

THE FUTURE OUTLOOK

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PTA Ward Systems

Solve Traffic Problems

If Ward Systems were organized and sponsored by the Parent-Teacher Associations, they would help to curtail quite a bit of traffic hazards during inclement weather. Ward means just this: an organization of neighborhoods with members having similar ideas. For example, if Wards were set up by the PTA's of Lincoln and Dudley High School and the neighborhoods of Morningside Homes, Dudley Heights, Clinton Hills, Benbow Park, and the like, the leaders of each Ward would assume a responsibility like this. Of course you know that each family has one or more cars. When there are five children going to the same school and living on the same street or a block apart, the Ward leader could suggest that one parent assume responsibility of pooling these children during inclement weather. That would eliminate four cars on the same street.

During this time, much construction work is being done near the schools, especially Dudley High, where ground work is being done for a stadium. Several types of vehicles are being used. These vehicles interfere with traffic during fair weather. What would happen if a gala windstorm took place when classes were being dismissed in the afternoon?

On the other hand, at the intersection of Lincoln and Lee Streets, there are pupils leaving five different schools, namely the Catholic School, Lutheran, Dudley, Lincoln and Bluford. Prior to this time, some women would go to their husbands' jobs to secure their cars for the sole purpose of picking up one child. This was to show others that the family owned a car. How much easier it would be if the parent knew somebody in her Ward who could be responsible for carrying her child home, thusly eliminating the traffic hazard.

We criticize our teenagers as being careless and reckless drivers, but they will go back and forth to pick up their friends. Most of them will say, "Look how it's raining. There is Mrs. Jones' son. He lives next door to us." They will pick them up. After one trip has been made, they will even return to the school to pick up others.

In thinking about a PTA Ward System to curtail traffic, a teacher expressed the opinion that female faculty members would be the first to criticize this type of system, because they live next door to some of their co-workers. If something were to happen to their automobiles, like battery or tire trouble, they would find some type of excuse to curtail a conversation between the two. There is a law which states that teachers should not transport students to and from school, but it doesn't apply to adults. Why can't five teachers ride in the same car and reduce the number of cars on the streets? It has been observed that a layman or a teenager would do this with no trouble, but what about the professionals? Why can't teachers in the same school do the same thing? Is it purely a matter of trying to show off a car or is it just selfishness?

This editorial will be continued in the next edition.

This Week's Sunday School Lesson

God's Spokesman For Justice

What Is Our Concern?

You may be surprised to see a cartoon in a church school lesson. We're used to cartoons in newspapers and magazines. Sometimes they make us laugh, but many cartoons are drawn to make us think.

Most daily newspapers print editorial cartoons. The editors work hard writing editorials to present their views, but many people never read these editorials. So a cartoonist takes an important issue every day and puts it into a picture. People who don't read editorials will take ten seconds to look at a cartoon.

The cartoons in these lessons are drawn by Bill Sanders, editorial cartoonist for the Kansas City Star. Six days a week, his cartoons prod people into thinking about issues of the day. On Sunday he teaches a young adult class in a Methodist church. This is the first time he has tried being a "church school cartoonist."

These cartoons may make you chuckle. They may make you angry. Either way, I hope they'll make you ask some questions.

These next four lessons are about Amos. We know him as a great prophet, but in his own day he was called a troublemaker who would not mind his own business. This is one thing he had in common with John Wesley and with the minister in today's cartoons.

Before You Read the Scripture

Amos was not a professional prophet or preacher. He came from the town of Tekoa in rural Judah. He was a shepherd, because his father had been a shepherd before him. (Amos 1: 1) When he was not working as a shepherd, he pruned sycamore trees. (7:14)

Although Amos was from Judah, he did his preaching in Israel. Preaching in a foreign nation was most unusual. Israel and Judah had been one nation, but they separated when King Solomon died, about 922 B. C. Although formerly they had been one nation, they now were enemies. The fact that Amos was a Judean made his criticism of the Israelites especially hard for them to take. It was something like a man going from Chicago to Mississippi to lecture on civil rights.

The Hebrew calendar was not like ours. They did not reckon all dates from one event, as we do. They dated any event according to the king who was reigning at that time. When Amos began preaching, Uzziah (783-742 B. C.) was the king of Judah, and Jeroboam II (786-746 B. C.) was king of Israel. Within the reign of a given king, dates were listed according to the number of years before or after an outstanding event. Amos began preaching about two years before a great earthquake. We figure the date to be about 750 B. C.

INTERPRETING A VISION

God called Amos to be a prophet through a series of visions. The first vision involved a plumb line. A plumb line is a string with a heavy weight on one end called a plumb bob. A

builder can hold a plumb line next to a wall and see if it is straight. If it is not, he will start over again.

Amos saw a vision of God standing by a wall with a plumb line. The wall was Israel. God's plumb line showed that Israel did not stand straight. When the vision ended, Amos went out to tell the people about it. He warned that God would destroy the "crooked wall" if they didn't repair it.

AMOS SPEAKS OUT AT BETHEL

Bethel, where Amos first preached, was an important shrine. The temple there belonged to the king himself. It was the national shrine of Israel. The high priest of Bethel was Amaziah. But Amos had dared to criticize both the priests and the king himself.

Amaziah was furious; he was sure that Amos had been paid to cause a disturbance. Obviously some wealthy Judean just wanted to stir up the Israelites. Amaziah told Amos to go home to Judah to prophesy to those persons who were paying him.

Amos replied that he was not being paid to prophesy. He was just a simple man who had been sent to prophesy to God's people.

As a prophet, Amos spoke to the people for God. The word prophet comes from two Greek words meaning "to speak for." Amos was not predicting the future. He was speaking for God about the situation in his day.

What the Scripture Says

The Scripture for today is Amos 1:1; 7. Selected verses are printed below.

Amos 1:1

1 The words of Amos, who was among the shepherds of Tekoa, which he saw concerning Israel in the days of Uzziah king of Judah and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash, king of Israel, two years before the earthquake.

Amos 7:7-15

7 He showed me: behold, the Lord was standing beside a wall built with a plumb line, with a plumb line in his hand. 8 And the Lord said to me, "Amos, what do you see?" And I said, "A plumb line." Then the Lord said,

"Behold, I am setting a plumb line in the midst of my people Israel;

I will never again pass by them;

9 the high places of Isaac shall be made desolate, and the sanctuaries of Israel shall be laid waste, and I will rise against the house of Jeroboam with the sword."

10 Then Amaziah the priest of Bethel sent to Jeroboam king of Israel, saying, "Amos has conspired against you in the midst of the house of Israel; the land is not able to bear all his words. 11 For thus Amos has said,

'Jeroboam shall die by the sword, and Israel must go into exile away from his land.'

12 And Amaziah said to Amos, "O seer, go, flee away to the land of Judah, and eat bread there, and prophesy there; 13 but never again prophesy at Bethel, for it is the king's sanctuary, and it is a temple of the kingdom."

14 Then Amos answered Amaziah, "I am no prophet, nor a prophet's son; but I am a herdsman, and a dresser of sycamore trees, 15 and the Lord took me from following the flock, and the Lord said to me, 'Go, prophesy to my people Israel.'"

Memory Selection:

The Lord God has spoken; who can but prophesy?

—Amos 3:8

How We Understand the Scripture

Being a shepherd gives a man a lot of time to think, and Amos was a deeper thinker than most shepherds. He was a very religious man; he knew the laws of God and took them seriously. As he traveled from place to place, Amos was disturbed because most of the people he met paid no attention to God's laws. Merchants were cheating their customers; rich men were stealing the property of the poor; the poor were literally starving to death; and no one cared. The people claimed to believe in God, but they lived as though they had never heard of him.

CORRUPT PRIESTS

Amos was amazed. When he visited the temples, they were full of people. Sacrifices were offered to God every day, but the people who brought the sacrifices forgot God as soon as they left the temple. Amos knew that the priests would not stand for this sort of nonsense. As soon as they saw what was going on, they would call their people to repent.

Amos waited a long time, but the priests were silent. In fact, they were among the worst offenders. They joined with the rich to steal from the poor. They gave sacrifices to pagan idols in God's own temples. Sick at heart, Amos turned away from the priests and looked for help elsewhere.

RESPONSIBILITIES IGNORED

Surely the kings and princes of Israel and Judah would soon do something about the wickedness in their lands. Again, Amos was disappointed. The kings were no better than the priests and the people. They forgot their promises to God and concentrated on getting richer; they appointed corrupt officials and judges; they shut their ears to the cries of the needy.

But there was still one ray of hope. Both Israel and Judah had groups of professional prophets whose job was to proclaim God's will to the kings, the priests, and the people. The early prophets had attacked sin and idolatry wherever they found it, even in the king's palace.

Amos waited for the prophets of his day to speak out. Once again, he was disappointed. The prophets were paid by the kings and took their orders from them. When the kings broke God's laws, the prophets looked the other way.

IMPENDING DISASTER

Amos was close to despair. He knew that God would not put up with this situation for long. If the people did not change their ways soon, they faced disaster. They had broken their covenant with God. Didn't they realize that God was about to punish them?

As Amos looked at Israel, the northern Kingdom, he saw the

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Not This . . .



Discarded linens and refrigerators are death traps for children each year. Never discard such items with door and latch left on.

But This . . .



Always remove the door of any refrigerator or icebox which is to be discarded, the Red Cross emphasizes.