

THE FUTURE OUTLOOK

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N. C. HEART NEWS BUREAU

A young man sat in the waiting room of his doctor's office one afternoon. Suddenly he moaned and toppled off his chair.

His heart and stopped. Technically, he was dead. The doctor rushed out, took one look at his patient—who had been waiting for a routine physical check-up—and with the help of his nurse, rolled him on his back, undid his collar, tilted his head back and started to work.

As the nurse breathed through the patient's mouth, forcing air in and out of his lungs, ten to twelve times a minute, the doctor put his hands at the base of the breastbone and began to pump rhythmically, sixty times a minute.

While the stunned people in the waiting room watched, the team continued to pump oxygenated blood through the man's body to keep up the artificial circulation until his heart could take over.

Eventually, his heart did begin to beat again, as it often does in such cases, and the young man recovered—literally brought back from the dead by the quick action of the doctor and his nurse.

The doctor later discovered through tests given at the hospital that a mild heart attack caused this "sudden death." There are other possible causes of sudden stoppage of the heart, according to the North Carolina Heart Association. It is something that occasionally happens during an operation or in drowning, electrical shock, suffocation, blood loss and severe drug reactions.

The victim of "sudden death" can recover fully—provided trained help is available immediately.

Speed is essential. If circulation stops for as little as four minutes, the delicate tissues of the brain can suffer irreparable damage from a shortage of oxygen.

For many years the only practical place to revive a stopped heart was the operating room because the only successful way to keep blood circulating was to massage the heart by hand, and that involved opening the chest cavity.

In 1960 the picture changed. A team from Johns Hopkins Medical School devised and perfected the technique for closed-chest massage used later by the young man's doctor.

As closed-chest compression has gained wide acceptance, more and more people likely to be confronted with heart arrest are being trained when to use closed-chest massage and how to do it properly, and a statewide training program by the North Carolina Heart Association and its local heart groups is now underway. Simple as the technique is, even a physician needs special training to avoid damage to the heart, lungs, liver and ribs.

In some cases of "sudden death" the heart will not resume normal beating and becomes a mass of twitching, quivering fibers—its usually well-coordinated electrical system gone awry.

In such a case, the quivering heart is unable to pump and will not begin beating of its own accord.

Electronics have come to the rescue and with devices known as defibrillators, a jolt of electricity is given to the heart to halt the quivering. Then the electrical system can begin to work as it should and the beat resumes.

Defibrillators have recently become standard emergency equipment in hospitals.

Advances in reversing "sudden deaths" have been so dramatic in the past few years that some physicians are dreaming of even bigger and better rescue techniques.

One such dream is that circulation can be maintained mechanically after "death" for hours, or even days, while physicians attempt to correct the cause of death.

Several machines to handle artificial pumping have already been designed and the biggest stumbling blocks to this particular dream are the medical techniques needed actually to reverse a fatal illness.

But visionary as such dreams may seem, one can never tell what the future may hold.

Certainly at the turn of the century, the hopes of reviving stopped hearts must have fallen into the same dream category, and we can all take heart that physicians have these dreams—and the perseverance and dedication to try to make them come true.

This Week's Sunday School Lesson**THE NEW PEOPLE OF GOD****Beginning Where You Are**

Trying to describe our human situation, the poet Conrad Aiken thought of two gods playing chess. At the end of the game one of the pawns is carelessly dropped to the floor. It rolls into a dark corner and lies there forgotten.

Today millions of people feel like that forgotten pawn. They feel they are mere numbers rather than persons. Slum dwellers think society has passed them by and doesn't care. Delinquents believe they haven't had a fair chance. Young people feel that adults won't listen to them.

A favorite theme of contemporary novels and plays is the feeling of alienation on the part of their characters. Last year both Protestant and Catholic film commissions gave awards to two films, *Rachel, Rachel* and *The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter*, whose stories dealt with lonely people.

All sorts of people — young and old, rich and poor, black and white — feel alone. The Scripture for this lesson speaks to all lonely people.

Searching The Scriptures

The Scripture for this lesson is Joshua 24; Matthew 18:1-20; John 17. Selected verses are printed below.

Matthew 18:10-20

10 "See that you do not despise one of these little ones; for I tell you that in heaven their angels always behold the face of my Father who is in heaven. 12 What do you think? If a man has a hundred sheep, and one of them has gone astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine on the hills and go in search of the one that went astray? 13 And if he finds it, truly, I say to you, he rejoices over it more than over the ninety-nine that never went astray. 14 So it is not the will of my Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish.

15 "If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. 16 But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses. 17 If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church, and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. 18 Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. 19 Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. 20 For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

Memory Selection:

Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

—Matthew 18:20

Exploring The Questions

The passages in Joshua, Matthew, and John tell a progressive story of God's search for

a people to love and serve him.

Toward the end of his life, after successfully leading Israel into the Promised Land, Joshua reminded the people of Israel that God had brought them safely out of Egyptian slavery and through the wilderness years. Now he had established them in the land God promised to Abraham.

Then Joshua challenged the people. Would they be faithful to the God who had chosen them, or would they worship the gods of their defeated enemies? In a great service of covenant renewal the people declared, "We will serve the Lord." (Joshua 24)

Twelve hundred years later God's love for the world led him to send his Son to mankind. The sayings of Jesus gathered in Matthew 18 express God's concern for little children, for the lost and the needy.

In John 17, we hear Jesus praying for himself as he faced his trial and Crucifixion, for his disciples as they continued his work, and for all those down the ages who accept the Christian faith.

These three chapters together give us a comprehensive statement of the biblical view of God's purpose in his dealings with men.

In an age of faith these passages might have been enough to convince the lonely and the outcast that God does indeed care for them. But ours is a skeptical and doubting age. If we are to help these multitudes find faith, we must be prepared to listen to their tough questions.

If God exists, why doesn't he just impose his will on the world?

Why should we or any other people think we are God's special favorites?

If God really desires a people, what would they be like? What does he expect his people to do?

Does the church of today look and act like the people of God?

Finding Help**With Your Questions**

We have often heard how Peter Bohler, the Moravian missionary, told a discouraged young Anglican priest named John Wesley to preach faith until he had faith. We also know that you cannot prove God's reality by logical demonstration. The Bible never attempts to do so. It is the mission of men and women of faith to declare and live their faith. Only thus can they perform their mission to lonely and alienated.

A Christian lives by certain faith assumptions. The following ideas are basic.

1. There is a God who is at work to establish righteousness. Those who reject the idea of a creator God have to accept an even more difficult idea, namely, that this universe, which operates according to dependable laws, came into being by blind chance.

Those of us who prefer to believe that our world is the work of a self-conscious, purposeful intelligence also believe that God continues his creative activity in the forces of nature and in

the processes of history. This faith Joshua stated at Shechem. (Joshua 24:2-13)

2. This God is actively seeking men to share in his work of creation.

God's character is portrayed by Jesus in his parable of a shepherd who seeks a lost sheep. (Matthew 18:12-14) God cannot bear to see the men he created for fellowship wandering in the wilderness of selfishness.

This faith in a God whose will is righteousness and who steadfastly seeks a people is basic. It underlies our faith in Christ, in the church, and in the future. It enables us to live the present moment with dignity and confidence.

3. This God does not coerce but seeks the willing cooperation of men.

Rocks and hills, floods and tides, and the stars in their courses have no choice. They blindly follow the forces of nature. But men are created in the image of God. This means at least that they share God's power of decision and purpose.

This is the reason why, at Shechem, Joshua confronted the tribes with a choice. He recited what God had done for them, but he recognized that many of them had been impressed by the gods of Egypt and of the pagan people around them. Hence a choice had to be made. (Joshua 24:14-28)

"Choose this day whom you will serve." (Verse 15) Those who choose the Lord become his people. Through them he works to establish his will.

4. The people God seeks as his own are called from every race and nation.

Throughout history great nations have arisen, each thinking it was the special favorite of God. Usually they have used this conviction to justify the establishment of military and political dominion over weaker people.

The Old Testament affirms that God chose the Hebrew people not for power but for service. (See Isaiah 42:6; 49:6; Lukt 2:32.)

Very early the church, composed as it was of Jews and gentiles from all parts of the known world, came to regard itself as "the new Israel," the heir of God's ancient promises. This is why Peter declared, "You (the church) are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people." (See 1 Peter 2:9-10.) The church of today is likewise called to be the new people of God.

Characteristics of God's People

But what are God's people like? If we accept our call, what is expected of us? The Scripture for this lesson gives us several leads.

1. Commitment. We have already noted that Joshua required a decision. Israel could not serve both the God of Abraham and the baals of Canaan. Jesus declared that we cannot serve both God and riches. (Matthew 6:24)

We must make up our minds whose side we are on. Are we committed to God's purpose to

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