



Rev. Calvin Rex

Rev. Calvin Rex keeps growing spiritually, learns from sickness

Rev. Calvin Rex, pastor of Zion United Church of Christ in Marietta, is a minister who has kept growing in his religious faith. Some of his spiritual growth he attributes to sickness.

A few years ago he was downtown in Marietta when he got chilled. When he came home he was still chilled. Moreover, he had a pain his side. Even though he didn't feel well he went to a consistory meeting at the church. A member of the consistory advised him to see a doctor. "I'll go tomorrow," said Rev. Rex.

That night when he went to bed he was shivering so violently that his bed creaked.

Then he did what some people might consider a strange thing: he thanked God for his sickness.

"I confessed my sins," he says. "I thought I might pass away. I asked my wife to read Psalm 23: 'Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death...' Then, I asked her to read Psalm 91: '...neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling, for he shall give his angels charge over thee...' He also asked his wife to read Matthew 8, about Jesus healing Peter's mother-in-law.

Rev. Rex was healed. His wife said, "You're well; the bed isn't shaking. You're not warm anymore."

The next morning Rev. Rex noted a swelled vein in his foot. When he went to see the doctor, the doctor

said, "Well, it's all over now." Apparently, Rev. Rex had suffered from blood poisoning.

Cured, Rev. Rex asked the Lord, "Why did I get sick in the first place?" Rev. Rex meditated and prayed. On the third day the Lord answered.

Rev. Rex says, "When I went to visit sick people I used to wonder: does God answer prayers?"

"I don't have any doubts anymore.

"I broke my wrist when I was roller skating... You laugh. Everybody laughs when they hear I broke my wrist while roller skating. I was roller skating with the Youth Fellowship. I had much pain. I went to the hospital to see if they couldn't open the cast, but they said they couldn't.

"So I tried the same procedure: I prayed to the Lord, and all of a sudden, there was no more pain.

"The Lord works in many different ways to reinforce our faith in Him, when we trust him.

"The Lord teaches us through experiences with sickness, if we are willing to learn what the Lord wants to teach us.

"Many people who don't get to church, turn to God when they are sick or on their deathbeds, and their lives, which are miraculously extended, are changed. They come to see that there is more to life than merely temporal values.

"We don't realize how many of our sicknesses are

related to our sins."

Rev. Rex, of course, was trained in theology and in Biblical criticism at Lancaster Theological Seminary. His church, the United Church of Christ is quite liberal in its theology. But increasingly, Rev. Rex is turning to the Bible itself for inspiration. He does not try to pick and choose pleasing passages from the Bible, nor does he try to interpret its meaning loosely. "If I pick and choose what I want to believe from the Bible, then I let my mind become God. I have to accept what God tells me. The Bible is the inspired word of God, and it has to be the final authority in my life.

"If I can't trust God's word, whom do I trust?"

So, Rev. Rex has been immersing himself in the Bible, reading it, re-reading it, memorizing long passages from it, making it part of himself.

And he is finding its meanings very clear.

For example, the Bible is clear on certain sins.

Rev. Rex used to have a very liberal attitude toward divorce. No longer.

He says, "The scribes and Pharisees were liberal on divorce. Jesus said that anyone who marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

"I was wrong about divorce. I know that it is a terrible sin to walk off and desert a mate. It creates so much sorrow, not just to your mate, but to the children who love you.

"I used to be afraid to tell the truth as a minister, but now I can tell the truth and let God take care of it. I just tell people what the mind of God says."

Sins are permitted in modern society, not just because of the leniency of contemporary people, but because of the beginning of leniency generations ago. Rev. Rex says, "What we do moderately, our children will do in excess. One trouble with our society is that our fathers and our grandfathers did not teach the word of God to their children. 'Teach your sons and your sons' sons the commandments of God.'"

Rev. Rex has become more conservative about the structure of the family. Following the Bible, he believes that obedience is an essential quality in the family. Children should obey their parents, and wives should obey their husbands. He believes that only with obedience can the family also have unity.

Sin exists. "How," asks Rev. Rex, "can I be forgiven for sins if I have not repented? 'Forever, O Lord, thy word is established in Heaven.'

"If we want the way of life, we follow what He says.

"The church is the bride of Christ. We are to be pure

and holy for Christ. Our bodies are the living temple of God. By immorality we defile the temple.

"After forgiveness, the change in us has to be complete. We must not merely believe scripture; we must trust it, and we must apply it.

"The Lord doesn't look so much at what has happened but at where we're going. A

man is not a failure when he has failed, but when he waits. It's the direction in which we're going that counts."

One gets the impression from Rev. Rex that salvation is not a momentary experience, but a lifelong and arduous process which continues every day in Rev. Rex's life.

Councilmen elected at Zion Lutheran

Four councilmen were elected at the annual Congregational Dinner at Zion Lutheran Church on Rte. 441: Arthur Seigler, Michael Myers, Ronald Wagner, and Claude Bensinger.

Lay chairman John Griffith conducted the business session, at which William Rudy was accepted as a delegate to the annual Synod Convention.

Communion sharing was voted to be the first Sunday of each month, as well as church festivals.

It was also decided to have the council appoint a committee to organize the celebration of the church's 125th anniversary in 1980.

The budget was adopted. It totals \$54,519 for next year.

A new pipe organ will be installed in February, and a recital by Clark Moyer is planned for March.

Thanksgiving services will be held on Wednesday, Nov. 21st, at 7:30pm. A Christmas cantata will be presented by the choir on Dec. 23rd.

Rev. Reapsome to edit Christianity Today

Rev. James Reapsome, pastor of the Congregational Bible Church in Marietta, got a big surprise last Sunday, when his congregation threw a farewell party for him at Riverview School, next door to the church.

Rev. Reapsome has accepted as position as managing editor of the publication **Christianity Today**, and will be leaving the Congregational Bible Church on Dec. 16th. He will be living in Wheaton, Illinois.

The congregation gave Rev. Reapsome a handmade quilt as a going-away present. It was made by the women of the church.

The minister's daughter, Sara, was another sort of gift; she was flown in from Chicago for the farewell dinner.

Pastor emeritus John S. Hiestand, served as master of ceremonies. The program was arranged by James Gish, chairman of the church council.

A skit was produced for the occasion by the college-age members of the congregation, and the younger kids made the music.

Rev. Reapsome has been the pastor at Congregational Bible Church since 1973. Before he came here, he was chaplain at Malone College in Canton, Ohio. He has been editor of the **Sunday School Times** in Philadelphia, as well as a staff member of the **Lancaster Intelligencer Journal**.

The dinner was prepared by the women of the church under the direction of Mrs. Ethel Wander, who chairs the fellowship committee.



Rev. James Reapsome, his wife Martha and daughter Sara