



Volume 28

April 1988

Number 4

## The Psalmist's Soul-Winning Formula

by Edward O. Bragwell, Sr.

*"Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, And uphold me by Your generous Spirit. Then I will teach transgressors Your ways, And sinners shall be converted to You." -- Psalms 51:12, 13 (NKJV).*

The Psalmist may be saying that if the Lord restores the joy of his salvation then he *promises* to teach transgressors. Or he may be saying that when the joy of salvation is restored teaching transgressors *naturally* follows. In either case, sinners would be converted.

Answers to why we are not converting more to Christ are offered by the dozens. "How to" instructions abound. Several preachers specialize in "soul-winning techniques". "Specials" are held from time to time to consider the matter. Book stores stock books and kits that are supposed to tell us how to make virtually every Christian an effective soul-winner. Yet, all the above combined produce meager results. Even what appears to be spectacular results often turn out to be nothing more than a mirage - a flash in the pan. It is the considered judgment of some good brethren that I know that so much emphasis on technique may hinder more than they help.

All this somewhat reminds me of a story that I heard several years ago about a company trying to increase its sales. They hired an expensive sales expert to lecture their salesmen on sales organization and technique. Their experienced salesmen and new recruits were required

to attend so they, too, could become experts. The expert unveiled his plan. He demonstrated his sure fire technique. He organized the territories complete with a wall map with pins placed at strategic points to illustrate the salesmen, customers and potential customers. He had refined his program to a fine art. During his lecture he spotted an old salesmen sitting over in the corner who was reputed to have been the top salesman for the company over several years. After, proudly and with fan fare, presenting his technique he asked the old salesman if he had any words of encouragement or advice that he might add to what had been said. The old salesman replied, "Yes, take all those pins out of that map and stick them into the salesmen!"

Could it be that our problem in teaching transgressors the Lord's way and thus converting them to Lord is not so much poor methods, materials, and facilities as it is poor motivation with no proper foundation? It may be that the joy of our own salvation is the missing element. Pep rallies and motivational hype on the subject of soul-winning may stir brethren into spurts of action, even producing some results. A sustained effort and lasting results will likely come from one who really knows both the plan and joy of salvation. Such a one understands what it means to be lost. He knows what it means to be saved. His knowledge is not based on fleeting feelings but on a know-

ledge of what God's word teaches on damnation and salvation. His joy is not the superficial cart wheel turning hand clapping "praise the Lord" shouting variety, but a far deeper joy of thankfulness, knowing that he has been delivered from the power of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son. One with such joy understands what it means to no longer be a sinner alienated from God. He understands God's plan of salvation. He understands what the Bible teaches about being a Christian. His joy is produced by that understanding and his knowing that his life is now in harmony with that understanding. Thus, he wants others to know what he knows and do what he has done to be saved -- and is doing to stay saved. His genuine faith in the promises and blessings in Christ produces the joy of salvation that leads him to teach transgressors the Lord's ways so that they can enjoy what he enjoys.

Brethren filled with the knowledge and joy of salvation will find ways (or techniques) to teach others consistent with their own temperaments and abilities and of those they are trying to reach. Their methods may vary widely but their message and results will be the same - the gospel will be taught and sinners will be converted.

It may well be that the best personal work program that a church can develop is to set about to restore that genuine joy of salvation to its membership by building them up in the faith through teaching.

## Humanism - A Religion

*by Edward O. Bragwell, Jr.*

As a preacher of the gospel, I have always tried to avoid references to political issues in my preaching. In most cases I think that preachers should avoid trying to make political statements. After all, our main concern is to be for the spiritual welfare of others rather than being too concerned with the social, economic, or political affairs of the world. I am a strong believer in this. I also try to avoid too much involvement in these areas in my writing. But I think that something has occurred which merits comment, because it does in a way strike at our spir-

itual well-being. So please bear with me.

An interesting thing has happened here in the state of Alabama, the ramifications of which affect the whole country. A federal judge in Mobile has handed down what I think to be a very needed ruling. U.S. District Judge William Brevard Hand handed down a ruling on March 4, the results of which was that "36 schoolbooks must be removed from Alabama public schools because they advance the religion of 'secular humanism' in violation of the U.S. Constitution." (Anniston Star, March 5, 1987, p. 1A) This was the lead story in almost every newspaper in the state and on almost every local TV and radio newscast. Most of the national news outlets also quickly picked up on the story and it is easy to see why. This was a major blow to the humanists who want free access to the schools to preach their religion while they continue their fight to subvert other values being taught to our children. Of course the ACLU and other groups such as the People for the American Way have already vowed to appeal this ruling.

This ruling and the publicity that surrounds it ought to cause Christians to come to some very strong realizations. I think that there are three basic realizations that we must come to:

**1. The realization that secular humanism is a religion.** One of the significant things about this ruling is that here we have a federal judge saying what many of us have said all along. Secular humanism is a religion. Of course, humanists deny this. In response to the judge's ruling Delos McKown, a humanist counselor at Auburn University and a member of the American Humanist Association board is quoted as saying, "No matter what he (Hand) says, no matter how he traces it back... secular humanism is not a religion because it has nothing sacred in it." (Anniston Star, March 5, 1987, p. 10A) What we need to realize, however, is that humanism does have something "sacred in it". It makes man sacred and elevates humankind as the thing to be worshiped. Just as Satanism promotes Satan as its god and as idolatry promotes idols as its gods, humanism promotes man and humankind as its god. In humanism man glorifies himself and worships himself. Get a

copy of the Humanist Manifesto (the humanist's creed book) and read it and see if that's not true. Humanism, therefore, must be dealt with as any other false religion. We must teach and exhort against its evils.

**2. The realization that humanism has invaded our schools.** This ruling would have never been handed down and there would not be so much publicity surrounding it if this were not true. The decision was a result of a lawsuit filed by a group of 600 parents and teachers who had come to a realization of this fact. They had seen the humanist doctrines taught in some of the textbooks that were used in the state of Alabama and asked that these books be removed from the schools. Let me quote something from one of the home economics textbooks that was banned as a result of this ruling. "Too strict a conscience may make you afraid to try new ventures and meet new people. It may make you feel different and unpopular. None of these things belongs to a healthy personality." ("Today's Teen," by Joan Kelly, Bennett & McKnight Publishing Co., 1981) Are you alarmed by such being in the textbooks that our children are using? I know I am. One who denies that humanism is in our schools is being naive. Take a good look at your children's textbooks sometime. Ignoring humanism will not make it go away.

**3. The realization that we must fight for our children's minds.** Humanists are making an assault on our children's thinking through our public schools. They freely admit this. Just read some of their writings sometime where they reveal their plans. It is well documented. What then are we to do? I think we must do what Christians have always done and what Christians are commanded to do. We need to make sure that we bring up our children "in the training and admonition of the Lord." (Eph. 6:4) Parents have always had to fight for the minds of their children. Humanism is not the first thing that Satan has used to try to draw away our young people, just the latest. We must not sit around wringing our hands and lamenting, "What are we going to do to protect our children from these humanist educators?" We must do what Christian parents have always done to protect their children from

Satan's devices. We must teach them the Lord's way, the word's which the Lord commands. "You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up." (Deut. 6:7) That is how we win the fight for our children's minds.

Humanism has been in our schools for some time, although many are only now realizing it. The most influential force upon our American educational system are the ideas of John Dewey, an avowed humanist. It has been in the schools for years, although gaining a stronger hold in the past few years. I am a young man and remember that the humanist philosophies were present in my own education. Throughout grade school, humanistic ideas were promoted. Evolution was taught, and efforts were made to influence my values. The influence of humanism became even stronger as I went on to a state institution of higher learning and proceeded through both undergraduate and post-graduate study. I encountered the philosophies that we so readily associate with the false religion of humanism. As far as I can tell, I have not been greatly affected by humanism. I hope that I have not deceived myself in this assessment. I have been bombarded with the idea that man is here by chance, yet still firmly believe that God put us here on the earth for a purpose. I have been told that values are relative, yet still firmly believe that God has given us an absolute standard to live by. Why is this so? I believe that the great part of the credit for that lies at the feet of two godly people, my Mom and Dad. They taught us children that God's way was the right way regardless of what anyone else might say. They warned us of the dangers and threats that there would be to our faith wherever that we might find ourselves in the world. We were made to realize that we must not be deceived by the blatant attempts by the people of the world to sway our thinking or by the subtle attempts on the part of those who claim to be brethren. So whether we were in the wide open arena of state

*Continued at bottom next page.*

## Defeated

I meant to study all the week  
And very carefully prepare.  
I meant to kneel -- yes, every day  
And bear each pupil up in prayer.  
But I was weary and found  
So many things that I must do --  
Important things that could not wait --  
The week was gone before I knew.

I meant to visit several homes,  
And mail some cards to absentees  
To let them know that they were missed,  
For such a word is sure to please,  
And often brings them quickly back.  
But somehow every day went by,  
And not a single card I sent.  
And now I ask, "Why didn't I?"

So this morning when I rose  
I tried to study while I ate.  
I briefly read my lesson,  
And hurried out, five minutes late.

I found them singing, and I dropped  
Breathless, ashamed, into my seat,  
For I intended to be there  
That I the earliest child might greet.

Time for the lessons, and a group  
Of eager voices beg their turn  
To quote by heart the memory verse  
Which I, alas, forgot to learn.  
And so I stumbled through the hour,  
And built with stubble, hay, and wood --  
Instead of gold and precious stones  
And silver, as His servants should.

"Go feed my lambs," was His command,  
And shall I hope for them to live  
On little morsels such as this,  
When mighty feasts are mine to give?  
"Forgive me, Lord, that I should treat  
They Word in such a shameful way,  
And may I never stand again  
Defeated, as I've done today."

*Author Unknown (Adapted)*

### HUMANISM (cont'd)

controlled higher learning or in the sheltered confines of a "Christian" school, we had been taught not to believe everything we heard, but to rely upon God and His word as our standard. I realize that holding one's own parents up as an example is risky, but I'll take that chance, because I'm proud of what they have done for me.

So, what I am saying is, don't leave the education of your children up to the world. Teach them the values at home that will help them withstand whatever outside threat they might encounter, even humanism. You can win the battle for your child's mind if you are willing to put

forth the effort.

We certainly praise the ruling of Judge Hand, but must not wait for a federal judge to tell us the dangers that lie in front of our young people. We must continue to teach them diligently the way of righteousness.

## John Cripps In Summer Program

Brother John Cripps, a native of South Africa, will begin his work with us on Sunday May 8. He will work with us through August 7. We are looking forward to his being in our midst.

THE REFLECTOR is published monthly  
by the church of Christ meeting at 2005  
Elkwood Drive, Fultondale, AL  
USPS 606-140

Address Correspondence and Returns to:  
THE REFLECTOR  
3004 Brakefield Drive  
Fultondale, AL 35068

Editor  
Edward O. Bragwell, Sr.  
3004 Brakefield Drive  
Fultondale, AL 35068

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Postage PAID  
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