the editor of "Report from the Capitol," Baptist Joint Committee, Washington, DC.*

## Thoughts on Caring

**A**lthough many studies have highlighted the effects of self-care on children, they don't address how many parents just "aren't there" for their children. For an increasing number of American children, their need for love and attention from the adult world is unmet.

*Taken from Reaching Out to Lonely Kids by Valerie Bell (Zondervan, 1994)*

**C**hildren have their antennae tuned to the wavelength of love. They pick it up in their parents' expressions of pride, respect, and tenderness.

*Taken from What Good Parents Have in Common by Janis Long Harris (Zondervan, 1994)*

**S**uffering is indeed a sacred process. The crucible births a capacity for compassion and tolerance for another's pain. Instead of feeling discomfort and drawing back, instead of averting our eyes and mumbling our sympathy, we who suffer well have learned the value of shared tears and a loving touch.

*Taken from Young Widow by Kate Convissor (Zondervan, 1992)*

**F**eelings and instincts—what some psychologists call intuition—are invaluable in learning to care for others. Developed through years of experiences, your care-giving instincts will help you discover needs of others you might have never known otherwise.

*Taken from When Someone You Know Is Hurting by M. Gregory Richards (Zondervan, 1994)*



# HOOOP



# HEAVEN

by Art German

By any standard, the new Elk Grove First Baptist Church just off Highway 99 south of Sheldon Road is the kind of building that turns your head.

For one thing, its 45,000 square feet of floor space makes it by far the largest church building in the Elk Grove area. And its cavernous sanctuary is a far cry from the kind with fixed seats that you usually see in churches. This one is a multi-purpose facility, used for church services in the usual fashion, but also for banquets and other social functions, basketball games, volleyball, and audiovisual displays.

Ron Norman, the church's senior pastor since 1986, was hard put to define the church building's architectural style, seemingly an eclectic mix of California shopping-center contemporary.

"If we hadn't erected the cross in front of the building," Norman said with a smile, "some people might have thought it was a roller rink."

Norman said the Church's somewhat unorthodox sanctuary plan-



*Pastor Ron Norman stands in the sanctuary at Elk Grove First Baptist Church. The sanctuary, which is equipped with fold-away baskets and backboards, can also be used as a basketball court.*

ning was designed especially to accomplish the facility's objective—to provide a "full-service facility" for residents of Elk Grove and the surrounding area.

"We are open seven days a week, and we offer a variety of services," he said. "We provide families, single parents, and young people with educational and recreational opportunities of many kinds. We have two senior citizen groups. We have support groups

for divorce recovery, co-dependency, or single parenting. We try to address all the needs of society."

Norman said the Church puts its members' spiritual needs first, "but service for their physical and social needs are the hook to introduce them to the gospel," he added.

The new building opened January 9 and was dedicated at a ceremony March 13. Norman said the Church has been in the Elk Grove area for 70 years.



*The new Elk Grove First Baptist Church on Stockton Boulevard just south of Sheldon Road spans 45,000 square feet.*

**"We'll have to continue to provide for more people. The people are hungry for spiritual principles and input. There's a world of hurt out there."—Ron Norman**

The first congregation was established in nearby Franklin by North American Baptist Conference church members from the Dakotas, he said. The Church was originally composed of former German immigrants who had settled in the Midwest and then moved on to California.

In Franklin, the Church was called the Zion Baptist Church until the congregation decided to move the facility to Elk Grove in 1948 when that community began to emerge as the major population center in the south county.

The renamed First Baptist Church was established in Elk Grove's old town area east of the railroad tracks and grew briskly during the years as the community's population increased.

By the mid-1980s, Norman said, Church membership had increased to 400. By the end of the decade, it approached 1,000.

Norman, who is 49, came to the Church in 1986 after serving Bismarck (ND) Baptist Church and Village Green Baptist Church, Glen

## What Has Happened in the First 15 Weeks?

For the first 15 weeks that the Church has been in its new facility, it has been averaging per week

- 40 plus visitor units (one or more people per unit)
- 10 plus individuals coming forward during the altar call
- 2 plus conversions
- 2,600 plus total attendance
- 1,430 plus worship attendance
- 850 plus education attendance
- 500 plus evening service attendance
- \$28,000 to \$30,000 plus weekly offerings

The Church has welcomed 50 new members and witnessed 35 baptisms.

"Needless to say, 'God is good'!" says Norman. "We are being blessed every day with His guidance and a multitude of opportunities. The challenge is great, and the responsibility beyond our comprehension!"

Ellyn, IL, and a stint with the North American Baptist Conference International Office as Director of Church Growth. An outstanding athlete in several sports, he had opted for the ministry after being scouted as a catcher by the Chicago Cubs and the old Milwaukee Braves.

"That didn't work out," he said, "but I have no regrets. If I had been picked up by the Cubs, my life would certainly have been different. But I received a call from the Lord, and once that corner was turned, I never looked back."

Coincidentally, Norman had been with the Elk Grove Church once before. In the early 1970s, he was in the community as a seminary student intern. It was a time, he said, that "opened my eyes to California as a place where I might serve."

His opportunity to move to California permanently came when Merle Brenner retired in 1986 after 20 years as the Church's pastor.

"Elk Grove had been growing rapidly before I came here," he said, "and when I came, I had a significant commitment for growth."

An issue that soon faced Church members was whether to keep the old Church in Elk Grove's old town and allow a second one to be developed elsewhere, or to find a new site for an expanded facility. Norman said he opted for the latter as the best way to serve the community and was able to persuade almost 98 percent of the members to support his position.

He said he received strong backing from two of the Church's most influential members — Chuck Collings, president of Raley's Stores, and John Boyd, owner of Radiator Specialties of Sacramento, who served as chair of the master planning committee.

Finally, a 28-acre site on the east side of the freeway, part of the Henry Kloss Ranch, was purchased, and the Church embarked on a program to fund the \$6 million land

acquisition and construction project. The Church also got a fiscal boost earlier in April when its old town property was sold to The Christian and Missionary Alliance serving the Hmong community from Southeast Asia.

"I'm happy with the way everything has turned out," said Norman. He reported that the new facility has 25 classrooms, 14 administrative offices, and a commercial-level kitchen. The sanctuary can accommodate 1,700 worshippers or 900 diners at banquet events. Tables and chairs are moved in and out of the sanctuary frequently, Norman said, as different functions are scheduled.

On a typical Sunday, Norman said, there may be as many as 2,500 people on the Church premises at the same time, including those attending services and in religious classes.

At times, the scene in the sanctuary undergoes a sharp change. With all the chairs and tables moved out, youth groups gather to play basketball, volleyball, and other sports. Foldaway baskets and backboards are lowered into place, and spectators cheer from the surrounding floor spaces.

The sanctuary is carpeted with what Norman called a pro gym floor covering that allows basketballs to bounce as high as from a wooden surface. Players must still be careful to stay on their feet, however, he added, "If you slide on the floor," he said, "you'll get carpet burns."

Norman said that with Elk Grove and Laguna projected to continue growing rapidly, his Church will undoubtedly try to keep pace in the years ahead. A baseball field is planned, and a 25,000-square-foot educational facility also is in the works. The Church has 12 staff members, six full-time.

"We'll have to continue to provide for more people," he said.

## FIESTA TIME

Good friends and good food always make good times. We'll have all that and more (music, balloons, and a choir) on Saturday night, August 6, at the Triennial Conference in Dallas, TX.

All food will be served at your table. No standing in line, no hot spices (unless you bring them), just good beef, chicken, beans, rice, peppers, and onions. There will be drinks and desserts. You won't eat this well nor as cheaply anywhere around.

After a great meal, we'll have Bruce Carroll and other surprises. Join your friends for this great event. You might win a great-door prize.

See your pastor or call (708) 495-2000 for pre-registration forms.

## A HEART THAT CARES



44TH TRIENNIAL CONFERENCE  
NORTH AMERICAN BAPTIST CONFERENCE CHURCHES  
DALLAS, TEXAS • AUGUST 2-7, 1994

## A New Paradigm!

The 44th Triennial Conference in Dallas, Texas, on August 2-7 will mark a major transition for North American Baptists. The North American continent (as well as many nations overseas) is undergoing momentous change. Our society is convulsing with "aftershocks" of crime, sexual perversion, abortion, family upheaval, financial stress, and spiritual attitudes ranging from paganism to revival.

This Triennial Conference will initiate a new model (paradigm) for organization and ministry as a Conference. With the election of a new Executive Director, along with significant recommendations from the General Council, the delegates will launch a new era for the North American Baptist Conference and its ministry both at home and abroad.

Inspiring speakers, worship, and fellowship will once again characterize this gathering. This Triennial Conference will be the usual pleasure of renewing old friendships while meeting new friends, while at the same time forming the foundation for a Conference structure and ministry that will propel us into the 21st century.

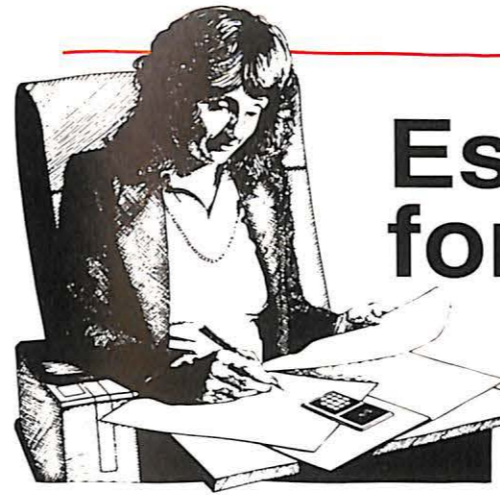
Decisions will set in motion the kind of reformation that can transform our Associations as well as our local churches...a new vision to make disciples at home and abroad. Plan now to be a part of this historic gathering. Pray fervently for the Spirit of God to descend on Dallas, and provide the guidance and wisdom we will need. See you there!

—Ron Norman, N.A.B. Conference program chair and vice moderator.

"The people are hungry for spiritual principles and input. There's a world of hurt out there." □

Art German is a "Neighbors" correspondent. The article is reprinted by

permission from "Neighbors" (Elk Grove-Laguna), a community publication of the Sacramento Bee, April 7, 1994.



# Estate Planning Is for Women, Too

Following are several reasons why you might want to consider a trust:

- 1) If you have minor children, a trust can postpone distribution until your children are more financially mature than they probably would be at the legal age of 18.
- 2) If you have aged parents who are financially dependent upon you, a trust can provide income to them, without the actual distribution of assets.
- 3) If your estate is subject to estate taxes, a trust can be utilized to avoid taxes.
- 4) A trust can also provide for management of property in case of incompetency prior to death.

Times have changed considerably since the days on the farm, where husband and wife worked side-by-side, but all the income was reported in the husband's name. It was assumed that all property was owned by the husband. Some assets may have been held in joint ownership but purely for the purpose of avoiding probate.

Today, it is estimated that the majority of wealth is controlled by women. And women live longer than men. That means that the final distribution of most estate assets will be from the estates of women.

### What Should a Woman's Estate Plan Look Like?

At the very least, you should have a will.

You want to make sure that your estate is distributed according to your desires and not according to the intestacy laws of the state of which you are a legal resident at death.

And if you have minor children, the will is an absolute necessity to nominate guardians for your children.

In your will, you also name the personal representative who will be responsible to carry out your desires at the time of death.

If your estate is more complex, then a trust might be important for you to consider. The trust can be established through your will, or it can be established and funded during your lifetime.

- 5) A trust gives you confidentiality in the distribution of your assets. Another vehicle which should be included in your estate plan is a durable power of attorney.

A durable power of attorney is a special document designed to give someone whom you trust the power to manage your property, should you become incompetent prior to death.

### Married Women Need Estate Planning, Too

Whether married or single, it is extremely important to have an estate plan. If you are single, your

desires for the distribution of your property at death, and the management of property in case of incompetency prior to death, can only be accomplished through a valid estate plan.

And if you are married, you should not assume that everything will be cared for by your husband's estate plan. Many men's estate plans assume that the husband will pass away first.

Also, if your estate plan was completed more than two or three years ago, it is important for you to review your plan to make certain that it is current.

Changes in financial situations, beneficiaries, tax laws, or your desires can make your estate plan obsolete.

To help you begin this process, or if you already have an estate plan, to assist you in reviewing your existing plan, our staff has prepared **A Guide to Planning Your Estate**. Please write for your free copy today. □

(Neither the Development Department nor the N.A.B. Conference is engaged in rendering legal or tax advice. For advice or assistance in specific cases, the services of an attorney should be obtained. The purpose of this article is to provide information of a general character only.)

### YES! Please send me "A Guide to Planning Your Estate"

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Birthdate \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 Spouse's name \_\_\_\_\_ Spouse's Birthdate \_\_\_\_\_

Send to: Dr. Constantino Salios  
 N.A.B. Conference International Office  
 1 So. 210 Summit Ave., Oakbrook Terrace, IL 60181  
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# How Long Is the Sermon?

By Lyle E. Schaller

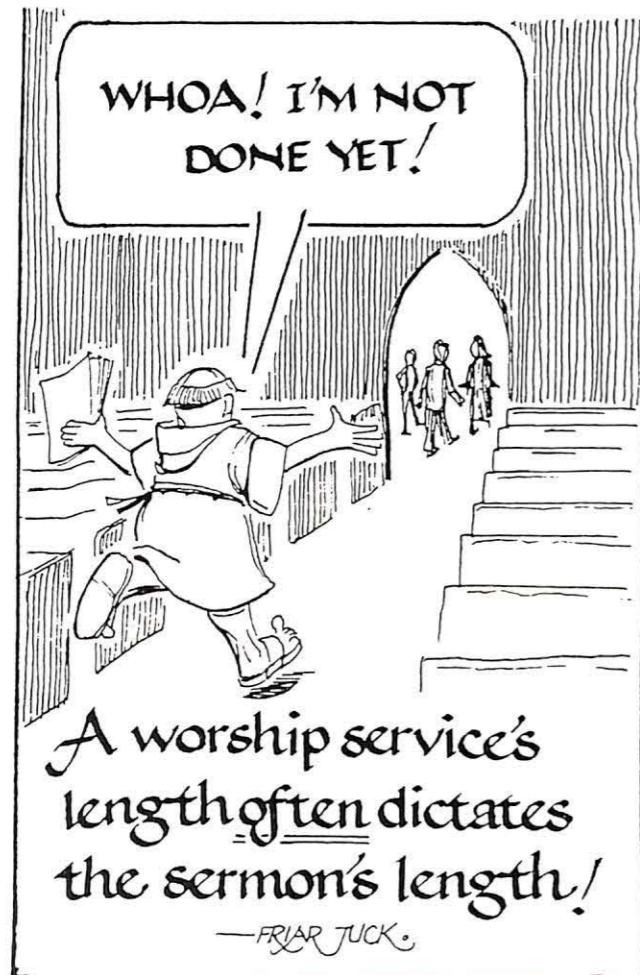
For decades, preachers have asked about the appropriate length for the sermon in that principal weekly worship experience. The answers vary tremendously and provide little guidance. "The mind can absorb no more than the seat can endure." "Twenty minutes." "Long enough to cover the subject." "Twelve minutes." "No more than 30 minutes." "Stop when you have lost the attention of one-fourth of the congregation." "If you can't say what you have to say in 12 to 18 minutes, go back and complete your preparation." "Fifty minutes. That's the length of the class period in most colleges and universities."

The only reason to cite those responses is to illustrate how varied and irrelevant they are. The only good simple two-word response to that question about the appropriate length for a sermon is, "It depends . . ." A good answer must recognize the existence of many variables.

## What Are the Variables?

1) **What year is it?** If it is 1855, the answer may be 45 to 120 minutes. In the middle of the 19th century, adults would come and stand for an hour or two or three to listen to a traveling evangelist or a candidate for political office. That was back in an era when communication of the Gospel, candidacy for public office, entertainment of crowds, appreciation of music, and persuasion of the undecided depended heavily on oral communication.

Television has transformed our



culture. Today visual communication is more influential in the sending and receiving of messages. The weather forecast on television may be the best illustration of this. MTV may be the second best.

In 1855, it was relatively easy for public speakers to grab and hold people's attention for a long period of time. Today that requires a far greater reliance on visual images, humor, pace, and a high level of competence in oral communication.

2) **What kind of sermon is being preached?** In general terms, the traditional three-point textual sermon should not exceed 15 to 20 minutes, an expository sermon may hold people's attention for 25 to 45 minutes, a carefully prepared doc-

trinal sermon may require 25 to 75 minutes, an excellent Bible teaching sermon usually will run for 35 to 70 minutes, and a topical sermon probably will lose many in the audience after 12 to 15 minutes.

3) **What is the communication skill of the speaker?** What is the difference between a 25-minute and a 75-minute doctrinal sermon? For most listeners, the crucial difference is in the level of competence of the preacher as an oral communicator. The best oral communicators can hold an audience's attention for 75 to 90 minutes. For the speaker with a slightly above average skill in oral communication, the ceiling is closer to 25 minutes.

4) **What is the design?** It is not easy to prepare and preach a doctrinal sermon that will hold the listener's

attention for an hour or longer! How can that be accomplished? The number-one factor, as emphasized earlier, is in the preacher's skill in oral communication. The next key variable is in the design of the sermon. Was that sermon designed to communicate what the preacher believes people should know and believe? Or is this a doctrinal sermon that speaks clearly and meaningfully to the questions and concerns people bring with them?

5) **What motivated these people to come here today?** If most were motivated largely out of institutional loyalties, friendship ties, guilt, social pressures, habit, inherited loyalties, family ties, a sense of obligation, and/or parental influ-

ence, the sermon probably should not exceed 15 minutes.

If, however, most came expecting their religious needs would be addressed, their spirit would be nurtured, and their lives would be enriched, 35 to 75 minutes may be the appropriate length for the sermon—but only if the sermon accomplishes that!

6) **What proportion of today's congregation came to this church after years of no active participation in the life of any worshiping community?** The larger that proportion, the longer the sermon.

7) **What proportion of today's congregation came to this church within the past three years?** If that proportion is over 50 percent and today's preacher has been here for more than three years, at least 35 to 50 minutes can be devoted to the sermon. If the majority of today's congregation have been regular attenders here for at least a dozen years, 12 to 20 minutes, and if today's preacher has been here for at least five years, 12 to 18 minutes may be the appropriate length of the sermon.

8) **What is the frequency of attendance?** If at least three-quarters of the members worship here on at least 42 weekends every year, the sermon usually can be at least 25 to 35 minutes. If only one-third or less of today's resident members, age 18 and over, worship here on at least 42 weekends annually, the sermon probably should be under 20 minutes.

9) **Is the sermon read or preached with few or no notes?** With one exception, the preacher who reads from a manuscript probably will be well advised not to exceed 15 to 20 minutes. That exception consists of those rare public speakers who preach from a manuscript that was prepared for oral communication, rather than for silent reading, and are exceptionally competent oral communicators

when reading from a manuscript.

The minister who preaches with few or no notes may allocate 20 to 40 minutes for the sermon.

10) **How far is the preacher from the people?** The basic generalization is the more distant the speaker from the audience, the more difficult it is for a speaker to capture and hold the attention of the audience. Physical distance, even with a superb public address system, is a powerful diversion and distraction. The greater that distance, the greater the competition for the listener's attention.

Thus the minister who comes down out of the chancel and delivers the sermon while walking among the people has a substantial advantage over the preacher in a pulpit that is at least 15 feet from the closest parishioners.

11) **What about the preacher's voice and oratorical skills?** This may be the most obvious variable. The minister with a tiny voice that cannot be heard easily by those listeners 30 feet away or who would receive a "D" on oratorical skills probably would be well advised to concentrate on 8-to 12-minute sermons.

By contrast, the speaker with a loud booming voice and superb oratorical skills may be able to spread a 15-minute sermon over a half hour and leave everyone well satisfied.

12) **Is radio or television the model?** If the minister assumes the spoken word can carry the message without visual support, the sermon probably should not exceed 15 minutes.

If the minister is both an excellent oral communicator and can reinforce that with powerful visual imagery, a relevant, meaningful, memorable sermon that speaks to the hearts and souls of the listeners may run for 35 to 75 minutes—and cause many to leave feeling it was too brief.

1) **The local tradition.** Does local tradition call for worship services that are one hour in length? 30, 45, 75, 90, 105 minutes or two hours? The length of the service usually will influence the length of the sermon. Can and should the local tradition be changed? Or should it be perpetuated?

2) **The room.** If the acoustics are poor and/or if the pews or chairs are uncomfortable and/or if the pulpit is a long distance from most of the listeners and/or if the room offers many distracting visual attractions, that can be an argument for shorter sermons.

3) **The most critical local variable: television.** Read Kathleen Hall Jamieson, *Eloquence in an Electronic Age* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988) and Neil Postman, *Amusing Ourselves to Death* (New York: Penguin Press, 1986). The basic generalization is the younger the listeners, the more likely that television has shaped their listening skills. This means that a 1955 preaching style may still be effective if most of the listeners were born before 1925. If, however, most of today's worshipers were born after 1945, a 1955 preaching style may be inappropriate. The generations born before 1940 usually are comfortable with a minister who preaches to the crowd. The generations born after 1955 usually respond better to the preacher who speaks to people in one-to-one style.

Finally, if the size of the congregation and/or the frequency of attendance among the members is declining, it may be wise to reduce the time allocated to the sermon and increase the time given to drama, music, and intercessory prayer—or improve the quality of the preaching.

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# Anger: God's Gift

by Susan Lawson-Cauthon

**A**nger—perhaps the human emotion we are most uncomfortable both expressing and experiencing. When we feel anger, we commonly attempt in a myriad of ways to make the anger go away, rationalize its reality, or deny its existence.

We, as Christians, are particularly uncomfortable with the very human experience of anger. Somehow we have been taught to believe that being angry is a sign of non-spirituality, or even sin. If we carefully examine what anger does within the human personality, we may notice some startling revelations which, when properly understood, help us realize that anger may, in fact, be a tremendous gift from God.

## Something Isn't Right

There are three ways I would like to propose that anger may serve us as human persons. First, anger signals that something is not right, either within us or related to our circumstances. When every-

thing in our lives is comfortable, peaceful, and restful, we do not experience anger.

It is in our restlessness, our agitation, that anger is often felt. In this way, anger is a "cover" or "defense" signaling that something deep within us is not right. It is often at this point that we begin our feeble attempts to rationalize or deny our angry feelings. We are uncomfortable with what our anger may be signaling within us. In this way, anger is telling us something. It becomes like a massive searchlight attempting to get our attention.

## Reflection and Introspection

This leads us to the second way in which anger may serve us. If we allow the search of our heart, anger then gives us a profound opportunity for self-reflection and introspection.

Scripture calls us to this kind of self-reflective search in several places. "Let one examine himself/herself before eating of the

bread and drinking the cup" (1 Corinthians 11:28). "Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves" (2 Corinthians 13:5). "Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting" (Psalm 139:23-24).

It is imperative that, as believers, we become partners with God and participate in the search of ourselves. Anger signals this need and calls us to an honest, diligent self reflection.

In my practice of psychotherapy, I notice this need for self-reflection most distinctly when I work with couples. Typically, a couple comes into the counseling office believing that all the difficulties within the marriage are the fault of the spouse. If only he expressed his feelings more readily; if only she were more affectionate; he needs to stick to a budget; she needs to be a better manager of time; and on and on the list of

complaints goes.

Quite frankly, I tell couples who are in this mode, "I cannot help you. I cannot help you because your searchlight is focused in the wrong direction. It is focused upon finding blame with your partner. The only way I can help is to assist you in gently, ever so gently, turning that searchlight upon yourself. In a compassionate and loving self search, you can come to understand and love yourself more deeply. And then, miraculously, your spouse will look different to you."

This is the journey God calls us to take. A deepening of ourselves into Himself, not finger pointing at others' shortcomings. What we most disdain in others tells us a great deal about ourselves. If we allow a full and compassionate search of ourselves, we grow in our awareness and experience of God's love and grace manifested to us.

## Separation's Tool

Finally, anger may act as a tool of separation from people and situations that harm us. In some cases the harm may be unintentional, but causes us distress just the same. In other cases, the harm may be intentional, and we need the courage to protect ourselves.

Anger is a "power tool" that allows us the energy to leave people and situations that are harmful to personal and spiritual well-being. Anger allows us to "shake the dust off our feet" from certain people, while not having to call down "fire and brimstone" to consume those people who are objects of our anger. In this way, we see how anger can free us and be of great benefit in our lives. Anger not properly used however can make us vindictive and judgmental.

Anger is an emotion. Scripture tells us to "be angry and sin not"

(Ephesians 4:26). This phrase puts the anger we feel into perspective as one of God's gifts that calls us forward into personal growth. Anger that is denied is a gift denied. Anger that is repressed is the misuse of a gift that will cause us harm.

Anger is an emotion that takes

great energy to use. As we grow to see anger as a powerful ally to love, we will have made the channel of God's grace deeper in our lives.

*Susan Lawson-Cauthon, M.A., is a psychotherapist, as well as a member and pastor's wife at Meadow Hills Baptist Church, Aurora, CO.*

# Finding RELIEF from the Conflict

by Charlene Gray

**R** is for "rest." Rest is most often the last option in the busy woman's life. But it is as important for us to rest as it is to worship. They are tied together. We cannot worship God unless we are still and quiet.

**E** is for "expect your best." There is a big difference between your best and somebody else's.

**L** is for "learn." Women should be lifelong learners—learning from successes as well as failures. Most of all learn from God's Word. Memorize it and make it yours.

**I** is for "identify stress points." Many times women haven't identified what it is that stresses them, just that they are stressed. Even though the stress can't always be removed, it can be managed.

**E** is for "enjoy life." Women have a hard time doing things for themselves without feeling guilty. Women are nurturers by nature. It's those voices out there saying, "Give, give, give. Spending time with God and learning to laugh at yourself are essential to enjoying life."

**F** is for "fear the Lord." It's easy to read the description of a "godly woman" found in Proverbs 31 and get stressed out. But there is not so much an emphasis on what she does as there is on who she is—how she chooses to live out her faith. ☐

*Charlene Gray is a program associate for the Southern Baptist Convention WMU of Tennessee.*

## 2000

Our Strategic Focus On The Biblical Imperatives

## COMMISSIONED TO WITNESS

**Praise God for people receiving Christ as Savior and for His growing church**

■ **OSOYOOS, BC.** Pastor Paul Mohninger baptized seven young people at Osoyoos Baptist Church. Newly hired youth worker, Celina Wyatt, was received into membership in the same service. "It was a day of joy and victory," says W.T. Laskowski.

■ **KITCHENER, ON.** The Rev. Ron Kelway and Pastor Felipe Rodriguez baptized eight believers at Central Baptist Church. During the service, 12 brothers and sisters were welcomed into membership at Central.

"We are thankful that the Lord is blessing the Latin-American ministry at Central and that growth under the able leadership of Pastor Rodriguez is evident," declares Karen Yahn.

The Rev. Ron Kelway is senior pastor; Rev. Arthur Drewitz and Mr. Felipe Rodriguez are associate pastors.

■ **GEORGE, IA.** Central Baptist Church recently celebrated a baptismal service. Pastor Steve Dunkel baptized a girl who received Christ at Village Creek Bible Camp last summer.—*Gert Schrick*

■ **TRENTON, IL.** Pastor Steve Beardsley baptized 12 believers at Grace Community Baptist Church. Two fathers assisted the pastor in baptizing their children. The eight youth and four adults were given the hand of fellowship by the church members following the service.—*Gene Luginbuhl*

■ **ASHLEY, ND.** Pastor Darwin Stahl baptized one youth and welcomed him into the fellowship of Ashley Baptist Church. An adult was also welcomed by his testimony of faith.—*Florence Kranzler*

■ **CHILLIWACK, BC.** The Rev. Matt Dressler baptized seven adults and welcomed them into the fellowship of Evergreen Baptist Church. Since coming to Evergreen, he has welcomed 12 new members through baptism and 19 by testimony and transfer. "We praise God for specific answered prayer in bringing many young families to us," says June Hunt.

■ **STEAMBOAT ROCK, IA.** The Rev. Mike Lerud baptized eight young people at First Baptist Church.

## CALLED TO WORSHIP

**Chilliwack church worships with praise teams**

■ **CHILLIWACK, BC.** To assist in a meaningful time of worship and praise to our God, Evergreen Baptist Church has four worship "teams" of three to five members each.

On alternate Sundays, a team leads the congregation in worship songs and choruses, brief testimony, or Scripture with a specific emphasis. The newly-formed Children's Choir under the direction of Sandy Dressler, assists in worship on

special days and occasions. The Rev. Matt Dressler is pastor.—*June Hunt*

**Church presents cantata**

■ **ASHLEY, ND.** The mixed choir of the Ashley Baptist Church presented the cantata, "The Seven Last Words of Christ," on Palm Sunday. It was followed by a meal and fellowship. Pastor Darwin Stahl directs the choir.—*Florence Kranzler*

## CHALLENGED TO GROW

**Minitonas and Swan River churches host missions conference**

■ **MANITOBA.** First Baptist Church, Minitonas, and Temple Baptist Church, Swan River, hosted "Missions: Should I Care?" Ralph and Martha Nelson and Ken Bayer, all missionaries to Brazil, provided informative and interesting speeches. The Rev. Jake Leverette, area minister, and his wife also took part.

The Conference began with a Friday evening banquet and service. Three workshops, held on Saturday, included "The Life of a Missionary Family," "CHAIN of Love Ministry," and "Great Things for Smaller Places" (rural ministry). A men's breakfast, women's luncheon, and a Junior High and

High School combined activity focused on missions.

Sunday morning, each church had its own service. The closing rally featured a panel discussion with the guests.—*Monica Muller*

**Spiritual renewal meetings held at Wiesenthal Baptist**

■ **MILLET, AB.** Dr. Lewis Petrie, development director, used the theme, "Commanded to Care," in spiritual renewal meetings at Wiesenthal Baptist Church recently. "He challenged us to care for the lonely and the hungry as Jesus cared, basing his messages on Mark 6 and 7," says Annie Hoffman.

The services were well attended by members and friends from neighboring churches. "Dr.

Petrie's strong messages made us examine our commitment to care for the many needy in our own area and throughout the world," declares Hoffman.

**Steamboat Rock church looks into past**

■ **STEAMBOAT ROCK, IA.** Fellowship. Getting to know one another... developing deeper relationships between members of a congregation... these were some of the goals which prompted an after-church fellowship at First Baptist Church. But this wasn't the "usual" after-church fellowship.

Of course, there was plenty of good food. But the focus of the evening was a "Who's Who" theme. A few weeks before the fellowship, each church member was asked to bring a photograph from the time of their high school graduation. These photographs were framed, numbered and displayed around the church fellowship hall. That evening, while helping themselves to great food, church members tried to fill in the blanks on numbered sheets by identifying the pictures!

As church members looked into the past, it helped draw closer bonds in the present. To

end the evening, the names which matched the faces were revealed. The Rev. Mike Lerud is pastor.

**Morris women enjoy home Bible study**

■ **MORRIS, MB.** Women's Ministries at Emmanuel Baptist Church spent a few months recently enjoying home Bible study groups. About 30 ladies were involved and met in five homes. Ages ranged from senior citizens to young marrieds. Studies were from the book of John. Plans are underway to continue the studies next winter.—*Cynthia Bergstresser*

**Brookfield men attend retreat**

■ **BROOKFIELD, WI.** Great fun and fellowship was had by all on the men's retreat this year. About 25 men from Ridgewood Baptist Church went to Village Creek Bible Camp in Lansing, IA. Dr. Constantino Salios, associate director of estate planning, N.A.B. Conference, served as guest speaker at the retreat. His topic was the importance of relationships—with God, your Church, your family, your friends, and your spouse.—*Barbara Boswell*

## COMMANDED TO CARE

**"Come Alongside" at Iowa Church**

■ **STEAMBOAT ROCK, IA.** Several people at First Baptist Church are involved in a ministry

"Come Alongside." This group of people makes a special effort to greet those who worship with the Church, and to make them feel welcome.

## 2000

Our Strategic Focus On The Biblical Imperatives

The coordinator of the group calls on the members to ask them if they would be willing to have a newcomer over for dinner after church (or when it is convenient for them). Their goal is to make sure no one "slips through the cracks." The group member will attempt to arrange this within a two to three-month time frame.

In an effort to begin this ministry, a noon meal was served at the church, and the volunteers of the "Come Alongside" ministry hosted those who had been visiting the church recently. They served 34 guests.

Our Church's goal is to get to know those who are showing an interest in First Baptist Church and to assimilate them into the church family.

**The world comes to Fort Richmond**

■ **WINNIPEG, MB.** Fort Richmond Baptist Church is strategically located in South Winnipeg near the University of Manitoba campus, within walking distance of the residences of hundreds of foreign students from all over the world. Some of these students are believers. "We have the privilege of welcoming our international brothers and sisters into our church family" says Heather Dirks.

Some students become

Christians through campus ministry groups and then find their way to the Church. The Church has the privilege of nurturing them in their new faith and later supporting them through prayers and letters as many of them return home to unsupportive families.

Some students come to Canada with the express purpose of learning about Jesus. "We have seen incredible spiritual hunger, especially among the Mainland Chinese, disillusioned with communism and eager to find Truth.

"Last September, a young man from China walked by our church as we were having an outdoor service. He started attending our Sunday school class for internationals, and became a believer a few months later. He is now being disciplined by one of our College and Career members," says Dirks.

Another student is a government official in his home country. He has been attending the Church for a few years. His wife recently became a Christian, and he is now seriously "counting the cost." Pray that this couple would return to their home country and influence many others to follow Jesus.

International missions can happen right in our living rooms at minimal cost. Students come here already knowing our lan-

## 2000

Our Strategic Focus On The Biblical Imperatives

guage and eager to make Canadian friends. "Pray that God would continue to give us compassion for the lost and courage to

move outside our cultural comfort zones to share the Good News of Jesus," says Dirks. The Rev. Bob Carroll is pastor of the Church.

## COMPELLED TO SERVE



**Temple Baptist woman named North Dakota Mother of the Year**

■ JAMESTOWN, ND. Betty Anderson, a member of Temple Baptist Church, has been chosen as North Dakota's "Mother of the Year." She was selected by a panel of five judges from the North Dakota American Mother's Organization, and repre-

sented North Dakota at the National Mother's Convention in Salt Lake City, UT. She was sponsored by the Fireside Literary Society of Gackle, ND, where she and her husband, Jalmer, live.

Betty and Jalmer farmed in the Gackle area until 1977, when their son Jonathan took over the farm. The Andersons have eight children and fifteen grandchildren. For two years, they worked in a mission school in South Dakota, and then returned to North Dakota to serve as Head Residents at Jamestown College dormitories for four years. After retiring for two years, they returned to the College to spend another two years as Head Residents. They are now retired.

In Gackle, Betty is active in community and church affairs. She works with senior citizens groups in Gackle and Jamestown, with a cancer organization, and with Special Olympics. She helps lead a Home Bible Study and teaches an Adult Sunday school class.

Children love her flannelgraph stories. She also serves as counselor and teacher at a Child Evangelism Camp.

"We, at Temple Baptist Church in Jamestown, are very proud of her," declares Leona Meisch.

## COMMITTED TO GIVE

## Chilliwack children give to CHAIN of Love

■ CHILLIWACK, BC. Wednesday evenings find the facilities at Evergreen Baptist Church bursting at the seams with Pioneer Club members. A recent challenge involved a penny collecting contest between the leaders and the children, proceeds to be donated to the CHAIN of Love (Christian Homes for Abandoned Infants in Need of Love) ministry in Brazil, headed up by the Rev. Ken and Mrs. Jerilyn Bayer. The losers in the contest will have pie on their faces—and the winners will be the

street children of Novo Hamburgo. —June Hunt

## Marion church dedicates new auditorium

■ MARION, KS. Emmanuel Baptist Church held a Dedication Service for its newly renovated auditorium. A dropped ceiling, new lights, fans, speakers, and paint gave new beauty to the auditorium.

Dr. Lewis Petrie, N.A.B. Conference development director, served as guest speaker at both the morning and evening services. The Rev. Bill Sherfy is pastor.

## ANNIVERSARIES

## Mission Baptist Church celebrates 40th Anniversary

■ HAMILTON, ON. Ours is a church organized by German immigrants who, finding themselves in a strange country, needed a like-minded fellowship using their familiar language, coping with the same hardships of settling in a different country, and changing customs. Here they felt "at home." Many came by the infamous boat "Beaverbrae." This alone was an adventure. Eighteen German Baptists founded the then-called "Deutsche Baptisten Missionsgemeinde."

Mission Baptist Church's two praise teams led the congrega-

tion in lively music and lots of singing during a celebrity concert. The Mohawk College Recorder Ensemble performed classical music. The evening provided music for every taste.

The celebration continued with a banquet on the following Saturday. "It was a joy to meet former pastors, members, and friends," says Irene Noack. A display of photographs and other memorabilia covering the 40 years attracted many viewers. The charter members able to attend were honored with corsages.

Former pastors, the Reverends Mark Woods, Mark Boughan, and Frank Hildebrandt recalled some experi-

ences while serving the Church. The Dr. Herman Effa served as guest speaker. The Male Choir, a male voice quartet, and Herman and Ardath Effa provided music.

On Sunday morning, Dr. Reinhold Kerstan of Hamilton, ON, served as guest speaker for the German service. The Rev. John Ziegler, area min-

ister, spoke at the English service. The Mixed Choir, the Praise Team, and a solo by Monica Litster, a former member, contributed to the time of worship.

The afternoon featured fellowship and special music. "We are anxious to continue to do our Master's work," says Irene Noack.

## Modern Prodigal

(Continued from page 7)

alive; he was lost, and is found" and his whole family rejoiced.

Over the years, this son, though his path has changed, still struggles with some of the baggage gathered over his eight-year sojourn. However, with the help of Christ, he carries on daily. He will never forget his father's devotion to him and the example that he was. The son's house was blessed, and the Lord gave to him a beloved wife and two children, and he rejoiced in what he had received.

That was my dad, going the full nine yards, just like the father in Luke 15:11-32

At that, Phil turned to his mother and said, "Mom, I'm really going to miss Dad, and I thank God I had a father like Robert Rapske."

As he read this tribute, Phil was able to point to one of the gifts given by his father: the ring. And when he spoke of his own wife and children, it was evident that his father's influence was creating a heritage.

For a moment, everyone in the hall was quiet. Most were tearful. But all were left with the profound truth that Christ continues to work, even in the lives of modern day prodigals, and especially with the commitment of parents who place their children into God's hands forever.

*The Rev. Lyle Schrag is the senior pastor of Bethany Baptist Church, Vancouver, BC.*

## IN MEMORIAM

■ EWERT, ALICE (75), Chilliwack, BC; born Nov. 15, 1918, in Kalisz, Poland; died March 30, 1994; member, Evergreen Baptist Church, Chilliwack, BC; survived by her brothers, Artur (Louise) Ewert, Lynden, WA; George (Martha) Ewert, Chilliwack, BC; nine nieces and nephews; 14 great-nieces and nephews; the Rev. Matt Dressler, funeral service.

■ KOCH, HARRY W. (80), Ellinwood, KS; born March 28, 1914, to G.F. (Gus) and Mina (Scheufler) Koch in Ellinwood, KS; died April 3, 1994; married Bernice Parker on March 10, 1935; member, First Baptist Church, Ellinwood, KS; survived by his wife, Bernice; three sons: Marvin, Woodward, OK; Fred, Ulysses, KS; Ron, San Diego, CA; three daughters: Barbara Hoar, Ellinwood, KS; Gloria Roberts, Hutchinson, KS; and Twila Bartels, Olathe, KS; 14 grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren; Pastor George Redington, funeral service.

■ RAPSKE, ROBERT (72), Burnaby, BC; born Dec. 16, 1921, to Adolf and Wilhelmina Rapske in Bereztowitz, Poland; died March 5, 1994; moved to

Canada, June 1928; married N. Ruth Golz in 1949; member, deacon, choir member, moderator for 17 years, Bethany Baptist Church, Vancouver, BC; served 26 years as Director of Evergreen Baptist Home, White Rock, BC; survived by his wife, Ruth; two sons: Dr. Brian (Rita); Philip (Diane); daughter, Dawn (John); ten grandchildren; brother, Arnold; two sisters: Ida Litke and Violet Stork; sister-in-law, Molly; the Rev. Dr. Lyle Schrag and the Rev. Richard Hohensee, pastors, funeral service.

■ RADKE, ERIKA (70) Vancouver, BC; born March 11, 1923, in Rathenow, Germany; died Feb. 25, 1994; immigrated to Canada in 1927; married Erwin Radke on April 29, 1945; member of Bethany Baptist Church, Vancouver, BC, where she served as church organist and accompanist for over 40 years; served with WMF and as a volunteer in a local hospital; predeceased by her husband in 1986; survived by her children, Curtis (Marva), Judy (Chris), Wilfred (Rita), and Raymond (Sandra); 8 grandchildren; Pastors Richard Hohensee and Kelly Moore, memorial service.

## Kansas churches join together in youth ministry

The people in the small community of Marion, Kansas, have joined together in a new model or way of providing a ministry with youth. Their goal is to reach out to the youth of Marion County.

In July 1993, the Ministerial Alliances of Marion and Hillsboro, KS, invited Horizon Ministries of San Diego, CA, to conduct evangelistic meetings for five days. An average of 500 attended each evening. On Youth Night, 50 teenagers made a decision for the Lord. God is at work in the youth of Marion County.

Recognizing the need to do something to reach out to area youth, the Ministerial Alliance again contacted Horizon Ministries. This time, a team of six adults and 22 teens, led by Marcus McClure, came to Marion. Assemblies were held in every high school in Marion County. The week concluded with a "Lock-In" at the Marion High School Gym, attended by 435 teens . . . half the teens in Marion County! More than 130 decisions were made for Christ.

The ministers of Marion began to seek someone to work with the youth, since none of the churches in Marion are large enough to have a full-time youth leader.

Marcus McClure sensed a call from the Lord to serve as the Marion County Youth Leader. He moved to Marion and began his ministry on a Wednesday evening with 50 teens in attendance. The next week, 71 youth attended.

The City of Marion has offered the auditorium in the City Building, rent free from April

throughout the summer, for this ministry, now known as Marion County Youth Impact. McClure's salary is paid by individuals pledging ten dollars a month for two years. No church treasury is involved.

Two N.A.B. Conference churches, Emmanuel Baptist of Marion, KS, and First Baptist of Durham, KS, are involved in this ministry, as well as Methodists, Presbyterians, Catholics, and others. Many other churches in the area are now asking how they can become involved.

"To God be the glory as we see the Family of God working together with our youth here in Marion, KS," says Bill Sherfy, pastor of Emmanuel Baptist Church. □

## True Love . . . Waits

by Brian Siken

The Youth Department of Temple Baptist Church, Lodi, CA, embarked on a campaign called "True Love Waits."

Discussed in the newspaper, TV talk shows, and the radio, it is seen as a strange stance as far as the national media is concerned. The goal of this campaign is to challenge youth to remain virgins until they are married. It is a nationwide challenge developed by the Southern Baptist Convention. True love is valued by youth and can be a powerful reason for delaying sexual expression until marriage.

At least five elements of love motivate purity:

- True love for God

- True love for your current date
- True love for your future mate
- True love for your future child and
- True love for yourself.

The purpose of the True Love Waits campaign is to

- Communicate to youth the spiritual, emotional, social, and physical value of remaining sexually pure until marriage;
- Challenge families to address within the home biblical standards of sexual behavior; and
- Communicate to our nation and the world a preferred alternative to the "safe sex" message.

These values and reasons were taught in Sunday School. The students were challenged to sign a commitment card to pledge themselves to virginity until they get married. They received a white key to put on their key ring as a constant reminder of their commitment. We dedicated those who took the pledge on Sunday, April 24.

The students filled out two commitment cards. They kept one, and the second one was sent to the campaign headquarters to be displayed along with hundreds of thousands of others along The Mall in Washington, DC, on July 29, 1994, as a testimony to the nation. □

Reprinted from "Temple Witness," May 1994. The Rev. Brian Siken is Youth Pastor, Temple Baptist Church, Lodi, CA.

■ Mr. Randy Folkerts to pastor, First Baptist Church, Appleton, MN, effective June 15.

■ The Rev. Arnold Friez, pastor of Lehr-Ebenezer Baptist Church in North Dakota died May 21, 1994, after a long struggle with cancer.

■ The Rev. Joseph Link from Minister of Family Life, Oak Street Baptist Church, Burlington, IA, to Heartland Youth Ministries. He will lead parenting classes throughout the Burlington area and also serve as Midwest Regional Director for Growing Families International. He plans to help churches establish parenting ministries throughout the Midwest effective May.

■ The Rev. Doug Sathren from pastor, First Baptist Church, Appleton, MN, effective June 15.

■ The Rev. Don Mashburn from pastor, Greenvine Baptist Church, Burton, TX, to pastor, Strassburg Baptist Church, Marion, KS, in May.

■ The Rev. George Redington from pastor, First Baptist Church, Ellinwood, KS, effective April 30.

■ The Rev. Robert Hoffman retired from full-time ministry effective May 15. He graduated from N.A.B. Seminary, Sioux Falls, SD, in 1957 and was ordained by Trochu Baptist, AB, July 18, 1957. He served as pastor at the following churches: Trochu Baptist, AB, 1957-62; Napoleon Baptist, ND, 1962-64; Startup Baptist, WA, 1964-65; Springside Baptist, SK, 1965-70; First Baptist, Hebron, ND, 1970-75; Calvary Baptist, Regina, SK, 1975-80; Emmanuel Baptist, Valleyview, AB, 1980-85; Community Baptist, Beiseker, AB, 1985-88; and as chaplain, Haven of Rest and Sunnyside Nursing Home, Medicine Hat, AB, 1988-1994.

■ The Rev. Gordon Denison, pastor, Temple Baptist Church, Leduc, AB, received the Doctor of Ministry

degree from Western Conservative Baptist Seminary, Portland, OR, on May 1.

## BAPTIST WORLD ALLIANCE



### Rwandan Baptist Leader Pleads for Prayer and Protest

Washington, DC (BWA) "Please ask people to pray but also ask Baptists to protest to the Belgian government their help for the rebels in Rwanda."

This is the desperate cry of Rwandan Baptist leader Eleazar Ziharambere, general secretary of the Baptist Convention of Rwanda and regional secretary for Africa of the Baptist World Alliance.

Before he fled to Nairobi, Kenya, Ziharambere said he saw terrible massacres. "It was a blood bath. I saw people being slaughtered and thrown into the river when we finally crossed the border."

Ziharambere said the rebels had sent guns and other weapons into the villages before they began the attacks, so the villages were well armed to carry out these terrible killings.

Before he fled, Ziharambere said he also got special permission to hold services in Butare. "We, as Baptists, have taken a stand to protect one another," Ziharambere said. "I am proud to say that in Butare there was no violence where the Baptist Union is located. But all of the other communities around the Baptists have been involved in the fighting."

According to Ziharambere, many Baptist pastors and some church members have already died, especially in Southern Rwanda.

Ziharambere also reported some fighting and killing in Burundi where the Tutsi rebel troops have sent soldiers to Bujumbura where a majority of Hutus live.

Ziharambere believes the Belgian government can appeal to the rebels to stop the killings. "This is tribalism at its worst," he said. "If you are not of our tribe, you are the enemy."

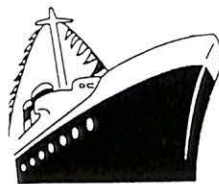
Because of his friendship with the president, who was killed in an airplane crash, Ziharambere believes he was a target to be killed. "Those who are killing each other today were sisters and brothers yesterday," Ziharambere said.

Baptist World Aid has committed US\$40,000 to send almost US\$1 million of beans and other food through the Canadian Food Bank to refugees and displaced persons; is relocating Ziharambere's work base; is working with MAP to ship emergency medical kits; and Florida Baptists in sending a disaster unit to feed and provide water; as well as with several Baptist denominations in sending medical supplies.

Denton Lotz, general secretary of the BWA, assured Ziharambere of prayers from Baptists around the world.

"The BWA stands prepared to channel contributions to the Baptist Union of Rwanda and the All-Africa Baptist Fellowship."

Send your contributions designated for Relief for Rwanda to N.A.B. Conference International Office, 1 S. 210 Summit Ave., Oakbrook Terrace, IL 60181.



## TAKE A WINTER BREAK

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•Ocho Rios •Cozumel  
•Grand Cayman Islands  
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## IT'S STILL NOT TOO LATE . . .

To send in your audition tape for the Monday night talent show at the Triennial Conference to be held in Dallas, TX, AUGUST 2-7, 1994.

If you or your group sings or plays an instrument send your tape to:

Curtis Grandi  
Music Review Committee  
CrossTimbers Baptist Church  
2021 Cross Timbers Road  
Flower Mound, TX 75028

(Your tape should be sent to this address, and not the Sioux Falls address listed in the December '93 issue of the Baptist Herald.)

All tapes must be postmarked by June 30. Don't miss this opportunity to be part of an unforgettable worship experience.

## THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY of FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

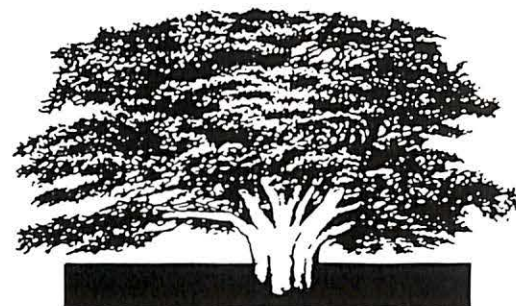
Leduc, Alberta  
JULY 1 - JULY 3, 1994

Former members and friends are cordially invited to attend. Banquet (July 2) tickets need to be purchased in advance.

## ONWARD IN UNITY Ephesians 4:3-4 GRACE BAPTIST CHURCH KELOWNA, BC

invites all former members and friends to join in celebrating its 60th Anniversary  
SEPTEMBER 1-4, 1994

Guest speaker: Dr. Herman Effa  
For more information, contact the church at: (604) 763-3457 or (604) 762-0589



You are invited to participate in the North American Baptist Seminary Heritage Club reception on Friday evening of the Triennial Conference in Dallas.

The Heritage Club is for any person or family who has included North American Baptist Seminary in a planned gift through a will, annuity, or insurance policy.



Call or write NABS for reservations:  
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Toll free 1-800-440-NABS

## BUILDING CHURCHES INTO THE 21ST CENTURY

### WHAT'S A BUILDING FOR?

By Barry Seifert

Have you ever stopped to ask yourself, "What's the purpose of our Church building"? Most often, we go in and out of our Church buildings for worship and meetings without asking, "Why do we have a building"? Yes, there are those who say, "You don't need a building to worship God." There is truth to that statement. Others say, "The money we spend on our building could be going to missions or other worthy ministries." There is also truth in that observation.

But I believe that a Church building holds a special place in God's over-all plan. The prophet Habakkuk warns us about the trap of thinking that man-made creations can provide us with a lasting sense of security and fulfillment (Hab. 2:18-20.) We will never find fulfillment in the building itself. But in verse 20, Habakkuk declares, "But the Lord is in his holy temple; let all the earth be silent before him."

When God "fills" His church, the church building then—and only then—fulfills the purpose for which it was built. How does God "fill" a church building? Let me tell you Marla's story.

Marla is a single parent who came to Park Meadows Baptist in search of a church where she would be accepted and where God would relate to her specific needs and concerns. The first Sunday she attended, a friendly usher with a smile and a genuine concern for her and her four-year-old son, Christopher, let her know that she was indeed welcome.

As Marla sat in the worship service, the time came for the children to be dismissed to Children's Wor-



Park Meadows Baptist Church, Lethbridge, AB.

ship. Bob Korhous, sitting next to Marla, explained what was taking place and took her son to the front of the Church where the children were being dismissed. He then took Christopher and Marla downstairs where the Children's Worship was being held and introduced them to the person in charge. That day, Marla found a Church where she felt God's presence.

Since then, Marla has broken off an unhealthy relationship, been baptized, and joined the Church. She is now reaching out to others in the same way.

I could also tell you about how God touched the lives of Frank, Burt, Maria, and Wendy, or others of the 200 first-time attenders we have had in the first four months of 1994. I close by saying "Thank you" to investors of the Church Extension Investors Fund for funding our sanctuary, foyer, and Sunday School addition. I encourage you to fill your Church with God's presence through loving others in practical ways for the glory of God. □

The Rev. Barry Seifert is senior pastor, Park Meadows Baptist Church, Lethbridge, AB.

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*See you in Dallas!*