

"GO UP, TAKE POSSESSION"

Mar. 15, '87

TEXT: BEHOLD, THE LORD YOUR GOD HAS SET THE LAND BEFORE YOU: GO UP, TAKE POSSESSION, AS THE LORD, THE GOD OF YOUR FATHERS, HAS TOLD YOU, DO NOT FEAR OR BE DISMAYED." *Deuteronomy 1: 19-25*

ONE OF THE GREATEST OF THE BOOKS OF THE WHOLE BIBLE IS THE BOOK OF DEUTERONOMY. IT IS QUOTED BY ALL EXCEPT SIX BOOKS OF THE N.T. AND AS IT DESCRIBES ONE OF THE GREAT DRAMATIC MOMENTS IN THE HISTORY OF ISRAEL, IT MAKES REAL THE WORD OF GOD. IN 621 B.C. KING JOSIAH INSTITUTED A GREAT REFORM OF ISRAEL'S LIFE AND WORSHIP. MOST SCHOLARS BELIEVE THE REFORM WAS INSPIRED BY THE FINDING OF THE BOOK OF DEUTERONOMY, OR AT LEAST PART OF IT, WHILE THE TEMPLE WAS BEING REPAIRED. SOME OF THE PROFOUND CENTRAL INSIGHTS OF OUR FAITH ARE ANNOUNCED, AND HERE IS PROCLAIMED THE GREATNESS OF GOD AND ISRAEL'S OBLIGATION TO HIM. THE BOOK CONSISTS OF THREE ADDRESSES BY MOSES WHICH DESCRIBE THE ACTS OF GOD, THE LAW OF GOD, AND THE COVENANT WITH GOD. DEUTERONOMY IS ONE OF THE HIGH POINTS OF THE BIBLE.

THE BOOK DESCRIBES A CRUCIAL SITUATION. THE EARLY CONQUESTS HAVING BEEN ACCOMPLISHED, ISRAEL NOW WAITS BEFORE THE PROMISED LAND. THE DANGER NOW IS TO SETTLE DOWN AND ADOPT THE CUSTOMS AND RELIGION OF THEIR NEIGHBORS. A GENERATION HAS BEEN SPENT IN THE WILDERNESS, AND HERE THEY ARE AT THE MOMENT OF DECISION. WHAT NEXT? WILL THEY STOP, OR WILL THEY GO ON AND CLAIM THE LAND? MOSES PROCLAIMS THAT GOD HAS SET THE LAND BEFORE THEM AND NOW THEY MUST GO UP AND POSSESS IT. IT IS A DRAMATIC, DECISIVE MOMENT IN THE LIFE OF THE PEOPLE, AND IT IS THE KIND OF SITUATION WHICH MEN AND SOCIETIES FACE SOONER OR LATER.

LET US BEGIN BY OBSERVING THAT IN EVERY ^{Person's} ~~man's~~ LIFE, THERE IS A LAND TO BE POSSESSED --

we may stop before actually winning it and content ourselves with a compromise. BUT GOD PUTS ^{Men} MEN AND SOCIETIES A VISION OF PLACES THEY OUGHT TO BE, AND LIVES THEY OUGHT TO LIVE.

any faith.

even he for us the relinquishing of

IN OUR TIME THE PROMISED LAND IS WORLD PEACE, AND WE HAVE MADE SOME ADVANCE IN THAT DIRECTION. WE NOW LINGER BEYOND THE JORDAN, AND THE HARDEST PART OF THE FIGHT PROBABLY IS AHEAD OF US. MANY LOOK UPON THE ATTAINMENT OF PEACE AS IMPRACTICAL AND IMPOSSIBLE, BUT IT SEEMS OBVIOUS TO ME THAT GOD WILLS THE NATIONS TO LIVE IN AMITY, AND WE MUST NOW GIRD OURSELVES FOR THE FINAL ASSULT. WE KNOW IT IS THERE AND WE MUST PROCLAIM THAT IT IS TIME TO GO UP AND POSSESS IT. THERE

ARE A GOOD MANY TECHNICAL PROBLEMS INVOLVED, NO DOUBT, BUT THE MAIN THING IS THE WILL TO DO IT AND THE VISION TO SEE IT. THIS IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE FOLLOWERS OF THE PRINCE OF PEACE, AND FOR THE FIRST TIME IN ALL HISTORY, THE POSSESSION OF THIS LAND IS BEFORE US.

IN AMERICA WE HAVE SPOKEN BRAVELY ABOUT FREEDOM AND LIBERTY FOR MANY YEARS. WE HAVE ACCOMPLISHED MUCH, AND THIS COUNTRY HAS BEEN A REFUGE FOR THE OPPRESSED AND THE ENCLAVED. YET, SO FAR AS ENTERING THE PROMISED LAND ITSELF, WE HAVE HOVERED ON THE OUTSKIRTS AND POSTPONED THE FINAL ASSAULT. TODAY WE ARE CAUGHT UP IN THE MIDST OF THAT LAST INVASION, AND THERE ARE MANY PEOPLE WHO ARE UNHAPPY. BUT THINK WHAT IT WILL MEAN IF EVERY AMERICAN CITIZEN IS FIRST CLASS AND EVERY AMERICAN CHILD HAS EQUAL OPPORTUNITY. THIS IS A GREAT DAY FOR US BECAUSE OUR BLACK BRETHREN ARE URGING US TO GO UP AND POSSESS THE LAND.

THE CHURCH HAS BEEN DIVIDED AND TOO CONTENT TO ACCEPT ESTABLISHED PATTERNS OF ORGANIZATION. NOW A FRESH BREEZE IS BLOWING AND THE MISTS ARE DISAPPEARING, LEAVING THE LAND SHARP AND CLEAR AHEAD. THE OLD DIVISIONS ARE CRUMBLING AND WE ARE SPEAKING MORE IN APPRECIATION OF ONE ANOTHER AND BEGINNING TO DEMONSTRATE MORE CLEARLY THAT CHRISTIANS OUGHT TO LOVE ONE ANOTHER. IT IS GREAT TO BE LIVING IN A TIME WHEN THE VOICE OF GOD COMES TO US THROUGH EVENTS AND MEN TO TELL US IT IS TIME TO MOVE FORWARD ECUMENICALLY.

IN OUR PERSONAL EXPERIENCE WE FACE SUCH MOMENTS AND ARE CONFRONTED BY SUCH DECISIONS. NOTHING IS MORE CONFINING THAN THE SELFISH LIFE, AND THERE COMES A MOMENT WHEN THE INNER VOICE COMMANDS US TO ENLARGE OUR VISION AND EXPAND OUR SERVICE. TRULY AT THE END OF THE DAY A LIFE THAT HAS CONTRIBUTED NOTHING TO THE COMMON GOOD IS THE GREAT FAILURE. EVERY MAN IS COMMANDED TO GO OUT BEYOND HIMSELF AND CLAIM A PLACE IN THE HEALING MINISTRY OF THE WORLD.

IT IS A STRANGE THING THAT OUR AFFLUENT SOCIETY CAN PRODUCE SO MANY COMFORTABLE LIVES THAT ARE SO UNHAPPY. I TALKED WITH A MAN NOT LONG AGO WHO OBJECTED TO THE IDEA THAT THERE WAS ANYTHING VERY WRONG WITH US. HE POINTED OUT ALL THE ADVANCES IN COMFORT WE HAVE MADE AND ALL THE SOCIAL PROGRESS OF THE THE LAST 50 YEARS. WHAT HE SAID WAS TRUE, OF COURSE, BUT HOW DO YOU EXPLAIN THE TERRIBLE FEAR IN THE HEARTS OF SO MANY PEOPLE? WHAT CAUSES OUR ANXIETY AND WHY IS INNER PEACE SO HARD TO COME BY?

THERE IS IN EACH ^{Person's} LIFE SOME PURPOSE WHICH MAY HAVE BEEN A GROWING REALIZATION OR A SUDDEN DISCOVERY. BUT THERE IT IS AND

ONCE IT HAS BEEN RECOGNIZED, THERE IS NO PEACE FOR HIM UNTIL HE MOVES FORWARD TOWARD ITS ACCOMPLISHMENT. ONCE MOSES HAD REMINDED THE PEOPLE OF WHO THEY WERE AND WHAT GOD HAD PROMISED THEM, THEY COULD NEVER BE CONTENT ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE JORDAN. NOR CAN WE CALL IT A RESTLESS DISCONTENT OR GIVE IT ANY NATURALISTIC TERM YOU CHOOSE. THE RELIGIOUS MAN KNOWS IT IS GOD PROBING HIS HEART AND COMMANDING HIM TO GO AND POSSESS THAT BETTER PLACE.

SOME TIME AGO JOHN CROSBY, A COLUMNIST FOR THE NEW YORK HERALD TRIBUNE ASKED, "WHY IS IT THAT THE MOST ADVENTUROUS NEW BUILDINGS ARE ALL CHURCHES?" COMING FROM MR. CROSBY, THIS IS A SIGNIFICANT QUESTION. I WAS NOT AWARE THAT THIS IS TRUE, BUT I HOPE IT IS. THE CHURCH OUGHT TO BE A SYMBOL IN ITS ARCHITURE AND A PROMISE IN ITS LIFE OF SPIRITUAL ADVENTURE AND MORAL PROGRESS. FOR THE CHURCH SHOULD POINT THE WAY FOR SOCIETIES AND PERSONS TO A LAND OF PROMISE WHICH OUGHT TO BE AND CAN BE POSSESSED.

BUT ANOTHER THING WE MUST NOTE IS THAT THE WILDERNESS HAS A GREAT ATTRACTION.

WHAT WE CALL CIVILIZATION IS FOREVER UNDER THE ATTACK OF PEOPLE WHO PREFER THE JUNGLE. THERE IS AN EASY AND RELAXATION CONNECTED WITH THE SIMPLE LIFE OF THE SAVAGE WHICH PULLS CIVILIZED PEOPLE IN THAT DIRECTION. ALWAYS WE STAND IN DANGER OF SLIPPING BACK TO A LOWER LEVEL OF LIFE BY PEOPLE WHO ARE SAVAGES IN THEIR HEARTS. SO WE STAND ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF THE PROMISED LAND, DECIDING WHETHER TO GO FORWARD AND POSSESS IT OR SLIP BACK QUIETLY INTO THE LESS DEMANDING LIFE OF THE WILDERNESS.

CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE ILLUSTRATES THIS ATTRACTION. THE NOVEL THAT REVELS IN ANATOMICAL DESCRIPTIONS OF THE SEX ACT IMPLIES THAT MEN WILL BE HAPPIER IF THEY NO LONGER SEEK TO CONTROL THEIR SEXUAL IMPULSES. THE NATURALISTIC SCHOOL OF WRITING TRIES TO MAKE ALL RESTRAINT HYPOCRITICAL AND ARTIFICIAL. SUCH WRITERS HOLD UP DOING WHAT COMES NATURALLY AS A SIGN OF MATURITY.

WE HAVE BEEN THROUGH SUCH PERIODS AND PROBABLY THERE WILL BE MORE OF THEM IN THE FUTURE. NEW WRITERS APPEAR WHO SEEM TO BE VITAL AND VIGOROUS. BUT LOOK AT THEM OBJECTIVELY AND THEY ARE SIMPLY EXTOLLING ADOLESCENT THOUGHT AND BEHAVIOR WHICH WE SHOULD HAVE OUTGROWN. REPRESSION CAN BE EVIL, BUT NOT ALWAYS. REPRESSION OFTEN TIMES MAKE THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A HUMAN BEING AND AN ANIMAL. THE UNDISCIPLINED LIFE HAS ITS ATTRACTION, AND ALWAYS THERE ARE PEOPLE WHO PREACH THIS GOSPEL AS IF IT WERE A NEW DISCOVERY AND THE PROMISE OF A NEW LIFE. ACTUALLY, IT IS NOTHING OF THE KIND, IT IS LITTLE MORE THAN

THE EXPRESSION OF A NOSTALGIA FOR THE WILDERNESS.

WHEN IT COMES TO ART I CANNOT SPEAK WITH ANY AUTHORITY AT ALL. IN THIS FIELD I AM IGNORANT AND ENTIRELY A PHILISTINE. YET WHEN I LOOK AT SOME OF THE ABSTRACTIONS WHICH SEEM TO ME NO MORE THAN AN ARRANGEMENT OF GEOMETRICAL LINES OR THE PLACING OF BLOBS OF COLOR AT WILL, I CANNOT THINK THAT THEY POINT TO THE FUTURE. WHAT IS DESPISED AS TRADITIONAL ALSO DEMANDS MORE SKILL AND MORE DISCIPLINE. THE KIND OF PAINTING WHICH CAN BE HUNG UPSIDE DOWN IN A MUSEUM FOR MOTHS WITHOUT ANYBODY NOTICING THE DIFFERENCE SEEMS TO ME SYMBOLIC OF THE WILDERNESS AND NOT THE PROMISED LAND.

THE THEATER REFLECTS THAT SAME SITUATION. IT IS ALL RIGHT TO HAVE A STAGE SETTING THAT IS MERELY SUGGESTIVE, BUT AS A GREAT DIRECTOR ONE TIME POINTED OUT IN AN HONEST MOMENT, IT IS ALSO EASIER. IN THE NAME OF REALISM WE ARE SOMETIMES WILLING TO WIPE OUT ALL PROGRESS TOWARD A BETTER LIFE AND MOVE BACKWARD TOWARD THE PRIMITIVE. AN EXCESSIVE SUPERFICIALITY IS NOT TO BE DESIRED BY ANY MEANS, BUT LET US NOT BE MISLED BY THE URGE TO REMOVE ALL RESTRAINT. THE TROUBLE WITH MUCH MODERN DRAMA IS NOT THAT IT IS SHOCKING WOULD THAT! IT IS JUST DULL AND BORING, AND WE OUGHT TO COMPLAIN TO THE BETTER BUSINESS BUREAU FOR TAKING OUR MONEY UNDER FALSE PRETENSES.

WHEN WE TURN TO MORALS, WE ARE TOLD WE MUST NOT BE CABINED AND CONFINED. IN THE NAME OF FREEDOM WE ARE ENCOURAGED TO SEEK PATHS THAT LED TO INDECENCY, AS IF THIS IS NEW AND PROGRESSIVE. I HAVE FOR EXAMPLE, BEEN READING SOME THINGS ABOUT THE NEW TOPLESS BATHING SUITS, AND I HAVE HEARD THAT THERE ARE SOME RESTURANTS WHERE THE WAITRESSES WEAR SUCH COSTUMES. THIS IS PROGRESS? A FEW YEARS AGO IN AFRICA I DROVE THROUGH THE CONGO WITH A YOUNG MESSONARY. WE SAW LOTS OF TOPLESS BATHING SUITS ALL ALONG THE ROAD AND IN EVERY VILLAGE WHERE WE STOPPED. DO WE WISH TO RETURN TO THAT, OR IS THERE A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE WAY WOMEN DRESS IN A CIVILIZED NATION? YOU WILL FORGIVE THIS ALLUSION, BUT A LEADING FASHION DESIGNER ONE TIME REMARKED THAT THE MOST BORING PLACE IN THE WORLD IS A NUDIST CAMP. IF WE WANT TO BE RATHER NASTY LITTLE BOYS OUT BEHIND THE BARN, LET US RECOGNIZE THE IMPULSE FOR WHAT IT IS. ACTUALLY, IT IS THE CALL OF THE WILDERNESS.

EACH ~~MAN~~ ^{person} HAS TO DECIDE WHETHER HE ^{she} WILL PAY THE PRICE FOR MOVING ON OR TAKE THE EASIER BARGAIN AND SLIP BACKWARD. LICENSE HAS ITS APPEAL WITHOUT QUESTION, AND IF I COULD BELIEVE THAT THIS IS THE ROAD TO THE FUTURE, HOW PLEASANT IT WOULD BE. MY ONLY SAFETY IS TO REALIZE THAT SUCH A WAY LEADS BACK FROM WHENCE I HAVE COME. THE DISCIPLINED ROAD, WHILE HARD, OFFERS

"GO UP, TAKE POSSESSION"

Mar. 15, '87

REWARDS FAR BEYOND ANYTHING THE JUNGLE TRAIL CAN PRODUCE.

ALL OF US TO SOME EXTENT AT LEAST, ARE LAZY AND WE PREFER EASY TO EFFORT. I WANT THE WAY THAT DOES NOT MAKE TOO MANY DEMANDS ON ME. TO GO FORWARD AND UPWARD MENAS TO SAY GOOD-BY TO MUCH ANIMAL COMFORT. BUT LIFE CONSISTS OF SOMETHING MORE THAN THE PHYSICAL, AND I MUST NOT BE FOOLED BY THE WILDERNESS CALL. THE UNINHIBITED PERSON WHO IS SO OFTEN PORTRAYED BY OUR CONTEMPORARIES AS ADMIRABLE, IS VERY OFTEN NOTHING MORE THAN AN UTTERLY SELFISH INDIVIDUAL WHO SIMPLY WANTS TO DO WHAT HE ^{she} FEELS LIKE DOING. THE MAN WHO TAKES SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY HAS ADMITTED AND ACCEPTED THE CLAIMS OF HIS BRETHREN. INDIVIDUALISTS MAKE INTERESTING BIOGRAPHIES, BUT THEY ARE USUALLY A DANGER AND A SNARE. WE SHALL BE WISE TO LEARN AS EARLY AS WE CAN THAT DOING JUST AS WE PLEASE IS ANOTHER NAME FOR SAVAGERY. AS THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL PAUSED BEFORE THE PROMISED LAND, SO WE STAND OFTEN IN THE VALLEY OF DECISION. WE NEED A MOSES TO TELL US TO GO UP AND POSSESS.

A MAN TELLS OF HAVING BREAKFAST AT THE KENNEDY INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT IN NEW YORK. A POORLY DRESSED, DESPERATE LOOKING CUBAN CAME IN, WAVING A BEER BOTTLE. HE BEGAN TO SPEAK IN BROKEN ENGLISH ABOUT THE SITUATION IN CUBA AND INSISTED THAT AMERICA MUST PAY MORE ATTENTION TO IT. HE FINALLY BECAME A NUISANCE AND THE WAITRESS SAID TO HIM, "THIS IS A BUSINESS ESTABLISHMENT. WE DON'T WANT NO TROUBLE. NOW GET OUT! THE MAN WAS CRESTFALLEN BUT IMMEDIATELY LEFT THE RESTAURANT. THE DINERS ALL RETURNED TO THEIR BREAKFAST EXCEPT AN AMERICAN SAILOR, WHO SAT STARING AT HIS COFFEE. SUDDENLY HE LOOKED UP AND SAID TO THE WAITRESS, "LOOK, HE WASN'T TRYING TO MAKE YOU NO TROUBLE. HE WAS TRYING TO TELL YOU THAT YOU GOT TROUBLE." WHENEVER A MOSES COMES ALONG AND COMMANDS US TO GO UP AND POSSESS THE LAND, HE IS NOT TRYING TO CAUSE US TROUBLE. HE IS TRYING TO TELL US THAT IF WE DO NOT ESCAPE THE ATTRACTION OF THE WILDERNESS, WE HAVE TORUBLE.

FOR ANOTHER THING. NOTICE THAT HERE IS THE PERENNIAL STRUGGLE BETWEEN DOUBT AND FAITH.

MOST OF OUR LIFE IS LIVED ON THIS BATTLEFIELD. WE LIVE BY FAITH, AND THE IMPORTANT DECISIONS ARE EITHER FOR THE PROMISE LAND OR THE WILDERNESS.

IF HISTORY TEACHES US ANYTHING WITH ANY CLARITY IT IS THAT THE DANGEROUS TIME FOR A PEOPLE IS THE PERIOD OF EASE AND PROSPERITY. HOW SHARPLY THE BIBLE DRAWS THIS LESSON AND HOW STRANGE IT IS

that the biblical writers seem to be less afraid of adversity than they are of success. AMERICANS ARE NOT THREATENED BY INVASION TODAY IN SPITE OF THE HYSTERIA OF EXTERMIST GROUPS. BUT WE ARE IN REAL DANGER OF SELF BETRAYAL AND SELF DESTRUCTION. DEMOCRACY WEARIES US, FOR IT IS DIFFICULT AND DEMANDING. HOW MUCH EASIER IT IS TO ACCEPT DICTORS AND DROP THE BURDEN OF RESPONSIBILITY. OUR FAITH IN FREEDOM IS THE DECIDING FACTOR, AND ONE OF THE EVIL THINGS IN OUR NATION TODAY IS THE APOSTLES OF DISCORD SOWING DOUBT IN THE NAME OF PRTRIOTISM.

POLITICAL PARTIES LIVE BY THEIR FAITH AND NOT BY THEIR DOUBTS. ONCE THEIR LEADERSHIP SEES THE PROMISE LAND BACK TOWARD THE WILDERNESS, THEIR DAYS ARE NUMBERED. FOR MEN KNOW DEEP INSIDE THAT DOUBT HAS NO FUTURE AND THEY CAN ONLY BESAVED BY FAITH.

HOW EASY IT IS FOR ^{Christians and} THE CHURCH TO SURRENDER ^{their} FAITH. HOW EASY IT IS FOR US TO SETTLE FOR TOO LITTLE. HOW EASY IT IS TO ADJUST TO THE PRESENT CONDITION AND NOT KEEP THE TENSION ON OUR WAY OF LIFE. THE CHURCH IS TO PROCLAIM AND DEMONSTRATE FAITH, AND IT MUST NEVER ALLOW MEN TO CONFUSE COMFORT WITH PROGRESS. THERE IS A SENSE IN WHICH THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH MUST ALWAYS STAND BEFORE THE PEOPLE AS MOSESE DID, SAYING TO THEM, "BEHOLD, THE LORD YOUR GOD HAS SET THE LAND BEFORE YOU: GO UP, TAKE POSSESSION AS THE LORD, THE GOD OF YOUR FATHER, HAS TOLD YOU: DO NOT FEAR OR BE DISMAYED."

THE TRAGEDY OF MOST LIVES IS TO SETTLE FOR TOO LITTLE AND BE RULED BY OUR DOUBTS. KIERKEGAARD WROTE ONE TIME, "WHEN I READ THE N.T. I GET THE IMPRESSION THAT IN GOD'S OPINION EVERY MAN IS A GIANT...HOW IRONICAL THAT EVERY MAN IS DESIGNED TO BE AN ATLAS, CAPABLE OF BEARING THE WEIGHT OF THE WORLD AND THEN SEE WHAT MEN WE ARE: AND ALAS, HOW SORRY A THING IT IS THAT WE OURSELVES ARE TO BLAME FOR WHAT WE ARE." WE ADJUST OURSELVES TO OUR WEAKNESS RATHER THAN TRUST OUR STRENGTH.

WHEN ALASKA EXPERIENCED A TERRIBLE EARTHQUAKE A FEW YEARS AGO, THE GOVERNOR'S WIFE SAID THAT MANY PHONE CALLS CAME TO THE GOVERNOR'S MANSION. SHE ANSWERED MOST OF THEM, AND USUALLY THEY WERE DEMANDS THAT SHE DO SOMETHING FOR SOME RELATIVE OR SOME FRIEND. BUT SHE RECEIVED A LETTER FROM A TEN-YEAR OLD BOY IN THE MIDWEST WHO SENT HER TWO NICKLES. "IF YOU NEED ANY MORE, HE WROTE, "PLEASE LET ME KNOW." THERE IS FAITH IN ALL ITS SHINING SPLENDOR! TWO NICKELS ARE NOT MUCH, THEY WERE PROBABLY ALL THE BOY HAD, HE WAS ONE OF THOSE PERSONS WHO THOUGHT IT WAS BETTER TO DO HIS BEST EVERN IF IT WAS SMALL. THIS IS FAITH, AND IT HAS POWER TO OVERCOME ALL THE FORCES OF DOUBT. FOR ONCE IT IS OBSERVED IN ACTION, IT LIFTS UP THE HERTS OF ALL THE PEOPLE WHO SEE IT. SAID MOSES, "BEHOLD, THE LORD YOUR

GOD HAS SET THE LAND BEFORE YOU." THE COMMAND IS FROM GOD, AND OUR RESPONSE MUST TRUST HIS PROMISE.

THE FINAL THING FOR US TO OBSERVE IS THAT GOD'S COMAND CARRIES WITH IT THE PROMISE OF GOD'S HELP.

THIS IS THE WONDERFUL THING ABOUT THE DEMANDS HE PUTS UPON US. THE N.T. SAYS THAT WE ARE NEVER TEMPTED BEYOND OUR POWERS TO RESIST. IT IS MY FAITH THAT GOD KNOWS ME BETTER THAN I KNOW MYSELF, AND HE NEVER GIVES ME A BURDEN I CANNOT BEAR. WHEN IT SEEMS WE CANNOT DO WHAT WE OUGHT TO DO, WE HAVE FORGOTTEN THE POWER AND SUPPORT THAT COME FROM HIM.

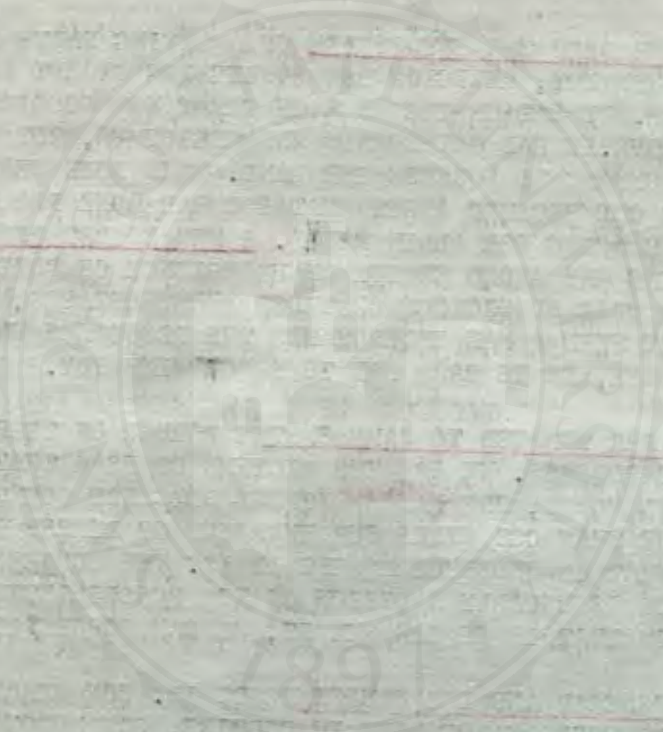
HOW MUCH WE NEED THE ENTHUSIASM OF A LIVING FAITH IN GOD. IN THE 18th CENTURY, RELIGION HAD EVERYTHING EXCEPT POWER AND ENTHUSIASM. IT SAT ON THE EDGE OF GREAT NEW POSSIBILITIES AND DID NOT MOVE. IT HAD CATHEDRALS AND CLERGYMEN, BUT THE PEOPLE FELT NO COMMAND TO POSSESS THE LAND. THEN JOHN WESLEY CAME ALONG AND GOT EXCITED ABOUT WHAT GOD HAD DONE FOR HIM AND WHAT HE SAW GOD DOING FOR PLAIN FOLKS. A NEW SPIRIT POSSESSED HIM, AND NOTHING WAS ADDED EXCEPT AN EXPERIENCE OF FAITH. SOME CHURCHMEN WERE SUSPICIOUS OF THESE "ENTHUSIASTS," EVEN AS TODAY. BUT WHEN A MAN UNDERSTANDS THE RESOURCES WHICH ARE PROMISED HIM, IT IS HARD NOT TO SHOUT WITH JOY.

TODAY WE ARE TEMPTED TO CAMP ON THE BORDER OF TERRITORIES WE SHOULD POSSESS. WE ARE THE VICTIMS OF FEAR THAT IN AN IMPERSONAL WORLD, ONE MAN'S WITNESS DOES NOT COUNT. BUT IF WE BELIEVE THAT GOD WILLS OUR INVASION OF TERRITORIES FOR CHRIST, WHAT A WONDERFUL MOMENT IT IS. THE CONVERSION EXPERIENCE IS USUALLY A VISION OF NEW POSSIBILITIES AND A CONVICTION THAT IF WE CAN SEE IT, WE CAN POSSESS IT.

WE NEED RENEWAL AND THE CHURCH NEEDS IT. HOW WEARISOME LIFE CAN BECOME WHEN WE BOG DOWN IN ROUTINE. HOW MONOTONOUS EXISTENCE CAN BE AND OFTENTIMES IS FOR ~~us~~ BUT THE BIBLE IS ALWAYS BRINGING US BACK TO A GREAT NEW VISION OF GOD AND WE ARE LIFTED UP. FOR EVERY ~~man~~ WHO LIVES ON THE EDGE OF SADNESS AND FINDS THE FUTURE JUST MORE OF THE PRESENT WEARINESS, THERE IS GOOD NEWS. THERE IS A BETTER LIFE THAN WE HAVE REALIZED AND THERE IS A GREATER ACCOMPLISHMENT THAN WE HAVE DARED TO EXPECT. GOD IS NOT THROUGH WITH US BY ANY MEANS, AND IT COULD BE THAT EVEN IN THIS VERY HOUR, HE PLANS TO GO WITH US INTO THE PROMISE LAND.

CHRISTOPHER MORLEY, ONE DAY WHILE OBSERVING THE TELEPHONE, BEGAN TO THINK OF THE PEOPLE WHO WERE WAITING SOMEWHERE TO HEAR SOME GOOD NEWS. THERE WERE THE PARENTS WAITING ANXIOUSLY

for a call FROM A BOY OR GIRL FAR FROM HOME. THERE WAS THE LONELY YOUNG MAN IN THE CITY WISHING THAT SOMEONE WOULD CALL HIM AND TALK TO HIM. THERE WAS THE GIRL WHO WAS WAITING FOR THE YOUNG MAN TO ANNOUNCE HE WAS COMING TO TAKE HER TO DINNER. AND HE SAYS THAT SUDDENLY HE WISHED HE COULD CALL THEM ALL AND GIVE SOME GOOD NEWS TO EACH. WELL, THIS IS WHAT I HAVE BEEN COMMISSIONED TO DO. TO EVERY MAN, TO EVERY WOMAN TO EVERY YOUNG PERSON WHO IS DISSATISFIED, ON WORD IS THAT GOD WANTS YOU TO POSSESS A BETTER LIFE THAN YOU HAVE EVER KNOWN, AND BEST OF ALL, HE WILL HELP YOU POSSESS IT.



Behold, the heavens were opened

Matthew 3:16



MORNING WORSHIP SERVICE
Second Sunday in Lent

March 15, 1987

10:30 AM

PREPARATION OF OUR HEARTS FOR WORSHIP

"Let the people be in silent meditation
and prayer upon entering the sanctuary."

WE PRAISE GOD

ORGAN PRELUDE

CHORAL INTROIT "All People of God" Chancel Choir
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*HYMN OF PRAISE No. 41
"When Morning Gilds the Skies"

CALL TO WORSHIP

Pastor: Blessed is He whose transgression is forgiven,
whose sin is covered.

People: Blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputes no
iniquity, and in whose spirit is no deceit.

Pastor: I acknowledged my sin to Thee,

People: and I did not hide my iniquity.

Pastor: I said, "I will confess my transgressions
to the Lord."

People: Then Thou didst forgive the guilt of my sin.

All: Therefore, let every one who is godly
offer prayer to Thee.

WE CONFESS OUR SINS

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (In Unison)

We confess, O Lord, that too often we have misused Thy
gifts. With shame we think of the strife and greed and
fear that are rampant among us and of the selfish mate-
rialism in which we often live. Lift us by Thy grace
from the dominion of sin and fear into the freedom of
Thy kingdom. Save us from the evils that beset us, and
set our affections on things above where Christ our
Savior reigns in grace and love. Amen.

DECLARATION OF PARDON

*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

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WE GIVE THANKS TO GOD

ANTHEM

"Psalm 150" by Lewandowski

Chancel Choir

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Pastor: Lift up your hearts.

People: We lift them to the Lord.

Pastor: Give thanks to God for He is good.

People: His love is everlasting.

Pastor: Let us pray.

PASTORAL PRAYER

CHORAL RESPONSE "In This Quiet Moment"

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RITUAL OF FRIENDSHIP "Reach Out and Touch" Walker

GIVING OF TITHES AND OFFERINGS

OFFERTORY MUSIC

"Ain'-a That Good News" by Wm. L. Dawson

Chancel Choir

*DOXOLOGY

"Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow"

No. 544

*OFFERTORY PRAYER

*THREEFOLD AMEN

GOD SPEAKS TO US

SCRIPTURE

Leuteronomy 1: 9-21

MUSICAL SELECTION

William Ellis, Soloist
"If I Can Help Somebody"

SERMON

Rev. George Walker Smith
"Go Up, Take Possession"

*INVITATIONAL HYMN

"Just As I Am"

No. 272

*BENEDICTION

CHORAL BENEDICTION "God Be With You"

ORGAN POSTLUDE

* Congregation standing
++++ Worshipers are seated

TO OUR GUESTS - You are welcome to our Worship Service and all activities of the church. Please help us to know you by signing a record of attendance card. You are invited to meet with others in the Fellowship Hall for refreshments. Please come again and invite your friends and neighbors to come with you.

Elders Yvonne Johnson and Albert McClain will be at the front of the sanctuary during the Invitational Hymn.

THE FLOWERS FOR TODAY were placed in the sanctuary by Ms. Sharon Coleman in loving memory of Mrs. Valleta Linnette.

HOSTING THE COFFEE HOUR today will be Mrs. Mary Lovelady and the March Birthday Club.

CHRIST UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF SAN DIEGO

3025 Fir Street at 30th
San Diego, Calif. 92102

Phone: 239-2346/2347

Office Hours: 10:30 AM to 4:00 PM

Minister:	Rev. GEORGE W. SMITH
Assistant to the Minister for Community Affairs:	Mr. DONALD GULLANS
Parish Associate:	Dr. EDWARD REYNOLDS
Choir Director:	Mrs. DOLORES STEVENS
Youth Choir Director:	Ms. JAHNETTE ROGERS
Youth Choir Pianist:	Ms. JUANITA DENTHAM
Organist:	Ms. JUANITA DENTHAM
Pianist, Church School:	Mr. MARCUS BROWN
Church School Superintendent:	Ms. CAROLYN Y. SMITH
Church Secretary:	Ms. PHYLLIS WALTERS

A photograph of a steep, reddish-brown rock face with several climbers. The sky is a clear, deep blue. The text is overlaid on the upper portion of the image.

You

of little faith,
why did you
doubt?

Matthew 14:31

MORNING WORSHIP SERVICE

AUGUST 18, 1996

10:30 AM

ANTHEM

WE GIVE THANKS TO GOD

PREPARATION OF OUR HEARTS FOR WORSHIP

"Let the people be in silent meditation and prayer upon entering the sanctuary."

WE PRAISE GOD

PRELUDE
CHORAL INTROIT
PRAYER OF PREPARATION

Rylophane
Organist

§HYMN OF PRAISE
‡CALL TO WORSHIP

#403

Leader: O come, let us worship the Lord our God.
People: That we might discern the will of our Maker.
Leader: O come, let us worship the Lord our God.
People: That we might recall the bondage from which the Lord delivered the people of God.
Leader: O come, let us worship the Lord our God.
People: That we might do the will of our Maker.

WE CONFESS OUR SINS

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (In Unison)

We acknowledge, O Lord, that many of the institutions we create and the proud achievements of which we boast turn out to be Towers of Babel. Our wisdom produces confusion rather than peace and community. It is difficult to admit our complicity in creating the problems in society about which we complain. Deliver us, Gracious God, from misguided efforts that ignore your will and depend upon the arm of flesh instead of the Grace of God. Amen.

DECLARATION OF PARDON

§AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

"The Apostle's Creed"

p. 14

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

**** *Lung's family*

Leader: Lift up your hearts
People: We lift them up to the Lord.
Leader: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
People: It is right to give our thanks and praise.
Leader: Let us pray.

PASTORAL PRAYER
CHORAL RESPONSE

Dr. Annie Barrios - Deacons
Oct. 4-1996 Washington, DC
Deacons/Virginia Cardinals
Vernon Moore

CHILDREN'S SERMON
RITUAL OF FRIENDSHIP

"What A Friend We Have In Jesus"

GIVING OF TITHES AND OFFERINGS
OFFERTORY MUSIC

#398 *Sweet, Sweet Spirit*

DOXOLOGY

"Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow"

OFFERTORY PRAYER
THREEFOLD AMEN

GOD SPEAKS TO US

SCRIPTURE

Vernon Moore Deuteronomy 1:9-25

MUSICAL SELECTION

SERMON

Rev. George W. Smith

"Go Up, Take Possession"

INVITATIONAL HYMN

#383

BENEDICTION
RESPONSE
ORGAN POSTLUDE

§ Congregation standing
‡ Congregation sitting
**** Worshippers will be seated

TO OUR GUESTS. You are welcome to our worship service and all activities of the church. Please help us to know you by signing the record of attendance sheet as you enter the foyer. You are invited to meet with others in the Fellowship Hall for refreshments. Please come again and invite your friends and neighbors to come with you.

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO RECEIVE CHRIST AS YOUR SAVIOR, we invite you to come to the front of the sanctuary during the Invitational Hymn. Elders Donald Brown and Lola Buie will be at the front of the sanctuary to greet you.

HOSTING THE FELLOWSHIP HOUR WILL BE Mmes. Audrey Burris and Dorothy J. Bryant.

THE USHERS FOR TODAY are N.L. Allen, Ben Brown, Arthur Buie, and Raymond Williams. The Ushers today are also responsible for loading the food for the homeless.

PREPARING FOOD FOR THE HOMELESS TODAY will be **THE DEACONS.** If you are asked to help prepare or purchase food, please do it with a smile! We love your time and talent. Thank you.

CHRIST UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF SAN DIEGO

3025 Fir Street at 30th
San Diego, CA 92102

Phone: 239-2346/2347
Office Hours: 9 AM to 1 PM

MINISTER: Rev. George W. Smith
MINISTER OF MUSIC: Dr. Leon R. Kelley
CHANCEL CHOIR DIRECTOR: Mrs. Dolores E. Stevens
ORGANIST: Ms. Juanita Dentham
YOUTH CHOIR DIRECTOR/PIANIST: Ms. Geraldine C. Pipkins
CHRISTIAN EDUCATION COORDINATOR: Ms. Cathy Ramsey
CHURCH SCHOOL CO-SUPERINTENDENT: Ms. Freddie Jackson
Mr. Robert Matthews
DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS: Mrs. Zee Griffith
BOOKKEEPER: Mrs. Helen Deisher
SECRETARY: Ms. Cathy Ramsey

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