

JULY

THE REFLECTOR

1978

Movies and TV programs about Christians

You will not find the following listed in TV GUIDE or the movie guide of your local newspaper. The titles are there but the stories exist, not in the imagination of a script writer, but in thousands of congregations of God's people around the world. Do you have a leading role?

The Wild And The Innocent. The exciting story of a young preacher's first full-time work.

The Bold Ones. Rare classic about preachers who dared to preach against such popular sins smoking, drinking, dancing, gossiping and immodest clothing. To be replaced next week with *Run, Joey, Run.*

Black Sheep Squadron. The story of young Christians and the ridicule and peer rejection they suffer for refusing to "go along with the crowd".

The Longest Day. Explores the attitudes of Christians who do not attend both Sunday services because "it is their only day off."

Rose Mary's Baby. The story of a young mother who frequently used her baby as an excuse for not attending church services. In this touching story we see the folly of turning God's wonderful heritage into license.

Eight Is Enough. A documentary tracing the evolution of gospel meetings from the protracted meetings of yesteryear which sometimes lasted for weeks to the shorter, more convenient meetings of today.

The Undersea World Of Jacques Cousteau. A biography of a Christian who always puts Christ and His church first -- except when the fish are biting.

One Day At A Time. An in-depth psychological study of the habits of many Christians who plan their vacations months in advance but will not make long-range plans to attend gospel meetings.

All In The Family. All about church cliques whose members always associate together and shut out all others.

The Godfather. The plight of a congregation lorded over by a modern Diotrophes who has to have everything his way or he will not support the work pro-

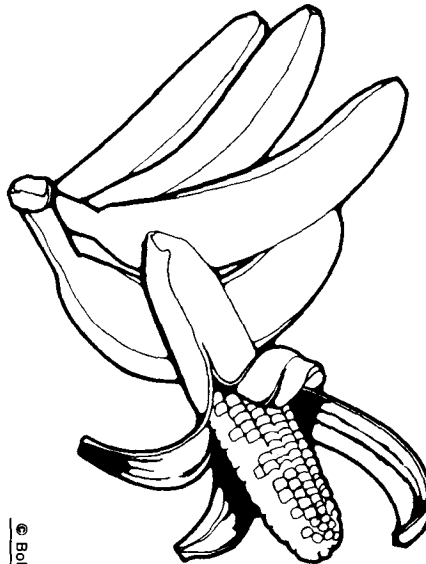
grams of the church.

Baby, I'm Back. An all-too-common theme about a Christian who forakes the church, does not attend the services for months, then comes back and, without a word of explanation or apology, expects to resume his place in the congregation.

The Undefeated. The story of the victory of faithful Christians over daily trials when they place their trust in God.

RALPH JOINER

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WOULD NATURE MAKE THIS MISTAKE? the evolutionist says it did

Talk about faith — he's got it! Getting corn from a banana is nothing. He gets everything by starting with one cell and changing species millions of times. We even got our animals from the same one cell beginning — you do believe that, don't you? After all, we do want to be rational and scientific. — Jere E. Frost

We're moving

Wait a minute! Before you are completely over-joyed by this report, it is not just the preacher that is moving. It is the whole church! Now any preacher will tell you that anytime that you can get the whole church to move it is worth talking about.

Yes, the Fultondale church is moving into its new building by October 1, 1978. After meeting for 56 years at the present location it is going into a new building. We are thankful for the growth that makes this possible.

Our new location will be less than 2 miles from the old building. To get there you go west on Walker's Chapel road past our old building until you get to ELKWOOD DRIVE. Turn north on ELKWOOD DRIVE. The new building is in the second block on your right. We are planning a series of meetings in the new building October 1-6, 1978, with a singing at 3:00 P.M., October 1.

*"If any man's work shall be burned,
he shall suffer loss:
but he himself shall be saved;
yet as by fire".
--1 Corinthians 3:15*

Work burned, Man saved?

Is Paul saying that a Christian's evil works will be destroyed in judgement, while he himself shall be saved. If a Christian lies, commits adultery or gets drunk then he is not in danger of hell -- because these works will be burned off at judgement. This is the view many take of 1 Cor. 3:15. Could it be that Paul is speaking of any entirely different kind of work? I believe that the context shows that he is.

The "work" under consideration is the preacher's work. The artist's work is his paintings. The draftman's work is his drawings. The carpenter's work is his building. The author's work is his literature. The preacher's work is his converts.

The Corinthians were divided over an inordinate loyalty to preachers. Some were "of Paul", "of Apollos" and "of Cephas". (1:10). Paul raised the question: "*Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?*" It was God who gave the increase, not these ministers. (v.6) Each did his work. Paul planted, Apollos watered. Paul laid the foundation, others built on it. God was to receive the praise of it all.

Paul issues a word of warning about the work of those who would build upon the foundation he had laid. (v.10). He had laid a good foundation. Now others were to add to this foundation by continuing to add new converts. In their work of adding new material (converts) to this foundation they needed to preach and teach so as to produce lasting converts ("gold, silver, and precious stones")-- rather than ones that would easily turn away under the fire of

temptation (wood, hay, and stubble). A preacher is rewarded by converts to Christ who remain faithful (v.14), but he suffers loss when some do not (v. 15)-- but at any rate he can be saved even if his converts do not abide (work is burned). It is a loss to him, but it does not have to affect his personal salvation.

Preachers, whether pulpit or personal workers, would do well to consider Paul's caution. We think we see too much pushing to "make a sale" at the expense of genuine conversion. We have come to measure success by numbers to the point that we see success when we persuade one to "let us baptize" him. Too much of the personal work materials on the market is geared to getting one to agree, as soon as possible, to baptism (like closing sales on the spot). Too many training sessions on personal work are oriented in that direction. We have watched the methods of door to door salesmen and have thought the gospel can be peddled the same way. So, we gear our program to give a high pressure (and often highly emotional) presentation followed by a push to get an immediate commitment on the spot. The government has stepped in to protect the public from these tactics in salesmen by passing a law to give the buyer a few days cooling off period during which he may cancel the contract that he might have signed under the pressure of the moment. This ought to tell my "get 'em baptized before they cool off" brethren something.

Some brethren seem to think that if we baptize one who does not abide faithful (he cools off after the sale) that no harm is done. This is just not so. The Lord and His church suffer re-

proach when one turns back (or else we had better quit preaching that apostacy brings reproach upon the church). The one who turns away is harder to reach than he would have been had he made no commitment in the first place.

In making disciples (Matt.28: 18-20 ASV), we are to baptize them and "teach them to observe all things". At the time of conversion he may not yet understand "all things commanded", but he needs to understand that he is making a commitment to observe any and everything he finds that the Lord commands him to do. That is how real disciples are made: by baptizing them and by teaching them to observe all things commanded.

Such caution may not get as many wet in the first place, but it will cause fewer to be burned in the last place. Doing our best, some are going to turn out to be "wood, hay, and stubble" and we will suffer loss -- but let's reduce our losses to a minimum by preaching and teaching so as to gain a total commitment to Christ rather than merely chalking up another baptism for the record. Are we trying to play down the importance (even the essentiality) of baptizing folks? No! A thousand times, no! One must be baptized to be saved (Mk. 16:16). But baptism without total commitment to the Cause of Christ is meaningless.

I thank God that I can still be saved even when some of my work as a gospel preacher does not abide. If this were not so, I would be of all men most miserable.

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A matter of emphasis

"Is not emphasis the difference in right and wrong, propriety and impropriety in so many things? It often boils down to putting first things first. Or, to putting the emphasis at the right place."

What is the difference between a good rich man and a materialistic one? Is it not a matter of emphasis? What is the difference in a miser and a thrifty man? What is the difference between one who is a good provider and a "workaholic"? Emphasis!

Is not emphasis the difference in right and wrong, propriety and impropriety in so many things? It often boils down to putting first things first. Or, to putting the emphasis at the right place.

I suppose Satan is more successful in the area of emphasis than anywhere else. When things are cut and dried, inherently right or wrong, most Christians have little trouble deciding right or wrong. But, when right or wrong is determined by where the emphasis is placed, then it is more subtle. It is not easy to decide just at what point legitimate interest may turn into an over emphasis.

We hear a lot about the "social gospel" lately. What makes this gospel different from the gospel that the apostles preached? Is it not a matter of emphasis? The "social gospel" over emphasizes the "here and now" and under emphasizes the "hereafter". It concerns itself more with the social and physical needs of man than with his spiritual needs. Church pulpits and programs become oriented to our social needs rather than our spiritual needs. Hence, "feelowship meals" (social events), scout troupes, ball teams, and various other social action programs become the work of churches.

We, who see the folly of the "social gospel" with its emphasis in the wrong places, might do well to examine our own emphasis in other matters from time to time:

In the New Testament the emphasis in gospel preaching and

the churches work was upon reforming individuals through repentance rather than reforming society, the state, or the community as a whole. New Testament preachers had little to say about the corruption (either moral, political, or economic) that secular historians have reported in the Roman government of that day. They did not direct their efforts to straightening out the "mess in Rome" or down at city hall. They did not avoid rebuking sin anywhere (even in government officials), but it was directed at their individual salvation and not at reshaping the government. John the Baptist rebuked Herod. Paul stood up to "the powers that be" on occasion. But, it was an effort to change them individually from the inside out and not a campaign to reform the government. We fear that too much of our energy and time in the pulpit and in religious journalism is aimed at reforming states, communities and societies as a whole, thus shifting emphasis away from individual conversion to Christ. Too much attention is given to world and national affairs that should be given to kingdom business.

In the first century there was legalized sin in nearly every city of the Roman empire. The New Testament preachers did not waste their time lobbying to get the government to remove its "legal" status. They fostered no campaign to change government policy in such matters. What did they do? They fought immorality in another arena. They set about to change men's attitudes toward immorality by preaching the gospel to them. It worked (See 1 Cor. 6:9-11). They taught Christians to have nothing to do with it, regardless to its "legal" standing with the government. They were more concerned with judging those within than those without

(See 1 Cor. 5:9-13). It is a sin for Christians to gamble (at the dog track or elsewhere) and to drink liquor (by the drink or by the bottle)--but we are not going to launch nor join in a political campaign from the pulpit or in these pages on these matters. We will teach Christians that they can have no part in any sin regardless to what the government does about it.

Immorality has dire consequences. Sometimes the consequences are physical. They are always spiritual. I am afraid that much of our preaching against immorality warns more of the effect it may have on society and too little of the effect it has upon kingdom of God and the souls of the guilty. Preaching on marriage-divorce-remarriage too often emphasizes its effect on society than upon the spiritual side of man. While sexual immorality may bring VD or an illegitimate child--it is the spiritual consequences that need emphasizing. While drinking may cause social, domestic, economic, and even national problems--we need to emphasize its consequences to the soul more. While homosexuality may cause social isolation -- it is the eternal effect that gospel preachers show more concern about. Such people need to be told firmly and kindly that the Bible says they cannot inherit the kingdom of God--unless they turn away from their sin and are converted. (1 Cor. 6:9 - 11). Sure these things cause other problems, but these are nothing compared to the spiritual ruin they cause. It is the spiritual ruin that should concern God's people more. Get the spiritual right and the other areas will take care of themselves.

Let us get to putting emphasis where it belongs.

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VIEWS & REVIEWS

By the time you read this the Catholics will likely have a new Pope. According to news reports many Catholics are concerned about his views. Will he be liberal or conservative? Will he permit more or less changes than Pope Paul? If the Past is any indication of what the future holds, one thing is sure, he will still have the loyalty of millions regardless to what his policies may be. What a shame? Especially in view of the fact that Jesus Christ is the head of the church (Eph. 1:22,23) and not the pope of Rome. Anyway, we think one fellow had a good idea. He said that they ought to elect a Baptist this time because he thought the Catholics had had it long enough!

GAY?

I don't remember the "gay nineties" even if I am a grandpa. But, I do remember when "gay" was a good and honorable word. But no more. Every time I hear it I feel sick inside. I get even sicker when I read of all the efforts to protect the "gays" from any embarrassment. We just read of such an effort in one of the national advice columns. Among other things it was suggested that the "experts" blame being "gay" on something that may have happened in very early childhood

or even before birth. At any rate, the gay is not at fault but merely an innocent victim of some force of fate, so the line goes. Now, we don't claim to be an expert on hardly anything. But, we do know that God does hold the "gay" responsible for his actions (1 Cor. 6:9). The "abusers of themselves with mankind" of the KJV are the "homosexuals" of many other versions. These shall not inherit the kingdom of God. Even if we grant that the "gay's" attraction to another of the same sex is rooted in some psychological quirk dating back to early childhood--it still doesn't make him not responsible! The "normal" person who is attracted to one of the opposite sex has the responsibility of self-control. He must restrain himself from activity with one other than his wife. The gospel demands this of him. If one were to find himself to have homosexual tendencies--he simply must not yield to the temptation, just as one must not yield to the temptation involving one of the opposite sex. To do so, would endanger the soul. The only sex partner that God permits is a husband or wife of the opposite sex. (Heb. 13:5). Any effort to set this aside is an affront to God.

OUR LOCAL FULTONDALE WORK

Our work here at Fultondale continues to grow. We are about to go into our new building. We want to thank all who have worked so hard to make this possible. We have enjoyed our work with this church (we begin our ninth year the fourth Sunday of August) We are looking forward to future with renewed determination.

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