PIONEER PREACHERS OF THE ROCKIES

LEVETTE J. DAVIDSON

The church, like other great institutions, rests upon a solid foundation of inherited traditions and past accomplishments. Through a knowledge of the works of our predecessors, we gain perspective. Standing upon the shoulders of the men of yesterday, we see more clearly our tasks of today and tomorrow. We see, also, what led to success and what caused failure. Man is, so to speak, a time-binder, whose roots go down into the rich soil of his cultural heritage. He is also the link connecting this past with a potentially greater future. Inspiration as well as instruction may be drawn from the record of the activities of the religious founders of the West, for this story portrays the reaction of strong and devoted human beings undergoing great trials. Their lives rival in interest the careers of fictional heroes and heroines.

This article will present, for the most part, examples of the hardships and the opportunities which the pioneer preacher encountered on the Colorado frontier between the discovery of gold in 1858 and the coming of the railroad in 1870. These were the years of uncertainty and of great privation. In the remote parts of the Rocky Mountain West, however, similar conditions prevailed down until recent times.

Sabbath-keeping on the frontier was often in keen competition with Sabbath-breaking. The following description of Gregory Diggings in 1859, by the journalist, A. D. Richardson, illustrates this point:

"On Sunday morning, a walk through the diggings revealed nearly all the miners disguised in clean clothing. Some were reading and writing letters, some ministering to the sick, and some enacting the part of every-man-his-own-washer-woman — rubbing valiantly away at the tub. Several hundred men, in the open air, were attending public worship . . . They were roughly clad, displaying weapons at their belts; and represented every section of the Union and almost every nation of the earth. They sat upon logs and stumps, a most attentive congregation, while the clergyman upon a rude platform preached from the text: 'Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy'."[1]

Early church services, even in the settlements on the plains, were crude affairs. The following account, taken from the letters of William Larimer, describes the first church meeting in what is now Denver. It was conducted by an elder of the Methodist Church, George W. Fisher, on November 21, 1858. William Larimer was only eighteen at the time he wrote this letter.

"It was a morning service. The congregation was small although Mr. Fisher and my father went around and invited everybody to attend. There were no church bells to ring, no finely draped ladies, no choir, no pews to sit in. But seated on the buffalo robes spread on the ground, with the Jones and Smith squaws present (there were no other ladies), Fisher, father, myself and perhaps six or eight others held the first religious service ever held in this country . . . In the opposite end of the cabin I could hear the money jingle where the gambling was going on at the same time Mr. Fisher was preaching."[2]

In fact, organized Methodism preceded organized government in the Pike's Peak region. Under authority from the Kansas and Nebraska conference, which met in Omaha on April 14, 1859, W. H. Goode and Jacob Adri-

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[1] Albert D. Richardson, *Beyond the Mississippi*, Hartford, 1867, pp. 198-199.

[2] Larimer, *Reminiscences*, p. 117. Quoted by LeRoy R. Hafen, *Colorado*, Denver, 1933, p. 127.

ance set out for the Rocky Mountain mines to serve the newly-created "Pikes Peak and Cherry Creek Mission." Arriving in Denver, May 30, 1859, they held their first church service in Pollock's Hotel on June 3. A month later they went up to Gregory Diggings and held services there and in the other mining districts in the weeks which followed.[3]

The first Sunday School in the Pike's Peak Region, as the frontier mining area was called, was held in Denver in the autumn of 1859. It was described as follows in J. E. Wharton's *History of the City of Denver*:

"A Sabbath School of all sects and denominations, was inaugurated by Rev. Geo. W. Fisher, Rev. Jacob Adriance and Messrs. Lewis N. Tappan, D. C. Collier and O. J. Goldrick. This school met at the residence of the ministers mentioned, in Auraria, near Cherry Creek."[4]

The pioneer preacher found opportunities to serve, also, among the overland caravans which dotted the plains between the Missouri River and the Rockies. Reverend W. H. Goode describes one such incident, which occurred on his fifty-second birthday, while he was traveling to Colorado in 1859.

"In the midst of these scenes I passed my fifty-second birthday. It was a Sabbath. I remained in camp; read, thought, prayed. My library for the Plains is not large, but select. The catalogue is as follows: Bible, Hymn-Book, Discipline, Wesley's Sermons, Mason's Self-Knowledge, my faithful companions at home and abroad. Near by was a camp of jolly Missourians, and others, keeping the Sabbath also. They had a fiddle, banjo, rattle-bones, guns, revolvers, whiskey, and other requisites for 'A good time, generally.' In all my frontier work and intercourse, I have endeavored to keep to the maxim quoted with approbation by Mr. Wesley, and long ago copied by me among the mottoes that daily meet my eye in the old portfolio in which I now write: 'Homo sum—humanum nihil a me alienum puto.'

"Acting upon this principle I visited their encampment, conversed freely a few moments, passed no direct censure, found two sick men, tendered them aid and medicine, and returned to camp. In the afternoon they sent a deputation to invite me to preach to them. I readily consented, and an hour after had — to my self at least — a comfortable season in inviting the 'laboring and heavy-laden' to come to Christ, felt my heart strongly drawn out in my work, found the children of pious parents, spent considerable part of the afternoon with them, they cheerfully uniting in singing the 'songs of Zion in that strange land.' All was orderly and quiet. We parted. I met them afterward at the mines, and they seemed to feel that they had found a friend."[5]

Reverend Goode, in another part of his book, *Outpost of Zion*, tells of his first service in Denver as follows:

"The first Sabbath after our arrival we had notices out for preaching in the towns, morning and afternoon, and an interest seemed to be felt in the matter. But no one was sufficiently interested to make a business of circulating them; and our exceeding modesty, as strangers, had led us, for this time, to commit the arrangements to others. As the hour approached, finding our congregation likely to be rather slim, I went around to the crowds however engaged, personally invited them in, and at length succeeded in obtaining a tolerable assemblage. Allen Wiley once said in my hearing, 'Methodist preachers are in a pushing world, and they must push too.' This applies peculiarly to frontier work, and ever after I prac-

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[3] Isaac H. Beardsley, *Echoes from Peak and Plain*, Cincinnati, 1898, pp. 224-231.
[4] Denver, 1866, pp. 33-34.
[5] William H. Goode, *Outposts of Zion*, Cincinnati, 1864, pp. 405-451.

ticed upon it. When necessary — for at some points, even here, it is not — I have posted written notices, then mounted a mule and rode around the evening previous to ranches, houses, booths, tents, wagons, liquor stands, and card-tables, and from all these places have invited them out. But one of the most effectual means, after all, is to sing them up; and in this I have a most efficient aid in the fine musical powers of Brother Adriance. There is a power in song; and perhaps no where else more felt and seen than here among those so long absent from religious associations."

These religious pioneers had to have great adaptability, physical strength, endurance, strong convictions, and courage. As an example of adaptability we have "Father" John L. Dyer. His autobiography, *The Snow-Shoe Itinerant*, Cincinnati, 1890, tells of circuit riding in the Rockies in the early days of the gold rush. Coming to Colorado in 1861, penniless but determined to "preach the truth burning hot," he pawned his watch in Denver and set out on a tour of the mining towns. After ministering to the camps at South Park, Buckskin Joe, Montgomery and Fairplay, he crossed the Mosquito Range to California Gulch, Oro, and Cache Creek, the first man to preach in Gunnison County. Finding his parishioners unable to support him, he earned his living by carrying mail over the Mosquito Range. Every week the mail went through, and three times a week he preached. Alone he wandered over the perilous mountains, carrying his message of comfort and courage in the storms of summer and the savage winds and snows of winter. On a pair of homemade skis, which he called snow-shoes, he followed the Indian trails over the moutains. For sixty years he labored at his chosen work, extending his mission even into New Mexico. Although a Methodist minister, he was called "Father" Dyer and was welcomed by peoples of all faiths.

There was much of truth in the old description of the Western population: "Only the strong reached the mountains. The cowards never started; and the weak died along the way." Even greater than ordinary strength of dedication and of conviction was needed by the pioneer preacher. The following story is told, for example, of the missionary B. F. Perkins: "Once when riding in the Black Hills he came by chance upon some rich pieces of ore, which he naturally picked up and put away carefully in his handkerchief. Then as he found his mind coming back to those bits of rock — to their probable value and to a possible mining claim — he realized that his thoughts were being distracted from his great mission. At once he untied his handkerchief, shook it to the winds, and then, dropping on his knees in prayer, rededicated himself to his spiritual task."[6]

The frontier settlement constituted a great challenge to the church, for the mining towns of the Pike's Peak region and the outfitting towns on the plains were from the beginning dedicated to Mammon. The lures of gold and of quick profits from trade were magnets drawing people away from settled communities and settled ways of life into an environment characterized by restlessness, impermanence, materialism, and the gambling spirit. Such was not an atmosphere conducive to religious developments, however great the need for them. One shocked traveller reported that as he passed through a mountain camp, he found the air blue with the fumes of hell. Often saloons, gambling dens, and disreputable houses outnumbered the grocery stores and churches. The railroad towns which developed as the railroads built West were no better. In fact, the end of the line settlement was usually called "Hell

[6] Colin B. Goodykoontz, *Home Missions on the American Frontier*, Caldwell, Idaho, 1939, p. 318.

on Wheels." Even early-day Denver had to have its vigilance committee to combat lawlessness.

The West provided, also, promising mission fields. The uncivilized native Indian tribes, for the most part on reservations, were still to be Christianized, although Catholic fathers had ministered to some of them for more than a century. The Spanish-American communities in the Southwest, because of their backward ways of living, were cited by zealous Protestants as evidence that the Catholics had failed, and that Protestant missions were needed. The Mormon settlements in Utah were regarded with horror by the Protestant mission societies, because of the doctrine and practice of polygamy, which was in the early days a vital part of the religion of the Latter Day Saints. But the record of Western home missions is another story. Those interested may read of it in the books by Dr. William Warren Sweet, and Dr. Colin B. Goodykoontz.

The parasites and exploiters who followed the miners into each new field of discovery rarely took the trouble to oppose the Church. Deep down in themselves these human beings respected the Men of God who sought to serve, without personal profit, the people in the remote and raw settlements. After describing the usual difficulties, Lanson P. Norcross, for example, wrote as follows concerning the facilities which were available for public worship in a mining community in the Black Hills of Dakota in 1876:

"We have the present use of the Inter-Ocean Hotel, free of rent. It is a fearfully cold place, which the best efforts of a powerful stove cannot make comfortable on a moderately cold day ... We have the use of an organ — the only one in town, I believe. It does duty every night at a concert and faro hall. We go and get it Sunday morning and carry it back before dark. Thus you see it does duty for God and Mammon both—not quite scriptural, I fear."[7]

There is a story, perhaps true, that "Pap" Wyman, proprietor of Leadville's most famous saloon in the 1880s, had a large Bible and a pulpit brought out from the East and that he located them conspicuously in his place of business, offering them free for the use of visiting ministers. Parson Uzzell, later of the People's Tabernacle of Denver, is said to have preached from them frequently to a saloon audience.

Among the physical difficulties that the pioneer preacher had to encounter were the lack of good roads, the sparseness of population, and the rigors of mountain climate and travel. These are illustrated in the following descriptions. The first is the story as told by Dr. Sheldon Jackson of the journey made by the Rev. George M. Darley, of the Presbyterian Church, and a companion through the San Juan mountains.

"They procured a burro to carry their blankets and provisions, and started out on foot, March 20. The snow was from one to five feet deep, and the distance of 125 miles through a wilderness without an inhabitant except at the Ute Indian Agency. The first day they walked twenty-five miles, reaching a deserted log cabin. During the day the tin-plates and coffee pot were lost from the burro. And the third day, the bread by constant jolting upon the burro had become so fine as to necessitate eating with a spoon, while the snow storms were so continuous, that much of the way they could not find any wood dry enough to make a fire. After a couple hours of sleep, they were up and on their way at 5 a.m. All that long day they tramped through the snow in the face of a snow storm so severe that they made only fifteen miles. That night they lay down in the snow in a roofless cabin. Unable to sleep in their wet clothes, they arose at midnight and at 3 a.m. started on, making by night thirty-four miles. Lying down

[7] *Ibid.*

in the mud and slush, they were kept awake by the wolves, scenting the provisions, and coming so near that the snap of their teeth in the darkness had a most ominous sound. The fourth night, in the midst of a severe snow storm, they reached the Indian Agency, having had altogether only about three hours' sleep in three nights. Four days and three nights their clothes had been soaking wet and part of the time frozen. Their feet and legs had swollen to twice their natural size, and they were in danger of being permanently crippled.

"While bathing their limbs with whiskey, an old frontiersman, looking on, thought it was a great waste of whiskey. He would have taken it internally and rubbed the limbs with the bottle.

"And now comes the last and hardest day of all. It is twenty-five miles to Ouray, every step of which will be made by acute pain and torture. In that twenty-five miles the Uncompahgre river, a rushing mountain torrent of ice-water, is to be waded twenty-one times . . .

"Coming to the river, seizing hold of the ears and tail of the burro, they would throw him off the steep snow bank into the stream and then plunge in after him. Placing a pole in the rocks below them, they were kept from being swept down by the swift current and thus, waist-deep, they waded through the ice-water to the farther shore. Another mile through the snow and then another ice-bath and thus snow and ice-water until 8 p.m., when he arrived in Ouray, the first minister of the gospel."[8]

Since populations were scattered, the area to be covered by the itinerant was often very extensive and but vaguely defined. Father Dyer was said to have told Reverend Thomas Harwood in 1869 that he should do as follows in order to locate his territory in New Mexico:

"Get your pony shod, then start out northward via Fort Union, Ocate, Elizabethtown, Cimarron, Vermejo and Red River until you meet a Methodist preacher coming this way, then come back on some other road and rest up a little; thence go south via Las Vegas, etc., until you meet another Methodist preacher coming this way; thence home again and rest a little; thence westward and eastward until you meet other Methodist preachers coming this way. All this will be your work."[9]

Long before gold was discovered in the Rockies, missionary priests of the Catholic Church were laboring in the Southwest. With Santa Fe, the City of the Holy Faith, as the center of their missionary work, these pioneer churchmen attempted to Christianize the natives and to serve the little communities of the Spanish-speaking people which extended north through New Mexico and into the San Luis Valley of what was later called Colorado. They built at Conejos a church, Our Lady of Guadalupe, in the late '50s. This was probably the first religious edifice in Colorado.

Among the pioneer preachers and priests of Colorado, we should list, in addition to "Father" Dyer, Reverend Adriance, Reverend Goode, and Reverend Darley, all referred to above; such well-known spiritual leaders as Father Machebeuf, later Bishop of the Catholic Church in Colorado; Reverend Charles H. Marshall, Episcopalian rector in Georgetown, Leadville, and Denver, for nearly half a century; Dean Henry Martyn Hart, of St. John's Cathedral; Reverend Myron Reed, of the Congregational church; Father William O'Ryan; and many others, a few of them

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[8] Quoted by Goodykoontz, *op. cit.* pp. 308-309. cf. Rev. George M. Darley, *Pioneering in the San Juan*, Chicago 1899.

[9] Quoted by Goodykoontz, p. 325, from Thomas Harwood, *History of New Mexico Spanish and English Missions of the Methodist Episcopal Church from* 1850 *to* 1910, Albuquerque, 1908-10.

still living. It is said that Reverend Marshall, between his ordination in 1874 and his retirement in 1920, performed 14,000 marriages and conducted 12,000 burials. Although I witnessed no one of these, I remember with pleasure a talk which he gave a few years before his death in 1930, on his experiences ministering to his congregation in Georgetown in the early days. Father Machebeuf, who was immortalized, together with Bishop Lamy of Santa Fe, in Willa Cather's "Death Comes for the Archbishop," came to Denver on October 29, 1860, and held a service in the nearly completed Catholic Church, on Christmas Eve, 1860.[10] Under his direction the first church bell was brought to Denver by ox-team freight in 1863. After it was broken by a fall in 1864, he ordered a new one, twice as large, and a smaller one for the Sisters' Academy in Denver. These were brought out from St. Louis, in July, 1865, at a cost of $305.90 for transportation alone. They were used in the early days to announce fires and Indian scares, as well as church services.[11]

Many additional stories of the work of an early-day pastor are contained in the Rev. George M. Darley's *Pioneering in the San Juan.* Some are suggested by the following chapter headings: Lost on the Range, Hell's Cave, Killed by a Snow Slide, Comical Scenes in Church, Grand Scenery, Experience with Indians, The "What I Used To Do In The East" Kind of a Christian, and Two Men Lynched.

In paying tribute to the Christian pioneers, we should not neglect the frontier preacher's wife. When Jacob Adriance, who had come to Colorado with W. H. Goode in 1859, returned from the Kansas-Nebraska conference in 1860, he brought with him as his bride a New York girl, Miss Fanny A. Rogers, daughter of a member of the Central New York conference. The following from one of Reverend Adriance's letters indicates the kind of a life she experienced.

"On our return we crossed the Plains at the rate of twenty-eight to thirty miles a day, reaching Golden about the first of July, and began housekeeping in a little cabin 12 x 14, with no floor, one door, half a window on each side, slab roof eaves about five feet high, three stools, and a little sheet-iron stove. Kept house three months without a chair.

"When Presiding Elder Chivington came to stop over night, he had a much better bed than I had a number of times the year before, in the same place; for I had previously, with a pick and sledge-hammer broken off, pounded down, or dug up some of the stones among which I had wriggled down, so that I could rest a little and sleep. Further, I had covered the ground with saw dust, then with hay, upon which we had put a carpet of gunny-sacks, tacked down with wooden pegs driven into the ground. So, with a few blankets, a pair of nice white cotton or linen sheets, and a big feather-bed, we made him quite comfortable. But wife had to wait in the morning until he got up before breakfast could be started. A wedding party of four came to stop over night. We bunked on the ground with a part of them, giving the newly-married pair the bedstead with one leg, of my own make.

"When wife and I visited on the circuit, she rode the pony and I took it afoot. I carried my revolver and knife in my belt. On the whole, we had a good year; some souls converted."[12]

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[10] Jerome C. Smiley, *History of Denver,* Denver, 1901, p. 727.

[11] Rev. W. J. Howlett, *Life of the Right Reverend Joseph P. Machebeuf,* Pueblo, Colorado, 1908, p. 323.

[12] Beardsley, *op. cit.,* p. 236. Reverend Adriance's diaries for 1857-1862, which are in the Western Collection of the Denver Public Library, make very interesting reading.

Glimpses into the social life of pioneer communities and the part taken in it by the preacher are afforded by the following quotations from Emma Shepard Hill's descriptions of her experiences in Empire, Colorado, in 1865 and 1866. Although written much later, they present her reactions at the time when she was a girl of fifteen. "My aunt has gone away to live in her home. She married a man who has a fine ranch near Divide. She had a nice wedding. There were forty guests here — all the best people of the town. You can imagine our small house was crowded. The minister came on horseback from Georgetown — of course, at my father's expense. There was a rumor that one of the old bachelors was going to be married soon. The young fellows guessed it, because this man, who is said to be the stingiest person in the town, had been to the store and bought two bars of common soap, when he had never been known to buy more than one at a time. The young lady he went with was an English girl of good family. The night my aunt was to be married, this old bachelor kept watch along the road over which the minister would come, and when he saw him, asked him to go to the girl's home and marry them first. The minister was willing, and so they were married. Later in the evening this man and his new wife were seen to go to the bachelor's house. That was enough evidence for the young men about town, and they quickly made plans to give the couple a serenade — in other words, a charivari; and they certainly made it a success from their standpoint. We could hear the noise from our house; in fact, I think all the town could hear. They hooted, and yelled, and rang cow bells, and fired pistols, and beat on any old pan or iron they could find. When all this racket failed to bring a response from the man, the boys took an ax, pried up one of the windows, opened the door, and let themselves in. Then they compelled the man to go with them down to the store and give them everything they wanted in the way of refreshments; after which they locked the man in the store and kept him there all night. I have often wondered since if the minister received any fee for this extra wedding.

"We are again without a minister. Mr. Mellis was rather delicate. Perhaps the air was too light for him. He died this summer. The whole town mourns his loss. There was a large funeral. The Masons had charge of it. They came from Central City and Georgetown and Idaho Springs — a very large number of them. The services were held in the town hall. This is a long, wide frame building, and it was full of people. The Masons used for a dressing-room a small one overhead, which had been roughly finished, with an outside stairway. So many of them crowded into this little room that the floor broke through. If the building had been of brick, I am sure the walls would have fallen; but it is all wood. The walls and ceiling are made of narrow boards without plaster. Some men ran out and told them the floor was coming through, and they quickly left the room; but in the meantime everyone had gone out of the hall. It was an unsafe thing to do; for this breaking floor was near the door (the only one in the building) and everybody had to pass under this spot. But finally nearly everyone came in again."[18]

To be added to the many other firsts on the record of Methodist pioneering in the Rocky Mountain West is the establishment of Colorado's first magazine. It was a religious periodical, *The Rocky Mountain Sunday School Casket,* edited and published by the Rev. B. T. Vincent from January 1864, to October 1868, first in Central City and later in Denver. The Reverend Mr. Vincent felt the need of a more regular

[18] Emma Shepard Hill, *A Dangerous Crossing and What Happened on the Other Side,* Denver, 1914, pp. 72-75.

supply of Sunday School materials than was furnished by Methodist publishers in the East. He also desired to draw together the Methodist Episcopal Sunday Schools of Nevada, Central City, and Blackhawk, Colorado. In order to accomplish both of these goals, he originated and carried out plans for this quarterly which should include not only lesson material and didactic literature, but also news notes and announcements of interest to the church workers of these mountain communities. With the coming of the railroad, the original need for Sunday School materials was met by imports; so Vincent discontinued the *Casket*.[14]

Another pioneer religious publication is the *Rocky Mountain Presbyterian*, founded in 1870 by the Rev. Sheldon Jackson, then superintendent of Presbyterian missions for New Mexico, Colorado, Wyoming, Utah, Montana, and Idaho. In spite of the many demands made upon his time Mr. Jackson continued this publication on his own responsibility until it was taken over by the Board of Home Missions of his church, in 1882. Although he dated it from Denver Mr. Jackson edited, printed and circulated it from different places, depending upon his many travels and upon the financial support and printing services which he could secure from time to time.

Many other church periodicals have sprung up in Colorado and the neighboring states since the time of the *Rocky Mountain Sunday School Casket* and the *Rocky Mountain Presbyterian*. The latest of these, the *Iliff Review*, has just made its appearance. Under the sponsorship of The Iliff School of Theology, this attractive journal should have a long and useful existence.

Space does not permit the description here of the pioneer work of Methodist preachers in the development of education in the Rocky Mountain West. That is another story, parts of which may be found in chapter thirteen of Isaac H. Beardsley's valuable history, *Echoes From Peak and Plain*. The University of Denver and The Iliff School of Theology, however, rest upon the foundations laid by Methodist leaders who realized that ignorance is no protection against evil and that knowledge, skills, and appreciations are essential tools for the building of the Kingdom of God on earth.

We of a later generation should be inspired by the example of our predecessors to contribute our full share to the realization of this ideal. Our difficulties and our opportunities differ from those present on the frontier, but the same enthusiasm and determination are needed now. Reverend W. H. Goode's exhortation is in most respects still valid. He wrote from Auraria, Kansas Territory (now Denver, Colorado), on August, 1859:

"Whatever may be said of other aspects of the case, the Church has a great work to do here. That point is settled. 'A great door and effectual is opened,' — and there are few adversaries — suddenly, mysteriously opened, and it were faithlessness to Christ's cause to neglect it. Thousands are here. Thousands more are coming whether we advise it or not. They all have souls, all are the purchase of Christ's blood, all traveling to the bar of God. Many of them are our brethren, Christians, Methodists; some are humble seekers of religion, as we have cause to know; some are, even there, struggling to break away from habits or dissipation and rise to a better life. They are accessible as other men, nay, in some respects more so, from the peculiar circumstances thrown around them, if rightly approached. They want the Word of Life. They must

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[14] It is worth noting that the only known file of this magazine is in the library of the State Historical Society of Colorado. *Cf.* L. J. Davidson, "Colorado's First Magazine," *The Colorado-Wyoming Journal of Letters*, February, 1939.

have it. Let none stand at a distance, coldly calculate the cost, and, like the miner standing on his claim, ask 'Will it pay?' 'That's none of your business,' said Wellington to a young divine who asked his opinion as to the probable success of the British missions in India; 'your business is to obey orders, and your orders are to "go into all the world and preach the Gospel".' But it will pay, it is now paying, feeble as is the beginning, in the spiritual edification, improvement, and perseverance of our people here, in saving youth, the children of the Church, from destruction, in leavening this rising community with a healthful moral and religious influence. And it will pay eventually, should success attend, in remunerative contributions to the fund that has aided them in the hour of their struggle, for miners are proverbially liberal. More men, too, will be wanted for the work. Let none dread the privations; there are some truly, but what of that, even though mountains of difficulty were in the way of the salvation of souls? I find, however, upon a near approach, that, the journey once over, the actual privations are fewer, and outward comforts and privileges greater than I have found in any one of my previous fields of frontier labor when first entered upon."[15]

15 William H. Goode, *op. cit.*

"MORE THINGS ARE WROUGHT BY PRAYER"

WILLIAM H. BERNHARDT

The meaning of prayer is determined, primarily, by what one expects of religion. When men believed they could control the weather by means of religion, prayer was defined as a form of petition. Men prayed for and expected definite things. When they defined religion as "personal fellowship, morally conditioned,"[1] prayer meant a form of communion with God. Under these conditions, prayer as petition for specific things had little if any meaning. When one considers religion to be a form of individual and group behavior whereby the unsatisfactory and inescapable conditions of life are made to contribute positively to significant living by reinterpreting such unsatisfactory situations in the light of one's knowledge of God,[2] prayer may be defined as a technique whereby one seeks to establish sympathetic relations with Deity. More specifically, it is the attempt to establish such sympathetic relations with God by vocal and attitudinal means.

Prayer so defined always involves God. There are many forms of human behavior which include words and attitudes, but they are not necessarily prayer. They have their own names: meditation, suggestion, even reflection or thinking. Prayer, in terms of this theory of religion, is always an attempt to relate oneself to God in constructive ways. In this relationship, normally vocal and attitudinal, one learns to view life in more inclusive terms. He learns to view it not only in terms of his own immediate concerns and interests, but also in terms of that larger panorama — the divine perspective.

The goal of religious living is the achievement and maintenance of poise and serenity no matter how difficult life may be; the achievement and preservation of courage, confidence and hope even though victory may appear infinitely remote. Prayer, as the attempt to establish sympathetic relations between the individual and God, may become an highly effective means whereby these goals of religious living may be realized.

1 This is the definition of religion presented by Dr. Harris Franklin Rall in many of his books.
2 This theory of religion is developed more fully in "God as Dynamic Determinant," *The Journal of Religion,* October, 1943, pp. 280 ff.