

BUDGETING THE PREACHER'S TIME

A few days ago there came a letter from a layman who said he attended a meeting in which was discussed the subject, "How to Make 1947 a Better Year in Our Churches." The subject was discussed by five ministers and five laymen. At one point in the discussion, one of the preachers asked, "How can the pastor be more efficient?" No one answered this question directly, but the layman who wrote me said he was inclined to answer, and if he had done so, his answer would have included a tacit understanding between the pastor and his people to the following effect:

1. That the pastor, as a servant of God and pastor of the people is on call at all times in emergencies—twenty-four hours of the day, seven days in a week.

2. But since the pastor is a prophet who is expected to speak for God, as well as for the church, it is well that he be given a chance to prepare for his work. And such preparation certainly would be assisted if a schedule were adopted. And the following is suggested:

(a) That Monday be the pastor's day, it being understood that he will be called that day only in emergencies.

(b) That the other days of the week be outlined as follows:

1.8:00 a.m. to 12 noon—the pastor in his study engaged in prayer, reading, study, meditation, and preparation of mind and heart for his task. (It is better if the study is not in the parsonage.) In any case, the members must be trained not to call for the pastor during these hours, except in emergencies—neither personal nor 'phone calls.

2. In the afternoon, the pastor should make his calls and take care of the other essential work of the church.

3. Evenings are to be occupied in the regular meetings of the church or are to be spent with the family.

(c) On the Sabbath, the pastor will be ready and anxious to "feed the sheep," and a church with a leadership like this will grow.

The layman who sent in this letter has been a faithful man for forty years, and loves the church and ministry without either question or limit. His suggestions are constructive, and require cooperation on the part of both the pastor and people to make them effective.

Dr. G. Campbell Morgan prepared himself for that mature world-wide ministry by word and pen by sticking religiously to a program much like the one suggested during the early years of his ministry. Many a pastor has extended his years of usefulness beyond the general average by such means. But it is not only a man's future, but his present effectiveness that is promoted by such a practical budgeting of time and organizing of possibilities. We present and commend the plan in the hope that many will find it useful.

If it be supposed that the people will not cooperate, the answer is, give them a chance. Adopt the schedule and let the information be noised about. In most instances it will be found that the people will be glad, and especially so, as they begin to reap the benefits in a richer, fuller ministry on the part of their pastor.

Preachers who are dead in earnest will welcome any suggestion that looks to a better use of time and a fuller preparation for the work. And as regards others, there is not much hope. Just yesterday a busy pastor told me he went

to help the pastor of a small church in a revival meeting. Seeing the crowds were small and the interest slow in awakening, the visiting minister proposed that he would join the pastor in an intensive program of visitation among the members and friends. But the pastor complained he could not afford gasoline for his car. The visiting preacher then suggested that they "walk the circuit." But the hard-pressed pastor complained that his feet gave him trouble and that he could not walk very much. The visiting preacher, well supplied with energy and optimism, said, "You have some very fine books, and I judge you have a good time reading, studying, and preparing for your preaching work." To this the pastor replied that his eyes were weak, and that he could not endure sustained reading or study. The visiting preacher, having reached his limit as to suggestions, had to let the matter rest there. But I have been wondering if that pastor is not one of those who insist on an increase of salary—surely he should find at least some little point on which he could show some interest in change, if not in improvement.

The preacher cannot depend on his work to push him. Rather, he must be so full of plans and so blessed with vision and energy, that regardless of his field, whether small or large, he shall push his work. A business man said that enough business to meet his overhead just came to him as a natural consequence of his location and the public's demand. But in order to show profit and make increase he had to "go out" after business. Thus, he said, it was always possible for him to tell whether he was alive or not. Some churches will survive by reason of their own inherent advantages. But few churches can increase in either spiritual power or saving efficiency without effective and energetic leadership. And when the preacher grows, the church will grow; for if the church grows and the preacher does not grow, the church will soon cease to grow and the preacher will deteriorate.

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PUTTING HOLINESS WHERE IT BELONGS

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The Lord, for purposes best known to himself, has allowed the questing mind of his creatures to penetrate far and deeply but we venture to assert that the final creative secret will forever be kept within his power. Man has neither the intellectual nor moral capacity to enter into the final secrets of God's creative wisdom and might. The recent and world-confounding excursion into the realm of atomic power is the revelation of but "parts of his ways." It still is in order to say, "how little a portion is heard of him." In the final and awful secrets of creation, towards which the burdened mind of man can but erect indistinct fingerboards, "the thunder of his power who can understand?"

In the realm of the spiritual, infinitely vaster than that of the natural, the questing mind of man has busied itself in this same endeavor of finding the universal. His dependence upon his own power, apart from the Spirit and word of God, has given to the world all manner of absurdities and monstrosities. There have been "gods many and lords many," whose worship has plunged the race into deeper darkness still. The only true God is the

"God who was in Christ reconciling the world unto him himself." While we shall never be able fully to comprehend the endless reaches of his eternal and infinite nature yet we can understand and assimilate to our measure, the universal element which pervades his person plan. To this vital work we now address ourselves.

We can never properly understand either his person or his plan until we place holiness as the true universal element. "Holiness is the perfection of the perfections of God." You can trace all of the varied attributes of God back to his holiness, but on arrival there you are at an intellectual and moral stand, for holiness is the very essence of his nature. God, being unalterably and only holy, created man in his holy image, and designed that man should glorify him by manifesting his essential nature of holiness. Sin entered and then wrought and thus ruined man organically and therefore functionally. The supreme tragedy of the race is that it has largely failed to fulfill that purpose for which it was brought into being. Therefore, any remedial scheme to be successful must heal man organically and restore him to his primitive function of glorifying a holy God.

"This is the touchstone by which to test any and all systems purporting to be God's plan of salvation. It is here that systems rise or fall." The only true way to interpret the nature of God and his reconciling plan is to recognize that holiness is the true universal element. Any attempted interpretation of God or his plan that does not put holiness at the very centre is certain to produce distortion in the belief and consequently in the practice of its adherents. The whole non-Christian world has failed to discern that "God was in Christ" and therefore are failing to embrace God's plan of salvation for a lost race. Indeed, within the Christian world itself many are failing to understand that holiness is the true universal element and in the end they will suffer loss of the soul along with those who find no beauty in Christ that they should desire him.

One of the most subtle and deadly devices of the enemy during these strange days is to lead folk into the grievous error of taking some subordinate item of belief and placing it at the center. This mistake of taking a particular and raising it to the rank and power of the true universal is deadly indeed, for two reasons. It is deadly because this subordinate belief or ceremony does not possess the vitality or substance to nourish the soul. When this particular item is raised to a place that it was never designed to fill it is by that very act degraded and perverted. It is equally deadly because it obscures the true universal of God's demand and provision for that "holiness without which no man shall see the Lord." It is a terrible thing indeed to take the very crowning doctrine of redemption and attempt to place it among the odds and ends as worthy of only passing thought and attention.

Whole movements today are dizzily revolving around prophecy, tongues, and knowledge, instead of following the more "excellent way." The results are dire now and will be more dreadful still at the coming judgment. It is freely granted that some in these camps have intuitively grasped the true universal element in salvation and are therefore on their way to heaven. It is to be feared, nonetheless, that multitudes in these movements are revolving intellectually and therefore spiritually around

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