



# Your NAWE Companion

'N AWE

## What Does Pressure Produce?

Jim Garrett, *Douglasville, GA*

*(This is an excerpt from Jim's report to his church at its Annual Church Conference.)*

Precious stones such as diamonds and others are formed in the earth's crust due to high pressure and heat over a long period of time. More simply and close to home, wood (yellow pine), when placed under pressure and heat can be made almost rot proof with the proper chemicals. In days of old, steam pressure resulted in the movement of mechanical parts which resulted in motion. Interestingly, pressure on a person can have similar effects. Anyone living out the teachings of Jesus in everyday life will feel pressure exerted on them. For the younger believer, the call of former worldly things applies pressure. At the same time the call of the Holy Spirit to walk in newness of life brings about tension in their existence. Surrender to the God of our salvation is the antidote. This tension, if allowed and one keeps faithful, will produce in you better things unto greater godliness of character and deeper spirituality. For the more mature believers in Christ, the things of this world should by now be losing their glimmer. The apostle Paul said, "When I became a man I put away childish things." Yet we are worn from spiritual battles; the constant draw of emotional resource grinds the compassion out of us. We are tired, exhausted, and weary. Our battle is not so much a temptation to sin in worldly things, (though it can happen) but to back away, slow down, give up. The antidote for this is no different: surrender to the Lord. He has promised that in due season He will lift us up. He will be faithful to sustain us and keep us. Many of you know what I mean.

Some may be saying to themselves, "Pastor you seem tired and tempted to give up." To that I would say you are exactly right. I live with this every day – truth is most pastors do – some more than others. However, as you have noticed, I do not give up very easily. Furthermore the pressure and grind of ministry work over the years has seemed to produce some good things. I have seen God provide for this pastor and his family in ways unexplained. I have seen that faith can grow when I decided to stay in the fight, stay with my charge and trust that God will simply be faithful. The late Leonard Ravenhill stated in speaking of the church of his day, "...we were a painless Pentecost." On the other hand, there are many things I still need to work on – God's pressure and fire of refinement are still pressing and burning.

So what do we do? I have considered the latest in church growth strategies and have decided that this is nothing more than new-fangled worldly gimmickry combined with the teaching and preaching of a false gospel of feel good ear-tickling sensitivity. I have decided that I will not compromise the message of repentance from sin, death to the old way of life, and sinless holy living for the sake of a larger crowd. I am not saying the two are mutually exclusive. However, this is the way it has been for me up to this point, for I am a much-refined specialist on attendance lost than gained. Yet, I will continue to preach the necessity of repentance, the cross, sanctification and the inescapable doctrine of belief in Jesus. I foresee there will be messages that agree with your soul, bring comfort and edify the body. However, I also foresee there will be messages that will teeter on the edge of fire, warn of eternal loss and that make a clarion call for repentance and the putting away of sinful behavior and attitudes. Yes, there will be some Sundays you will leave worship wondering what just happened and if it is safe to return.

About now some are thinking, "Pastor has lost his mind and compassion." Let me ask you, what is compassion? Is it compassionate for a shepherd to allow his sheep to be so comfortable, so fat, so unshaven, so immobile that when the wolf appears, they haven't the tone, the awareness and the motivation to move, to resist, to fight, to follow - only to lie and wallow as they are eaten alive? Or is compassion the warning that there is a lion prowling about seeking someone to devour? Or is compassion the warning that we serve a holy God who is fire and His patience with sin and sinners will one day come to an end? Or is compassion the revelation that His patience with our own personal favorite sin habits are deeply hurtful, troubling and disappointing to Him placing our eternal hope of heavenly bliss in jeopardy? (Calvinist won't get this.) Has our congregation grown too comfortable? Have I grown too comfortable? Think on these things.

February—March 2019



### Praise & Prayer

Praise the Lord for His faithfulness which stirs our gratitude as we look behind us and gives us hope and assurance as we look ahead.

Continue to pray earnestly for our nation and leaders.

Let's pray for some of our United Methodist brethren who are seeking God's guidance and facing decisions about their future.

Pray for wisdom and courage for our ministers & churches as they seek to be faithful and serve in these challenging times.

Pray for Lance Snipes as he seeks the Lord's direction after shutting down The Pierced One Ministries.

## Associations News

### Retreats

Tony Elder was able to attend the Men's Retreat for the Southeast Region of the Association of Independent Methodists, January 18-19 in Cordele, Georgia. "It was a wonderful time of fellowship. John Muehleisen, WGM missionary to Uganda, brought some inspirational and challenging messages. The AIM men made me feel right at home. I would encourage more of our NAWE men in the Georgia area to consider participating in this event in the future."

**Ministers' & Wives' Retreat:** Be making your reservations to attend our retreat at Desoto State Park on April 23-25. Be sure to let them know you are part of the NAWE group. We are looking forward to Hal Daigre's ministry to us, along with the good fellowship.

DESOTO STATE PARK  
1299 Blalock Drive NE  
Fort Payne AL 35967  
(256) 845-5380



### Calendar

Visit us at  
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**April 23-25:** Ministers' & Wives' Retreat at Desoto State Park near Fort Payne, AL

**July 16-18:** Annual Meeting at Danielsville, GA

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