

# COMMUNICATOR

NAZARENE PUBLISHING HOUSE

## Faithful Preaching

**Even though I knew what was going to be proclaimed,  
I really *wanted* him to say it! I couldn't wait for him to say it!**

**R**ecently, while on my annual sermon planning retreat, I attended our Church of the Nazarene in the little town where I was staying. I've been there several times and I always enjoy worshiping with that group of folks. It always blesses me to be reminded that throughout this land there are faithful pastors and faithful congregations doing the work of the kingdom of God.

I enjoyed every aspect of the service but I was especially looking forward to the sermon. I think it has to do with the same way my wife enjoys a meal when she didn't have to cook it! The pastor took his text from Romans 8, the latter part where Paul makes that glorious declaration of our security in God's love. The sermon was very well done and delivered with the obvious love of a pastor's heart. As I listened and participated by the Spirit, I had a revelation about the nature of preaching. This will probably be obvious to you, but it really helped me that day.

All through the sermon, I pretty much knew what the conclusion was going to be. I've preached that same text many times and I could just imagine how the pastor would probably bring that sermon to its climactic point. My fresh discovery, however, was that even though I knew what was going to be proclaimed, I really *wanted* him to say it! I couldn't wait for him to say it! I didn't know exactly what words or phrases he might use, but I became excited about hearing the pastor say what he did indeed ultimately declare: that in Christ we are no longer doomed to a life of constant struggle and doubt. *Preach it, brother!* No matter what life may dish out

on us, we are "more than conquerors through him who loved us." *Praise God!*

I left the service that day with a new perspective on how my people come to church. I am keenly aware that on any given Sunday there are many people before me who do not know what the message of Romans 8 will be. But there are many others who have walked the way of Jesus long enough to be able to predict the point of the message on almost any text. Does that mean it's not as meaningful to them? No way! I preach every week to a group of preachers and theologians who are part of my congregation, but I know that they still need to hear the good news proclaimed just as much as those who are "seekers."

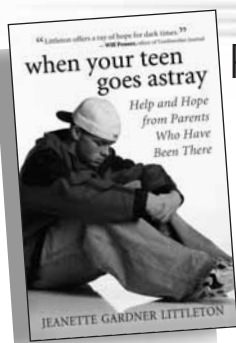
I wonder if we pastors are too often tricked into thinking that our sermons have to be cleverly innovative and "new" in order to gain a hearing. I am certainly an advocate of excellence and imaginative creativity in preaching. But I was reminded that nothing is so powerful as the simple and clear proclamation of the basic good news that "if God is for us, who can be against us?" "Pre-Christian" persons need to hear it. New believers need to hear it. Old saints need to hear it. And pastors even need to hear it.

I was sure glad that I was in church that day to hear it. I needed it. Thank you, Pastor John, for allowing the Spirit of Christ to work through you bringing a fresh word of hope to a weary soul.

—Jeren Rowell



Parents Who Have Been There by Jeanette Gardner Littleton



The author says, "When our child walked away from our home and our faith, my husband Mark and I had no clue what to do." Many Christian parents know this dilemma. Parenting a prodigal teen is an exhausting task. Parents are quickly wiped out emotionally, distraught, and maybe even in shock. They often feel isolated and alone. *When Your Teen Goes Astray* provides wisdom from both professional family

experts and unofficial family experts who have faced similar struggles. The stories and advice from parents who have been there offer comfort, consolation, and hope. For most kids, the prodigal life is a season. Sometimes it's a long season, but parents can survive, and even thrive during this difficult time.

Jeanette is a freelance writer and editor in Kansas City. In the past 20 years, Jeanette has worked on staffs with eight publications, including *Moody Magazine*, and has also been a book editor.

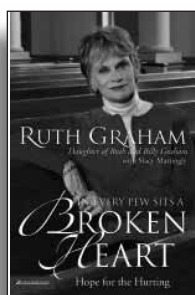
(Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 2004, 136pp., \$12.99, paper, COZZ083-412-0445)

BOOK BRIEFS

Resources for Pastoral Ministry

PASTORAL CARE

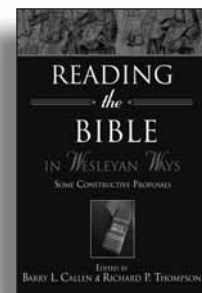
*In Every Pew Sits A Broken Heart.* By Ruth Graham. (Zondervan, 2004, 224pp., \$19.99, cloth, COZZ031-024-3394) A touching book that deals with brokenness, failure, or hurt that one might feel in life. Ruth Graham shares from her heart and shows how God's love can envelope you, especially through the struggles of life. A good book that offers advice for a friend, loved one, or anyone who is suffering. (Reviewed by Sarah Henry)



"Twenty Cans of Success." The Chapter consists of 7 steps to overcome depression. Each of these is coupled with scripture. The book is well written and could be helpful for trained counselors of people suffering from depression. (Reviewed by Lee McCleery)

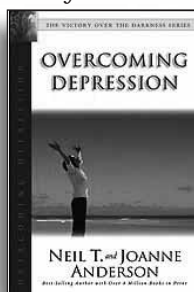
BIBLICAL STUDIES

*Reading the Bible in Wesleyan Ways.* Edited by Barry L. Callen and Richard P. Thompson. (Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 2004, 248pp., \$29.99, paper, COZZ083-412-0488). Believing that there are "distinctly Wesleyan ways of reading the Bible," the editors have compiled works from a number of Wesleyan scholars on the subject of hermeneutics. Contributing writers include: Geoffrey Wainwright, John W. Wright, Robert W. Wall, Donald A. D. Thorsen, Joel B. Green, Clark H. Pinnock, Sharon Clark Pearson, and Diane Leclerc.



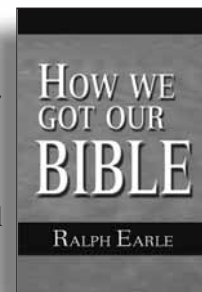
PASTORAL CARE

*Overcoming Depression.* By Neil T. and Joanne Anderson. (Gospel Light, 2004, 176pp., \$11.99, paper, COZZ083-073-3515). Although doctors and scientists know far more about brain chemistry and how neurological systems work than ever before, still the number of people seeking treatment for depression has nearly doubled in the last 10 years. This book addresses the issues of depression and is helpful for anyone experiencing symptoms of this malady or who is trained to counsel people suffering from it. There are numerous Scripture passages used to minister to the suffering. For instance, Elijah is used as an object lesson. Someone once said that success comes in "cans" and failure in "cannots." On pages 117-119 there are twenty questions, called,



BIBLICAL STUDIES

*How We Got Our Bible* by Ralph Earle. (Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1971, 120pp., \$12.99, paper, COZZ083-410-2269). The late Nazarene scholar, Ralph Earle, offered this volume on the origination, development, preservation of various translations, and how the Bible has spread across the centuries. Includes evaluation of modern translations. May be a helpful tool for small groups Bible studies, Sunday School classes, or membership classes.



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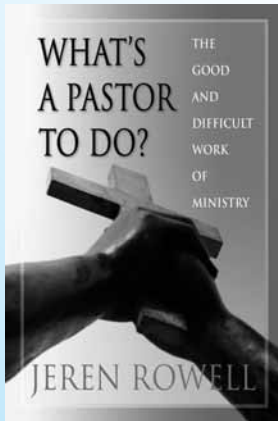
Want to know the official missions project that Nazarene churches are participating in this year? Visit our Kids Reaching Kids website at:  
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# ENCOURAGEMENT AND INSIGHT FOR PASTORS

## *What's a Pastor to Do?*

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COZZ083-412-2073 \$9.99

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CHURCH OF THE COVERED DISH by Thom Tapp



Suddenly, and without warning, Clarence realizes he doesn't know what an "Ebenezer" is.

