

Four Calls to Soul Winning!

By Dr. Jack Hyles

"But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." (Acts 4:19-20)

"And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us." (Acts 16:9)

"Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us," (Hebrews 12:1)

"Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment." (Luke 16:27-28)

Thirty-eight years ago last August 30th, a nervous, frightened 33-year-old Texas boy became pastor of a downtown First Baptist Church of Hammond, Indiana. There is no way for me to describe how formal it was. No piano was allowed to be played on Sunday morning. No congregational song leader was allowed to stand up and wave his hands and no gospel songs were allowed on Sunday morning. You could sing "Jesus Saves" or "Rescue The Perishing" on Sunday night, but not on Sunday morning. The former pastor preached in striped pants and a scissor-tail coat. I do not know of an Episcopalian church any more formal than First Baptist Church was.

When the pulpit a committee interviewed me, they asked what I thought about the Sunday morning service. I said, "I think it stinks." They said, "What kind of a Sunday morning service would you have if you became our pastor?" I said, "It would be more like a Billy Sunday Revival Campaign."

The wealthiest man in Hammond was on the board of trustees. Several months after I became pastor, he came to me. "Reverend, I want to talk to you. We like you fine. We think you're a good guy. But the truth is, we have a problem with your preaching. Ever since you've been here, the pressure's been on. Every Sunday morning and Sunday night, and Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday it's soul winning. The pressure's on all the time. Before you came, we use to have a revival meeting every 6 months or so and bring a fellow in to have an evangelistic crusade. But since you've been here it's been that way all the time. Every Sunday is just like one of those revival meetings."

He said, "Look at me, I'm a nervous wreck. I shake when I come to church anymore. You've ruined our worship service." (If I could, I'd ruin every formal worship service in

America next Sunday morning.) "I'm not the only person who's nervous -- this church is full of nervous people. It's soul winning on Sunday. It's soul winning on Monday. It's soul winning on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday. Then we start all over again on Sunday. Last Sunday morning we sang 52 stanzas of 'Just As I Am'. No wonder we're nervous! Something's got to change!" I said, "Come back on Sunday night and I'll give you my answer."

That Sunday night I preached the message I am preaching to you tonight. I'm telling you exactly what I told my people 38 years ago. I said, 'Ladies and gentlemen, a man came to me last week and told me that you're nervous. He said that you were concerned because we're having soul winning on Sunday, and soul winning on Monday, and soul winning on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday. I'd like to tell you tonight why it's that way, and why it's going to be that way as long as I am the pastor of this church, whether that is one more week or 50 more years.'

A CALL FROM WITHIN

In the first place, there's a call from within. There is something inside of me that says I have to go soul winning. "I cannot but speak the things I have seen and heard." I have no choice. It's burning inside of me - a call from within that compels me to stress soul winning in everything that we do.

This call from within came to me many years ago. When I was a boy, I was the most timid boy in the church. When I was 17 years old, I weighed 92 pounds. I now weigh...I finally got your attention, didn't I? I now weigh MORE than 92 pounds! (Once my doctor put me on a diet, and I gained 15 pounds on 1,000 calories a day. I wonder if it could be that 7,000 calories at night that caused the problem?)

On my 17th birthday I weighed 92 pounds and I was the most timid fellow in the church. They called me little Jackie-boy Hyles. I failed public speaking in high school. I could not make the ball team. I was too little to get a date. I didn't get to be in the senior play. I was an introvert. Most of the people in my church had never heard me say a single word.

One Sunday after the morning service, one of the deacons, Jesse Cobb, said, "Hey, Jackie-boy. Would you like to go soul winning with me this afternoon?" I said, "Uh, J-J-Jesse, y-y-you know I c-c-couldn't go soul winning." He said, "Jack, you won't have to say anything, I just need a partner to give me some moral support. My partner is on vacation, and I just need someone to go with me. you won't have to say a word."

The first door we knocked on was the home of a high school football player named Kenneth Florence. Jesse Cobb was 5'4" tall, and I was shorter yet. He must have weighed 120, and I weighed 92 pounds. The two of us put together might have weighed as much as Kenneth did.

When Kenneth came to the door, Jesse looked up and said, "Kenneth Florence, my name is Jesse Cobb and this is Jack Hyles." Jesse said, "Kenneth, Jack here wants to say a few words to you." No, Jack didn't either! Kenneth looked at me and said, "Yes, what is it, Jack?" I said, "Uh ... Uh... ahem... K-K-Kenneth, would you l-l-like to come to ch-ch-church tonight?" I do not remember what happened. Jesse told me later that Kenneth said, "Yes, I would," and I said, "You would?" Jesse told me that I said, "I'll come by and get you tonight at 7 o'clock." And Kenneth said, "That will be fine."

That night at 7 o'clock I borrowed Jesse Cobb's car and went over to get Kenneth Florence. For the first time in my life, knew I had to win a soul. I had never won a soul in my life. The sweat was rolling down my face, and I was trembling. When the invitation began, I put my arm across Kenneth's big broad shoulders and said, "K-K-Kenneth, w-w-would you like to get s-s-saved?" And he said, "Yes, I would." I said, "I don't know how to tell you, but follow me." We walked down the aisle, and my pastor met us at the end of the aisle. I said, "B-B-Brother Sizemore, this is K-K-Kenneth Florence. He wants to get saved."

I had done my part, so I started back to my seat. Brother Sizemore said, "Hold it, Jack!" I turned around. He said, "Kenneth, Jack wants to kneel here and show you how to get saved." No I didn't! He was a bigger liar than Jesse Cobb! I knelt at the front row. I said, "Kenneth, I don't know what to tell you. I've never done this before. But I want to see you saved." I began to weep. Kenneth said, "Jack, I know how to be saved. I've heard it many times. Every Sunday afternoon for months, somebody from the church has come by. But you're the first one that I ever thought really cared. I know how to do it." I said, "Well... do it!"

Kenneth bowed his head and said something like the old prayer you've heard thousands of times, "Oh God, be merciful to me, a sinner. I now receive Jesus as my Saviour and trust Him to take me to Heaven when I die." And while Kenneth Florence was getting saved, the fireworks of Heaven turned loose in my soul! I mean the sparklers sparkled, and the firecrackers banged, and the Roman candles soared through the sky. I jumped up and said, "Brother Sizemore, would it be okay with you if I just did this all the time from now on?"

We started a revival that night. In the next 7 days, little introverted Jackie-boy Hyles that nobody took seriously brought 37 people down the aisle professing faith in Jesus Christ. God set something ablaze in my soul, and that something is still burning tonight. When you tell me not to build a soul winning church, you may as well tell a bird not to fly or a fish not to swim. It's a call from within.

"Why can't you be like other preachers?" he wanted to know. "Why can't you be normal like everyone else? Why the constant pressure about soul winning?"

Not one time in the Bible does it say, "The Son of man is come to exegete the scriptures." Not one time does it say, "The Son of man is come to lead the deeper life

program." My Bible says the reason that Jesus left Heaven, and the fellowship with the Father, and the glory and majesty that were rightfully His for 33 homesick years - the reason why He lived with no place to lay His head while foxes had holes and birds had nests - the reason He was rejected by His own city, hated by His own race, expelled from His own synagogue - the reason that He went to Calvary was TO SEEK AND TO SAVE THAT WHICH WAS LOST.

Why do we work day and night to build soul winning churches getting the message of the Gospel to America? I'll tell you why. Because of the burning call from within.

A CALL FROM WITHOUT

"Preacher, we're nervous. Why does it have to be soul winning all the time?" I told my people that night, "Not only is there a call from within, but there is a call from without." Come over and help us." There's more to it than personal preference. There's a world going to hell! There's a call from without. I believe that men without God are lost. I believe that when those lost men die in their sins, they go to hell. I believe that men who go to hell burn forever and ever. If that be true, would you tell me what else counts in this world?

That call from without began many years ago. I was called to pastor a little country church. I could win souls to Christ, but I could not preach them down the aisle. For more than a year, nobody walked the aisle professing faith in Christ. I begged and pleaded for God's power. I didn't know what the answer was.

But on May 13, 1950 I knelt on the grave of my alcoholic father who died, and as far as I know, went to hell, and I said, "Dear God, I'm not getting off my face until something happens to me."

The next Sunday night I went back to my little church to preach. A lad came to receive Christ as Saviour. And then there came another ...and another. I'd never seen anybody walk the aisle under my preaching before. When they came in we voted them in on the spot. Up north today, you have to have credit references and blood tests and everything else to get in a lot of Baptist churches.

I'd say, "So and so is coming, professing his faith in Christ. What is your pleasure?" I had a deacon that sat over here every Sunday right next to a window, and he would spit out that window and say, "I make a motion that he be received for baptism, and after baptism into the full fellowship of the church." I had a man over here next to that wall who would say, "I second the move." The same two men said it all the time. I said, "All in favor, say aye." They all did. Then we 'extended the right hand of fellowship'. We sang, "Shall We Gather At The River" and everyone went around row by row to shake hands with the new converts. Then I dismissed the service.

That night 3 people got saved, and boy I was happy. Back in east Texas where I pastored, there weren't many cars. Most everybody came by tractor or horseback or wagon, and one Model A Ford. Everyone was getting on their wagons and tractors to go home, and I was praising the Lord. I was having a spell. I wish some of you folks would get religion again. You've gotten too used to it.

I was having an old-fashioned spell - clapping my hands and praising God when all of a sudden --- WHAM! A big old 235 pound fellow hit me from the rear. I turned around and there was O. C. Pruett, a trainman, with tears in his eyes. He said, "Reverend, my daughter Barbara is leaning up against the wall back there crying her eyes out. I think she wants to get saved." I went back and said, "Barbara, do you want to get saved?" She said, "Of course, I do! Nobody wants to go to hell." I won Barbara to Jesus.

I went out on the front porch of the church and said, "Hey, come on back in." Folks left their wagons and tractors and came back in. I said, "Folks, Barbara Pruett just got saved. What's your pleasure?" The same man said, "I make a motion that she be received for baptism, and after baptism into the full fellowship to the church." Over here he said, 'I second the move.' Everybody in favor, say aye." "Aye." We sang "Shall We Gather At The River" and came around row by row to shake her hand. Glory to God, hallelujah! I dismissed the service again at about 10 o'clock.

I was having another spell when the same guy hit me from behind. WHAM! He said, "Reverend, my married daughter Dorothy is there on the back row. Look at her crying her eyes out. Would you go talk to her?" I went back and said, "Dorothy, do you want to be saved?" She said, "My sister's going to heaven and I'm going to hell. Don't you think I want to go to Heaven with her?" I told her how to be saved and she got saved. I went out on the front porch and said, "Hey, come on back in."

When they came in, I said, "Folks, Dorothy Hall just got saved. What's your pleasure. This man over here spit out the window and said, "I make a motion that she be received for baptism and after baptism be received into the full fellowship of the church." This one said, "I second the move." I said, "All in favor, say aye." "Aye." We opened our song books to "Shall We Gather At The River" and came row by row again to shake Dorothy's hand.

I dismissed the service for the third time about 10:30 and went out on the front porch and continued my spell. I know you won't believe this, but it really happened. WHAM! It was the same man. "Reverend, her husband Sam is over there and he just threw down his cigarette. Do you reckon that means anything?"

I went down and said, "Sam, I understand you just threw down your cigarette?" He said, "Reverend, you preached about hell tonight. I looked at the fire on that cigarette, and it dawned on me --- that's where I'm going when I die." I said, "Do you want to get saved?" He said, 'Sure I want to get saved. My wife's going to Heaven and I want to go to Heaven with her." On the front porch of that little country church I won Sam to Jesus Christ and said, "Hey, come on back in. Sam Hall just trusted Christ as

his Saviour." We went through the same thing again.

Six people got saved that night. I'd been preaching for over a year and hadn't seen anybody get saved. We had over 1,000 walk the aisle for salvation last Sunday at First Baptist Church, but that didn't make me any happier than those six people that Sunday night after God filled me with his Spirit for the first time.

Now I know you won't believe me -- I wouldn't believe you if you told this story either. But as I stood in the same spot having a spell, WHAM! ...you guessed it. The same fellow. He said, "Reverend...I think I'll get saved myself before I go home." I won O. C. Pruett to Jesus and all the people came back in and voted him into the church and sang and gave him the right hand of fellowship/

That night Mrs. Hyles and I went to our little parsonage next door. I wish you could have seen it. The foundation under the back bedroom was so shaky that two people couldn't walk around in there at the same time. There was a rat at the back porch when we came, that was still there when we left. He thought he was one of the family. We gave him rat poison and he gained weight on it. We put a rat trap out there and he thought it was a toy. We went to our little country parsonage that night at 11:15 and took out a great big Bible. We were just a couple of kids -- I was only 22 or 23 at the time. We put our hands on that Bible and looked up and said, "Oh, God! This is what we've been wanting. We're not going to settle for anything less."

May I take a moment and praise His name? Since that Sunday night almost 48 years ago, there has not been a single somebody saved. I'm talking about little country churches and small town churches and big city churches. We baptized that night, and there's not been one single Sunday since then that somebody hasn't been baptized. All of our children have grown up and not a single child has ever gone to church without seeing somebody baptized before Sunday night was over.

You say, "Preacher, why don't you calm down?" I don't intend to calm down. I believe there's a hell! Now if there's no hell, let's all go 'deeper life'. If there's no hell, we can all join John MacArthur. If there's no hell, let's all go exegete. But if there is a hell, let's go soul winning. Let's build soul winning churches. The call from without.

A CALL FROM ABOVE

"Pastor, may I talk to you please. We like you fine," said the wealthy man, "but we're nervous. I represent the nervous people of this church. We like your preaching, if it is a bit loud and long. We use to have revival meetings now and then. But since you've been here, it's like that every Sunday morning. Soul winning, soul winning, soul winning. Why can't you be like other preachers are?"

That night I told them that there is a call from above. "Wherefore seeing we also are

compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses... My mama is watching. Dr. John Rice looks down from Heaven, and I can tell you that he's mighty pleased. He gave his life for soul winning, to fight formalism and the deeper life movement and the hyper-Calvinism movement and the Charismatic hodgepodge. He gave his life for what's going on right here. Tonight they're watching. Dr. John, Brother Lester Roloff, Dr. Bill Rice, Dr. Ford Porter, Dr. Bob Jones, SR...There's a call from above.

Years ago I was pastoring in Garland, Texas. I was 26 or 27 years of age. The church had grown rapidly and was running about 1,500 in Sunday School. One Sunday morning I was out front shaking hands with everybody that came in. An old man came through the door. He was close to 90, I think. His hair was as white as freshly fallen snow. His shoulders drooped. If he stood up straight, he couldn't have been more than 5'4" tall.

I said, "How do you do, sir. My name is Jack Hyles." In a squeaky voice he said, "My name is James W. Moore." I said, "Brother Moore, we're glad to have you. Where are you from?" He said, "I just moved to the area. I've been a preacher up in Iowa for over 50 years. I had a heart attack and the doctor says I won't live long. I came to Texas because it's warmer and I have some family here. I'd like to join your church. I won't cause you no trouble. I'll be for you. I hear you preach it like it is."

I bought a platform rocker and put it by the altar next to the wall for Brother Moore. He'd rock while I preached and clap his hands. "Amen! Glory to God! Hallelujah! Praise the Lord!" When I'd preach on dancing or movies or something, he'd shout, "Pull over and park there for a while." Apart from my pastor J. C. Sizemore and my best friend, Dr. John R. Rice, I've never loved a preacher like I loved James W. Moore.

Every Monday morning he'd come by my office at 9 o'clock. He'd walk in my office and pace the floor. He'd say, "Brother Jack, I just came to tell you about a stupid mistake I made when I was a kid preacher..." It was always the same mistake I had made the day before. I'd hug him and thank him for telling me what he had learned. He'd teach me the Bible and talk to me every Monday morning from 9 to 10 o'clock. What a dear, sweet man of God.

One Sunday his chair was empty. For several weeks he was gone. I went to his house and no one answered. I thought maybe he had moved back to Iowa. Late one Sunday night the phone rang. The lady said, "This is the nurse at Spiegel Memorial Hospital. I hate to bother you this late at night, but there's an old man that was brought in with a heart attack. He has no identification, and nobody knows who he is. He's about to die. But he keeps saying, 'Call Brother Jack.' We knew that you like to be called Brother Jack, so we thought you may know the old man." I said, "Is he about 5'4"? Is his hair real white?" She said, "Yes." I said, "Yes, I know him." I went to the hospital. I hadn't seen many folks die, so I was all prepared for a solemn ceremony. But Brother Moore wasn't dying right. He said, "Come on in, Brother Jack. I'm just about to take a trip I've been looking forward to for a long time. In just a few minutes I'm going to see Elijah and Moses and Abraham and Paul and John the Baptist and all those fellows. Anything you want me to tell them for you?" Then he said, "Brother Jack, I want you

to have a Bible conference. I'm going to Heaven now, but I want to plan it for you." He chose the speakers. I had the conference after he had gone to Heaven just like he asked.

Then this is what he did. He took the oxygen mask off his face and laid it beside him. He reached his hands out and put them around mine, and said, "Brother Jack, KEEP...PREACHING...IT...!" I heard the rustling of wings as the angels came and took his dear old spirit to the presence of the Saviour. I said, "Oh God, help me to keep preaching it."

Many times in the past several years I've heard that old man say, "Keep preaching it! Keep preaching it!" Don't you hear tonight the call from above? Even the blessed Saviour says, "Go! Go! Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel..."

A CALL FROM BENEATH

"Reverend, we're glad you're our pastor and we like you fine, but you're different. Why can't you be like everybody else?" I told my people that Sunday night, pretty much what I've told you tonight. There's a call from within - something on the inside that says, "I've got to do it." There's a call from without - a lost world crying, "Come over and help us." There's a call from above - heavenly witnesses cheering us on. And there's a call from beneath. "Send Lazarus, have him tell my 5 brothers not to come here." They're more concerned about soul winning in hell tonight than you are in your church. "Send Lazarus. I've got 5 brothers and I don't want them to burn in hell." There's a call from beneath.

On Saturday, December 31, 1949, I got burdened for my father. My father was an alcoholic - a part-time bartender. I was pastoring a little country church in east Texas. Up to that time I had won souls to Christ, but I had never had anyone walk the aisle under my preaching. On New Year's Eve I got in the car and drove 150 miles to Dallas to a tavern right across the street from the seminary. My daddy worked there part-time and drank there rest of the time for 8 years and not once did one single professor, staff member, administrator or student ever walk across the street to witness to the drunkard that tended the bar. That's not New Testament Christianity. I didn't care how much Greek and Hebrew you memorize.

I walked in the Hunt Saloon on Saturday morning, New Year's Eve. My daddy was sitting at the bar, drunk. I walked up and put my arm around him and said, "Daddy, I'm going to take you with me to east Texas. I'm going to have a Watch Night service tonight, and tomorrow is Sunday, New Year's Day. I want you to go with me." He cursed at me and said, "I'm not going to no church tomorrow." I said, "Yes, you are." He said, "No, I'm not." I laid my Bible down and said, "Daddy, you are either going to have to come with me or whip me. I'm going to fight you if I have to in order to get you in that car." He came with me and I sobered him up.

That night my daddy went to church and we had a light kind of a service, a lot of fun. The next morning was the first time he had ever heard me preach. Tears streamed down his cheeks. The invitation came and my big one-legged deacon put his arm around my daddy, and said, "Mr. Hyles, won't you come to Christ." He did not walk the aisle. That afternoon I took a walk with my daddy out across the pasture and said, "Daddy, I want to see you saved more than I want anything in the whole world. Daddy, I want you to go to Heaven with Mama and me." He had left us many years before when I was a little boy.

My daddy said something I never thought I'd ever hear him say. "Son, I'm going to get saved. I can't today, but I'm going back to straighten up some things at home, and I'll come back in the spring, and maybe get a little fruit stand or something, and I'm going to get saved. You're going to baptize me this spring, and I'll be a deacon in your church one of these days, you wait and see if I'm not."

I took him back the next morning. The last words he said to me were, "Son, I'm going to let you baptize me in the spring." That was good enough for me. But the spring never came. On May 12th I got a call that my daddy had dropped dead with a heart attack, and I was a powerless preacher.

Several years passed. One Sunday night, I was still in my office at about 11 o'clock. I heard a knock at my door and there stood my sister weeping. She said, "Jack, would you tell me how to be saved." I brought her into my office and led her to Christ. She's now a lovely Christian and a wonderful soul winner. After she got saved, I said, "Earlyne, why did you come tonight." She said, "Jack, tonight you preached on Luke 16. You told about the rich man in hell who lifted up his eyes and said, 'Send Lazarus to tell my five brothers not to come here.'"

She said, "Jack, when you told that story, I thought of a dream I had shortly after daddy died. I dreamed that a man in a white robe, maybe an angel, took me in a big building. He showed me walls lined with caskets. In every casket was a corpse. He took me to the first casket and I looked into the face of that corpse and he had a smile on his face. He took me all around that room and every casket had a corpse, and every corpse had a smile on his face, until I got to the last one. The angel said, 'You can't see that one.' She said, 'I must see it,' and in her dream she broke away from that angel.

My sister told me, "Jack, daddy was in that casket. I went up and looked at him and his face was writhing in pain. He cried out in agony, 'Sister... sister...sister...' All those years I wondered what daddy was trying to tell me, and tonight when you preached that sermon, I know what it was daddy was trying to tell me. He was saying, 'Sister... don't come here.' Don't you tell me not to build a soul winning church. Don't you tell me not to live for soul winning. I've got a daddy who, as far as I know, is in hell. There's a call from beneath.

Why don't you let God change you tonight? Where is that Curtis Hutson who was in Atlanta in 1961 whose life was changed? Where is that Wally Beebe who was in a meeting like this up in Danville, Illinois and his life was transformed as a kid preacher?

"Pastor, I come representing some nervous people. We like you fine. But pastor, why are you like you are? Why is the pressure on all the time? We use to have revival meeting twice a year, and see people get saved, sometimes 50 or 60 a year. But ever since you've been here it's soul winning Monday, soul winning Tuesday, soul winning Wednesday, soul winning Thursday, soul winning Friday, soul winning Saturday... Why can't you be like everybody else?

I'll tell you why. There's a call from within. "K-K-Kenneth, w-w-wouldn't you like to b-b-be s-s-saved?" There's a call from without. "Reverend, I think I'll just get saved myself before I go home." There's a call from above. "Brother Jack, KEEP...PREACHING...IT!" There's a call from beneath. "Sister...sister...sister!"