

# From The Pulpit

by Rev. Donald M. Clark

## Host Seminary Directors At Bethel Church Sunday

THE SPIRIT OF GOD IS LIKE THE WIND

Text: "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth, and tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; so is everyone that is born of the Spirit." John 3:8.

ONE NIGHT an earnest and learned man, Nicodemus, came to Jesus as though he would know more of his teaching. He received a surprising answer. He was told that he would have to be born again if he was to understand what Jesus was saying. And when Nicodemus wondered whether this was possible, Jesus answered in words that draw a picture.

He likened the Spirit of God to the wind and said, "The wind blows where it will, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know whence it comes or whither it goes."

What an unforgettable way to say it! The wind unseen yet known by what it does, unseen but felt and heard. God is like that! The wind having power waiting for man's handwork, a sail raised, a windmill erected, something reaching out for that power so freely given. So the power of God is like that.

DOES GOD really work among men that way today? Sometimes the Spirit is like a sudden wind. In Acts 2:2 we read, "And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting."

What the disciples needed was an increment of power suddenly they received it. They needed an increment of courage; they received it. The sudden wind of God blows and gives sufficiency when a man feels inefficient. The wind brings comfort in times of bereavement. Or strength comes in an experience of shattering disappointment. Renewal comes in the hour of exhaustion. The sudden winds of God blow when we need them most.

Sometimes the Spirit is like a steady wind. It is so quiet that you take it for granted. There are many people who, in telling their Christian experience, would have little or nothing to say about any sudden impact of the Spirit. Such persons might have little to say at all; but their friends and neighbors become aware of their growth in grace, their steadfast purpose in doing good, and would acknowledge the rich and pervasive influence of their characters.

FOR OTHERS, God's Spirit comes like an invigorating wind in the heat of struggle. It is as though God were reaching out of a whirlwind to give a man deliverance and peace and power. "The Lord has His way in the whirlwind and the storm."

Who can understand the ways of God with men? Why should God speak to one man in the hour of his despair and to another in the time of his joy? Why should God speak to one in the thick of life's work and to another in the quiet moment of contemplation? Why should God suddenly stand astride the path of one who has not even been seeking Him and seem, on the other hand, often to withhold himself even from those who have sought with earnestness and every agony?

THERE IS an amazing variety in the experience men have of God. Just as He has made every person unique and without duplicate so, in a sense, everyone's experience of God is unique.



REV. I. W. WILSON

The Department of the Las Vegas Seminary Extension Class of the American Baptist Theological Seminary School, is having as guest speaker, Dr. Joe E. Conley, Extension Director of the Theological School of Nashville, Tennessee, on Sunday January 29, at 3 p.m.

Other distinguished guests will include Dr. Jack O'Meit, Extension Director of Fresno, California and Mayor Oran Gragson.

THE BASIC purpose of the Department of Seminary Extension of the American Baptist Theological Seminary is to provide opportunity for systematic study on the part of ministers, pastors, and other Christian leaders, many of whom entered the ministry with little or no opportunity for training and for obvious reasons cannot attend college or theological school. Further, it is the purpose of this adult educational program in Biblical and Christian educational (non-degree) training to extend some of the opportunities of the Seminary to every section of the nation so that those who have a desire to continue their education may be enabled to do so. The opportunity for such systematic study is offered in extension units, located at Bethel Baptist Church, 400 Adams Avenue.

Rev. I. W. Wilson, pastor of Bethel, and Dean of the Las Vegas Extension unit, and Rev. J. L. Simmons, Director, invites the public to attend this affair.



REV. D. M. CLARK

# ALTAR CALL

By EMORY G. DAVIS, D.D.  
NEGRO PRESS INTERNATIONAL

## STILL WITHOUT A SONG

Jazz in the sanctuary of the staid and stolid churches and cathedrals of white America may be an innovation, but it is nothing new in the churches of Negro America.

IT IS NOT uncommon to feel the same pulsating reaction to the beat of the gospel song in church and that music played in predominantly Negro night clubs and taverns. Only the words are different.

Perhaps it was not unusual in our culture that the music of the Negro church had a different character and quality than that of the white church. Whites, with their monopoly on "God," have a long tradition of glorious, victorious chants, oratorios and hymns.

The Negro was left to express the aches and pains of his heart through the spirituals, replete with minor chords and moans. The pathos in the minor strains of Jewish liturgical music reflects a similar suffering. But the Negro grew weary and ashamed of the spiritual, abandoning it for the more rhythmic gospel song.

If the trend in some small sectors of the "white" church is toward jazz, the Negro could well meet it on this common ground. However, if the words of Negro "church jazz" continue to be suppliant and pulsing, there will be no meeting ground.

FURTHER, THE Negro will never learn through the kind of church music now being used that God is depending upon him to be a God-created MAN. It's about time the Negro stopped crying on God's shoulder.

Such words, set to dancing rhythms as "The Lord is Blessing Me, Right Now;" "Ask What You Will of The Savior;" "We've Come This Far by Faith, Leaning on The Lord," ought suggest that the Negro needs to stop "leaning" and start standing and walking. His church songs, jazz or otherwise, need to convey this message.

Perhaps jazz and lilting rhythms can be the best vehicle to convey meaning to Negro worshippers. Some ministers oppose it, others are strong advocates.

IF, THE jazzy gospel song is best for Negroes then let this medium proclaim a message, a message calling to full humanity and love for all mankind.

Perhaps the use of meaningful words set to rhythmic tempos will enliven the Negro church member to the point where he will go out into the world and put a new song into the hearts of those suffering under the heel of racial segregation and dehumanization at the Altar of Those Without a Song.


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