

# Today's Pioneers



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by LEO. C. DAVIS


# TODAY'S PIONEERS

Home Mission Miracles  
In Southwest Indiana

by  
LEO C. DAVIS

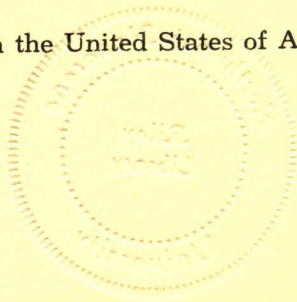
With Introduction by  
Dr. Ralph Earle

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## Introduction

Some months ago I sat in the living room of the district parsonage at Bedford, Indiana. Rev. Leo Davis, superintendent of the Southwest Indiana District, was telling me about the twenty new churches he had organized in the three years since he had taken office. His stories of home mission miracles thrilled me through and through. As he recounted some of the tiny beginnings and limited prospects I marveled at the grace of God. Finally the good superintendent summed up his philosophy of home missions in these words: "All that I want in any community is God and a great need."

Leo Davis is a quiet, unobtrusive individual. His modesty and humility might deceive one as to his qualities of leadership. But his record speaks with louder tones than any boasting lips. Here is one who prevails with God and so prevails with men.

The main thing that God needs now, as always, is men—men of vision, consecrated men, praying men, men of faith and courage. Such a man is Leo Davis.

It is not the intention of this little book to discount what others are doing. Many of our district superintendents are doing an outstanding piece of work, a truly magnificent job of building the church in their areas. We would pay sincere, grateful tribute to every one of them. God bless them and prosper their efforts!

But it was the feeling that the efficient methods and amazing miracles of home missions on this district might inspire and encourage others to continue the battle with renewed zeal which caused us to say: "This ought to be in print."

May God help all of us to "do a little more," not only for foreign missions but also for home missions.

RALPH EARLE

## Foreword

Lieutenant Colonel C. C. Englemann, a consecrated layman of Bloomington, Indiana, now in our armed forces and stationed in the Far East, gave me this interesting story.

After Tokyo was bombed a certain Japanese father and mother, pagan in their faith, searched place after place and hour after hour for milk. The doctor had said that unless it was found and fed to their sick and starving child, it would soon die.

Finally they asked Dr. William Eckel, missionary of the Church of the Nazarene and district superintendent of Japan, for the precious life-giving liquid. "Oh, yes," said he, "I have just received a food package from America and from it I am able to supply you with a can of Pet milk."

This milk bridged over the emergency for the time being and the child's life was saved. Later, in deep gratitude, the parents donated to Dr. Eckel a choice lot in Tokyo for a church. Today a nice church building with a growing congregation of worshipers is located there. Quite an enormous percentage of gain from one can of milk!

I have been asked to relate some of the incidents happening on the Southwest Indiana District in the work of home missions. In fulfilling this request my only thought is that my effort will be helpful. We are not out for show or display. Perhaps someone's faith will be stimulated and further results obtained in the spreading of the gospel, by a perusal of these pages. Much has been written, done, and said about home missions and the establishment of

new churches. My contribution to this work is small indeed, but we send forth this attempt with a prayer.

As the can of Pet milk was used to stimulate, nourish, and strengthen, may this effort do likewise.

LEO C. DAVIS

January, 1953

## CHAPTER ONE

### "I Got the Berries!"

"I got the berries!" These were the words spoken by a successful woman pastor in reading her paper on home missions in a preachers' convention held on the Southwest Indiana District. She was speaking of the necessity of enduring the scratching of briars and the inconveniences of engaging in berrypicking. All this is a necessity if berries are to be secured. In fact, some of the best berries are deepest into the patch and to get them requires the worst pricking of the briars.

By way of explanation, she had taken the home mission enterprise in Nashville, Indiana, when there was not even a membership—just an opportunity. She had gone to work for God, enduring the scoff of "woman preacher" and "no need of another church in this town." She had received many a scratch and dig; but God had blessed her efforts, given her souls, and she was now coming forth with "the berries."

My story goes back to the district assembly held in the month of August, 1949. A tent meeting had recently been conducted in Nashville without definite results. The weather had been dismal and the small attendance droopy. The only thing it left in its wake was a burdened heart and a prayer. "O Lord, send forth a laborer for this field," I implored. Nashville, in scenic Brown County, mecca for tourists and artists at that time of the year when the leaves change and the trees, in a riot of color, go out on dress parade, needed a church where the beauty of holiness could be reflected. The community was quite



populous, with only two churches in the town, and they without an aggressive, soul-saving program.

My prayer was answered at the assembly. Quietly and assuredly the Spirit spoke and also directed my attention to a minister in the audience, Rev. Mrs. Naomi Downs. While Dr. Hardy C. Powers presided, I left the platform and spoke a few words with her. "Would you be willing to go to Nashville?" I inquired. "It is a home missionary opportunity with a great need, but with no membership as yet." She turned to her husband for a moment of counsel and guidance, while I waited in suspense. I was not anxious for long. "Yes, we will go," came back the reply.

Shortly, Brother and Sister Downs moved to Nashville. Brother Downs, a most beloved and consecrated layman, entered into the work with as much zest as did his wife. He obtained work and my problem of "pastoral support" was solved. Mrs. Downs secured the permission of the county commissioners to use the courthouse auditorium for her public services. How we appreciate the considerateness of these men!

The winsome ways of Brother and Sister Downs soon began to tell. A Sunday school was started, a visitation program arranged, revival meetings announced, and much prayer offered. By February, 1950, I received notice from Sister Downs that she was ready for the organization of the church. A date was set and I received into fellowship seventeen members. The lady pastor was coming in "with the berries!" Several had been saved, some inactive church members put back into circulation, and a nucleus of wonderful people formed. We all rejoiced together and forgot, for the moment, the scratches from the briars.

Our chapter on the Nashville work would hardly be complete without mentioning some choice berries deep in the patch. The Worshipful Master (highest officer on the local level) of the Masonic Lodge came to the services



held under Mrs. Downs's direction. After kneeling at the altar and finding reality in Christ, he inquired about membership in our church. The *Manual* was given him and our position relative to lodges explained. The man walked in the light of his new experience, left his lodge behind, and united with the church. A second Worshipful Master was elected—only to have the same process repeated: a mourners' bench, a *Manual*, and a member of the Church of the Nazarene. A third Worshipful Master was elected to the office by his fellow Masons. I suppose everyone thought the process would stop now, but behold!—page Mr. Ripley!—this third one found Christ and joined in fellowship with the lowly Nazarene, the only Potentate and Worshipful Master worthy of the name.

On August 31, 1952, Dr. Ralph Earle, of the Nazarene Theological Seminary, brought the message of dedication for the new church building in Nashville. Sister Downs and her group had continued to enlarge the church in numbers and in influence. God had marvelously worked through it all and she was able on this date to present to the district superintendent, and he to Dr. Earle for dedication, a fine building free from debt except for two thousand dollars, which was financed with ease.

May God bless Sister and Brother Downs and their fine laymen and may they continue until that eternal morn to endure the scorn, bear their cross, and "get the berries!"

## CHAPTER TWO

### Don't Tell the "Generals"!

In the minutes of the Journal of Southwest Indiana District (1951-52) is listed the Bedford Eastside Church of the Nazarene, Rev. and Mrs. Wm. J. Kerney, pastors, with 60 members, a weekly Sunday-school average attendance of 101, \$1,016.00 raised for general church interests, and a grand total of \$10,448.00 raised for all purposes. The church has a fine modern parsonage and a wonderful Bedford limestone church basement unit.

Some three years ago this work became an organized church. We can hardly say "organized" since there were only five members, including the pastor and his wife. We just appointed everybody to everything! Wasn't this a rather foolish decision for a district superintendent to make? Please do not report him to any of the "Generals"! Those five members, however, little realized the influences they were setting in motion on that day. With plenty of giants to threaten their extinction, they undertook to plant something for God.

Our Bedford First Church, located in the western part of the city, had contributed some three hundred dollars to the new work in its very beginning days. This was of untold aid right at a time when it was needed most.

At the close of the original meeting in the hall the appointed pastor, with his wife and three children, unloaded his household goods from the truck, placed them in the upstairs apartment over the hall (for which the never-to-be-defeated members were paying sixty dollars per

month rent), secured a job as an auto mechanic to make his living, and began the work of blasting out a kingdom. He and his wife proved to be the right pastors in the right place, sacrificial and useful, and not one bit afraid of work. Brother Kerney's knowledge of building construction and his willingness to labor with his hands to lead out in the actual building of the church and parsonage have been of untold value. Little by little God added to their numbers and to their successes. The work has been characterized by unevangelized persons in the rough of sin finding God at the altar, some of whom have united with the church. Often the services are broken up by visitations of the Holy Spirit, the regular order laid aside, while someone is found at the altar seeking and finding the Lord.

One reason we write of this church is because it is an illustration of one of our basic thoughts in doing home mission work, namely, if we expect to reap, we must first plant. As in nature, so in things spiritual—one plants, another waters, but God gives the increase. If we wait until we have a great revival with much fruit and then organize, we will miss the opportunity in many instances. Let us not try to reverse the order. We are fanatics if we expect the end without the means, said Mr. Wesley. We must first plant! To start the new Bedford work with so small a beginning seemed a rash act. Those first meetings in the hall, however, were so characterized by the Shekinah that it amounted to the Voice saying: “. . . speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward” (Exod. 14:15). We are not to despise the day of small things.

We usually get what we go after. We possess what our faith claims. We once ascended to the top of a twenty-story building, placed our dime in the telescope, and beheld many sights that were not discernible from the streets at the base of the building. We beheld ships at



sea in that beautiful coastal area and many beauty spots that we did not know were in existence.

In our beginnings at Bedford Eastside we could not see the new converts, the increasing attendances, or the fact that the limestone companies of the Bedford limestone area would donate to us all the stone for our church basement unit. The church is now exercising new faith and believing that the time will soon come when it can arise and complete that which is begun and the entire church building structure be finished.

“By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went” (Heb. 11:8).

## CHAPTER THREE

### Those Money-grabbing Preachers

In August of 1951, a tent meeting was conducted in Sullivan, Indiana, by Evangelist Don Scarlett. This city is a county seat town of some six thousand population. A few persons signified their interest in the organization of the work, and at the close of the meeting seven were received into membership and the Church of the Nazarene declared in existence.

I was again confronted with that all-important and stubborn question of leadership. "O Lord, where is there a pastor for Sullivan?" I prayed. At the very same time there was an elder of the Church of the Nazarene, living in Hammond, Indiana, who lay tossing upon his bed in prayer and in confusion. In substance his prayer ran thus: "O God, I do not want that commercial job being offered me tomorrow. I do not want to sign that contract. Lord, Thou hast called me to do Thy work, and wilt Thou not open the door of service?" Rev. James Humble, for that was his name, had been in God's work for years, but he had been obliged to accept secular work in a store for some two years. He was anxious to get relocated in the work of the church. On the morrow he was to sign a contract with a mercantile company, with a handsome salary of \$200.00 per week.

On the morning after this sleepless night his phone rang. The writer was on the other end of the line. I had met Brother Humble only once, but I could not quiet the Spirit's impression to call him. I stated to him my Sullivan proposition, offering him a rag tent that could be left



standing for a few days longer, seven members who hardly knew whether to proceed or to back out from the venture, \$25.00 a week salary, and an opportunity. The salary was small indeed for a man with a family. "What do you think, Brother Humble? Are you interested?" Without a moment's hesitation he answered, "Sounds like the Lord to me." Once again God had shown me His outward providence to match my inward leading, and I rejoiced.

It was only a short time until Brother Humble was on the job. God marvelously opened up to the district advisory board and to the infant church a suitable residence to be used both as an auditorium and as pastor's quarters, with an adjoining lot for a church building. Recently the auditorium has been enlarged.

The blessing of the Spirit is prevalent in the services and the work has gradually grown. We hope to be able to go forward with the building program soon. Recently when we preached in this church, there was an altar service with one man seeking the Lord and pronounced conviction upon others.

We are located in the eastern part of the town with a population of some twelve to fifteen hundred. There is no other church in this area except a small mission. A great God and a great need governed us in our decision relative to Sullivan, and God had His servant prepared for the place. He has supplied Brother Humble's need, and he has succeeded, with much happiness and blessing upon his own soul.

How often have we heard the remark that all the preachers are after is money! Perhaps the dollar mark does rule some preachers, but mark it well, not all have bowed the knee to mammon! We praise God for a mighty host of consecrated men who are out to do only the will of God, money or no money.

As I write I am wondering if there is not some unhappy minister somewhere who may chance to read these lines; someone who has yielded to pressure and gone back into secular work. If so, will you not spend a day or night in fasting and prayer, if need be, and once again offer yourself to God and the church for His service? "It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks." I would rather have Jesus than anything. I would rather have the conscious knowledge that I am exactly in His will than to have honor, money, pleasure, or anything that men and devils can produce. Wouldn't you? There is nothing like it.

*He who obeys, trusts, and clings  
Often hears the rush of angel wings.*

## CHAPTER FOUR

# Do Something

Driving around the public square of the beautiful little city of Paoli, Indiana, one might spy the noisy Town Tavern on the south side of the square. As I drove by it one evening the room was filled with tobacco smoke, a crowd of loafers, and general "good time" gaiety. A woman dressed in man's attire, cigarette in lips, and with her hair cut short, could be seen at the pool table.

At the same time a contrast might be both seen and heard. There was an upstairs hall over the Town Tavern. Out from its windows would oftentimes come the sweet refrains of "Amazing grace, how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me!" or "O happy day that fixed my choice on Thee, my Saviour and my God!" At the stairway entrance could be read an overhead sign: "Church of the Nazarene—Welcome."

At first thought one might say, "Well, that is no place for a church," but it did prove to be a good place, at least a good starting place. Its close proximity to a place of sin symbolized the purpose of the Saviour, who did "not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." It also symbolized the spirit of the soul-winning and well-respected pastor of the church, Rev. Carlton Golliher, who by his preaching, prayers, zeal, and personal work has won many a diamond out of the rough in and around Paoli, making friends for the Church of the Nazarene throughout the community.

It all started some months previous when this licensed minister from the Northeastern Indiana District (Dr.



Paul Updike, district superintendent), called me for an appointment. We met in Paoli on a warm summer day and sat down on the grass in the tree plot just across from the post office building for a conference. "Brother Davis, this city is on my heart; I am burdened for it. Could I come on your district and start services here?" he asked, with tear-moistened cheek. Without hesitation I appointed him the evangelist and also the pastor of the new Paoli, Indiana, Church of the Nazarene, which was being formed that very day in the compassionate heart of this burdened preacher.

Rev. Carlton Golliher and Mrs. Golliher, who has also taken a major share of the load in the development of the work, arrived in the city of their burden as permanent residents in a short time. They conducted revival services and in a few weeks forged together thirteen persons. I had the privilege of organizing them into the new church on July 24, 1949. He led his church from that organizational meeting to a location in a civic building, and then into the hall spoken of above the Town Tavern. After the course of a few months the first unit of their church building was erected and a parsonage purchased in a beautiful site in the eastern part of the city at the junction of two state highways—our permanent church home!

Many have been the trophies won for Christ in this church. The audience has had a fine growth. Records show as of last assembly (1952) forty-eight members, a weekly average in Sunday-school attendance of seventy-one, and property valued at \$17,200.00 with a debt of only \$4,426.00. If we can have the same proportionate growth in the next few years that we have had since organization, we shall, ere many years, have a strong church in Paoli.

In II Kings 7:3 we find this question asked by a quartet of lepers: "Why sit we here until we die?" A good subject for this text could be: Do something! Why grumble,

nurse grievances toward the district superintendent and others, because we have no place? Let's go forth and start something. Stagnation is next door to damnation. I believe there are too many of us who would work if only we had a big place, or if we could get into a high bracket. We should forget it all and let the reign of ambition cease. We should get an eye single to God's glory and let Him take care of the promotional end. He will advance us if He sees we are qualified for it and can stand it. But, if not, isn't the very lowest place of service too good for us? We once heard Rev. N. B. Herrell speak of the evils of the "bracket racket." What a curse!

I commend Rev. Carlton Golliher's example of going forth weeping and of hewing himself out a kingdom, that has now grown in influence until it bids well to become a place desirable for any ordinary-talented minister who lives the devoted life. There are hundreds of needy places in our land. The Master took water, basin, and towel and washed the feet of weary ones. Today the world is filled with His glory and He is exalted at the right hand of God's throne. There will ever be the place for those who serve—a place in the hearts of the people and a place in the heart of God.



## CHAPTER FIVE

# The Bunkhouse

It was in July or August, 1951, when I first heard this most auspicious appellation: "the bunkhouse." I wondered where it was and what it might be like. We had been searching the city of Charlestown, Indiana, for a place of worship. Another infant church was about to be formed. The tent must soon come down. What next? The "What next?" of the mission's future depended upon the "Where next?" of a location. Charlestown is a highly industrialized area. Prices were soaring and rentals were all but prohibitive except to the resolute and the valiant in faith. The rational thing seemed to be to pull stakes and give up the whole venture and quit trying to find a place of rest for the "ark of God."

After our searching in vain for a couple more days, someone ventured to say we might, perhaps, secure the old bunkhouse. As we drove by to take a look at it, my heart sank. It was along an old switch track; it was constructed of corrugated iron, extremely hot under the rays of an August sun; the premises were grown up in tall weeds; and its location was wholly undesirable, with only a very few houses near it in any direction. In former days it had been used for sleeping quarters for section hands; hence its name. It had an inside partition built of paper from pasteboard boxes, which divided it into two rooms. Yes, we could rent one room for \$40.00 a month. What a location and what a cradle in which to rock a baby church! Could I afford to associate the name "Church of the Nazarene" with such a location? What would the

townspeople say? I rested in the fact that we had done our best and I would leave the decision up to the crowd who were in night-by-night attendance at the revival meeting.

I had preached to them at one of the services from Num. 13:30: "... Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it." I confess that I fought giants all the way through the message. I tried hard to believe like Caleb, who uttered the words of my text. After announcing that it seemed it was the bunkhouse or nothing, I inquired, "How many will be willing to follow the lowly Nazarene into these quarters?"

To my delight the audience of some thirty or thirty-five pledged me they were ready to follow. Only six had signed on the dotted line as charter members, but all present expressed willingness to go forward, whether into the high or the lowly place. We called for volunteers and a few of the women and some of the men turned out and gave their new quarters a face-lifting job and the group moved in with a shout of triumph.

Since that date, only one and one-half years ago, God has performed the miraculous. We now have one of the most promising young churches in Charlestown that one could hope for. The original meeting was conducted by Evangelist Mark Hamilton with Wayne and June Haas as the singers, assisted by nearby pastors in Jeffersonville, New Albany, and Clarksville. For the first few months the church was pastored by Miss Carol Callahan, assisted by her colaborer, Miss Bernice Purdue. The present pastor is Rev. Cordell Hudson, who is proving to be a wonderful leader. Many promising advancements have been made.

The old bunkhouse has long since been left behind and we now worship in a commodious hall that is well located. Two fine building lots have been purchased at a cost of

\$1,500.00 and they are paid for. The original six members have been multiplied four or five times. The pastor is having fine success with altar services right along. The weekly Sunday-school average attendance is now around seventy-five. To God be all the praise!

The Charlestown work is just another monument to God's faithfulness. If we will but start, in faith, God covenants to lead us on and out. The waters will not part until we put our feet into the water. We read in II Kings 4:1-7 of the prophet's widow whose sons were about to be taken for bondmen. The harassed mother took her problem to Elisha and to God. She had naught but a pot of oil in the house; but at the prophet's command she borrowed vessels, not a few, and began to pour out of her scant supply. The vessels kept filling just as long as she kept pouring. Note Elisha's significant words: "Go, sell the oil, and pay thy debt, and live thou and thy children of the rest."

Christian worker, it is ours to put our oil out on the marts of trade, and pay our debt to God and to man. It is only as we do so that we can live. To withhold is but to diminish our stock and to dry up! Not only do we live by pouring out our lives, but we build bridges for a rising generation likewise. "... live thou and thy children of the rest." If the oil has dried up, it is not because the supply has been diminished, but it is just because we have quit drilling and quit pouring. God forbid that our rationalizing and our unbelief should thwart and cancel out the miracle-working power of our wondrous Lord.



## CHAPTER SIX

# Amazing Co-operation

This chapter demands a most thoughtful reading. It contains a principle that is thoroughly New Testament and apostolic. Its adoption or rejection might easily spell the success or the failure in our present quadrennial goal for new churches in our beloved Zion. I dare you to read and reflect! I warn you now, it will hurt. Are you big enough? Remember, we may be small but we cannot afford to be little.

On August 21, 1949, I was privileged to organize Terre Haute Southside Church of the Nazarene. As I remember, there were twenty-two charter members in the new church. Rev. D. F. Steininger held the original meeting and served as the first pastor of the church. The church has gone forward since the organization and there is not a single reason why it cannot become a strong church in that city of some 80,000 population.

The existence of this church is wholly due to what I term "amazing co-operation" on the part of the church board, membership, and pastor, Rev. Ralph Ahlemann, of the Terre Haute First Church. As a district superintendent, I merely went by and helped with the shouting on the day of the organization. The First Church congregation, with its present pastor, Rev. Clyde Montgomery, is at present thinking in terms of a third church in the city, with the co-operation of the Southside Church of the Nazarene.

When Rev. Ralph Ahlemann presented the matter of the second church to his congregation, they subscribed

around \$600.00 for the campaign. The members were asked to seriously consider the new venture and, if God led in that direction, to unite with the same on organization day! (Now, don't you think I am choosing the right word for the caption of this chapter when I use the word "amazing"?) As a result of such "amazement" a number of fine members, including some of the board members and Sunday-school teachers of Terre Haute First, united with Southside. As I gave them the right hand of fellowship, the pastor, Brother Ahlemann, was on hand to follow me in the act and to rejoice with me in the fact that a new soul-saving concern was being set up.

How easy it would have been for all this to have been defeated! A spirit of murmuring could have sprung up in First Church and God's will been canceled out. But the pastor and people were too big!

Of course I am not frowning on large centers, large memberships, or great churches. Thank God for all of them, together with their pastors. Without such support our various home mission enterprises, nothing could be accomplished. On Southwest Indiana District the larger churches are quick to respond to our home mission program and to definitely assist us in our efforts. Our large centers must have qualified and capable leadership, and not every pastor can serve a home mission church.

My plea is that all might be possessed with a compassion that will not permit us to be smug and complacent. One of the greatest honors that comes to a pastor is to be able to report to his district assembly that some of his members have been given to a new church. I believe we should teach ourselves a new slant on our tithing program. How about considering that one member out of ten received into the established church should be tithed to the new church? Then, too, we believe in offerings besides the tithe. We must also remember that it is marked

impiety to pick out a blind, a crippled, or a sick sheep and tithe him. Worse still, it is no sign of the second blessing, properly so called, to shove off an "old goat" on the new church and then settle down into self-approval and dare to believe we have done our part. (Are we still reading?)

God will certainly bless bigness at this point. In the case of Terre Haute First Church, this loss of some twenty members and a bit of recession in finances were soon overcome. As I remember it, Rev. Ralph Ahlemann sent me the good word before many months that the blessed Holy Ghost had visited his church 'once again and that many new persons had entered its ranks and portals. Just like the Lord!

It is well to keep our flocks in their respective sheep-folds; but when God directs, it is also well, and very well, to encourage some of them to transfer their memberships into other pastures, that new works might be formed.

We once knew of a Nazarene who secured his transfer from his pastor and was ready to join a new church. He felt it was God's will. As he sat in his pew for the last service a special song was sung by the incumbent pastor and his wife. Some of the words of the song ran, "Here the dearest of ties we must sever, tears of sorrow are seen every day . . ." The pastor began weeping and could not finish his part of the song. It was too much for Brother Prospective Member. He crumpled up his church letter and remained in his church. (Some of us are very resourceful in devising ways and means to keep a member.) All this was an example of too much honey! In Old Testament times it was forbidden to offer honey with the sacrifices. I could not write of the sufferings that have followed in the wake of the man's failure to obey God and join the new church and in the wake of those who could not bear to "give him up." To whom do the members of a given congregation belong? Are they not the Lord's



people? Why should we consider that we have been given a clear abstract of title and deed to any of them?

What a glorious privilege to be a bit of seed corn and to be willing to be planted in a new home mission church to suffer and to bleed with it! All we need in many places is just a small nucleus of clean, Spirit-filled Nazarenes and we could start a new church. But who has enough sanctification for this? I am afraid too many of us get our minds on big numbers, big churches, big memberships, big reputations (Christ made himself of no reputation), big assembly reports, big! Big! Big! . . . ! "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit" (John 12:24).

'Tis a rugged way, I know, but, O my brother, it's the way to resurrection power and to Pentecostal glory. I would a million times rather go that way than to dry up and to live in the glow of a day that is done! Shall third generation Nazarenes be obliged to go into the cemeteries and read epitaphs on the tombstones of their forebears to be reminded of deeds of valor, heroism, and sacrifice?

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### From Death to Life

A few months ago we visited our new church in Freetown. A victorious service was in progress with a fine attendance at this week-night service. Miss Bernice Roedel was the evangelist and Paul Newby and wife, together with Miss Susie Hegwood, the singers. There were a number of seekers during the course of the meetings. The pastors, Rev. R. B. Knudson and wife, looked as though they were about to be translated for sheer joy. The laymen of the church were abounding and abiding. Life was apparent everywhere. Yes, the home mission project was succeeding. Favorable influences were being crystallized, new members were looking our way, and, best of all, the heavens were open and the fire was falling. Testimonies were spontaneous and money was coming in to pay the bills. My visit was like seeing a young Lazarus in action after he had crawled out of his grave and had had his bandages of bondage removed. Freedom had come to Freetown!

The place of worship was a reconditioned undertaker's establishment. Its location is on a choice corner, and the building could be classified as about halfway between a hall and a church building. When I first walked into these premises a pallor of death was everywhere apparent. The funeral director had removed his business to another locality. The place was unoccupied and gloomy. I beheld an old casket that had been left behind. Lying about was equipment that had been used in embalming the dead and other death-dust and death-dew paraphernalia.

The building was an excellent buy, however, so we made the purchase and moved in, in the name of the Prince of Life! What a contrast before and after the occupancy. That victorious crowd of shouting, happy Nazarenes had taken over!

We would not forget the Kurtz Church of the Nazarene and the part it played in the formation of this new church. Kurtz is located five miles from Freetown. This church had sponsored the campaign, given freely of its money and also a portion of its membership. The pastor, Rev. E. E. Hopper, had spearheaded the entire project and had served as the evangelist in the opening revival campaign leading to the organization of Freetown. Kurtz advanced the down payment on the building. Mrs. Hopper, a licensed minister, had even served as the pastor of the new work for a short period until permanent pastoral arrangements were made. Now, since they had borne the burden, "sowing beside all waters," they were coming in with their sheaves. God had in the meantime prospered their own work with an excellent enlargement in property. A new modern, eight-room parsonage, constructed of beautiful Indiana limestone, had been erected, into which the Hoppers had moved.

Once again the Freetown work with its victories and triumphs illustrates what can come to pass when a nearby pastor decides to do something about the community near him, and in an unselfish way moves in with the spirit of death-removing, life-giving redemption.



## CHAPTER EIGHT

### That Next Town

Jesus said: "... Let us go into the next towns" (Mark 1:38). If we follow Jesus' example and obey His precepts, we will be amazed at what we find in these "next towns." Before entering, there may not be an encouraging circumstance or person in sight; but if we will move out, and in, we shall discover. It was so in Christ's day.

The quartet of lepers spoken of in II Kings 7:1-10 were diseased and starving. They had nothing upon which they could depend for succor but a proper use of their reasoning faculty. It is striking, however, how much that can do for us if we are not too lazy to use it. They concluded it was better to act than to die of inaction. "Why sit we here until we die?" they mused. "If we but do something, perhaps our efforts will be rewarded," they declared. And what a discovery their activated faith brought! They found the camp of the besieging army deserted and behind them had been left enormous stores of provision, far more than they needed for themselves and even more than the starving inhabitants of Samaria could use.

In June, 1950, I met some ten or twelve persons in Winslow, Indiana, for a business meeting. An opening revival meeting, held by Evangelist Loy Snow and sponsored by the nearby Oakland City Church of the Nazarene (Rev. James Robbins, pastor), was fast drawing to a close. I was seeking to forge my nucleus of charter members for a new church. There was nothing definite

in sight save God and a great need. Satan was out in full battle array. I held my breath while I inquired of the small group just what amount their tithe would be per week for the new venture, should they become charter members. Half or more of the group were women and not wage earners. To my utter surprise the first man who answered my question said his amount would be \$15.00. "I do not mean per month," I explained, "but per week." "Yes, it would be \$15.00 per week," he assured me. In all \$47.00 per week was subscribed during that business meeting and the consent of most of those of the group obtained for "seed corn" for the Winslow church.

I found the right pastor in the person of Rev. Loren Schaffer, who was at that time pastoring nearby. He was a successful young man, a graduate of Oakland City College, and Mrs. Schaffer had been a Winslow girl before her marriage. Well thought of in the "old home town," they seemed to be the right leadership. Results have certainly proved this conclusion to be true.

A residence was purchased and a temporary auditorium fashioned out of a couple of the rooms, and operations started. If my readers could see their new church building today, ready for dedication, the many converts and new Nazarenes, the growing Sunday school and general developments, they could readily exclaim, "What hath God wrought!"

When it came up to the time of starting the new church building, Mr. Ivan Henning, one of the new members whom Brother Schaffer had received, was found to be a most capable superintendent of construction. He serves as the Sunday-school superintendent at present and has proved to be very helpful in every way. When entering Winslow with our dreams of establishing another holiness church, we did not know we would find such strength awaiting us in the way of this fine group with a pastor and

personnel that are capable of gracing any city or any district.

Another interesting event in Winslow was the procuring of the loan for the building. The local banker from whom the congregation expected to receive the loan broke the news of the bank's refusal. Many fine members had been added to the church rolls, the Sunday school increased to above a hundred in attendance each week, and the building constructed and offered as security for the loan was of far greater value than the needed \$9,000.00. It was an excellent business proposition; the congregation was disappointed and hardly knew what course to pursue.

In the midst of their disappointment a local merchant, Mr. Snider, contacted the pastor. He declared he would make the needed loan. An attorney was secured and the business deal brought to a successful climax. Once again we say, when we entered Winslow, that "next town," we did not know that a wonderful friend of the church would be found in the person of Mr. Snider and his two other business associates, who would come to the assistance of the young church at a time of real need. Mr. Snider attends the services of his synagogue in nearby Evansville, and we pray God will bless him for his kindness to the Church of the Nazarene. We could not make it without our many friends outside our membership.

I do not think the Winslow church has cost the district one dollar of expense. God has supplied every need from local sources. Everything has worked out for God's glory and the constituency is filled with optimism and victory. In our beginning days, however, had we given place to rationalizing and to "figuring it out on paper," we never would have tasted of the sweets of the honey in the dead carcass of the lion. Too many times, I feel, we let the scarecrows keep us out of many a community for the lack of material evidences that would seemingly



guarantee us success in the undertaking. If we could, in faith, launch out into the deep and let down the net, we would find ample provision to care for every need.

Let us enter that "next town."

"Why sit we here until we die?"

## CHAPTER NINE

### Further Sketches

We rejoice in the splendid advance in home mission work throughout our denomination. We are far from feeling we understand how to do such work. I explained to Dr. G. B. Williamson on one occasion that, since I had very little of the know-how of home mission work, I would be obligated to go ahead and do it and learn how afterward. I have made mistakes and am trying to profit by them. All fields are a bit different, with a different background. The method that will work in one place may not work in another. However, we do feel grateful to God for the way He has given aid to Southwest Indiana District. There have been twenty-seven new churches organized in the first quadrennium of our district's history and one other as a starter on the second quadrennium. I now write of the others which are not mentioned in the previous chapters of this book. We thank God for the fine group of pastors God has given us to lead on in these churches.

Petersburg, organized in the autumn of 1948, has a good congregation, a new church building, and a parsonage with a small indebtedness. The first pastor was Rev. C. A. Patton and the present one is Rev. Harold Small. Before we entered this city we received notice from a few church folks to "please keep off our grass." They thought there were enough churches already and that we would only proselyte if we entered their territory. During our second revival there, however, two men were saved who had not been in anyone's church for fourteen years (except to a funeral), and one boy was enrolled in Sunday

school who had never attended a session of any Sunday school in his life,

Gosport, pastored by Rev. Clyde Sciscoe, has a lovely new building worth \$20,000.00, with a debt of around \$5,000.00. This church was organized with fourteen adult members, seven men and seven women, without a revival meeting. It was organized in a residence on a Sunday afternoon at the second weekly meeting the group had conducted. The organization was perfected amid shouts and Holy Ghost demonstration after a message on my old stand-by text: "Let us go up at once, and possess it." Two nearby churches, Spencer and Stinesville, sponsored the Gosport church in a large measure, contributing members and money.

Cory Church of the Nazarene, located in a village near Terre Haute, Indiana, is in a rural section twenty-five miles long and ten miles wide and without any other holiness church within its territory. It has a staunch membership of spiritual people. The first pastor was Rev. M. L. Hoard, who was greatly used of God in the beginning days of the church's history. The present pastor is Rev. Frank Canada, who has gone ahead with the building program and who is doing a very fine piece of work. The new building will be ready for dedication before long, another beautiful Indiana limestone job.

Cloverdale has been organized and is pastored by Rev. Burton Cummings. The members have not as yet started their building program but they are anxious to get out of their hall into permanent quarters.

Shelburn, pastored since organization by Rev. Earl Poorman, has made progress against great odds. The congregation is still in a hall but is planning to erect a building as soon as possible. Lots have been purchased.

Carlisle, pastored by Rev. J. P. Mahan, is forging ahead with a fine group of laymen. A parsonage has been



purchased and remodeled into a combination chapel and parsonage.

Owensville, pastored by Rev. Mrs. Walter Bailey, is sending me encouraging reports of progress made. Property has been purchased in a fine location with temporary parsonage quarters.

The two new churches in Evansville, Trinity and Bethel, are forging ahead. Trinity has just completed a very good brick church building. The two pastors are Rev. James Blume and Rev. Oscar Pullum.

At Dale, with Rev. Vernon Sowder, pastor, we are making good progress with a new church building to be dedicated in the near future.

At Clarksville and at East New Albany, both in the tri-city area (Louisville, Kentucky; New Albany and Jeffersonville, Indiana), much progress has been made since organization, with Pastors Rev. Hubert King and Rev. Floyd Farnsley respectively. Growing congregations, new converts, and spiritual services are the order of the day.

Scottsburg, a county seat town some thirty miles north of Louisville, Kentucky, had a developing group pastored by Rev. Lee Bennett. We bought our building from the Baptist church, which has erected a new and larger building. The Baptists were kind enough to act as their own loan company and not to demand too large a down payment.

Orleans has been organized and a new parsonage built, a monument to the sacrificial labors of Rev. C. A. Wheeler, former pastor. The present pastor, Rev. Jesse Raymer, is well received and the future looks bright.

Campbellsburg, pastored by Rev. Dennis Mangrum, has acquired a nice chapel and parsonage. The work is characterized by numbers of church people outside our own ranks who attend the revival services from time to time.

Columbus Calvary, with Rev. C. G. Bohannon as its first and building pastor, has a good church property located in the center of an area of the city with some three thousand population and without a single church, except the Mormons. The present pastor is Rev. Paul Miller, district secretary, and he is looking forward to enlargement and to greater spiritual victories.

Valley Mission is a strong rural church received from an interdenominational group. It is pastored by Rev. I. D. Horine. It has a stalwart band of Christians with unusual manifestations of the Holy Spirit in their services.

In Tell City, with a population of some six thousand, Rev. James Steele is our pastor. In this Roman Catholic dominated city our struggles have been many. We have succeeded in acquiring both chapel and parsonage with small indebtedness, due largely to the sacrifices of the former pastor, Rev. E. A. Wells.

Chandler church, located near Evansville, is getting a good start under the pastorate of Rev. Victor Cokley. A fine corner building lot has been purchased and paid for, and God's Spirit is working.

Rego church, located in a sparsely settled rural community, has been transferred to another holiness denomination known as the Missionary Bands of the World. We were unable to maintain pastoral supply, so we thought best to recommend to the Board of General Superintendents its disbanding and to deed the property to the other denomination. The church is carrying on and supplying the gospel needs of the community. Although lost to us, it is not lost in the greater and larger sense.

Out of thirty-two home mission campaigns conducted, twenty-eight organizations have resulted. All are functioning today, with pastors and Sunday schools, and all but two or three are progressing in an encouraging way.

All churches of the Southwest Indiana District exist in actuality. None exist on paper and merely in the district assembly journal. At the time of organization the twenty-eight new churches had 350 members. By July, 1952, they had an even 800. They had a weekly average Sunday-school attendance as of that date of 1,394, with an enrollment of 2,095. They gave for all purposes that year \$116,304.00.

To God above, who has raised up an "amazing co-operation" among both pastors and laymen, to a loyal advisory board, to a wide-awake district board of home missions, and to Dr. Smee, the general secretary of the Department of Home Missions and Evangelism, who has given us financial aid, we give the praise for the achievements of the past four years on the Southwest Indiana District. Not all our new churches are in large enough centers to warrant hope of great enlargement, but all can be self-sustaining and keep the gospel light glowing in their respective communities. Many of them, however, are in sufficiently large centers to minister to thousands of people and to grow into good, strong churches.



## CHAPTER TEN

### Distinguishing Characteristics

It was my privilege to serve as the pastor of the Winchester, Indiana, Church of the Nazarene for nearly a five-year period beginning in September, 1926. During this pastorate the old building was torn down and a commodious and beautiful brick church building was erected.

The former governor of the state of Indiana, Mr. James P. Goodrich, resided in the city and in the course of our pastorate attended the services of the church on a few occasions. I remember at one Sunday morning service I had preached on the *Manual*. In greeting him at the door at dismissal time, I remarked, "Mr. Goodrich, you came at a time when I felt I should preach to my Nazarenes." To this he replied, "What is good for the Nazarenes is also good for the Presbyterians." Our church always appreciated his cordial friendship.

During the building program I solicited and received from him a generous subscription to the building fund. After I was seated in his great library and had had a few words of conversation, he asked me a question that has stuck with me until this hour. I pass it along to you. "Rev. Davis, building a fine, new church building will not rob you Nazarenes of your distinguishing characteristics, will it?" What a thought-provoking question, coming from a man of such standing in state and in church! I replied that I did not think there was particular danger inasmuch as we were building because we had outgrown our old quarters and not for the sake of show or pride,

and he seemed to rest content. But, even at that, I confess that I am a bit troubled.

The services of the Winchester church were characterized with unusual manifestations of the Holy Spirit, scarcely a service going by without someone giving praise to God in some way or fashion. (I heartily believe in all such at this present minute!) Joy abounded in the congregation when the Governor was present as well as when he was absent. The Nazarenes didn't attempt to "put the cork in" just because this outstanding citizen might happen to be present. Coupled with all this, the Governor had observed the lives of the members in their social and business relationships and he was impressed. The "glory in the midst," producing stability of character, separateness of life from the world, and marked unity and love among the people, had caused the expression "distinguishing characteristics" to be coined.

We thank God for the Winchester Church of the Nazarene as it was in those days when I was privileged to serve as its pastor, and as it has continued to be down across the years—a wonderful people, indeed.

I have just returned from the 1952 Conference of Superintendents held in Kansas City. All five of our general superintendents were present and presiding. College presidents, heads of general church departments, members of the General Board, missionaries, the entire number of district superintendents, and a host of pastors evangelists, and laymen were in attendance.

The messages of our beloved general superintendents, their brotherly spirit and capable leadership were outstanding. All the speakers on the program were at their peak it seemed. When Rev. J. W. Short, most beloved and long-time district superintendent, spoke on the "glory in the midst" and urged us to "keep the glory down" (using our sainted founder's expression), the Divine

Presence was pronounced, amid rejoicing and triumphant "Amen." It seemed that "everybody was urging everyone" to pursue the course marked out for us by our forebears. Faced with grave tasks and responsibilities, and fully aware of the dangers confronting us, all were persuaded to believe that the God of the yesterdays will also be the God of our todays and our tomorrows.

The Southwest Indiana District is all out to do her part in the advancement of the cause of scriptural holiness. We desire to share the burden with our beloved leaders, holding up their hands. We refuse to fall in line with a world-conforming spirit and with a complacent doing-nothing attitude. A feeling of "having arrived," both in one's quest for greater spiritual depths and in one's efforts to achieve, is the church's most deadly peril. How easy to limit the Holy One of Israel and conclude that He is not able in this particular age! We refuse this opiate of the devil. We do not propose to lose the distinguishing characteristics of New Testament, apostolic Christianity. Our advancements, our greater buildings, and the general enlargement of our work are to be used as steppingstones to further endeavor. Rather than permitting them to deter us from our purpose, we shall use them as instruments to reach out farther into earth's whitened harvest fields. We need not succumb to the deadening influences of unbelief about us.

We desire to add this "Parable of the Hot Dog Man." Although it may sound a bit juvenile, it points out the condition of our times in an interesting fashion.

Once there was a man who lived by the side of the road and sold hot dogs. He was hard of hearing, so he had no radio; he had trouble with his eyes, so he read no newspapers. But he sold hot dogs. He was a firm believer in advertising. He put signs along the highways advertising the merits of his product. He would stand



by the side of the road and cry, "Buy a hot dog, mister!" And the people bought. He increased his meat and bun order. He bought a bigger stove to take care of his growing trade. Finally, business became so good that he brought his son home from the city to help him. Then something began to happen.

The son said, "Father, haven't you been listening to the radio? Haven't you been reading the newspapers? The European situation is terrible, the domestic situation is worse, and besides, the government will take over a good percentage of your profits. You can no longer make your business go forward by old methods."

Whereupon the father thought, Well, my son has been to college and lived in the city with big businessmen. He ought to know. I guess I'd better cut down on my meat and bun order and no longer bother about standing in the ways and crying out my wares. His sales began to fall off overnight and he said to the boy, "Yes, Son, you were certainly right. We are in the midst of a great depression!"

The application of the parable is obvious, as well as sad. Once the major segment of the great churches of our land stood true to the old gospel. Revivals were prayed down from heaven and our country was sowed down with gospel light. Church members were aglow with evangelism and went out to tell the story of redeeming love. They had the best product in the land and they were not ashamed. Business prospered and great congregations were developed.

Then something began to happen. Modernism and other deadly opiates crept in. Human wisdom began to gain the ascendancy. College and university degrees became of greater value to preachers than the unction and power of the Holy Ghost. "Ours is a new age," they began to proclaim, "and we must keep abreast of scientific enlightenment; the old methods are outmoded."

Business, however, began to decline. Churches began to close down their services and to diminish in number. The old passion and glory were gone. Federation became the only way left to cover over losses. At present a heart-sickening depression is still on; spiritual fires are turned down or completely out. Men are saying there is no longer any use to be concerned because the days of revivals are over!

And shall we not all offer this prayer? "O Lord, the reefs of unbelief are everywhere and many are the shipwrecked, who reach out desperate hands from darkened waters beneath. Give us compassionate hearts and burning love. Unite us to make any necessary sacrifices to throw out the lifeline and to let down the lifeboats and rescue the perishing. Help us to steer our course aright. May we keep in the deep channel, lest we encounter sand bar and rocky shoal. May our ship be stout and with a hardy crew. Save us from accumulating contraband or useless cargo. Give us a faith that will not shrink. Let us not turn back from a stormy sea because so many others have put into an easy and a nearby harbor. Finally, O Divine Pilot, may we reach the eternal harbor with banners unfurled and with guns ablaze. And may there be multitudes on board our good ship Zion to enter with us forever into rest and calm. Amen."