

Among my ‘treasures’ is a file that includes dated material that made a positive impression on my perspective of ministry. Every so often I like to pull out one of the ‘oldies’ and indulge myself. Times have changed. So has methodology. But the need for effective ministry lingers. The following article was written by Gordon W. Nichols and published in The Preacher’s Magazine in June 1961.

NYPS is now NYI. Reviews have replaced ‘vote’ or ‘recall.’ Only a few churches still have 150 services per year but the message of the article remain relevant even after more than 40 years.

“The Marvelous Minister”

The marvelous minister . . . No, I’m not thinking of the world-wide evangelists, with hour-long television programs from coast-to-coast, with daily radio broadcasts, large audiences, and many volumes to his credit. No, I’m thinking of you – the marvelous minister, pastor of a little “First Church.”

Ministers receive public recognition, sure! They aren’t unsung heroes. It may happen twice a year (Christmas and recall time, of course). But, we really don’t begin to appreciate you. Who else sits outside a hospital door while life begins or ends, marries the living, buries the dead, corrects his youngsters, and mows the lawn – all in the same day?

But the marvelous thing – think of it – is preparing 150 messages a year! No other public speaker must do this. Lawyers and politicians have their speeches prepared for them by writers and secretaries, but no the minister. Anyone can be creative, original, and unique . . . once in awhile, but not three times a week! Texts and themes come, at times, by inspiration, but messages come by hard work . . . and they must homiletically correct, theologically sound, and interesting. Look how fatigued the layman is who has

just completed a thirty-minute NYPS program. With a message long enough to get the Gospel across, short enough to please the board, unique enough to hold the interest of the crowd, you enter the pulpit to preach to what looks like a replica of the stone faces at Mount Rushmore, intermixed with crying babies and fidgety children – and you do it three times a week.

How? The laymen will never know, and all of this for the play of a common laborer.

We marvel at you . . . the marvelous minister!

Straight ahead for Jesus!