

Rev. Lester Kinsolving's

# Religion Update

Should churches and synagogues abandon preaching? Elimination of the sermon has been tried recently on an experimental basis at All Saints' Catholic Church in Portland, Ore., and in Hertfordshire, England, one person announced that he was giving up preaching for Lent -- in order, he contended, to increase church attendance.

Such action is undoubtedly appealing to some people for whom the very word preaching has become invidious ("Don't preach to me!"). This can usually be blamed on first-generation preachers who angrily shout moralisms from the pulpit, exhorting "you sinners," a category in which they never place themselves.

This kind of preaching is at least comprehensible -- unlike a preaching technique often heard on radio: the shouting of Bible questions to no apparent logical purpose. Understandable, too, are the recently ordained idealists (intent on "converting the entire world by tomorrow morning") who try to solve all of today's problems in one sermon -- a sort of farwell speech to the human race.

At the opposite extreme is the long-ordained clergyman who is either too tired or too scared to preach on any relevant topic for fear it might be regarded as controversial and whose preaching therefore resembles a hippopotamus in the pursuit of a pea.

CLERGY ARE FACED with congregations who for the most part are used to a daily dosage of TV or radio announcements selling soap flakes as their lives depended on it.

But many preachers who wear dramatic vestments, sing dramatic hymns and lead in the recitation of dramatic liturgies are in their preaching about as lively and dynamic as casket salesmen. They appear to be devotees of England's 19th-century Bishop Joseph Butler who once prayed for deliverance from enthusiasm.

This is primarily the fault of many theological seminaries in which homiletics (the art of preaching) is a "cut" course that nobody ever flunks.

It resembles too homiletics as it is usually as they do the writing of scholarly papers (and most clergy preach far more than they ever write) they could among other things utilize video tapes. This could give the student preacher the inimitable experience of having to watch himself preach, which can do wonders for improvement.

THE PRESENT CONDITION of much preaching was described in a letter to the conservative Catholic periodical *Our Sunday Visitor*. "I often fall asleep during the sermon at Mass. Is this a sin?" asked one reader.

The answer, by a monsignor



REV. LESTER KINSOLVING

who once headed the U.S. Canon Law Society:

"Your sleeping is probably a voluntary act I wouldn't worry about the sin of it. But you are missing a great opportunity of doing penance."

DESPITE the low esteem of preaching, the Second Eastern Council ordered a stop to casual omission of the sermon, which it called a prime means of spreading the Gospel. And Pope Paul VI, in his encyclical *Ecclesium Suum* stressed "the extreme importance of preaching... no other form of communication can take its place."

Our apostolate is above all the Church of England's Archbishop of York, F. Donald Coggan, warned recently of "the

folly which declares that the day of preaching is over and dialogue alone is allowed to take its place."

Few clergy would question the value of dialogue, and many seek to initiate it in such forms as post-sermon congregational discussions. On the other hand, Jesus Christ is not remembered for "The Dialogue on the Mount." Certain things are said and moods conveyed by effective preaching that are impossible in a "pure session."

While it is virtually impossible for a preacher to be fascinating and inspiring every Sunday, the level in interest might well be raised if:

- Pastors could be spared the usual obligations of excessive administrative trivia in order to devote more time to sermon preparation.

- Pastors could specialize in the study of two or three of the contemporary social issues -- then exchange pulpits at least once a month.

- Congregations would be scrupulous in protecting the freedom of their clergymen to tell them the truth as they see it. Many congregations either consciously or subconsciously castrate their pastor in order to keep their church a comfort station instead of a launching pad. Such congregations usually get the listless and irrelevant preaching they deserve.



HARVEST OF FASHION -- That's the title of the St. Edith Fashion Show and Dinner scheduled for 8 p.m., Wednesday, Oct. 1, in the Bonnie Brook Country Club. Tickets, priced at \$6, are available by calling Pat Recker at 464-0653. The fashions will be presented by Harvi's and showing off some of the selections are, from left: Sharon Leonatti, co-chairman; Kathy Burdette, ticket chairman; and Marilyn Lewis, chairman.

## LJC Kadima Schedules Picnic

The KADIMA chapter of Livonia Jewish Congregation will hold a picnic at 2 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 12, at the synagogue, 29475 W. Six Mile. The open to boys and girls 11 and 12 years of age and admission is 50 cents.

## MORE CHURCH NEWS

Attend Church This Sunday At The Church Of Your Choice With Your Family

UNITED METHODIST

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH of Garden City 6443 Mariner Road Phone: 421-8628

NEWBURGH UNITED METHODIST CHURCH 36500 Ann Arbor Trail Livonia 422-0149

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH of Plymouth 680 Church Street 453-5280

NARDIN PARK UNITED METHODIST CHURCH 476-8860 2987 West 11 Mile Road

CLARENCEVILLE METHODIST CHURCH 20300 Middlebelt, Livonia 424-3563

ALDERSGATE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH (Bedford Township) 10000 Beech-Daily Road (Between Woodmont and West Chester) 424-6038

ST. MATTHEW'S UNITED METHODIST CHURCH 30900 Six Mile Road 422-6038

ORCHARD UNITED METHODIST CHURCH 30450 Farmington Road Between 13 and 14 Mile 424-5820

ST. ELIZABETH'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH 26431 West Chicago Road South Redford 424-6038

ST. JOHN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH 274 S. Shadeland Road, Plymouth 424-5919

CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE 4150 E. Ann Arbor Trail Plymouth, Mich. 424-5919

EASTERN ORTHODOX

American Orthodox Church of St. Innocent 23300 W. Chicago 528-1700

PRESBYTERIAN

St. Mark's Presbyterian Church 26701 Joy Road 424-5919

WARD UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF LIVONIA 17000 Farmington Road 424-5919

ST. TIMOTHY Presbyterian Church 16700 Newburg Road 424-5919

ROSEDALE GARDENS PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH Hubbard at West Chicago 424-5919

VILLAGE UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF REDFORD 25350 W. Six Mile Road 424-5919

CHURCH OF GOD

Riverside Park Church of God 11771 Newburg Road at Plymouth Road 424-5919

NORTHWEST CHURCH Christian and Missionary Alliance 28111 West Ten Mile Road 424-5919

EVANGELICAL COVENANT CHURCH 24331 N. Eighth Mile 424-5919

CHRISTIAN SCIENCE

CHRISTIAN SCIENCE You are cordially invited to attend Sunday School as listed below. Sunday Schools are conducted by all churches, and care is provided for children of pre-Sunday School age.

# AREA DEATHS AND FUNERALS

JOHN L. DARR, Services for Mr. Darr, 77, 2790 Five Mile, Livonia, were held from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. at the H. Harris Funeral Home, 10000 Middlebelt Road, Livonia. Burial was in Parkview Memorial Cemetery.

EDWIN A. CAMPBELL, Funeral services for Mr. Campbell, 62, of 2841 Goffredo, Plymouth, were held at the Schrader Funeral Home with Rev. Henry J. White of the Reformed Church officiating. Interment took place at the Riverchapel Cemetery.

ELVA DE ALEXANDER ROWLAND, Services for Mr. Rowland, 76, of 1919 Jamestown Circle, Northville, were held at the Mann-Ferguson Funeral Home, 10000 Middlebelt Road, Livonia. Interment was in Parkview Cemetery.

FRANCIS J. FLOWERS, Services for Mr. Flowers, 78, of 1919 Jamestown Circle, Northville, were held at the Mann-Ferguson Funeral Home, 10000 Middlebelt Road, Livonia. Interment was in Parkview Cemetery.

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MICHELLE M. TOMLINSON, Funeral services for Michelle, 21, of 2854 Oakdale, Livonia, were held at the Mann-Ferguson Funeral Home with Rev. Barrett H. White officiating. Interment took place at Grandview Cemetery.

JACK BREWINGTON, Services for Mr. Brewhington, 63, of Southfield, a former 26-year resident of Farmington, were held in the Thayer Funeral Home. Burial was in Glen Eden Cemetery.

C. ERNESTINE PIERCE, Mass funeral services for Mr. Pierce, 73, of Boca Raton, Fla., who was born and had lived in the Farmington area for 45 years before retiring about 30 years with the attendance department of DePaul University, died Sept. 22 after an extended illness.

MARGARET C. GRABOWSKI, Requiem Mass for Mrs. Grabowski, 49, of 2020 Balamont Circle, Farmington Township, was held in St. Fabian Church by Rev. Mr. Charles J. Malloy officiating. Burial was in Holy Sepulchre Cemetery.

VERNON CHARLES OLSEN, Services for Mr. Olsen, 69, of 2815 Quail Hollow, Farmington Township, were held in the Bremer-Sundquist Funeral Home, 10000 Middlebelt Road, Livonia. Burial was in Glen Eden Cemetery.

Survivors include her husband, Stanley; mother, Mrs. Margaret McDonald; children, Richard S., Janet M., Barbara J., and Robert; and a sister, Mrs. Robert (Sarah) Ringe of California.

Born Oct. 12, 1899, in Buffalo, N.Y., Mr. Olsen died Sept. 18 in a hospital. He had been an editorial writer for 24 years for R. L. Folk & Co. and spent six years with Packard Motor Co. as chief promoter and sales manager.

Survivors are Mr. Olsen's wife, Bernice; a daughter, Mrs. David K. Olsen; a son, Robert; a daughter, Mrs. Daniel McGarry of Buffalo; and a grandson, Harry Brian Johnson.

HAMILTON H. JONES, Mr. Jones, 64, of 2340 Springbrook, Farmington, died Sept. 22 after an extended illness. He had lived in the Farmington area all his life and was retired from the maintenance department of a local public school.

# Methodist Men Set Barbecue

The Methodist Men of Lola Valley, United Methodist Church, Puritan at Delaware, Redford Township, will sponsor their chicken barbecue Sunday, Sept. 28, from 4 to 7 p.m. The menu is a half-roasted chicken, chips, slaw, roll and butter, homemade cake and beverage. Children's portions are the same except a quarter of barbecued chicken is served. Carry-outs are available.

The Methodist Men have been putting on two chicken barbecues a year since 1963.

# Outreach Fund Up 50 Per Cent

The Church of God at Anderson, Ind., has established a new record in total giving for outreach causes with \$25,447 reported during 1968-69.

Dr. Paul Tanner, director of the fund-raising Division of World Service, said per capita giving of \$15.09 also is a new record, being increased from \$10 during the last seven years.

The church has adopted an all-time high budget of \$2,275,000 for 1969-70.

"Our \$25,447 outreach income this year," Dr. Tanner observed, "is approximately \$1,000,000 more than our annual income 10 years ago. Compared with this, the previous million dollar increase required 20 years to accomplish."

# Rabbi Jessel Given Advanced Study Grant

Rabbi David B. Jessel, former spiritual leader of Temple Beth Am in Livonia, has been awarded a \$1,000 grant to record Jewish history in the Detroit area.

The grant was announced in Washington by the B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundations.

As part of his work toward a doctorate in sociology from Wayne State University, he is making tape recordings of conversations with elderly Jews on their recollections of life at the turn of the century.

"So far I've made just one recording," he said, "and that was with a judge in his 70's."

"I think it's important to get his impressions and those of others like him onto tape, because when these people are gone a lot of Jewish history will be gone with them."

THE RESEARCH is being carried on for the Jewish Historical society.

The rabbi, who served Beth Am from 1963 to 1968, now is a community affairs specialist with the Jewish Community Council of Metropolitan Detroit.

He and his wife, Nagie-Laure, have a year-old daughter, Dalia. They live at 19745 Weyber, Livonia.

RABBI JESSEL, a graduate of Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in Cincinnati, is one of 22 selected by a committee of academicians to receive grants from a special fund established by the Charles E. Merrill Trust and administered by the Hillel Foundations.

The late Charles E. Merrill was a founding partner of Merrill, Lynch, Pierce, Fenner & Smith, largest brokerage house in the nation.

A total of \$60,000 is being distributed over two years to help rabbis "deepen their competence in those branches of learning required to interpret the complexity of the modern world against the background of Jewish tradition and values."

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