

For Release after 12:00 noon, Wednesday, May 31

H. FRANKLIN PASCHALL, elected president of the Southern Baptist Convention last year in Detroit, has been pastor of the First Baptist Church of Nashville, Tenn., for the past 11 years. A native of Kentucky, Dr. Paschall was pastor of the First Baptist Church of Bowling Green, Ky., from 1951-55, before coming to the Nashville church. Previously he was pastor of the Hazel Baptist Church in Hazel, Ky. He is a graduate of Union University, Jackson, Tenn., and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky., where he earned the Doctor of Theology Degree. His alma mater, Union University, bestowed upon him an honorary Doctor of Divinity Degree in 1956. Dr. Paschall was born May 12, 1922, in Hazel, Ky.

## President's Address: Mandate to Minister

By H. Franklin Paschall

Jesus said, "The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto but to minister." And again He said, "As the Father hath sent me even so send I you." From the mountains of inspiration and worship we go down into the lowlands to serve. Sir Walter Scott observed that the most beautiful scenery in Scotland is where the highlands and lowlands meet.

### The Pattern of Ministry in the New Testament

There is a pattern of ministry in the New Testament. It is a ministry under authority. One word translated "minister" means under-rower. It is the picture of a servant rowing the boat under the authority and direction of the captain. In the New Testament, ministry is not optional but mandatory. It is under the authority and direction of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Chief Captain.

There is the liturgy type of ministry, ministering to God in worship. It is public. Luke wrote, "As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them" (Acts 13:2) (also note Romans 12:1,2). An alive, relevant, spiritual worship service will issue in missionary action. The need today is not to do away with the corporate ministry of worship but to make it vital and productive.

There is the deacon type of ministry. Jesus was a deacon. This type of service predominates in the work of Jesus and His disciples. It is a ministry in little things. The deacons were chosen to care for specific and neglected needs. There may be many volunteers to do big, noteworthy things but where are the volunteers to do the menial, unnoticed tasks. Christian ministry is at its best when credit is not sought for services rendered. It does not really matter who is the greatest in the Kingdom of God but it does matter who is concerned to serve wherever there are human needs.

The deacon type of ministry is to persons. Jesus was concerned with the needs of human beings. Christian service is never cold, impersonal and matter-of-fact. It is warm, friendly, compassionate, personal. The organization, the profession, the movement must always be subordinate to human needs. In an age of population explosion and computers, bigger and bigger organizations in Church and State, it is easy to forget the dignity and worth of human beings and personal needs.

Jesus introduced a new dimension in service. Before Him, the many served the few, the poor served the rich, the small served the great, the disciples served the teacher. Jesus reversed all this. He inverted the pyramid of service. The one at the apex became responsible to provide for the welfare of all under him.

### The Purpose of New Testament Churches

The ministry of Jesus was passed on to the churches. It was to be a ministry to the saints (II Corinthians 9:1; Hebrews 6:10; Ephesians 4:11,12) and to the world (II Corinthians 4:1; 5:18-20). The ministry committed to us is one in source and purpose. We have received "this ministry," not these ministries. We are the churches of the Word, not words. We are the churches of the Truth, not truths. Ministries, words, truths, divide and fragment us. This ministry, the Word and the Truth unite us. This ministry of reconcilia-

tion gives us an overarching, overruling, integrating purpose in all that we do.

Our ministry is redemptive. We plead with men to be reconciled to God. The word for "reconcile" means exchange. The old passes away and the new takes its place. There is a marvelous exchange. Once there was the stony heart. Now there is the tender heart. Once there was hate. Now there is love. Once there was the life of the flesh. Now there is the life of the Spirit. When men are reconciled to God they can be reconciled to one another. Every organization or movement will become a curse to mankind when it is divorced from God.

True churches have a place in the purpose of God in Jesus Christ. Institutional churches are under bitter attack today. Some say they are no more than ghettos of Christianity and islands of real estate. Swinburne called the church Christ's leprous bride. Others say that at best the churches are irrelevant and at worst an obstacle to genuine human experience.

It is true that the churches have spots and wrinkles and that many times they stumble and stutter. There is the continuing need for repentance and renewal. Let us face our sins honestly, confess them and repent from them. Let us break out beyond ourselves—beyond our frozen orthodoxy, organizational routines, religious rigamortale, prejudice and pride—and minister in the world. But let us see the difference between trying to renew the churches and trying to liquidate them. Apart from the churches there is no purpose for a single agency of this Convention. Southern Baptists cannot successfully by-pass the churches and minister to the world. If we try it, one day it will be plain that we are trying to do everything with nothing. The churches stumble but they are trying to go somewhere. The churches stutter but they are trying to say something.

What is the primary purpose of the churches in the world? I am indebted to Dr. Wallace Hamilton for some helpful suggestions at this point. Some say the churches should seek to destroy civilizations. Is Christianity a subversive force in the world? Herod felt threatened by Jesus, the new-born king. The Pharisees accused Jesus of trying to destroy the law of Moses. But Jesus said that He came not to destroy but to fulfill. The Pharisees made common cause with Rome in Pilate's judgment hall as they charged that Jesus was an enemy of Caesar. Emperor Julian said: "This Jesus is the greatest rebel who ever lived. What was Brutus, what was Cassius, compared to him? They murdered only the man Julius Caesar. Jesus murders all that is called Caesar, all that is Rome." Apparently Nero found no difficulty in blaming the Christians for burning Rome. Edward Gibbon believed that the fall of Rome represented the triumph of barbarism and religion. Nietzsche considered Christianity an obstacle to progress and called it "the one great curse, the one great corruption, the one immortal blemish in the earth." Communists think Christianity is an enemy of mankind and call it "the opiate of the people."

Some say the churches should preserve civilizations. When the Nazi blitzkrieg was at its fury over London, Winston Churchill said: "The battle of Britain is beginning. Upon this battle depends the survival of Christian civilization."

One may ask if there is any such thing as a Christian civilization. But we must confess that our history would have been decidedly different if our forefathers had come from a Moslem or Buddhist or Hindu land. Our cities, rivers, mountains and roads have Bible names. Our Constitution and government reflect the influence of the Gospel. Our way of life is rooted in the Christian tradition. Is it our business as churches to preserve a way of life or support a particular form of government?

When the Gospel is preached and the Christian ministry performed a mighty force is unleashed against all of the evils in civilizations. At the same time, this mighty force is a support to all that is good in civilizations. Then it is an inescapable conclusion that Christianity is independent of civilizations.

Civilizations are mortal. They die. The Roman civilization and Christianity were closely intertwined. Some said that Christianity would fall when the Roman Empire fell. But it survived and proved its independence. Later, Christianity became identified with the in-



stitution of feudalism, a civilization that was destined to die. Again Christianity survived and proved its independence. Out of this survival came the Renaissance and Reformation.

In modern times there have come the industrial revolution, science and technology and space exploration. This civilization of technocracy too will pass away. The Christian faith will survive and flourish.

The primary purpose of the churches is not to destroy or to preserve civilizations, but to proclaim the reality of the Kingdom of God whatever may be the kingdoms and civilizations of the world. Arnold Toynbee was right when he said that Christianity does not exist for civilization but civilizations exist for Christianity. Jesus and the early Christians used the Greek language, Roman roads and other fruits of civilizations to communicate the Good News of the Kingdom of God. There are many magnificent means in our day which we should use for the furtherance of the Gospel. Paul declared, "All things are yours in Christ." Tennyson in the prologue to "In Memoriam" said:

"Our little systems have their day,  
They have their day and cease to be;  
They are but broken lights of thee,  
And thou, O Lord, art more than they."

#### The Practice of This Ministry in Today's World

We must continue to give primary emphasis to man's relationship to God. Our persistent plea should be, "Be ye reconciled to God." If man is not in right relationship to God he cannot really be in right relationship to man. If one does not believe that God loves him he cannot really believe that man loves him. Faith in God gives sanctity and meaning to human relationships. It is imperative that we seek to win men one by one to faith in God and commitment to our Lord Jesus Christ.

We must practice an evangelism that is concerned with the whole man. Jesus ministered to the body and the soul. Evangelism and ethics should not be divorced. It is our responsibility to win men to Christ and to minister to them so that they may all come to "the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the full grown Christ." Every ministry of a church should make Christians more like Jesus. A changed heart means a changed life and as John Wesley said, "A changed man will change his environment."

We must demonstrate concern for all of the problems of modern man whether they be personal or social. And there are many problems: war, poverty, racial tension, population explosion, breakdown of homes, alcoholism, dope addiction, gambling, immorality and crime, only to mention a few. Jesus did not heal all of the sick people of His day, but He healed enough of them to prove to the world that He was concerned about physical diseases. He did not solve all of the social, political and economic problems of His day, but He did enough in word and deed to identify Himself and His cause with the righteousness of the Kingdom of God. He never gave support or encouragement to an evil condition, cause or institution. We cannot solve all of the personal, social, political and economic problems of our day but we can show our concern in Christ by preaching and teaching whatsoever things are true, honest, just, pure, lovely and of good report. Also we can do these things by becoming involved personally in every area of life and letting our light shine as Christians to the glory of God, and to the good of all mankind.

Some think God is doing more through government than He is doing through the churches. Admittedly, God is working through the powers that be, but He is doing something through the churches which He will not accomplish through government. The approach and emphasis of churches are different from that of government. Jesus did not say to government, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." Government is concerned with symptoms; churches are concerned with disease. Government seeks to change man by changing his environment; churches seek to change man by changing his heart. Government can make man better off; churches can make man better. Government administers; churches minister. Both government and churches are ordained of God and they should be mutually helpful.

It is not wise or necessary for churches to be identified with a particular political party or program. The church is not an it or a tool to be used by government. But the church is a voice crying in the wilderness and saying, "Make the paths straight." It is the duty of churches to be identified with the principles of justice and

truth. Individual Christians in the churches can and should be identified with particular parties and programs which under God they feel will serve in the best interest of the whole man, the whole nation and the whole world. So those who are committed to the ministry of evangelism—saving the individual—and those who are committed to a ministry of social action—providing for the general welfare of people—can and should be one in Jesus Christ and one in "this ministry" of reconciliation. Christ broke down the wall which alienates man from God and man from man. When the tree is good its fruit will be good. Man is saved by grace through faith and not by good works, but good works are the normal evidence of salvation. The Christian experience consists of impression and expression, root and fruit. Social action without evangelism is doomed to failure and evangelism without ethics in personal and corporate living is woefully incomplete.

We must magnify the local church. (This emphasis need not militate against fellowship in our denomination or in the larger Christian community.) Many are so taken by the universal, unassembled church that they neglect, ignore and sometimes disparage the local church. Others seem to think that Christians can serve best on their own in "splendid isolation." Surveys reveal that more and more young preachers prefer to minister to a captive audience or in a controlled situation. The faults, foibles and failures of the institutional church have been so emphasized and exaggerated that our young people are deciding that they want no part of it. It is a frontier situation where soul-winning, worship, education, training and service should be at their best. Theoretically all of our agencies exist for the strengthening of the ministry of the local church. Let all of us encourage and inspire our young people to commit themselves to this ministry where there are many problems and promises, challenges and opportunities, demands and rewards.

We must conduct our warfare with spiritual and not carnal weapons. The Kingdom of Heaven suffers violence but it cannot be taken by force—the force of arms, politics, boycotts or what have you. A military victory may make freed men but only God can make free men. Peace cannot come by war. They that live by the sword shall perish by the sword. Toynbee said that the one thing you cannot do with a bayonet is to sit on it.

Education alone cannot establish the Kingdom of God. Men are not good simply because they are trained. World War II was started among the best educated and most enlightened people of the world. According to Dr. Elton Trueblood some of the worst scandals in recent years have occurred on college campuses.

The distribution of our material wealth will not in itself change men. The "haves" should help the "have nots." The developed countries of the world have a responsibility to help the underdeveloped countries. But a mere sharing of our material wealth is not enough. Let us not forget that Jesus put emphasis on preaching the Gospel to the poor. Many are trying to help the poor in every way except by giving them the Gospel. It may be well for us to see what terrible things our affluence has done to us before we expect too much in the lives of the poor when this affluence is shared with them. Statistics do not prove that the rich are necessarily better in character than the poor. To be better off is not necessarily to be better.

Let us preach out, teach out, and live out, the Gospel before all men. Let us proclaim the present reality of the Kingdom of God. Let us lead men in this temporal situation to experience the Eternal. Let us live in two worlds at the same time as we pray, "Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven."

We must live positively. Christianity is not negative. One is a Christian not by what he refuses but by whom he chooses. "He that hath the son hath life." "Therefore, being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." What we are, what we have and what we can do as Christians furnish us a basis for a ministry in courage and confidence. Too much is being said about what we are not, what we do not have and what we cannot do. We are suffering from spiritual hypochondria. When Jesus needed to feed the five thousand besides women and children He did not say, How many loaves do you not have, but, How many loaves have you? What they had did not seem to be adequate but with God there was enough and to spare. Let us follow in His steps and give thanks for what we have and ask God to bless it. The results now as then will be amazing. The future belongs to Christ and the Kingdom of God will stand forever.