

ABSTRACT

A RHETORICAL STUDY OF THE PREACHING OF PASTOR DAVID WILKERSON

BY

Russell M. Spangler

The primary purpose of this study is to describe, analyze, and evaluate the preaching of Pastor David Wilkerson in connection with his Teen Challenge ministry, and his subsequent weekend crusades. Wilkerson is a man who has had little formal training in speech or homiletics, yet he probably preaches to more young people per week (his average is 10,000) than any other minister in the world today. This study also attempts, therefore, to discover the reasons for this successful communication, and the method that Wilkerson is employing to "get through" to his audiences.

Chapter I contains a rhetorical biography which indicates Wilkerson's early desire to preach; his "success" in a comfortable country parish; and, most importantly, his "call" to go to New York City and begin a new--seemingly hopeless--ministry in the inner city slums, working for young delinquents and gang members. This was where he was going to build his experience and earn the authority later attributed to him.

The growth and development of this Teen Challenge ministry is outlined in Chapter II. It shows one of Wilkerson's strong traits of character--his loving *concern* for individuals in need--a trait that very likely contributes to his high *ethos*, and helps to account for his ability to "reach" his listeners.

A study of the drug situation in America today, and Wilkerson's attitudes and approaches to it, is undertaken in Chapter III, for this has been one of the major concerns throughout his ministry.

Wilkerson's grandfather, his father, and "all the books on the lives of missionaries," seem to have been the greatest influences upon his life, and have helped to shape some of his creative and provocative ideas and beliefs that are described in Chapter IV.

Chapter V reveals nine of Wilkerson's methods and theories for "getting through" to modern young people: (1) Be totally convinced of the truth and power of your message, (2) Practice what you preach, (3) Satisfy their loneliness, (4) Have an authoritative answer, (5) Be contemporary and relevant, (6) Work with the Holy Spirit, (7) Be willing to become personally involved on a one-to-one basis, (8) Don't be bound by existing methods, and (9) Demand an immediate response.

Wilkerson's own preaching is then analyzed in Chapters VI and VII. Two of his crusade sermons are criticized

in terms of traditional rhetorical theory, revealing: (1) a very strong personal proof--made up of authority, experience, conviction, sincere honesty, earnestness, friendliness and likeableness, (2) a bold, direct, forceful, urgent style that almost compels his audience to give attention to him, (3) a strong conviction for the necessity of becoming relevant and involved in the right way--without sacrificing principle, (4) a masterful way of telling warm, human-interest stories, and an appropriate use of humor, and (5) a dynamic, powerful delivery calculated to move his hearers to the desired action.

David Wilkerson is still a young man, and no final conclusions may be drawn, however, he has already made outstanding contributions in the area of communicating with young people, and students of public address may profit from a continued observation of his theories and methods.

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OF PASTOR DAVID WILKERSON

By
Russell M. Spangler

A THESIS

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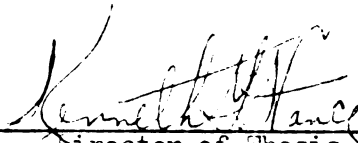
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As these words of appreciation are being written the Apollo 11 astronauts are returning to earth from man's first successful journey to the moon's actual surface. The monumental nature of this historic event causes even the completion of this dissertation to become of less than earth-shaking significance! Taking a cue from these astronauts, however, who are the first to admit their indebtedness to the magnificent cooperation and help they receive from a large number of people--I am also thankful for this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to the following people for their inestimable contributions to this project:

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Doctors David Ralph and Gordon Thomas, who first sparked an enthusiasm for the intricacies of Speech Criticism and Public Address.

Doctors David Lewis and Francis Donahue--the other members of my committee--for the privilege of sitting in their classes.

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My parents, Pastor and Mrs. R. Spangler Sr.; my wife's parents, Pastor and Mrs. C.G. Samograd; and my grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. J.W. Carlson; for their encouragement and assistance from the beginning to the end.

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My beloved wife, Joan, who not only patiently and lovingly endured the deprivations and hardships involved in a doctoral study, but who has served as secretary par excellence throughout; and my two children: Bruce and Loretta, who have tried to understand the perplexities and loneliness that have so often resulted from "Daddy's dissertation."

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INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the Study

The primary purpose of this study will be to make a rhetorical description and analysis of the communication of David Wilkerson. Using established patterns of rhetorical criticism, this study will also attempt (1) to discover the personal and biographical factors which compelled this young minister to leave his comfortable country parish and start a lonely--seemingly doomed--crusade in the slums of New York, (2) to trace briefly the history of the Teen Challenge organization, which Wilkerson founded, and the work it is doing for the narcotics addict, (3) to examine the drug situation in America today in order to understand and evaluate the work that Wilkerson and Teen Challenge are doing in this area, (4) to survey the influences that have especially affected Wilkerson, as well as the ideas and beliefs that he has on a number of religious, moral, and social issues, (5) to describe and evaluate the theories that Wilkerson advocates for "getting through" to his audiences, and (6) to analyze two specific preaching situations in a detailed "case study" method.

Limitations Imposed on the Study

It will not be the purpose of this study to make a comprehensive biography of the life of David Wilkerson; therefore, it will be limited primarily to the ten most recent years of his ministry, (beginning with his "call" to New York City). It will also be necessary to limit the Teen Challenge aspect of this study primarily to the New York Center and the work done there, rather than to examine any of the other centers around the world.

Significance of the Study

Intrinsic Merit of the Study.--Dave Wilkerson has been in an excellent position to gain much valuable experience on the human side of the drug problem, and the problems of juvenile affairs. In one of his recent books he indicates the contact that he has with teen-agers everywhere.

In ten years of helping kids in trouble, I have dealt personally with an average of six hundred teenage narcotics addicts and a much larger number of delinquents each year. . . . Not a week goes by that I do not counsel hundreds of kids and lecture to an average of four thousand teen-agers, groping for the right pathway through life.¹

As the founder and executive director of Teen Challenge, he has seen the organization grow from an idea into over twenty centers located in various large city slums around the world.² The almost unique thing about these

¹David Wilkerson, *Parents On Trial*, (New York: Hawthorn Books, Inc., 1967), p. 11.

²David Wilkerson, interview in *Listen*, December, 1967, p. 8.

centers (as far as drug addicts are concerned) is their remarkable success. Wilkerson has challenged the world to line up 100 completely cured addicts on any stage in America as Teen Challenge has done. "No one has ever accepted that challenge. We can produce thousands, in fact, possibly three thousand or more over the nation."¹

A simple estimation of the value of this service to the nation was given by Wilkerson in a meeting in Battle Creek on the night of May 9, 1968. He said that the average drug addict must steal approximately \$40,000 worth of goods a year to support his habit. He then told of *one* street-corner meeting that his staff conducted, where at least eight confirmed addicts came forward, took the "treatment" at the center, completely kicked the habit, and even went back to the streets as missionaries to reach more addicts.² The implications and subsequent savings to the city and the nation are obvious.

It is also important to notice that Wilkerson's ministry has expanded in recent years. Whereas he once was able to say that his "parish is the gutter," that is no longer true, for he now conducts weekend crusades in various

¹*Ibid.*, p. 9.

²David Wilkerson made this statement in his "introductory sermon," which he preached in Kellogg Auditorium, Battle Creek, May 9, 1968.

cities all over the world.¹ He says that he has discovered, "that the same evils that destroy the youth from the worst neighborhoods are just as destructive and tempting to those from the best."

Wilkerson's books are another indication of the interest and merit involved in this study.

1. *The Cross and the Switchblade*.--This first book tells the story of his initial mission to the asphalt jungle. It has now (1969) sold over four million copies in twenty-six languages.

2. *Twelve Angels From Hell*.--The vivid story of twelve addicts reclaimed from the living hell of drug addiction.

3. *The Little People*.--The unbelievable story of the "baby" gangs from eight to twelve years of age.

4. *Parents on Trial*.--Why kids go right--or wrong.

5. *Hey Preach, You're Comin' Through*.--This is perhaps the most revealing book, indicating Wilkerson's excellent audience analysis and his desire to get involved in youth problems rather than just to preach about them. When he does "preach", he communicates the gospel in terms understood by his peculiar audiences, enabling them to say: "Hey, preach . . . you're comin' through!"

¹In a recent trip to England, he was told that four of his crusades outdrew the Beatles two to one. *Listen* interview, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

6. *I'm Not Mad at God.*--An excellent little devotional book.

7. *Man Have I Got Problems.*--Confident answers to the many kinds of problems facing people today.

8. *Purple Violet Squish.*--This latest book (Fall, 1969), is a frank appraisal of the hip teen scene, along with Wilkerson's positive responses to the floundering young people who see God as a nebulous kind of "purple violet squish."

Distinctiveness of the Study.--When David Wilkerson was in Battle Creek in May, 1968, I had an opportunity to speak with him after the first meeting. At that time he indicated that no one had yet undertaken a study of his Teen Challenge ministry, and that I would be most welcome to do so. He invited me to come to New York in July or August, 1968, live in the center, and observe firsthand the various methods (of what he prefers to call "spiritual therapy") as Teen Challenge seeks to rehabilitate these young people.

Materials or Sources for the Study

The primary sources for this study include (1) a transcript of a taped interview sent to me by Dave Wilkerson in September, 1968, covering biographical material and his communication theory and practice; (2) Wilkerson's writings, including his several books and numerous articles; (3) three

records, and some thirty-five tapes of sermons, radio interviews, and testimonies produced by Teen Challenge; (4) *News Report* and *The Cross and the Switchblade* magazine from Teen Challenge; (5) the mail files at the Brooklyn Teen Challenge, and at the David Wilkerson Youth Crusades Office, (6) responses from a little questionnaire survey taken in Battle Creek concerning Wilkerson as a speaker, and (7) personal interviews with David's Mother, his brother, his Crusade Director, his secretaries and many other staff members and former drug addicts from Teen Challenge.

Secondary materials will include:

1. The materials used in setting the background of the problem in New York:

Nicky Cruz, *Run Baby Run*.
Harrison E. Salisbury, *The Shook-Up Generation*.
E. B. White, *Here is New York*.
Articles in *Time*, *New York Times*, *Life*, etc.

2. The main materials used to discover the drug problem as it is in America today, along with those that describe selected methods of treating the narcotics addict:

William C. Bier, ed., *Problems in Addiction*.
Drug Abuse: Escape to Nowhere
L. S. Goodman and A. Gilman, *The Pharmacological Basis of Therapeutics*.
Alvin Moscow, *Merchants of Heroin*.
Helen H. Nowlis, *Drugs on the College Campus*.
Will Oursler and L. D. Smith, *Narcotics: America's Peril*.
Proceedings, White House Conference on Narcotic and Drug Abuse.
Jules Saltman, "What We Can Do About Drug Abuse," *Public Affairs Pamphlet No. 390*.
Task Force Report: Narcotics and Drug Abuse.

Norman Taylor, *Narcotics: Nature's Dangerous Gifts. The Crutch That Cripples: Drug Dependence. The Drug Takers*, Time Incorporated.
 Articles in *Science*, *Michigan's Health*, *Newsweek*,
Time, *Today's Education*, *Listen*, *America*, *Medical World News*, etc.

3. The main rhetorical materials used as a frame of reference for the critical evaluation of Wilkerson's theory and practice:

Donald C. Bryant and Karl R. Wallace, *Fundamentals of Public Speaking*. (4th ed.)
 Lane Cooper, trans., *The Rhetoric of Aristotle*.
 Kenneth G. Hance, David C. Ralph, and Milton J. Wiksell, *Principles of Speaking*, 2nd. Edition.
 James C. McCroskey, *An Introduction to Rhetorical Communication*.
 Alan H. Monroe and Douglas Ehninger, *Principles and Types of Speech* (6th ed.)
 Lester Thonssen and A. Craig Baird, *Speech Criticism*.
 Lester Thonssen, *Selected Readings in Rhetoric and Public Speaking*.

The Organization of the Study

Chapter I is basically a rhetorical biography which reveals the growth and expansion of Wilkerson's ministry. It seeks to give an early indication of the authoritative nature of his preaching, based on his vast experience.

Chapter II contains a description of the situation that faced Wilkerson when he first came to New York City, and a history of the development of Teen Challenge.

Chapter III has at least four purposes. It attempts to survey the nature of the drug problem in America today, as an indication of the problem which Wilkerson and Teen Challenge deal with. It examines a sampling of Treatment

Programs for narcotics addicts. It compares these programs with the ones offered at Teen Challenge. Fourthly, it reveals Wilkerson's beliefs and attitudes regarding both the "old" and the "new" drug problem.

Chapter IV is concerned with discovering some of the important influences that have affected David's life, as well as some of the ideas that will be of significance in understanding and evaluating his communication theory and practice.

Chapter V is an endeavor to discover some of the methods, theories, and admonitions advocated by Wilkerson as important to "getting through" to his audiences.

Chapters VI and VII are case studies of Wilkerson crusade sermons preached in Battle Creek, Michigan and in Anaheim, California. The methods of rhetorical criticism applied to these sermons are an endeavor to make a fair and meaningful evaluation of Wilkerson's communication.

Chapter VIII makes some general conclusions based upon the entire study.

CHAPTER I

AUTHORITATIVE PREACHER

David Wilkerson felt the compulsion to preach at a very early age. One evening, when he was just five years old, he walked up to the platform of his father's church and brashly sat down behind the pulpit. At first, his father ignored him, but near the end of the song service he indulged his curiosity by asking young David what he thought he was doing. David said: "I'm going to preach the sermon tonight!" Years later, his father told him that he regretted not giving him the opportunity to go ahead.¹

This earnest desire to preach seemed to come naturally enough to David Wilkerson. Both his father and grandfather, who were great influences on his life, were ministers here in America, and ever since the earliest days of the Protestant Reformation there has almost always been a Wilkerson in the ministry in the British Isles or Western Europe.²

A heritage like this no doubt helped David Wilkerson to "sort of grow into" the ministry. It wasn't something

¹David Wilkerson, Interview Tape, September, 1968. (The complete transcript of this interview is to be found in Appendix I).

²David Wilkerson Youth Crusades, Press Information Kit, Biography material.

that he decided; it was just more or less apparent all along. He vividly recalls an experience that took place at Living Waters Campground in Cherry Tree, Pennsylvania, however, as one of the turning points in his life. He was only eleven years old, and felt like the "skinniest preacher's kid in the country," but that July evening he came forward to the altar and an old gray-haired minister laid his hands on him and set him apart.¹ From that time on, David Wilkerson was convinced that God had a task for him to do:

That night a fire from God began to burn in my soul, and I knew that I would never again be the same. After that, many a time when the other kids were playing, I was praying. While they were watching movies or reading comics, I was seeking God or reading the Bible. I had learned that my life had a purpose and a mission, and this I have never lost sight of.²

Another experience which greatly strengthened young David's faith and sense of mission took place when he was just twelve years old. During all of his childhood, his father had been a very sick man. "He had duodenal ulcers, and for more than ten years he was not free of pain."³

One day, as David was walking home from school, an ambulance rushed by and pulled into his driveway. When he was still more than a block from home, he could hear his father's screams of pain.

¹Wilkerson Interview Tape, September, 1968.

²David Wilkerson, *Hey, Preach--You're Comin' Through!* (Westwood, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1968), p. 58.

³David Wilkerson, *The Cross and the Switchblade* (Westwood, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1963), p. 40.

A group of elders from the church sat solemnly in the living room. The doctor wouldn't let me in the room where Dad was, so Mother joined me in the hall.

'Is he going to die, Mom?'

Mother looked me in the eye and decided to tell me the truth. 'The doctor thinks he may live two more hours.'¹

David decided it was time to put to use some of the good counsel his father and grandfather had given him regarding the power of prayer. He ran down the basement stairs and shut himself up in the coal bin to pray alone. What he did not realize was that his prayers were going to be more public than he had intended:

Our house was heated by hot air, and the great trumpet-like pipes branched out from the furnace, beside the coal bin, into every room of the house. My voice was carried up those pipes so that the men from the church, sitting in the living room, suddenly heard a fervent voice pouring out of the walls. The doctor upstairs heard it. My father, lying on his deathbed, heard it.²

His father sent for him, and David soon found himself alone with his mother and father in the bedroom. The bedclothes and even the floor were soaked with blood. Dad asked mother to read Matthew 21:22. She read: "And all things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive." As his mother read the passage over and over, David got up and laid his hands on his father's forehead.

'Jesus,' I prayed, 'Jesus, I believe what You said. Make Daddy well!'

There was one more step. I walked to the door and opened it and said, loud and clear:

'Please come, Dr. Brown. I have . . .' (it was hard) 'I have prayed believing that Daddy will get better.'

¹*Ibid.* p. 41.

²*Ibid.*

Dr. Brown looked down at my twelve-year-old earnestness and smiled a warm and compassionate and totally unbelieving smile. But that smile turned first to puzzlement and then to astonishment as he bent to examine my father.

'Something has happened,' he said. His voice was so low I could hardly hear. Dr. Brown picked up his instruments with fingers that trembled, and tested Dad's blood pressure. 'Kenneth,' he said, raising Dad's eyelids and then feeling his abdomen and then reading his blood pressure again. 'Kenneth, how do you feel?'

'Like strength is flowing into me.'

'Kenneth,' said the doctor, 'I have just witnessed a miracle.'¹

Reverend Kenneth Wilkerson was able to get up from that bed of sickness and fulfill many more years of fruitful ministry. He was always considered by David, "as the greatest preacher in the world."² As such, he had an uncommon influence for good on David's life.

One of the important lessons that he taught his boy was also taught in that very same coal bin. It was the place where all Dad's "counselling" sessions were held. David says: "There were five children in our family and each of us had a holy respect for Dad's razor strap that hung on a big nail on the way downstairs to the coal bin."³

Father Wilkerson would always wait until his anger had cooled before administering his discipline. Sometimes David had even begun to hope that he had forgotten all about

¹*Ibid.*, p. 42.

²Wilkerson Interview Tape, September, 1968.

³David Wilkerson, "We Need A Woodshed Revival," *The Cross and the Switchblade Magazine*, February-March, 1965, p. 23.

it. There always came the time, however, when Dad would say: "All right, David, let's go downstairs and learn another lesson on obedience."¹ (It didn't help to scream like he was being killed even before Dad started either, David found out:)

My crying never seemed to frighten or impress him, I got it--hard! Then I had to kneel and ask God to forgive my stubbornness and after making it right with heaven, I had to put my arms around him and tell him how much I loved him. That is why that stubborn, foolish, disobedient little child grew up to be a minister of the gospel instead of a gang leader!²

As a minister of the gospel today, David Wilkerson places a great deal of emphasis on this area of parent-child relationships. One of his most recent books is entitled: *Parents on Trial*, in which he reveals his sincere concern for family relationships, calling heavily upon the unique experiences which he has had as an authoritative background to his timely advice to parents. In the Introduction to this book, he states:

In ten years of helping kids in trouble, I have dealt personally with an average of six hundred teenage narcotics addicts and a much larger number of delinquents each year. I have come to know them well, and I also have spent considerable time with their parents, out of whose anguish this book has grown. Not a week goes by that I do not counsel hundreds of kids and lecture to an average of four thousand teenagers groping for the right pathway through life. Many of these youngsters have asked me questions and voiced complaints about their parents. . . .³

¹*Ibid.*

²*Ibid.*

³David Wilkerson, *Parents on Trial* (New York: Hawthorn Books, Inc., 1967), p. 11.

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Realizing that this is a problem of major concern today, Wilkerson will usually preach on the "Home" in his weekend crusades. His opening sermon in the Battle Creek Crusade on May 9, 1968, for example, was *Why Kids Go Wrong*. He mentioned again in this sermon that he probably preaches to more young people per week than any other minister or evangelist. (This time he quoted a figure of 28,000 for the previous week, and an average of 10,000 a week).¹

He mentions these numbers to show his experience and familiarity with the problems that face young people in their lives and in their homes. As they seek his counsel after the crusade meetings, and share their troubles with him, he is made aware of the situations that exist in many families throughout the United States today.

Then, because he recognizes this to be such an underlying problem, David Wilkerson considers it necessary to speak directly to the families in his crusades. He reminds the parents of the wise Biblical counsel to administer sufficient discipline (in love) to their children to insure their obedience. However, he also tells the young people to respect and honour their parents. As he gives this admonition, he is able to illustrate it with numerous stories from his past experience (sometimes they are personal and often

¹David Wilkerson, *Why Kids Go Wrong*, Sermon Tape, Battle Creek, May 9, 1968. These figures give some indication of Wilkerson's rapidly expanding ministry.

they are humorous) so that his audience will be more likely to understand and accept this important foundation message.

This rich background of dealing with all kinds of young people in all kinds of situations, is one of the things that gives Wilkerson the necessary authority to attract and hold his young audiences. Most of them have read *The Cross and the Switchblade*, and they come to his meetings hoping that this man will have the answers for them also.

A church full of these restless young people faced David Wilkerson in Finland one night, during his European Crusade in 1966. As he studied them from the ornate chancel, he saw that the formal liturgy was rapidly "turning them off." He caught the meaningful glances that told him that his wildly dressed young people were about ready to "blow." He sent an urgent message to the startled pastor: "Unless you hand me this meeting in the next two minutes, I'm leaving!"¹

The gracious pastor complied, and David Wilkerson proceeded to get the attention of those young people *fast*. He knew their confusion and boredom. What is more, he was able to tell them confidently and convincingly of a Power that he had personally seen change the lives of hundreds of criminals, drug addicts, pushers, and would-be suicides. This kind of a message, needless to say, is successful in "getting through" to his youthful audiences--a feat that is

¹Wilkerson, *Hey Preach*. . . , p. 7.

refreshingly inspiring in an age when the formal liturgy and pious "other-worldly" attitude of many churches have so completely alienated modern young people.

Wherever he has gone, Pastor Wilkerson says:

I have sensed the same thing: an intense desire for something genuine and real. Young people today want something to live for, something to believe in, and in their expressions I often read. . . .

'Mister, you're getting through to me. Man, it's never been like this before--you hit me deep.'¹

It was not like that from the very beginning, however. The only thing that David Wilkerson remembers about his first sermon was that it *didn't* get through the first time, so he started to preach it through the second time. He was only thirteen years old, and it was at his father's church in Turtle Creek, Pennsylvania. He stopped only when his Dad came up to the pulpit and said: "That's enough son."²

By the time he was seventeen or eighteen, however, David was receiving many requests from nearby pastors to speak at their Youth Conferences and Rallies. He enjoyed these opportunities to preach, and in fact, felt compelled to do so wherever he could get a hearing. Even while he was attending Central Bible College in Springfield, Missouri, David Wilkerson still found time to pioneer a small church.

This little church gave him a taste of his calling, and he felt that he just couldn't wait to finish Bible Col-

¹*Ibid.*, p. 10.

²Wilkerson Interview Tape.

lege so he could go out and "win the world."¹ When it came time, therefore, for his second year at Bible school, and no funds seemed available, David Wilkerson gladly turned to full time pastoring.

He was ordained in the Assemblies of God church, and for five years served as pastor of the Gospel Tabernacle in Phillipsburg, Pennsylvania. He and his wife, Gwen, were happy in Phillipsburg. "The life of a country preacher suited me perfectly. Most of our parishioners were either farmers or coal workers, honest, God-fearing and generous."²

When the Wilkersons arrived, the congregation of fifty members was meeting in a private house and using the upstairs for the parsonage. Within a few years there was a new church, with a new parsonage next door. He writes: "Gwen and I worked hard in Phillipsburg, and we had a certain kind of success. By New Year's Day, 1958, there were 250 people in the parish--including Bonnie, a new little daughter of our own."³

It was just about this time, however, that a singular event occurred--an event that in its own strange way was to lead David Wilkerson into an unexpected and vast new ministry. *The Cross and the Switchblade* tells the story very effectively:

I was beginning to feel a kind of spiritual discontent that wasn't satisfied by looking at the new church

¹Anne Wilkerson, private interview with David's mother at the Teen Challenge Center, Brooklyn, New York, August, 1968.

²Wilkerson, *The Cross and the Switchblade*, p. 10.

³*Ibid.*, p. 11.

building on its five acres of hilltop land, or the swelling missionary budget, or the crowding in the pews. I remember the precise night on which I recognized it, as people do remember important dates in their lives. It was February 9, 1958. On that night I decided to sell my television set. . . .

'How much time do I spend in front of that screen each night?' I wondered. 'A couple of hours, at least. What would happen, Lord, if I sold that TV set and spent that time--praying?' I was the only one in the family who ever watched TV anyway.

What would happen if I spent two hours every single night in prayer? It was an exhilarating idea. Substitute prayer for television, and see what happened.¹

Pastor Wilkerson immediately thought of many excuses relative to the legitimate needs of relaxation and keeping informed, but he finally decided, at least, to put up a fleece² before God and see what would happen. He made it difficult. He told the Lord to send a buyer within a half-hour after the paper arrived.

It was a comical scene in our living room after the paper arrived. I sat on the sofa with the television set looking at me from one side, the children and Gwen looking at me from another, and my eyes on a great big alarm clock beside the telephone.

Twenty-nine minutes passed, by the clock.

'Well, Gwen,' I said, 'It looks like you're right. I guess I won't have to. . .'

The telephone rang.

I picked it up slowly, looking at Gwen.

'You have a TV set for sale?' a man's voice asked.

'That's right. An RCA in good condition. Nineteen inch screen, two years old.'

'How much do you want for it?'

'One hundred dollars,' I said quickly. I hadn't thought about what to ask for it until that moment.

'I'll take it,' the man said, just like that.

¹*Ibid.*

²Reference is to the Biblical story of Gideon as found in Judges 6:37-40.

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'You don't even want to look at it?'
 'No. Have it ready in fifteen minutes. I'll bring the money.'¹

David Wilkerson has never underestimated the influence of that decision. His father had told him ever since childhood, "God always makes a way for a praying man." He had told David that he had the same hours in every day that Elijah had, and thus had access to the same power through prayer.² Now David was giving this counsel a chance to work. Speaking of the effects of this new plan, he concludes: "My life has not been the same since. Every night at midnight, instead of flipping some dials, I stepped into my office, closed the door, and began to pray."³

This was not the first time that God had honoured a "fleece" for David Wilkerson, nor was it to be the last, for this time of prayer was soon to lead him into a remarkable and challenging new way of life. It was to be a way of life that would provide him with the rich experiences and background that would make his later crusade sermons so meaningful. It would lead him into the slums and building projects of New York City to observe the transforming power of God on the lives of the outcast and the neglected.

It all began during one of those late evenings of prayer. Pastor Wilkerson had been in prayer a long time.

¹Wilkerson, *The Cross and the Switchblade*, p. 12.

²Wilkerson Interview Tape.

³Wilkerson, *The Cross and the Switchblade*, pp. 12-13.

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He felt particularly close to God, yet he was strangely restless. He walked around the study, not knowing exactly why he was so uneasy. Then, he spied a copy of *Life* magazine lying on his desk. Feeling impelled to pick it up, yet completely puzzled as to why, he sat down and turned the pages.

One of the pages seemed to catch his attention: "It carried a pen drawing of a trial which was taking place in New York City, 350 miles away. I'd never been to New York, and I never wanted to go, except perhaps to see the Statue of Liberty."¹

As he started to flip the page over, his attention was caught by the expression in the eyes of one of the figures. "The artist had caught such a look of bewilderment and hatred and despair in his features that I opened the magazine wide again to get a closer look. And as I did, I began to cry."²

Reading the story, David Wilkerson found that these seven boys were all teen-age members of a gang called the Dragons.³ They had brutally stabbed and killed a fifteen-year-old polio victim named Michael Farmer. "They went away wiping blood through their hair, saying 'We messed him

¹*Ibid.*, p. 7.

²*Ibid.*

³It is *The Cross and the Switchblade* story which correctly refers to this gang as the Dragons. The original article ("Teen-Age Burst of Brutality," *Life*, August 12, 1957, pp. 34-35.) refers to the gang as the "Egyptian Kings". They also picture nine boys instead of seven. The story of the trial, as recorded in the *New York Times*, March 1, 1958, p. 18, *et passim*, makes it clear that there were seven boys on trial, and that they were members of a gang called the Dragons.

good.'"¹

The story revolted me. It turned my stomach. In our little mountain town such things seemed mercifully unbelievable.

That's why I was dumbfounded by a thought that sprang suddenly into my head--full-blown, as though it had come into me from somewhere else.

Go to New York City and help those boys.

I laughed out loud. 'Me? Go to New York? A country preacher barge into a situation he knows less than nothing about?'²

The idea would not go away. It persisted completely in opposition to David Wilkerson's own feelings and ideas about the matter. He decided, finally, that he should go to New York City--at once, while the trial was still underway.

* * * * *

Wilkerson's trip to New York actually marks the beginning of his Teen Challenge ministry, and will therefore be included in the next chapter. The first part of the chapter will provide a brief description of the conditions which faced Wilkerson in New York City, followed by a history of the growth and development of Teen Challenge.

¹Wilkerson, *The Cross and the Switchblade*, p. 7.

²*Ibid.*

CHAPTER II

THE HISTORY OF TEEN CHALLENGE IN NEW YORK

"The Naked City"

The city of New York is so vast and so diverse, that it seems to overwhelm and engulf the visitor or stranger. It is a city that both invites and defies description. Although there have been many volumes and countless articles that have tried to picture the city with words, there will always be good reason for aspiring young writers to continue the endeavor, for it is ever elusive, and constantly changing.

Elwyn Brooks White is just one of the gifted writers who have tried to capture the texture of this city with their pens. In the introduction to his excellent little monograph: *Here is New York*, he expresses this very sentiment. In order to present an accurate, and up-to-date picture of New York, he says that one's works: "Would have to be published with the speed of light--and not even Harper is that quick."¹

The blurb on the cover of White's book is also very picturesque: "Here is the greatest town in the world--the gaudiest, most beautiful, most crowded, most private, most

¹E. B. White, *Here is New York* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1949), p. 6.

satisfying, most heartbreaking city in all history."¹ Inside the book, Mr. White elaborates further:

The island of Manhattan is without any doubt the greatest human concentrate on earth, the poem whose magic is comprehensible to millions of permanent residents but whose full meaning will always remain elusive. At the feet of the tallest and plushiest offices lie the crummiest slums. The genteel mysteries housed in the Riverside Church are only a few blocks from the voodoo charms of Harlem. . . .

New York is nothing like Paris; it is nothing like London; and it is not Spokane multiplied by sixty, or Detroit multiplied by four. It is the loftiest of cities.²

Whatever is said about New York City; however it is described; it must be said that it is *cosmopolitan*. It is a conglomerate of anything and everyone into one giant whole.

What E. B. White said twenty years ago is even more true today:

New York is the concentrate of art and commerce and sport and religion and entertainment and finance, bringing to a single compact arena the gladiator, the evangelist, the promoter, the actor, the trader and the merchant. It carries on its lapel the unexpungeable odor of the long past, so that no matter where you sit in New York you feel the vibrations of great times and tall deeds, of queer people and events and undertakings.³

Through the years, New York has earned its proud title: "America's mightiest city," but it has also earned many other titles in the process--many of them not so complimentary.

When David Wilkerson first came to New York, in 1958, it could well have been known as: "Gangland--U.S.A." It was attracting nationwide attention for its juvenile problems.

¹*Ibid.*, cover blurb. ²*Ibid.*, pp. 21-22.

³*Ibid.*, p. 10.

In March of 1958, the New York *Times* had Harrison E. Salisbury take a long hard look at the problem. In a very informative and provocative seven-article series, he laid bare the brutal facts.¹ The next issue of *Time* magazine picked up his cue and succinctly summarized the situation:

Of all the pains that plague a modern city, none is more corrosive than juvenile delinquency, and the one city in the U.S. that has a giant's share of pain is New York. There, in the weltering tenements and public-housing complexes that pimple district upon district of the city's 299 sq. mi., roam the "bopping clubs," the teen-age street-fighting gangs. They call themselves Centurians, Demons, Villains, Stonekillers and Sand Street Angels, organize themselves with the precision of military combat teams, with an officer heirarchy (president, war counselor, armorer, etc.). Their code of ethics is a distorted boy's-eye view of the underworld, laced with real touches of bravado and evil that are gleaned from television and the movies--and from relatives who have firsthand experience. They prowl the dark streets, kill and maim one another, dabble in narcotics, drink themselves into a rage with cheap wine called "sneaky pete."²

Both this article, and the series in the *Times*, make grim reading for anyone who has not had first-hand experience with the situation as it was in the late fifties and early sixties in New York City. In their matter-of-fact summary, however, they manage to be less gruesome and bloody than some of the other national periodicals of the day that carried the sensational "gang-murder" headlines.

¹Harrison E. Salisbury, New York *Times*, Series of seven articles from March 24 to March 30, 1958. An outgrowth of this series is Salisbury's book: *The Shook-Up Generation* (Greenwich, Conn.: Fawcett Publications, Inc., 1958).

²"The Shook-Up Generation," *Time*, LXXI (April 7, 1958), p. 21.

In another general description of the gangs, *Time* magazine says:

Typical of the 75 to 100 gangs in the city are the Cobras, half of whose 40 to 50 members live in a Brooklyn housing project. All but a few of them are Negro; there are separate Puerto Rican gangs, and thoroughly integrated ones. The members are, in their own language, all "shook up" and cling together for defense against others as well as for the comradeship they can find nowhere else. They range in age from eleven to 20, occupy themselves chiefly with protection of their own "turf" (territory). Trespassing on one gang's turf by another gang--or the stealing of another's property or girl, even an insult--may bring on councils of war, choice of a battleground, scouting forays. Finally comes the "rumble", a bloody combat with knives, machetes, guns, rugged garrison belts and "a favorite weapon" skin-slashing automobile-radio arials stolen from any handy car.¹

Most of these gangs evolve out of almost indescribable living conditions. Brooklyn's infamous Fort Greene Houses, for example, is one of the world's largest housing projects. Even in 1958 it was a \$20 million slum with a third of its families on relief. "A heavy portion of the 300,000 Puerto Ricans and many of the 300,000 Negroes who have arrived in the city in the past seven years have settled in such projects and in older tenement slums."²

Mr. Salisbury describes the deplorable conditions that some of these new immigrants are forced into:

The newly arrived Puerto Ricans are unfamiliar with city ways. They are cheated and robbed without mercy. A fifteen-by-twenty room in a hundred-year-old house is rented to a family of four for twenty dollars a week. Slightly smaller rooms cost fifteen dollars. There is no water. Little heat in winter. A gas plate for cooking. No refrigerator. No icebox. No bath. No shower.

¹*Ibid.*

²*Ibid.*, p. 22.

A dirty toilet and a single faucet down the hall. I went into one house of three stories. There were six cubicles to a floor. By renting each at \$15 a week the thieving landlord was taking more than \$1,000 a month out of a rat-infested building in which a farmer would not think of housing goats.¹

It is only with great difficulty that the average American can imagine what problems such a situation causes-- especially for the children:

You will see little children three and four years old sitting on the stoops or playing under the lights. Why are they on the streets? A very simple reason. They can't go to bed. Someone is sitting on it. Until the adults are ready for bed there is no place for the children to sleep. . . .

Look at the records of these youngsters in school. They have lived at fifteen addresses in the last two or three years. They are birds of passage, rootless and drifting, pathetic examples to buttress the conviction of Albert Schweitzer that "modern man is lost in the mass in a way which is without precedent in history."

Here are all the social evils of the great city which most of us comfortably living middle-class Americans thought had long since been relegated to the annals of the past.²

Such poverty and population mobility constitute a natural breeding ground for the gangs, which offer the stability and the security that the teen-agers so desperately seek.

It was members of just such a teen-age gang, the **Dragons**, that murdered Michael Farmer that night in High-**bridge** Park. In fact, Salisbury mentions this incident as **he** describes the nature of these gang-members:

¹Harrison E. Salisbury, *The Shook-Up Generation* (Greenwich, Conn.: Fawcett Publications, Inc., 1958), p. 76.

²*Ibid.*, p. 77.

These are the boys who turn a schoolroom into a gang arena. These are the boys who make zip guns in the carpenter shop while the teacher is showing the class how to make a tie rack. These are the boys who knife the monitor in the hall and attack the teacher who tries to bring them to order.

These are the boys who killed a teen-age paralytic named Farmer when they encountered him in a deserted park near the George Washington Bridge one summer evening, slashing his body with their knife blades and ripping his flesh with their brass-tipped garrison belts. And these are the boys whose explosion of violence caused the 1958 crisis in the New York City public schools and a grand jury inquiry which led to the suicide of a broken-hearted high school principal.

These are the boys who extort "protection" money from younger children, who rape a fourteen-year-old girl in a school corridor and shoot each other with Beretta pistols in the schoolyard.

These are the youngsters whose conflict with society is deep, relentless, and unending. These are the youngsters who clog the youth courts, the youth detention houses, the reformatories and corrective institutions. They cost society a pretty penny--\$5,000 or \$6,000 a year in the institutions to which they are sent. Often the cost runs even higher.¹

The Dragons had been out looking for trouble that summer evening, and they happened to discover young Michael "trespassing" on disputed turf. The unwritten law of the concrete jungle took over; and before they knew it, they had all become actors in just one more story--one of the eight million stories in the Naked City.²

The Trial

The boys were arrested and placed on trial for murder. Their picture-story appeared in *Life* magazine, and it

¹*Ibid.*, p. 17.

²The reference is to the opening line of the old TV program, "The Naked City."

was at this point that David Wilkerson entered the story. He had taken the picture from *Life* to his congregation and told them of his strange compulsion to go and help those boys. They responded with sufficient funds for the trip; so Wilkerson and his Youth Director, Miles Hoover, drove to New York City.¹

Pastor Wilkerson was naively innocent concerning the extent and seriousness of the gang problem in New York. He had been sheltered from its unbelievable brutality by his comfortable mountain parish. When he went to New York, he had no definite plan for helping those gang members. He was still not even sure why he had felt compelled to come in the first place--and he was soon to wish that he had never made such a decision.

His introduction to New York City left him somewhat awed, and visibly impressed:

I had never seen so many cars, all in a hurry. They pulled around me and honked at me; the air brakes on gigantic trucks hissed at me.

What a sight the bridge was! A river of red lights on the right--the taillights of the cars in front--and the white glare of oncoming traffic and the immense skyline looming out of the night ahead. I realized suddenly how countrified I really was.²

When Wilkerson and Hoover got to the end of the George Washington Bridge, they were faced with a complexity of signs pointing to places that meant nothing to them. Pastor Wilker-

¹David Wilkerson, *The Cross and the Switchblade* (Westwood, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1963), p. 14.

²*Ibid.*, p. 16.

son turned to his Youth Director and asked, "What do we do now?"¹

"'When in doubt,' said Miles, 'follow the car ahead.'"² The car in front of them, it turned out, led them to a place where they began to recognize familiar names: "Broadway," "Macy's," and "Gimbel's". This was the place to spend the night, close to the names that somehow managed to help dispel the loneliness and strangeness of the huge metropolis.³

Wilkerson had tried several times to get in touch with the District Attorney's office, or someone who could give him permission to see the boys who were on trial. He was finally told to be at the trial the next morning, February 28, 1958. It was the only way he could see Judge Davidson, who was the only one who could give him that permission.⁴

After taking the last two chairs in the courtroom, and learning that the gang had threatened the Judge's life, Pastor Wilkerson and his Youth Director impatiently waited for the trial to begin. When the convicted gang members were finally led in, Wilkerson was amazed to discover how young they really were:

I don't know what I'd been expecting. Men, I suppose. After all this was a murder trial, and it had never really registered with me that children could

¹Ibid. ²Ibid. ³Ibid., p. 17.

⁴Ibid., p. 18.

commit murder. But these were children. Seven stooped, scared, pale, skinny children on trial for their lives for a merciless killing. Each was handcuffed to a guard and each guard, it seemed to me, was unusually husky, as if he had been chosen deliberately for contrast.¹

The proceedings of the court were strange to Pastor Wilkerson in other ways also. He was surprised when it took *a*ll morning to achieve a simple statement concerning the *k*nife that was used on the night of the murder. He was further surprised when suddenly Judge Davidson stood and adjourned the court. Wilkerson rapidly decided that he must see the judge--at once:

With a quick prayer I grasped my Bible in my right hand, hoping it would identify me as a minister, shoved past Miles into the aisle, and ran to the front of the room.

'Your Honor!' I called.

Judge Davidson whirled around, annoyed and angry at the breach of court etiquette.

'Your Honor, please would you respect me as a minister and let me have an audience with you?'²

The fact that the judge's life had been threatened no doubt accounted for the swift reaction of the guards, who immediately swooped down on Wilkerson and somewhat unceremoniously hustled him back up the aisle. Many were the questions which followed: "Where's the gun? . . . Who were you with? Who else is in there? . . . Are you with the Dragons? Did you steal those church letters or forge them?"³

¹*Ibid.*, pp. 19-20.

²*Ibid.*, pp. 20-21.

³*Ibid.*, p. 21.

Judge Davidson finally revealed that he did not want to prefer charges, and the officers decided to let Wilkerson go if he agreed never to come back.

'Don't worry,' said Miles. 'He won't come back.' They escorted me brusquely out to the corridor. There a semi-circle of newsmen were waiting with their cameras cocked. One man asked me:

'Hey, Rev'rn. What's that book you got there?'

'My Bible.'

'You ashamed of it?'

'Of course not.'

'No? Then why are you hiding it? Hold it up where we can see it.'

And I was naive enough to hold it up. Flash bulbs popped, and suddenly I knew how it would come out in the papers: a Bible-waving country preacher, with his hair standing up on his head, interrupts a murder trial.¹

The entire episode had been so embarrassing and disheartening that the two men decided to go home immediately. David kept wondering how he would face his wife, his parents, and his church. He did not have long to wait. The papers the next morning carried the UP account of "the wild-eyed, Bible-waving young preacher who had been thrown out of the Michael Farmer murder trial."² Back in Phillipsburg, the phone kept ringing as perturbed and bemused neighbors became aware of their sudden publicity. The parishioners were polite--but silent, as they tried to comprehend their pastor's strange behavior. Only Gwen was understanding.

There was something that David Wilkerson could not

¹*Ibid.*, pp. 21, 22.

²*Ibid.*, p. 23. This episode was carried in the New York Times, March 1, 1958, p. 18.

begin to understand, however, and that was the preposterous idea that kept coming into his mind--*go back to New York!*

Return to New York

This strange idea to return to the symbol of his discouragement was so persistent that Wilkerson found himself asking his church members once more for funds to get him back to New York. He could not know what this trip would bring; he knew only that he had to make it. It was to be a rewarding trip this time, however; another one of those turning points which eventually led to the founding of Teen Challenge. For Wilkerson had not been in New York half an hour, this time, before he was being introduced to his second street gang. He had simply parked his car in a likely place and started walking down the street. He had not gone half a block before he heard a voice:

'Hey, Davie!'

I didn't turn around at first, thinking some boy was calling a friend. But the summons came again.

'Hey, Davie. Preacher!'

This time I did turn around. A group of six teen-age boys were leaning against the side of a building beneath a sign saying, 'No Loitering. Police Take Notice.'

They were dressed in tapered trousers and zippered jackets. . . .

A seventh boy had separated himself from the group and walked after me. I liked his smile as he spoke.

'Aren't you the preacher they kicked out of the Michael Farmer trial?'¹

This seventh boy turned out to be Tommy, the President of the Rebels. He offered to introduce "Davie" to the

¹Wilkerson, *The Cross and the Switchblade*, p. 27.

rest of the gang. What happened next is of key importance in understanding how David Wilkerson was able to make a breakthrough in communicating with the New York gangs. He says:

They kept their studiously bored expressions until Tommy revealed that I had had a run-in with the police. That was magic with these boys. It was my *carte blanche* with them. Tommy introduced me with great pride.

'Hey fellows,' he said, 'here's the preacher who was kicked out of the Farmer trial.'

Their logic was simple. The cops didn't like me; the cops didn't like them. We were in the same boat, and I was one of them. This was the first time but by no means the last time that I heard this logic. Suddenly I caught a glimpse of myself being hauled up that courtroom aisle, and it had a different light on it. I felt the little shiver I always experience in the presence of God's perfect planning.¹

It was then that Tommy asked Davie if he wanted to meet a **s**econd street gang--the GGI's. The GGI's, or the "Grand **G**angsters Incorporated," met in a basement on 134th Street. **I**t turned out to be a cold, ill-smelling room full of tangled **c**ouples with the same bored look in their eyes--until Davie **w**as introduced as the "preacher who was kicked out of the **F**armer trial:"

Immediately, I had their attention. More important, I had their sympathy. That afternoon I had a chance to preach my first sermon to a New York gang. I didn't try to get a complicated message over to them, just that they were loved. They were loved as they were, there, amid the vodka bottles and the weary, searching sex. God understood what they were looking for when they drank and played with sex, and He yearned for them to have what they were looking for: stimulation and exhilaration and a sense of being sought after. But not out of a cheap bottle in a cold tenement basement. God had so much higher hopes for them.

¹*Ibid.*, pp. 27-28.

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Once, when I paused, a boy said, 'Keep it up, Preach. You're coming through.'

It was the first time I heard the expression. It meant that I was reaching their hearts, and it was the highest compliment they could have paid my preaching.¹

This remarkable turn of events would have left David Wilkerson greatly encouraged, except that there, among the GGI's, he had his first encounter with narcotics. As he was telling them how God could help them toward a new life, one of the girls interrupted him and said it was impossible for her. When he asked her why, she simply pulled up her sleeve and bared her inner arm at the elbow. Wilkerson didn't understand. All he could see were little wounds like festered mosquito bites. Some were old and some were fresh. Suddenly he realized what she must be trying to tell him. She was a dope addict.

I'm a mainliner, Davie. There's no hope for me, not even from God.'

I looked around the room to see if I could catch in the other youngsters' eyes a sense that Maria was being melodramatic. No one was smiling. In that one fleeting glance into the faces of a circle of kids, I *knew* what I was later to find out in police statistics and hospital reports: medicine does not have an answer to drug addiction. Maria had expressed the opinion of the experts: there was virtually no hope for the 'mainline' addict, the one who injects heroin directly into the bloodstream.²

Searching for a Purpose

David Wilkerson began to realize at this time how much he wanted to help these "hopeless" youngsters in the city slums. He had not yet given up the idea of seeing those

¹*Ibid.*, p. 29.

²*Ibid.*, p. 30.

seven young boys who were still on trial for murder, either. He was told that he must receive the written permission of each of the boy's parents before he would be allowed to visit them. The story of how he managed to get the necessary signatures is dramatically told in *The Cross and the Switchblade*. Even these signatures, however, were not going to be enough. A fellow clergyman, the prison chaplain, thought that it would be: "disturbing to the boys' spiritual welfare to introduce a new personality,"¹ and therefore denied permission **FOR** Wilkerson to see them.

Keenly disappointed, David returned home to Pennsylvania. In his discouragement he sought out the cherished counsel of his beloved grandfather. This fiery evangelist from another era was seventy-nine years old, but still active and full of wise counsel. He opened up a new vision for David: "I've got a feeling, David, son, that you were never intended to see just seven boys, but thousands of boys just like them."² It was an inspiration to David. He suddenly wanted to rush right back to New York and get to work.

This was not possible because of his pastoral duties in Phillipsburg; but during the months of March, April, May, and June of 1958, he drove to the city once every week, using his day off for the trip. "I would rise early and make the eight-hour drive, arriving in New York in the early

¹*Ibid.*, p. 35.

²*Ibid.*, p. 43.

afternoon. Then, until deep into the night, I roamed the streets of the city, driving home in early morning."¹

David Wilkerson came to refer to this afterwards as his "long walk."² It was a long walk of discovery--of searching for a purpose and a pattern. He came to believe **that** all the fighting, sex, and drug addiction were "dramatic manifestations of the needs of New York's teen-age gang members. But, . . . they were just the outward symbols of a deep inner need: loneliness. A hunger for some kind of significance in life."³ As a result of this long walk **through** New York City's worst streets, the pattern became **clear**. It was a familiar pattern of *need*, but from this **rediscovery** there arose a vision in Wilkerson's mind to meet **that** need. The one thing those kids really needed was a **chance** to begin all over again in a new atmosphere of love, **instead** of hate and fear.

The idea came to mind as a complete thought, as clearly as the first order to go to New York. And along with it came into my mind the picture of a house where these new kids could come. A really nice house, all their own, where they would be welcomed--welcomed and loved. They could live in their house any time they wanted to. The door would always be open; there would always be lots and lots of beds, and clothes to wear, and a great big kitchen.⁴

The Growth of "Teen Challenge"

David Wilkerson's vision of a home where desperate and troubled teen-agers could escape to a new beginning did

¹*Ibid.*, p. 46. ²*Ibid.*, p. 51. ³*Ibid.* ⁴*Ibid.*, p. 53.

not come into being overnight. It took many long months for all the details to work themselves out.

During this time, however, Wilkerson continued to have a number of significant meetings with the gangs and gang members in New York. Some of the results of these early meetings were unbelievably encouraging. Davie had even managed to get through to some of the tough, hardened, gang leaders. One, in particular, experienced a dramatic conversion. His story and example have exerted a powerful influence for good on the lives of the boys who have since gone through Teen Challenge.

Nicky Cruz was the terrifying young leader of the suicidal Mau Mau gang. He had gained this position by being more daring, more cruel, and more bloodthirsty than any of his companions. When Pastor Wilkerson first tried to approach him, Nicky spat on him and said: "Go to Hell, preacher, you come near me, I'll kill you." Wilkerson's inspiring response was: "You could do that, you could cut me in a thousand pieces and lay them out in the street and every piece would love you."¹

It was that love and concern that finally reached even Nicky.² He made an about-face, left the gang, and

¹*Ibid.*, pp. 62-63.

²Today, after several years of working with Wilkerson at Teen Challenge, Nicky Cruz has his own "Outreach for Youth" program in California. Billy Graham recently called him a Christian legend in his own time. He made that statement in an Introduction to the following autobiography: Nicky Cruz, with Jamie Buckingham, *Run Baby Run* (Plainfield, New Jersey: Logos International, 1968), p. xii.

decided to go to Bible College to prepare for the ministry. Before he left, he took some of his boys and paid a visit to the police station. The following incident is an indication of the effect that that visit had upon Wilkerson's reputation with the police. They had called him down to the Edward Street Precinct after hearing the Mau Mau's story:

The desk sergeant called the Lieutenant, and the lieutenant assembled the whole force. The lieutenant stuck out his hand.

'Reverend,' he said, 'I want to shake your hand. I took his offer, and he pumped me firmly.

'How did you do it?' he asked. 'These boys declared war on us a few months ago. They've given us nothing but trouble for years. Then this morning they all troop in here and you know what they want?'

I shook my head.

'They want us to autograph their Bibles!'

I looked at Nicky and Israel and the boys who were with them. They grinned at me.

'Any time we can help you set up another street meeting, Reverend, just let us know,' said the lieutenant, and as we all stepped out onto the sidewalks of Brooklyn, I saw the sergeant sitting at his desk, shaking his head in wonder.¹

Eventually, it was this kind of success, that helped Wilkerson to make the difficult decision to leave his comfortable country parish and to begin a new, uncertain ministry in New York. It was about a year and a half after that first "disastrous" trip to the court trial, when the Wilkersons said good-bye to their parishioners. It happened to be the fifth anniversary of their stay in the Phillipsburg church.²

¹David Wilkerson, *The Cross and the Switchblade*, p. 83.

²*Ibid.*, p. 98.

Immediately, David set out on a tour of speaking engagements around the country, telling all who would listen of his concerns in New York. One such listener was a pastor by the name of Reginald Yake in Irvington, New Jersey. It was the middle of winter, 1960; and as Pastor Yake listened to Wilkerson's experiences, he became enthusiastic: "'Dave,' he said at last, 'it seems to me that the churches need a full-time worker among the gangs in New York. I wonder whether you would let me make a few telephone calls to some friends in the city.'"¹

Thus it was that a small meeting of interested clergymen met together in the basement of Glad Tidings Tabernacle on West 33rd Street and became instrumental in founding a new ministry. "Since its main purpose was to reach young boys and girls with the message of God's love, we called the new ministry Teen-Age Evangelism."² A Police Captain named Paul DiLena was voted secretary-treasurer to assist Wilkerson in the new organization. Since Paul was not at the meeting, Pastor Stanley Berg, co-pastor of the Glad Tidings Tabernacle, phoned to tell him the news:

'Paul,' said Pastor Berg, 'there's good news. You have just been elected Treasurer of Teen-Age Evangelism. David Wilkerson is your Director in this fight for young people. And you'll be glad to hear that you've got a budget of \$20,000 for the first year.'

Captain DiLena said, 'Who is David Wilkerson, who's got the books, and where is the money?'

¹*Ibid.*, p. 100.

²*Ibid.*

'Paul,' said Pastor Berg, 'we have no books, we have no money, and Dave Wilkerson is a preacher from the hills of Pennsylvania who believes he belongs in New York.'

Paul laughed, 'You make it sound naive,' he said.

'We are naive, Paul, said Pastor Berg. 'Just about as naive as David was when he stepped up to Goliath with nothing but a sling, a pebble . . . and the conviction that he was on God's side.'¹

This was the way that Teen-Age Evangelism began as an organization. Wilkerson found a small, three-room office suite on Staten Island, and this became the headquarters for the ambitious program.² First came "Operation Saturation." It was a literature program aimed at reaching every high school student in the city's troubled areas. David wrote a series of little booklets on various problems, and these were distributed faithfully by hundreds of young people from the local churches.³

The second experiment was television:

I gathered together one hundred boys and girls who had been in trouble and found the way out. We formed an all teen-age choir and every week for thirteen weeks we put on a television show. The format was simple and fresh. The kids sang, then one of the boys or girls told his story.

We were encouraged by the rating this show received: we were apparently very popular among the teen-agers of the city.⁴

The popularity of the program, however, did nothing to reduce the expensive nature of this TV experiment, and the little group was constantly on the alert for finances that might be directed to their program. It was at this time that they

¹*Ibid.*, pp. 100-101.

²*Ibid.*, p. 101.

³*Ibid.*, p. 102.

⁴*Ibid.*

made the acquaintance of W. Clement Stone, President of both the Combined Insurance Company of Chicago and Boys Club of Chicago, who gave them \$10,000 toward their endeavors.

The \$10,000 went to pay our debt, and it also paid for the second thirteen weeks, [of television] and for a film, *Vulture on My Veins*, about dope addiction among teen-agers in New York. But this money purchased more than just film and television time. It bought us a new respect for this ministry.¹

It is interesting to note at this point also, that David Wilkerson preferred personal contact to the medium of television. Even before the second series of TV shows was over, he had started walking the streets again and talking to the young people face-to-face. "As soon as I did, I knew that I had touched the live, vital key to effective work with young people. . . . I knew as soon as I returned to my original technique of going out into the streets that this was the method meant for me."²

This vital personal contact impressed David once more with the urgent need for a home that could be the headquarters for full-time workers, and a refuge for the young people with their problems. Such a home would provide the necessary insulation from their former environment that would allow the delinquents and the addicts to begin life anew. Such a home might be called the--"Teen Challenge Center."

The original dream began to take on substance in 1961, as the young organization moved its operation into a large,

¹*Ibid.*, p. 105.

²*Ibid.*

old Georgian mansion at 416 Clinton Avenue in Brooklyn. There is an interesting story behind the location and purchase of that first building. It will not be necessary to go into the detail that *The Cross and the Switchblade* does, but it was an incident that greatly strengthened and encouraged those who were starting out in this endeavor.

With less than a hundred dollars in their bank account, they began looking at some houses on Clinton Avenue. There was one stately old Georgian mansion which seemed to be ideal, but had a price of \$65,000. They finally got the asking price down to \$42,000, which meant they needed \$4,200 for the ten-per-cent binder. This burden was carried to the Glad Tidings Church by David Wilkerson, and after the meeting the people filed by and gave or pledged exactly \$4,400. The "extra" \$200, it turned out, was later needed to pay some of the lawyers and closing costs.¹

With the establishment of the original center at 416 Clinton Avenue, Wilkerson's idea of a place to house gang members and other troubled or homeless youth became a reality. Soon after initiating the Brooklyn program, however, it became apparent that narcotic addiction was rapidly becoming the biggest problem.

Gangs were breaking up because members were forsaking the group to rob and steal on their own to raise

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 110-113.

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money to support a drug habit. Each new addict had to sell to his circle of friends to support his own habit. It spread like a malignant cancer through the entire city.¹

In 1962 the name was changed from Teen-Age Evangelism to Teen Challenge, Inc., for this was a more accurate title to describe their expanded program. Because of a need for more street workers to help reach the addicts, David Wilkerson accepted a speaking appointment at Central Bible College in Springfield, Missouri. He presented the need and found that he had seventy interested young people standing in line after the meeting. Twenty were eventually selected by the faculty, and came to New York to help Teen Challenge.

Teen Challenge began taking in addicts and was soon engaged in a full-time program of rehabilitation. The staff learned the language of the addict, went into hideouts, visited them in hospitals and jails, viewed 'tea parties' where addicts were mainlining narcotics, and learned how to communicate effectively with them. Those who were really desperate for help were invited to the center as beds became available.²

The very real terrors of drug addiction and the alarming problem that it posed for New York (not to mention the world society) in the early 1960's, must be told in the next chapter. Because the problem has, if anything, grown larger in recent years, it will be profitable to look at the many and varied programs that have arisen to cope with the problem, and discover the place and relation of Teen Challenge to these other endeavors.

¹"Teen Challenge Fact Sheet," *Press Information Kit* for Wilkerson Youth Crusades.

²*Ibid.*

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Suffice it to quote here one letter from Mr. Walter Hoving, Chairman of Tiffany and Co., Fifth Avenue, New York. Mr. Hoving became an early friend of Teen Challenge, and has since acted as a member of their Board of Directors and Advisory Council. In a 1967 letter to David Wilkerson he said:

I cannot help but take my pen in hand to tell you how utterly sound I think your approach is to the narcotics problem, particularly in view of its importance in American life today.

We know now that it has been adequately demonstrated that only a fraction of a percentage of the addicts have been helped by governmental efforts or by private efforts that approach him by using treatments which appeal to his will power alone to overcome his addiction.

We know now that an addict must find something stronger than himself, something outside of himself that can help him overcome his craving for narcotics. Your method of invoking a complete change in the individual by calling upon the power of God through the Holy Spirit to help him, in my judgment, is the only way. That is why your approach has had such a high percentage of successful cures. That is why it has given addicts insight and strength to find a permanent cure.

These are the reasons I have been so enthusiastic about your work and why I have done the little I have done to support you in your efforts. I think our greatest obstacle is the secularization that has steadily gone on in this country with its consequent elimination of the power of God in the lives of people, especially these poor unfortunates whom you are helping.¹

Continued Expansion

The original building at 416 Clinton Avenue is now used to house male in-patients and their counselors. These counselors are volunteer or nominally paid full-time workers who normally are Bible College graduates. Former

¹Walter Hoving, letter to David Wilkerson, January 13, 1967. Reproduced in a little promotional booklet: *The Story of Teen Challenge--New York*, p. 2.

delinquents or narcotics users assist in this program as a very necessary part of their rehabilitation. Their experience is invaluable as they deal with patients who are struggling with the same problems that they have just come through.¹

This work has continued to expand until there are between thirty-five and forty full-time workers in the New York program alone. The 1968 Christmas issue of *The Cross and the Switchblade* magazine gives a very interesting and informative list of the present workers, their background, and their duties at Teen Challenge:

Here are a few notes of interest to better acquaint you with Teen Challenge staff members:

Rev. Don Wilkerson, brother of the founder, Rev. David R. Wilkerson, is the Director of Teen Challenge.² The Associate Director is Rev. John Benton.

Rev. Alan Brett is the Dean of Men and his wife, Margaret, is the Publications and Business Secretary. They are from New Zealand. Two of their children, David and Rozanne, worked at Teen Challenge last year and encouraged their parents to join the staff.

Rev. John Miller serves Teen Challenge as the Business Manager, and his wife, Karen, is Mr. Benton's

¹It was at this unique "dormitory" that I stayed when conducting my research during the summer of 1968. It gave me a good opportunity to observe the counselors, the addicts, and the former addicts, as they went about their work.

²David Wilkerson is still the executive director of Teen Challenge, but he now works out of a Long Island office that has been set up to take care of the David Wilkerson Youth Crusades. After successfully launching Teen Challenge and guiding it directly for several years, he found that he was constantly being called upon to speak in various parts of the country and tell the story of the Teen Challenge ministry. He turned, therefore, to a full-time crusade ministry sometime in 1967, and now conducts such crusades almost every weekend in some part of the country or world.

secretary. Both are graduates of Central Bible College in Springfield, Mo.

Rev. Larry Breitzkreutz is Director of the Re-Entry Home while his wife, Hazel, serves as bookkeeper. They were graduated from Northwest Bible College in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada.

Dom Costanzo, who joined the staff as cook last September got his experience as a butcher while in penal institutions of New York.

John Fester is the chief radio technician and produces the radio programs and tapes for Teen Challenge. He and his wife, Millie are graduates of CBC in Springfield, Mo., and have two children.

Mrs. Ann Wilkerson, mother of David and Don Wilkerson, operates the switchboard, serves as office receptionist and also works at "The Lost Coin," the coffee house operated in Greenwich Village, New York, by Teen Challenge. She has served faithfully in this work for nine years.

A large and competent staff of teachers and counselors are necessary to counsel and train the more than 960 young men who enter the rehabilitation program yearly. Among them are:

Randy Larson, the Assistant Dean of Men, who recently married one of the secretaries, Miss Patricia Boswell of Memphis, Tenn.

Dennis and Kay Nelson came to Teen Challenge from Minneapolis, Minn., and are graduates of the Bethany Fellowship Missionary Center of that city. The Nelsons visited Teen Challenge four years ago and at that time planned to enter foreign missionary service. However, fourteen months ago they began their missionary ministry in this drug-infested "asphalt jungle." Dennis serves as teacher, counselor, work director, and recreational supervisor; Kay is assistant editor of the magazine and also the staff nurse. They have a small son and daughter.

Dick Harden, Allen Jump, Mario Medina, Oscar Muriel and Robert Negrón are staff counselors. Dick and Allen joined us last summer after attending Bible school and college. Mario, Oscar and Robert are junior staff members, and native New Yorkers who originally came to Teen Challenge for help. Their lives were changed by God's power and now they are helping others to find salvation and deliverance.

In late September, Mr. and Mrs. Don Chapman and their infant daughter came to Teen Challenge from Wilmington, Delaware. Don is a graduate of the Reformed Episcopal Seminary in Philadelphia, Pa., and works as a counselor.

Mr. David Larson works in the mailroom, filling orders for literature. Dave and his wife, Lynda, started

in September following their graduation from Bethany Fellowship. Lynda is the magazine secretary. Miss Faye Mianulli works in the mailroom with Dave. When asked what her duties are, Faye replied, "general practitioner."

Several girls are employed to answer the great volume of mail that comes to the various Teen Challenge offices. Miss Nancy Taylor is executive and radio secretary and assists Rev. Don Wilkerson in answering letters concerning radio programs, applications and visiting schedules. In November, 1966, her sister, Mavis, visited and soon returned to supervise the new IBM system. They are from Oklahoma.

Miss Sandy Segrest of Houston, Texas, is a secretary and IBM worker but also finds time evenings for evangelistic work among children. Miss Sharon Bassford, from Springfield, Mo., operates keypunch and IBM equipment and was graduated from Evangel College where she earned a B.S. degree.

Mrs. Sally Moor, a graduate of Elim Bible Institute, joined the staff in January, 1967, and works in IBM and "The Lost Coin." Susie Vasquez also works in IBM and as a former drug addict has watched God deliver many of her friends from addiction during the past five years.

Chuck and Barbara Miller, from Seattle, Washington, live in the Children's Home, direct Kids Crusades and work with troubled youth. They have two sons, Tommy and Ricky. Miss Beverly Learn formerly worked with the Millers in the Children's Home, but recently transferred to the bookkeeping department in the Brooklyn Center.

Hundreds of others participate in the Teen Challenge program through their gifts and prayer support. These people, too, are vitally essential to our ministry!¹

As this large staff was gradually assembled, it became necessary for Teen Challenge to expand and buy other buildings on Clinton Avenue to house them. Much of the history of this period of expansion was retold in a sermon, entitled, *God is Faithful*, which Wilkerson preached in the Christian Center Church at Anaheim, California. In this sermon, Wilkerson gives an interesting, building-by-building

¹Karen Miller, "One Family in Christ," *The Cross and the Switchblade*, November-December, 1968, pp. 12-14.

description of how Teen Challenge grew.¹

One of these buildings is the new headquarters building at 444 Clinton Avenue. This beautiful blue and white office building is set back from Clinton Avenue and makes a sharp contrast with the other buildings on the block. The facilities include a chapel that seats approximately 200, a large cafeteria and kitchen, a mailing room, an IBM room, a modern radio room with studio (from which two new weekly broadcasts originate--"Youth Beat," and "Youth in a Fix"), a large office area, individual offices for the directors, and a conference room.

These new facilities were officially dedicated on July 1, 1967. *The Cross and the Switchblade* magazine reported the opening ceremonies.² David Wilkerson presided at the dedication. His brother, Donald Wilkerson, who had become the new Director of the New York Teen Challenge, gave a brief history of how the work had progressed. Whereas David's original office had been the back seat of his 1956 Chevy, now there was a new half million dollar "spiritual therapy clinic" as a basis of operation. Mr. W. Clement Stone was the featured speaker at the dedication. Once again, Teen Challenge was grateful to him for his help in providing funds for the erection of this new building.

¹A portion of this sermon may be heard on the promotional record produced by Teen Challenge: *A Visit to Teen Challenge*.

²*The Cross and the Switchblade*, August-September, 1967, pp. 12-13.

As the work expanded, it became necessary to purchase another old mansion across the street from 416 to house the female in-patients. These girls, it was soon discovered, often made slow progress as long as they remained in the city. They needed to be isolated, out in the country somewhere. Today there is a 22 acre estate in Garrison, New York, where these girls can receive the training and care they need for rehabilitation. Their old home at 405 Clinton Avenue was once a mansion, but had deteriorated with age and environment. Their new home in Garrison, however, is indeed a "real castle".

It was Walter Hoving, the Chairman of Tiffany and Co., who helped Teen Challenge to purchase this desirable environment for the girls. He contacted the Petra Foundation,¹ which is now granting \$15,000 a year for mortgage payments. Mrs. Petra recently asked Teen Challenge to commemorate Mr. Hoving's 70th birthday by naming it, *The Walter Hoving Home*.² (The girls have affectionately named it, "The Hoving Home for Hags!")

Reverend John Benton and his wife Elsie are in charge of the re-education and refinement of these girls. He has recently authored a book in which he tells some of the interesting stories and challenges connected with this phase of Teen Challenges' ministry. It is appropriately entitled,

¹The entire story of the purchase of this \$175,000 estate, and the generosity of the Petra Foundation, is told in the following new book: John Benton, *Debs, Dolls, and Dope* (Old Tappan, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1969), pp. 115-126.

²*Ibid.*, p. 126.

Debs, Dolls, and Dope.¹ The approach that the Bentons have taken in the rehabilitation of these girls was briefly described in the New York Challenge *News Report* as follows:

The approach of the home is on a firm spiritual basis and the rehabilitation is both lasting and practical. Not only are the girls taught about God's power to deliver from the bondage of drugs, alcohol and vice, but they are also helped socially and mentally. Bible classes and chapel services provide spiritual training. Instruction in cooking and home-making helps equip them for a well-rounded life when they leave.²

405 Clinton Avenue is now used for a re-entry program for fellows who have completed the program at Teen Challenge and are now employed in outside jobs.

As early as 1962, another urgent need was filled when a farm was established in Rehrersburg, Pennsylvania. This gives an opportunity for the fellows, many of whom have never left New York City or even their own home turf, to get out into the country and work on a farm. After proving themselves at the Brooklyn Center for two or three months, and passing Bible examinations, they are allowed to transfer to this training center on the rolling 200 acre farm in the heart of Pennsylvania Dutch country. Here the former addicts are provided with a full curriculum of classes in Bible, language, agriculture, woodworking, auto-mechanics, cooking, and many other practical subjects.

¹*Ibid.*

²"Expansion Needed at the Walter Hoving Home," New York Challenge Bi-Monthly *News Report*, January, 1969, p. 3.

This crucial phase in the rehabilitation program was made available, in part, by another grant from philanthropist Clement Stone's foundation. One of the halls was also erected by the Kathryn Kuhlman foundation.¹

They provided the funds for the buildings, but the continued support of the operation must be met in other ways. Reverend Frank N. Reynolds, superintendent of the Training Center, says that, "funds for the actual building have not been hard to come by. It's the everyday operating expenses that are difficult to raise."² These funds, like the funds for Teen Challenge in New York, are made up largely of day-to-day contributions of small amounts from interested friends.

David Wilkerson briefly describes the program at the farm as follows:

There is a hill in the heart of Pennsylvania we call 'God's Mountain.' We call it that because situated right on top of that hill is a most unusual training center where hundreds of drug addicts and alcoholics have met God

Five years ago, Mr. Graybill the former owner, knelt with me in prayer to ask God to raise up a Christ-centered school to help us train and rehabilitate delinquents and addicts. Today, a beautiful two-story building stands on top of that hill as a testimony to the world that Christ can remake the hardest criminal known to society. Graduates of this center have gone on to Bible Schools, into the ministry, and back to wives,

¹David Wilkerson, "A Miracle Ministry," *The Cross and the Switchblade*, February-March, 1965, p. 29. (Miss Kuhlman is a successful evangelist in her own right. Her television program and crusades have received wide notice. She has taken an active interest in Teen Challenge for many years).

²*The Cross and the Switchblade*, August-September, 1967, p. 5.

families and good jobs. Converts can be heard praying in the chapel all night long, and the singing of gospel hymns by these fellows can make your spine tingle.¹

There are usually from seventy-five to eighty boys at "God's Mountain," at any one time. While there are facilities for 100, not enough staff is available to take care of that number.

After their stay at the farm, a large percentage of the fellows want to continue their education by going to a Bible College. One of the places they can do this is the newly established Teen Challenge Institute-Missions, a unique school located on one of the former Astor Estates in Rhinebeck, New York.

Today, the Institute of Missions is a very select school. As Wilkerson once said in an interview:

You have to meet the standard to get in--a drug addict, an alcoholic, a prostitute. No one else is allowed in. We train former incorrigibles to become workers and missionaries, . . . and we anticipate that out of this school we'll raise up missionaries to travel all through the world carrying this testimony.²

The first class from this school was graduated as recently as 1968. The November, *News Report* told of increased enrollment:

Teen Challenge Institute of Missions, a three-year Bible study course, began the new school year on September 2, 1968. The seventeen freshmen came from various areas of the country. . . .

The educational background of the student varies. Some are high school graduates while others have attended

¹*Ibid.*, p. 2.

²David Wilkerson, interview in *Listen*, December, 1967, pp. 10-11.

universities. The age of the student body ranges from sixteen to forty-two.

The total school enrollment is forty-three and increases each trimester. Since the school opened in April 1966, the enrollment has increased four hundred percent.¹

Many of the graduates from the Institute of Missions become Teen Challenge counselors and workers in the many new Teen Challenge Centers that have sprung up around the world. This fact marks perhaps the greatest expansion of all, in that there are now over a score of these centers indirectly affiliated with the New York Teen Challenge. These new centers are located in such cities as: Boston, Chicago, Dallas, Denver, Detroit, Ft. Worth, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, Paterson, N.J., Phoenix, St. Louis, San Francisco, Seattle, Toronto, Vancouver, and Boyamon, Puerto Rico.² There are others being developed in Brazil, Australia, New Zealand, and Holland.

These Teen Challenge Centers have arisen to meet the need and challenge of the drug problem around the world, and they represent an approach and a "solution" distinctly religious in character. (In this respect, if not in others, the Wilkerson approach is quite unique). This drug problem, the "more traditional solutions," and Wilkerson's approach will be considered in some detail in the next chapter.

¹New York Challenge Bi-Monthly *News Report*, November, 1968, p. 4.

²"Teen Challenge Fact Sheet," *Press Information Kit* for David Wilkerson Youth Crusades.

CHAPTER III

THE PROBLEM OF "DRUGS" IN TODAY'S SOCIETY

Although it was primarily a concern for the gangs, and a desire to help this type of troubled delinquent, that prompted David Wilkerson to come to New York in the first place, the area of greatest need soon appeared to be the narcotic drug problem. Many of the gangs were even breaking up because the members found it necessary to forsake the group to steal on their own in order to support their drug habit.

As Teen Challenge expanded, and made available its facilities for rehabilitation, a very special emphasis was placed on the problem of narcotic addiction. This emphasis has continued; and today the program of Teen Challenge is almost synonymous with the extensive work that it has done, and is doing, for the "hard-core" drug addict.

The program is open, of course, for juveniles (and adults) with almost any other sort of "hang-up" or problem, including the abuse of non-narcotic drugs or hallucinogens. In fact this "new drug problem," because of its rapid growth and the importance it has assumed to young people today, has recently become another area of real concern to David Wilkerson and Teen Challenge.

It will be the purpose of this chapter, therefore, to examine more closely the beliefs and convictions that Wilkerson has regarding both the "new" and the "old" drug problem in today's society, and to see how these views have been incorporated into the unique approach that Teen Challenge has taken to these problems.¹

It should be emphasized that the victims of the "new drug problem" do not usually require, or make use of, rehabilitation facilities. Therefore, the greatest majority of individuals "on the program" at the Teen Challenge centers, and the other centers that will be described by way of comparison, are still former heroin addicts (or those that have been "hung-up" on what is now referred to as the "old drug problem"). However, Wilkerson is constantly being faced, in his weekend crusade meetings, with young people who are having difficulties with the new drug problems--such as LSD and marijuana. He has recently found it necessary, therefore, to write and speak quite extensively on this newer aspect of the problem also. His experience and authority in the area of narcotic addiction, that has come about as a result of the success of the Teen Challenge program, have made it quite natural that he continue to work in this related area of "substance abuse".

¹In order to give a basis for a fairer and better evaluation of the program provided by Teen Challenge, it was considered important to include a sampling of other "solutions" and "approaches" to this problem--as they are being used throughout the country.

As a matter of fact, a major portion of David Wilkerson's ministry has been (and still is) involved in endeavoring to communicate with individuals who have a drug problem; helping them solve that problem; or persuasively communicating the nature and dangers of these problems to other young people--before they begin such experimentation. It was because of this very noticeable emphasis, then, that it was considered essential to devote this entire chapter to a detailed study of the "drug" situation as it is today, and a representative sampling of Wilkerson's attitudes and convictions on the subject.

The procedure to be followed will be, first, to define and explain clearly the necessary terms, background, and scope of the problem, and then to discuss the ideas and approaches that are being advocated regarding the problem.

Definition of Terms

Drug.--This term doubtless has many meanings and numerous classifications to the physician or pharmacologist, which it will not be necessary to discuss here. One inclusive technical definition which appears to be satisfactory, however, is: "Any substance that by its chemical nature alters structure or function in the living organism is a drug."¹

There are probably at least two, more common, connotations that immediately come to the mind of the layman,

¹W. Modell, "Mass Drug Catastrophes and the Roles of Science and Technology," *Science*, CLVI, 1967, p. 346.

however. First, he is likely to think of that "miracle" medicine--which cost him so much--the last time his physician prescribed one of those marvelous new anti-biotics, a much needed pain-reliever, or a quick tonic of some kind. This is a legitimate meaning, and these kinds of drugs have proved of immeasurable benefit to mankind when they were used with wise supervision and care.

The second connotation that the average person is almost certain to conjure up in his mind, is some kind of image of an "evil" narcotic drug--such a heroin--along with what he may consider the appropriate associations of illicit traffic, mysterious pushers in sunglasses, vicious "dope-fiends", or dirty hypodermic needles.¹

Neither of these connotations, nor even the two of them together, are at all adequate to begin a discussion of the so called "drug problem." They tend to leave it as merely a medical or legal problem, when actually the present intensified interest in "mind-expanding" types of drugs makes it necessary: "that drug use be considered in relation to ethical, religious, philosophical and social values as well as in relation to medical and legal facts."¹

¹These individual myths and stereotypes still cling strongly to this subject, partly because of a peculiar fascination for the entire area of "drug addiction"--a fascination that is continually fostered by the movie industry and the popular press.

²Helen H. Nowlis, *Drugs On the College Campus* (Detroit: A publication of the Food and Drug Administration, 1967), p. 5.

Drugs can be technically thought of in connection solely with curing, controlling, or preventing disease. However, even thus narrowly defined, it is clear that drugs are chemical substances that act upon the body's own chemistry in such a way as to produce various kinds of changes (both physiological and behavioral). Just how they do this, or exactly what changes may take place is far from being totally understood.

The human organism itself, and the central nervous system in particular, is composed of literally billions of anatomically and chemically complex neurones and cells which have been said to pose the ultimate challenge for the mind of man.¹ It is little wonder that there is concern not only for the effects that drugs might have upon these extremely complex structures, but for the resultant effects on what is equally complex: human behavior itself.

The potential dangers of drugs to mankind can be appreciated even more fully when it is realized that the pharmacologists themselves readily admit that the action of most drugs is extremely complex and not yet entirely predictable from individual to individual or even from occasion to occasion. In fact, Dr. Nowlis lists the following variables:

Among the many factors which modify the effects of a drug are dosage level, route, and speed of absorption

¹D. W. Esplin, "Drug Action on the Central Nervous System," in *The Pharmacological Basis of Therapeutics*, ed. by L. S. Goodman and A. Gilman (3rd edition; New York: Macmillan Co., 1965), p. 43.

(ingested, inhaled, injected), time of administration, temporary state of the organs involved in inactivation and excretion of the drug, tolerance, general physiological variations (water balance, acid base status, body temperature), genetic factors (enzyme or blood deficiencies), interaction with other absorbed drugs, age, sex, pathological conditions (nutritional status, disease), and environmental and psychological factors (setting, suggestion, knowledge, expectancy, motivation, mood, other competing behavioral systems, etc).¹

What is important in this concept about drugs is the emphasis placed upon the individual. It is now seen to be not so much a drug problem, as a problem of dealing with the people who use drugs (or to be more accurate, *abuse* drugs). For the purposes of this study, then, "drugs" will be taken to refer to any chemical substance that alters mood, behavior, perception, or consciousness, and is misused in a way that could be detrimental to the individual or society.

This study will seek to show its concern for the individual by emphasizing the various rehabilitation programs available to those who have abused drugs, and then comparing these programs to the one offered at Teen Challenge.

Substance Abuse.--There are those whose definition or connotation of "drug" is not inclusive enough to cover everything that should be mentioned in a discussion of this problem today. The term "substance abuse" has been used, therefore, as a more accurate label that is readily understood by all. A spokesman for the Michigan Department of Public Health defended this term, because it was:

¹Nowlis, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

. . . broad enough to include the use of everything from alcohol to morning-glory seeds, both capable of *modifying mood, altering perception, and changing behavior*. And these, of course, are the critical problems related to substance abuse.¹

Those individuals who prescribe their own drugs and persist in this self-medication without proper supervision, along with the large numbers of those who are now indulging in illegal drugs, can fairly be said to be misusing and abusing these substances. They may not be dependent yet--that may come later.

Drug or Substance Dependence.--As a result of periodic or continued use of certain drugs, a person may become either physically or psychologically dependent upon them. He may also have *both* psychic and physical dependence upon a given drug. The term "dependence" needs to be explained further.

The World Health Organization has even realized the need to revise its labels. They used to use the term *drug addiction* to refer to physical and psychological dependence on narcotics, and *drug habituation* to refer to psychological dependence on other drugs. In 1964, however, the WHO Expert Committee on Addiction decided to use the single concept, "Drug Dependence," to replace the two older labels.²

¹Roy Smith, "The Ups, the Downs, The Around and Arouns--A Look at Substance Abuse," *Michigan's Health*, Fall, 1968, p. 2.

²WHO Expert Committee on Addiction Producing Drugs, (World Health Organization Technical Report, 1964), Serial No. 273.

This phrase is more accurate, for an unhealthy dependence on a self-prescribed drug can be present in both narcotic addiction *and* in drug habituation. It is also true that some *non*-narcotics have shown themselves to be both psychologically and physiologically addictive. In fact, it is usually rather difficult to distinguish between the physiological and psychological aspects of any drug dependence. The latter is said to be the universal characteristic of drug dependence, in that the person's state of mind compels him to take a drug repeatedly, either to receive pleasurable sensations or to avoid discomfort. Physical dependence, on the other hand, is manifest by the withdrawal symptoms which result if the drug is suddenly stopped. When individuals become involved with their particular substance to the point of either situation, they have crossed the line of substance abuse to the unfortunate condition of dependence.

The "Dangerous Drugs" to be Examined.--Substances which are potentially abusable, or that may produce dependence, vary all the way from simple kitchen spices through common flowers and weeds to highly complex psychoactive chemicals. All of these substances may be divided into four categories--according to their characteristics: (1) sedatives, (2) stimulants, (3) hallucinogens, and (4) narcotics. Each is capable of producing beneficial as well as harmful results, as the following quotation points out:

Whatever their classification, most of these drugs have important legitimate applications. Narcotic, sedative, tranquilizing and stimulant drugs are essential to the practice of modern medicine. Hallucinogens are used in medical research. To the abuser, though, these same medically useful drugs have a compelling attribute: they affect the nervous system, producing a change in his emotional responses or reactions. The abuser may feel intoxicated, relaxed, happy or detached from a world that is painful and unacceptable to him.¹

Sedatives.--The sedatives belong to a large class of depressant drugs that include barbiturates, tranquilizers, and alcohol. The sedatives are medically beneficial for their powerful calming effect upon the central nervous system, but the barbiturate (or "goof ball"), in particular, can be highly dangerous when used illegally or without supervision. A person can develop tolerance to barbiturates, become physically dependent, and because the drug clouds the mind and confuses the judgment, very easily take a lethal overdose--accidentally or by design. Three thousand Americans die that way every year, making barbiturates the leading poisonous agent as a cause of death.²

Stimulants.--Instead of relaxing the central nervous system, the stimulants (as their name suggests) stimulate it. Caffeine is a mild stimulant that has received wide usage and social acceptability. Amphetamines (or pep-pills,

¹*Drug Abuse: Escape to Nowhere* (Philadelphia: Smith, Kline & French Laboratories, 1967), p. 28.

²Jules Saltman, "What We Can Do About Drug Abuse," *Public Affairs Pamphlet No. 390* (New York: Public Affairs Committee, Inc., 1968), pp. 7-8.

"bennies," "dexies," etc.) have received widespread medical usage for the control of overweight, relief of fatigue, and in the treatment of mental disorders.¹ They have a capacity to elevate the mood and give a feeling of well-being and exhilaration--which may lead to psychological dependence, or an overdosage that may cause damage to the heart or result in a state of exhaustion when the effect of the pills wears off.²

Methamphetamine, or methadrine (commonly called "speed") is another powerful stimulant that works faster, and gives more bizarre results, than the "pep-pills." Especially is this true if it is injected directly into the bloodstream of the abuser. The danger of this substance was made clear when even the recognized "drug areas" like Greenwich Village and Haight-Ashbury started promoting the little buttons: "Speed Kills."

Hallucinogens.--This third classification of drugs contains the psychedelic (mind-manifester) and consciousness expanding type of drugs--those that can cause hallucinations and distortion of perception. Included in this group are such items as d-lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD-25), mescaline (peyote), psilocybin, dimethyltryptamine (DMT), STP, morning glory seeds, and the various forms of glue and paint thinner,

¹*Drug Abuse: Escape to Nowhere*, p. 36.

²*The Crutch That Cripples: Drug Dependence* (Chicago: American Medical Association, 1968), p. 8.

etc., that some young people have learned to sniff in order to get a hallucinogenic effect.

Marijuana is also best placed in this category. While it is commonly thought to be a narcotic drug, it is not properly considered so either medically or by the law. Marijuana is controlled by the Federal Bureau of Narcotics, which may account for some of the confusion.

There are almost no medical uses for the hallucinogens. They are being used in carefully controlled research situations in a very few places only. There is not enough evidence yet to determine their value to medicine.¹

Narcotics.--This fourth general classification of drugs refers primarily to opium and its pain killing derivatives, such as heroin, morphine, paregoric, and coedine. There are also some synthetic drugs, such as Demerol and Dolophine, which are classified as narcotics. It is heroin, of course, which has become the standard black market drug of addiction in America today.

The narcotics, primarily morphine, are widely used as standard pain relievers. Used and controlled in this way, they are of great benefit to medicine. The manufacture

¹There is a great deal of evidence and information that could be included here about the nature and effects of LSD and marijuana (the two most popular hallucinogens). However, it is the primary purpose of this section merely to define briefly the broad category "hallucinogen." For a fuller treatment of this subject, by this author, the reader is referred to a monograph that was published by the Michigan Council on Alcoholic Problems in July of 1969.

and distribution of these medicinal opiates, however is carefully controlled by the Federal government through laws designed to keep these products for legitimate use only. Strict record-keeping and drug security requirements must be adhered to in order to avoid contributing to the severe problem of narcotic addiction.¹

Historical Background of the Drug Problem

Although it is of little reassurance or comfort, it is nevertheless interesting to learn that substance abuse is extremely ancient. Mankind has apparently been seeking an escape from his pains, fears, anxieties, and tensions ever since antiquity. For thousands of years now he has been taking drugs that affect his mind and behavior. Usually it has been for one of the following three purposes: (1) pure hedonistic indulgence, (2) medical reasons, or (3) as part of a religious rite. Not far behind any of these reasons, as can readily be seen, is man's age-old-desire to be free for the moment from the perplexities and troubles of this life, and experience a bit of heaven on earth.

In his eager yearning for this blessed release, man soon discovered many items in the plant world which could bring about the coveted euphoria. *Cannabis sativa*, as Linnaeus christened it, or Indian hemp as it has long been known, is one of the oldest such substances. Today, its

¹*Drug Abuse: Escape to Nowhere*, p. 30.

common and increasingly popular derivative is known as marijuana (also pot, grass, or tea), but the ancient Chinese had a word for it too--nearly 3,000 years before Christ. The Chinese emperor Shen Neng, about 2737 B.C., prescribed this "medicine" for gout, rheumatism, malaria, constipation, and absent-mindedness.¹

It was in India, however, that the culture of the hemp plant became almost a science and a religion. Norman Taylor, a botanist, has written:

For centuries nearly every system of Indian philosophy or religion is inextricably bound up with Indian hemp. At least sixteen hundred years ago cultivated Hindus set out to explore the emotional and fantastical properties of hemp. . . . Their object was to produce some flight from reality, less harmful than most others, and to produce an effect different from any other.²

They succeeded in developing three distinct grades or products: (1) *Hashish* or *Charas*--the extremely potent, unadulterated resin from the tops of the finest female plants of Indian hemp, (2) *Ganja*--a specially cultivated and harvested grade of the tops of the female plants, and (3) *Bhang*--a smoking mixture from the cut tops of uncultivated female hemp plants.³

Marijuana is simply the Mexican name for *bharg*, and has become the word used for the hemp plant in America. It

¹Norman Taylor, *Narcotics: Nature's Dangerous Gifts* (New York: Dell Publishing Co., Inc., 1966 Laurel Edition), p. 21.

²*Ibid.*, p. 24.

³*Ibid.*, p. 25.

has rapidly become the most popular substance (outside of alcohol and tobacco) used by that group of young people today who are apparently still continuing the search for instant happiness and bliss.

One of the other primary substances which man's restless fingers long ago uncovered was *opium*. In fact, it may have been used even earlier than hemp. The ancient Sumerians apparently had an ideogram for opium which meant: "the plant that produces delight." One anthropologist has said: "As early as 4000 B.C. the opium poppy (*Papaver somniferum*) was cultivated, undoubtedly for its pleasurable effects as a drug, in the Mesopotamian region of Sumer."¹

Man had discovered in opium another substance with the power to relieve his frustrations and discouragements, and even provide an effective escape from the oppressions of reality--or so he thought.

This harmless looking poppy, however, has been the cause of untold woe in this world. It has resulted in bloody wars in which thousands have died (1839-1842; and 1856 between Great Britain and China), and it has resulted in terrible famines because greedy governments insisted on the cultivation of poppies instead of food (e.g. the Persian famine of 1871-72, in which tens of thousands died).² As

¹Ashley Montagu, "The Long Search for Euphoria," *The Drug-Takers* (New York: Time Incorporated, 1965), p. 32.

²Will Oursler and L. D. Smith, *Narcotics: America's Peril* (Garden City: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1952), pp. 66-69.

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Norman Taylor says, it is difficult to exaggerate the tragedy that opium has brought to humanity:

No other drug has caused so much corruption, or unseated so many of the powerful; the tentacles of its trade have stretched from the august board rooms of the East India Company in London to the slums of San Francisco, the Emperors of China, the respected merchants of New York and Boston, and to those great centers of modern drug traffic in Cairo, Bangkok, and Singapore. Its undeniable terrors and dangers have never stopped its use, its hold upon its addicts is adamant; its most literate user put his finger on the cause of its world-wide popularity when he called it 'The Abyss of Divine Enjoyment.'¹

By the end of the eighteenth century, opium was being used extensively in the American colonies as a therapeutic agent. It received widespread use as a pain reliever, frequently being advocated for even very minor ailments because its addictive ability was just not understood by the medical profession at that time.

The rising problem of opium addiction was severely compounded by the discovery of two powerful opium alkaloids--morphine (1805) and codeine (1832). Unfortunately, physicians again failed to realize the dangers of these new drugs, and they began to administer them to cure the opium habit. It was discovered too late that in the case of morphine at least, the opium addict was merely being transferred to another addicting drug, one that was *ten* times more potent.²

¹Taylor, *op. cit.*, pp. 38-39.

²*Drug Abuse: Escape to Nowhere*, p. 17.

Then, with the introduction of the hypodermic needle in the 1840's, there came a further complication of the problem: "The hypodermic use of morphine spread rapidly, especially among the armed forces in the Civil War; indeed, to such an extent that morphinism became known as the 'army disease.'"¹

After the war, the situation became even worse as several different forms of opium and its derivatives began to appear on the market. Considered important medicine, these drugs could be bought legally and inexpensively almost anywhere. They were used for the treatment of everything from headaches to diarrhea; and since this opiate indulgence was socially acceptable, it continued to flourish until the 1890's. About that time, public attitudes began to shift. The following reasons have been given for this change:

1. Physicians had finally realized the destructive nature of narcotic dependence and were informing everyone.
2. There was a growing realization of the great numbers of people that actually had become addicted.
3. The widespread reports that were being written by these addicts themselves, telling about their experiences, were very convincing.
4. The new derivative of morphine, *heroin*, was discovered in 1898. It was originally hailed again as a cure

¹Montagu, *op. cit.*, p. 120.

for addiction, but was found only to create thousands of new addicts. It seemed to be time for a complete reevaluation.¹

This time the physicians were quicker to restrict the use of heroin, with the result that it dropped just as quickly into the illegal traffic of the underworld, where it has remained. Before long, various laws exercising control over the narcotic drugs began to appear. In 1914 the Harrison Act made the dispensing of narcotics illegal except for physicians and pharmacists (and then only with a written prescription). Even these sources eventually became eliminated, and the addicts who were unable to kick their habits were forced to deal entirely with an underworld market and its vastly inflated prices.

This made it necessary for them to turn to crime to support their habit--the very situation that presents itself to the heroin addict today. He is still faced with a forced life of crime, and the near-hopelessness of any rehabilitation. He is the "hard-core" addict. His problem is referred to today as the "old" drug problem because it involves addiction to the older opium derivatives.

It is still a problem of major size and concern, and one that has borne the stigma and contempt of society since the "change of heart" at the turn of the century. Only recently can we take any sort of gratification in the fact that

¹*Drug Abuse: Escape to Nowhere*, pp. 18-22.

as a nation we are at last beginning to look at the heroin addict as a sick person in need of highly specialized help, supervision, and understanding, rather than as a criminal to be hunted down and imprisoned.

The Nature and Scope of the Narcotic

Addiction Problem Today

What is narcotic addiction?--Most of the other drugs mentioned in this chapter do not produce physical addiction (barbiturates are perhaps the only exception). The narcotic abuser soon finds, however, that his body requires repeated and larger doses of the drug to get the same effects. The narcotic abuser becomes "hooked" and is said to have a "monkey on his back," because his body develops a tolerance for the drug, and goes through severe withdrawal sickness when deprived of it. This is the reason why the heroin addict,¹ for example, will do almost anything to maintain his habit and avoid the much dreaded pains of withdrawal.²

¹Since heroin is the drug which is being used illicitly by most hard-core addicts today, terms like "drug addict" and "narcotic addict" are commonly used interchangeably with "heroin addict." It will be sufficient, therefore, to discuss this "old" drug problem as a heroin problem.

²Because of the diluted product on today's market, however, the average junkie cannot really afford to give himself nearly as severe a habit as was possible a few years ago when the heroin was purer. The withdrawal problem is not usually as bad as the addict may have imagined--or as it may still be pictured by the layman. The symptoms today have been compared to a bad cold or case of the flu.

Why would anyone want to take heroin in the first place? There have been many reasons advanced, covering such things as social factors, psychiatric factors, and pharmacological factors. Perhaps it is primarily due, however, to the fact that: "heroin provides the most complete relief from the pain and suffering of life for those who cannot, or choose not to, cope with the physical or mental strains which beset them."¹ This position is taken by Alvin Moscow, who continues:

For the individual who is unhappy for whatever reason, in physical pain or mental distress, heroin is a great temptation. Marijuana and cocaine provide a mere "high" and LSD takes you on a 'trip' which may or may not be pleasurable, but heroin gives you complete relief, although temporary, from whatever ails you. The price one pays, however, is not merely five dollars a grain. Heroin demands the user's whole living life. It changes his body chemistry so that he must continue to take more and more and more to get the original degree of euphoria. It makes an addict out of the user, regardless of race, social status, education or level of intelligence.²

In addition to Moscow's opinion that "escape" is the major reason for beginning to use heroin, notice what David Wilkerson says about it. He believes that there is no complete answer as to why young people become addicted. He says: "The background leading to addiction usually is so complicated that the addict himself cannot provide a clear or complete history of his own case."³ However, he goes on

¹Alvin Moscow, *Merchants of Heroin* (New York: The Daily Press, Inc., 1968), p. xiv.

²*Ibid.*, p. xiii. ³Wilkerson, *Parents on Trial*, p. 92.

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to list the following six factors that he has seen to be important: (1) Curiosity, (2) Ignorance, (3) Desire to be Accepted, (4) Method of Escape, (5) Exploitation by Pusher "Friends," and (6) Victimization.¹

The heroin addict definitely does become psychologically dependent upon the drug, whether he started to use it as a means of escape or not. Even after enduring the agonies of withdrawal and overcoming physical addiction, the heroin addict is still psychologically dependent and will usually return to drugs just as soon as possible.

Wilkerson discusses "this thing called drug addiction" at considerable length in his book, *The Cross and the Switchblade*. He tells of one boy who had been to the Federal Hospital in Lexington, but who came out with this very typical attitude: "Once you are hooked, man, . . . you are hooked for good. I got me a fix within five minutes after getting out of that place."²

Other addicts told Wilkerson "over and over again," that there are two habits: the body habit, and the mind habit. They agreed that overcoming the body habit wasn't too much of a problem:

'But that mind habit, Davie . . . that's something terrible! There's a thing inside you that *makes* you come back. Something spooky, whispering to you. We

¹*Ibid.*, pp. 92-97.

²Wilkerson, *The Cross and the Switchblade*, p. 149.

got names for this guy: either he's a monkey on our back, or a vulture on our veins.'¹

The problem--When John F. Kennedy was President, he expressed his concern over this problem by calling the first White House Conference on Narcotic and Drug Abuse, on September 27 and 28, 1962. "The Conference, chaired by Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy, was attended by more than 400 representatives of public and private agencies concerned with the control and treatment of this problem."²

In his welcoming address, President Kennedy outlined the problem as he saw it:

I don't think that there is any field about which there is so much divided opinion, so much possible to do, and, in some places, so limited in action, as this field of narcotics and the control of drug abuse. . . .

The discouragingly high relapse among addicts who leave our medical institutions free from any physical dependence on drugs is clear evidence that more must be done.³

Another speaker at the opening session of this conference was Robert F. Wagner, who was then the mayor of New York City. He presented a discouragingly clear picture of the narcotic problem in his city.

For New York City no problem is more critical, more devastating in its effects, more puzzling in its fundamental causes, more frustrating in its resistance to our

¹*Ibid.*, p. 153.

²*Proceedings, White House Conference on Narcotic and Drug Abuse* (Washington, D.C., U.S. Government Printing Office, 1962), p. xv.

³*Ibid.*, pp. 2-3.

efforts, and more needful of the kind of discussion and illumination that has been underway and will reach its climax during this conference, than narcotics.

Nobody knows for sure how many addicts there are in New York City. The estimate is from 25,000 to 50,000.¹ This figure is just that--an estimate. This number is believed to be about one-half of the total in the United States. That, too, is an estimate.²

When the mayor began to analyze these estimates to discover their economic meaning for the city, he stated that only a very small percentage of the addicts are able to support their habit out of regular income. It is usually necessary for the women to turn to prostitution and the men to theft, in order to raise the \$50 to \$100 a day that they might need to support their habit. The stolen goods must be converted into cash in order to buy the drugs, says Mayor Wagner:

The goods must be sold, generally bringing no more than one-fifth of their replacement value. We estimate that it costs the average addict \$10,000 a year to support his habit, or \$50,000 in stolen goods.

If 25,000 addicts each steal this much, the total comes to well over a billion dollars a year. If only half this many addicts steal to this extent, the total is still \$625 million. Even if one adjusts conservatively further downward, it is hard to place the figure below a half billion dollars.³

It was not an encouraging picture that Mayor Wagner presented back in 1962; and in many respects the problem has remained the same, or grown even worse today. It is virtually impossible to control the flow of illegal heroin into the

¹This estimate is placed variously from a low of 23,000 to a high of 100,000. See James Mills, "Realities We Must Face--But Won't." *Life*, March 5, 1965, p. 114.

²*Proceedings*, p. 16.

³*Ibid.*, p. 18.

country. Wilkerson says that: "The narcotics business is the underworld's second most lucrative racket, and the profits are constantly climbing."¹ It is no trouble for them to smuggle drugs across the borders, for the authorities cannot possibly search every plane, car, and boat that comes into the country.

For example: "By conservative estimate, 1.5 tons of heroin enter the U.S. illegally every year. In fiscal 1963-64, the U.S. Bureau of Customs intercepted only 35 pounds."² The amount of business that all of this heroin means for the underworld is further exemplified by showing the strange kind of "markup and dilution" that is involved. There are many middlemen along the way who cut the strength of the drug and raise the price at the same time. (Today, when it finally reaches the addict, he may be getting only from three to ten per cent pure heroin, the rest is milk sugar, powdered milk, or even quinine.) "The addict may finally pay at a rate of \$9,000 an ounce for a product which came into the country at \$600 an ounce."³

Governmental authorities are doing all that they can to control such traffic in drugs. The legal penalties are stiff, and are usually enforced for narcotics violations.

¹Wilkerson, *Hey, Preach.* . . , p. 79.

²"Narcotics: Slum to Suburb," *Newsweek*, February 22, 1965, p. 68B.

³*Ibid.*

"Illegal sale of narcotics can mean a fine of \$20,000 and a sentence of 5 to 20 years for the first offense, and 10 to 40 years for further offenses."¹

In recent years, however, a clearer and much-needed differentiation between the addict and the profiteer has been made:

California pioneered in translating this new attitude into law. A statute passed by the California Assembly in 1961 made the first legislative distinction between the addict and the seller--the victim and the profiteer. The law set up rehabilitation centers where addicts can commit themselves, be committed by their families, or--if arrested--be sent against their will by a judge.²

Now, the heroin addict is beginning to be looked upon as a medically sick person, one who needs rehabilitation and treatment for both his physical and psychological addiction. Conquering the psychological habit is a long and difficult task, and many diversified programs have arisen to cope with this problem. Some of the more prominent of these programs will be briefly surveyed, and then a comparison will be made to the approach at Teen Challenge.

The Treatment of Narcotic Addicts

The key to treating and rehabilitating the drug addict lies within his own personality. His addiction

¹"Students and Drug Abuse," *Today's Education*, NEA Journal, LVIII (March, 1969), p. 50. This authoritative and informative article was prepared by the Public Information Branch and Center for Studies of Narcotic and Drug Abuse, National Institute of Mental Health, in cooperation with the staff of *Today's Education*.

²Tom Alexander, "Drugs and the Law," *The Drug Takers* (New York: Time Incorporated, 1965), p. 56.

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reflects an emotional incapacity to deal with reality--an affliction so personal that there is probably no single sure cure. But all of the varied approaches share one purpose: to instill within the addict a sense of self-discipline and mature self-respect.¹

Federal Hospitals

Until recently, the two federal hospitals, located at Lexington, Kentucky, and Fort Worth, Texas, were almost the only places a junkie could go to try to overcome his addiction. Now there are scores of new treatment centers of various types all across the country. In 1965 there were about forty of these in New York city alone.²

It is still the federal hospitals which bear the brunt of the treatment traffic, however. Lexington, or "K.Y." as the addicts refer to it, takes in approximately 2,300 patients a year--about one-sixth of them federal prisoners, and the rest voluntary admissions.³ The treatment at these federal institutions usually involves three phases--if the voluntary patient will stay that long:

The first is physical withdrawal from drugs, which may be eased by occasional medication, particularly methadone. Those on barbiturates in addition to narcotics are given doses of pentobarbital to avoid withdrawal symptoms.

The second phase is the beginning battle for the addict's personality. He receives several weeks of treatment and guidance from psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, and vocational experts. In the

¹Richard B. Stolley, "Up From Addiction: The Long Way Back" *The Drug Takers*, p. 57.

²*Ibid.*, p. 59. ³Jules Saltman, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

third phase the patient goes out among the general hospital population and is assigned to a job or job-training class. Now he is challenged to cope with himself, with others--patients, staff members, and visitors--and with the emotional hazards of living without recourse to drugs.¹

What kind of success does such a program meet with? Unfortunately, many of the voluntary patients never give the program a chance to go beyond the first phase--if they last that long. They have almost unimaginable problems to cope with, and there is a very small percentage who make it. A simple cross-section of the patients admitted to Lexington in 1961, for example, revealed that:

Sixty-eight percent had not finished high school. Eighty-five percent were in the lowest of five socioeconomic levels, and most had a background of severe emotional and social deprivation. . . .

About 90 percent of the patients were classified by Lexington doctors as easily frustrated, impulsive, unstable, and unable to plan ahead; in the hospital, they were often childishly demanding and stubborn.²

As for the number of addicts who are permanently helped by the federal hospitals, the figures have always been most discouraging:

The best information now available on what happens to Lexington patients is provided by a follow up study of some 1,900 residents of New York City who were discharged between July 1952 and December 1955. *More than 90 percent* of them became readdicted--generally within 6 months.³

¹*Ibid.*

²Mental Health Monograph 2, *Narcotic Drug Addiction* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1963), p. 10.

³*Ibid.*, p. 11.

The patients usually return to their old environment. Once they are back among old associates and the same old problems, it is very difficult not to relapse back into the old habits. The exact percentages vary from study to study, depending upon the length of time studied and the difficulty of tracing all patients. The one thing that does become clear is that the best results obtained were found among those who underwent some sort of compulsory supervision after discharge. This is the advantage of some of the newer programs now being offered by private organizations. There is still a scarcity of "halfway houses" where the addict can receive professional help while adjusting to society, but more are becoming available. Perhaps the most publicized of these programs is *Synanon*.

The Synanon Approach

Synanon was founded in 1958 by an Alcoholics Anonymous veteran, Charles Dederich. The patients are voluntary; in fact it is deemed a privilege to be allowed to enter. They must prove to the indoctrination committee that they truly seek help and want to change their behavior. If accepted into the isolated community of Synanon, the addict can expect no medication--for the approach is of a very different nature:

An entering addict is exposed to the Synanon form of 'attack therapy': an understanding but scathing analysis of his weaknesses by other addicts and former addicts. If he can face up to it, work out his emotional problems, and endure the discipline--plus--self-discipline

of the group--who themselves have lived through every aspect of his experience--they believe he has a good chance of staying off drugs.¹

The so-called "small s synanon" group psychotherapy is one of the keys to this program. Dederich, himself, describes it as follows:

Another device which has seemed to produce beneficial results is the "Synanon." The Synanon can be defined broadly as a kind of type of group psychotherapy. Synanon, which is a coined word, is used to describe a more or less informal meeting which ideally consists of three male patients and three female patients, plus one Synanist who is himself an addictive personality, but who has managed to arrest the symptoms of his addiction for some considerable length of time, or seems to be progressing at a rate somewhat faster than his colleagues in the meeting. The Synanist acts as a moderator, and by virtue of an empathy which seems to exist between addictive personalities, is able to detach the patient's conscious or unconscious attempts to evade the truth about himself. The methods employed by a Synanist in a Synanon meeting may include devices or stratagems which appear to be unorthodox, but such surprisingly beneficial results have occurred in an encouraging number of cases that we feel we must further explore the method.²

Experts are undecided about the techniques employed at Synanon. Some feel it is dangerous experimentation by laymen who are out of their field. Other medical men, however, agree with one Los Angeles psychiatrist specializing in addictive disorders, who said: ". . . it is my conviction that from experiments such as this will ultimately come an effective answer to the problem of drug addiction."³

¹Saltman, *op. cit.*, pp. 26-27.

²Lewis Yablonsky and Charles E. Dederich, "Synanon," *Narcotics*, ed. David M. Wilner and Gene G. Kassebaum (New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1965), pp. 194-195.

³Richard B. Stolley, "Synanon: The Open Door and the Blunt Truth," *The Drug Takers*, *op. cit.*, p. 122.

Synanon does not talk about cure percentages, because it is an organization which realizes that even after years of being "clean" it is still easy for the former addict to relapse. Dederich insists that he does not want to add to the note of pessimism that addicts know surrounds places like Lexington. He argues, somewhat to the point, that if addicts know there is a 90 per cent relapse rate, they will seize upon it as a rationalization for continued use of their drugs. They will come in just to get clean, lose their tolerance, and enable themselves to get high on a lower dose when they leave. Instead of this tone of failure, Synanon hopes to present a tone of success by talking about the number of "clean man days" they have every day.¹

This term refers to the number of addicts who are daily kept off drugs at the many Synanon houses now spread around the country. Dederich pointed out in March of 1964, that because Synanon was keeping 400 addicts clean each day, they were saving society (conservatively) over \$3.5 million per year (in merchandise that was *not* stolen to support a junkie's habit.)²

Daytop Lodge

This is another voluntary program that is similar to the Synanon approach, but is supported by a Federal grant and

¹Yablonsky and Dederich, *op. cit.*, p. 197.

²*Ibid.*

is under court sponsorship. (Synanon is supported almost entirely by contributions and its own enterprizes).

Daytop stands for Drug Addicts Treated on Probation and the project is Joe Shelly's brainchild. He refused to believe that the cure of drug addiction was almost hopeless. For years he traveled on his vacations, seeking new methods, and approaches. Synanon, the famous organization founded by drug addicts to treat addiction, impressed him greatly. Then, in California, he came across "thin layer chromatography," a scientific development that, in a half hour, will conclusively prove whether a man has taken drugs or anything out of the ordinary within the past three days. Furthermore, it is foolproof.¹

Daytop was opened late in 1963, and the prospects for its success are still very bright. Despite initial angry protests from the neighboring public, it has continued to grow in prestige; and Dave Deitch, the new ex-addict director, predicts an optimistic eighty-five per cent cure rate is possible.² The Daytops are true *halfway houses*, places where an addict: "can make the transition to ordinary living under sympathetic care, with his routine needs taken care of, and without the pressures that an abrupt return to 'the street' would entail."³

Narcotics Anonymous

Besides the halfway houses, there are so-called neighborhood projects which seek to help ease the transition. This

¹Warren J. Shanahan, "I Kicked the Habit," *Hooked*, ed. Phil Hirsch (New York: Pyramid Publications, Inc., 1968), p. 109.

²Peter Meyerson, "Breaking the Deadly Cycle," *The Drug Takers*, *op. cit.*, p. 117.

³Jules Satlman, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

first project is, of course, patterned after Alcoholics Anonymous. It has established some twenty-nine chapters in major cities and stresses surrender to something greater than oneself, followed by action towards recovery.¹

NA's informal groups meet almost anywhere--cafeterias, YMCAs, churches, jails--and discuss almost everything, from prison experiences to the hostility of the 'square world,' to ways of improving rehabilitation programs. Narcotics Anonymous emphasizes the therapeutic value of confession. Members are asked to admit their own shortcomings and list, if only for themselves, all the persons they have injured in the course of their addiction.²

The California Rehabilitation Center

This program, established in 1961 by the California Youth and Adult Corrections Agency, is a combination of inpatient and outpatient treatment. The addicts are required to remain on inpatient status for at least six months, but the average is close to fifteen months. "During this period they are divided into 60-patient units for purpose of treatment. Work therapy, vocational courses, and a full academic course through high school also are offered."³

Upon release to outpatient status, the patients are supervised by caseworkers with special training and small caseloads. Patients are chemically tested for the presence of drugs five times a month, both on a regular basis, for at least the first 6 months. Failure of the test or other indications of relapse to drugs results in return

¹*Ibid.*

²Peter Meyerson, *op. cit.*, p. 117.

³*Task Force Report: Narcotics and Drug Abuse, op. cit.*, pp. 14-15.

to the institution. A halfway house, the Parkway Center, provides guidance for those making a marginal adjustment in the community. The patient becomes eligible for final discharge after 3 drug-free years as an outpatient.¹

The superintendent of this program, Roland W. Wood, admits that: "We cannot say that these men are definitely cured, but at least they have controlled the habit for a time."² The statistics for CRC are very hopeful in this field where it was formerly believed: "Once an addict, always an addict-- there is no cure." Thirty-seven per cent of the patients treated at CRC "stay clean" at least a year. Further:

The 63 percent who leave CRC without obtaining a final cure are not necessarily hopeless cases, though. According to Mr. Wood, every time an addict fails and returns for additional rehabilitation, he is more likely to succeed the next time he is paroled. He admits that some men may need six or seven stints at the Center before they are in full control of their habit. It is encouraging, however, to note that by March, 1967, 170 men and women had received complete freedom after three drug-free years as outpatients on parole.³

New York City's Addiction Services Agency

In December 1967, Dr. Efren E. Ramirez became the Commissioner of the Addiction Services Agency in New York City. He was recruited by Mayor John Lindsay because of his remarkable success in his native Puerto Rico. There, where he ran a treatment center for addicts: "only seven of the first

¹*Ibid.*

²Roland W. Wood, as quoted by Pat Horning, "Winning the Losing Battle," *Listen*, September, 1968, p. 12.

³Pat Horning, *Ibid.*

124 addicts treated had gone back to taking drugs three and one-half years later. This is a relapse rate of 5.6 per cent versus a rate of nearly 92 per cent for addicts treated in federal institutions."¹

ASA's program in New York is thus very new, but it is employing an extremely comprehensive prevention and rehabilitation process that involves several important steps learned from other programs.

The *Community Orientation Center* is the first phase of the program. Working from store fronts, churches, and other buildings, the center provides a variety of services to the addict. It is staffed by ex-addicts who are best equipped to help the addict to face reality and choose to start on the road to recovery. They manage to hold onto approximately fifty per cent of the addicts who walk in the door.²

After deciding to enter the program formally, the addict is sent to one of the several hospitals in New York which have recently made certain facilities available for detoxification purposes.

The *Phoenix House* is the residential therapeutic community where the intensive phase of the program takes place. It is also run largely by ex-addicts, working under

¹Efren E. Ramirez, "Drug Addiction is Not Physiologic," *Medical World News*, August 23, 1968.

²*Ibid.*

the direction of professionals. Ramirez describes this important phase as follows:

For nine or ten months, the addict is relentlessly confronted, day in and day out, with his own character faults. These shortcomings are thrown up to him by addicts, ex-addicts, and professionals. The aim of these confrontations is to undermine his destructive attitudes and to reinforce his productive attitudes. The addict begins to be bothered by guilt and anxiety. Gradually, his defeated, distrustful, and hostile attitude becomes reoriented toward realistic goals.¹

Another important phase is the *Re-entry*. Here the rehabilitation is completed and the addict prepares himself to assume a place back in society.

Throughout this re-entry phase--which may last two months or two years--the addict is watched carefully. After a final social, psychiatric, and vocational evaluation by all those who have worked with him, he receives a certificate of rehabilitation. Once certified, the ex-addict can count on the official backing of the City and the State of New York in his efforts to find a respectable, productive place in our society. This is our assurance to him that his involvement in the long rehabilitation program will be rewarded, that he will be socially and vocationally accepted on equal terms with non-addict citizens.²

ASA considers that rehabilitation of the addict is not enough, however. There must be a program of education for the community at large, as well. They have therefore undertaken several programs in this area as well. They have begun orientation programs of education for concerned New Yorkers who want to improve the situation in their streets. Then, when the addict gets back in society, it is hoped that he will receive more sympathetic understanding. ASA is also

¹*Ibid.*

²*Ibid.*

concerned with aspects of prevention, realizing that this is the best cure of all--to educate the proper people not to get involved with drugs in the first place.

Methadone Maintenance

This method of treatment is different from the others. It originated with a husband-wife team, Dr. Vincent P. Dole, a specialist in metabolic research at Rockefeller University, and Dr. Marie Nyswander, a psychiatrist, who proposed the substitution of methadone for heroin. Methadone is a synthetic painkiller used for cancer patients and post-operative pain. It is undeniably an addicting drug:

But physical dependence on methadone is less stubborn than that on heroin or other opium derivatives, and patients who take it do not experience either euphoric highs or hellish lows. Moreover, methadone costs only about 10¢ a dose, in bulk.¹

Methadone apparently produces cross-tolerance to heroin, and remarkably blocks the patient's desire to shoot heroin. There is little doubt that addiction to methadone is more desirable for the individual and for society, than addiction to heroin.

Of the first 723 male patients, only 15% were employed before treatment. Within three to six months, the proportion rose to 53% at work or in school, and hovers near 70%. An additional 20%, though not employed, are rated by Dr. Nyswander as "socially acceptable," while 12% are frankly listed as failures.²

¹"Kicking the Habit," *Time*, January 17, 1969, p. 70.

²*Ibid.*

The patient must go to the hospital or clinic daily and drink a dose of methadone with orange juice or some other beverage. At that time he leaves a sample of urine, which when analyzed will show if he is taking any heroin. If he remains clean long enough, he is eventually given methadone to take at home. The patients allowed to take the methadone treatment are carefully selected. They must have been addicted for four years, have a record of arrests as a result of their habit, and must have failed previous cure methods, before they can begin this program.

Advocates of this method of treatment argue that they are giving chances of a "normal" life to those who might never otherwise have one, and they are benefiting society. There are those who disagree with the whole philosophy behind methadone, however. They say that maintenance programs maintain addicts in their childish behaviors and character disorders, by keeping them dependent upon a drug. They also argue that Methadone addicts cannot fully function as adults in a total environment. Basically, those who are critical of methadone (and a newer maintenance drug, cyclazocine), prefer to view addiction as a psychological problem rather than a metabolic problem.

Exodus House

Originally known as the East Harlem Protestant Parish Narcotic Committee, Exodus House has been working

with drug addicts since 1956. It is another of the neighborhood service type of programs operating as a store-front "clinic," but it is also a church-related program, and therefore comes closest to the approach and philosophy of Teen Challenge. The addicts are guided, followed-up, and helped in every way possible. It is a two-phase program, referring addicts to hospitals and giving intensive treatment at its own small facilities.¹

Reverend Norman C. Eddy became the original director of the program in 1956. He has outlined "The Clergyman's Viewpoint" in a speech recorded in *Problems in Addiction*, in which he points out that the clergy has a responsibility to care for the addicts whose lives have become enslaved to drugs. This position was also taken by Wilkerson and Teen Challenge, and Eddy's "Viewpoint" has been quoted in Teen Challenge literature. One of the statements, particularly pertinent, is as follows:

In summary, it must be repeated that the clergy have neglected their ministry to the addict. It is up to the Church to make the first move. While there are signs of hope in the whole field of addiction, largely there is despair. Knowing the need and the suffering and the anguished yearning of the addict, the Church above all cannot stand by, whether or not there are signs of change and progress. For whatever the other professionals and fields of human endeavor may say about the problem, addiction to heroin is a symptom of deep-rooted spiritual sickness, and a diabolical answer to the spiritual quest of the man without faith in God.²

¹Peter Meyerson, *op. cit.*, p. 117.

²Norman C. Eddy, "The Clergyman's Viewpoint," *Problems in Addiction*, ed. by William C. Bier (New York: Fordham University Press, 1962), p. 207.

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A sign painted over the door of the headquarters of this service depicts a cross smashing a hypodermic syringe, "but the religion practiced within is simply that of the Golden Rule and of the admonition to forgive, even up to seventy times seven."¹

There is an intensive workshop aspect to the Exodus House program from which chosen candidates are particularly benefited when they are ready for it:

Here they work six days a week, seven hours a day, receiving what is nominal rehabilitation pay. This 42-hour workweek is broken up by continuing group therapy and bull sessions led by the minister or the workshop foreman. Recreation is provided along with tutorial sessions, discussion periods, and Bible study sessions. In short, the objective is to fill the seven days of the week with meaningful interaction with people, things and ideas.²

There is a fundamental difference between Synanon and Exodus house. While Synanon seeks to insulate the addict and "hook them on Synanon," the Exodus House believes that nearness to a drug market can be an advantage:

Exodus House believes in the gradual maturation and moving out of the individual into the open community as an independent functioning individual. While great stress is placed upon staying off drugs, relapse is not treated as a fatal blow or a source of excommunication. It is punished, for example, by demotion to a lower level, but the major stress is placed upon understanding the nature of the relapse and discovery of a better way of handling both the situation and the temptation to use drugs. Unlike Synanon, too, there is room for the professional both as leader of the group and for individual discussions.³

¹Mental Health Monograph 2, p. 14.

²Seymour Fiddle, *Portraits From A Shooting Gallery* (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1967), pp. 340-341.

³*Ibid.*, p. 341.

Teen Challenge

The history and much of the methodology of the Teen Challenge approach to the drug problem has already been given in the last chapter. It can readily be seen that it is a much different approach from that of most of the other programs referred to.¹ Teen Challenge believes that narcotic addiction is a moral, spiritual problem that demands church action. The program, therefore, offers sincere faith in Christ as the necessary motivation needed to extract and replace the deep-rooted symptoms that cause dependence on narcotics. David Wilkerson has been asked about this totally religious approach. He replied:

We make no bones about it. When a psychiatrist asked one of my boys what he got at Teen Challenge, he said, 'We get God in the morning, the Bible in the afternoon, and the Holy Ghost in the evening.' The psychiatrist said, 'Well, you are using God as a crutch.' The reply came back, 'If that's so, then give me two of them' This is our thinking, that we've gone back and revived the two concepts of our Puritan fathers, simple, hard work and faith in God. Our motto is, 'If you don't work you can't eat'; and we have simple faith in the power of God not only to break habits but also to maintain victories through faith.²

Teen Challenge does not subscribe to the medical and psychiatric theories. Instead, it tells the addicts that only through a total commitment to God can they really kick their habit. Originally, Wilkerson conducted street services to convince the addicts to enter the Teen Challenge program.

¹The most similar program being that of *Exodus House*, as just given.

²David Wilkerson, interview in *Listen*, December, 1967, p. 9.

The word soon spread among the addicts, however, that Teen Challenge was successful in its rehabilitation program; and now the Center has a full house and a waiting list most of the time.¹

Those who enter the program come and stay voluntarily. They come knowing that it is a religious program and that they will have to kick their habit "cold turkey"--instantaneous withdrawal without medication. This method of abruptly cutting off an addict's drug supply is scorned by most medical experts. As an article in *Time* pointed out, however, it is not the same at Teen Challenge:

But Wilkerson's serving of cold turkey is unlike anybody else's. He never leaves an addict alone in the throes of withdrawal, he helps them pray as they agonize through their first three days without a fix. 'Once when I had to kick in jail,' says Toni, 'I vomited, I had diarrhea, I twitched all over, I couldn't eat and I couldn't sleep. When I kicked here, I ached some, but in two days I was eating three meals a day. How can you feel sick where everyone's always saying, 'How do you feel, honey? Can I rub your back for you?'²

Still, a large percentage of those that walk through the doors do leave within the first two weeks:

Of those that initially enter, twenty-five percent stay. Seventy-five percent leave within the first two weeks because of an unwillingness to submit to withdrawal without medication, a lack of real motivation to

¹During the last week in August, 1968, for example, (while I was at the New York Center) they had to turn sixteen addicts away, telling them to come back later.

²"Preaching the Monkey Off Their Backs," *Time*, August 14, 1964, p. 43.

be free from drugs and/or adverse influence from friends or relatives. Fifteen percent of these that leave do return later.¹

For those that stay, the statistics are much more favorable. There is usually a two-month induction period at the Brooklyn Center, where the addict is screened for sincerity of purpose and Christian commitment. After this phase is completed satisfactorily, the candidates spend six months to a year in Christian education and vocational training classes at the farm in Rehrersburg, Pennsylvania. (The girls have their own retreat at Garrison, New York). This phase of the program places a strong emphasis upon discipline and interpersonal relationships. Wilkerson believes: "Just as Alcoholics Anonymous draws its success from one person helping another, so cures for narcotics addiction are dependent on the brotherhood of personal assistance."²

The superintendent of the farm program, Reverend Frank N. Reynolds, describes a very encouraging picture: "Although the total success figure for the center is 33 per cent, the figure for those boys who remain for the full period is around 80 per cent."³

¹Kay Nelson, "Narcotics," *The Cross and the Switchblade*, IV (March-April, 1968), p. 13.

²Wilkerson, *Parents On Trial*, p. 107.

³Frank N. Reynolds, as quoted by Mike Puddington, "Addicts Shedding Monkey," *The Cross and the Switchblade*, III (August-September, 1967), p. 4.

There are critics and skeptics who doubt these figures, and attack the methods used by Teen Challenge. This fact does not seem to disturb Wilkerson. He doesn't mind whether or not it is accepted by the professionals:

I know it's being accepted by drug addicts. I challenge the world, anyone in the world, to line up 100 cured addicts on any stage in America as I've done, or as Teen Challenge has done, all of them completely cured and filled with the power of God. No one has ever accepted that challenge. We can produce thousands, in fact, possibly three thousand or more over the nation. If the critics or anyone can show me a better program we'll drop ours and take theirs. I haven't seen anything that works better.¹

One of Wilkerson's critics, Dr. Robert Baird of New York's Haven Clinic, has said: "Sure, he'll cure a few who are motivated by a religious fervour, but what's he going to do --turn every addict in the country into a minister?"²

As far as Wilkerson is concerned, that might be a good idea. It would certainly be a far better situation than now exists, and since almost all of the "ministers" that Teen Challenge produces go right back into the old neighborhood to "rescue" other addicts--the problem would soon be solved. He also adds, very correctly and most forcefully: "The church has done less to cure drug addicts than anybody else. These kids are tired of 'bless-me clubs,' they want a church that's alive and active, not cold and dead."³

¹David Wilkerson, interview in *Listen*, December, 1967, p. 9.

²*Time*, August 14, 1964, p. 43.

³*Ibid.*

As far back as 1963, David Wilkerson outlined his approach in a pamphlet entitled, *A Positive Cure for Drug Addiction*. The introduction to that little booklet is an excellent source of the philosophy and rationale behind Teen Challenge:

Teen Challenge is not interested in just curing the addict of a drug habit. We believe the addict is not fully cured until he has the power within himself to conquer all his habits, including smoking, drinking, cursing and promiscuous sex indulgence. He is not cured until he is fully motivated to work and to stand on his own feet anywhere and in any crisis. He is not fully cured until he makes restitution for his many crimes. He is not fully cured until he is set free from all fears of relapse. WE BELIEVE IN THE TOTAL CURE OF THE TOTAL MAN! Only God can grant that kind of cure!

Teen Challenge does not take an addict down the dark alley of analysis in search of anxieties. We believe that psychoanalysis provides the hatching ground for newborn anxieties and that nothing is gained in most seminar sessions except a false set of watered down, carnal philosophies that work only as long as the addict is in a protected situation. Man-made theories produced by non-spiritual men are usually set forth in persuasive, enticing words of human wisdom. But it is not enough for an addict to know himself . . . he must get to know God!

We believe it is truth that sets men free and that the Bible is the source of all truth! Men with all their earthly wisdom fail to perceive and recognize God by means of their own philosophy. While they choose to sprinkle a little God into their philosophies, they will not accept the preaching of Christ as a scientific approach to the narcotic problem. It is considered un-philosophical nonsense by the so-called experts. Therefore we do not seek to be accepted or endorsed by others. We are satisfied to know that through this ministry former confirmed addicts are now in the ministry, others in college, some married and restored to society . . . all of them completely delivered from all dependence on drugs. The Teen Challenge ministry has spread to major cities from coast to coast and is enjoying the most dramatic success in the field of follow-up and rehabilitation.¹

¹David Wilkerson, *A Positive Cure for Drug Addiction* (New York: Teen Challenge, 1963), pp. 5-7.

Then, in an open letter to drug addicts, Wilkerson lays the situation on the line for them. It is a hard-hitting, no-nonsense letter; characteristically authoritative--an approach well suited to reach the personality of most drug addicts.

Dear Drug Addict:

It's about time somebody told you the truth about your habit! You've been lying, cheating, stealing and working angles ever since you got hooked--now it's time to stop and do some hard thinking for just ten minutes. If you like the stuff and just want to control your habit--NO ONE CAN HELP YOU! Get this straight--THERE IS NO HOPE FOR YOU UNLESS YOU ARE DESPERATE FOR HELP! Take a good look at yourself! You thought you were different --you thought you would never get hooked. You thought you would never have to mug or break in--you never thought you'd end up like a beggar just living from one fix to another. You didn't want to admit you were getting hooked but now you can't fool yourself any longer. YOU'RE A JUNKIE! 'YOU'RE HOOKED' 'YOU'RE LOSING YOUR LIFE AND YOUR SOUL! If you like the kind of life you're living--don't read another word of this little book. I want to talk just to addicts who are sick of junk, fed up with the needle and who want to start a new life!

THERE IS A LIFETIME CURE FOR DRUG ADDICTION! It doesn't matter how long a run you have had--you can be cured. There are FIVE STEPS to this cure!¹

The five steps are then outlined as follows: (1) Admit you are hooked. (2) Quit looking for an easy way out. (3) Give yourself over to God. (4) Start planning your life all over again. (5) Shake off all your fears. The rest of the booklet is full of encouraging Bible Verses, other instructions, and testimonies from converted and cured addicts, plus admission procedures and a number to call for help.

¹*Ibid.*, pp. 13-14.

A summary of Wilkerson's position on this question may be found in the following two quotations:

Is this a hopeless situation? Is there no cure for our addicted youth? Jails have failed in the 'cold turkey' process practiced in confinement. Psychiatrists have failed in the 'quarantining' of victims. Hospitals and clinics suffer from a 'sense of frustration' in the field of narcotics. The medical profession claims there will never be a 'magic key' to a 'cure.' It seems we have heard from every source except the church! If every other attempt has failed--is it not time to recall the everlasting words--'WITH GOD NOTHING SHALL BE IM-POSSIBLE.'

*There is a positive cure for drug addiction! We have found it! We want the whole world to hear about it! We can prove it at the Teen Challenge Center. Mainline addicts with suicidal tendencies have not only been cured but are now preaching the Gospel. . . . The cure is Christ. It always has been. He never fails.*¹

The second statement is even more inclusive, showing clearly the underlying philosophy of this approach:

The government of this nation spends millions of dollars trying to solve the problems in the slums in an effort to change lives. Few can deny they have failed. Money is not the answer. You cannot 'buy' cures from sin. You cannot purchase immunity from riots and anarchy with dollar bills and fancy promises. Rioters, addicts, delinquents and alcoholics have one thing in common. They are all lost and need a Saviour. Who cares if they accuse us of oversimplifying the problem and the solution--we are getting results. I dare honest researchers and medical men to take an objective look into this work. We may not use professional jargon and our paper work may not be up to professional standards; but we can produce more proven cures by the power of Christ than any other program in existence today. The miracles taking place at this training center clearly refute the idea, 'Once an addict, always an addict.' Not so! Christ is the cure.'²

¹David Wilkerson, "One Million New Teen Age Drug Addicts," *Teen Challenge Magazine* (First issue, n.d., approximately 1963), pp. 11, 13.

²David Wilkerson, "God's Mountain," *The Cross and the Switchblade*, III (August-September, 1967), pp. 2, 11.

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A good summary of the Teen Challenge approach to the drug problem has been made by Kilian McDonnell, a Catholic priest, who has written what may be assumed to be a relatively unbiased report of what he considers to be the effectiveness of Teen Challenge. He carefully considers the emotional tendencies of Pentecostalism, but concludes that the boys are not hurried into such an experience. Instead, he was impressed¹ at the solidity, simplicity, and underlying love that was so evident at the Center. McDonnell considered the preaching, especially by the former addicts who have completed the program and then returned to help others, to be very effective in getting the message across to the addicts. He concludes his study in this way:

There are more than theological factors at work in the effectiveness of Teen Challenge. The boys at the center form a strongly cohesive group and find mutual support in their attempt to reach a common goal. They are made to subject themselves to the discipline of the house (not going out alone, no home visits, daily household chores), but the basic attitude of the staff is to overwhelm them with love. If one were pressed to specify those aspects of the Teen Challenge that account for its effectiveness, one would have to name theological factors. The emotional involvement, to which outsiders attribute so much of Pentecostal success, is a contributing factor but is not decisive.

Whatever the true percentage of its success and whatever the deficiencies of its program, Teen Challenge is effective because it preaches the whole of the biblical message as the Pentecostals see it, which includes sin, conversion, sanctification, joy, peace and judgment. This message is simple, direct and eminently

¹My own observations, after similar initial reservations, were also those of respect and admiration. When I saw those addicts in the chapel on Clinton Avenue singing and praising God, I was deeply impressed with the change that had so obviously taken place in their lives.

personal. The center is effective because its staff members have taken seriously the imitation of Christ and because they live Spirit-filled lives. Finally, it is effective because the spiritual posture and the daily finances are based on prayer that has dared to take our Lord's injunction seriously: 'Everything you ask and pray for, believe that you have it already and it will be yours.'¹

The Nature and Scope of the New Drug Problem

In addition to the narcotic addiction problem already described, there is a "new" drug problem that has rapidly become an issue of major social concern today. It is, of course, the alarming spread of the abuse of the newer dependence-inducing substances such as barbiturates, tranquilizers, amphetamines, and various hallucinogens like marijuana and LSD.

This problem has grown so rapidly that it is now believed to be much more widespread than the narcotics problem. Almost every class and level of society is affected. Age is likewise no barrier, for both young and old are likely to be captivated by its allurements. Location and environment are no longer determining factors. People are "turning-on" all over the country. Drugs are clearly not just a slum problem any more.²

¹Kilian McDonnell, "The Pentecostals and Drug Addiction," *America*, March 30, 1968, p. 402.

²At this point, it would be possible to devote several pages to a description of this new problem, its individual drugs, and the proposed "reasons" and "solutions" for the problem. (This the author has done in another pamphlet already mentioned.) It must be sufficient for the purposes of this study, however, to examine what Wilkerson has to say about this subject.

David Wilkerson has summarized some of the startling statistics that show the size of this problem in the following quotation:

When you consider the thirteen billion potentially lethal doses of barbiturates (sleeping pills), amphetamines (pep pills), and tranquilizers taken in our country every year--at least half of them distributed through illegal channels at prices ranging up to a dollar a pill--and when you consider the thousands of people, many of them teen-agers, who smoke "pot" (marijuana), sniff glue, and use heroin, morphine, or cocaine, you have to accept the fact that the drug and narcotics problem is larger and involves more lives than any of us could possibly comprehend.¹

How does Wilkerson feel about these large numbers of people that are involved in this new drug problem? He refers to them as the "cop-out crowd," and in a sermon by that same title, he says:

The cop-out crowd is the most deceived crowd in America today. They take LSD to expand their consciousness, only to wake up with a mind void of true comprehension. . . .

Is the cop-out crowd really the interesting crowd? Do they go deeper in discovering true values? Do they really understand more about life and existence? A thousand times NO! They cannot even find the moral courage to face a single day without taking a pill, or some kind of cop-out.

David Wilkerson is concerned about the size of this "crowd" today, and the difficulty of reaching them. In another sermon, *Message of a Man of God*, which he preached at the Christian Center Church in December of 1967, he said:

Nowadays the Christian worker has to go out into a world that's saturated with drugs. You have to try to get through to young people with bleary eyes, who are

¹Wilkerson, *Parents on Trial*, p. 89.

high in a world all their own--a world with false peace, transitory joy, and bottled emotion. . . . Oh, they have peace alright, but it came out of a bottle, out of a pill.

Wilkerson went on to reveal, in this same sermon, his conviction about his responsibility to the victims of this problem:

We've got to be able to carry to them a message of lasting peace, and a power to control their feelings and emotions without a phony escape through a pill, or LSD, or marijuana. We've got to have a message of real peace and composure.

Realizing the extent of this problem as he does, Wilkerson devotes an entire chapter in his book, *Parents on Trial*, to describing the warning signals that parents should watch for in their children--signals that would indicate their beginning involvement in drugs. He also includes helpful suggestions about the most important preventative steps that should be taken in the home.¹

In his book, *Hey, Preach--You're Comin' Through!*, Wilkerson has four chapters that deal specifically with the drug problem.² In these chapters he presents the problems of (1) heroin, (2) marijuana, (3) LSD, and (4) STP, the amphetamines, and barbiturates. He gives examples of their effects upon individuals, followed by his counsel concerning their dangers. It will not be necessary to summarize the content of all of these chapters, but a few representative

¹Wilkerson, *Parents On Trial*, pp. 99-110.

²These four chapters have also been reprinted under the title of: *What Every Teenager Should Know About Drugs* (Minneapolis: Bethany Fellowship, Inc., 1968).

quotations will be given as an indication of Wilkerson's views on this problem.

Regarding marijuana, for example, Wilkerson says:

I disagree totally with the current permissive attitude toward marijuana. *I consider marijuana the most dangerous drug used today.* . . .

Ninety-five percent of all the drug addicts we have ever treated began with marijuana and then graduated to harder stuff.¹

The reason Wilkerson feels marijuana is so dangerous, "is the very fact that it's considered so harmless."² Because the young people now have the idea that "tea isn't that bad," it is very difficult to help them:

The irony of it is that a year later the same youngster will come back, dirty and unshaven and hooked on heroin. That's the end of the route. I wish every expert who thinks marijuana is so great could see this as often as I do.³

There are, of course, thousands of marijuana smokers all over the country who never graduate to the harder drugs, and Wilkerson realizes this, but his position is understandable because Teen Challenge has to deal with the ones who do go on to heroin. He also concludes:

I know what marijuana does. It breaks down resistance to other drugs. It paves the way to alcoholism and drug addiction. It destroys moral values, especially sex standards. It speeds up heart action, dilates the pupils of the eyes, and slows muscle response. It increases laziness and anti-social attitudes. It destroys inhibitions, impairs judgment, gives a person a feeling of greater capability than he actually has, and distorts his sense of time and space.⁴

¹Wilkerson, *Hey, Preach.* . . . , p. 87. ²*Ibid.*, p. 90.

³*Ibid.*, p. 91.

⁴*Ibid.*, p. 89.

At the close of his chapter on LSD, which is entitled "Blow Your Mind. . . ," Wilkerson has this to say:

I have been told by young intellectuals that LSD is harmless and helpful under controlled conditions, and that I ought to do some more research into it. I have done my research where the ivory tower intellectuals have not--in the streets. I have stood there helplessly when the LSD users were barking like dogs; I have been called in when they have blown their minds and have tried to kill themselves; and I have had to bury them when they succeeded.¹

The final chapter on drugs in *Hey, Preach. . .* contains a summary of Wilkerson's own views on the reason why so many young people are accepting drug addiction and the bohemian way of life. He says it is a new form of religion for them--they are searching for something, and have accepted drugs as a temporary answer:

The only route they know to a feeling of well-being, security, and pleasure is through drugs.

They take these drugs for the "kicks" and the wierd visions they get from them. Now, *visions* are the legitimate experience of young people. The prophet Joel prophesied that God would pour out His Spirit upon all flesh, and that at that time, "your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions" (2:28). Those who seek visions through synthetic drugs are trying to capture *an experience they should have*--but by using drugs they bypass the true religious experience.

I am a young man, and I have seen visions. Visions of the glory and beauty of Jesus Christ, and of His wonderful revelations; visions of what Christ is ready to do for this generation. He offers the experiences that can give the greatest thrills of all without risking the destruction of mind, body and soul.²

¹*Ibid.*, p. 98.

²*Ibid.*, pp. 105-106.

CHAPTER IV

INFLUENCES AND IDEAS

In order to obtain a sound basis for understanding and evaluating the messages of a speaker (or preacher), it is important to discover as much as possible about his life background, his thinking, and his beliefs. (It has been the purpose of the three preceding chapters of this study to provide a rhetorical biography of the life of David Wilkerson; a historical background of his work with the unique Teen Challenge program; and an analysis of the drug problem in connection with some of the "solutions" presently being offered in today's society--something which has long been one of Wilkerson's major concerns).

It will be the purpose of this chapter, however, to return more specifically to Wilkerson's life and consider, first, some of what he feels to have been the more important influences upon his life and, second, some of his ideas and beliefs concerning a number of social, moral, and religious questions.¹

¹Wilkerson's ideas and theories regarding effective communication will be reserved for the following chapter, however it will be noticed that some of the most profound influences upon his life were those related to his preaching ministry.

Any treatment of the influences that have affected a man's life, and the ideas and values upon which he bases that life, cannot hope to be exhaustive--especially within the confines of one short chapter. There will certainly be no attempt or claim for such depth in the scope of this study. It is, nevertheless, important in a complete rhetorical analysis of a speaker to consider the foundations, philosophies, beliefs, prejudices, and ideas of that man--as well as the influences upon his life which perhaps have given it the direction it has taken.

Influences Upon Wilkerson's Life

His Grandfather

When David was asked to comment on some of the greatest influences in his life, his first response was: "I think my grandfather has had a tremendous impact on my life. My father claims that I took a lot after him. He only had a third grade education, but he was a man who had college professors come to hear his wit and wisdom."¹

Jay A. Wilkerson, of English-Welsh-Dutch descent, was himself the son and the grandson, and perhaps the great-grandson, of a preacher. By the time he reached his twenties he

¹Wilkerson Interview Tape, September, 1968. This characteristic of wit and humor also appears in almost all of David Wilkerson's sermons. It is usually spontaneous, but often derives from the cleverly worded phrases and illustrations that he uses--as will be evidenced later.

was a circuit rider preacher of a very unorthodox and shocking character. David says: "Grandfather was known all over the country in the early days."¹

He developed what he called "The Lamb Chop School" of evangelizing:

'You win over people just like you win over a dog,' he used to say. 'You see a dog passing down the street with an old bone in his mouth. You don't grab the bone from him and tell him it's not good for him. He'll growl at you. It's the only thing he has. But you throw a big fat lamb chop down in front of him, and he's going to drop that bone and pick up the lamb chop, his tail wagging to beat the band. And you've got a friend. Instead of going around grabbing bones from people, or cutting feathers off them. I'm going to throw them some lamb chops. Something with real meat and life in it. I'm going to tell them about New Beginnings.'²

David Wilkerson seems to enjoy telling some of the tales that are told about his grandfather. He devotes several pages in *The Cross and the Switchblade* to "grandpap's" exploits and influences, and there is an entire chapter in his book *Hey, Preach. . .*, which is entitled, "The Gospel According to Grandfather."

Grandpap, apparently, was not above making his descriptions of hell very vivid--even to the point of dropping sparkler powder behind him on the platform: "Then, with perfect dead-pan expression, pretending he never noticed a thing, he continued to talk about hell, while the smoke billowed up behind him and the platform crackled."³

¹Wilkerson, *The Cross and the Switchblade*, p. 36.

²*Ibid.*, p. 37.

³*Ibid.*, p. 38.

On other occasions:

People said that Grandad sometimes got so mad at the devil, during his tent services, that he would take off his coat and throw it at him. If that didn't get any results, he would take off a shoe and toss that, too. The stories were true. Grandad was more interested in results than conventional behavior, and in the end he always got a crowd. And he got results.¹

This particular characteristic, of shocking his hearers to insure their interest and attention, is frequently used by David Wilkerson. He does not go to the extremes that his grandfather used (which may have been more acceptable in that generation), but he does love to shock his audiences. He will deliberately say things that he knows are shocking and will arouse immediate interest (even controversy sometimes), and then he will add as an aside--after a dramatic pause--"That's right!" He will often repeat this device a number of times in the same sermon.²

David also learned other things from his grandfather. As he writes about the nature of grandfather's sermons, it becomes apparent that he admires them, and his own sermons reveal a similarity. He says:

Grandpa was a master psychologist. He filled his sermons with illustrations, humor, and pathos; his hearers gasped, laughed, and wept as he spoke. He often

¹Wilkerson, *Hey, Preach*. . . , pp. 36-37.

²This is an important attention device as used by Wilkerson, and it also provides him with an outlet for many of his ideas--which are often rather startling and refreshing to the average person in his audience. When he is speaking to a church audience, he sometimes even finds it necessary to add, "Yes, I still have the anointing."

made use of simple homely things in his messages. . . .

Grandfather Wilkerson was holding a camp meeting on the outskirts of one city near a chicken farm when a hen walked into the tent and onto the platform where he was praying. During the prayer the hen laid an egg not far from the pulpit. Then she stretched her wings and cackled proudly.

'Look at that!" said Grandfather. 'She's praising God for being able to lay that beautiful brown egg. My friends, this hen doesn't know the first thing about salvation, but she opens her mouth in praise to the Lord. Some of you are ashamed to throw up your hands and jump to your feet when the Lord blesses you with the magnitude of all His love, but this hen praises her Creator with her whole body. And you folks are too sedate and stiff and proud to do what this hen can do.'¹

David Wilkerson concludes his "Gospel According to Grandfather," by saying that he believes that his grandfather would not accept the phony excuses that young people are giving today. When a young drug addict tells him that he is hooked because of "sibling rivalries" or "interpersonal relationships" or the fact that society has failed him; or a juvenile delinquent blames his misdeeds on the fact that his father never took him to the ball game, Wilkerson believes that his grandfather would say that this is the old story of Adam blaming Eve and Eve accusing Adam. He says that grandad would probably say: "'Quit looking for a scapegoat! Quit passing the buck. . . . Grow a backbone and tell yourselves a thousand times a day, *It's up to me. No more free rides.* Grow up! And don't be afraid of prayer, or faith, or God.'"²

¹Wilkerson, *Hey, Preach*. . . , pp. 40-41.

²*Ibid.*, p. 45. This is, of course, David's own message now to the young people of today, as evidenced in his sermon, *Wanted: Backbone*.

His Father

David has said: "I always thought my dad was the greatest preacher in the world."¹ He goes on to show the importance of the influence that his father had upon him by saying:

My real training came in my father's study. He took me into his library after I expressed a desire to preach My dad made me study and got me into the books, and he used to tell me that the most important thing of all was to back up your preaching with praying.²

David's father reminded him that even Elijah had only twenty-four hours in his day, and could pray no more than he could. He also told him that if he could never reach the educational standard that he wanted to reach, for lack of funds or any other reason, praying would always make up the difference.³ (To this day it is obvious that Wilkerson's belief in this statement has helped overcome his educational deficiencies. He usually spends from midnight until two o'clock in the morning--reading the Bible for an hour and praying for an hour).⁴

Wilkerson's Bible College training did stop after one year because of a lack of funds, his interest in pioneering a church, and his marriage. However, he again indicates the importance of his father's training by saying: "I found that my father had already taught me those things that I was

¹Wilkerson Interview Tape, September, 1968.

²*Ibid.*

³*Ibid.*

⁴*Ibid.*

learning, even in some of the third year subjects that I was allowed to take as elective courses."¹

One of the things that David's father taught him was to get his sermons from the Bible. He believed that the Old Testament produced Christian character and that the New Testament brought edification and reviving of the spirit. Another important aspect of homiletical training that was to prove a foundation for David's preaching is revealed in the following recollection:

My dad did work on my homiletics, he always said 'Come on strong, and have at least three things to say about your subject.² Explain your subject, and then just tell it as it is.' He also suggested to me at a very early age that it would be better to use illustrations that were my own, unique, true to life experiences, rather than to borrow them. I've never in my life borrowed illustrations, I don't believe in that. My dad called these windows in a sermon, and he said you need enough windows to let a little light in, a little air out, so it won't be stuffy; but he said a house with too many windows, of course is fragile. So I've tried to make sure that I unburden my heart--come on strong. In other words, let people know immediately where you're headed and try to get there as quickly as possible. My dad said if you couldn't say it in one-half hour, you had no right to attempt it.³

His Mother

David was, of course, profoundly influenced by his devout mother also. She is still living, and has worked

¹*Ibid.*

²Almost invariably, in all of the sermons that we were able to hear David Wilkerson preach (either in person or by tape), he uses three main divisions or points in his sermon. Infrequently it may be four, but very seldom more than that.

³Wilkerson Interview Tape, September, 1968.

faithfully for nine years at New York Teen Challenge as secretary, office receptionist, and switchboard operator. She is also an ordained minister and leads out in the work at the coffee house ("The Lost Coin") in Greenwich Village.¹

"She was the kind of mother," David Wilkerson recalls in his sermon *Why Kids Go Wrong*, "that used to pack my bags for me, if I told her that I was going to run away from home." Both parents seem to have had a powerful influence for good in the proper raising of their children, and David carries this atmosphere and philosophy into his popular sermons on the need for a "Woodshed Revival."

Wilkerson says, in those sermons, that he still goes to his mother for counsel and encouragement from time to time, and she says that she is constantly praying that God will guide her boys "and keep them humble."²

Other Influences

There have obviously been many other influences on Wilkerson's life that could be discussed at this point. Suffice it, however, to conclude with two more influences that he specifically mentions in his interview tape. The first is a single little paperback book:

¹The story of her concern for the young people of the Village, and the founding of the "Catacomb Chapel," is told in David Wilkerson's second book, *Twelve Angels From Hell* (Westwood, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1965).

²Ann Wilkerson, private interview at New York Teen Challenge, August, 1968.

But one book, of all the books I've read, that really touched me was a little paperback called *I Saw the Welsh Revival*, the story of Evan Roberts' part in the Welsh Awakening. This was the book that precipitated a real broken spirit and launched me into a deep prayer life, and I've really never been the same since that book.¹

The second also deals with literature, this time a vast series of books. He says:

Of course, I've read every book, I think, that has been written on the great missionaries, even the contemporaries. I spent my teenage years, and through my twenties, reading all the missionary lives. I think this has had as much influence as anything on my life. I seem to gather from this that all the men that God used had three things in common: they had to drink a cup of pain, they faced a night of confusion, and hours of isolation. These are the three influences, of course, that came to Christ in the garden and you can't get away from them. Christ was the pattern and I've seen that in all of their lives.²

A Survey of Wilkerson's Ideas

The term "idea" is here singled out from a large number of synonyms that could be used--such as: "belief," "conviction," "philosophy," "principle," "opinion," and "attitude," etc. While all of these could probably still apply to various parts of the material to follow, "idea" seemed to be the most appropriate because David Wilkerson has been accurately described as an "idea man."³

¹Wilkerson Interview Tape, September, 1968. ²*Ibid.*

³One of the workers from C.U.R.E. Corps (Wilkerson's latest major "idea-project") made the remark that Pastor Wilkerson was an "idea man" who usually came up with fifteen or twenty ideas in every committee meeting. Interview at New York Teen Challenge, August, 1968.

His ministry has been characterized by a continuous flow of ideas that have blossomed into an ever-expanding work for God. His mother has made the comment that it is a constant source of amazement to herself, and to most of David's other staff members, to see him begin a special project, build it up until it is going well, and then branch out into something new again as soon as he became convinced of another need.¹

Early Use of Television.--While Wilkerson was still pastoring in Phillipsburg, for instance, he said: "I became very frustrated preaching to the same people week after week and I had to have an outlet."² He persuaded a television station (WFBG) in nearby Altoona, to come into his church once a month and film four fifteen-minute programs. The response to those programs was so good that Wilkerson had to get two secretaries to help answer the mail. For a time, it satisfied his urge to reach the largest possible number of people with the gospel. It was even responsible for the founding of a new church in another nearby town--a church that is still thriving today.³

Early Ideas in New York.--Shortly afterwards, however, Wilkerson again expanded his horizons by beginning his

¹Anne Wilkerson, private interview at New York Teen Challenge, August, 1968.

²Wilkerson Interview Tape, September, 1968.

³*Ibid.*

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ministry in New York. He admitted much later, in his sermon, *No New Gospel* (1967): "When I first went to New York, I was going to win the city. Yes, sir! So I stayed up for a whole week, night and day, and you talk about a dreamer--I had all the dreams that anybody can dream." He tells of how he designed a "flip-top box" to be filled with tracts, and special aluminum street-corner-pulpits, and how he bought a huge "Cathedral Cruiser" from Mexico that was loaded with gadgets and gimmicks guaranteed to attract a crowd. He discovered that he could get a crowd all right; but after they looked the "Cruiser" all over, they wandered off again. David said: "We wound up at the end of the service with two people."

Eventually, he found that he had to abandon all his "gimmicks" and rely on Christ as the central theme of Teen Challenge. He took one little booklet out of that "Library of Life" called *Chicken*, and just began to circulate that and "preach Jesus," and he started to get results: "That little booklet has already been distributed over fifteen million copies around the world. Thousands have been converted, we've needed no Cathedral Cruisers, we've needed no street pulpits, and the city streets are being reached for Jesus Christ."

Personal Witnessing.--In this same sermon, *No New Gospel*, Wilkerson said: "I've learned my lesson, no more gimmicks." Instead, he learned to rely on person-to-person witnessing on the streets. In the *Listen* interview, he gave this as the key to the Teen Challenge program:

The original concept of Teen Challenge is a person-to-person relationship on the street. The concept is that it's easier to love the whole world than to love your neighbor. Usually today you apply love like a mustard plaster--over the whole world--and it's easier to love the world than to go next door and wipe the sweat off somebody's brow. So our whole concept here has been a person-to-person relationship, not through mass media, but through personal contact.¹

City-Wide Youth Crusades--The success of the Teen Challenge program resulted in frequent requests for Wilkerson to come and tell his experiences to different churches and organizations in various cities. He soon found that this was taking more and more of his time, and that he was reaching another important group of young people with the gospel--the "goodnik":

The goodnik is the young man from a good home, a good background, and a good church, but who is having a reaction to all the wrong kind of action and the inaction today, . . . I've been traveling now almost full time on weekends in city-wide youth crusades around the world. I'm finding that this is the greatest challenge I've ever had. I'm hearing confessions from teen-agers in this group that surpass any I've heard in the gutters.²

He discussed this change in the emphasis of his ministry in *The Cross and the Switchblade* magazine:

Now I am on my way to England for 26 youth crusades in cities throughout Great Britain. After a full year of active street-work and Teen Challenge ministry to delinquent youth, the Lord has led me to return to city-wide youth crusade work. I will be conducting crusades across the nation and overseas. . . . We anticipate that as many as 20,000 will be attending some

¹David Wilkerson, interview in *Listen*, December, 1967, p. 8.

²*Ibid.*, pp. 7-8.

of the crusades this next year. I urgently request your prayers as we add this ministry to our present burden.¹

It is important to notice, as Wilkerson says, that **this** is a ministry added to his present burden. He still **considers** the personal witnessing of primary importance, as **he** reveals in his sermon, *Phonies*:

You know, there is so much talk today about reaching the masses. I've never been excited about reaching the masses until first we've had that person-to-person contact on the street. And because the Lord has blessed us in this person-to-person contact--working one at a time with individuals--then and only then, have I felt right in stepping out to reach anyone as far as the masses are concerned. And so, even though we're reaching them in mass now, we're still--like this past week--out on the streets working one by one.

C.U.R.E. in the Slums.--In addition to his work with **Teen** Challenge and the Youth Crusades, David Wilkerson established C.U.R.E. Corps in July of 1968. It is another one of **his** ideas that illustrates his compassion and concern for **those** who need help. C.U.R.E. stands for Collegiate Urban **Renewal** Effort, and is a direct ministry of involvement with **the** spiritual and social needs of the ghetto by young volunteer college students and graduates.²

There are a number of programs being undertaken by **this** domestic Christian "peace corps." They have Good News **Clubs**, New Start Schools, and Teen Clubs called the Pink and

¹David Wilkerson, "Back to City-Wide Youth Crusades," *The Cross and the Switchblade*, II (September-October, 1966), p. 3.

²New York Challenge Bi-Monthly News Report, September, 1968.

Red Berets, all of which are directed at helping the individuals and the conditions in the inner-city slums. According to Wilkerson, these workers believe that love can be measured "by long hours of toil, tears, and tenacity."¹

The Home and the Family.--One of the first things that Pastor Wilkerson usually emphasizes in his crusade meetings is the importance of a solid, happy home in today's society. This concept also underlies much of the work of C.U.R.E. Corps, for it is realized that the absence of such a home life can be the cause of many of the problems in the slums--especially for the children, and consequently there is a special emphasis placed on helping them.²

Wilkerson's ideas and beliefs concerning the home and the family are revealed in considerable detail in his book, *Parents on Trial*. They will also be very evident in the sermon, *Why Kids Go Wrong*, to be analyzed in Chapter VI. Basically, he says:

I have learned that delinquency and drug addiction can strike any home, not just impoverished slum dwellings; that outwardly well-adjusted youngsters are not immune to trouble; that the course of a child's life can be favorably influenced by parents of any educational or economic standing if they are not afraid to work at being good parents.³

¹*Ibid.*

²Even before C.U.R.E. Corps, Wilkerson had a program and a great burden for "The Little People." In his book by the same title, he presents a very clear need for these children from the gutter, showing another one of the concerns that has grown out of his ministry.

³Wilkerson, *Parents on Trial*, pp. 11-12.

In the last chapter of *Parents on Trial*, he gives two interesting lists of "ten commandments." The first list, in abbreviated form, outlines the following ten ways to produce a juvenile delinquent:

1. Keep your children out of sight and silent.
2. Hound them to be at the top of their class in school.
3. Don't bother to take (or send) them to church.
4. Have your fights in front of your children.
5. Don't be too interested in your children's friends.
6. Demonstrate your love with material things.
7. Set a bad example so they will not want to grow up like you.
8. Refuse to believe it when you are told your children have done something wrong.
9. Don't be too tough in disciplining your children, lest they hate you for it.
10. Never discuss the facts of life with your children.¹

The second list consists of some positive tips to **parents** from the youngsters themselves--in their own language --as they told Pastor Wilkerson:

1. "Keep your cool."
2. "Don't get hung up on a jag that keeps you away from home."

¹*Ibid.*, pp. 184-186.

3. "Don't get strung out."
4. "Bug me a little."
5. "Don't blow your class."
6. "Light me a candle."
7. "Take the world off my shoulders."
8. "Scare the hell out of me."
9. "Call my bluff."
10. "Be honest with me."¹

Wilkerson talks about many other things in this general area of family relationships, but it must be sufficient merely to list some of the other topics: "parental delinquency," "the part-time parents," "permissiveness," "sex education," "religious education," "communication," etc. He concludes:

Out of this search the six basic essentials of good parenthood have become clear, at least to me: love, supervision, discipline, communication, companionship, and religious education. And it seems that if you love your children and can communicate with them, the other qualities that constitute good parenthood will just come naturally.²

Phonies and False Fronts.--This is another vital subject as far as Wilkerson is concerned, and he preaches about it frequently. In 1967, when he preached this sermon (*Phonies*) at the Christian Center Church, he said: "I've preached this message thirty times." There is also a chapter entitled "Phonies" in *Hey, Preach. . .*, in which Wilkerson says:

¹*Ibid.*, pp. 187-188.

²*Ibid.*, p. 178.

We live in a phony age. Businessmen talk about integrity and cheat their customers. Labor leaders talk about fair play and practice racial discrimination. Government leaders mouth words about peace while they make war, and in the name of freedom and truth lie to their own citizens and imprison others.¹

Pastor Wilkerson points out how quick young people are to spot phonies and fakes; and then he warns parents who are addicted to their alcohol, tobacco, and pills that such habits can greatly reduce their effectiveness. "No wonder a good many hippies say that their parents are phonies who can't exist without their own fifths of whiskey and their cafeterias of pills--and all of whose advice is therefore worthless."² David continues by telling how Jesus revealed the hypocrisy of the Pharisees (the "Imposters") of his day, in Matthew 23. He says: "I'm convinced that a lot of young people today would applaud if they heard anyone talk that way to the leaders of the establishment."³

Wilkerson is quick to remind the young people in his audience, however, that adults are not the only phonies. He says, in his sermon, that there are three big false fronts that phony young people hide behind--The Confusion Front, The Callous Front, and the Christian Front. He then proceeds to illustrate each of these false fronts with entertaining (and convincing) stories about actual young people with whom he has worked in previous crusades.

¹Wilkerson, *Hey, Preach.* . . , p. 124.

²*Ibid.*, p. 128.

³*Ibid.*, p. 129.

Suffice it to quote one example here, as used to explain "the callous front." This is where the youngster says: "I'm going to live my own life, and no one will ever jam religion down my throat." He is deliberately tough, hard, and apparently "untouchable." Wilkerson has many of these so called "tough cookies" come to his meetings; often with the avowed purpose of breaking them up.

He is not usually disturbed by their noise and clamor for attention, however, for he remembers an idea that old Grandfather Wilkerson had: "When you throw a stone into a bunch of dogs, the one that yaps loudest is the one you hit."¹ Wilkerson then proves this to be true by telling about a group of noisy mods and rockers who came to one of his meetings in England. They eventually stopped flying their airplanes, and they stopped making their other distractions, and came under the strong conviction of the Holy Spirit. At the close of the meeting, many of them were the first ones down to the altar--revealing the true state of their hungry, longing hearts: "One of them came right up to the microphone, and he said, with tears rolling down his cheek, 'Preacher, I came here to bust up your meeting . . . and I got all busted up myself.'"

Learning to be Ordinary.--Here is a somewhat unique and valuable concept that must be included as a part of

¹*Ibid.*, p. 30.

Wilkerson's philosophy. He gives this as a reason why many of the young people are led to assume false fronts in the first place. He says: "In our age it is an unforgiveable sin to fail. . . . And one of the biggest problems ahead of most young people is non-success."¹

Wilkerson talks about this age of commercialization, where there is supposedly a product to solve every problem or supply every need, and then he says:

Young people are led to believe that if they take the right courses, meet the right people, memorize the right formulas, smell good, and smile with gleaming teeth, brilliant successes will drop right into their laps. Our whole way of life is a pressure cooker in which ordinary youngsters are turned into neurotic, maladjusted, success-seeking, miserable, aspirin-popping adults.²

"Most of us are superior in some way to certain people we know," says Pastor Wilkerson, "and inferior to others." What we need to do is learn to live with that fact:

I am calling for a philosophy of life by which young people can accept being ordinary--in other words, accept the fact that they are only human. . . . And we need to be able to face our limitations, and to live with such things as loneliness and failure.³

A person can do this, Wilkerson insists, by "learning to live with his real needs." When he explains that statement, he reveals another key idea in his philosophy of life:

A person's real needs are very simple. He must learn to live with himself, with other people, and with God. I like to think of this as a triangle with equal

¹*Ibid.*, p. 143. ²*Ibid.*, p. 144. ³*Ibid.*, p. 146.

sides. One side represents self, one side others, and one side God. If one side is out of proportion, all of life can get maladjusted.¹

No New Gospel.--David Wilkerson has developed firm ideas on the question of what kind of message it takes to reach young people today. Most of this discussion must be reserved for the following chapter, which will deal specifically with Wilkerson's ideas on effective communication. However, it can be emphasized here that Wilkerson strongly favors the "old gospel" approach. He completely disagrees with the new approaches that are being taken by some churches. He says that young people:

. . . will not be reached by go-go religion offering nothing but jazz masses, and pulpit diets of nothing but politics and civil rights. We will not win them by trying to be like them. I don't intend to grow a beard and I intend to wear conventional clothing. . . . I intend to preach a square straight Gospel and without compromise tell them that Christ is still the cure.²

Wilkerson even has a sermon entitled, *No New Gospel*, in which he says: "We don't need to change the Gospel. We don't need to put it in a new language, or modernize it, or streamline it. We need to stick to the simplicity of the Gospel of Jesus Christ." By taking this position, he does not eliminate the need for keeping up-to-date. Wilkerson does feel that the old Gospel message is what will change

¹*Ibid.*

²David Wilkerson, *Hippies, Yippies and Freebie Gypsies* (New York: The David Wilkerson Foundation, Inc., 1968), pp. 31-32.

lives today, but he also feels that it may be necessary to adapt the methods of presenting that Gospel to suit the generation and the particular audience involved. In another context, he said:

Both church and parents, however, have failed the teenager. The church has failed by refusing to keep pace with the times. . . .

The church can help by directing its message to the challenge of the times in understandable language, by teaching its young persons to look beyond the "squares" and "phonies" to the real gospel, by avoiding the old cliché that the activities and sins of youth are not pleasurable, and by offering a healthy substitute for the excitement and adventure that teenagers look for outside of morals and the law.¹

The Coming Spiritual "Revolution."--David Wilkerson
is convinced that there is going to be a great spiritual awakening, especially among young people, in the near future:

This generation has experienced revolutions in science, in technology, in education, in space exploration, in religion, in morals. But I'm convinced that the greatest revolution of all is just ahead . . . a spiritual revolution involving young people around the world.²

As evidence for this conviction he cites the responses to his meetings in countries like Denmark, Holland, Norway, and Sweden. There, where he was completely "shocked at the pornography and filth" openly displayed on the newsstands, he spoke directly about the moral situation. In Stockholm, five hundred young people responded to his first altar call. He writes:

¹David Wilkerson, "Attitudes 'N Teens," *The Cross and the Switchblade*, IV (March-April, 1968), p. 11.

²Wilkerson, *Hey, Preach*. . . , p. 16.

The next day I saw five hundred young people board trains and buses for their homes and schools and communities, fired with a new zeal to fight pornography, immorality, and atheism. Some went back to pray for their pastors. All Sweden had been touched in some manner in one day. . . .

I firmly believe that a moral and spiritual revolution is on the way.¹

The very last paragraph in this same book, *Hey, Preach*. . . , again reiterates this belief: "I predict that we are on the brink of the greatest spiritual renewal in history. Young people everywhere in the world are about to witness the power of the Holy Spirit in action. Get ready, get set--God's time has come!"²

It is very understandable that a man who sincerely believes there is going to be a great spiritual awakening will be seeking to do his part in preparing for that day. Such is certainly the case with Wilkerson. He is not only an "idea-man," he is also a man of action. The following chapter will endeavor to show how he attempts to "get through" to his young audiences with his message.

¹*Ibid.*, pp. 21-22.

²*Ibid.*, p. 160.

CHAPTER V

"HEY, PREACH . . . YOU'RE COMIN' THROUGH!"

Introduction

This is the intriguing title to one of David Wilkerson's recent books.¹ It is an indication of his concern for effective communication, and a realization that the ultimate goal must be to "get through" to the listener. It is a phrase that appears frequently in Wilkerson's books and sermons. When someone from his audience tells him that he is "coming through," he considers it the highest compliment that they can pay his preaching.² He is very conscious therefore, of the importance of discussing the "hows" and the "whys" of good communication--the subject which will be the concern of this chapter (insofar as it relates to Wilkerson).

In the "Foreword" to the book mentioned above, Pastor Wilkerson recalls an experience, from the early days of his street preaching on the sidewalks of New York, that further illustrates his concern for "getting through":

¹David Wilkerson, *Hey, Preach . . . You're Comin' Through* (Westwood, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1968).

²David Wilkerson, *The Cross and the Switchblade* (Westwood, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1963), p. 29.

Those New York youngsters had been crowding all around my street-corner pulpit in one of the city's worst neighborhoods, but I realized that I wasn't getting through to them. A girl in a tight blouse and skirt blew cigarette smoke into my face. Boys in bright shirts pushed against each other. Between whiffs of tobacco I could smell a sour mixture of bus fumes, stale perspiration and beer. I tried in vain to lift my voice above the jeers and curses that slipped so easily out of those hard young mouths.¹

Wilkerson was fully aware that he was preaching on the home "turf" of some of New York's deadliest gangs, and that those boys would kill if the whim struck them. Yet, he says that he wasn't afraid of getting killed as much as he was afraid of making no impression on those young lives: "As the hubbub grew worse, I flashed a desperate prayer to God. I knew that He had brought me to this street corner, and that only He could reach those young people."²

Notice that already in this incident there are two important characteristics revealed about the nature of Wilkerson's communication--*his intense sincerity*, and his *reliance upon God* as the One who makes the real contact. The latter characteristic is emphasized again as he continues his story:

Then it happened. A little circle of silence began to widen around me. One pair of eyes after another locked with mine. As I talked of the tremendous Love that could reach out to even the most hardened and unlovable, several teen-agers nodded. Here and there I saw something that might be tears. I knew that God was making contact.

¹Wilkerson, *Hey, Preach.* . . . , pp. 8-9.

²*Ibid.*, p. 9

³*Ibid.*

What is the result of this kind of attitude and this kind of preaching? Wilkerson says:

When I had finished, I was surrounded by the leaders of one of the gangs that had terrorized this section of the city. One of them shook his head incredulously, unable to figure out why he was reacting as he did to my simple message. He grabbed my arm and blurted: *'Hey, Preach--you're comin' through!'*¹

David Wilkerson has been working with young people in this way for ten years now, and he says that wherever he goes he is faced with a similar situation:

I have sensed the same thing: an intense desire for something genuine and real. Young people today want something to live for, something to believe in, and in their expressions I often read the same message I saw in the face of that New York gang leader years ago: *'Mister, you're getting through to me. Man, it's never been like this before--you hit me deep.'*²

Pastor Wilkerson's type of evangelism is apparently continuing to get through to his audiences. In September of 1968 he conducted his thirty-second rally at Disneyland. Speaking about the response, he said: "We turned away 2,000 young people at Melodyland there, more than 4,000 inside, and over 1,000 standing against the walls. In fact, the police had to shut down the parking lot and the doors were closed because of the overflow crowd.

A few months later, in April of 1969, Wilkerson conducted what was referred to as a "Super Rally." Jene Wilson, the Rally Coordinator, said that it was the third such rally to be moved from the Melodyland Theatre to the Anaheim

¹*Ibid.*

²*Ibid.*, pp. 9-10.

Convention Center Arena. Pat Boone and the "New Dimensions" appeared with Wilkerson, and this time there were 11,000 people in attendance with another 2,000 to 3,000 who had to be turned away. At the close of the meeting there were approximately 500 young people who came forward for counseling and to receive Christ.¹

Jene Wilson also gives the following information about the effectiveness and acceptance of these rallies:

For those people who have been willing to go and to look in, I believe they have found this is one of the most effective youth rallies operating in America today. In actuality, it is the largest consistent youth rally being held in America, possibly in the world. The reaction of the local community toward the program has been overwhelming as far as their favor, and recently at a very special meeting held at the Disneyland Hotel where they were honoring the service organization that had done the most in contributing to the community, the David Wilkerson Youth Rallies received the top honor. This is what is called the Disneyland Community Service Award. You can only be involved in it by invitation, and out of all those organizations participating, the David Wilkerson Youth Rallies was chosen to be the recipient of not only the honor but also a \$5,000 cash award.²

Statement of Purpose and Procedure

The Disneyland Community Service Award is but one indication of Wilkerson's effectiveness as a communicator, however. It will be the purpose of this chapter to examine his rhetorical theories in an endeavor to discover some of

¹Letter from Jene Wilson, Rally Coordinator and Youth Pastor at the Christian Center Church, Anaheim, California, April 22, 1969.

²*Ibid.*

the factors that he feels are important in "getting through" to modern young people.

Is it worthwhile to study the communication of a man who took only one year of Bible College, had very little formal speech training, and has been described in *Christianity Today* as: "a sort of a gut-preacher. . . who is a little wooden-tongued on the platform and now and then stumbles or halts in delivery?"¹

On the other hand, perhaps those are sufficient reasons, in themselves, to warrant an investigation concerning what it is that has enabled Wilkerson to "get through" in spite of those apparent handicaps. The procedure to be followed in this chapter will be to list the theories and methods that he considers essential to effective communication, as revealed in recorded interviews, and writings, and in sermons he has preached on the subject, particularly one entitled: *Generation To Be Reached*.

David Wilkerson has said very little about rhetorical or homiletical theory as such. He is not familiar with the five canons of rhetoric, for instance, or very many of the other classifications and labels used by those educated in Rhetoric and Public Address. It was decided to be particularly important, therefore, to set forth his views and principles of communication in his own terms first. Then,

¹John Phillips, "Challenging The Switchblade Set," *Christianity Today*, January 29, 1965, p. 59.

an evaluation and comparison of these methods and ideas with accepted rhetorical standards will be made in later chapters.

This question, of what Wilkerson himself feels to be essential in effective communication, is a question to which he has earnestly sought the answer in a lifetime of striving to reach young people with the Gospel message. He raised this very question in a sermon entitled, *Message of a Man of God* (a sermon that was preached at the Christian Center Church, Anaheim, California, in December of 1967). He asked: "How can a true man or woman of God get through to this generation? What kind of a message is it going to take? . . . What kind of a person will it take to reach them, and what will that person's message have to be?"

Wilkerson is completely captivated with these questions. They echo throughout most of his sermons in the Christian Center Church, where he preaches on the first Sunday night of every month--the night before the rally meeting at Melodyland Theatre. He has travelled the world over and worked for all kinds of young people in all kinds of situations, and the burden of how to reach them weighs very heavily upon his shoulders.

In his sermon, *The Cop-Out Crowd*, Wilkerson said:

With me now it's a life and death battle. I walk into Greenwich Village and I walk out sick in my heart. Sometimes I get in the car and I just bow my head over

the steering wheel, and I say, 'Oh God, how does it happen?'¹

Wilkerson has also made the statement, and he was very serious and sincere in making it, that he didn't think there was a preacher in America: "that has thought more about how to get through to young people than I have." He went on to qualify this assertion, made in his sermon, *Message of a Man of God*, by telling again of his wide experience in trying to reach modern young people. This he considers to be his solemn calling.

How David Wilkerson Attempts to "Get Through":

As Derived from Interviews and Writings

Pastor Wilkerson was asked in an interview to explain what it was that actually caused his street audiences to say, "Hey, Preach . . . you're comin' through." He responded with six very helpful characteristics, which will be considered separately and illustrated with examples wherever possible.²

Be Totally Convinced

"To get through to anybody," Wilkerson says, "whether it's a goodnik, or a hippie, or a gang leader, or a drug addict

¹The sincerity and loving concern manifested in this short excerpt are, in our opinion, one of the greatest assets to his personal proof and to his successful communication.

²These six characteristics will not be given in any order of emphasis, nor do they represent Wilkerson's total theory. Additional material will be drawn from other sources, and a final correlation and summary will be made at the end of the chapter.

first of all, you have to be so totally convinced yourself, that not a word you say is in vain."¹ He is speaking here of complete commitment to the Gospel message before attempting to help someone else. Young people are especially quick to spot the hypocrisy and phoniness of much of modern religion, and this is what turns them against it. Wilkerson believes that if the Christian worker wishes to get through to others, he must first be totally convinced *and* changed by the Gospel himself.² In *Message of a Man of God*, he says: "You cannot get through to a single person on the streets anymore until you speak with the voice of authority that comes from having experience--the power of the Gospel at work in your own life. You can't preach freedom from sin until it has freed you from your personal secret sin. You can't preach a gospel of joy or peace until you have it yourself."

In characteristic fashion, Wilkerson has employed an original "catch phrase" in referring to this first desirable quality. In *Man, Have I Got Problems*,³ he speaks about this as "VERY PERSONAL EVANGELISM":

¹Wilkerson Interview Tape, September, 1968.

²Wilkerson's point of reference, as always, is from the viewpoint of the Christian persuader. His principle, however, of sincere belief in the truth of whatever one is speaking about, is fundamental to good communication.

³This is the latest (Summer, 1969) book of Wilkerson's to be published by Revell thus far. It contains an honest sharing of his own temptations and inadequacies, and a realistic view of man's weaknesses, as it points the way toward victory and freedom in the Christian life.

Very personal evangelism takes you into *your* heart before it takes you into the world. You look at yourself as a mission field before you see other mission fields. You ask God to change your soul before trying to convert others.¹

Practice What You Preach

Wilkerson says that he has had to conquer the fear of preaching righteousness without having attained it. He admits to walking off the platform on two occasions because he heard a voice saying, "You're a phony, you're preaching something you haven't practiced." He has since concluded that a man does not preach the Gospel according to the measure of his own achievement. He says:

The victory finally came when I realized that David the Psalmist faced the same dilemma. He wrote, 'I have preached righteousness in the great congregation. . . . but in the next breath he cried, '. . . mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up; therefore my heart faileth me.' (Psalm 40:9, 12).²

"Really what he did," says Wilkerson, "was to preach righteousness, then strive to practice what he preached."³

This is admittedly a dichotomy that faces any preacher. Pastor Wilkerson has come to a reasonable conclusion that he

¹David Wilkerson, *Man, Have I Got Problems* (Old Tappan, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1969), p. 102. Some of the chapters in this book are recognizable revisions of sermons that we had previously heard on tape. For example, this phrase "very personal evangelism" is found in a chapter entitled "The Message of a Man of God," and was also used in the original sermon by that same title.

²*Ibid.*, pp. 90-91.

³Wilkerson Interview Tape, September, 1968.

must preach righteousness and hold the standard as high as possible--beyond his own achievement. Yet, this in no way suggests that he does not feel obligated to strive for the same high standard. In fact, as he said in his sermon, *Message of a Man of God*, the one answer that he keeps coming back to in his private prayer sessions is: "David, the only answer now is a holy life. A life set on fire, just a living testimony of what I can do in one individual's life. Just live it, and then when you preach it, it will have authority. It'll get through."

Answer Their Loneliness

A third factor that David considers vital in his communication with young people is the fact that he has tried to relate to the teen-agers' feeling of loneliness. This dates back to the time when he was walking the streets of New York, searching for purpose and direction in founding his new ministry. He asked one of the young delinquents what the greatest problem was that boys had to face in New York City. The quick reply was, "lonesomeness." The more he came to know the city and its young people, the more convinced Wilkerson became that the boy was exactly right.¹ So now Wilkerson preaches Christ as the central theme of his message, not doctrine or religion, but Christ as the only one who understands young people's problems--why they do

¹Wilkerson, *The Cross and the Switchblade*, p. 49.

the things they do, and the only one who has the power to deliver them from their hang-ups.¹

Have An Authoritative Answer

A fourth, very important, conviction that Wilkerson has, is his belief in the necessity for a strong, authoritative approach. He says:

When I'm out on the street I demand not only their attention, but their respect. I say, 'Take your hat off. I'm a man of God and I've got a message.' I'm totally convinced that I'm as authoritarian on the Scriptures as any man in the world, and I believe that any man that God has ever used in any major way has to be totally convinced that the Bible is true, that it's relevant, contemporary, and that it does change life patterns when accepted.²

David says: "I think one psychiatrist put it pretty well when he tried to summarize my ministry. He said, 'That man is hung-up on the Bible.'"³ Wilkerson's authority also stems, of course, from the long experience he has had in dealing with all kinds of youth problems.⁴ Many people presumably come to hear him because he speaks with the voice of authority, and a "Thus saith the Lord," in an age when many churches have lost that authority. Wilkerson believes that a direct, confident approach is very important today:

¹Wilkerson Interview Tape, September, 1968.

²*Ibid.*

³*Ibid.*

⁴This fact has been mentioned a number of times already, for the very reason that it is such a decisive factor in his ministry. His strong external personal proof, based largely upon his reputation, is probably responsible for attracting many members of his audience. Then this image of *authority* and *competence* is usually maintained or enhanced by the sermon or contact.

I refuse to argue God's cause to this runaway generation. I will not defend the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ against those who have already hardened their hearts by way of an intellectual cop out. But I have some straight talk for high school and college students who have yet to find true freedom. . . .¹

Then he turns to these young people, tells them the story of Samson, and concludes with an interesting list of ten authoritative "commandments":

Now let me sock it to you. . . .
My message to the young intellectual is:

DON'T
be a
fool
for a
fool
cause
and
die a
fool's
death.

DON'T
mistake
childishness
for
courage.

DON'T
mistake
weirdness
for
wisdom.

DON'T
mistake
lewdness
for
love.

DON'T
mistake

¹David Wilkerson, *Purple Violet Squish* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1969), p. 63.

violence
for
victory.

GET
smart
and
get
your
education.

LOOK
for the
right
things
in the
right
places.

LEARN
all
about
what
Jesus
said
and
did.

SEEK
truth
in
God's Word.

HIS
Holy Spirit
will
guide
to
peace--
purpose.¹

¹*Ibid.*, pp. 65-69. The unique style is that of the publishers, who have tried to do a number of similar interesting things in this new book. (At the time of this writing, the book is so new that it has not even been officially released to the market. It should be available to the public by September, 1969).

Be Contemporary and Relevant

A fifth bridge that Wilkerson uses to span the "Communication and Generation Gaps," is his splendidly contemporary subjects. He preaches on themes like: "Purple-Violet Squish," "How to Handle Your Parents," "Why Kids Run Away," "Hippies, Yippies, and Freebie Gypsies," "How to Handle Snakes," etc. In one of his recent Melodyland Rally meetings, for example, in which there were approximately 200 barefoot hippies, he preached on the life of Samson--a real fool:

Here's a man, I suggested to them, that was born to a minority family. Here was a man who became vitally concerned about human need and poverty and the ghetto problems of his generation. He developed an attitude toward the Establishment. He wanted to overthrow the political structure of the day, it was a perverted Philistine structure. He became a violent demonstrator and he went out into the city and tore down city walls, he plundered their warehouses, went to their vineyards and turned foxes loose through their vines with fire-brands and killed a host of them in the process. When it finally got out of order and his own people were crying, 'law and order,' they turned him over to the Philistines and he wound up in jail, just as our young people are today. In fact, this young man Samson broke out of jail and, with the jaw-bone of an ass, killed 1,000 Philistine National Guard.

The picture up to here, I told the young people, was similar to what we're seeing today. Here was a man of great courage, strength, with a great cause, and concerned about human injustice and perverse political structures. But if teenagers and young people just read their Bibles they're going to find out where this all ends. The next picture we see of Samson, he's sitting in the grass playing with riddles with a bunch of no-faced people with no future. It's not long before this man trades childishness for courage and sits playing as a flower child, just like the flower children of today, playing with riddles and lying around with harlots, and allowing sensuality to sap his

strength. This man foolishly wound up without a voice, without any influence, blind and losing all, his cause included.¹

Another way that Wilkerson makes his messages contemporary is illustrated in a sermon entitled, *Goodniks*, that was preached at the twelfth rally in Pittsburgh's Syria Mosque. He gives the following parable in modern, meaningful language:

Now two teen-agers went up into the church to pray; the one a goodnik and the other a delinquent. The good one stood and prayed like this to himself: God, I thank you that I'm not like all the other kids, cheaters, phonies, and sex-minded, or even as this delinquent. I study all week, I give my allowance to the church, or a portion of it, and I give all that I have to being good. And the delinquent, standing afar off--would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, and struck himself across the chest and said: God, have mercy on me, I'm a big sinner. Now I tell you that this delinquent went down to his house justified, more than the good one, for everyone that exalteth himself and thinks he is something shall be broken down and every one that humbles himself shall be lifted up.²

Wilkerson is currently writing a series of youth sermons to be published in a book entitled: *A Generation of Fools*. It will combine several of the characteristics of effective communication listed above, but it will be based primarily on passages that have an up-to-date message--taken mainly from Proverbs. He says:

And I'm going to make these all relevant, contemporary, and show the Bible speaks to them. I just don't take any back-talk from them, I tell them, 'I'm not here

¹Wilkerson Interview Tape, September, 1968.

²Luke 18:10-14 (As revised by Wilkerson).

to defend God, or Jesus, or the Holy Ghost; he knows how to take care of himself. I'm here to lay the claims of the Gospel down to you in love. You can take it or leave it, but I'm going to unburden my soul to you.¹

Work With the Holy Spirit

The sixth, and final, approach or attitude given by Wilkerson in this interview, as being characteristic of his communication, is summarized as follows:

Furthermore, I'm totally convinced that it's not in the depth of preaching, or not necessarily even in what is said. I've found that when I stand in the pulpit under great unction and exercise faith, that the Holy Spirit is doing a work in the audience. Often, the most simple, direct messages are the most effective.²

Very early in his ministry to the gangs and delinquents in New York, Wilkerson learned that by himself he could not reach the restless, troubled youngsters. At one of the first big rallies, after he had finally managed to get several different gangs together in one arena (a difficult and volatile arrangement in itself), he tried unsuccessfully to win their attention and response:

I couldn't understand what was wrong with my sermon. I'd done everything I could to make it a good one. I'd spent hours preparing it, and prayed over every line of it. I'd even fasted in the hope that this would strengthen my delivery and my persuasiveness. But I might as well have stood up and read the stock-market report. Nothing I said seemed real to these kids; nothing came through to them. I preached for perhaps fifteen minutes, and all I could sense was the growing restlessness of the crowd. I had reached the point in the sermon where I quoted Jesus' command to love one another.

Suddenly someone jumped up in the second row. He stood on his chair and shouted:

¹Wilkerson Interview Tape, September, 1968. ²Ibid.

'Hold on, Preacher! Hold on! You say you want me to love them Dagoes? One of them cut me with a razor. I'll love them all right--with a lead pipe.'

And another boy, this one from the Hell Burners' section, jumped up and ripped open his shirt.

'I got a bullet hole here, Preacher. One of them Nigger gangs did it. And you say we're supposed to love them? Man, you're not real.'¹

It didn't sound real, even to Wilkerson, in that room charged with hatred. He said that it wasn't humanly possible that we couldn't work it by ourselves, but that God's love would have to come and take over. Then, suddenly, he realized that those words were intended for him also. There was nothing more that he could do in that meeting, he was going to have to turn it over to God. Silently he bowed his head and prayed for three minutes that God would have his way with that meeting. Slowly the laughter died down, a quiet hush descended upon the meeting, and here and there sobbing could be heard. When David gave the call to come forward, the entire Mau Mau gang followed their leaders down to the altar, along with about thirty others. It was a remarkable breakthrough, and vividly impressed Pastor Wilkerson with his need to rely on God's Holy Spirit to convey the message home to his hearers.²

This emphasis on the Holy Spirit and total dependence on the providence of God is what one might surely expect from an Assembly of God preacher. The entire Teen Challenge program was built on that kind of faith and trust. The boys

¹Wilkerson, *The Cross and the Switchblade*, p. 80.

²*Ibid.*, pp. 81-82.

and workers at the Center literally had to "pray in" their operating budget on a day-to-day basis in the beginning.¹ Even before the Center was established, when Wilkerson was first thrown out of that trial, reporters asked him a host of questions about what a country preacher was doing at a New York murder trial, who was sponsoring him, and what he thought he was proving? Wilkerson's response, as written down later, went something like this:

My answer has never changed--'God sent me! The Holy Spirit sponsors me! I'm trying to prove that the gospel of Jesus Christ is still the answer to all youth problems. I can help gangs and addicts because I know God can break any habit through faith in His Son, Jesus Christ!' I prayed before I came to the city from the country town. I've prayed every day since; we will keep on praying, and every worker, every addict, every gang member, prostitute and beatnik who has entered our program has learned to do the same. We believe prayer is the greatest force on earth.¹

Pastor Wilkerson strongly believes that prayer and the Holy Spirit should play a definite role in effective preaching. He made this point very clear in a sermon entitled *No New Gospel*, which was preached at the beginning of the new year of 1967 in Anaheim, California. In this sermon he emphasizes, that as far as he is concerned, it is still the anointing of the Holy Spirit that produces the results. In order to clarify his meaning, he gives the following example:

I've heard great preachers pour out silver-tongued oratory about Jesus. O, friend, I have heard some

¹David Wilkerson, "Teen Challenge: A Miracle Ministry," *The Cross and the Switchblade*, I (February-March, 1965), p. 29.

beautiful sermons on Jesus . . . I could see his beautiful flowing beard, I could see his great white throne, I could see all the glory of the man Jesus. But the next day, I couldn't remember a word he said.

And then I've been to some little mission up in Harlem, and I listen to one of my boys struggle through the most unusual presentation about Jesus that you ever heard. And he staggers through it--you'd think Christ was born in the hospital in Bethlehem--the way he preaches. He knows so little, except what he's experienced in his life. But suddenly in the middle of it, his tongue seems to loosen, and the Spirit of unction comes upon him, and that congregation forgets his presentation, and at the invitation they run to the altar under the conviction of the Holy Spirit, and they are converted all over the house--because he's under unction.

By use of the word unction here, Wilkerson is referring to a special act of anointing by the Holy Spirit upon the one who is preaching. He goes on to say, in this same sermon, that he can tell when he is under unction:

I can tell when the Holy Spirit is moving and so can you. You can know it when a man preaches the Gospel, and I heard a man preach the other day--I was listening to a tape--and I thought to myself, Oh, I wish I could preach like that. The beautiful words just poured out of him. But you know I came to the conclusion . . . that more than being an orator, I want the unction, I want the anointing of the Holy Spirit.

There is an issue, however, in this area of homiletical and rhetorical theory. Just how much should the preacher rely on God for what he is to say from the pulpit? How should this affect his presentation for individual sermons, and, in fact, his entire rhetorical training and background? This is an issue which dates all the way back to

Augustine.¹ C. S. Baldwin has made the following summary of Augustine's position:

Since his (the preacher's) strength is derived from a source deeper than human skill, his best preparation is prayer. Nevertheless, human skill is to be cultivated. Prayer itself proves the folly of making no other preparation. He who abjures human lore of preaching because God gives us our messages might equally well abjure prayer because God knows us and knows our needs. The Pauline Counsels specify how Timothy should preach. As God heals through doctors and medicines, so he gives the gospel to men by men and through men.²

Norval Pease also refers to a study made by William Carson Lantz, then associate professor of speech and homiletics at Fuller Theological Seminary. His concluding advice is:

Keep your belief in God and the mystical experience if you must, but this does not mean you cannot also keep *rhetoric*. Your use of classical, systematic rhetoric, natural and human as it may seem, is not a denial of God. It is simply a recognition that God uses it and works through it.³

Lawrence L. Lacour, formerly Director of the Department of Preaching Evangelism of the Methodist Church, and presently Senior Minister of the First United Methodist Church of

¹Norval F. Pease has written a very helpful summary on this whole question of the relationship between homiletics and rhetoric, which can be found in the second chapter of his dissertation: Norval F. Pease, "Charles E. Weniger's Theory of the Relationship of Speech and Homiletics as Revealed in His Teaching Procedures, His Writings, and His Public Addresses" (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Michigan State University, 1964).

²C. S. Baldwin, *Medieval Rhetoric and Poetic* (Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1959), p. 67.

³William Carson Lantz, "Rhetoric and Theology--Incompatible?" *The Digest of Research in Religious Speaking* (October, 1963). Reprinted from *Western Speech Journal*, March, 1955, p. 5.

Colorado Springs, Colorado, has made a similar matter-of-fact statement:

That preaching is a special form of communication involving the work of the Holy Spirit is assumed. Our aim is to explore some of the factors which either aid or deter the Holy Spirit in helping the worshipper to hear, understand, and respond to the proclamation of the message.¹

The above position taken by Lacour will also be assumed for the purposes of this study. Preaching will be considered as a special form of communication that involves the work of the Holy Spirit. There are, however, factors which may help or hinder the Holy Spirit in His work of reaching the listeners. David Wilkerson is well aware of this human responsibility of working with the Holy Spirit, and fulfilling his duties of the partnership. That is the reason why he started Teen Challenge in the first place--to try and do something about the problems he saw. It is also the reason why he continues to search for the best ways to communicate with young people today.

On the other hand, as a Pentecostal minister, and the son of a minister, he has a strong fundamental belief in the transcendence and power of God and the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, his own experiences have convinced him of God's leading in his life, and His ability to rescue "hopeless" individuals and change their life patterns.

¹Lawrence L. Lacour, "If Aristotle Could Hear You Preach." (Part One), *Pastoral Psychology*, October, 1965, p. 10.

Pastor Wilkerson has found that these two positions are in no way incompatible. Instead, he has found them to be very complementary, and so he carefully prepares his sermons, for example, making them as relevant and as contemporary as possible, yet all the while asking for God's guidance and relying heavily upon His Word.

Sermon Preparation.--What Wilkerson has to say about his sermon preparation might well be inserted here, because he does make use of both prayer and research in his preparation:

I do almost all of my studying through the Bible. I'm totally absorbed in the Bible, and I do some contemporary reading, but mostly on the lives of missionaries. I have a girl here doing research work, she clips for me; a clipping service on all subjects, and I refer to these. I try to keep up on terminology through these clippings and then I get digested material sent to me and I absorb all this digested material.

About the sermon preparation; I ask God to lay a thought on my mind. I always pray something like this: 'God, you know who I have to speak to, and Master, what would you preach if you had to stand before 4,000 kids like I have to next week? What would you say? What is your message?' I try to imagine what Christ would preach and then I go through the New Testament primarily to find out what he did say to his generation and then find other places in the Bible where his thoughts are made contemporary or backed up by the prophets. Then I get my thoughts, and then I just sit down at the typewriter and pray and dig and get a Thompson Chain, the big Bible reference for all the correlating scriptures, and I try to get the broad picture of what God's saying on every subject.¹

Sermon Delivery.--It is likewise relevant to point out Wilkerson's attitude toward delivering the sermon, for it shows his concern with adequate preparation. He has said:

¹Wilkerson Interview Tape, September, 1968.

My preaching now, of course, is done with just a Bible and no pulpit. Young people, I think, are responding more because it gives me a tendency more to picture myself being seated among them in just a heart-to-heart talk. In fact, I've been thinking about just putting a stool up there, a round stool that would swivel, and just talk to them from the stool. A holy hush settles over the place and I'm finding that I can communicate immediately. There's nothing between myself and them. I usually have a roving mike now and I rove around and try to 'get' them right in the white of the eye. I prefer this so much. I acquaint myself with my subject better, and then I try to speak more extemporaneously.¹

How David Wilkerson Attempts to "Get Through":

As Derived from a Sermon

Besides the above information, which was derived primarily from the interview tape, there are additional theories and principles that Wilkerson would consider important to effective communication. For instance, in one of the sermons he preached at the Christian Center Church, entitled, *Generation To Be Reached*, he explained to the church what approaches he considered important for "reaching" young people.²

This sermon is based on the third chapter of Acts, which contains the story of the crippled man that was healed by Peter and John. Wilkerson maintains a unique and

¹*Ibid.*

²In this sermon, Wilkerson gives five of these directives. Three of them are in addition to those already mentioned, while two of them are covered by the first list above. They will be given here in the same order as they were given in the sermon.

interesting analogy throughout the entire sermon, as he compares the crippled man to this modern "crippled" generation. The young hippie beggars are standing just outside the door of the church looking for a handout, yet they are being given either nothing, or the wrong things--just as was happening to the cripple in the Bible story. After discussing some of the wrong things that he feels many churches are trying to do in their effort to be relevant and involved, Wilkerson suggests four positive approaches that he feels are important. That is why it is necessary to include this sermon in this chapter; because it reveals at least three additional planks of Wilkerson's rhetorical theory platform.

Be Relevant and Be Involved--Properly

Wilkerson first of all points out in this sermon, as he does in many of his books, his belief that many of the modern churches have come up with the wrong answers to the problems posed by young people today. There are some churches which are totally unaware of the problem, and are doing nothing to communicate with their young people, as revealed in these keen analyses:

'Our minister just doesn't get through to us.'
 'My church is dead.'
 'Nobody in my church will answer my questions.' . . .
 'I guess my preacher is a politician. We get nothing but civil rights and politics Sunday after Sunday.'
 'Our church is a sophisticated private club.'
 'My minister talks so far above my head, I don't think he understands what he is saying himself.'

'The only reason I go to church is because my folks make me, and my girl friend is there.'

'There's not a thing in my church that touches me, or stirs me or grabs me or helps me. Sometimes I wish our pastor would make me mad, or yell or scream, or do *something* to wake people up.'¹

Then there are other churches which eagerly seek to become relevant and involved. They provide "Recreation Revivals," "Bowling Alley Services," and a host of "new, pop-art gospel schemes," in an effort to entertain their youth. Wilkerson believes that if these young people want entertainment, they can find more exciting entertainment elsewhere; they don't need to come to church for it. He considers it a disgrace that the church has become a "cheap night club, a political platform, and a free forum." He does not believe that the church has to "change gears to reach this generation." By this, Wilkerson means that the old-fashioned Gospel of Christ is still the most satisfying and rewarding answer to youth's inquiries. In fact, he has preached a sermon entitled *No New Gospel*, in which he dramatically makes this very point:

Now friends, this is principle. . . . I want this church and this congregation to follow me closely tonight. The modern church planners, the image makers, the busy-beaver-public-relations-preachers have added a little bit of everything to their gospel to try and attract a crowd. They've spiked it with jazz, flavored it with rock and roll dances for teen-agers, sugar-coated it with art and nature studies, polluted it with heresy, cut it with kooky theology, mixed it with politics, diluted it with moral standards--low moral

¹Wilkerson, *Hey, Preach*. . . , pp. 27-28.

standards. They took the hell out of it, put the fun into it, squeezed the life out of it, starved the Spirit out of it, denied the virgin birth out of it, accepted non-virgins as examples of it, and they have been so busily handling and mutilating the Gospel, they've forgotten what it looks like!

In his book, *Parents On Trial*, Wilkerson tells of a church-sponsored, rock-and-roll street dance that he saw in New York, where most of the young people in the crowd did not even know the name of the church:

Did the dance attract anyone to any church on Sunday? I doubt it. Did the clergymen who staged the dance learn the important lesson, that you have to take relevant church activities into the street to these people? I doubt that, too. Mere church attendance, as we all know, does not make a man religious any more than swimming turns a man into a fish. The job of the clergy is not one of making the church more appealing or offering more bribes to youth to lure it inside the door. The real task of the clergy is to acquaint itself with the heartbreak, the loneliness, the lost feeling of many youths and to engage in a simple, direct ministry of satisfying the needs of teen-agers in terms they understand.¹

It is not a matter of not being involved, but of the right kind of involvement. As far as the Teen Challenge ministry is concerned, Wilkerson writes:

The Teen Challenge ministry has always been one of complete involvement on the "turf," where the kids are ---on the roofs, in basements, in the tenements, on the playgrounds, in the prisons. We take our message "where the action is." Our gospel message of redemption includes in-patient services where we offer beds, food, clothing, and medical care if needed, as well as a job-placement service and legal and family welfare bureaus. . . . Everyone is grateful for whatever the various churches do to try to meet the problems of delinquency and neglect, but I would hope that they will eventually

¹Wilkerson, *Parents On Trial*, pp. 161-162.

come to see that the bread-and-butter kinds of assistance are more productive than jazz and the ringing of handbells.¹

Returning to the sermon *Generation To Be Reached*, Wilkerson said, in this sermon, that: "God is not silent about how to reach this generation." There may be many people searching for new methods, but there are still four very important old methods that Wilkerson proceeds to illustrate from the Biblical story found in Acts 3.

Be Personally Involved in Witnessing

Peter and John had enough interest and love for this cripple to want to become involved, points out Wilkerson. That is the first and most important step: "The only way we are going to get through to this generation, is for every Christian that is Spirit-filled to get personally involved in the life of those outside the door."

"Everywhere I go," says Wilkerson, "pastors want to know, 'What can we do for our young people? How are we going to get the young people working?'" They are apparently looking for a glossary of terms on how to reach them. What it really takes, says Wilkerson--and here he *reveals one of the main keys* to his entire ministry--is a *complete willingness to become personally involved in helping others*.

When he was a pastor back in Pennsylvania, David admits in this sermon: "I had the most beautiful sermons on

¹*Ibid.*, p. 162.

personal evangelism you could ever see . . . but I wouldn't get out myself." Finally, he came to the realization that he must get out and do some personal witnessing--at the street level--himself, if he was going to expect others to do it. It was a "turning-point experience" for him. It started him on the road to successful communication and put real meaning into his ministry. He said in a *Listen* magazine interview, when answering a question about his conviction and purpose:

I call it a holy obsession to get involved in youth problems rather than just preach about them--rather than merely making statements about faith, to try to understand the real love that motivates one to deal with human need.¹

Pastor Wilkerson summarizes this first step by saying: "I'll tell you why this church is not reaching this generation, it's too busy minding its machinery . . . too busy polishing its programs." Instead of doing that, he says: "Let us put personal witnessing ahead of everything else until there is a touch of involvement in our lives."

Speak with Authority

Secondly, Wilkerson notes that Peter and John had the *right* answer for the cripple's problems. Furthermore, they were confident and authoritative in extending their solution to him. Wilkerson believes that this is what the church needs today, if it is to communicate, as has already

¹David Wilkerson, interview in *Listen*, December, 1967, p. 7.

been pointed out in the last section. Here in this sermon, he said:

Everywhere I go, the experts and the sociologists, say, 'Mr. Wilkerson, how can you brazenly write a book, *A Positive Cure for Drug Addiction?* You know once an addict always an addict. How can you write such statements?' And I tell them on radio or television, or wherever it is, 'Because, sir, I have the answer. I have a positive lifetime cure for drug addicts.'

There is little doubt about the authority in such a statement. Later in the sermon, Wilkerson added:

I never let a hippie disrupt the moving of the Holy Ghost. . . . I've had to speak with authority, and stand up with a 'Thus saith the Lord.' . . . There has to be a voice of authority in the streets. . . . We must speak as the oracles of God.

Don't Be Bound By Methods

Thirdly, David Wilkerson decries the "specialization" that has even overtaken the church. Peter didn't have to call in a specialist. With this important principle, Pastor Wilkerson is saying that everyone has his own particular method of "getting through" to another individual, and what works for him will not work for his brother Don, for example. The important thing is to have a genuine love and concern for others, and this will cross a lot of barriers. It is another vital concept to an understanding of Wilkerson's ministry, because he does evidence a deep sincerity and personal concern for individuals in his audience. In another sermon, *The Cop-Out Crowd*, he shows this concern by saying:

I've never been more serious in my life. I've never felt like I wanted to preach harder than I feel

tonight, because I see some of these young people sitting here, and one of these days unless God gets this message through to you, you're going to be walking the streets, you're going to leave home . . . you'll look just like the rest, and you'll be lost, unless God gets a hold of you tonight and gets it out of your heart, and that's my message tonight. They call me the wooden-tongued preacher, because I slip over my words--I think *Christianity Today* called me the wooden-tongued preacher--I couldn't care less. I'm after the hearts of young people tonight.

Demand An Immediate Response

The fourth step that Peter and John took in reaching the crippled man, according to this sermon *Generation To Be Reached*, was when Peter said, "Rise Up and Walk." This is what Pastor Wilkerson picturesquely describes as a "cold-turkey gospel." He says that he has determined to lay the claims of the Gospel before this generation, and then demand an immediate response. "We'll not reach these young people on the streets, until we bring them to an immediate spiritual crisis." He is not content to stand idly by and wait for the kids to outgrow their problems when they are twenty-one. He has an earnest desire to reach them now, and he senses the urgency of having them make immediate decisions.

Summary of Wilkerson's Methods

The above approaches and theories are the primary ones which Wilkerson considers important in effective communication--in "getting through." There are no doubt other admonitions and principles that he makes use of in his own sermons, or mentions in his writings (some of which will

certainly be mentioned when a closer look is taken at the more specific areas of rhetorical theory). However, the following summary statements seem to outline the main planks of Wilkerson's "bridge of communication."¹

1. Be totally convinced of the truth and power of your message, and your own capability and need to share it with others. You cannot persuasively communicate to others what you have not experienced yourself.

This statement shows concern for credibility in that "good character" and sincere "good will" are considered important beginning points. It recognizes the need for being "sold" on something oneself, before being able to persuade others.

2. Practice what you preach. Don't preach according to the measure of your own achievement, but preach righteousness and then endeavor to evidence such a holy life of living testimony that the message will be clear to all those who choose to observe it.

Again, this shows that Wilkerson realizes "good character" is essential to strong personal proof, and that the speaker will be examined to see if he really believes what he says.

¹The procedure will be to present the summarized position in italic print first, and then in the regular type face, make a very brief comment indicating its relationship to recognized rhetorical theory.

3. *Satisfy their loneliness and their restless searching by showing them that Christ is the only true answer to their problems and their longings.*

In practicing this principle, Wilkerson makes use of motive appeals to show his audience their needs, and then he satisfies this need with evidence from the Bible and illustrations from his experiences. Christ is the central theme and subject of Wilkerson's preaching.

4. *Have an authoritative Biblical answer to meet the questions and demands of your audience. Be able to command their interest and respect by your authoritative knowledge and grasp of the subject.*

Once more this is a primary concern for good personal proof. This time an authoritative answer that commands respect is considered an important part of Wilkerson's credibility. The Bible, likewise, is a very important source for his evidence and ideas.

5. *Be contemporary and relevant in the proper ways. Meet the young people where they are; but it is not necessary to mimic their entertainment. Rather, strive to show them solutions to their hang-ups in terms they can understand, with concepts they can appreciate, and goals worth reaching for.*

This is essentially a concern for discovering materials, arranging them, and choosing the most meaningful

language possible, in an effort to reach his chosen audiences with something that is relevant and contemporary. In rhetorical terms, it is a concern for the canons of *invention*, *arrangement*, and *style*.

6. *Work with the Holy Spirit by realizing that a man alone, regardless of all his homiletical, theological, exegetical, or rhetorical skill, cannot persuade a person to change his way of life. It is the work of the Holy Spirit to bring that kind of conviction. It is, nevertheless, possible for the human agent to help or hinder the Holy Spirit in His work.*

The above position does not eliminate the necessity to prepare diligently for the act of communication in order to make the message as contemporary, relevant, authoritative, and convincing as possible, and to insure that the delivery of such material will only enhance its meaning and enable it to be absorbed more easily.

7. *Become personally involved in witnessing on a one-to-one basis. There is no glossary of terms that guarantees successful communication with young people. It is a matter of becoming personally involved and showing a willingness to help others in a relevant way.*

Evidence is given here for a well-founded belief in "sincere concern" as something that will reach through to people. The audience, or even individual listeners are likely to be favorably impressed with someone who takes such an obvious interest in them.

8. *Don't be bound by existing methods and courses of instruction on how to "get through" to other individuals. What works for one person does not work for another. The important thing is to have such a deep sincerity and love for those individuals, that it will be obvious to them.*

This principle could affect the arrangement and structure of Wilkerson's messages, as well as many other factors, because he is primarily interested in what will work for him and not in what may have been done in the past by someone else. This experimentation and variety can be helpful. Again, notice the emphasis on ethos--sincerity and loving concern.

9. *Demand an immediate response. This is a "cold-turkey gospel," and it is most effective when the young people are brought to an immediate spiritual crisis. It is time they were making decisions; they do not need to be spoon-fed and coddled, they need to be confronted with the dilemma they are in, and brought to an immediate decision.*

This characteristic is indicative of the immediate, forthright style of Wilkerson's preaching. Perhaps this is also what accounts for his forceful and vigorous delivery. It is another indication of his concern and total involvement in the immediate goals of the message he is giving. Each of these positive elements give evidence of sound rhetorical principles at the basis of Wilkerson's theory.

CHAPTER VI

A RHETORICAL ANALYSIS OF WILKERSON'S CRUSADE SERMON:

WHY KIDS GO WRONG

The purpose of this chapter will be to examine a single sermon in depth. Such a case study analysis should provide additional bases for the criticism of David Wilkerson's communication.

This particular sermon, *Why Kids Go Wrong*, has been selected for the following reasons: (1) it is a fairly representative sermon, based on a topic that Wilkerson preaches about in most of his crusades, (2) this sermon was presented on the first evening of the Battle Creek Crusade, thus providing an example of how Wilkerson's weekend crusades are begun, and (3) the Battle Creek Crusade afforded the opportunity of personal observation and study of all phases of the sermon.¹

The text of the sermon will be considered authentic, since it was transcribed directly from a tape recording of the sermon as it was delivered in Kellogg Auditorium on May

¹The Battle Creek Crusade was considered to be quite typical of most of Wilkerson's crusades, so his crusade director told us. Private interview with David Patterson at the David Wilkerson Youth Crusade Office, Long Island, New York, August, 1968.

9, 1968. Since that date, Teen Challenge has produced a record by the same title: *Why Kids Go Wrong*. This record is a reproduction of essentially the same sermon, as it was preached extemporaneously on an *earlier* occasion--before the Battle Creek Crusade.

The availability of both of these texts provides an excellent opportunity to study the audience adaptations and extemporaneous nature of Wilkerson's preaching. It was decided, however, to use the text of the Battle Creek sermon for the purposes of analysis, because: (1) it *may* be more representative and natural than the one that was made into a record, and (2) it was the one that we had an opportunity to witness.

The procedure of this description and analysis will be to examine the following important factors relating to this sermon: (1) the time, place, and background of its presentation, (2) the audience to whom it was directed, (3) the structure and arrangement of the sermon, (4) Wilkerson's personal proof as it was likely affected by this sermon, (5) materials of speaking used, (6) the style of the sermon, and (7) the delivery of the sermon.¹

The analysis of this sermon was done from the substance outline which follows immediately, for purposes of easy reference.

¹The labels used in this analysis are seen to be those of: Kenneth G. Hance, David C. Ralph, and Milton J. Wiksell, *Principles of Speaking, 2nd Edition* (Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing Company, Inc., 1969).

Substance Outline of

Why Kids Go Wrong

[Introduction]

- I. *There's no college in the world that teaches people how to become parents. It's only on-the-job training.*
- A. *Sadly, too many dads and mothers never do learn how to become good parents. And after ten years of working with troubled kids, around the world, I think I have a right to speak on the subject.*
- B. *I'm not talking to you just as a gang preacher tonight. I want to talk to you out of my heart as a father of four children, and two teen-agers especially. And I share what I call the parental panic that there is in America today--the panic about why kids are going wrong.*

[Body]

- A. *I was in a crusade in San Francisco and a group of hippies invaded the crusade. They wanted to see me after the meeting.*
- 1. *They went backstage, and especially I got cornered by one young hippie who had her eyes painted with green paint to make herself look like a cat. And she had the sandals, and the knocker rings, and the incense pot, and the rabbit's feet--everything that goes with it. I said, "Why did you become a hippie? Why did you run away from Home?" She said, "One reason Mr. Wilkerson, Parents."*
- 2. *(Now, I'll tell you something--if any of these kiddies need their diapers changed just let me know and I'll get one of these pastors to come back and help you there. You just take them right outside, they'll come back and help you change those diapers. David, see to that please. We love children, but parents, it'll be easier for me if I don't have to outpreach them. Fine.)*
- 3. *I said, "Why did you join the hippie rebellion?" She said, "One word Mr. Wilkerson, Parents. Those are two people back home in Idaho who are hung up on themselves. Two people who don't give a darn about us kids." She said, "My mother was in charge of charity balls. My mother put on a big front about God and religion, but she didn't know God at*

all. My Dad couldn't go to bed without his whiskey. Mother had to have a pill to go to bed, and one to wake up, and one to stay awake, and then lectured me about marijuana. They tried to sell me on that phony respectability they had, but I wouldn't buy it." She said, "Now, Mr. Wilkerson, my hippie friends may not be what you call respectable, but at least they're honest.

- B. In the same meeting were two young sailors, dressed like two demon monks. They had these prayer shawls and prayer beads and the incense pot. I said, "Why would two sailors mess up their hair and go down here when they take leave from ship?" They said, "Mr. Wilkerson, we're running away from cheating parents; parents who don't know how to be honest anymore. We came down here looking for reality, and honest acceptance, and especially some semblance of love. We found it in Haight-Ashbury." (This was in the Haight-Ashbury section--a sixteen block section of San Francisco.)
- C. Seventeen year old boy, Randy, a drug addict--a main-line drug addict for four years. I said, "Randy, why did you leave such a good home and become such a terrible drug addict?" The same thing. "Mr. Wilkerson, my dad was a businessman and he was too busy to have any time for me. Every time I had a problem, and I went to him, he'd say, 'Some other time, son, I'm busy. Run along, come back later.' And he'd give me \$10 just spending money. Every time I went to him he'd just open his wallet. I didn't want money. I wanted to talk to him. I wanted to share some problems I was having, and I became emotionally disturbed. And I thought to myself, 'If I get in trouble, or maybe if I go to jail even, Dad will have to sit down, and he'll know I have a problem, then he'll talk to me.'" He said, "I went out with some kids and robbed a gas station." He said, "I got locked up all right. My Dad came to see me, but only long enough to tell me that I'd disgraced the family, and that I should never again set foot in my house." He said, "I learned to hate my father. I've never been back to this day Mr. Wilkerson. I went out and became a drug addict."
- I. And I've just completed a tour through some of Europe and South Africa. And I've traveled around the world the past two years preaching to thousands of teen-agers. And everywhere I go teen-agers and young people are down on their parents.
- A. They talk about parents' being too busy--too wrapped up in their own problems. Now I'm not down on parents, even though I wrote a book Parents on Trial.

And I speak of a parent's being on trial, and I consider myself one of those parents' on trial. But I want to repeat, I believe that there's a parental panic today. I believe most parents are God-fearing people who are worried and concerned about the condition among young people today.

- B. Pick up your newspaper almost any day of the week--learn of the moral landslide in America. The permissiveness toward marijuana smoking. LSD on campuses, and now in our high schools.
1. I picked up the paper recently and read of a boy on a bad trip on LSD--cut up the family cat and ate it raw.
 2. A boy steps out of an 18th floor window in Los Angeles--thinks he can fly, and falls to his death.
 3. A girl in San Francisco--her Dad in the Boeing Factory--ignites her body, after dousing with kerosene, and burns to a crisp.
 4. A young boy walks Haight-Ashbury high on LSD with a man's severed elbow and arm under his, wrapped in cellophane--the police follow him to his Volkswagen, lift up the front end, and the rest of the body wrapped in cellophane, in his Volkswagen. And he says to the cops, "He sold me bad acid."
- C. And friends, they come now to our Crusades all over America--the past five nights in Seattle, and Los Angeles. (I just came in from Los Angeles, at Disneyland, our twenty-fifth rally there).
1. And they come back stage with their parents, and Dad and Mother just brought them from the hospital. They say, Mr. Wilkerson, pray for my boy. Pray for my girl. And those young people stand there just staring at me. There's nothing there anymore. It doesn't register. I preach Christ to them, they say, "Yes I want to accept." But they can't grasp anything. It doesn't get a hold of them. You see Dad and Mom take that teenager by the arm and lead them out of the Crusade. My heart breaks every time I see it.
 2. We have a school in Pennsylvania; we take in LSD addicts now, and users. (And don't forget they are addicts. Psychologically they do become hooked on LSD. There's a psychological need for it). And they're having chemical reactions even one year after. You see them sitting in our class at our Bible School, then suddenly go into a frenzy, like an epileptic fit, and have a chemical reaction in their body.

3. That's what bothers me about our college campuses today. Think of the day Dad and Mother, you've got to send your kid to a college.
 - a) With all the rebellion, all the marijuana smoking, and now on major campuses the girl can spend, on the average, 68 hours in her boy friend's room with the door locked!
 - b) And I listen to these college professors, these pink, agnostic eggheads, who sit in our classrooms and pour this pornographic filth in the minds of our young people, and make permissive statements that marijuana smoking is not dangerous. THESE MEN DO NOT KNOW WHAT THEY'RE TALKING ABOUT!
 - c) I consider marijuana one of the most dangerous narcotics on the American scene today. And I'll get into that a lot more tomorrow night.
- D. But there is a parental panic today. So I want to get into it now. I'm not down on parents. As I said, I believe the majority of God-fearing people are in a state of panic.
 1. Before I get into this message, I want to tell you this. I preached this recently, at an upstate New York and after I was finished preaching it, I was mobbed backstage by a pastor, and I won't say the name for fear the Methodists would get hurt. But he cornered me with ten of his young people (Now this, you see--Methodists are my friends--this happened to be just one man.) He said, "Mr. Wilkerson, you had no right to preach that tonight in this suburban community. You're talkin' about slum conditions. You make it sound like all the kids are having problems with their parents. You missed the point, your message wasn't relevant, I think it was a shame!" And the kids, oh, they mobbed around me, and said it was horrible. And I had to chase them out of the room--it was in the counseling room. I had forty kids waiting for me that wanted to be helped.
 2. The next girl, even when I . . . just when I was feeling bad about it--a twelve-year-old girl, came up. She said, "Mr. Wilkerson, I heard what they said to you." She said, "If they're getting along good with their parents they should be grateful. They ought to be on their knees thanking God. They don't know how the rest of us have to live." She said, "I live with my Aunt. There are four of us kids, and my Aunt took an axe last night and she was going to kill us all."

3. The next girl, fourteen years old, said, "Mr. Wilkerson, I heard that too. They don't know it, nobody here knows it, I ran away from home three days ago. I've been on the run. Your message caught me tonight."

Forty kids who had trouble with their parents. Dad drinks. Mom and Dad are fighting. They're getting a divorce. And I hit the nail right on the head.

- E. And I preach this all over the country. And in spite of the criticism about it being a message irrelevant and not necessary for a suburban small community, I'm going to preach it anyhow. You see, I'm not here to impress anybody. I'm going to be here tomorrow night anyhow. I've got no other place to go the next four days.

II. Let's go to the Bible. Pure wisdom.

- A. I'm not going to give you any of Dr. Spock's pabulum philosophy--this philosophy that suggests to you that if your little boy has a trauma, give him a teddy bear, and put him in a closet with a big needle, and let him stick needles in the teddy bear and take out his aggression patterns.
 1. I heard one of his friends on television recently, telling the American Mother this: "If your little girl has an aggression pattern toward her little brother, and she's mad at him--if you want to take that anger and resentment out of her, give her a pencil and paper and tell her to draw an ugly picture of her brother, that'll make her feel better. But if that doesn't do it, give her a pair of scissors and let her cut up that picture. And if that doesn't do it, let her throw those pieces in the basket, and jump up and down on it, and take out her anger--she'll feel better and she'll love her little brother."
 2. You ought to take those books on how to raise kids and spank them with them!
- B. Now listen to me. Right into the Bible, pure wisdom. Here's the story that cannot be improved on. Here's the story of permissive parenthood and a runaway generation--the Prodigal Son. Here's the story of a father who found a rebel on his hands. This is the first hippie. This is the first runaway that lands in Haight-Ashbury of his day.
 1. The story begins like this. (And I want to talk first of all about permissiveness.) "A certain

man had two sons." We're not given his name, because I believe he represents all the parents. "A certain man had two sons. The younger of the two came to his father and he said, 'Father, Give me the portion of goods that falleth to me.'"

This father looks at his boy in a state of rebellion, and that father knew, and the boy also knew, that that portion of goods, or the inheritance, did not rightfully or legally belong to him till after his father's death.

2. The father knew that boy couldn't handle that. He knew it was too much for him. But he said, "If I say No, that boy will turn against me, he'll be a rebel, and he'll run away from home."
- C. And you see, right there you have it, friends. This is why we're losing our generation. Life magazine said, 500,000 kids will run away from home this next year. 500,000 Why? Because we don't have enough dads and mothers with enough courage left to say "NO."
1. The specialist, the psychiatrist, and the psychologist, says to you, "Don't discipline your children anymore unless you give 'em a reason for it." My Dad said, "David, you'll do it because I said so, period." And I believed him. What if your teenager doesn't like your excuse, or your reason? You're going to keep dreaming them up, and then finally they're going to "cop out" on you.
 2. I believe that we need in America a WOODSHED REVIVAL--woodshed therapy.
 - a) I was on a radio station in St. Louis, recently, talkin' about spanking the foolishness out of children as the Bible suggests, and a lady called up--one of these call programs. She said, "Oh, you kind of preachers make me so mad, getting on the radio, talking about spanking kids." She said, "That's gone out years ago."

She said, "You're giving comfort to all the sadists and child beaters in St. Louis." She said, "I serve beer to my four-year-old daughter and my six-year-old son, at the dinner table, so they'll learn how to handle their alcohol when they're teen-agers, and be able to choose between right and wrong."
 - b) I said, "Mom, you're the one that needs to be spanked. And you better keep my telephone number. Your kids are going to need it when they're teen-agers."

3. I was on an airplane recently, flying to California. A social worker sat next to me, and I introduced myself. She said, "Say, you wrote the Cross and the Switchblade, didn't you?" I said, "Yes, Ma'am." And she said, "Did you write that book on woodshed therapy, Parents on Trial? I said, "Guilty." She said, "Well, you know--in the field we don't buy that, anymore." She said, "we feel that it will create a trauma in the kid," but she said: "My neighbor taught me a lesson. I believe your theory now, Mr. Wilkerson, I believe it."
- a) She said, "My neighbor had a seventeen-year-old daughter who was coming in drunk all hours of the night. She'd pull up in front of the house in her boy friend's hot rod and they'd sit there and park, and disgrace the family--right in the driveway. Dad and Mom would be upstairs, on the second floor, peeking out the bedroom window. Mom, sitting there in her little rocker, unable to go to sleep till her little girl was in. You see she didn't want to create a sibling rivalry, or interpersonal relationship, or intensified anxiety states. She was doing it by the book. And Dad would look out that window and watch, but he didn't want to touch the child--she had to make her own choices.
- But ONE NIGHT, Dad looked out and he saw something he didn't like. And he said, 'Mama, I've had it. That is enough!' He walked down the stairs, went out, 'round the car where his daughter was, yanked her out, slapped her across the backside, said, 'get to your room girl, and don't move till I get up there!' 'Yes sir,' and up she ran. He went around to the other side, yanked the young hot rodder out, stuck a finger right on his nose, and he said, 'Buddy, if you pull your hot rod within one mile of my house again, I'll get a shot gun and blow your off.' 'Yes sir,'--zoom, off he went.
- Dad went upstairs to his seventeen-year-old daughter's bedroom, and with his belt in his hand, to get some sense into her, and as soon as he walked in, she leaped on him crying and said, 'Dad, it's about time.'
- b) She said, "Mr. Wilkerson, I believe in woodshed therapy now."
- D. I don't believe in spanking children just in anger. If you don't balance your discipline with love, you are a child beater.

1. But I don't believe you should smack children on the face, or on the hand, or on the legs. I believe God has so designed the human anatomy; there's a special place designed just for discipline.
2. I was in Columbus, Georgia, preaching this message the first night of a crusade. The second night, I came back stage to take my place--a little twelve-year-old girl came running up, she grabbed my hand and started walking with me. She said, "Hey, Mr. Wilkerson, you sure got me in trouble with that sermon you preached last night." She said, "I don't think I'm going to be able to sit in your meeting tonight." She said, "My mom's been making up for lost time all day today."
3. My Dad raised me by the belt and by the book. I remember when I was a kid, I started a basket ball team in my Dad's church. (My Dad was a preacher). And we were playing the Methodists one day. They came out with beautiful red and gold uniforms, and my team had these heavy sweatshirts, these dungarees, and canvas shoes. And by the way, they beat us. And I said, fellows, we need uniforms, that's our problem--uniforms.

So we rushed down to the sports store and I found five beautiful yellow and red uniforms--\$26 worth. And I told the man behind the desk, "don't sell them, just hold them, I'll go home and get a check and be right back. Hold them for me." And I rushed home consumed with those--with the thought of getting those uniforms.

But as soon as I got to the house, I saw Dad's car in the driveway. And I always waited till Dad left, because Mom was an easier mark. I waited until Dad went visiting. Mom was peeling potatoes in the kitchen sink, and I went in, "mother, you know I got this team, Dad's church, and we played the Methodists; they beat us, we need uniforms; I've found \$26 worth of beautiful uniforms; write me out a check right now, I've got to get down there."

She said, "David, you need school clothes, we don't have money for uniforms right now, and besides, wait until your Dad gets home." And that's one thing I didn't want. And she wasn't about to budge, and so you know kids will bluff you as much as you let them, so I started to bluff her, and I said: "Mother I want \$26 right NOW!" She said, "You won't get it, right now. Wait till your Daddy gets home."

And I tell you, I got so angry I threw myself on the floor and I put on a fit. And I turned all the colors of the rainbow, and I yelled and I screamed, and I sassed my mother, and I stood up and looked her right in the face, and I said, "Mother, if you don't give me that check for \$26 I'm running away and I'll never come back." And my mother was the kind that packed my bags for me. This time she put two peanut butter sandwiches in with the clothes. (That's right). I had no alternative but to run away, but twelve hours later I got hungry--I had to come home. And this time I wasn't worried about uniforms, I just wondered if Dad was in on it by now. And I thought if I could only--I stayed up on the 3rd floor--if I could only get to my bedroom, Dad and Mom could sleep it off--it'll be cool in the morning, I probably won't get it.

So I took off my shoes, and I got around the hall to go up the third floor, and suddenly Dad's bedroom door squeaked open--stuck his head out and he said, "David, into my office for a personnel meeting. Right now." (He called them personnel meetings). He came walking into the bedroom, or into his study, and he said, "David, I understand we've had some discussions about uniforms while I was gone. Is that right?" I said, "Well, Dad, we can just forget all about it now." He said, "Oh, we WON'T forget about it." He said, "I understand that you threw yourself on the floor, and you sassed your mother in MY HOUSE under MY ROOF." He always said, "my house, my roof." Because my Dad had a habit of saying, David, as long as you're under twenty-one and live in my house, you'll live by the standards of this house.

You remember those days, Mother, Dad? Your parents told you that. And they meant every word of it. If you didn't like it, you took the prodigal trip. You had to abide by the standard of that house.

My Dad said, "David, did you sass your mother?" I said, "yes sir." He said, "You know what that means, don't you?" "Yes, sir." He said, "Stay right where you're at, don't move." In my mind I could picture every move he was making. He went down the stairs, opened the basement door, and there hanging on a nine-penny nail was a big black leather strap--white on one side, and black on the other. That was his security blanket, his badge of authority--because the only security your children have, often, is the discipline and love that you give them.

He walked up the stairs holding that belt in his hand. He said, "David, kneel over that bed,"--and he didn't mean to pray, either. And my Dad came down across my backsides quoting scripture with every stripe. "Foolishness is bound in the heart of the child, and the rod of correction will drive it faaaaar from him." Down again, "'Spare the rod and damn the child.' And I'll not damn my boy. 'A child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame.' And I'll not let you shame your mother anymore.'" And just when I was screaming, you thought he was killing me, and the neighbors thought he was killing me, Dad would come down harder than ever, "And spare not for their crying." AND THAT'S IN YOUR BIBLE TOO.

My Dad figured out seven evils I did in that one thing, and I got seven stripes. And they hurt. Then he stood up and said, "All right, David, raise your hands and ask God to forgive you, ask the Holy Ghost to forgive you." My Dad always brought the Holy Ghost into it. So I had to ask God to forgive me for grieving the Holy Ghost. Then he said, "Come here." He made me put his arms around him and love him. He said, "You're my best friend, David, and don't you ever forget it," and then he'd love me. And that used to hurt worse than his spankings.

4. And I loved my Dad till his dying day--eight years ago. I loved my Father--you come to Teen Challenge, there's a beautiful little lady sitting there at the reception desk, she--her hair's just beginning to turn gray--the most beautiful, lovely little woman in the world--that's my mother. She still prays for me. She still remembers that day when her little boy put on a fit and ran away from home. But my Dad and Mother believed in discipline.

III. Now let me talk to you about disrespect.

- A. Disrespect--and here's where I want to get to the kids. This boy ran away; the Bible says, "Not many days hence, he gathered together his goods and went off to a far country." He ran off, he became a hippie in other words. He ran away from home. You see they run away anyhow. If you don't discipline, you're going to lose them anyhow. So he ran off. Total disrespect for his father. The Bible says there's a generation that curseth their father and doth not bless their mother.

1. I was in a youth camp this past summer--600 teenagers--and I decided to talk personally with every one of them. I lined them up and had them come right in front of me and shake hands and talk to me about their parents. Bitterness and rebellion, and feelings.

a) The first girl, seventeen years old--she said, "Mr. Wilkerson, my Dad's a preacher, he's sitting right over there on the front bench." This was in a big tabernacle. She said, "I hate him. He's a big phony. We haven't talked in two years. I go to his church only because he makes me."

I tell you, I got so righteously indignant; well, no, I got mad really. I said, "In the name of Jesus, I bind that rebellion and bitterness," and while I was praying for her, her hands went up, she said, "Oh God, don't kill him, I don't want him to die." Evidently, subconsciously, she was wishing he was dead. I said, "Honey, you get over to your Dad, your pastor and your father, and you tell him you're sorry, and you make up with your Dad. Get that bitterness and rebellion out right now." So she went over and sat beside--he sat there with his hands folded, just looking into space--and she sat beside him. I kept the line going, but I was peeking through the corner of my eye. And she sat there for a full five minutes and nothing happened--neither one could break the ice. And suddenly, when I thought it was hopeless, the girl turned this way and reached over and patted her Dad on the hand. That's all it took, he jumped up, hugged her and kissed her and they made up.

They came running up to me, and he said, "Mr. Wilkerson, I don't know what happened," he said. "This daughter of mine, I love her so much, but she turned against me because I had to discipline her. And because of my discipline, she began to show signs of disrespect and rebellion. He said, "I didn't understand her anymore. She said that we don't communicate."

- (1) And I [ah] and there is [ah] what they talk today about a communication gap.

(a) I was in Orlando, Florida, and a young girl, fifteen years of age, came back stage and put her head on my shoulder and began to cry like a child. I said, "What's the matter?" She said, "Mr. Wilkerson, I just buried my

best girl." Fifteen-year-old girl friend--one of the most popular girls in the Orlando High School. At a basketball game, at half time (during half-time intermission)--took a pistol out of her pocketbook, aimed it at her stomach and shot herself, to death. She fell over and died in this girl's arms. And the last thing she said--"My parents just don't understand anymore."

(b) And everywhere I go I hear that from teen-agers and young people. But kids, listen to me, teen-agers; often this talk about misunderstanding, or lack of communication, is not Dad and mother's fault. What it really is, in essence, is the teen-ager often saying, "Mom and Dad don't see things my way."

- a)¹ This girl, I finally got to the bottom of it, she wanted to dress in the Hippie fashion, and her Dad said, "I'm a pastor, I'm a minister, you've got to help me set a standard, and I just won't have it, I don't believe in it." And because the daughter wanted to dress and act like a hippie, and Dad wouldn't have it, she turned against her Dad.
2. I was in a meeting recently--a little twelve-year-old girl came up to me. She said, "Mr. Wilkerson," (tears running all over her face), she said, "My mother just doesn't understand me at all." So I sat down with her and I took her by the hand, and I said, "Honey, you tell me all about your misunderstanding mother." She said, "Well, Mr. Wilkerson, and her heart, it sounded like she was going to break--she said, "My mother gets mad just because I'm going with a boy twenty-one years old and coming in at twelve o'clock." I said, "Honey, I feel like spanking you. You expect your mother to understand that."
3. And we have girls who are turning against their mother today because of dress and fashion, and the way they want to conduct themselves. And mother has to take a stand, and the teen-ager doesn't see it that way, and consequently--rebellion and bitterness.
- C. Now, my Dad was a minister, and I know what I'm talking about. (God called me to preach when I was a young boy--about twelve years of age). But when I was a teen-ager, I remember how difficult it was for my trying to adjust my feelings toward my parents.

¹Here Wilkerson returns to the story he had interrupted with his "aside" about the "communication gap."

1. You've heard of the church down by the railroad track. My Dad didn't pastor the church down by the railroad track. My Dad pastored the church under the railroad track. We had an elevated train, ran right over the top of my Dad's church down in a section of town, in Turtle Creek, Pennsylvania. (What an obnoxious name for a town. No turtles or creek). But you know, I used to go to that church, and my Dad wasn't a college graduate, he was a self-made man. He read books, and he prepared himself for the ministry.

And in my Dad's church they really believed in being happy about their religion. My Dad said there were five places in the Bible that it says, "Clap your hands and make a joyful noise unto the Lord. my Dad had his people clap their hands when they sang--what they called choruses. Especially one called, "Sweet Honey in the Rock," and then, "The Ark is Coming Down The Road." (Now those were the days when even the Free Methodists were free. Those were the days when even the Pentecostals shouted. There's not much worry about that anymore today.

But 7:30 we'd start church on Sunday night, and 7:36 every Sunday night an eight-minute freight train would run over, and the windows would shake, and the soot would pour in the window, and we'd all have to stand and out-sing the train. "Amazing Grace" six times, equals an eight-minute train.

2. And we had a lady in our church called Sister Gedun. And she had an in-built Holy Ghost pump. When she'd get a blessing, it would go in and out, and then suddenly her blessing (we called it the fire whistle blessing) she'd go whooooooooo---Glory. Right in church. And I used to sit there and watch people clap their hands, and get a blessing, and I'd watch Mrs. Gedun with her fire whistle, and the lady at the piano would play so hard the whole piano would shake, and the church would rattle, and that train over, and I thought, "Why couldn't my Dad pastor a good church down town like the rest of the preacher's kids in school?" Poor Dad. Poor church. Poor David.

And I became ashamed of my Dad--his lack of education. (And we've got a lot of kids that won't bring their best friends home from college for Easter vacation because Mom's too fat and Dad speaks broken English, he's an Italian.) That's right! They're ashamed of their parents. And they go around calling Dad the old man and Mother the old woman. God forgive you.

3. And one day the president of the student council, Timothy Ashcroft, came to me--said, "Hey, David does your Dad pastor that church down under the railroad?" I said, "Yes." He said, "Do they really climb the walls down there in your Dad's church?" And I said, "No. Why don't you come and see for yourself?" He said, "Oh, we are, we are--six of us--the student council and the newspaper. We're going to do an article in our school paper about all the churches in town and we're startin' at your Dad's church Sunday night. You can expect us."

This was Friday, and if there had been a hole there I wanted to jump in and die. Can you imagine little David in his Dad's study Sunday afternoon gettin' Dad ready for Sunday night--telling him how to act and behave. And it went something like this:

"Now, now Dad you know I love you very much. (You see I call that a Holy Ghost dig. You always bless 'em before you dig them). Now you know Dad I love you very much, but I've got six of the cultured, nicest kids in our high school coming to church Sunday night. Dad, please, could we have a nice quiet Episcopalian kind of meeting tonight? And Dad, preach with the biggest words you can find, or they'll chew you up in English class. And Dad, please don't sing "Sweet Honey in the Rock tonight. Dad, do you have to clap tonight?" And I said, "Please don't let Sister Gedun take off." And I told my Dad how to behave so he wouldn't embarrass me.

He said, "Are you finished David?" I said, "Yes, sir." He saw me to the door of his office. He said, "David I intend to let God have his way tonight." That's all he said. And I was the janitor of that church, so there was nothing left for me to do but go down and get it cleaned. I said, at least it's going to be clean. And I put the best song books in the back row, hoping they'd be there, and I was kinda' silently praying God wouldn't let anything happen that would embarrass me among my school friends. And we've got a lot of kids ashamed of their parent's faith now see. They become pseudo-intellectuals, and Dad and Mom are hung up on some old-fashioned religion. (Ya. Don't look at me like that. I know what I'm talking about. You see I never get invited back anywhere a second time, but I'm unloading my guns the first time.)

And I kept secretly praying--hoping that Sister Gedun had had a fight with her husband so she probably wouldn't get a blessing. But she came bouncing in happy--I said, "That's trouble, that's trouble. Seven-thirty we started the service. (My good wife was there. I hadn't married her at the time, of course, I was just a child). And [ah] 7:30--7:36 the train, we all stood, sang "Amazing Grace" six times. And in they came, took their place, but I forgot all about them because I was watching Sister Gedun. She was already pumping --and I said, any minute, and I got ready. I said, I'll never live it down as long as I live. I can't even go back to school if she lets out that fire whistle. All of a sudden, sure enough--"Whooooo--Glory!"

4. Young people, I stood there looking at my Dad and those people in my Dad's church and I felt ashamed. I felt angry. I wanted to run. I wanted nothing to do with it. Because, you see, I didn't want to be embarrassed. Poor Dad. But suddenly my Dad stopped that meeting. He said, "Let us pray." And when my Dad prayed, he always touched God. I knew he was a man of God, I knew he was a man of prayer, but I was going through this thing with my parents, trying to adjust my feelings. Because, teen-ager, there comes one time in your life that you have to determine once and for all how your parents fit into your life--whether you're going to love them or despise them, or whether you're just going to go along and play games with them. You're either going to love them or despise them, one or the other. You can't carry roots of bitterness and rebellion, or that will destroy you eventually.

And my Dad raised his hands and looked up to God and began to pray, and as he prayed, his whole face seemed to be lit up with the glory of God. And something happened in me. I began to reach out to my father, and I said, there's the one man in the whole world that loves me. And I felt, I'd been standing there in a pool of self-pity. And I could feel the presence of God as my Dad prayed. I said, why should I be angry at my Father and have these feelings in my heart? Why should I worry about those friends of mine? And I asked God on that spot to take that bitterness and rebellion out of my life, and I could feel it ooze right out the bottom of my feet so to speak. And by the time my Dad was preaching, I was his Amen corner, as if to say, "Sic 'em Dad, get 'em, get 'em. I

went home that night--and my Dad preached a great message. I'm sure Dad forgot all about them being there--my Dad never did put on a front. And I went to his study that night and told him what a good message he'd preached, and I said, "Dad, I've had a hard day today." He said, "You're learning, boy, you're learning."

5. I went to school next day and got ready for the criticism. When Timothy came up, he said, "Hey, man, they sure enjoy singing in your church don't they? And man, your Dad lays it on the line. My church is dead." He liked it.
- D. Well, friends, it just goes to show you, as far as I'm concerned, that the most important thing in life is to love and respect your parents. Love and respect them.
- E. This boy made no attempt to get back to his parents, gave no attempt to try to reach them. And I'm sure, if you'd have asked that Father where his boy was, he'd have said he's off on a business trip, making investments with my money. He didn't know--you'd have said, "Well, I saw him in Haight-Ashbury, he's a hippie," "Oh no, no." Why? You see, parents don't like to believe anything wrong about their teen-agers.
- IV. I want to bring my thoughts to a close in just a minute. In Los Angeles, at Disneyland, there's a big rock and roll theater--it's called Melodyland.
 - A. If you've been there, you have seen right across the street there, from Disneyland, the big rock 'n roll theater in the round. Every night of the week they have a big rock 'n roll group there. "The Mamas and the Papas," "The Alley Cats," "The Detergents," "The Wumpies," "The Head Hunters." They're there every night of the week.
 - B. But one night every month, on a Monday night, we have it for a Youth Rally. This past Monday--this week--we had our twenty-fifth rally. They've been going on for twenty-five months. You have to come early to get a seat. Thousands of teen-agers jam into this place.
 1. I was speaking a few months ago at Melodyland about bitterness and rebellion toward parents, and disrespect. And I said, if you want me to pray with you tonight, I want you to come back stage. A teen-ager came up, a fifteen, sixteen-year-old girl, grabbed the microphone right out of my hand. She said, "Young people, please listen to Mr. Wilkerson. I just came from my mother's funeral."

She was heart-broken. She said, "I stood a few hours ago in front of my mother's casket and I realized my mother died thinking I hated her. I used to argue and fight with her. I never could remember telling her I loved her. Deep in my heart I did, I loved her, but I never did . . . we were always at it." And she said, "You don't know how I hurt now." And she grabbed the mike again, and she said as loud as she could, "Go home and tell your mother once and for all that you love her. And get that out of your mind."

2. And that night, some 450 young people met me in the counseling room. Over a hundred of them wanted special counseling. The first two in the line were two girls--two beautiful girls.
 - a) The first girl, fourteen years old, she took me by the hand, and tears rolled down her cheeks. She said, "Mr. Wilkerson, you talked tonight about bitterness toward parents." She said, "When I was twelve years old my daddy started to molest me. And I didn't know what it was all about." She said, "My mother found out. Instead of getting medical attention and help for my daddy, because I think he's a sick man, the doctors explained it all now to me," she said, "she blamed me. She blamed it on me. And she placed me in a foster home." She said, "Now the foster parents are standing right over there against the wall over there." In fact, I recognized the people. They go to Christian Center church in Anaheim--wonderful people. She said, "But they're not my real parents." She said, "At Christmas time it was so hard--you sing carols, and you think about the comfort of your own home. But my mother hates me now." She said, "Mr. Wilkerson, you tell the kids to have respect and love, but, what do you do when you have a parent like this, who gives up on you?" She said, "You've got to pray for a miracle that Mom will call me on the phone and tell me she's sorry and let me come home."
 - b) And the next girl, a little blonde girl about fifteen going on sixteen. She said, "Mr. Wilkerson, I stay in the same foster home with Judy." She said, "As you can see I'm going to have an illegitimate baby." She said, "Now I'm not a bad girl. Mr. Wilkerson, I'm not making excuses," but she said, "this is just one experience." And she said, "I've regretted it, I've been so sorry. She said, "When my mother came home from

the doctor and had to tell Dad about it--he came into my room and called me a dirty little tramp, said that I would ruin his reputation, his business--he was a well known businessman in Los Angeles. And they placed me in this foster home, and my Dad won't contact me. He doesn't want anything to do with me at all." She said, "I made one mistake, and my Dad gave up on me." She said, "I think parents should stick with kids no matter what their problems are. No matter how the parents may think they've failed them." She said, "I need my Dad. Now, if you believe in miracles, Mr. Wilkerson, you better pray for one. I don't hate him now, but you give me six months and I'll hate the ground he walks on."

- c) The next girl, thirteen years old. She was so upset, she dug her fingernails right into the palm of my hands, and tears streaming down her cheeks, said: "I want to tell you something Mr. Wilkerson, I love Jesus, and I love my Dad and my Mother, but something's got to happen tonight. If you believe in miracles, you better pray for one."

Last Thursday my Dad told Mother he didn't love her anymore. And he said he's leaving tomorrow. He's packing his suitcase before he goes to work at twelve o'clock. I'm going to tell you what I told them. I don't want to run away from Jesus and I don't want to be a hippie, or a drug addict, but she said, "I've got my bags packed. And one hour after my Dad leaves, I'm leaving, and I'm going to hitchhike to Haight-Ashbury in San Francisco, and I'm going to throw my life away, and I'm going to get LSD--anything I can get my hands on--I'm going to throw my life to the devil." She said, "If Dad can walk out, I'm going to spite him. I'm going to show him that he can't do it." She said, "I think parents should stick together, no matter how hard it is, until their kids are up and it doesn't hurt them anymore."

3. And, I'll tell you. It broke me. The next thirty-five kids I talked to, all from Christian homes--some the sons and daughters of deacons in church; one was a minister's son, who said his Dad's a coward, and his Dad has lost his love for his Mother, that there's just no love in the home. His Dad gets up and preaches and there's no respect, he said. But that was just one case.

- a) But it went something like this. Mr. Wilkerson, "Look, I'm seventeen years old, and Dad and Mom are breaking up. They're getting a divorce. They're Christians. And I can take it, I'm seventeen years old, but I got a kid brother, six years old, and man, he's crying himself to sleep at night and we've tried to explain it but he doesn't understand it." He said, "Why can't Dad and Mom stick it out? No matter if they hate each other, let them stick it out till that boy's up big enough so it doesn't hurt him anymore. He's going to be a delinquent. He's already gettin' unmanageable--you can't handle him. You can't talk to him, and he's only six years old."

[Conclusion]

- V. And friends, after an hour of talking personally to these kids, I turned to another pastor. I said, "Please take over this line, I can't take any more."
- A. And I went to a little room, and I put my head up against the wall and I began to hit it. And I began to pray and ask God for grace. Said, "Lord, how many more kids do I have to talk to around the country; tell me the same thing over and over again: 'Mr. Wilkerson, there's so much fighting, and bickering in my house. Dad and Mother really aren't in love anymore.'"
1. Oh, how I used to remember my Dad and Mom on a July and August afternoon, out in the back yard on the porch swing, stealing a kiss. And how comforting, and how much security all the kids got out of seeing Dad and Mom just being in LOVE!
 2. We need some old-fashioned dose of love in our homes. And there's nothing the Holy Ghost can't cure if you really want it.
 3. Dad and Mother, if you'll get on your knees, and pray together, and lay it out before God. (Now, I'm not trying to over simplify it. There's some very deep seated problems). But oh, my friends, it's worth holding on to for the sake of your children. Don't damn the soul of your kids, even if you want to mess up your own lives. Don't damn the lives of your children.
- B. Friends, it's been ten years now, and we have twenty-eight centers for drug addicts all over the world--including South Africa, and Puerto Rico, New Zealand, Australia, and in the Hague in Holland--all over the world now.

1. And I preach on an average--now last week I preached to 28,000 teen-agers--and on the average, around 10,000 a week. And I speak to more teen-agers, I think, than any man in the world--literally thousands.
 2. And I shake hands, I go home some nights--I'll be the last one out of this crusade tonight. My work just starts when the invitation is given. I'm in that back room; I won't leave till the last teen-ager is gone. And I talk to them, and I don't do it as a business, I do it because I'm in a life-and-death struggle to reach teen-agers. And I've listened to these stories about drinking Dads--and there must be twenty-five kids here right now who have a drinking Dad. Other Christian kids, who have to sit here right now, knowing that they go home, tonight, to parents that [ah] just do not understand. Dads and Moms who are not converted.
- C. But teen-ager, hear me please, before I close. No matter what kind of hell you have in your home, no matter what conditions may be, God can put something in you, such strength and such courage, that it can't affect you. You can stay strong and true for Jesus in spite of your family. In spite of the conditions. God can keep you true.

And if you've got bitterness and rebellion; that's got to come out tonight. You can't leave this auditorium tonight with bitterness and rebellion in your heart. Or one of these days, hear me, it could well be that you'll be as this girl who stands before a casket, and then you know, then you know, where you've missed it.

[Call]

- VI. Now please, in total silence, no one trying to help the Holy Ghost, He knows what he's doing. Every head bowed in total silence.
- A. Everybody twenty-one and under, stand. Please. Stand to your feet. Stand. Look this way. Look this way. Now I don't care what church you're from. I don't care whether you call yourself a Christian or not.
 1. Some of you young people who are standing here right now have to admit, "David, I've been a phony. I don't read my Bible and I don't pray like I should, or witness for Christ."
 2. But more than that, some of you have to admit that you've had feelings of resentment, or a little

bitterness, or rebellion in your heart, for Dad or Mother. How can you call yourself an over-coming Christian? You can be faithful to Christ, but if you're dishonest to your parents. God takes that into account too. You've got to be honest with yourself, and your Dad and your Mother.

- B. Last year, you know, I realized I would be talking to thousands of teen-agers, so in prayer, I asked God to give me a special gift of faith to pray for teen-agers.
1. So here's what I do in my meetings--I'm going to do it right now. David's wife is going to sing an invitational number. We're going to bow our heads. And I'm going to give you a chance, if you feel the little tug or the pull of the Holy Spirit, and you want to be honest. You say, "Mr. Wilkerson, what you say is true. Deep in my heart, I do love my parents, but I've not been honest with them."
 2. And some of you kids, that are standing here right now, you've got trouble in your home. Maybe your Dad drinks, maybe there's fighting; how many of you would have to say, "David, I've got an unconverted mother, father." Either your mother or father is unconverted. Raise your hand please. They're not serving Christ. Put your hand up high. Oh, look at that--all over the building. You should be concerned about them tonight. You should be living such a life before them that they would see Christ in you. But have you been living that kind of a life? Are you a testimony to your parents?
 3. Now here's what I want you to do. You feel, as we sing, you feel a little tug at your heart. I want you to get right up out of your seat. I want you to come right down to the front. I'm going to have you come right inside here and stand, and then I'm going to take you to a side room. I'm going to take you by the right hand--here's how God has led me to do it--I'll take you by the right hand, I'm going to ask you what you want me to pray about, and together, you and I are going to pray. And I'm going to believe God for a miracle in your home and in your personal life.
 4. And if you're not serving Jesus Christ with all of your heart, if the fire is dead--you don't feel the first love that you once had--if you've been a phony, or if you just want to come, and you say I want to pray for my Dad or my Mom, or for my home--I want you to step out.

But mostly, those who want to confess their need of a full surrender of their life to Jesus Christ my Lord. As she sings it, step out--up in the balcony go to the exit and come down. Right now. Just step right out of your seat, while your heads are bowed. Every head bowed. I'll expect to see 100 young people. That's it. Come on. No one will beg you. You have to feel that tug. Get out of your seat and come down here and meet me. . . .

The Occasion¹

The preceding substance outline contains the text of the sermon which was delivered by David Wilkerson, on May 9, 1968, as the opening sermon of his Battle Creek Crusade. It was an evening service, held in the W. K. Kellogg Auditorium before a near capacity audience of approximately 2,500 people.

The very name of the auditorium is suggestive of one of the chief distinguishing characteristics of Battle Creek--Kellogg's cereals. Dr. John Harvey Kellogg, and his younger brother, W. K. Kellogg, pioneered in a search for a healthful meat substitute. Their resulting breakfast cereal has expanded into a major industry which now brings "the best to you each morning" in more than 150 countries.²

¹It is important to examine the background information concerning the occasion of this sermon as an aid to better understanding and evaluation. Bryant and Wallace define *occasion* as follows: "*Occasion* is a rhetorical concept referring to all the circumstances that in combination bring a speech into being. . . . The principle factors that constitute an occasion are time and place, audience, speaker, and subject." Donald C. Bryant and Karl R. Wallace, *Fundamentals of Public Speaking* (4th ed.; New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1960), p. 57.

²*Greater Battle Creek* (Chicago: Windsor Publications, 1967), p. 89.

Besides the Kellogg Company, however, Battle Creek also has manufacturing plants for the Post Division of General Food, Ralston Purina, and Nabisco. It is little wonder that Battle Creek has been tagged "Cereal City," and advertised as "the best known city of its size in the world."

Located in Southern Michigan, approximately midway between Chicago and Detroit, Greater Battle Creek is a Midwestern city with a population of about 106,000. Although one-fourth of the employment in the city is accounted for by the breakfast cereal industry, it is not the only means of economic support. There are many other industries, including the headquarters for the world's largest producer of fork-lift trucks--Clark Equipment.

Battle Creek has been liberally endowed in educational, cultural, and other areas, by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation--the fourth largest institution of its kind in the world.¹ Kellogg Community College is one excellent example, as is the impressive Kellogg Auditorium--where Wilkerson held his meetings. This cultural center was a wise choice for the crusade. It is the most prestigious, and best, facility available in Battle Creek--easily comparable to such facilities in many larger cities.

It is interesting to note, as far as the physical arrangements of the stage are concerned, that there was a

¹*Ibid.*, p. 12.

substantial pulpit used throughout all of the preliminaries. Before Wilkerson began to preach, however, he had it removed to one side so that he could have a more direct communication with his audience.

This indicates, as did his delivery, his familiarity with the subject that he chose to speak on at this first (Thursday evening) service of a four-day (weekend) crusade. While it is not used to "introduce" all such crusades, this sermon subject has become somewhat of a trademark with Wilkerson in recent years, and is used quite frequently in similar situations. His strong convictions on this subject have already been mentioned, and have, of course, resulted in his book, *Parents On Trial*.

The frequent preaching of the same sermon, or subject, can have both advantages and disadvantages--quite obviously. The sermon, as it was presented in Battle Creek, appears to suffer most in its structure and organization, as a wealth of material and experiences are crowded in on the original outline. (The sermon, as presented on the record, was better organized). On the other hand, many of these experiences have been honed to a professional edge, through repeated usage, until they are as sharp and keen as a (to be topical) gang-leader's switchblade. Wilkerson then skillfully proceeds to "cut to the emotional quick" of his audience, in order to drive the point home to the hearts of his hearers.

Audience

Who are his hearers? In the case of Battle Creek, as in most of his weekend crusades, the audience is made up primarily of young people from a large variety of church denominations. Quite often, at the beginning of a crusade service, Wilkerson will have all the Methodists stand, and then all the Baptists, all the Catholics, and Episcopalians, etc.--to see what kind of an audience he has, and to show the diversification. He encourages their acquaintance with one another also. At the close of this first Battle Creek service, for instance, he said:

You see, we have Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians, Pentecostals, Catholics, and only one thing draws us together tonight. That's the person of Jesus. The person of Jesus. And the Bible says, 'By this shall all men know ye are my disciples, if you have love one for another.' Now nobody is allowed to leave one of my crusades unless you turn around and shake hands with twenty-five people. Twenty-five. Just don't say, 'I'm a Methodist.' 'You're number three, number four, number five, number six,'--twenty-five people.¹

If there was any predominant church group, it would probably be the Assembly of God, since they are often responsible for the invitation in the first place, and are usually directly associated with the pre-crusade advertising and preparation. David Wilkerson is careful, however, to insist that whoever sends the original request for his

¹This admonition is not included in the substance outline because it came after a lengthy call (most of which was also omitted), but it is taken from the original transcription of *Why Kids Go Wrong*, as preached May 9, 1968 in Battle Creek's Kellogg Auditorium.

appearance, should also be certain to line up the firm support of as many other churches and organizations as possible.

The booklet distributed by Battle Creek's Chamber of Commerce indicates that there are more than 120 churches, representing fifty denominations, in their city. It goes on to say:

Battle Creek came to be known as Cereal City and Health City because it was, in the beginning, what might have been called Faith City. It was the indomitable faith of a group of Seventh-day Adventists that drove them to establish the Western Health Reform Institute here in 1866--faith that God will heal those who live according to His prescription. It was in the search for nutritious substitutes for meat and other substances considered harmful--growing directly out of this religious conviction--that Battle Creek grew to be what it is today.¹

David Patterson, Wilkerson's Youth Crusade Director, told us that he spent the few weeks just prior to the Battle Creek Crusade in speaking at a large number of these churches and high schools in the area, and otherwise advertising the meetings through every available media, in order to create as much interest as possible before Mr. Wilkerson actually arrived.²

This reminder to the high schools, along with Wilkerson's avowed interest and concern for young people, accounts for the large percentage of those who were twenty-one and under at this service. When Pastor Wilkerson had

¹*Greater Battle Creek, op. cit.*, p. 16.

²David Patterson, private interview, Battle Creek, May 9, 1968.

these young people stand at the close of the sermon, it could be seen that over one-half of the audience was standing. He once said, in his sermon, *Phonies*, "I'm going to be preaching to young people. I've got to abide in my calling."

The young people in the Battle Creek audience were primarily what Wilkerson describes as "goodniks." There were a few "hippie" types, but very few. In larger cities, at Melodyland, and in his European crusades, there is a larger number of "flower people" and "runaways" that are attracted--but even then, the crusades are aimed primarily at the "goodniks." In his street meetings, Wilkerson has had a great deal of contact with other kinds of young people--as he explains and draws the contrast, in the following excerpt from his sermon entitled, *Goodniks*:

Young people, I've preached to some of the most hellish congregations. I've preached down in the gutter; right next to Hell I have preached. And no preacher in America has rubbed shoulders with any more wicked young people than I have. I've walked with them. I've talked with them, I have lived with them . . . and yet I am the first preacher in America who will admit that the vast majority of our teen-agers are good. The vast majority of our teen-agers are not trouble-makers. They don't shoot dope. They don't mug, or rob, or steal. They watch their manners, and their morals. They are not drunkards or derelicts. They are good kids from good homes, with good values, good students, good citizens. And in New York, our boys now call them 'goodniks.' Not because they are looking down on them, and not to make fun of them. In fact, this is a term of respect. But it's a term signifying what kind of background they have, as against theirs.

The other "half" of the audience at Kellogg Auditorium on May 9, 1968, were adults. A large percentage

of these were parents, and many of them were grandparents. Their satisfaction and enjoyment were immediately evident when Pastor Wilkerson began to recall the "good old days" when Dad's word was law, and there was strict discipline in the home. By the same token, as Wilkerson illustrated in his sermon, it was necessary to talk about a "woodshed revival," because there are so many (including the members of this audience) permissive parents, and disrespectful and rebellious children in our society.

It might be argued that this was a typical Midwestern church-going audience, except perhaps, that there were probably almost as many males present as females, instead of the usually higher percentage of women.¹ Wilkerson's reputation and work with the New York gangs appeals to the men, particularly, and attracts their interest. Furthermore, his (sometimes) gut-level of preaching, and his frankness, are also something that a man can easily relate to.

Another indication of the make-up of the audience was revealed by the Sheriff of Calhoun County, Paul M. Schoder, when he reminded us that the surrounding district is largely a very prosperous agricultural area. It is very likely that this segment of the population was substantially represented at the meeting. Mr. Schoder also estimated that approximately fifteen per cent of the Battle Creek community

¹No official count was taken; this is based on just a general observation of the crowd.

is black¹--they were also well represented at the crusade.

In the very small, and admittedly unrepresentative, sampling that we were able to make of those that had heard Wilkerson at some time when he was in Battle Creek--it is well recognized that few valid conclusions may be drawn. However, in this area of audience composition, at least, an indication may be derived from the following results of that "survey": There were eighteen males and nineteen females who responded. Of this number--seven were housewives, five were factory workers, five were teachers, seven were students, two were ministers, and there was also a postal operator, a farmer, a physical therapist's aide, an executive housekeeper, a printer, an M.D. in private practice, a draftsman, a waitress, and two who did not stipulate their occupation.²

Structure and Arrangement

The structure of *Why Kids Go Wrong* is not typical of Wilkerson's sermons in general. Whereas he very characteristically has three main points or divisions in the body of

¹Paul M. Schoder, Sheriff of Calhoun County, private interview, Battle Creek, June 8, 1969. He also said that Battle Creek was the only city of its size in Michigan that had not yet had race riots; it did have an average crime rate; it did have a problem with the newer drugs, but not with heroin.

²This survey was taken more than a year after the sermon was preached, and subjects were individuals who volunteered their services from two separate congregations--one, The Bellevue Assembly of God Church service; the other, the Battle Creek Academy Commencement, both on June 8, 1969.

almost all of his sermons, there is no such clear-cut arrangement in the Battle Creek presentation. The structure of this sermon appears to suffer, for instance, because of a number of parenthetical insertions, and repetitions. (In actuality, however, these instances may well have been the evidence of good audience adaptation, and thus have outweighed any negative factors regarding disorganized arrangement).

The introduction provides a good example of the nature of this "possible" problem. As it was finally divided in the substance outline, the introduction contains several excellent elements of a good introduction. However, it is rather short, almost abrupt, in this form. It would have been very possible to argue that everything up to the story of the Prodigal Son is really introductory in nature. In fact, after several pages of text and many illustrations, Wilkerson is still saying: "*Before I get into this message. . . .*" He apparently feels the need of one more story of clarification and preparation. To begin the "body" of the sermon here would make an unusually long introduction, however, even for Wilkerson--who likes to include a few narrative illustrations in his introductions. It was decided, therefore, to begin the body of the sermon with the opening illustration.

Returning to the introduction, as divided in the substance outline, it may fairly be pointed out that, even if it is brief, it does contain several elements of a good introduction. It opens with a provocative summary statement:

"There's no college in the world that teaches people how to become parents. It's only on-the-job training." It also contains a statement of Wilkerson's qualifications, and a reason why the audience should listen: "And after ten years of working with troubled kids, around the world, I think I have a right to speak on the subject." Furthermore, and lest that last claim sound too boastful, it is followed by another indication that Wilkerson would like to talk to us from his heart, "as a father of four children, and two teenagers especially." Then, he concludes this phase of the introduction (at least) by including himself as a sympathetic part of the audience, and a clever restatement of the title: "And I share what I call the parental panic that there is in America today--the panic about why kids are going wrong."

It must also be remembered that he has already had one twenty-minute "sermon" that introduced himself, Teen Challenge, and the Crusade, to the audience.¹

There are four divisions indicated in the body of the sermon, two of which are arbitrary and for purposes of clarification, and two of which are primary to Wilkerson's message. The first division contains the series of illustrations calculated to show the problem of young people in

¹Wilkerson has, "two parts in every service." During the first part he explains the current needs and calls for an offering to support the Teen Challenge ministry. On the opening night of a crusade, this becomes an introductory sermon in itself.

conflict with their parents, and to justify the relevancy of this topic for this audience. (This section also includes a complete departure from the structure of this discourse when Pastor Wilkerson interrupts his sermon to remind some mothers down on the front row that he loves children, but it will be easier for him if he doesn't have to "out-preach" them)

The second and third divisions contain the main burden of Wilkerson's message. The second talks about *permissive parents* and the need for a "woodshed revival." The third talks about the *disrespect shown by children*. Both divisions use the Biblical story of the prodigal son as a background, but numerous other illustrations are also included.

The fourth division is but an amplification of the third. Including, besides "disrespect," "rebellion and bitterness," it is illustrated specifically from incidents that took place at a recent Melodyland Crusade.

As far as transitions are concerned, Wilkerson too frequently relies on "and". It has become a characteristic habit immediately evident when the sermon is transcribed into writing. On the other hand, he will often use statements like the following--to introduce illustrations:

I was on an airplane recently. . . .

I was in Columbus, Georgia, preaching this message the first night of a crusade. . . .

I was in Orlando, Florida. . . .

I was speaking a few months ago in Melodyland. . . .

He will also use the following kinds of phrases to focus attention on what he is planning to say:

Now let me talk to you about. . . .

Now listen to me, teenagers, please.

Hear me now. . . .

The conclusion of this sermon is not completely distinct. In fact, it might be argued that "the call" is Wilkerson's conclusion, since he closes every one of his crusade sermons with a call. There does seem to be an intensification of his final illustration, however, followed by a special summarizing appeal to both parents and young people to get an "*old-fashioned dose of love in our homes*," so that we can solve this problem of *Why Kids Go Wrong*.

While the text of the call is not included in its entirety, it is important, as far as structure is concerned, to notice the following things: (1) he asks for total silence, "*no one trying to help the Holy Ghost*," (2) he asks for everyone twenty-one and under to stand, and (3) he explains very carefully, step-by-step, what he is going to do, and what he wants his audience to do.

This persuasive sermon, as evidenced by the call, is one that Monroe would classify: "To actuate."¹ It goes

¹Alan H. Monroe and Douglas Ehninger, *Principles and Types of Speech* (6th ed.; Glenview, Illinois: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1967), p. 118.

beyond "convincing" that there is a problem, and beyond "stimulating" agreement through vivid illustrations and emotional appeals, to asking the audience for an overt act of response.

Judging from the overt response of those that did come forward (approximately eighty), and the obvious enjoyment and laughter manifested by the entire audience on numerous occasions throughout the sermon, it seemed evident at the time this sermon was given that it was "getting through" to the listeners. Therefore, it is suggested that the apparent difficulties or irregularities in the structure of this text were more than compensated for by other factors. Furthermore, as already suggested, it may well have been true that the "detours," added illustrations, and interesting sidelights, were specific adaptations on Wilkerson's part for this audience on this occasion. On other occasions, as evidenced by the sermon to be analyzed in the next chapter, Pastor Wilkerson may choose to follow a well organized structure very closely.

Personal Proof

It has been hypothesized from the beginning of this study that personal proof plays a major part in the acceptance of Wilkerson's ministry. In the Battle Creek situation, personal proof of a high order was manifest both in the verbal message and in external factors.

Sources within the composition.¹--With respect to the sermon itself, elements contributing to good *ethos*² may be seen from the beginning to the end. In the introduction, Wilkerson refers to his ten years of working with troubled kids, around the world, to let the audience know he is competent to deal with the subject. In the conclusion, also, he mentions the fact that he probably speaks to more teenagers than any other man in the world. He says this to inspire their confidence in his experience, so that they will be willing to come forward and talk with him after the meeting.

There are numerous other direct statements and personal references made in his illustrations, nearly all of which come from personal experiences he has had with the young people involved. These, of course, continue to build his authority and credibility with his audience, as they indicate that, "he knows what he is talking about."

It is comments like the following, which help to build for Wilkerson a reputation of a man with vast experience and "expertness" in the field that he is speaking about:

And I've just completed a tour through some of Europe and South Africa.

¹This is the phrase used by Hance, Ralph, and Wiksell (first ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 42, to differentiate from sources affecting *ethos* that are "external to the composition"--which will be considered next.

²Hance, Ralph, and Wiksell define *ethos* as follows: "In short: the speaker with a good *ethos* conveys the impression of knowing what he's talking about, of being honest and sincere, and of being friendly, congenial, and likeable." *Ibid.*, p. 39.

And I've traveled around the world the past two years preaching to thousands of teen-agers.

I just came in from Los Angeles, at Disneyland, our twenty-fifth rally there.

I was on a radio station in St. Louis recently. . . .

I was in a youth camp this past summer--600 teen-agers--and I decided to talk personally with every one of them.

The last sentence above is also an indication of another very important source of *ethos*--sincerity, and a genuine concern. Wilkerson revealed this willingness to become involved in the problems that young people bring to him, when he said:

I'll be the last one out of this crusade tonight. My work just starts when the invitation is given. I'm in that back room; I won't leave till the last teen-ager is gone. And I talk to them, and I don't do it as a business, I do it because I'm in a life-and-death struggle to reach teen-agers.

These traits of sincerity and loving concern are easily recognized as being a part of two of the original elements of good personal proof recognized since the time of Aristotle--*good character*, and *good will*.¹ (In recent years these dimensions of *ethos* have been given new labels as a result of certain experimental studies. Conditions that make for admiration and prestige are sometimes referred to as "respect"; and "likeableness" or "friendliness" may be used to pinpoint the attribute of good will).²

¹The third element, *competence* or "expertness," has already been covered with regard to the text itself, and will be mentioned again as external sources of *ethos* are discussed.

²Bryant and Wallace, *op. cit.*, p. 299.

The likeableness and friendliness of Wilkerson may have been bolstered in this sermon by two excellent personal illustrations that he "told on himself." By putting himself in the role of the questioning and "rebellious" teen-ager, and showing (with superb humor and punchlines) how he learned his lessons, he placed himself in the position of winning the favor and acceptance of his audience. They, for the most part, would probably be very quick to say: "[We] like him; he is warm and friendly, and he really gets across."¹

Sources external to the composition.--The primary factor affecting David Wilkerson's personal proof in this area would be his previous reputation. When the audience was asked: "How many have read *The Cross and the Switchblade*?" nearly every hand went up. Wilkerson admits that this book is one of the biggest drawing cards for his meetings.² It is a book which has built for him a deserved reputation of an energetic, bold Christian witness who has a compassionate concern to help seemingly "hopeless" young people. His success and experience in these endeavors give him excellent credibility and authority on the subject.

The "advance men," who do their best to prepare the community for Wilkerson's coming meetings, often consist of

¹Hance, Ralph, and Wiksell (first ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 39. His own "good will" was also evidenced at the close of the meeting when he urged his listeners to show themselves friendly. (See *supra*, p. 179).

²David Wilkerson, interview in *Listen*, December, 1967, p. 8.

the local ministerial association (or those clergymen who are interested); a representative from Teen Challenge (sometimes the Crusade Director, David Patterson--as was the case in Battle Creek), and whenever possible, a former drug addict who has gone through the Teen Challenge program. These men distribute as many copies of *The Cross and the Switchblade* as funds will allow.¹ They also show films that Wilkerson and Teen Challenge have made, and otherwise give as much favorable publicity as possible to the coming crusade.

When Wilkerson was first introduced by David Patterson to the Battle Creek audience, he was introduced simply as the author of *The Cross and the Switchblade*.² There was an important aspect about this opening-night message, however, that Wilkerson realized would require him to make an additional clarification of this "external image" that may have been in the minds of many listeners. Therefore, he sought to modify (and increase) his *ethos*, when he said in his introduction: *"I'm not talking to you just as a gang preacher tonight. I want to talk to you out of my heart*

¹My very first introduction to David Wilkerson and Teen Challenge was in 1964, in Calgary, Alberta, when someone came to the door and left this book. Apparently the idea originated there with a young businessman who decided to distribute these low-cost paperback editions from door to door. See John Phillips, "Challenging the Switchblade Set," *Christianity Today*, January 29, 1965, p. 59.

²Incidentally, Wilkerson's *ethos* received an additional boost, in many people's opinion, when he publicly introduced his beautiful wife, Gwen, to the audience--as, "the one you've read so much about."

as a father of four children, and two teen-agers especially." He then continued to build his qualifications to speak on this subject throughout the rest of the sermon.¹ His "terminal *ethos*," at least in this respect, was presumably greater than his "initial *ethos*."²

Another external factor, however, which certainly affected Wilkerson's *ethos*, and one that will be discussed in more detail under a separate heading, is that of the delivery of the sermon. Dave Wilkerson presents an attractive, dynamic image in his delivery. The members of his audience see a very good looking, "sharply dressed" figure before them. He is by no means flamboyant, yet he does not consider it necessary to dress in "ministerial black," either--a fact which may bring him somewhat closer to his young audience from the very start.

There is never any lack of volume or inflection in Wilkerson's delivery.³ He manifests a contagious enthusiasm, and/or an intense earnestness (depending upon the subject), which also contributes greatly to his personal proof.⁴ The

¹These materials contained within the text are obviously "internal" *ethos*. They were reserved for this juncture, however, to show how and why Wilkerson sought to modify his previous "external" *ethos*.

²See the excellent comments on these aspects of *ethos* by James C. McCroskey, *An Introduction to Rhetorical Communication* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1968).

³If anything, the problem is just the reverse. See *infra* on Delivery, p. 204.

⁴One of his listeners responded, for example, "His sincerity is as catching as his enthusiasm."

fact that he moves away from the pulpit and stands before the audience with only his New Testament in his hand, is also a definite positive addition to the fine image he presents to the people.

In short, it is strongly felt by this observer that it is these traits of personal proof (by whatever label they are referred to) that play a very prominent role in Pastor Wilkerson's ability to get through to his audiences.¹

Materials of Speaking

Narrative stories and *examples* are by far the most frequent "materials of speaking" that Wilkerson used in this sermon. If these were to be loosely classified into what preachers usually refer to as "illustrations," there would be approximately twenty-five of them. While many of them are just brief allusions or instances, that is a large number of "windows" for one sermon by any standard. This is, at the same time, one of the strengths and one of the weaknesses of this sermon, as it was delivered at Battle Creek.

Wilkerson has preached this message a number of times and, as frequently happens, he has accumulated a number of stories and examples that illustrate the point he is

¹This, of course, does not mean that there are not negative factors to Wilkerson's *ethos*, or that all members of his audiences are equally impressed. There were a few in the Battle Creek audience, for example, who later expressed the opinion that his many personal references and experiences went beyond the point of good *ethos*, to the extremes of pride and egotism.

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trying to make. These illustrations keep coming to his mind as he speaks extemporaneously and he keeps inserting them (some parenthetically, others--one on top of the other) until, as in this case, he may actually have too many.

However, the nature of the subject; and the fact that this was the first of four messages (the rest of which did not contain such a high proportion of illustrative material); plus the fact that some of these stories are masterfully worded and delivered, as well as being very appropriate; all seem to indicate that the materials presented on this first evening were both appropriate and successful in terms of communicating Wilkerson's intended message to the audience.

The further classification of these various "materials of speaking" was sometimes difficult. Most of the narratives were "materials of experience" rather than "materials of development," because they were stories designed primarily to appeal to the motives and experiences of the listener. Because many of the stories, however, are used as specific examples of the point Wilkerson is making, they could perhaps also be classified as "materials of development."¹ Both *instances* and *illustrations* are used in these examples. Some are brief references to incidents recorded in newspapers, while others are longer personal illustrations.

¹See Hance, Ralph, and Wiksell, *op. cit.*, pp. 51-89.

Statistics are to be found in only three places in this text. One of them was particularly interesting; he told how they used to stand and sing "Amazing Grace" six times, every time a freight train passed over his father's church: "*'Amazing Grace' six times, equals an eight-minute train.*"

The only direct quotations that Wilkerson makes in this sermon are several verses of Scripture--from the Prodigal Son story--and those verses that his Dad used when he "*came down across my backsides quoting scripture with every stripe.*" He does allude, in a negative way, to the content of some television statements made by "authorities" on child care and guidance. (He actually makes a mockery of what they say, and assures his audience that he isn't going to give them "*any of Dr. Spock's pabulum philosophy*").

However, there is an abundance of evidence of direct discourse throughout this text, and that is because of Wilkerson's interesting way of including a great deal of dialogue in his narratives. His practice of having the characters in his stories make their own statements, tends to make these stories more concrete, vivid, and realistic.

Scattered throughout this sermon there are occasional examples of materials created by the speaker as tools of development. He uses *repetition* and *restatement* in a number of places, repeating words and phrases for emphasis, as in the following example:

Now I'm not down on parents', even though I wrote a book Parents On Trial. And I speak of a parent's being on trial, and I consider myself one of those parents' on trial.

Poor Dad. Poor Church. Poor David.

He ran off, he became a hippie in other words.

He said, 'You're learning, boy, you're learning.'

. . . love and respect your parents. Love and respect them.

There is also an excellent example of *comparison* when Wilkerson compares the prodigal son to the hippies of today. He refers to the prodigal son as the first hippie who ran away to the Haight-Ashbury of his day.

Most of the *evidence* presented in this sermon comes from Wilkerson's own experience. This is why his personal proof is so important. If he is perceived as a highly credible source his evidence will tend to be meaningful and convincing also. In fact, it may be argued that since he is a high-credible source, it is not essential to include a great deal of other evidence.¹ As far as could be determined, from the audience response, the audience seemed pleased with Mr. Wilkerson's material. He reminds parents of what "used to be," and his contemporary stories should let teen-agers know that here is a man who understands their current problems. Sheer weight of true, convincing stories help the audience to decide in favor of his arguments and solutions to the problem.

¹See James C. McCroskey, "A Summary of Experimental Research on the Effects of Evidence in Persuasive Communication," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* LV (April, 1969), pp. 169-176. He says on p. 171, "When the speaker's credibility is initially high, bringing even more credibility to bear on the case may be unnecessary."

Wilkerson makes sound use of reasoning by analogy with his story of the prodigal son--as a comparison to the situation today. There is also evidence of frequent reasoning from cause to effect, as when he concludes that permissive parents, who are afraid to say "no," can cause runaway hippies. For the most part, this is an inductive sermon. Based on the many examples he has given, Wilkerson reasons through to the conclusion with his audience.

As he works toward the final solutions and the call to action, he continues to make frequent use of all the other materials of experience. The entire sermon constitutes a massing of detail--of experience upon experience--to produce the desired response in the listener. These experiences are calculated to appeal to the basic motives of love of family and home, and to cause the audience to recall their own memories and experiences.

The stories that Wilkerson uses are sometimes very descriptive, but the description tends to be of the vivid, terse, intense, street-level nature, rather than a more classic, picturesque beauty. Wilkerson has made little use of traditional figures of speech in this sermon. He does like to use alliteration, and in this sermon he refers to a "parental panic".¹ He also enjoys making and using his own

¹In other sermons he will frequently have all of his main points begin with the same word or letter. He also seems to delight occasionally in compiling an extremely lengthy list of synonyms describing a certain subject or situation. See *supra*, pp. 143-144.

figures, as when he refers to "a Holy Ghost dig," and "a nice, quiet Episcopalian kind of meeting."

Wilkerson seemed to have little trouble holding the attention of his audience with this sermon. His humor, his stories, his startling statements, as well as his dynamic delivery, left very little room for the attention to wander. When he does find the attention of his audience wandering, in spite of the previously mentioned factors, he does not mind speaking out to the teen-agers and saying: "*Hear me please,*" or "*Now listen to me. . . .*" He made these or similar statements at least four times in *Why Kids Go Wrong*.

There is also a wise use of *suggestion* throughout the sermon. Wilkerson does not say, "Now teen-agers, you are just like the kids I've been telling stories about." Instead, he leaves it up to his audience to conclude that their problems are similar to the ones he is talking about, and that the same solution is available to them.

Style

It is an interesting challenge to examine the style¹ of Pastor Wilkerson's preaching. He uses contractions and colloquialisms frequently, many would say, "too frequently." He begins far too many sentences with "and," indicating a

¹Bryant and Wallace refer to style as "the manner of selecting and handling the details of language in ways that communicated the speaker's intended meanings." Bryant and Wallace, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

somewhat rambling style. He sometimes has to pause and search for the right phrase. He also gets thinking too far ahead quite frequently, and in his hurry he leaves out the first word of a sentence, or skips over other small words. While the meaning is usually clear, as he is progressing rapidly from one story or thought to another, this habit could be disconcerting. (Perhaps it is this speed, or rate of delivery, which accounts for most of the characteristics of style listed above).

Wilkerson's books reveal a very careful and clever choice of language. When he writes, for example, of a fastidiously clean new group of young people called the "Wagumps," he asks: "Is this all a put-up? Not on your Lifebuoy! . . . They need more than the cleansing power of Oxydol--they need the ultrabrightness of Christ, the Light of the World."¹ The majority of his sermons also reveal the use of simple, clear, well-chosen and often very creative language, however, there are those times when he gets carried away in his excitement and speed, and his style suffers.²

¹David Wilkerson, *Purple Violet Squish* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1969), pp. 76-77.

²Because this aspect of his style "suffers," does not mean that there are not compensating factors. His very zeal and excited involvement have been mentioned as characteristics which his listeners like most about his speaking. It is also our opinion that it is this simple, yet enthusiastic style which makes his illustrations so memorable.

Wilkerson is familiar with all of the latest jargon used by young people, but he uses it only sparingly and when it is meaningful. He does not feel that one has to translate the gospel totally into that kind of language. In his very latest book he says:

To all my minister friends around the world who want to reach the runaway generation, let me add this. You cannot win rebels by being like them. Put away your childish talk. God is not 'groovy' or 'hep' and Christ is not a 'cool cat.' Jargon does not make the Gospel relevant; it is still the simple preaching of the cross of Jesus Christ that leads to redemption. Take off your love beads and grow up.' If you become a mixer, you're going to get mixed up. You're not going to reach this generation by what you say--but by what you are and by the way you live.¹

Wilkerson does have a very simple style. In his introduction, for example, he used 80 one-syllable words, 28 two-syllable words, and only *three* words of more than two syllables. They were hardly pretentious or ostentatious words, either--'America,' 'Parental,' and 'especially.' Observe the combination of short sentences which follow:

I felt angry. I wanted to run. I wanted nothing to do with it. Because, you see, I didn't want to be embarrassed. Poor Dad. But, suddenly my Dad stopped that meeting. He said, 'Let us pray.' And when my Dad prayed he always touched God. I knew he was a man of God. . . .

Furthermore, Wilkerson is usually a very forceful speaker. While this may derive more from his delivery than

¹Wilkerson, *Purple Violet Squish*, p. 69. Notice again this evidence of Wilkerson's firm belief in the importance of *ethos*.

his style, nevertheless, his simple directness is a compelling factor in causing his hearers to listen to him. Notice his opening statement again: *"There's no college in the world that teaches people how to become parents. It's only on-the-job training."* Or, these quotations:

And I hit the nail right on the head. . . . And in spite of the criticism about it being a message irrelevant and not necessary for suburban small community, I'm going to preach it anyhow. You see, I'm not here to impress anybody. I'm going to be here tomorrow night anyhow. I've got no other place to go the next four days.

I said, 'Mom, you're the one that needs to be spanked. And you better keep my telephone number, your kids are going to need it when they're teen-agers.

Now please, in total silence, no one trying to help the Holy Ghost. He knows what he's doing. Every head bowed in total silence. Everybody twenty-one and under, stand. Please. Stand to your feet. Stand. Look this way.

And I listen to these college professors, these pink, agnostic eggheads, who sit in our classrooms and pour this pornographic filth in the minds of our young people, and make permissive statements that marijuana smoking is not dangerous. THESE MEN DO NOT KNOW WHAT THEY'RE TALKING ABOUT!

When Wilkerson reported those stories from the newspaper about LSD users, or when he was talking about Dr. Spock's pabulum philosophy, or in almost any of the other illustrations that he used, he was able to make them come alive with *vivid* language. As previously mentioned, this language may sometimes be fragmented, or run-together, or even crude; but it is usually *forceful* and *vivid*, and these two characteristics may well compensate for the others.

Wilkerson's use of humor must be included as a characteristic of his style. It is evident throughout this sermon:

I believe God has so designed the human anatomy; there's a special place designed just for discipline.

*She said, 'Hey, Mr. Wilkerson, you sure got me in trouble with that sermon you preached last night.' She said, 'I don't think I'm going to be able to sit in your meeting tonight.' She said, 'My mom's been making up for lost time all day today.'*¹

He said, 'David, kneel over that bed,' and he didn't mean to pray either.

The Battle Creek audience, which Wilkerson had already referred to in his "first sermon" as, 'one of the clappingest audiences he had ever seen,' seemed to fully appreciate his good sense of humor. Along with this humor, Wilkerson has developed a 'keen sense of timing,' so that his stories are very valuable for their attention gaining elements, for what they add to his image of friendliness, and for the way they enhance his style.

Delivery

A basic fact of the communication experience is that every listener is confronted by two speakers: "*The speaker he sees and the speaker he hears.*"² In the case of Pastor Wilkerson, the audience *sees* a good looking, alert, dynamic figure, who energetically and enthusiastically presents a message to them.

¹Notice also the very characteristic use of dialogue, always prefaced by "she said."

²Hance, Ralph, and Wiksell, *op. cit.*, p. 200.

Wilkerson's movements and gestures are natural and uninhibited. In fact, he chooses to speak without a pulpit in front of him, preferring a single microphone on a slim stand, or even a "lavalier" microphone suspended from his neck to allow him greater freedom. Another reason he prefers this latter kind of microphone is that he feels it allows him to have better eye contact with his audience: "I usually have a roving mike now, and I rove around and try to "get" them right in the white of the eye."¹

While the audience may well have been pleased with the speaker they *saw*, it may have taken many of the listeners some time to adjust to the speaker that they *heard*. Wilkerson has a very natural, pleasant voice when speaking on a one-to-one basis, or while warming up to his subject. However, when he begins "preaching," he sometimes uses a loud, high-pitched, rapid-fire, almost strident type of delivery that is reminiscent of the "fire and brimstone" preachers of another era.

This is another age, when most individuals have become accustomed to the dignified, soft-spoken television commentators, who speak on a one-to-one level with people in their living rooms. It would seem, therefore, that these negative qualities in Wilkerson's voice would be a serious detraction from the delivery of his sermon.

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However, the undeniable vigor and earnestness which accompany the voice are also heard or sensed by the audience, and may even be an overriding factor. For instance, of the thirty-five who responded to a survey question: "Did you find Pastor Wilkerson's voice easy or difficult to listen to?" all but four responded that it was "*easy*" to listen to.¹ The dissenters responded that, "it was not what they had expected," "a little hard [to listen to] at first," and "it could have been lower, but it was acceptable."

If Wilkerson's speaking voice is a little too high pitched at times, his great variety of emphasis, rate, and duration, are helpful. In this sermon, his voice will drop in pitch, become more confidential, and quieter, as he tells some of the stories. He also makes frequent use of quite guttural utterances that lend vigor and conviction to what he is saying.

David Wilkerson speaks very rapidly. Several random samplings reveal that he will usually average between 160-170 words per minute. An actual count of every word, remembering the large number of one-syllable words that he uses, reveals that occasionally he may use between 210-230 words per minute. Perhaps it is the nature of the material--as one respondent observed: "You almost lean forward to listen,"--along with

¹Admittedly, this "survey" was taken over a year after the sermon was preached, but perhaps significantly so--there was nothing about the voice, as most people remembered it much later, that was difficult to listen to. See Appendix II.

the simplicity and directness of language, that makes it relatively easy to understand what Wilkerson is saying, in spite of the speed of his delivery.

The *mode* of delivery itself was very obviously *extemporaneous*. He clearly prefers this because of the freedom which it provides. While he used to speak from almost a full manuscript or a very detailed outline,¹ he now, whenever possible, uses only his Bible. It was especially easy and convenient to examine the extemporaneous nature of this sermon because of the record made of the same sermon as it was preached at an earlier date. The basic outline is followed very closely in both sermons, even to the sequence of illustrations in most cases. A great many phrases are identical, but most of the actual wording and thoughts are only similar, showing conclusively his ability to choose appropriate words on his feet and make good adaptations to suit the time, audience, and location.

In summary, Wilkerson's over-all delivery of this sermon was another positive factor in its favorable impact upon the Battle Creek audience.

¹I studied a large number of these old sermon outlines when I was in Wilkerson's New York office. They were usually typed with both black and red type, indented, and otherwise organized in a way that would allow easy reference. It was also interesting to note his early concern for contemporary subjects in these old sermons.

CHAPTER VII

A RHETORICAL ANALYSIS OF *GET HOLD OF YOURSELF*

David Wilkerson has had a unique ministry in Anaheim, California for more than three years. Every month, for over forty months [as of July, 1969] he has conducted a crusade meeting at the big rock 'n roll theater at Melodyland--across the street from Disneyland.

The idea apparently originated with Reverend Ralph Wilkerson (no relation), who is the pastor of the large Christian Center Church in Anaheim. He had heard of Dave Wilkerson's work for young people in the East and sought his authorization and help for a similar project in the West.¹ As a result, the Dave Wilkerson Youth Rallies organization was formed; and their success can be measured in part at least, by the fact that it just recently won the annual Disneyland Community Service Award for its contribution to the community.²

Setting and Audience

The physical setting of these Anaheim crusades is usually in the Melodyland Theatre. Wilkerson described this

¹Herman Wong, "Meeting A Challenge," Editorial, Los Angeles *Times*, March 3, 1969.

²*Ibid.*

theater in *Why Kids Go Wrong*. He said that while there is a rock 'n roll group there every night of the week, that on the first Monday night of every month, "we have it." It is a likely spot for a youth meeting, then, because the young people are accustomed to coming there.

On at least four occasions, however, "super rallies" have been planned. These are moved down to the Anaheim Convention Center in order to accommodate larger crowds. The sermon chosen to be analyzed as an example from this "long-standing" crusade on the West Coast is the sermon that was preached at the third "super rally" on April 7, 1969.¹ (It was the forty-second consecutive rally for David Wilkerson). There were 9,000 people inside the center and 2,000 outside, who would have gotten in if there had been room. They were able to hear the message and the performers--via a loud speaker system outside the center.

Performers, athletes, and other celebrity guests are a regular feature of these rallies. On this particular evening, Pat and Shirley Boone, and their four daughters were there to sing several numbers and share their inspiring testimony. Constantino Kartsonakis, a famous concert pianist from

¹There is no claim made for the random selection of this sermon to be analyzed. I have not had the opportunity to be in California or observe any of the sermons preached there by Wilkerson. My correspondence has been with Pastor Jene Wilson, the rally coordinator in Anaheim, and at my request he sent me two "representative" sermons from the Anaheim rallies. This one was selected by a flip of the coin, and will be analyzed in much the same way as was *Why Kids Go Wrong*, in the previous chapter.

New York, performed; and The New Dimensions, a singing group from Christian Center Church, also contributed more music. In fact, the musical portion of this program--something that is ordinarily considered to be preliminary--took far longer than the sermon itself.

The audience, many of whom may have been as attracted by Pat Boone and the musical features as by the thought of hearing Wilkerson preach, seemed very appreciative of the musical talent displayed--responding with prolonged spontaneous applause. They responded likewise to the sermon, however, interrupting Wilkerson with applause at least eleven times.

This audience was probably very similar to the kinds of audiences that attend Wilkerson crusades in other parts of the nation. However, there are several references in the sermon that indicate there was a greater than usual percentage of professional people from Hollywood and the various other media present in this meeting. (Wilkerson makes two or three specific and pointed appeals to them). There was the usual predominance of people under twenty-one present. This time Wilkerson did something he said he hadn't done in a long time; he asked the people *over* twenty-one to stand. (Appropriately enough, it was while he was calling for the offering). Then it was that he noted that more than two-thirds of his audience were twenty-one and under.

Structure and Arrangement

The structural organization of this sermon is much clearer and better (it is also more typical of Wilkerson's preaching) than the structure of *Why Kids Go Wrong*. This sermon, *Get Hold of Yourself*, divides itself logically into the following outline:

Introduction

- I. Get hold of yourself.
 - A. The Bible promises deliverance from the bondage of corruption.
 - B. The excuse: "I just couldn't help myself," will not stand up in the day of judgment.
 - C. This generation needs a red-hot message on self-discipline.

Body

- II. You can shine forth as a light in the midst of a wicked and perverse generation.
 - A. Get hold of yourself and testify for your faith.
 - 1. Christians cannot be ashamed of the gospel of Christ.
 - 2. The power to witness comes from the Holy Spirit.
 - 3. Such a powerful witness could stop the moral landslide in America today.
 - B. Get hold of yourself and learn how to lean on Jesus.
 - 1. Don't rely on your own decisions, let God direct your life.
 - 2. Ask *anything* in the name of Jesus, if:
 - a) It is in harmony with the Bible,
 - b) It will make you a better Christian, and
 - c) You ask to the glory of God.
 - C. Get hold of yourself and prepare for Christ's soon coming.
 - 1. Everything on this earth will soon be "dissolved" and "melted."
 - 2. The world will not be expecting the Son of Man to come.

3. Yet, here are seven Biblical signs of the end of the world.
 - a) Disrespect for authority.
 - b) Lawlessness.
 - c) Corrupted courts of law.
 - d) Nudity
 - e) Increase of sorcery (drug addiction).
 - f) Divorce and marital discord
 - g) Homosexuality
4. There is nothing worth being left behind for.
5. What would happen tonight if He would come?

Conclusion

- III. We shall all have to give an account in the day of judgment.
- A. Stand up for Jesus.
 - B. Lean on Him.
 - C. Pray for His coming.
 - D. Allow the Holy Spirit to work in your life tonight.
 - E. Come as you are and receive Jesus as your Saviour.

The above outline indicates the basic structure of this sermon; however the arrangement of the various materials within this outline may be more meaningfully discussed after a study of an abbreviated text in the form of the following précis:

[Introduction]

Every head bowed please. Jesus, settle our hearts tonight. Let the Spirit of almighty God perform a miracle. Let no one walk out of this house tonight without knowing that the Spirit of the Lord has gripped him. I need you Jesus. Bless my words that you've given to me. In the name of Christ my Lord, Amen.

My message tonight (and I don't want a soul moving-- not a person moving please. Ushers, no one in or out until I'm finished). My message tonight: Get hold of yourself. There's a promise in the Bible that this body shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption that is gripping America.

A young divorced husband, last week, went to visit his wife and family. He asked to see his six month old son. He went into the bedroom. Fifteen minutes later the mother-in-law came in--looked for the child and the child was gone. They found the baby ten floors below, he'd thrown her out the window. He said, "I just had to do it. I couldn't help myself."

Last week Mayor Lindsay appeared on television telling all the New Yorkers of his alarm at the rash of child-beatings and murders. A little four-year-old girl was found floating in the East River. The Dad confessed that something came over him--that he beat her to death, threw her in the river, and reported her missing. When he was booked, he said, "I couldn't help myself. Something came over me."

A young Arab pulls the trigger and murders one of America's most promising young statesmen. Now defense lawyers are trying to win his case by suggesting to the jury that Sirhan Sirhan couldn't help himself.

Now you hear it all over the world today. Everybody has a hang-up. You just can't help yourself. Teen-age lives today are getting out of control. Addicts, prostitutes, and murderers are all crying the same thing, when they're interrogated or when they are caught. "I just couldn't help myself."

Young people, these excuses will not stand before the judgment seat of Christ. This generation needs a red-hot message on self-discipline. I want to show you from the Bible tonight how you can get all the power that you need to get hold of yourself.

[Body]

First of all I say to you that you must get hold of yourself about your faith, or your testimony. I don't believe in secret believers. The Scripture says, many of the chief rulers--the famous people, believed on him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue. They believed on Jesus in their hearts, but they were not willing to pay the price of identity with the rest of Christ's children.

Dick Van Dyke, who has testified to be a Christian, said this: "Marijuana--I haven't tried it, but I'm curious enough to do it. I have no objections to it at all. I'm part of the drinking generation. I'd probably be an alcoholic if the second martini tasted half as good as the first. The attitude of churches are so screwed up now that religion is irrelevant. I'll probably leave the Presbyterian church."

Listen to me please. I believe Mr. Dick Van Dyke should explain that. I say, "Mr. Dick Van Dyke, it's a shame if you meant it." [Applause]

Chicken-hearted Hollywood Christians are the biggest curse in the church of Jesus Christ that I know. Thousands of teenagers are ashamed to stand up for Christ in their circle. Afraid that they'll be called religious fanatics. But the Bible says: "Get in or get out, but because you're lukewarm I'll spit you out of my mouth." God said that.

There's no other hope for this generation, but for dynamic Christians to stand up and tell the world, "I believe in Jesus." [Applause] How do you get power to get hold of your testimony and your faith? The scripture in Acts 1:8. Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you, then ye shall be witnesses unto me. There were no secret believers in the upper room. They wanted everybody to know they had been with Jesus. Every single believer in this midnight hour must go into all the world and preach the gospel. Preach through your profession, preach through your occupation. Preach through films, preach through radio, through television, but preach the gospel. You don't have to leave your profession to be a witness. And I say that to the Christian Actors Guild. I believe if every actor; every so-called Christian in Hollywood; and in radio; and in television; in government, would take their stand--within thirty days we could stop this moral landslide in America. [Applause]

Secondly, you need to get hold of yourself and learn how to lean on Jesus. You want to lean on your own understanding. Unless you get a hold of yourself on this matter, you'll never be a joyful Christian. In the name of Jesus you have been promised all power and control over your life and your actions. "If you shall ask anything in my name, I will do it." John 14:13. Another verse: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever you shall ask the Father, in my name, he will give it to you." Now think of it. If you believe the Bible at all, and you have faith in God's word, here is what He's promised: "If you shall ask anything in my name, I will do it." He will give you power over the sin in your life. He will give you direction and guidance. He will keep you from the evil friends and companions and the influences around you. Never have we been so baptized by dirt as we have been in films and pornography.

I walked the streets the other day, of San Francisco, and I have never seen such a landslide in the past six months --what you see and find on the news stands in San Francisco.

But I believe that it's possible that in the name of Jesus you can walk through the wicked, perverse generation in which we live, and shine as a light, sanctified and pure, and kept by the power of God. [Applause]

How do you get a hold of yourself? By using the name of Jesus. You ask him for the power to live a full overcoming Christian life. He said, "I will do it." Now there's only one catch to that, and here it is. Three rules:

When you ask anything of Jesus, Number One: Is what you want really in harmony with the Bible?

Number two: Will it make you a better witness for Jesus?

Number Three: Is what you ask for your own glory or to the glory of God?

God has the power. And friends, I have seen God raise up centers all over the world. I've seen thousands of teenagers come to Christ. I have to pray in one million dollars a year, without any rich people behind us. And in the name of Jesus He has always answered.

I knelt in my office two months ago and I prayed, Father, in the name of Jesus give me ten thousand dollars, from some unexpected source, that I can start this Children's Home. Three weeks later, I received a beautiful letter from a missionary in Formosa.

"Mr. Wilkerson: I'm a Methodist minister. I'm 82 years old, my wife is 80. And I was praying a few weeks ago, and God spoke to my heart that you have been praying for \$10,000. I'm sending you a certified check from our savings account next week for ten thousand dollars!" [Applause]

I needed another ten thousand dollars a week later and I prayed, "Lord, you did it once, you can do it again." I got another letter from the man, a week later, said, "Mr. Wilkerson, I really had \$20,000 in the bank, God told me to send all of it." [Applause]

He said if you had faith the size of a grain of mustard seed, you could ask and you'd receive. You've got to ask to the glory of God. I was asking for children. I was asking for something that would make me a better witness. You ask any of these things in His name, and he'll do it for you.

Thirdly, you must get hold of yourself, and prepare for the coming of Jesus Christ again. The Bible tells us exactly how it will be in the last hours of time. If you

believe that this Easter commemorates the fact that He was crucified, that Jesus went into the grave, that He was physically resurrected and went into heaven, you must believe His Word when He says, I will come back again, and receive you to myself. Jesus said that. [Applause]

Ah, but people say, Mr. Wilkerson, things continue as they were from the very foundation of the earth. Nothing is changed. We've had one crisis after another.

The Bible talks about a great noise, a sudden blast, and the melting and dissolving of the elements of the world, and the earth, and the universe. What kind of people should we be knowing that it's all going to melt anyhow? Peter makes it clear that all true Christians should understand the world is going to burn up and should be looking for the return of Christ.

Everything that you and I now value is going to be dissolved. Your career is going to go up in smoke. Your money is going to dissolve and burn. Your house, your car, your reputation, it shall all dissolve, a fire is coming. You can call me an alarmist, call me a fanatic, I'm giving you pure Bible. Should we be seeking fame and fortune? Should we be seeking a reputation for ourselves? Nay, the Bible says. "Watch therefore," come on now, listen to it. "Watch therefore, for you do not know the exact hour when your Lord will come. But be ye also ready for in such an hour as you least expect Him, then the Son of Man shall come."

The world will not be expecting Him. The pornography will reel off the presses, and it'll be a baptism of dirt. There will be political upheavals, there will be wars, but the Bible talks about seven signs of the end of the world.

Number 1: Disrespect for authority; Lawlessness; Corrupted courts of law; Nudity, Increase of sorcery, and Homosexuality. These are the seven Biblical signs that are going to come upon the earth just before the end.

Does any of that apply to 1968 and 69? Does that picture very vividly this generation in which you and I are living?

Listen to me. Is there anything worth being left behind for? Do you know anything in your life that you would rather have than Christ?

I say, "If you believe it, why don't you say it, tell the world." All this business is going to dissolve anyhow. That's why I'm so glad for Pat Boone and his wife and family here tonight. That blesses me so good. [Applause]

My father was a preacher, and my father preached that in the last day, the trumpet of God shall sound, the dead in Christ shall rise, then we that are alive and remain shall be caught up to meet him in the air. And when I was a boy, I had my ear tuned for the sound of a trumpet. I'd walk the street, and if anybody was going over to the football game--the band would lean out, and somebody would blow a trumpet, I'd come to attention. He's coming back in the middle of all of this foolishness--in the twinkling of an eye, we who look for his appearing shall be caught up and taken away and lifted out of this world. [Applause]

I'm looking. I expect him any day. I look. I wait. Oh, what would happen tonight if He would come? In this great auditorium--how many of you professional people that are here tonight, that secretly have believed in him, you haven't taken a stand, and Jesus--God's word said because you were neither hot or cold, but lukewarm, I will spew you out of my mouth. We shall all stand before God and give an account, and, Oh friend, that day of judgment is coming. I feel that so strong tonight.

[Conclusion]

My last words to this congregation. Get hold of yourself. Stand up for Jesus. Begin to lean on Him. Ask in His name for power to keep you till He comes. In the name of Jesus begin to let him guide and lead your life. How simple can I preach? How plain can I make it? And the most important of all, get a hold of yourself--discipline your life, and say, "Jesus, I want you to come."

People who have never in their lives ever thought of Christ are suddenly realizing that the ends of the world are caving in on us, that everything is spinning out of control. How much more should we, who are ready and expecting and looking, believe that our Christ is coming, and coming soon? [Applause]

Tonight, I want the Holy Spirit, to change everybody in this building, not just teen-agers. In my hotel room today, I've been praying, "Oh, God, send Holy Ghost conviction from heaven." I'm not trying to impress you with my preaching. I'm not a homiletical preacher. I just spill out what God pours in. And I know the Holy Spirit has descended here.

I'm going to pray in just a minute, and you're going to feel something. Something, perhaps, you've never felt in all your life. It's going to be the wooing, the calling, the

tugging, of the Holy Spirit. Come just as you are. You don't have to clean up to come to Jesus. He'll take you just as you are.

Please, every head bowed in this building. Jesus, you're coming soon. We've got to get a hold of ourselves now. We've got to get a hold of ourselves. We can't let ourselves go. We can't go with this generation. We can't swing with the crowd. We've got to be different, we've got to stand out, and say, "I resist the devil. I'll take my stand, I don't care what anybody thinks. It's all going to burn anyhow." The only thing that holds us back is our pride. Destroy that pride, kill that pride, O God. When I give this invitation, tonight, let hundreds of Dads and Mothers, adults, professionals, young people, come forward and say tonight--I receive Him.

It may readily be seen from this outline and précis that this sermon is of an entirely different nature than the one previously analyzed--*Why Kids Go Wrong*. This is made clear in the introduction, which begins with a prayer for power for both the audience and Wilkerson himself; and with a passage from the Scriptures to set the tone for the material to follow.

The introduction also contains three quick illustrations used to catch the *attention* and reveal the *need* for preaching on this problem. The body of the sermon follows with three very clear-cut steps calculated to *satisfy* that need, each one of which is extremely well *visualized* in terms of being explained and justified, and in terms of showing the benefits to be derived from following these solutions. Finally, there are a summary and a direct appeal for *action* on the part of the listeners to forsake the crowd, and come forward and receive Christ fully.

In short, this is a very careful and well-executed use of Monroe's Motivated Sequence,¹ whether or not Wilkerson is aware of it. This sermon shows that Wilkerson can, and usually does, present an organized and logical arrangement of his messages of advocacy. They are intended to lead directly to steps of action; and because this is true there will always be, as there is in this sermon, a question as to where the conclusion of the sermon ends, and the "call" begins. This is only a technical matter, however, and one with which Wilkerson would not be concerned inasmuch as he has not concluded speaking, in his opinion, until he has made his "call."

Personal Proof

Much of what was said under this heading in the preceding chapter applies equally well here. His concern and sincerity are shown immediately in this sermon--even in the opening prayer. His authority is also revealed quickly. Just as in Battle Creek, where he did not want to be disturbed by the baby's crying, so here in Anaheim he asks the ushers to make certain that no one goes in or out until he is finished.

This "demand" could, admittedly, have a negative effect on some members of his audience (especially the ones who were walking out)! However, Wilkerson's position

¹Alan H. Monroe and Douglas Ehninger, *op. cit.*, pp. 265-267.

becomes understandable when it is realized that the distraction caused by a very few people could have disrupted the attention of thousands in that large auditorium. Most people would probably respect his directness and forcefulness, and this incident might have even added to his *ethos* in the minds of many. The majority of people surveyed felt that this quality of direct straight-forwardness is the thing that they liked most about Wilkerson's preaching.¹

Wilkerson's direct and challenging reference to Dick Van Dyke, judging by the loud burst of applause, at least, was also an indication that his bold authority seemed to be appreciated. His remarkable answer-to-prayer story no doubt helped to raise his personal proof in the eyes of many listeners, as did his very heavy use of the Bible passages in support of his statements. Even those in the audience who were not familiar with the Bible knew that here was a preacher who could quote Scripture as preachers should be able to do.

Besides his evidence, his obvious knowledge of the Bible, and his previous reputation as a man who has had much experience in dealing with people (drug addicts) who need self-discipline and "to get hold of themselves," there is an additional factor which added to his credibility in this

¹This conclusion is the result of an open-ended questionnaire circulated by the investigator amongst a small sampling of individuals who have heard Wilkerson preach. See Appendix II.

sermon that could not be mentioned in connection with the Battle Creek sermon--his organization and arrangement of all the materials in this sermon.

His sincerity is evident throughout the sermon, but it is combined with humility in the following statement in the conclusion:

Tonight, I want the Holy Spirit to change everybody in this building, not just teen-agers. In my hotel room today I've been praying, 'Oh, God, send Holy Ghost conviction from Heaven.' I'm not trying to impress you with my preaching. I'm not a homiletical preacher. I just spill out what God pours in. . . .

It is an interesting confession, and a sincere one, which may have contributed to even greater personal proof.

One possible negative reflection on his competence may have been manifest when he confused the Los Angeles *Times* with the New York *Times*; however, the fact that he had just flown in from New York to Los Angeles makes the slip-up easier to understand. For the most part this sermon had very few instances of problems with language, in comparison with *Why Kids Go Wrong*.

Materials of Speaking

There is a marked difference in the materials of speaking used in *Why Kids Go Wrong* and those used in *Get Hold of Yourself*. Whereas the former relied heavily on an effective use of "materials of experience," the latter makes use chiefly of "materials of development." There are only five brief stories or "illustrations" in this present

sermon, as opposed to twenty-five in the first sermon analyzed. *Get Hold Of Yourself* is primarily a deductive sermon, rather than an inductive one. It is based on the following *hypothetical syllogism*:

1. If you "get hold of yourself," then you shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption gripping America.
2. You can "get hold of yourself" in these three ways. . . .
3. Therefore, you can be delivered from corruption.

The integrity of the ideas contained within this sermon would be considered of a high order to anyone familiar with the Bible at all--as a large percentage of his audience at least professed to be. (Wilkerson even takes the opportunity to reason from cause to effect with these "professed" Christians, and tell them: *"I believe if every actor, every so-called Christian in Hollywood; and in radio, and in television; in government, would take their stand--within thirty days we could stop this moral landslide in America."*

[Applause]

The Biblical evidence in this sermon is abundant.¹ That is, in fact, one of his avowed purposes: *"I want to show you from the Bible tonight how you can get all the power that you need to get hold of yourself--that you can be the master of your life, . . ."* He also says: *"You*

¹Since it is relied on so heavily, this could be a weakness for some of the young people, or others, in his audience that were not familiar with, or did not believe in, the Bible. However, one of the very reasons for the meeting is to present God's word to whoever will come to listen.

can call me an alarmist; call me a fanatic, I'm giving you pure Bible." There are no fewer than eighteen quotations or references to specific Bible verses in this sermon.

These Biblical materials are used as examples and, very often, as "proof" to convince his hearers of his arguments. For instance, he asks the question: *"How do you get power to get hold of your testimony and your faith?"* Then, he answers: *"The Scripture in Acts 1:8, 'Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you, then ye shall be witnesses unto me.'"* Wilkerson, therefore, concludes: *"And you cannot witness for Jesus until you have the power of the Holy Ghost in your life."*

Another kind of evidence (besides the Bible) is used when Wilkerson wants to illustrate the "baptism of filth" in this society; he simply recalls the instance of a recent trip to nearby San Francisco, where he had occasion to observe the news stands.

In another place, where he is trying to show that God will give his children whatever they ask in Jesus' name, he gives them a personal illustration of a dramatic answer to prayer.

Near the close of his sermon he refers to a number of other actors and professionals who are afraid to stand up for what they believe. Then he *contrasts* this attitude with Pat Boone's recent testimony: *"That's why I'm so glad*

for Pat Boone and his wife and family here tonight. That blesses me so good."¹ [Applause]

Besides this use of *contrast*, there are a number of other "materials created by the speaker" in this sermon, including the frequent use of *repetition* and *restatement*:

We've got to get hold of ourselves now. We've got to get a hold of ourselves. We can't let ourselves go. We can't go with this generation. We can't swing with the crowd. We've got to be different, we've got to stand out.

'Watch therefore,' (Come on now, listen to it). 'Watch therefore, . . .'

When you know that the Bible says in all your ways, all your ways, I repeat it, in all your ways.

Notice also the typical *massing of detail* in the following passage:

Teen-age lives today are getting out of control. Young people are getting hooked on drugs. They're having illegitimate babies. They're running away from home. They're losing identity. Committing suicide. There are mass murders. Perversion. Young people going insane, and drunkenness, cursing and violence. Addicts, prostitutes, and murderers are all crying the same thing when they are interrogated, or when they are caught: 'I just couldn't help myself.'

An examination of the lines of argument used in this presentation reveals the following:

Wilkerson begins with a Scriptural promise from Romans 8:21, which contains an assertion that willing

¹In spite of the colloquialism, this statement was followed by another loud burst of applause. The audience had apparently appreciated the Boone family's performance, and been impressed by their testimony. When Wilkerson acknowledged and identified with this, it was no doubt another boost to his own personal proof.

Christians can be delivered from the bondage of corruption in the midst of a wicked and perverse generation. His fundamental purpose is to persuade his audience that in order to be certain of such deliverance, they must: *"Get hold of themselves."*

In order to show the need for such a request, he gives three quick instances as examples of individuals who had committed murder without knowing why: *"I just couldn't help myself."* The last example is that of Sirhan Sirhan. It is followed by a massing of detail indicating the same irresponsibility. Wilkerson's argument is that these excuses will not stand up before the judgment seat of Christ, therefore, *"this generation needs a red-hot message on self-discipline"*. (These causes have resulted in Wilkerson's choice of this subject for this evening).

The next line of argument (this time reasoning from effect-to-cause) is more positive. Wilkerson says: *"You don't have to move with the herd. You can come out with power and strength and shine forth as a light in the midst of a wicked and perverse generation."* This can be the result, says Wilkerson, if you will do the following three things:

(1) *"Get hold of yourself about your faith and your testimony."* In this division, Wilkerson makes an analogy to some of the very popular and famous chief rulers of the time of Christ who believed on Jesus but did not confess

him publicly because of the Pharisees. Wilkerson says there are too many people like that today. He illustrates the fact with an example particularly pertinent to his California audience. He quotes a testimony by Dick Van Dyke, *"who has testified to being a Christian,"* but who recently made some permissive statements about marijuana, etc. Wilkerson, at this point, throws out a challenge--for which he receives applause, *"I say, 'Mr. Dick Van Dyke it's a shame if you meant it.'"*

A question is asked: *"How do you get power to get hold of your testimony and your faith?"* Wilkerson answers this rhetorical question with evidence from the Scriptures, Acts 1:8. His argument is again in the form of a syllogism:

*The Holy Ghost gives the power to witness.
You may receive the Holy Ghost power.
Therefore, you will be able to witness.*

This first division is concluded with another hypothetical cause-to-effect argument: If all these so-called Christians in important positions would take their stand, we could stop this moral landslide in America.

(2) *"Get hold of yourself and learn how to lean on Jesus."* In this section, Wilkerson is arguing that no one can be a joyful Christian until he learns how to lean on Jesus and let God direct his life. His evidence on this point is a quick series of five Bible promises to the effect that God is willing to give us whatever we ask in His name.

Wilkerson then proceeds to list many of the items that the Christian could expect that God would give him--if he follows the three rules that Wilkerson sets forth. It is at this point where he uses his personal illustration of answer to prayer as an example of how God will honor this promise.

(3) *"Get hold of yourself and prepare for the coming of Jesus."* For Wilkerson this "fact" is as simple as believing the Bible--because the Bible promises that Christ will come again, therefore, it naturally follows that Christ *will* surely come again. Since this sermon was delivered near Easter time, he appropriately argues, in effect, that "if you believe in Easter, and if you believe in the virgin birth, then you should believe His own promise that He will come again."

Wilkerson's next argument is: Peter says everything in this world is going to dissolve and melt anyway, therefore we should live Godly lives and forget about our earthly concerns that worry us so much. He quotes another Bible text to the effect that because no one knows the exact hour of His coming, we should be ready at all times. As an evidence that the time is near, Wilkerson lists seven Biblical signs of the end of the world. He then asks the rhetorical question: *"Does that picture very vividly this generation in which you and I are living?"*

Wilkerson's primary argument in this section--and it is at the same time an emotional appeal--is:

Christ is coming. (effect)
He has said He will spew you out of his mouth if you
are lukewarm.
Therefore get ready for His coming. (cause)

Wilkerson concludes with a good summary of his three main arguments, followed by a motivational appeal to activate his hearers into making a decision. It all adds up to a well-organized presentation of a logical step-by-step solution to fulfill the needs of his original "command." The arguments are firmly supported with Biblical evidence, which would probably be satisfactory to a large majority of his audience, as well as a number of other examples and illustrations.

The primary "materials of experience" used in this text are the fine motive appeals made throughout its presentation. There are appeals to sympathy, self-preservation, change, personal enjoyment, revulsion, pride, self-respect, fear, and conformity. The closing invitation seems to contain the strongest appeals to the basic needs and desires of the listener. It is also persuasive, because these appeals are soft-spoken and very sincerely delivered. Furthermore, it contains short, clearly expressed, meaningful sentences calculated to promote action.

Style

Not only in the "appeal" but throughout this sermon short, pithy phrases abound. They are more clear-cut and less

fragmentary than those used in Why Kids Go Wrong. Notice this example:

Then the Son of Man shall come. The world will not be expecting him. They'll be swinging, and rocking, and rolling. There'll be 'laugh-ins.' There will be all kinds of perversions.

The entire style of Get Hold of Yourself could be classified as more "serious" than the lighter touch used in Why Kids Go Wrong. There is only one real humorous instance used, and Wilkerson usually employs this tactic far more frequently. The style is suited to the nature of the subject, however, and perhaps Wilkerson felt that the audience had already had enough "entertainment." He may have felt the need to "get down to business" immediately and to accomplish his purpose as soon as possible. This, as evidenced from the text at least, is what he proceeded to do. Notice the obvious concern that Wilkerson keenly felt to make this subject, and his appeal, absolutely clear. Just after he succinctly summarizes his main points, he says: *"How simple can I preach? How plain can I make it?"*

The outstanding features of style in this text are the same as those mentioned in the preceding chapter--forcefulness and vividness. These characteristics appear to be Wilkerson's forte. As previously noted, these are the items that respondents mentioned as the characteristics which they liked best about his preaching.

Get Hold of Yourself, as the very title suggests, contains a large number of strong, positively spoken suggestions, or even "commands":

Young people, these excuses will not stand before the judgment seat of Christ. This generation needs a red-hot message on self-discipline.

Listen to me please or Hear it now.¹

Everything that you and I now value is going to be dissolved. Your career is going to go up in smoke. Your money is going to dissolve and burn. Your house, your car, your reputation. . . . You can call me an alarmist, call me a fanatic, I'm giving you pure Bible.

Delivery

The full impact of the forcefulness and vividness cannot really be appreciated by merely examining the text, however. It is the dynamic, driving delivery that adds so much to the impression received. Wilkerson's characteristics of delivery have already been discussed in the previous chapter, and there was little difference manifested in this sermon. Because it was of a more serious nature, there was what could be described as an even higher level of intensity and excitement. His sense of timing and use of emphasis are again a very positive addition to the over-all impact.

These factors add up to a sense of earnestness that is contagiously evident in Wilkerson's delivery. This was borne out, in part, by the eleven spontaneous outbursts of

¹These kinds of phrases are seemingly a favorite with Wilkerson, he uses them six times in this text.

applause on this occasion, and is reinforced by several of the typical responses quoted below:¹

I like Dave's direct way of preaching. He pulls no punches. . . . There are few preachers more convincing. His sincerity is as catching as his enthusiasm.

I liked his direct approach to the youth, and his sincerity.

I liked his boldness. . . .

I liked his zeal and very real interest in young people. He's much more enthusiastic in his delivery than some.

His straight forwardness.

Forceful.

He is more dynamic and it is hard to forget--it really sticks with you.

He told it like it was.

He was very honest and straight forward in his approach.

¹These quotations are taken from the questionnaire reported in Appendix II.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSIONS

David Wilkerson is still a young man. It is obviously premature to make any ultimate conclusions with regard to his ministry, yet it has been a challenging and interesting study to examine his rhetorical theories and practices to the present time.

Approximately eleven years ago he was pastoring a country church in the relative obscurity of the hills of Pennsylvania. Today he probably preaches to more young people per week than any other man in the world. He is the founder and director of Teen Challenge, an organization that has also had remarkable growth--from the "office" in the back seat of Dave's Chevy, to the new half-million-dollar complex in Brooklyn, and more than a score of similar centers in other major cities of the world.

What conclusions may be drawn from the research that has been done concerning the reasons for Wilkerson's expanding ministry?

What are some of the contributing factors to his apparent ability to attract and hold such large audiences of young people around the world?

In an age when everyone is wondering how to communicate with the young people on the other side of the "gaps," are there some secrets to be gleaned from Wilkerson's apparent ability to "bridge" these gaps and "get through"?

In an attempt to answer some of the above questions--and many others like them--it has been the purpose of the foregoing study to make the following kinds of analyses: (1) a rhetorical, biographical study of Wilkerson, (2) an historical survey of the Teen Challenge program, (3) an examination of the drug situation in America today, a number of "solutions" and "cures" that have been proposed, and a comparison of these with the somewhat unique approach advocated by Wilkerson and used by Teen Challenge, (4) a brief survey of the influences that have affected Wilkerson, as well as the ideas and beliefs that he has on a number of religious, moral, and social issues, (5) a detailed study of the principles, theories, and admonitions that Wilkerson advocates for "getting through" to his audience, and (6) rhetorical analyses of two "case study" crusade sermons preached by Wilkerson in Battle Creek, Michigan, and Anaheim, California.

From these various studies, the following conclusions may be observed:

1. David Wilkerson is a man of strong beliefs and convictions. His unique experiences over the past several years have placed him in a position to speak authoritatively

on how to "reach" the young people of today's generation. That, in fact, is one of his first and most important points: *"This generation wants to hear a voice of authority based on firsthand experience."*¹ (Italics mine).

This first admonition reveals a concern for two important aspects of *ethos*: competence and good character. It has been seen throughout the study that Wilkerson's theory and practice both stressed the importance of speaking with the confident voice of authority.² The second aspect (good character) is wisely combined with the first. These principles are not in opposition to each other. When Wilkerson says: "You're not going to reach this generation by what you say--but by what you are and by the way you live,"³ he means that the latter must precede the former. The life, the character, must first be acceptable, and then the voice of authority will be convincing.

2. It is also concluded that another large portion of the "success" and popularity that has come to Dave Wilkerson as a speaker, can be attributed to the other strong areas of personal proof which he manifests:

- (1) his vast experience and knowledge of young people's problems or "hang-ups."
- (2) his cheerful, freindly personality.

¹David Wilkerson, *Man, Have I Got Problems* (Old Tappan, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1969), p. 101.

²*Supra*, pp. 129, 147.

³Wilkerson, *Purple Violet Squish*, p. 69.

- (3) his attractive appearance and bearing.
- (4) his dynamic, earnest, and forceful delivery.
- (5) his sincere interest and loving concern for individuals.
- (6) his concern for contemporary, relevant subjects that do not, at the same time, compromise religious standards or principles.

3. The speaking style of Pastor Wilkerson seems to contain many elements appreciated by his audiences: directness, boldness, forcefulness, a profound sense of urgency, and a clear simplicity. His choice of words can be exceptionally creative and clever, as illustrated in many of his writings and oft-repeated stories. However, this aspect of style also tends to suffer--when Wilkerson gets speaking so rapidly that his thoughts start tumbling out faster than the appropriate words can keep up.

4. It is refreshing to observe a minister of the Gospel today who is able to attract and hold young people in his audiences--even in England and Europe where many young people have been completely alienated by their churches. The reasons for this are no doubt many, including all of those factors (and more) summarized at the end of Chapter V. As well as the personal proof, and the style of presentation, however, it is felt that the message itself--the matters of *invention*--contribute largely to the gripping power the sermon can have over a person.

Wilkerson seeks to answer the loneliness and the other problems facing young people today. Furthermore he presents them with a challenge in his message--a high standard

worth striving for, based solidly on the Bible. In his messages he also presents strong motivational appeals, appealing to the experiences, needs and desires of his young listeners. As he does this, he seeks to be relevant and contemporary in a "legitimate" way. . . .

5. It is very clear that Wilkerson has little patience with some of the modern church leaders who have gone "overboard" with their relevancy:

To church leaders, I say the church is not a cheap crash pad for hippies. God's house is not a theater for hippie happenings. It is the staging area for sinners who would be rocketed to spiritual heights of wonder and reality through faith in Jesus Christ, the Way, the Truth and the Life.

God is not groovy, man--God is great!¹

Wilkerson believes in being involved personally on a relevant basis, but he does not believe that this needs to compromise the church or its message. The kind of response that he is getting to "old-fashioned" sermons on the need for a "woodshed revival," and the need to stop the "moral landslide" in America, is a good indication of the success of the choice and handling of his subjects.

Pastor Wilkerson does manage, however, to keep a delicate balance here. He does use contemporary titles, and he is conversant with the latest trends and jargon among the young people, as evidenced by his latest book, *Purple Violet Squish*. He even strives to make the Bible

¹*Ibid.*

contemporary and meaningful to today's generation, but he will not change the message.¹

6. Although Wilkerson received little formal homiletical training, he did learn a great deal in his father's study, and he began getting his wide speaking experience at an early age. Today he conducts one of his crusades in some part of the world nearly every weekend, and often has numerous other speaking appointments throughout the week. This wide and varied experience has no doubt contributed in large measure to his present speaking and preaching ability.

7. The limited formal training referred to above does not seem to be a hindrance in Wilkerson's ability to communicate. While his knowledge and discussion of rhetorical theory may be lacking in many aspects, he has nevertheless spent his entire ministry in concentrating on better ideas and ways to "get through" to his listeners. In this endeavor he has been blessed with undeniably remarkable results. He has suggested one reason for this in *The Cross and the Switchblade*:

Perhaps there was a curious paradox in my lack of strength. Perhaps in this very weakness lay a kind of power, because I knew absolutely that I could not depend upon myself. I could not fool myself into thinking that money, or high-placed connections, or a degree in sociology would be adequate to this situation, because I didn't have these things.¹

¹*Supra*, p. 132-133.

²Wilkerson, *The Cross and the Switchblade*, pp. 55-56.

Wilkerson has occasionally made a similar remark about his preaching, as when he noted at the conclusion of *Get Hold Of Yourself*: "I'm not a homiletical preacher. I just spill out what God pours in."¹

8. It is felt that Wilkerson's willingness to rely on God's Holy Spirit to get through to the audience must be mentioned as one of his firm convictions. He strongly feels that in these preaching situations it is God that gets the message through, and not anything that he does.²

9. As measured by the results, in terms of attendance, and in terms of those who come forward at the call, Wilkerson may be considered successful in communicating his message to his audiences.

10. It is believed that Wilkerson's persuasive sermons "to actuate" are strengthened greatly by his confident belief that he must "demand an immediate response" on the part of his young listeners. Again it is his forceful, direct, authoritative style that is convincing.

11. Judging by audience response (observing their spontaneous laughing and enjoyment), it may be concluded that Wilkerson's use of wit and humor is another positive element in his favor. His warm human-interest stories are calculated to catch the attention of the audience, continue their friendly reactions, and prepare them for favorable decisions.

¹Wilkerson, *Hey, Preach*. . . , p. 9. See also *supra*, pp. 119-121; 134-141.

12. It is believed that Wilkerson makes excellent use of audience analysis in every situation. He endeavors to get as close to his audience as possible--with as few restrictions in the way as possible. He has also "successfully" communicated on both the street level, and in the large auditorium, indicating his adaptability.

13. Wilkerson's sincere speech personality, when coupled with his dynamic delivery, appear to present before his audience the image of an honest man of deep earnestness, whose forcefulness and conviction should not only be believed --but acted upon.

A P P E N D I C E S

APPENDIX I

A TRANSCRIPT OF A TAPED "INTERVIEW"¹

WITH DAVID WILKERSON

Question: What memories do you have of your first sermon or speech?

My father tells me that when I was five years old I walked up to the platform and brashly sat beside him. He ignored me through most of the song service, and then, only to indulge his curiosity, he asked me what I was doing on the pulpit. I told him I was going to preach that night. Years later he said he regretted not giving me the opportunity to go ahead. But actually, my first sermon came when I was about thirteen years of age. The sermon was delivered at the church underneath the railroad tracks at Turtle Creek, Pennsylvania. It was at a youth meeting, and all I remember about the sermon is that it didn't get through very well the first time, so I started over and preached it again the second time, and stopped only when my dad came up on stage and said, "Son, it's time to quit."

Question: What speech training or homiletical background did you have at home, in high school or Bible College, and how did this affect your preaching ministry?

I have attended Bible School for one year at Central Bible Institute and Seminary at Springfield, Missouri,-- graduated from high school, of course. That's my only Bible training. My real training came in my father's study. He took me into his library after I expressed a desire to preach. (Really I was called to preach at ten, or even twelve, years of age). My dad made me study and got me into the books, and he used to tell me that the most important thing of all was to back up your preaching with praying. He reminded me that Elijah had only twenty-four hours in his day, and Elias, and they could pray no more in a day than I could. He also told me that if I could never reach the educational standard I

¹The questions for this "interview" were left with David Wilkerson to allow him sufficient time to respond to them. His answers were subsequently sent to me by tape--and are recorded in this Appendix.

wanted to reach, for lack of funds or anything else, that praying would always make up the difference. And his motto was always, "God makes a way for a praying man." I think he taught me to pray more than anything else, and, also, to get my sermons from the Bible. He believed that the Old Testament produced Christian character and the New Testament brought reviving of the spirit; the Old Testament for character, and the New Testament for edification.

My dad did work on my homiletics, he always said, "Come on strong, and have at least three things to say about your subject. Explain your subject, and then just tell it as it is." He also suggested to me at a very early age that it would be better to use illustrations that were my own, unique, true to life experiences, rather than to borrow them. I've never in my life borrowed illustrations, I don't believe in that. My dad called these windows in a sermon, and he said you need enough windows to let a little light in, a little air out, so it won't be stuffy; but he said a house with too many windows, of course, is fragile. So I've tried to make sure that I unburden my heart--come on strong. In other words, let people know immediately where you're headed and try to get there as quickly as possible. My dad said if you couldn't say it in one-half hour, you had no right to attempt it.

I couldn't continue my Bible College training because of lack of funds, first of all. Secondly, I started pioneering a church at the age of nineteen and, as pastor of this church, I felt obligated to stay; and then, of course came my marriage. Thirdly I found that my father had already taught me those things that I was learning in even some of the third year subjects that I was allowed to take as elective courses.

I always thought my dad was the greatest preacher in the world. He had a very good background, himself. He was a self-trained minister. He never had much training himself, though he did have three years in Bible College.

Question: What or who has been responsible for some of the greatest influences in my life?

I think my grandfather has had a tremendous impact on my life. My father claims that I took a lot after him. He only had a third grade education, but he was a man who had college professors come to hear his wit and wisdom. He'd go to camp meetings as the offering taker or the offering evangelist, and he had more people converted during the offering than the camp evangelist had with his good sermons. He believed that the offering was a time to really get blest, that you give joyfully, and if you give joyfully, then all the other blessings come on the train of that.

His "revival" meetings lasted often six and eight months. He stayed in a town until he said, "You get 'em mad

or glad, but nothing in between" and he used to do everything, including taking off his coat and shoes and throwing them at the devil. He said the first two weeks he usually drove everybody out, then it took another two weeks for them to simmer down, and another three weeks to get them straightened up. Then he continued producing character preaching for weeks and weeks from the Old Testament characters and trying to build a basic character for people to receive the edification impact of the New Testament. Then he'd come on strong with edification revival messages and then, of course, thousands of people were converted.

As far as books (I can't think of any theologians-- had any impact on my life, or any teachers, or, especially, any preachers), but one book, of all the books I've read, that really touched me was a little paperback called, *I Saw the Welsh Revival*, the story of Evan Roberts' part in the Welsh Awakening. This was the book that precipitated a real broken spirit and launched me into a deep prayer life, and I've really never been the same since that book.

Of course, I've read every book, I think, that has been written on the great missionaries, even the contemporaries. I spent my teenage years, and through my twenties, reading all the missionary lives. I think this has had as much influence as anything on my life. I seem to gather from this that all the men that God used had three things in common: they had to drink a cup of pain, they faced a night of confusion, and hours of isolation. These are the three influences, of course, that came to Christ in the garden and you can't get away from them. Christ was the pattern and I've seen that in all of their lives.

Question: When and why did I decide to become a minister-evangelist?

I didn't decide; this is something that just grew on me, or I grew into. I found when I was seventeen and eighteen, more ministers were asking me to come to their church to hold youth conventions and conferences.

Of course, when I pastored for five years in the hills of Pennsylvania at Phillipsburg, I was gone every other week for two or three days at midweek, conducting area-wide meetings. Of course, I've been an evangelist at heart all the time, going out on the street corner, preaching wherever I could get a hearing; I'd always end up preaching.

And of course, when I was ten going on eleven, God called me to the ministry at Living Waters Camp Grounds, in a little place called Cherry Tree, Pennsylvania. I went to the altar, the minister was preaching on the call of God, and I asked the Lord to fill me with the Holy Spirit, to make me different; I was the skinniest preacher's kid in the country, I thought. The Lord promised me that He'd use me. An

old gray-haired minister laid his hands on me and prayed that God would set me apart, and I was never the same after that. I seem to have been convinced about that, that night.

In fact, I still look back on that night, eleven years old, on about July the twenty-fifth--years ago.

Question: Outline, mentioning years, and tell a bit about your pastorships from Bible College until your Teen Challenge ministry.

I can't remember the year, but I pastored in Scotdale, Pennsylvania. That's the little church I pioneered after coming from Bible College. From there, I started preaching evangelistically from church to church for a number of years and then I was called to Phillipsburg. My call was mentioned in *The Cross and the Switchblade* in some detail, in the first chapter. I was in Phillipsburg for five years, then, of course, into the Teen Challenge ministry, February 27, 1958.

Question: Any successful television program conducted during those years--and your interested in some of the comments on communication; and some of the problems and chores you had at the time.

I became very frustrated preaching to the same people week after week, and I had to have an outlet. Even traveling two days a week wasn't satisfying my urge to reach the largest number with the gospel. I went to a television station in Altoona, Pennsylvania, WFBG, and I "conned" them into letting me have a program and they came right into my church. I re-wired my whole church with this heavy equipment and none of my people in this country town could sing, but somehow, I got together a choir of about fifty people. The station came right in once a month and filmed four fifteen minute programs. We called it "The Hour of Deliverance." Of course that brought in tremendous mail and I had to have two secretaries.

Then, of course, I promoted my church through this, and consequently, while I was mentioning on the telecast that I would pray for those who needed prayer for all kinds of problems, a group of people about forty miles away in Belfin, Pennsylvania called me to come to their town. In the first meeting they rented an old grist mill down by the river. I thought there would be twenty or thirty people; when I got there, there were over 250 people. We kept going back up there every Saturday night and we established a church. Today the Assembly of God church at Belfin is a thriving church that came out of that. That church is a result of the television ministry.

Of course, when I came to New York, we went on television. The second year I was here we televised on Channel 9, WOR. We had a program called . . . I forget the name of it.

(I'll have to get the name of that telecast). We televised right from the Empire State Building. We had a hundred voice teen-age choir and this was very successful in getting us before the people; and much of the results we're having today stems from that television ministry.

Combining questions 7, 8, and 9, about getting through to those and communicating, let's see what we can do with that:

I think, to get through to anybody, whether it's a goodnik, or a hippie, or a gang leader, or a drug addict; first of all, you have to be so totally convinced, yourself, that not a word you say is in vain. Then too, I've had to conquer the fear of preaching righteousness and having not attained it. In fact, there were two occasions that I had to walk right off the stage, or the pulpit, because I heard a voice saying, "You're a phony, you're preaching something you haven't practiced." I think a man has to realize that he doesn't preach the Gospel according to the measure of his own achievement. David, for example, said he preached righteousness to the whole congregation, then he went home to his room and said, "My sins have overwhelmed me; they're over my head." Really what he did was to preach righteousness, then strive to practice what he preached.

I think one psychiatrist put it pretty well when he tried to summarize my ministry. He said, "That man is hung-up on the Bible." I have always tried to keep Christ as the central theme of the message, and not religion or doctrine, but a personal satisfying relationship with Jesus Christ. Then too in the heart of all my messages I've tried to relate to the teen-agers' feeling of loneliness, that Christ is the only one who understands their problem. Their parents can't understand it, but it's a personal relationship with one who really understands them, one who knows why they do the things they do, the only one who has the power to deliver them from their hang-ups.

When I'm out on the street I demand not only their attention, but their respect. I say, "Take your hat off. I'm a man of God and I've got a message." I'm totally convinced that I'm as authoritarian on the Scriptures as any man in the world, and I believe that any man that God has ever used in any major way has to be totally convinced that the Bible is true, that it's relevant, contemporary, and that it does change life patterns when accepted.

I use contemporary subjects like "Purple Violet Squish," "How to Handle Your Parents," "Why Kids Run Away," "Hippies, Yippies and Freebie Gypsies," "How to Handle Snakes," (this is how to reach serpent humanity, in other words).

Furthermore, I'm totally convinced that it's not in the depth of preaching, or not necessarily even in what is

said. I've found that when I stand in the pulpit under great unction and exercise faith, that the Holy Spirit is doing a work in the audience. Often, the most simple, direct messages are the most effective.

Last Monday night we had our thirty-second rally at Disneyland. We turned away 2,000 young people at Melodyland there, more than 4,000 inside, and over 1,000 standing against the walls. In fact, the police had to shut down the parking lot and the doors were closed because of the overflow crowd.

Then I preach to these young people about what it means to me to be a Christian, that's all. Basically I told them that being a Christian was a matter of making sure that I didn't exchange childishness for courage, first of all. I had in the audience probably 200 hippies, most of them barefooted, and these are from Los Angeles, you know. Their parents are well-to-do on the whole. I used the life of Samson, a real fool. Here's a man, I suggested to them, that was born to a minority family. Here was a man who became vitally concerned about human need and poverty and the ghetto problems of his generation. He developed an attitude toward the Establishment. He wanted to overthrow the political structure of the day, it was a perverted Philistine structure. He became a violent demonstrator and he went out into the city and tore down city walls, he plundered their warehouses, went to their vineyards and turned foxes loose through their vines with firebrands and killed a host of them in the process. When it finally got out of order and his own people were crying, "law and order," they turned him over to the Philistines and he wound up in jail, just as our young people are today. In fact, this young man Samson broke out of jail and, with the jaw-bone of an ass, killed 1,000 Philistine National Guard.

The picture up to here, I told the young people, was similar to what we're seeing today. Here was a man of great courage, strength, with a great cause, and concerned about human injustice and perverse political structures. But if teen-agers and young people just read their Bibles they're going to find out where this all ends. The next picture we see of Samson, he's sitting in the grass playing with riddles with a bunch of no-faced people with no future. It's not long before this man trades childishness for courage and sits playing as a flower child, just like the flower children of today, playing with riddles and lying around with harlots, and allowing sensuality to sap his strength. This man foolishly wound up without a voice, without any influence, blind and losing all, his cause included.

This is where it's all going to end for this generation, I fear. We see them sitting in the grass, playing with riddles and harlots; we see them starting out with a great cause, dedicated, on the whole; most of these young hippies

were really dedicated, on the whole; most of these young hippies were really dedicated young people who were disillusioned with the political structure, who were going to overthrow it, and they could have. So I've challenged these young people. I haven't made fun of their beards and long hair, because Samson had a beard and had long hair.

Question: How do you make the Gospel relevant to young people today, both beatniks and goodniks? Does it take different methods? Do you plan your sermons differently, or deliver them differently?

I think what I've just told you comes pretty close to answering that question. I try to get through to these kids by showing them how the Bible speaks to them. I'm working on a series of youth sermons now called, *A Generation of Fools*, and I'm showing how the Bible speaks so very clearly about all that's happening. It talks about the intellectual rebels, our intellectual fools, and I've been predicting that our next revolution will be on campus. Civil Rights will die as an issue and the next three to five years we're going to have college riots all over the nation, Proverbs 17:16 bears this out. In other words, why do these kids pay out money for an education when they don't really want it. I'm talking about the flower children, this is another set of fools; that's Proverbs 18:2 about the undisciplined fools, and Proverbs 17:10. The yippies are the political activists, Proverbs 18: 6 and 7; the young mockers, Proverbs 14:9; the young meddlers who meddle, Proverbs 23; the proud fools, Proverbs 16; and the new group I call the Wagumps who are young people who run around all dressed in white and taking showers all the time, that's based on Luke 11:39 and 40. Then, of course, the prosperous young fools, Proverbs 13:2; then the Godless fools, Psalms 53:1. And I'm going to make these all relevant, contemporary, and show how the Bible speaks to them. I just don't take any back-talk from them, I tell them, "I'm not here to defend God, or Jesus, or The Holy Ghost. He knows how to take care of Himself. I'm here to lay the claims of the Gospel down to you in love. You can take it or leave it, but I'm going to unburden my soul to you.

Question: About desperation, and is it easier for me to give a call on a street corner than before a group of goodniks?

That was true a few years ago, but now there is a tremendous spurt of awakening among the young people, the goodniks, especially, and we're finding them coming forth now in our meetings very quickly, and that's changing. So really, they're coming forward just as quickly in response, in these crusades, as they are in the street.

Question: How do I go about my sermon preparation, office work, and study time?

My prayer time remains the same almost all the time. I'm doing this right now toward midnight and I'll be here until two o'clock. Usually from midnight until two o'clock I'll read the Bible for an hour and I pray for an hour. I start first in the Old Testament and I read there, then I go to the New Testament, and I read five chapters from Psalms, and one from Proverbs. I absorb, totally absorb, the book Proverbs, I live in that.

As far as my office work, I get that done in the morning here, and I do almost all of my studying through the Bible. I'm totally absorbed in the Bible, and I do some contemporary reading, but mostly on the lives of missionaries. I have a girl here doing research work, she clips for me--a clipping service on all subjects, and I refer to these. I try to keep up on terminology through these clippings and then I get digested material sent to me and I absorb all this digested material.

About the sermon preparation; I ask God to lay a thought on my mind. I always pray something like this: "God, you know who I have to speak to, and Master, what would you preach if you had to stand before 4,000 kids like I have to next week? What would you say? What is your message?" I try to imagine what Christ would preach and then I go through the New Testament primarily to find out what He did say to His generation, and then find other places in the Bible where His thoughts are made contemporary or backed up by the prophets. Then I get my thoughts, and then I just sit down at the typewriter and pray, and dig, and get a Thompson Chain (the big Bible reference for all the correlating scriptures in the Bible). I draw out all the correlating scriptures and I try to get the broad picture of what God's saying on every subject.

My preaching now, of course, is done with just a Bible and no pulpit. Young people, I think, are responding more because it gives me a tendency more to picture myself being seated among them in just a heart-to-heart talk. In fact, I've been thinking about just putting a stool up there, a round stool that would swivel, and just talk to them from the stool. A Holy hush settles over the place and I'm finding that I can communicate immediately. There's nothing between myself and them. I usually have a roving mike now, and I rove around and try to "get" them right in the white of the eye. I prefer this so much. I acquaint myself with my subject better and then I try to speak more extemporaneously.

My most difficult speaking situation, I think, was in Royal Albert Hall in London last year. We had turned away actually by ticket request 5,000 people and the place

was packed, but I hadn't been prepared for the terrible PA system and every word was thrown right back in my face, and I lost my place before thousands of people. So I just closed my Bible and I just launched out into a dialogue with them. I did my best, and we did have about 200 responding. I was disappointed because I had expected so much more and, perhaps, for that reason, God was trying to knock some pride out of me as far as expectation. That, I felt, was a pretty rough time for me.

My greatest concern today, and greatest happiness, combined in one answer,--and that's to move the hearts of young people to God through Christ, and, one way or another, move them to God. I'm more concerned that I'm going to make disciples out of them than numbers. I'm not really concerned at all any more--I'm totally free from any bondage to numbers, and I'm vitally concerned in making disciples. All my workers have been told that; one to one--make disciples.

I think I get more thrill out of actually preaching to drug addicts. I'll be going Saturday night to Teen Challenge Center and preaching to addicts there. I really enjoy that session. And, too, they can always tell when someone stands up before them that's been praying, because a man who prays, they feel, is able to read them off, or get right to the heart of their problem, in the preaching. In other words, "How did you know what to say? How did you know I was going through this?" That always seems to hit the nail right on the head.

Concerning the number of books I've written.--The one I liked most of all is the devotional book, I'm Not Mad at God. And another will be coming out soon entitled, Man, Have I Got Problems. These are really taken out of my diary, Great Spiritual Battles. If you really want to know what my preaching's like, or more about me personally, you have to read, I'm Not Mad at God and sense some of the great battles and frustrations. The new book coming out, Man, Have I Got Problems (perhaps you can get a copy of the manuscript from Revell Publishers),--that, I think, is the one book that would tell you more about my preaching because this is really a compilation of my preaching, my service to young people and adults. I don't write a book unless I feel like I have something to say. Right now, I'm in the process of writing a book called, A Generation of Fools, and I just want to unload some things really burning into my heart. When I get burned up, and when I get angry, and I think anger is a tremendous righteous indignation, a tremendous motivation, and money is not a consideration in these.

APPENDIX II

DAVID WILKERSON AS A PUBLIC SPEAKER¹

A. <u>Semantic Differential</u>							
Informed	<u>29</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>			<u>2</u>	Uninformed
Timid			<u>2</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>22</u> Bold
Natural	<u>24</u>	<u>9</u>		<u>3</u>			Awkward
Unselfish	<u>23</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u> Selfish
Intelligent	<u>25</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>2</u>				Unintelligent
Unreliable	<u>1</u>		<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>26</u> Reliable
Interesting	<u>33</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>1</u>				Uninteresting
Tired	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>			<u>3</u>	<u>31</u> Energetic
Concise	<u>18</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>		<u>1</u> Wordy
Illogical		<u>2</u>		<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>23</u> Logical
Hesitant	<u>1</u>			<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>23</u> Fluent
Sincere	<u>29</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>		<u>1</u>	Hypocritical
Effective	<u>30</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>			Ineffective
Subjective	<u>3</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>14</u> Objective
Unbiased	<u>8</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u> Biased
Poor Content			<u>1</u>		<u>1</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>27</u> Good Content
Organized	<u>28</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>			Disorganized
Poor Delivery	<u>2</u>				<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>28</u> Good Delivery
Modest	<u>9</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>5</u>		<u>4</u> Egotistic
Apathetic				<u>1</u>		<u>7</u>	<u>29</u> Zealous

¹As indicated earlier, this very small survey was conducted amongst volunteers from the audiences at the Bellevue Assembly of God Church and the Battle Creek S.D.A. Academy Commencement Exercises on June 8, 1969. It is included only for the indications that it might give. Wherever the total responses do not equal 37, an abstention on the part of one or more individuals is reflected.

B. Questionnaire

Your kindness in answering the following questions will also be greatly appreciated.

<u>Male</u> -18	<u>Female</u> -19	<u>Age</u> -17-25=10	<u>Education</u> -	Grade School	8
		26-50=19	<u>Completed</u> -	High School	18
<u>Occupation</u> -See <i>Supra</i> ,		51-68= 8		College	4
	p. 183			Graduate	7

Church Membership-Assembly of God-16
Seventh-day Adventist- 21

1. Do you feel that David Wilkerson's preaching deals with problems that relate to modern-day living?
Yes--37 No--0
2. Did you find his sermons interesting and easy to listen to?
Yes--37 No--0
3. What is your impression of the illustrations and stories that Pastor Wilkerson uses in his sermons?

Good	13
Impressive & Appropriate	7
Interesting & Informative	6
Captivating & Dramatic	6
Too Personal	1
No Answer	4
	<u>37</u>
4. Did you find Pastor Wilkerson's voice easy or difficult to listen to?
Easy--32 Somewhat difficult--4 No Answer--1
5. What did you particularly like about Pastor Wilkerson's preaching? What did you dislike?

<u>Like</u>		<u>Dislike</u>	
Bold, direct approach	10	Use of "I"	4
Sincere, honest concern	8	Too much emotion	1
Love for Youth	6	Too rapid	1
Enthusiastic Vigor	5	Lack of Bible	2
His Stories	7	Clothes	1
No Answer	2	No Answer	28

6. How would you compare Pastor Wilkerson's preaching with other preaching that you have listened to?

Average to Good	12	Not as steady diet	2
Above average to "Tops"	8	Uses fewer Bible texts	1
More enthusiastic & dynamic	5	Almost unethical	1
Other favorable comments	5	No Answer	3

Thank you very much for your TIME and HELP.

APPENDIX III

EXCERPTS FROM THE "TESTIMONY" OF A FORMER

DRUG ADDICT: BENNY TORREZ¹

I was born in Puerto Rico and I came to this country when I was only three years old. At the time we had a large family. There was five children, my mother and father, My father didn't have much of an education.

I had relatives living here in New York City at the time that we were in Puerto Rico, and they used to write letters to my mother and father and they used to speak about New York, the United States, as the promised land. You come here and you get rich overnight. In Puerto Rico my father was working for maybe about fifteen or twenty dollars a week at the time. My uncle said to him, "If you come here to the United States you can easily start off with thirty-five, thirty-six dollars a week." So, it seemed like the promised land, but they never told my mother and father about all the problems, the sin, the drug addiction, and the alcoholism, and all this here that we have in the United States.

I believe it was back in 1945 sometime, or '44, during the war, that we came up to the United States. There were seven, all total, in the family, my mother and father and five children. We moved into a flat right here in Brooklyn. My father went out, he found employment and started working. It wasn't much and we had to turn to the welfare department to help us along, to try to make ends meet.

First, my older brother Ernie started going astray. He started hanging around the projects, the housing development across the way from us, and he started hanging out with gangs. I was only a young fellow then and I was kind of empty. Most of my time was spent out in the street. The house was crowded, there was five of us, and it was a small apartment. There wasn't much room for us there, so I would

¹Benny Torres, private interview, Teen Challenge Center, Brooklyn, New York, August 26, 1968. Benny's story is just one example of the personal testimonies given to me by former drug addicts who have been completely changed by Teen Challenge and David Wilkerson's ministry. Benny, at the time of this interview, was a student at the Teen Challenge Institute of Missions in Rhinebeck, New York, preparing for an active ministry.

turn out in the streets of New York, and hang out in the streets all day long. This was where I got my education at the early age of ten or eleven years old. I learned how to fight. My brother was in a gang and I also joined a gang. I learned how to fight, I learned how to steal, I learned how to cheat, I learned how to lie at the early age of ten or eleven years old.

By this time I lost all interest in school. I felt that there was nothing there for me, so I would go in and just take up space, that's all I would do. The teacher would teach and so on, but it didn't have any effect, it didn't penetrate, I didn't get much of an education.

At the age of thirteen, narcotics started creeping into the neighborhood. First, we started smoking marijuana cigarettes. A friend of mine came along one night and he had a few of these cigarettes and he offered me one. He told me that this was good, that this would get me nice and high. I, being young and being curious, and looking to have a nice time and live it up; I had a great ego, I wanted a reputation. I felt, "Well, why not go along with him? Everybody else was starting to turn to drugs, so why not me? So, that night I went with this fellow to his apartment. There was a few fellows there, a few girls, they had the phonograph playing real loud, listening to rock and roll music and everybody was nice and high, and having a nice time, so I went along with it and I smoked this cigarette. After that I just continued smoking with this fellow for a few weeks.

I think on my second week, another fellow came along, and he had heroin, he had narcotics with him. He was a main-liner, he was using drugs. I knew about this here and I was also curious about this, I wanted to know what the reaction was, how they felt and what it did to a person.

He came, and he invited me down to the schoolyard. He said he wanted me to help him, he was going to inject himself and he needed someone to hold the belt and help him along with these different things he had to do, different instruments he had to use.

I went down to the schoolyard with him that night, and this was the first time I saw anybody inject himself. He took out the hypodermic needle, he took out a little cork, a top of a wine bottle--a little cork that they use to cook up their heroin in. He took out a little bottle of water, and he had two little cellophane envelopes and they contained narcotics.

He gave me two envelopes and he prepared the hypodermic needle. He took off his belt and wrapped it around his arm. He told me to hold the belt, and then he took an envelope and he emptied it into the cork. He added a little water and he lit a match underneath. He cooked this up and heated it up, and it dissolved. It just turned into water, there was a powder there, but then the powder just dissolved and it was just water there. Then he drew this water into the hypodermic

needle, told me to tighten the belt real tight, and he injected himself. He stuck the needle right into his main vein. Some blood came up into the hypodermic needle, and he started shooting this substance, this liquid, in and out, in and out for a little while.

I looked at him and I felt that this was the thing I'd been looking for. I was thirteen years old, and from the age of nine, ten, years old, I was roaming the streets of New York City. I went home at night and there was no peace. There was always confusion in the house, my sister yelling at my brother, my brother yelling at my older brother, my brother yelling at my younger sister, my father yelling at my mother. There was so much confusion that I would just leave the house and go hang out in the neighborhood and say, "I just want to get away from this here." There was no peace.

I'd go to the neighborhood and try to find peace among my friends, but all they'd want to do is fight, hurt people, steal. So, I felt, "Well, this is the only way I can find satisfaction. This is the only way I can find fulfillment," so I went in and joined with them, but I still didn't find peace there. Then, smoking marijuana, that didn't do any good because after a while I started getting tired, it used to make me very sleepy, very tired, very weary, but when I looked at this fellow that night, and he was injecting this heroin in him, and I saw the reaction, I saw the change, I said, "Well, maybe this is it. Maybe this is what I'm seeking. I'm going to try this."

I remembered that he gave me two envelopes and I only gave him one back. When he asked me for the other one I said, "I don't have it, I lost it." He was so high on this thing, he was so intoxicated with this narcotic that he said, "Oh, that's all right, forget about it. I only paid a few dollars for it. That's all right. It's too dark now to look for it anyway."

We left the schoolyard and I still had the other envelope in my pocket, the other cellophane envelope. Immediately I ran to a friend that I knew was also a drug addict, I knew he had the hypodermic needle there and I went to his apartment and I gave him a little bit of the content and we got high together, and I injected myself.

I want to be truthful, in the beginning, I liked it. It felt good, it gave me a peace, and I sat down, I was listening to the music, I forgot my problems, I forgot everything that I was worried about, everything that I was concerned with. It seemed like the world stood still and I didn't care about anything. I felt good, I was at peace.

The next day I woke up without it. The reaction, everything went away, so I figured I had to get my hands on some more. I was only fourteen then, when I started going back to it and I just continued, continued, continued, and that lasted for almost twelve years, until I found the Lord Jesus Christ, and he delivered me from this problem.

In the course of this time (I went first in 1955), I got arrested for a crime I committed, because now, by this time, I found myself physically and mentally hooked. By this, I mean, mentally it was something that I would dream about, think about day and night, and I couldn't get it out of my mind. Physically, it was something that my body craved for, something that my body needed. Without a shot of heroin, my body couldn't function right. I'd be sick, I'd begin to perspire, I'd get very nervous, very nauseous and I would need a shot of heroin to keep me going. It was like my food, just like the human body needs food to keep it going, to keep it alive; well, drugs was the thing that was keeping me alive.

I had heard about people getting addicted, people getting hooked, you know they use this terminology, but I never knew the significance of it, I never knew what it meant. When they told me about a person getting hooked I didn't understand what they were saying. It's just the terminology they use, but nobody ever sat me down and said, "Now, listen, look at me. You see the condition I'm in, you see how sick I am? This is what drugs do to you when you don't have it."

I was looking for a nice time, a bigger "high," so I turned to drugs. But, like I said, in 1955 I found myself hooked and I began to commit crimes. I was only a young fellow of fifteen and I started going out, committing burglaries and doing other things to try to get my hands on some money. Then I was arrested, and I was given three years in the city penitentiary. While I was there I sat down, I tried to think. I said, "Wow, it's almost two years, I'm on drugs now, I'm only sixteen years old, what am I doing? I'm ruining my life."

My mother was heart-broken. She used to come up and visit me while I was in prison. She used to plead with me to see if I'd give this up, break away from it, try to start anew, try to better myself, go back to school, finish my education and so on. I lied and I said, "Yes, Mom, I'm going to stop, I'm going to do good. I'm going to try to get myself a job, go back to school, maybe night school, try to get my high school diploma and so on. I realize this is no good for me." But, deep down inside, in my heart and in my mind, it was always there.

As soon as my mother would leave from the visit, I'd go right back to the dormitory. I'd get together with the fellows, other drug addicts that were there for similar crimes, and we'd get together as a group and start talking about drugs again, day in and day out, day in and day out. This guy would tell me, "When I leave, I'm going to go right back to it." Another guy would tell me about how he's going to start selling it when he gets out. Somebody would introduce me to some pusher, some dealer that sells drugs and it was like this day in and day out. I just couldn't get it out of my mind. I knew, when I left this place, I was going to go right back to it.

After a year I was released under parole, strict supervision and parole. I think within a week I was right back on it again. I couldn't break away.

In 1957, I think it was, or 1958, somebody spoke to me about a hospital, Riverside Hospital in New York City, right here in Manhattan. This place was situated on a little island off Manhattan, right by this penitentiary where I was serving my time, and he said there they could help you.

My parole officer referred me to this place. He said, "They can help you. They use a psychological approach, they can help you this way. You need some group therapy, mental therapy and so on. They can help you along, and they've got the best of doctors and so on." I was on drugs now quite a few years, I was desperate, I was looking for help, so I said, "Why not try this place. Maybe they do have the answer for me."

I went there and it was a six month cure. I was in this hospital for about three months, but after the first three or four weeks I met fellows I knew from jail, fellows that I knew from the neighborhoods where I used to go out and purchase my drugs and they had connections there. They had one worker, he worked for the city, he was a cook, a Spanish fellow, and he used to go out, he used to commute, he used to come back and forth. He lived at home and he used to work his eight hours and he went out. Just to make an extra dollar on the visits, we used to get money, and the fellows used to save up their money. Sometimes you were only allowed so much on a visit, but if your wife came up, she could sneak you a couple of extra dollars. They used to save this money up, and when they got enough money they used to give it to this worker, and this worker used to go out. He lived in the Bronx, he knew all the dope pushers and everything. He used to go out and buy drugs. If the narcotics cost five dollars, he would charge you maybe eight to ten dollars to make a profit, and he would bring it back to the alley. Because this was a hospital, they had all the needles they could get, all the hypodermic needles and everything, and they would take in drugs right out in the alley.

Because I knew these fellows from the jail, from the street, I used to get together with them and they used to give me drugs. So, while I was in this place trying to find a cure, I was still on drugs, I was taking drugs and I had a habit right in the place. So, after three months I said, "This is not helping me. Who am I kidding? I'm only kidding myself. I'm getting worse here. Here I am taking drugs right in the hospital. They can't help me." So I signed out and I came out.

I just continued on drugs and I went back to this hospital about five times after that, but never with any intentions of seeking any medical help. I only went back because I wanted to get shaped up physically, go there, take

a good rest, stay there twenty-one days, get fat and healthy and just come out again and just continue with drugs.

By this time, I found myself now on drugs maybe about eight, ten years. This was about 1959, 1960, and when I look back on my life, I look back on these years, I notice here I was in the city prison, from the city prison to a hospital, from a hospital, my mother had sent me to a private doctor one time. She paid almost five hundred dollars one time to see if I could get help from this doctor. They said he could help me out; that failed. From there I went back to this hospital five or six times. When I looked back on this I said, "There is no help for me." Then the psychiatrist gave up on me. They saw me keep coming back and forth, back and forth, never trying to make any change, never for the better. So, they said, "There's no help for you, Benny. You're a drug addict, you're going to be a drug addict for the rest of your life. Just accept the fact and try to make the best out of it." So, I said, "Well, if that's it, I'm just going to have to do it."

I left the hospital in 1960 and I said, "There's no cure for me." I believed it, once a drug addict, always a drug addict, and there's no hope for us. So, I came out and I continued on drugs. Then in 1962 I started selling drugs. I met some fellow and he was selling drugs and he put me in business with him. I made a mistake and I sold to a police agent, an undercover agent, and I was arrested for this and given five years in the state prison.

I went up to prison in 1962, the early part of '63. I began to serve my time. While I was up there I went through the same thing. I looked back on my life, it was shot, I'd wrecked it. I had so many arrests and so many times in the hospitals, my family gave up on me, my friends gave up on me, everybody gave up on me, and I gave up on myself. I said, "There's no hope for me. I'll just stay here, do as much time as they require of me, after I'm released under parole or if I have another five years, I'm just going to go back to the same life again because there's no help for me."

In 1965 I was released and the very same day, after doing almost three years in the state prison, I went right back to the neighborhood, I injected myself again, I took a shot, and I just continued using drugs. I left there, owing the state of New York two years, and I was put under strict supervision. My parole officer warned me, the first time I reported, he said, "Benny, we know your record and we know that this is your problem, drug addiction. We're not here to do you any harm, we're here to help you. If we see, or if you feel that you're weakening, going back on drugs, just let us know and we'll send you to a hospital. We've got different hospitals now that take in the parolees and they try to help them along through our cooperation. We

try to help you. If you feel this way, just let me know, I'll send you to a hospital." I had taken a shot, but he didn't know this, he wasn't aware of this.

After a few weeks, I came out of this place. I was weighing 160 lbs. when I was released from the state prison. I think within three or four weeks I went down to about 140 lbs. My parole officer noticed that right away. I was going without sleep, I was hanging out in the old neighborhood all night long. I wasn't working, I'd lost all this weight and I came in his office one night and I was under the influence of drugs.

He looked at me and said, "You're back on that stuff again aren't you? . . ."

He said, "Come here." He took me to the light and he made me look into the light. He looked into my eyes and he saw that my pupils were very small and he said, "You are on drugs. You're high on drugs right now." Then he looked at my arm and he noticed the marks. He took out his handcuffs and he was going to take me in, so I pleaded with him and I said, "Listen, I just finished three years. I haven't been home for a month. I haven't had a chance to make a go at it yet. I've taken drugs, I've weakened, but give me another chance.

So, he said, "Well, let me send you to a hospital."

I told him, "I've been to hospitals, in and out of them. This is about the seventh, eighth, time I've been to hospitals, and sending me back again is not going to help me. I've spent three months, I've spent six months in another place. I've spent thirty days here. I went to a private doctor. That's not going to help me. I have to help myself. This is the only way I can make it in life. I have to make up my mind that I'm going to change."

He believed me and he said, "Alright, I'll give you another chance, but next week I want you in this office with a job, no marks on your arm. I want to see you gain weight, I want to see you looking good. I want to see a change by next week. If there's no change, you have to go back to the state prison and finish up the two years. . . ."

I went home that night, I was living at home. I had a few things. I packed them up and I ran out to the streets of New York. I started living in subways, basements, wherever I could find a place to lay my head down, this is where you would find me.

He started looking for me. Then, a few times he ran into me, but just through the grace of God, it has to be the Lord, it was God that kept that man from arresting me. Because if he would arrest me, I would be right back in prison, finishing up the two years. But every time he saw me and I saw him, I'd just run away from him.

Then, I just couldn't run anymore. I had no place to go, I had no money. I was very desperate and then I

remembered about Teen Challenge, this organization. Somebody witnessed to me about this organization way back in 1959 when it was just starting to progress and starting to get known in this neighborhood. I remembered about it and I remembered that somebody told me they help drug addicts there. It's just a small house and they take you in, they give you food, they give you shelter, so nobody would never know you're there. So, I figured, "Well, let me go there and hide, hibernate. I'll stay there for a while and gain my physical strength, and after I'm there a while I'll just go back into the world and continue using drugs." I felt there was no answer.

I came here and I had an interview, and I was accepted. The first few weeks I was bad. They were ready to dismiss me. First of all, they don't allow no smoking here and I used to sneak up in the rooms upstairs and smoke. Then I was like a ringleader. All my life I'd always been a leader, a little ringleader. In jail, if there was a crowd of a hundred, you could always spot me. I was the center of attraction. I was always looking to attract people to myself. I always wanted to be known and to lead. In jail it was the same thing, people followed me. So, when I came to Teen Challenge, it was the same thing, I had my little group, I was an instigator. I used to mock the things of God, blaspheme, this and that.

I was rebellious so they brought me down in the office. I was called down by Don Wilkerson, the director of the center, and one of my instructors, Al Palmquist. They warned me, they said if I didn't straighten up, if I didn't start seeking the Lord, I would have to be dismissed because this was a religious organization, this was a spiritual thing, and the only way that I can be changed, the only way that I can be delivered from my drug addiction, was through the power of Jesus Christ. This is the only reason why I'm here, and this is my intention for being here, to try to find help through Christ.

They didn't know at the time that I was a parole violator and this is why I was here. I never told them anything. When I came in they said, "Have you ever been arrested?"

I said, "Yes."

They said, "Are you on parole?"

I said, "No." I lied.

Then, as time went on, I noticed something. I was in the center for about two weeks. I'm the type of guy, I like to observe, I like to notice, and I like to watch things. I like to watch people and see how they react. I noticed that there were fellows there that were coming into Teen Challenge that were on drugs, not twelve years like I was, but fifteen, and some of them twenty, years. I was twenty-five or twenty-six years old at the time I came in. There were fellows here that were thirty-five, forty, and as far as fifty years old. I saw them come into this program, guys

that I knew from jail, and hospitals, and so on, and I believed that there was no answer for them. When I used to look at them, me being a drug addict and being really in bad shape, in bad condition, me being in that state of mind, I used to look at them in pity and say, "Boy, I really feel sorry for that guy because that guy's been on drugs for thirty, forty, years. Boy, that's a shame. I hope I don't get that deep into it."

Those same fellows that I felt sorry for, was the same ones that I saw coming into Teen Challenge and, after a few days here, they got up in the little chapel we used to have down here in 416, downstairs, and the first time that they heard the word of God being preached, and the first time they opened up to him and they yielded to the Spirit of God as the spokesman led them to the altar. The first time they got on their knees and they started crying out to God, God met them. God met their needs and God undertook for those fellows. . . .

After they'd given their heart to the Lord Jesus Christ, they would go into their own rooms and, instead of coming in my room and talking about the things of the world and having a nice time mocking religion, and mocking God, and everything else, they were in their rooms reading their Bibles.

So I said, "What's got into these guys? What are these, Holy Rollers?" I used to get on them. I used to go into their room and say, "Come on, come inside," and they would say, "No, we're giving our hearts to the Lord Jesus Christ, and we're not for that stuff anymore."

I said, "What's the matter? These people got you brainwashed? Are you going for that business? Listen, nobody can help you. You've got to help yourself. God didn't help you, you helped yourself and this is why you're making it. And you're only making it physically, you're getting fat, you're looking good, so right away you think you're off drugs, you're doing good, you've got it licked, you know, you're over it, but you're not. Come on, let's go in the room."

They said, "No," and they stayed in their rooms. Then, in the chapel service, there they were. They weren't in the back any more with the sinners, with me and my other friends, they were right in the front, praising the Lord, clapping, raising their hands up, getting up in the chapel, giving testimonies, "I want to thank God for this, he's delivered me from that, he's changed my life."

I couldn't believe it. Here's this guy, so and so, forty years, thirty years, twenty-five years, and so on, and the Lord's changed his life. How can it be?

I started thinking and I said, "This is what I want."

I started realizing then that the thing that those fellows had was the very thing that I'd been seeking for,

not while I was on drugs for those twelve years, but as a little teenager, seven, eight, nine, ten years old, when I was running around those streets of New York City. That's what I was seeking for, that peace of God which the Bible says passes all understanding. That's what I was seeking for.

I still was holding on. There was still self. There was a self-pride, self and pride and everything else still had me, it still had me captive and I wouldn't give in.

Then, on a Saturday night, we went to a rally on the lower East Side. We used to have these outside witnessing, you know, Evangelistic meetings there and they used to take all the fellows out there. Many of us used to get saved there, and I was one of the ones.

I went there Saturday night and Brother Dave Wilkerson, he preached there that night. I don't remember what he preached, but what he did, did something for my soul. He convicted me and showed me that night that I was a drug addict because I was a sinner, and not a sinner because I was a drug addict. He showed me that my problem was sin and that I had sin in my heart, and the only way I can overcome that drug addiction was by going to the altar and asking God to forgive me of my sins, cleanse me of them completely, forgive me, wash me in his blood. If I accept him as my Saviour, then I would be forgiven and my drug addiction would be taken from me completely.

He preached that and he made it real to me that night through the power of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit began to speak and every word that he said the Lord began to bring it back to my memory:

"See, that's your problem buddy. You're not an addict, you're a sinner. You need to be forgiven of your sins and I'm the only one that can forgive you. Come to the altar now."

I was fighting it. There was a fellow sitting next to me and he gave me a little talk. He got saved a few weeks before, and he said, "Go ahead, it's not going to hurt you." I don't know what did it but the Holy Spirit, because I had no intention when I went there Saturday night, I just went there with the idea that I was going to have a good time, laughing, mocking, making fun of everybody like I usually do. But, that night, the Holy Spirit lifted me up.

You've got to see this place. It was an old theater, an old dirty, filthy theater. Brother Dave could tell you. It was old and it was dirty, and it had a stage in the front. The floor was concrete, cold concrete. It was a dirty floor and it had a little stage. We had a little organ there, and Brother Dave's wife used to play. Brother Dave used to preach there every Saturday night. The chairs had holes in them. The place was filthy. You'd go in the bathroom, and it just stunk. But, God met us there and God was right there.

I got up out of my seat, not realizing, with no intention of doing this, I got up and I want to the altar and I knelt down on this cold, dirty concrete floor and I looked up at Brother Dave. He came over, and Brother Dave knew me, I was in the center for two weeks now, I was giving him a hard time and I hadn't given my heart to the Lord. He said, "What are you here for?"

I said, "I want you to pray for me Brother Dave. I want to get right with God."

He said, "All right, in the name of Jesus."

He just touched me and I felt a power just strike me right there. It seemed like I was going to go over backwards, but he held me up, he held me with his other hand and he prayed. I can tell you tonight that I felt God meet me. I was so bound and I was such in darkness and I felt, "Boy, I just can't break out of this, and this is my life. I have to live like this for the rest of my life, a no good drug addict." But, when I cried out to the Lord and I said, "Oh, God help me Lord, help me. You're the only one and if you don't help me tonight, if there isn't a change, if you don't do something for me, I'm walking out this door and I'm going to continue using drugs and I'm never going to come back. I'll never come to Teen Challenge. I'll never seek you in any way if you don't help me because I'm just at my wit's end. I don't know what to do, I don't know where to turn, You're the only one."

God heard that prayer. I felt this heart of mine, that was like steel, it was cold, I had no feelings. I had no love for my mother, I had no love for my father, no love for my brothers and sisters, no love for no one. I was so bound in sin, I was so cold and indifferent and rebellious against society, against everyone. God took that heart and just melted it away and saturated it with his love.

I started crying and crying like a baby. I remember when I was out in the world in 1963, my father passed away and I didn't shed a tear. I had no feelings. I loved him inside, but I shed no tears. I was so rebellious that I had no tears to shed for him. Many things happened in my family that never moved me. Many things that happened around me never moved me, I never shed a tear.

But, that night, the Lord just melted me and I just started weeping and crying like a child. I went back to my seat and I couldn't stop crying. I couldn't understand what it was.

"What is it? You know me, tough Benny, what am I doing here? Look, I'm blowing my cool, as we say in the world. Look, I'm making a fool of myself, I'm belittling myself. These guys are going to think I'm a chicken. They're going to think, 'What are you doing Benny? Everything that you lived for, your reputation, your ego and so on. You're

just making yourself look like a fool. Stop that crying, you're a man. Stand up, don't go for this.'" I realize now that it was the Devil trying to keep me from the Lord, but I just kept crying. I couldn't control myself. . . .

That was about two and a half years ago. I thank God for that. After that, the Lord just kept me here. From here he directed me to the farm. I went to the farm with a sincere heart. I wanted to seek more of the Lord. There the Lord just baptized me with the Holy Spirit. He gave me the power to overcome temptation, the power to pray for others. He gave me a love for other people. After I was on the farm a few months, he lead me back here and I started working on the staff as a counselor. When I was working here God laid Bible School on my heart and he said, "I want you to go to Bible School because I want you to prepare yourself for the ministry. I'm going to use you. I'm going to put you out there to witness, to preach or whatever it may be, but to lead others to the Lord and to tell them about your experience and tell them that I'm the answer and I can also help them."

I came back here, and then I fell in love with Don Wilkerson's secretary and we got married about eight months after that. She went to school with me. She's not studying, she has an outside job working for a state institution where they place delinquent children, and she's a secretary there.

I'm studying in school now and I have another eight months to go. Then I complete my studies and I graduate from there. Then I'm just going to let the Lord lead me. Wherever he leads me I shall follow.

I praise God that as I look back on my life and I see what I used to be and I see what God has done for me now, I praise him every day, and I love him every day and I love him more every day because he does more for me. I praise him for that tonight.

Last night I went to Harlem, there's a colored section there, right here in New York City, and they've got thousands of drug addicts in this area. As I got off the bus, I was going to a service out there to hear some preacher, he's a very good preacher, I was going to go out there to hear him speak, and as soon as I got off the bus I was confronted with drug addicts. I said, "Oh, God, and to know that I've got the answer. Not me, but Jesus is in me, and I have the answer because Jesus is in me. Oh, God this is what I want to do. I want to go back, I don't want to stand behind a pulpit and just minister to a group of people day in and day out, the same people while thousands and thousands are going to hell and nobody's taking them the Word of God. I want to go out to the corners like Jesus said, 'Go out to the highways and the byways, and compel them to come in.' This is what I want to do."

There are not many people who want to do this. This is why I admire Brother Dave. He has this compassion and this vision for these people, to go in the slum areas. Today we want to reach the ones that can give us the good offerings on Sunday, and the ones that can contribute and become good members, the ones that are influential people, people that are known in society. Nobody wants to go back to the alcoholic or the drug addict. Nobody wants to go and try to reach the oppressed or the poor, those that are rejected. Nobody wants those, but that's the ones that Christ died for. He said, "I didn't come to save the righteous, to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." This is who he came for. . . .

I've heard Brother Dave preach quite a few times here. You see, Brother Dave is different, he preaches right off the shoulder. He's quite a preacher. His way of preaching is quite different. As a matter of fact, he preached not too long ago at our Bible School. There was such a reaction and such a response to it, because he's real down-to-earth. He doesn't shoot over your head. He hits home, he uses simple language and he hits home. He's a man of experience. You see, you haven't worked with drug addicts, many people haven't worked with drug addicts, so, it's hard for you to come and minister to a drug addict. Brother Dave is different, he's had this experience, he's been around them, this is what his ministry is based on. He can communicate with them.

APPENDIX IV

LETTER FROM PASTOR JENE WILSON, ANAHEIM, CALIFORNIA

April 22, 1969

Mr. Russ Spangler
Alma College
Alma, Michigan

Dear Russ:

Thank you for your inquiry concerning the David Wilkerson Youth Rallies being held monthly here in Anaheim.

God only knows what the future of these rallies will be but to give you a few of the answers to your questions regarding the continued series of meetings here at Melodyland and Convention Center Arena I'll try and give you a basic background.

First of all these rallies began about three years ago on a monthly basis and David Wilkerson was flown out through the auspices of Christian Center Church to have this teen geared youth program at Melodyland Theater. This continued with success and the facilities at that time were not packed out but there were great crowds at the initial time. There were a number of rain storms and things that interfered on the weekends and the Monday nights on which these rallies were held. They were not started without some difficulty in getting communications out.

About two years ago we took our place of responsibility here as the rally coordinator and minister of youth at the church. At that time we instituted a follow-up program and a means of public relations, which is very costly but very successful. First of all, the public relations in promoting the rallies is done on a very home spun type level. We make up any where from 3,000 to 5,000 posters that are distributed in churches, shopping centers, and in businesses all over the Orange County, Los Angeles area by volunteer young people and adults who are concerned and interested in the rally.

Also a hand-out type card the size of a man's wallet is made up the exact replica of the posters. These hand-outs are ticket type promotion and given out on high school campuses all over the Los Angeles area as well. Sometimes we print from 30,000 to 60,000 of these hand-outs, whereby kids are personally invited and then given with that invitation an actual information sheet telling what the rally is about, who's going to be there, time and place, and all this. We found this to be very effective.

Along with the posters and hand-outs we have utilized a little bit of television advertising and very little in the area of radio, seeking continually to try to get the public service announcements as a means of getting the word out. This hasn't been as satisfactory as we'd like it to be for in many cases whenever the radio stations realized we were paying for advertising in the newspapers they were reluctant to give us free public service spots on their local radio medium. We are in the process at the present time of re-evaluating our radio promotion.

Of course, in advance of the rally, on the weekend, we run an ad in about 5 newspapers which is also an exact replica of the posters and hand-outs, tying all the same logo or image together in the minds of people. I'll include a sample of this hand-out in this letter so you'll get an idea of what I mean. The newspaper medium is very good to us here and we receive much help through news releases, and this has been a real help to us with pictures and articles on the rallies. We try to keep this on as low cost level as possible and so our news release advertising has been a real help to us. Even in this last rally where Pat Boone appeared with David Wilkerson and the New Dimensions, a high school singing group directed by Evie Wilson, plus the background orchestra not only for Pat but for the New Dimensions. We had 11,000 people in attendance at the Anaheim Convention Center Arena and we also turned away about 2,000 to 3,000 people.

This is the third in a series of Super Rallies, as they are called when we go from Melodyland to Convention Center. Because of the tremendous response this last month with Pat Boone in the rally, we are going again to the Convention Center on May 12, trusting that God again will bring about a great response--not just in attendance, for the real pay off is at the close of the meeting, which at the close of this last meeting there were close to 500 young people who came for counseling and to receive Christ as their personal Saviour.

You asked the question about people's reactions regarding the rallies. For those people who have been willing to go and to look in I believe they have found this is one of the most

effective youth rallies operating in America today. In actuality, it is the largest consistent youth rally being held in America, possibly in the world. The reaction of the local community toward the program has been overwhelming as far as their favor, and recently at a very special meeting held at the Disneyland Hotel where they were honoring the service organization that had done the most in contributing to the community, the David Wilkerson Youth Rallies received the top honor. This is what is called the Disneyland Community Service Award. You can only be involved in it by invitation, and out of all those organizations participating, the David Wilkerson Youth Rallies was chosen to be the recipient of not only the honor but also a \$5,000 cash award. This doesn't go very far in relationship to paying for one of these large rallies, but it was a real help to us in carrying on the program.

These rally programs usually feature some special personality. We've had everything from a Miss America, a weight lifting exhibition by Bob Zuva of the world famous gym down in Costa Mesa, to a singing or acting personality. The whole concept is to try to bring someone in whom the young people will want to hear, and then get across to them the message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

You asked whether I had any comment on Wilkerson's effectiveness. Let me say this in response to that question. David Wilkerson's effectiveness is made possible through him giving himself utterly and completely in trust to God and the leadership of His Holy Spirit to guide and direct him in the things he does. David Wilkerson's forthright and uncompromising presentation of the message and the truth of God's love, I believe, are the key areas which make him a success. Too many people today are trying to please young people and not offend them--they're trying to pamper them, coddle and baby them, but young people today, I believe, want to hear the truth. They want to know what it's really all about. They don't want to be given a "snow job," and they know if you're sincere or not. David's sincerity, intensity, his earnestness to really bring help and a solution to the needs of America's youth is realized by those who are listening. His success is due to his own sincerity and dedication, but most of all to an anointing of God upon his life that comes only through personal, self-sacrifice in spending time in the Word and in prayer and in allowing God to move through his life in a new dimension.

I trust that some of these comments and ideas have been of help to you. If you need further information feel free to contact us at your convenience.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

(signed)

Pastor Jene Wilson

JW:sc

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