

# From The Pulpit

by Rev. Donald M. Clark

GOSPEL ARITHMETIC  
(IV. Multiplication)

THUS FAR in our Gospel Arithmetic lessons we have learned Counting, Adding and Subtracting. The next step in our education is to learn to multiply. A suggested text for this study might be found in Acts 6:7.

There is a great thrill in reading the book of Acts about the rapid growth and spread of the early church. Several passages say that the church "multiplied" or the Word of God "multiplied" through Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and an ever widening circle from this center. It is a great marvel to read the account of the fulfillment of Jesus' prophecy comparing the growth of the Kingdom to leaven and the mustard seed in Matthew 13.

The question is what caused the early church to multiply and grow so phenomenally at this time when opposition seemed strongest? During the thirty years preceding World War II, churches were dying out all over the nation. In Illinois alone, 70 Christian Churches closed their doors. The activating flame within them had apparently been extinguished. There was a scarcity of trained and efficient leaders. If the churches would only look back upon Christ's Church in the New Testament days, the same things which spurred the church to multiply then can be applied to churches of today. The same results can be expected. The church will multiply!



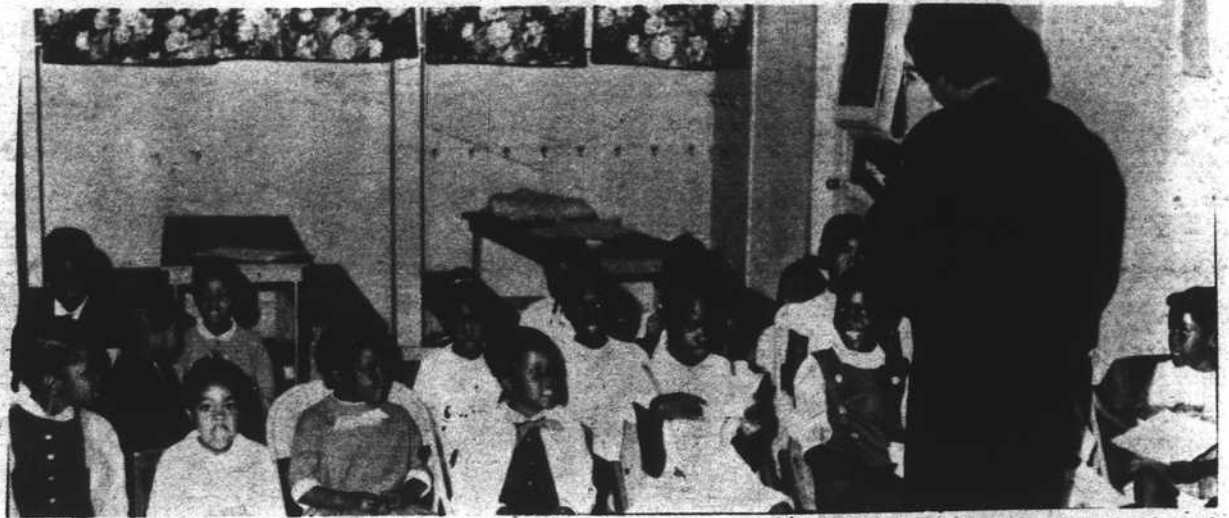
REV. D. M. CLARK

One of the principle causes for the multiplication of the early church was the Christians' persistence in the face of strong opposition. At first opposition came from without their number. The second sermon that Peter and John preached was in the temple area itself. Many people were being convicted by this preaching. Soon the Sadducees and the High Priest had them cast into prison until morning. When they were brought before the council, much to the surprise of all present, these "simple Gallileans" preached them a powerful sermon. They were then released after being beaten and commanded to stop preaching in the name of Jesus. But did this stop them? Hardly! They simply prayed for more boldness and continued to preach and perform miracles. Again the temple officials had them cast into prison. This time, before morning, the Lord caused the prison doors to be opened and, when morning came, they were found once more preaching in the temple. Again they were brought before the council and were commanded not to preach again. A second time Peter preached the council a sermon and declared, "We must obey God rather than men." Again they were beaten and released and again they continued their preaching. (Acts 5:41, 42)

IN SPITE of all the persecution and opposition that confronted them, the early church continued to preach Christ crucified with undaunted fervor. This very condition is prevalent in the world today. In Russia, if the Gospel is preached according to the Word of God, the preacher stands to lose his head. This is true in most of the Communist controlled countries. Even here in the United States there are restraints placed upon the preaching of the Gospel. Certain overhead religious organizations dictate what their preachers must preach. Within the churches themselves, restrictions are placed upon the preachers and enforced with varying degrees of pressure.

It is time for the churches and preachers of the Gospel to arise and persistently proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ as it is in the Word of God. It is time that we squarely face the devil-inspired opposition with the Sword of the Spirit. When the churches again do this, they will again multiply as in days of old.

**BUY U.S. SAVINGS BONDS**



**SUNDAY SCHOOL AT CARVER PARK**--Mrs. C.H. Parson, wife of Elder Parson of The Church of God in Christ in the Carver Park area of Henderson, Nevada, is shown with her Sunday School primary class (reading from left to right) Mary Cave, Jackie Green, Ronda, Sandra McCormick, Ann McCormick, Niede Parson, Claud Jr., and Edith Hawkins. Due to inadequate facilities, the Teen-age and Junior classes are held out of doors, but Elder Parson reasons that the greatest teacher of all times taught world-shaking principles with the sky for a ceiling and the sun for his light, and that they, too, can teach the Kingdom of God using whatever facilities available.

In the belief that the Sunday School is the most important department of the church, Elder and Mrs. Parsons are making an effort to reach all age groups in the area. They happily report the children attend regularly and are eager to learn.

The Parsons who have been assigned to the Henderson area for the past nine months, along with their church mother, Sister Inez Henry, wish to express their gratitude to the many people from Las Vegas who voluntarily give of their time to help them in this endeavor.

"All thy children shall be taught of the Lord and great shall be the peace of thy children"--Isaiah 54:13.

**NOTHING WILL PREVENT** a church from growing any quicker than bickering among the members. A basketball team cannot win when the players won't work together. A team of horses do very little work when they don't pull together. A church filled with strife, jealousy, envy, gossip, and bickering cannot multiply.

A second reason for the rapid multiplication of the early church was its use of prayer. Acts 2:42 tells us that they "continued steadfastly" in prayers. Prayer was not just an occasional thing to fill a gap in the worship service once or twice a week. They continued steadfastly in prayer!

The Scriptures record that Jesus Himself prayed frequently. The Apostles, under His training, also learned the value of frequent prayer.

In this fast moving age, the mid-week prayer meeting is a forgotten practice in thousands of churches. When a church becomes too busy to pray--as a church--it is evident that the fire of the Spirit within has gone out!

After the New Testament Church prayed, they received power to preach the Word of God with boldness. The thrilling testimony of this occurrence is recorded in Acts 4:31-33. When they had prayed, they began to preach the Word of God with boldness, squarely in the face of persecution. As a result, instead of the people shunning the church, they were drawn toward it. "And the Word of God multiplied." The early church was a praying church and as a result **THEY MULTIPLIED!** The church in the beginning multiplied also because they practiced what **THEY PREACHED.**

An old business proverb is this: "The best advertisement for a product is the product itself." The members of the ancient church wanted to sell others on Christianity. The church then simply demonstrated true Christian living.

**NOT ONLY** did the early church continue steadfastly in prayers, as mentioned earlier, but likewise in the Apostles' doctrine, fellowship, and breaking of bread This definitely helped the church to grow and multiply. Too often in the churches of today the Apostles' doctrine is replaced by man's doctrines--theologies, creeds, dogmas, etc. Fellowship, brotherly love and cooperative Christian service have been substituted with bean suppers, ice cream socials, and "pitch in" dinners. The breaking of bread (the Lord's Supper) has been changed in frequency from "steadfastly" to "occasionally."

Some have said that Christianity has been tried and it has failed. The truth of the matter seems to be that Christianity has not yet been tried. Jesus said, "Ye are the salt of the earth," and again, "Ye are the light of the world. . . Even so let your light shine before men; that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven."

**CONCLUSION:** How did the early church multiply? **THEY PREACHED THE WORD OF GOD.** Persistently, prayerfully, in practice. So the church of today, if it is to multiply, must do the same.

## Senator Cannon To Make Local Church Appearance

Senator Howard Cannon is scheduled to make a presentation of the American Flag to the St. James Catholic Church at a programmed social hour, Monday evening, November 22 at the Church. PAL, the Altar Society and the Holy Name Men's Society, three official organizations of the Church will take part in the ceremonies. Altar Society's President, Mrs. Juanita Smith, and Brother George Barton, President of the Holy Name Men's Society announced the Social Hour will begin at 8 p.m., and that the public is welcome.

## Rummage Sale Saturday

The Priscilla Women's Fellowship of the First Congregational Church will be holding a Rummage Sale on Saturday, November 20 from 7:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. at 1908 Glider Street, North Las Vegas (Rear of Bonanza Club).

Mrs. Elms, President of the Women's Fellowship said there is a large selection of used clothing and household items to be offered at rock bottom bargain prices. There will be on sale such used furniture items as a platform rocker, a gasoline stove (sensational for camping); an electric range, a baby Bath-O-Mat, a vacuum cleaner, and portable electric sewing machine.

Proceeds of the sale will go to the Church Building Fund.

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