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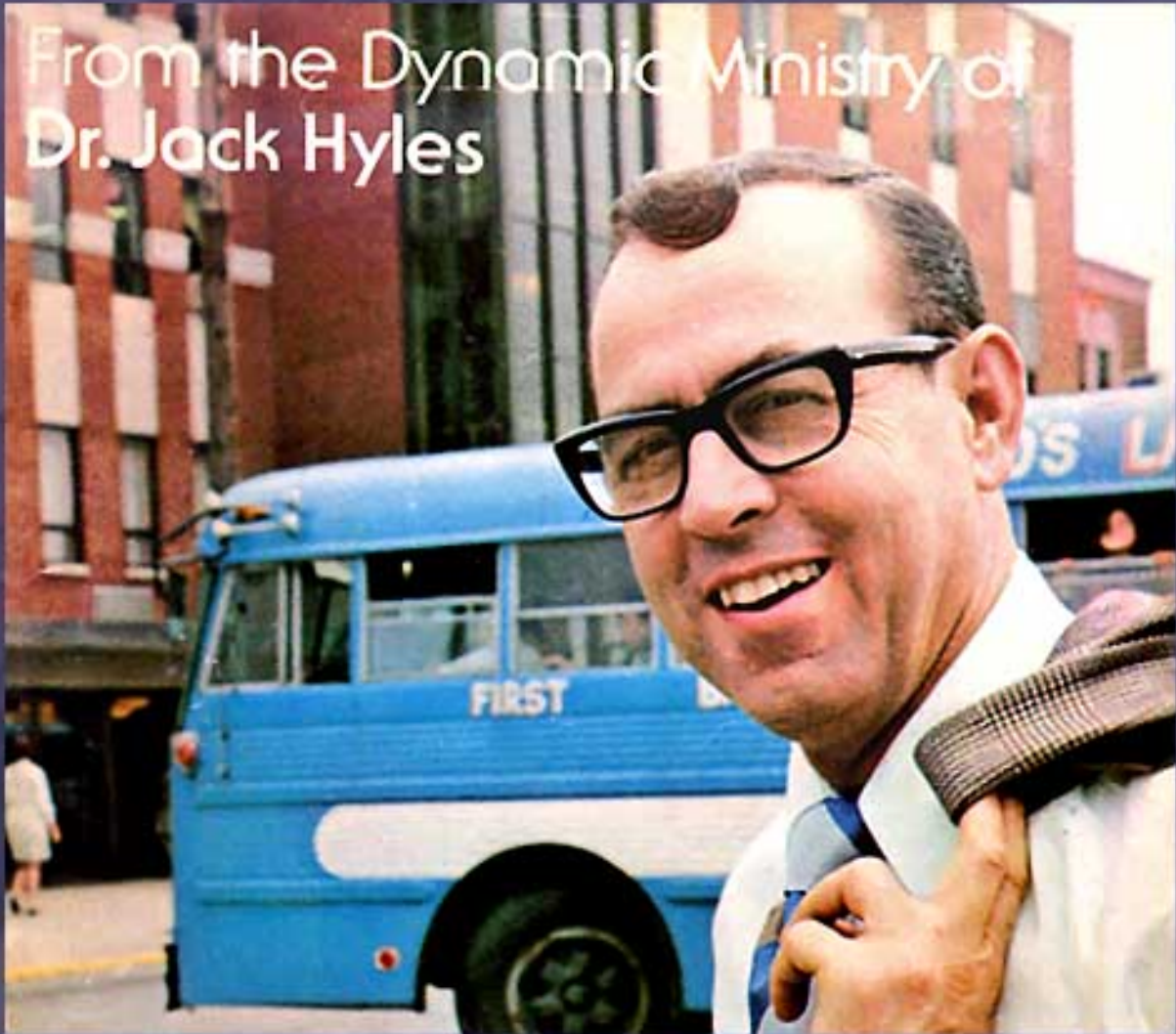
Biography of Jack Hyles

Elmer L. Towns

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From the Dynamic Ministry of
Dr. Jack Hyles



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Biography of Jack Hyles

Excerpt from The World's Largest Sunday School

By Elmer L. Towns

CHAPTER 17

Train Up a Child in the Way He Should Go

POVERTY SURROUNDS THE BIRTH AND LIFE OF JACK HYLES

A great man must have steel in his moral fibre and love in his heart. Hyles calls this "Blue Denim and Lace," the title of one of his books, showing the blend for toughness and tenderness in one personality. The human instrument to mold mental hardness and a tender spirit into young Jack was his mother, Coystal Hyles. She married young, worked hard all her life and had to raise Jack singlehanded. Her husband was a drunkard. She did the best she could with what she had. She was faithful to the light she knew and in a home of poverty, she invested love and character in young Jack. She is still living and today enjoys the weekly ministry of her son at First Baptist Church, Hammond, Indiana.

The family couldn't afford newspapers or magazines. Once a month relatives would bring over their old papers and leave them at the Hyles' residence. Mrs. Hyles and Jack would read the magazines together, she pointing out pictures of liquor bottles or drunks.

"*NO! NO! NO! NO!*" she would repeat several times, pointing to the pictures. "Now repeat after me son."

NO! NO! NO! NO! Young Jack would repeat.

Then Mrs. Hyles would put it on the floor and stomp the picture of a liquor bottle. "*NO! NO! NO! NO!*"

. She then made the young boy stomp the picture repeating, "*NO! NO! NO! NO!*"

"This is bad" she would say to her son, pointing to a picture of cigarettes or a man smoking.

Young Hyles would repeat, "This is bad."

"*BAD! BAD! BAD! BAD!*" She would drum into the young child's mind.

Mrs. Hyles would take a liquor bottle she found around the house into the back yard and break it with a rock whether empty or half full. "This is what you do with liquor," she would say to her son. He laughingly looks back, "I thought if I'd even look at liquor, I'd get drunk and kill someone."

Every evening, Mrs. Hyles would bring the Bible to young Jack before he went to bed. She would hold it out, "This is the Bible . . . it is the Word of God." He would have to repeat after her, "This is the Bible . . . it is the Word of God."

Mrs. Hyles would drill into his head, "You be clean . . . you be clean . . . you be clean."

Coystal Hyles believed the best way to get good character into a boy is to drill bad character out. She believed good actions make a good boy and bad acts make a bad boy. There was no place in the young Hyles for "sowing wild oats."

"G-o-l-l-e-e-" young Hyles said one day coming home from school. Mrs. Hyles knew he had to learn a lesson early so she took a bar of OK soap and peeled off the sticker. Soap was not wrapped in those days. Taking an old paring knife, she shaved the soap into the wash basin and carefully poured in a dipper full of water making a paste-like mixture. The young boy watched as she wrapped a wash rag made out of trousers around her two fingers.

"OPEN YOUR MOUTH," she demanded and began scrubbing teeth . . . gums . . . tongue . . ." Today he exclaims she went all the way to the gizzard.

"What did you say?"

He wouldn't repeat the word, "gollee," again. She asked a second time. Still he was silent. He had learned his lesson well. When Hyles comments on his life, he notes, "My mother made sin much blacker than it actually was." But he notes that this is still the only way to get the lesson across to young people (see sermon, "I Need Your Help to Raise Your Children.")

To this day, Hyles testifies that he has never said a curse word, never smoked, never drank, and praises God for the influence of his mother to keep him clean.

Jack Hyles was born when his mother and daddy were nearly 40, born to poor folks who ran a small neighborhood grocery store in Italy, Texas, 40 miles south of Dallas. The town of 1,100 was populated with hard-working sharecroppers who pulled corn and picked cotton during the week, then went to town "Sat'day night".

Hyles' mother had an eighth grade education, his father could ,barely write his own name to sign a check. Many of the houses in the neighborhood were unpainted and unpapered, called "shacks" by today's standards.

Hyles' mother came from poor hard-working people. He calls them "the salt of the earth". She knew what was right and why she should do it. At the beginning of Hyles' ministry, he led a fallen lady to Christ. Coming into the family kitchen he said, "Mama, I led an adulterous woman to the Lord."

"Son, would you talk to that kind of lady?" she inquired. Her moral background had warned her against the word, "adultry". She had not heard her son talk about leading the lady to the Lord.

When Hyles thinks of his background he exhorts his teenagers, "You don't have to be rich to amount to something, nor do you have to have a Ph.D. in your heritage to be an influence for God." He explains, "Poverty and simplicity prepare a person for successful service in the Lord's work." No one in their wildest dreams would have predicted that a church-builder of five super-

determined congregations would emerge from a poor family living in a dying town among the cotton fields of Texas.

Hyles father was active in the Methodist church for the first few years of married life. Lorine, the first child born to the couple was incapacitated, -she couldn't even turn over in the bed by herself, dying at age seven. The second child Hazel contracted the measles at age seven and died of an after-effect. Perhaps these disappointments caused Hyles father to drift, he compounded other sins in his life.

The third child was Eatlyne, she remembers her daddy going to church, whereas Jack Hyles, born September 25, 1926, twenty-one years after his parents had been married, doesn't remember his father attending church. Young Hyles did not know his father as the good man he had been in early married life.

The birth of Jack Hyles was five weeks late, and today he looks back and laughs, "No one tells me what to do and where to go." He was eleven pounds 3/4 ounces, delivered by Dr. Carlyle in the bedroom of that small home in Italy, Texas.

"You have a fine baby boy." Dr. Carlyle announced as he put the un-named baby boy on the dining room table. Then he told the mother, "The child has a covering over his face much like a veil," He also called it a mantle. It was easily wiped away and the doctor added, "I've only seen this once before in the sixty-two years of bringing children into the world." Mr. Hyles took it as a sign from God that the boy would serve God.

She prayed often that her last baby would be a president or preacher, then following and "old wives tale," she read much while pregnant, thinking it would increase the child's intellect.

Hyles father always wanted a boy but, even on the night of his birth, was out drinking rather than at home with his wife.

The Hyles were Methodist, the other children had been sprinkled, but for some unknown reason Mrs. Hyles would not sprinkle young Jack. Today, Dr. Hyles feels that God was supernaturally preparing the way for him to be a Baptist preacher.

Young Hyles would not stay in a Sunday School class at age three, crying and throwing a fit. His mother stayed with him and when he turned four, she eventually began teaching the four-year-olds. Then for the next thirty years she taught Sunday School.

Jack Hyles has a phenomenal memory, remembering incidents in Italy, Texas, even though the family left when he was only two years old. He shocked his mother and older sister, Earlyne, one day recounting the incident where he would not stay in the baby buggy. "You can't remember that, you were only nine-months old," said his mother. But Hyles continued to describe the incident, saying Earlyne got in the buggy to keep him there. He remembers sneaking into Mrs. Holly's kitchen and receiving a spanking, he was only eighteen months at the time. Many other incredible incidences, verified by his mother and sister, give credence to his sharp memory.

In Jack's early childhood, vicious dust storms swept across Texas with the resulting depression. The Hyles family lost their small store, and moved to Dallas.

The crops failed and there were no jobs there either. The NRA provided free food, the WPA provided what other little money the family had. In Jack Hyles first seventeen years, the family moved seventeen times, they just couldn't pay the rent. It was a downward spiral, each move was to a cheaper house hoping to make ends meet.

But with each move came frustration, the senior Hyles drinking more, coming in late, and the quarrels between the parents growing sharper. Young Jack became a nervous child, going to bed many times worried whether his father and mother would be together the following morning. As a sensitive child, he was left in Sunday School crying. One time a teacher asked, "Where's your daddy," which he simply replied, "My Daddy's dead."

Recently, Dr. Bob Jones, III, and Jack Hyles were riding together in a car, Hyles eluded to Jones' spiritual heritage, having been raised as the son of a college president and the grandson of its founder. Then looking at his meager background Hyles said, "You're a French poodle, but I'm an old alley dog." The men laughed over the illustration, "I'm glad that God uses both a French poodle and an alley dog," agreed Hyles.

"If we had a car, I might be a Methodist preacher rather than a Baptist preacher," Hyles says to this day. As a small boy, they moved to 1626 Ann Arbor, two doors from the Femwood Baptist Church and next door to the preacher. There was no transportation to a Methodist church. Since the Baptist Church was the closest one, Mrs. Hyles and Jack went to every service. The father would come home drunk, stumbling over the preacher's shrubbery. Once the father was milking the family goat in the backyard, leaving the gate open. The goat chased the cat in the front door of the church, but an usher slammed the door on the goat after the cat was in. During the hot summer evening the side door was opened, the goat wandered onto the platform, embarrassing both Mr. Hyles and young Jack.

The Hyles moved yearly, but never moving farther than one mile away from the church. Mrs. Hyles cleaned the church for two dollars a week, but more important was faithful in church attendance, walking through snow, rain or Texas heat. Hyles remembers several occasions when the preacher didn't arrive, but he and his mother were there.

"We may not dress as nice, but we're as good as anybody," Mrs. Hyles told her son, "so walk straight with your head held high." Young Hyles remembers walking barefoot in his patched khaki pants and thinking as he met an oncoming person, "I'm as good as you."

A tall well-bred boy living two blocks away, walked straight home from school each day, books in hand with shoulders back. "Son, I want you to walk like that," Mrs. Hyles remarked on several occasions. As they would attend church, she would point out other gentlemen. "Son, I want you to be like him when you grow up." She always kept a hero before him.

Young Hyles slept in his baby bed until he was seven. The family did not have money to buy him a bed. Hyles never remembers his father playing ball with him, taking him to a sports event or even buddying together.

"Ya'll going to church this evening?" the father asked one day.

"It's Sunday isn't it?" Mrs. Hyles said implying they were going to church as they did every Sunday evening.

"I think I'll go with you."

The father thrilled the family. Young Jack ran and told the preacher asking him, "Could you preach on the second coming?" The boy had remembered being scared when he heard about the second coming, thinking it would get his daddy saved. That evening the church had a special program. The pastor did not preach. Young Jack cried through the service, knowing that his dad would go home unchanged, returning to drink.

Young Jack played on empty lots, taking an old sock, filling it with small rocks, using it for a baseball. His sister Earlyne gave him his first baseball when he was ten. He took a two-by-four, whittled it with an ax making it into a baseball bat. He still sports a scar on his right leg, being slashed with that old bat.

Another scar on the left leg came from football in the streets, he went out for a pass and hit a car bumper.

Jack loved his mother dearly, although he was embarrassed by her shabby clothes and rotten teeth. There was no money to see a dentist or purchase extra clothes. Whatever extra money she could gather, she spent on her son.

He remembers in school his teacher exclaiming, "My what pretty shoes . . . where did you get them?" The teacher knew the Hyles family didn't have much money, yet Jack was too proud to tell her they came from welfare. He remembers his first bicycle. His father picked it out of someone's trash.

Many children in the church went forward for salvation, but not Jack Hyles. He never missed a service and often endured preaching, wondering. "Will the preacher even get finished." But he did not get saved early in life as did many of his friends. The Women's Missionary Service spent a special time in prayer for "Jackie Boy." Shortly thereafter, during the morning service, the pastor prayed, "Dear God, help Jackie boy get saved." Young Jack took it as a sign of distinction that the preacher knew him, he went around telling his friends, "The preacher prayed for me."

The effectual fervent prayers of Jack's mother were heard by God. The fact that the church was praying for Jack Hyles had an impact on his life. On Sunday evening, the church service was conducted in the backyard because of the summer heat. Young Jack accepted Jesus Christ. It was not outstanding nor earth-shaking, a simple poor boy receiving Jesus Christ. He knelt on some lumber next to the back door praying, "Dear God, the preacher prayed for me. If

You will take me, I want to get saved." That evening one other boy was saved. Today, Hyles look back and encourages preachers, "Never get discouraged when only children get saved. You'll never know what God can do with the life of a poor boy."

"I never doubted my salvation from that moment to this hour," Hyles maintains. His salvation was genuine, satisfying, and eternal. He was afraid to be baptized because he was afraid of water. Yet Pastor McLeroy assured, "I'll take care of you." There were no fancy dressing stalls, McLeroy and the boys undressed in the same room. Jack looked over and saw the preacher take off his shirt thinking how common he was. When he saw hair all over his chest, he thought, "He's just like anybody else, I guess preachers are human."

His home had no indoor plumbing or water. The bathroom was located at the end of the path in the back of the yard, the old fashioned biffy. Water for the house came from a pipe in the middle of the back yard, one of Jack's responsibilities was to take a bucket and haul drinking water for the family. The bucket was kept on a shelf on the back porch, and dipper hung on the wall. He jokingly tells that members of the family who didn't haul the bucket would drink from the dipper and any left was thrown in the yard. Young Jack had to do the hauling, he always poured his back in the bucket. Every morning he would brush his teeth, leaning over the banister rail, spitting the excess toothpaste into the yard.

Hyles said, "Childhood days is a time of character building . . . teenage years is a time of character testing . . . adulthood is a time of character reaping." According to Hyles, character is doing right subconsciously. You cannot get character when you get saved. Salvation is getting eternal life; character is paying your bills on time, telling the truth, and keeping your word. Hyles thanks God that his mother instilled character in him as a young boy.

CHAPTER 18

Wouldn't You Rather Have Me Than a Bottle of Beer?

THE PRESSURE OF ADOLESCENCE

Jack Hyles is called narrow-minded because he preaches against dancing, social drinking, petting, and smoking. He pleads unashamedly and unhyprocritically for teens to keep themselves pure because, when Jack Hyles was an adolescent, he lived by the standards he @now sets for them. And his spiritual testings were compounded by poverty and home pressures.

When he was thirteen years old, his mother woke him up around 1:00 A.M. Monday morning. Immediately he knew something was wrong. His mother and dad came and sat on his bed.

"Your dad is leaving home," the mother told young Jack Hyles. During the evening church service, she had stayed home for the first time in many years and the father had broken his marriage vows of faithfulness. Now she had confronted him and there was nothing else to do but separate. She did not tell young Hyles about the incident, only that he was @eaving home because of liquor.

"If Daddy quit drinking, could he stay?" his pleading eyes were directed to his mother.

"Yes."

"Will you quit drinking so you can stay with us?" the young Hyles said, pushing sleep away from his eyes and turning to his father.

"No," the voice of his father was simple but realistic. He knew he could not quit.

"Wouldn't you rather have us than drink?" the young Hyles was now sitting up in his bed, pleading with his father. He continued shaking his head and they talked for a few minutes. Finally, young Jack got out of bed, knelt on the floor pleading with his father.

"Daddy, wouldn't you rather have me than a bottle of beer?"

The father never answered but slowly got up and determinately left the room. Jack ran to the front window and watched his father walk down the street and turn at the corner of Hobson and Idaho. He never returned to the home. Several times as a teenager, Jack would get a phone call, the drunken voice at the other end would ask him to come to a neighboring drugstore. Young Jack would jump on his bike to meet his father where they would drink a Coca-Cola and chat for a few minutes. Finally, his father would give him a few dollars and leave. Today Jack Hyles looks back with tears, mentioning that his father never came to his high school graduation, his wedding. He never came back to the home.

At age thirteen, Jack moved with his mother across the street from Hillcrest Baptist Church, a place where Hyles spent his teenage years, met the girl who later became his wife, was licensed to preach and from this church, he went into the ministry.

During these teenage years, his sports ambitions grew. Jack developed the desire to be a sports announcer. He would practice by the hour, holding a stick to his face, broad-casting imaginary games. Station WRR, the mutual affiliate in Dallas held a contest for boys to announce baseball games. Hundreds of boys filled the room each one wanting to broadcast a major league ballgame. Young Jack won the contest and got to announce a baseball game of the Dallas team. As he looks back on those teenage years he states, "God was preparing me to use my voice so I could be a preacher." Even though his mother had wanted him to be a preacher before he was born, she never told him of this desire. She wanted God to call him to the pastorate, not a mother-inspired call.

Jack entered a nation-wide essay contest; teenage boys were invited to write an imaginary interview with Lew DeFillipo, the captain and center of the Fordham University football team. They were playing in the Cotton Bowl, Dallas, that year. Young Jack got some scratch paper and a pencil, writing the essay. Unknown to his mother, he mailed it off and promptly forgot about the essay. A couple of weeks later the phone rang at 1 A.M. in the morning, the voice at the other end notified young Jack that he had won. "I thought there was a rainbow, and a pot of gold at the end," stated Hyles. He was honored during Cotton Bowl Week, interviewed on 169 stations. Jim Knox, owner of the Knox Gelatin Company, gave Hyles a cowboy hat, a silk shirt and boots, and he rode on the fire truck in the annual Cotton Bowl Parade down the center of Dallas.

One year Jack attended thirty-nine high school and college football games in Dallas because he loved the game. As an usher wearing his ROTC uniform he went to every game because he got in free.

Jack Hyles was quiet and reflective. Many nights his mother looked out the front window and saw him sitting on the church steps reading, later in the evening he would be sitting there thinking. He thought about the universe, and its forces, he analyzed life as deeply as possible. When he wasn't sitting, he was walking the neighborhood alone. Yet he testifies that in all of his solitude he never felt lonely. Many evenings he couldn't go to sleep, tossing and turning on the mattress. He would get up and look out the window trying to figure out life.

Young Jack Hyles never spent a night away from home until he went into the Army in 1944. Because conditions at home were poor, he never had a friend sleep over. He and his best friend would sit and talk by the hour.

Every night young Hyles said his prayers before going to bed. His mother had taught him early and he never missed.

Now I lay me down to sleep

I pray the Lord my soul to keep

If I should die before I wake,

I pray the Lord my soul to take

Bless Mommy, Daddy, Earlyn, Jack

Make me a good boy, Amen.

Even though he said his childhood prayers he was not a sissy, he did not like to play with girls nor hang around them. He played in every football, basketball, or baseball game he could find.

During those lonely years Jack was developing an analytical mind, how to think. Today he looks back and indicates much of his philosophy in rearing children was developed as he thought about his own life. He analyzed how his mother reared him, as well as the faults of his father. Today, he maintains that the philosophy in his book, *How to Rear Children*, was developed as a teenager on those long walks around the block.

In the eight grade he ran for president of the junior high school, traditionally a boy was president and a girl was secretary. That year the, "prettiest girl in school" ran against Jack Hyles and during the final assembly, he gave the traditional speech of the president, what he would do for the school. He maintains the girl was "unfair" she sang a song, swaying the audience and winning the election. Since he missed election for the president of the student body, he ran for president of the eight grade class and won.

Jack Hyles had his first date with Della Lou Sutton the night he graduated from junior high school. His buddy Dickie Green and another girl made it a double date.

"Are you getting me a corsage?" Della Lou sent word through Dickie to Jack Hyles.

"Tell her she can eat anything on the menu," the naive Hyles responded.

As president of the eight grade, Hyles was Master of Ceremony at the graduation banquet. He was supposed to lead the first dance, but refused. As a matter of fact, he didn't dance all evening.

After the dance, the couples decided to get something to eat, but young Hyles had never been in a restaurant. He had spent most of his time at Dougherty's Pharmacy. Since that was the best place he knew and he was driving the car, the two couples went to Dougherty's, but all the tables were taken. The couples sat on the stools at the counter, and ordered milkshakes and hamburgers; the girls evening dresses were out of place.

As they left, Hyles announced, "Let's live it up." They had the rest of the evening. As they drove around, Hyles' looked in the rearview mirror and saw Dickie sitting close to his girlfriend. Slamming on the brakes, he jumped out of the car, took Dickie around to the back, out of earshot of the girls, "I'll have nothing immoral in this car," the young fourteen year old boy demanded. Dickie laughed at him.

As Hyles look back on the incident he maintains, "I'd rather be a square than unclean." It is better to be on the safe side than to ruin one's life.

The boys got back in the car and took the girls to Wee St. Andrews Golf Course. Many of those at the miniature golf course laughed at the girls in evening dresses and high heels trying to putt a golf ball. A few years ago an older Della Lou Sutton met Jack Hyles on the street of Dallas, they laughed together about the evening when she said, "Let's go play miniature golf."

Hyles reputation of having never kissed a girl spread throughout the school. One of the cliques of girls got together, each pooling one dollar into a kitty to go to the first girl to kiss Jack Hyles. During his senior year, Hyles stayed out on a date with two other couples later than he had ever been out. About 1 A.M., the six were parked in front of the Texas Theatre when the driver took a swig from a bottle of wine and passed it to the girl sitting next to him. She drank and the bottle was passed around the car, reaching Hyles last, sitting behind the driver. His conscience smote him, and his heart beat wildly. He didn't want to be a stick-in-the-mud. Every eye in the car was riveted on young Hyles, they knew it was the moment of truth. Feeling peer-pressure he wiped the bottle with his bare hand and began lifting it to his lips. Within an inch of his mouth, the pressure of seventeen years of godly living stuck a needle in his soul, an image of his drunken father stumbling home flashed through his mind.

"TAKE ME HOME!" he threw the bottle on the floor, spilling drink on those in the back seat.

"Why?" his shocked friends responded at the emotional display of temper.

"I promised God I would never drink," he angrily announced to his friends, realizing for once and for all he was choosing the side of right, spurning the side of alcohol and sin. He knew he would be laughed at. His friends began mocking him, taunting, "Do you want to go home and knit?"

"I'll go home and knit if I have to, but take me home," he demanded. His friends called him Little Lord Fauntleroy. He remained resolute, "I want to go home."

The moon left shadows across the sidewalk from the two trees in front of 2632 Idaho when they dropped him off at 1:30 A.M. Many teenagers would have been emotionally low, being mocked by their friends, but not Jack Hyles. He remembered every exhortation of his mother, to walk tall and remember, "I'm as good as any man." He walked onto the front porch, the door was opened but the screen door was locked. His mother was in an old fashioned drawstring nightgown, kneeling at the couch in the front room, she had not heard them drop Jack off at the curb.

"Dear Lord, I've tried to rear Jack to be a good boy, I've had to be both his mother and father, he's out later than he's ever been in his life . . . keep him pure." The prayer was intermingled with sobs.

"Mom," Jack said as he stood at the screen door.

She ran and hugged him, and the first thing she asked, "Did you do anything wrong?" They sat on the couch, young Jack telling his mother that he came within one inch of taking his first drink, he rehearsed throwing the bottle into the floorboard of the car. Through tears of joy,

his mother told him that at approximately 1 A.M. God had burdened her, she couldn't sit, walk or even lie in the bed. She was kneeling and praying at the time when he was tempted most, she was begging God to keep him pure.

On Baccalaureate Sunday, Jack Hyles double-dated that morning with his best high school buddy. The two were always together and were called the twins. The Baccalaureate service was held at Cliff Temple Baptist Church, Dallas, Texas. Afterwards they went out for Sunday dinner and then to an open house in one of the student's home.

"What will we do tonight?" Hyle's buddy laughingly asked the group.

"Where do we go to church tonight?" Hyles asked in dead seriousness.

"This is senior day, we've been in church all our life," said the boy who was not exaggerating. He went on to expand his argument, "I go to church as much as any of you, but I don't want to go to church on senior day." He suggested they go to a nightclub, but not drink, that was the thing to do on senior day. When Hyles refused, he suggested, "Let's go to the movies?" Hyles' date shrugged her shoulders, "It looks like I drew a dud." Jack maintained that a Christian belonged in church, and that she went to the same church he did but the three determined to go to the movies. "Let's take Jack home." the other boy explained, and they did.

When Jack got home he called his date's mother telling her that he was no longer responsible for her daughter, that she had gone to the movies. He went to church that night and eventually became one of the greatest Baptist preachers in America. His friend went to the movies, and later moved to Hollywood becoming involved in the television production of the Smothers Brothers Program and later as a movie director and actor.

Later that summer, Hyles was pitching softball for the Dallas Railway and Terminal Company, when the team won the city championship. The state finals were being held in Dallas that year. Hyles had pitched one no-hit game and struck out at least ten batters in each game he pitched. To complicate matters, he was the only pitcher on the team and for several days he knew the championship would be played on Sunday evening at 7 P.M. As Sunday drew closer, he battled his conscience as to whether or not he would play on Sunday. The coach was a deacon in the church and rationalized, "I'm going to be there, why can't you?" "Go on and play, it's just one time, it won't hurt any one," he reasoned.

"It won't hurt someone else, but it will hurt me," Hyles responded. After he left, Hyles knelt under a tree, promising God that he would go to church that evening.

When he arrived at the church, the coach had the team dressed, sitting across the street from the church. They met him as he entered the church steps. The coach argued, "If you played shortstop it wouldn't hurt us, but you are our only pitcher." With no encouragement from adult leadership, he stood alone, refusing to pitch the game.

Several years later preaching in a large Baptist church in Dallas, Joe Young, who had played second base on the team, came up after a service and shook Hyles hand. Joe reminded Hyles that they got beat 10-0 that night and he testified, "I cursed you because you let us down."

But then Young told Hyles, "As a result of that game I envied you, I wished I had the courage you had." Later, Joe Young was saved because of Hyles and became chairman of the deacons in that church.

Hyles uses the illustration of not pitching softball on Sunday commenting, "No one will care ten years later whether you came in first or second . . . they want to know if you have character now, people judge you by what you do now, not what you did then." Then Hyles went on to preach, "God was teaching me a lesson, if I could stand alone against a ball team, I could stand against liberal preachers, godless school officials and corrupt politicians."

After graduation from high school in June, 1944, he spent six months at home, working at the Dallas Railway Terminal in the parts division, but was not working toward a vocation. He pitched for the softball team, planning to be a sports announcer or journalist. All of his life he had lived for sports, he knew statistics and he wanted to be in the sports world.

While working in the Parts Division, a black Christian came in each day driving a truck. The two struck up a friendship. At first they just talked about the Lord and finally they began spending time studying Sunday School lessons together. Hyles was attending a Southern Baptist Church where they studied the International Sunday School lesson.

"God told me you ought to be a preacher," the black friend said one day, startling Hyles. For the first time in his life he began to think seriously about the ministry.

In November of 1944, Hyles got his letter of "Greetings" from Uncle Sam, notifying him of being drafted into the armed service. He didn't want to go into the infantry, so he went down and volunteered for induction, putting in his application for the Air Force. He and his best friend joined together. Hyles passed the physical test and later passed the scholarship examination everything seemed to be working out fine. At the last moment he failed the eye test, revealing for the first time in his life that he was partially color blind. His buddy went on into the Naval Air Force, Hyles was diverted off into the infantry; he was scheduled to leave for the service January 16, 1945.

The next month and a half were important days. He had been seriously dating Beverly Slaughter since getting out of high school. She attended the same church, but had gone to a different high school.

On the Watchnight service, December 31, 1944, Hyles was sitting four pews from the front with a number of teenagers. He was wrestling with a call to full-time Christian service, all the people in the auditorium knew that he would soon be in the Army.

A few seats down on the same row, Margaret Stevenson, wrote on the back of a Training Union quarterly, "Why don't you surrender tonight?" During the invitation, Jack Hyles went forward surrendering his life for the gospel ministry.

The night he left for Fort Sam Houston, San Antonio, Texas, he asked Beverly to marry him, to wait for him until he got out of the service.

During his basic training, he went through the training just as other men, even though he was only 135 lbs. One day toward the end of a 26 mile hike with full pack, he was stretched out under a tree in the hot Texas sun taking a ten minute rest when officers drove up in a jeep and announced, "We need volunteers." In the Army recruits learned not to volunteer for anything, but Hyles wanting to get away from the long hikes, was the first to put up his hand. He learned that he had volunteered for the paratroopers.

Next day he was examined along with 300 other men as to height, weight, and the basic requirements for the paratroopers. Out of the 300 men only 30 were accepted, among them Jack Hyles. Even though he had ignorantly volunteered for the paratroopers, he deeply wanted to get into that branch of service, he wanted to be something better than an ordinary foot soldier. That day out of 300 men only 299 were shown the color chart, the examining official forgot to test the eyes of Jack Hyles. To this day, he feels it was the hand of God allowing him to go into the paratroopers.

Right before they shipped out, Hyles was sent to the base hospital because of a spinal problem. The commanding officer told Hyles he would not go with his unit, he would have to stay and get x-rays. Hyles sneaked out of the hospital, rejoined his unit and was shipped out with them. "I still do not know what happened to those x-rays," smiled Hyles.

During the service he jumped nineteen times, landing in the water, in the bushes, on the desert, in pastures, and dangling, from trees. During all the time, God providentially watched over him, he was not hurt in any way. As he looks back on his paratrooping days, he jokes, "I never jumped, but was pushed nineteen times."

During training they had to run one-mile the first day. At the finish line he got sick, fell-out and threw up his breakfast.

"Paratrooper, when we quit running-we crawl," yelled the First Sergeant. He had to crawl back to the barracks, however the next day he ran two miles finally ending up running ten miles a day.

During his paratroopers days, Hyles testifies that never once did he dance, drink, smoke a cigarette or attend the movies. He goes on to add that when he was off duty he did not miss one Sunday morning, Sunday evening or prayer meeting. He missed only those services where he was on bivouac or had assigned duty. "I was in church every time possible," he testified.

The first time he made a jump was a frightening experience, he was the number two man, the second out of the plane into the air. The jump sergeant stood at the end of a line of eighteen men, nine to a side in the plane. The door was opened and the wind whistled by. Each recruit sat stoned face staring straight ahead waiting for the time that they had been trained. The sergeant yelled down the belly of the plane, "Stand up and hook up." Each recruit stood and hooked his static line to the cable running down the center of the plane.

"Check equipment," the paratroopers began checking the chute of the man in front of them, Hyles quipped back over his shoulder, "Make sure you do a good job."

"Count off," the sergeant shouted. The first man yelled, "Eighteen okay," Each of the men numbered off, Hyles yelling, "Two okay." The black boy who stood number one yelled, "One okay."

"STAND TO THE DOOR!" The first man was to stand, the left foot out, hands on the outside of the plane, each paratrooper was commanded to look to the horizon, never look down.

"Is everybody happy" yelled the sergeant. Hyles thought to himself, "the stupidity of the question is surpassed by the stupidity of the answer." Everyone yelled back, "YES."

“JUMP!”

"No sir, I can't go." The black boy would not go out of the plane. The officer tried to bribe him, persuade him, push him and kick him out, the number one man would not go. On three other occasions, they tried to get him to jump, but finally in disgrace he left the paratroopers. Hyles stood number one and had to go out the plane, "Yes, I was scared," he honestly maintains. But today he maintains, "talent never wins the victory," explaining some of the most talented people fail. He jumped because of the philosophy he developed as a lonely teenage boy thinking about life, "Character wins battles," and he jumped because he had to. "You do in life what is required of you."

Hyles remembers the happy days when he got his wings, the young men tied white suspension lines in the dark brown boots, thinking they were sharp. All the fellows in his unit went down to get a tattoo of a parachute on their arms, Hyles went with them and when his turn came, he rolled up his sleeve but for some reason he didn't think it was right. He rolled the sleeve back down and until this day he is glad, he resisted pressure to conform to the group.

When the unit was shipped out to Europe during World War II, he was kept home as a special rigger and trainer. During September and October, 1945, he got 66 days furlough, stayed home the first 60 days and got married with only six days left to enjoy the honeymoon. On Wednesday night during prayer meeting, he was licensed to the Gospel ministry, later that evening he was married in the pastor's study. To this day he regrets that it was not a public ceremony, there were no cameras to take pictures, no friends to share in his happiness nor a congregation present to wish the new family well. Hyles is against elopment and counsels young people to have a public ceremony that is both glorifying to God, rewarding to the couple and shared by friends.

When Hyles went back into the service, he spent most of his time on KP and Guard duty, realizing he was getting nowhere fast, he wanted to do something. Captain Fuller came through the unit one day asking, "Can anyone type?" Hyles volunteered for the job because no one else would, when in reality he had never touched a typewriter in his life. He was assigned to the personnel division of the company and had to type checks, letters and forms for the 279 men in the company. That first day was agony, every time an officer walked through the office, Hyles typed as rapidly as possible, "NOW IS THE TIME FOR ALL GOOD MEN TO COME TO THE AID OF THEIR COUNTRY." He spent every available free hour working on his typing, feeling if the Army was paying him to be a typist he ought to do a good job. He maintains, "It was not

whether I had the ability, I had the obligation." Within one week he had reached thirty-five words per minute and spent the remainder of his time in the army as a typist in the personnel office.

He was discharged in April, 1947, and immediately bought \$700 worth of furniture on credit without a job. It took a while to find employment, finally going to work for his father-in-law, laying oak flooring. It involved bending at the waist, nailing oak planks to the sub-floor all day long. "I had forty blisters at the end of the day," he jokes, "and had to lean against the wall to straighten up." that summer he won the respect of his father-in-law through hard work.

I The pastor of Cedar Temple Baptist Church was going on vacation and heard that Hyles was licensed for the ministry but didn't know much about him. He invited Hyles to preach in his pulpit. The chairman of the deacons introduced Hyles and for three minutes the first-time preacher stuttered, reading two or three random verses but having nothing to say. He would read a verse then look at the people, and when embarrassment spread over the audience, he would stare down at the text. When nothing came to his mind, he would read a second verse and the cycle of embarrassment would repeat itself. After a few minutes of frustration, he sat down thinking himself a complete failure. The chairman of the deacons apologized and dismissed the service, they went home early that day. Young Hyles who always accomplished what he attempted, had failed the most important task in his life, to preach the word of God.

That fall he attended North Texas Agricultural College, taking four classes in voice. Not only did he learn how to speak, he learned how to take care of his voice so that today he can speak four or five times a day without doing harm to his ability to speak.

He taught a class of junior boys for the next year and each Sunday evening he worked with his wife in Training Union. He worked in the Hilicrest Baptist Church, a time of growth and maturity in the Lord's work. One year later, September, 1947, he went to East Texas Baptist College, Marshall, Texas. His father-in-law gave him forty dollars to help him get into school. He got a job at J. C. Penny's working 40 hours a week, in addition to taking a full load at college and pastoring a country church. Hyles had the conviction that a wife should be at home and not working.

Even though he worked less hours than full time employees, (making 600 an hour) Hyles was considered one of the best salesmen in the store. On one occasion, a new suit was offered to the person making the most sales. Hyles won the suit testifying, "God wanted me to have it because I needed it to preach."

The first weeks of college, Hubert Borce, professor of Psychology and Sociology announced in class that he was preaching a revival and needed someone to supply his pulpit the following Sunday. He asked for volunteers, but didn't get any. After the class he came back to Hyles, commenting, "You're new." Hyles was sitting with Beverly when he asked, "Are you a preacher boy?"

"Yes, I am."

"Would you preach for me this Sunday?" Hyles replied that he would.

CHAPTER 19

A Great Work Never Just Happens

-It's Caused

THE FIVE PASTORATES OF JACK HYLES

When Jack Hyles preached his first successful sermon, he filled the pulpit for his sociology teacher at East Texas Baptist College. His wife thought he couldn't do it, but Hyles accepted the challenge, with full knowledge he failed in his first sermon.

The chairman of the deacons introduced him stating, "He's going to tell us what God has laid on his heart." As the deacon was introducing him, Hyles was fumbling through his Bible looking for a place to preach. Once again he read a verse, and made a few comments, this time the comments came easier and the content was coherent. He read another verse and found himself at home in the pulpit. Without realizing it Hyles preached for thirty minutes. On the way home he told Beverly, "Preaching is great, and I've got a whole Bible left, I'm just starting." He had been invited back that night and after the service the treasurer gave him a folded piece of paper to which he responded, "What's this?" The startled treasurer explained that was his pay for preaching that day.

"As I live and breathe, I'll never take money for preaching," Hyles told the treasurer. (Later in life he changed his mind.) The preacher-boys met him on the campus the next morning, news spread through the college that he would not accept money. They explained that he was ruining their way of getting through school. One boy greedily suggested, "Take the money and give it to us."

Within three weeks Hyles was called to pastor the Marris Chapel Baptist Church in Bogata, Texas, approximately a hundred miles away from college. There were nineteen members, a small church house and he was paid \$7.50 for the weekend. Hyles considered the opportunity to preach at Marris Chapel an answer to prayer inasmuch as many preacher boys had been in college four years and didn't have a church. One of the poorest congregations in East Texas gathered to hear Hyles preach, although they were good people. Beverly had been reared properly, it took grace to serve in the community, not a single house had indoor plumbing. One day as they sat at the table, Beverly commented, "I feel something on my leg, it's moving." It was a pig. The head of the house explained, animals had to eat too. On another occasion as they were sitting at a meal, a chicken came flying down from the rafters. On many occasions, the young couple had to ask for grace to get them through the meal. During one Sunday noon meal the family had one can of chili and banana puddin, "that's all they had," responded Hyles, "no bread, crackers or anything else." Right before asking the blessing the father exclaimed, "I wish we had the preacher every Sunday, we sure do eat well when he's here." At first Hyles thought he might be too good for the people, but finally God broke his heart and he was willing to pray, "Let me stay here the rest of my life . . ."

The pianist could only play one song, "The Old Rugged Cross." Many times they sang other songs, but it was always to the tune of "The Old Rugged Cross."

Beverly and Jack got up early on Sunday morning and drove 100 miles to Marris Chapel to preach, returning that Sunday evening. Many times the weather was beautiful in Marshall, but raining in Bogata. The church was back in the woods, down muddy roads and they couldn't get in. On one occasion, Bev pushed the car out of the mud, Hyles driving. The two of them had decided that the preacher should not get muddy because he had to stand in the pulpit.

Each Sunday morning, Hyles preached to about 12 people, the congregation swelled to over 40 in the evening, because the farmers were free to attend church. During his ministry, the membership grew from 19 to 20.

The church had only one deacon and he came in overalls. When it came time to serve communion, the deacon and Hyles served the elements off an old kitchen table. One Sunday a woodpecker got into the rafters of the church and rapped on the rafters, disturbing the communion service. Hyles ended up on the table with a broom, chasing the woodpecker out of the church. He commented, "It would come back the following week because there were no windows in the church."

During the summer of 1949, the men at the Union Pacific Railway learned about a fantastic softball pitcher who had moved to Marshall, Texas, they contacted Jack Hyles and asked him to pitch for their team. Hyles, first and always a sports enthusiast, agreed to pitch for the team, he saw nothing wrong with a Baptist preacher engaging in sports. The first time he played, he pitched a no-hit game. During the second game, Hyles hit a ball deep to the short stop. There was a close call at first base, and Hyles complained bitterly to the umpire when he was called out. During the rhabarb, a first baseman and Hyles exchanged angry words. The hardened veteran challenged young Hyles, "I'll bunt the ball down to first base and stomp you when I run past." Hyles lost his temper and retorted, "You'll never hit the ball because I'll knock you down." As circumstances would have it, the first baseman was the first batter up in the next inning. Hyles took aim at his head and let it fly with all the speed he had. As the batter ducked, the ball hit his bat and trickled down the first base line. Hyles charged the ball and the two men collided in the first base path. Cooler heads stepped in to avert a fight, Jack Hyles walked over to the pitcher's mound, placed his glove on the rubber and left the field. He has never pitched another ballgame to this day. On several occasions he has "goofed around" with a ball and some boys at camp, but he never entered a softball game again.

While preaching at Marris Chapel, Hyles still was a salesman in the men's department at J. C. Penney's in Marshall, Texas. One day Mrs. Jean Lambert walking out of Ladies Hosiery and chatted with the young preacher boy telling him her church was without a preacher for that Sunday. She was the pianist at Grange Hall Baptist Church. The congregation had already heard two candidates but needed a supply for Sunday. Hyles got someone to preach for him at Bogata and he filled the pulpit at Grange Hall Baptist Church, ten miles outside of Marshall. The following Sunday when the vote was taken, the first candidate got nineteen votes, the second eight and Hyles received twenty-eight write-in votes. He got one more vote than the other two candidate, giving him the majority. Mrs. Lambert and the teenagers in the church voted for Hyles.

The deacons were furious, three of them phoned the salesman-preacher demanding that he come to the church . . . immediately. They had just concluded the deacons meeting and it was after midnight. When he sat on the front pew, the deacons stood over him, charging, "Young man you're not old enough to pastor this church." One man vowed "I own the largest store in town, and most of the members rent from me." Another threatened, "You will not walk into the pulpit next Sunday."

Jack Hyles didn't sleep that night, but drove the country roads of east Texas. Finally, he stopped to pray in a pine thicket, kneeling on a sand hill. That night Hyles determined five things, that would ultimately help him build the largest church in America. He took out a sheet of scratch paper writing the following principles. (1) No man would ever tell him what to preach. (2) Money would never be the object of his preaching. (3) I will always be a friend to my friends. (4) I will be loyal to Biblical principles not to institutions. (5) I will make decisions for the ministry based on what I think is right and never go against my conscience. Hyles explains he doesn't know why the principles are in their order, except that these were his conviction that night. On many occasions Hyles has repeated these five points as his magna carta of liberty.

Jack Hyles went out to the Grange Hall Baptist Church the following evening, the deacons were not there. He went to the altar and opened his Bible, reading Psalm 1, "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the council of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful."

The deacons came to Mrs. Lambert saying, "You and the kids go tell Hyles that he's your pastor."

The first eight weeks, Hyles couldn't join the church that he pastored. As he looked out in the audience, the kids were not there to help vote him into membership. Many who opposed him would have voted against him, so he didn't present himself as a candidate for membership. After eight weeks there were enough converts added to the membership that he could vote himself in.

A person came to complain about the sermon, but Hyles stopped him short. "When we construct a new building, you get one vote; when we approve a budget; you get one vote; when we call a new staff member, you get one vote; but when I preach, you don't get a vote. That's between me and God." Hyles is determined he will not listen to anyone-any man-but God, when he is preparing a sermon.

For eight weeks, Hyles did not get a check. One week when he stood to preach, the treasurer held up a check, snickered and stuck it back in his pocket. On several occasions, the deacons had made faces at him while he preached, scowling or laughing. The young preacher boy got to the place where he wouldn't look them straight in the eye, he looked from one corner of the ceiling to the other or down at the text. One night, God gave him the verse in Jeremiah, "Be not afraid of their faces." He announced to the congregation on a Sunday evening, "Look what I found in the Bible. God says I'm not supposed to be afraid of their faces." Then he pointed to the deacons, "You . . . and you . . . and you . . . have been making faces at me when I preach, God tells me not to be afraid of you." The young pastor spoke with boldness that night and God gave him the heart of the congregation. When he told them he hadn't been getting his check, a man stood up and made a motion that Hyles be paid that week's salary and all that was due in the past. The people voted unanimously, and made the treasurer write the check on the spot and give it to him immediately.

Up until this time, Hyles had only seen one twelve year old girl receive the Lord as a result of his preaching, even then she did not get baptized. He went out into the fields behind the parsonage at night to pray for God's power, "I don't want to be an average preacher, I want to be the best, I want to have everything God has for me," he demanded, "I've got to have power." He prayed weekly, yet the altar was empty when he gave the invitation. Finally, Hyles went to church, praying all night. He went around the auditorium, kneeling at every spot on the pews, asking God for power to fall on the person who sits there.

Next Sunday evening three people came forward. After they were led to the Lord, the three stood in front of the church, the congregation sang a welcoming hymn, every person walked past with a book in the left hand, greeting them with a right hand of friendship. The service was dismissed and Hyles was standing by the communion table looking toward the choir when a big, 235 pound man draped himself on Hyles' shoulder, "My daughter's crying, I think she'd get saved if you'd talk to her." Hyles went to the back of the church and led her to the Lord. By this time people were already in their cars, one family had the mule hitched to the wagon getting ready to go home when Hyles ran onto the porch and yelled to them, "Hey, we've got someone else to vote into the church." The congregation returned and voted her into the church singing the welcome song again.

After they all emptied back out onto the parking lot, the same man came to Hyles again, "my married daughter, is in the other corner of the church crying. I think she wants to get saved." Hyles led her to the Lord and went onto the front porch again, yelling to the congregation, waving them back into the small building. They voted her into the church and again sang the welcoming hymn. Hyles looks back on the event and says, "The way I felt that night is the way I think I'll feel in heaven."

The man came up to Hyles a third time, with tears in his voice. "Preacher, my son-in-law just threw down his cigarettes and said he'll never smoke again. I think you can lead him to the Lord," Hyles went onto the front porch, and there led him to Jesus Christ. Once again, he waved the congregation back to vote him into the church and to sing a welcoming hymn. By this time, it was 11: 00 o'clock, but the little church had never experienced such fellowship.

A fourth time, the man came to Hyles, putting his arm around his preacher, "I think I ought to get saved now." Hyles knelt at the old fashioned altar where the hulk of a man cried like a baby. The congregation was waved back into their seats where they sang a welcoming hymn and gave him the right hand of 'fellowship.

Later that night Beverly and Jack Hyles knelt beside their bed in the small country parsonage next to the church, "This is what we want." For the next 27 Sundays in that church, someone was saved every Sunday. God had given His power to Jack Hyles to preach the gospel. Not only in Grange Hall Baptist Church, but every Sunday for the rest of his life, Hyles has seen the power of God work as the gospel is preached and there has never been a Sunday when someone has not been saved in a church pastored by Jack Hyles.

The Grange Hall Baptist Church began to blossom, people were at the altar every Sunday getting saved, the young preacher boy was the talk of the county. Hyles confesses falling in love with the church where he had his first funeral. His mother attended and came up afterward with maternal pride, "Son, you were great. You had them all crying back where I was sitting."

Today, there are forty pastors across America as a result of Jack Hyles' ministry at Marshall, Texas.

While in Marshall, Texas, Hyles' first daughter, Becky, was born on Dec. 5, 1951. Also, Hyles' father attended New Year's Day service listening to the sermons both Sunday morning and Sunday night, but not responding to the gospel. He promised that he would get saved, but was never able to keep that promise.

While at Grange Hall Baptist Church, Hyles' father died. He went back to the grave and knelt in the fresh sod, pleading with God for power. Young Jack Hyles looked up into the Texas sky, and vowed God there would never be a Sunday when he wouldn't preach hard, begging people to get saved. He promised God there would never be a Sunday where they would have a musical cantata or children's program. He remembered the time his father went to church, but the gospel was not preached. He determined every person who came to hear him preach would hear the gospel as clearly as he could make it.

As Hyles grew popular, invitations came for him to preach from all around the county, finally he was preaching all over east Texas. Seven pulpit committees came to hear him preach for seven weeks in a row, the last one from the Southside Baptist Church, Henderson, Texas. He accepted their call to be pastor and moved to his third church.

Hyles had a prosperous ministry at Henderson, growing from 100 members to over 600 members in a town of 10,000 during an eight-month period. The church had a typical auditorium with a two-story educational building. While there, Hyles finished college. He was approached by the pulpit committee from Miller Road Baptist Church, Garland, Texas and his first reaction was, "No, I won't come and preach, I just got to Henderson."

Cynthia White a one-year-old girl in the church, went into the hospital. The little girl was the same age as Becky Hyles and Hyles felt an unusual burden for her. Remaining at the hospital all evening, he slipped into a side room to pray. It was there that God spoke to him about the church in Garland, Texas. He had finished college and now he was ready to go to seminary, the Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary was only a hour's drive away from Garland. The Miller Road Baptist Church was the logical choice for his next ministry.

His first Sunday in Garland there were 44 present in a small building valued at only \$6,000. The church was smaller, the salary was smaller, Hyles took a \$117.00 a month cut in salary. They returned some of their furniture, sent the air-conditioner back and cancelled some life insurance. But the young couple did not consider it a sacrifice, they wanted to go to Garland. The first time Jack and Beverly Hyles walked into the auditorium, they felt God speaking to their hearts, being assured God was leading them to Garland, Texas. The church in Henderson had a beautiful parsonage, there was not one in Garland.

Hyles had to lead the choir at the new church and mimeograph the bulletin. There was no office, he sat at the communion table and typed letters.

The young congregation needed a building and Hyles went down to visit a gentleman who was one of the richest men in town.

He was announced as Reverend Hyles and when he walked in the door, the man said, "Well I guess you have come after money," before Hyles could give any explanation, the old man

went on a tirade concerning money grabbing preachers. He accused every church of only being after money.

"I WOULDN'T HAVE YOUR STINKING MONEY," Hyles interrupted in a declarative voice. He went on to say, "I'll not bow down to any man." As Hyles was leaving, he said, "If you want to let God's people use your money-fine, but you have found one preacher who's, not impressed because you've got a lot of money."

Before Hyles got to the church, the man caught up to him in the car. "You're the only fellow I've ever wanted to loan money to in my life. How much do you want?"

"\$13,000." Hyles had the money before sundown.

He had never constructed a building in his life and didn't know the first steps in building a Christian Education wing. He remembered how large his previous buildings were and drew them accordingly. He contracted a plumber, an electrician, a carpenter, Hyles was the general contractor for the job. He confesses now the building was not pretty but at the time, it was the most beautiful church building he had ever seen. Hyles hung much of the drywall and put down all of the tile on the floor. He put too much black glue down and during dedication day, it oozed up through the cracks and was tracked throughout the building.

A reception was held on Sunday afternoon to dedicate the new building. The congregation and visitors came by to view the new structure and shake hands with the contractor and pastor, who was both Jack Hyles. As they were standing around drinking punch one man asked, "What kind of heat are you using?" Hyles choked on his punch, "What?"

"What kind of heat do you have?" Embarrassingly, Hyles had to explain that he had forgotten to plan for heat. The building today has pipes running under the ceiling and down the walls in each room, humorously referred to as "Hyles' pipe."

Miller Road Baptist Church exploded in attendance, the crowds came weekly, every Sunday people were getting baptized and the church was called, "The fastest growing church in the world." Converts dressed for baptism in the new building next door, came across the church yard, and into the auditorium, where large screens kept them from view of the congregation. They had to climb a wooden ladder to get to the baptistry. Today Hyles maintains, "A man does not get baptized because it's convenient, he obeys God out of deep conviction." Then he explains a church should provide as nice and efficient facilities as possible but never get the means before the end.

Hyles came to Miller Road Baptist Church on December 14, 1952 and remained as pastor for six years and eight months. There were 44 members when he arrived, 4,128 when he left., The church had an annual budget of \$3,000 which rose to over \$200,000 while he was pastor. There was only one small \$6,000 building when Hyles was called, but he left 11 buildings and a strong vibrant church.

From those 44 members who met him on the first Sunday, attendance reached 618 on his first anniversary, a year later on the second anniversary there were 1,180 in Sunday School and

on the third anniversary, 2,212 were present, Sunday School attendance averaged 1,500 during that year.

When Hyles looked out at the people on that first Sunday, they sat on \$1.79 wooden folding chairs from Skillern Drugs, he preached behind a \$15.00 huge padded pulpit which had been purchased from a Jewish synagogue.

The building was constructed from simple brown Arkansas tile, the cheapest of building products. The hollow clay tile was less expensive than concrete block. Within two weeks of his arrival in Garland, Christmas vacation settled on the north Texas town and Hyles began making changes. He didn't consult the people or the deacons, but bought some 2 x 10 lumber and built a platform. He had never laid carpet, but covered his new platform with carpet also purchased without the church's knowledge. Next, he charged \$600.00 worth of supplies at a local lumber yard. During one week in his own amateurish way he panelled the dull brown unpainted tile. The preacher-carpenter nailed paneling on the first four feet of the walls, then glued celotex on the upper half of the walls. The next Sunday, some of his members cried in appreciation, others laughed at the amateurish job.

Miller Road Baptist Church was so small and unorganized that Jack Hyles had to do almost everything. He wanted unleavened bread for the communion service, so going to his own kitchen, he mixed flour and water and rolled it with a rolling pin. After cooking it in the oven, he served bread described as burnt, medium rare, smushy and brittle. At his other churches, the deacons had organized such procedures, but at Miller Road Baptist Church, he even had to buy grape juice and fill the communion cups. Along with his other duties, he printed the bulletins, tended the heat, and wrote letters in long hand, a note to every visitor. Thirteen years later, a lady remarked, "We chose Miller Road Baptist Church because the pastor cared enough to hand-write us a letter."

Maintenance of the church was not all he did, Hyles visited every afternoon including Sunday, making 500 to 750 visits a month. Within six months, the Sunday School attendance reached 300 without a building campaign. The small square building had five classes, one met in *the center of the room, four classes assembled in each corner. Turning a liability into an asset, Hyles advertised in the Garland paper, "The only church where you can hear five Sunday School lessons." Hyles asked neighbors to use their garage for Sunday school classes. Each Sunday morning they backed their cars out and wooden folding chairs replaced them for Sunday School. Even the baptistry got used. A Sunday school class met on the steps in and out of the pool. One Sunday when there were more children than chairs, Hyles ran to a corner drug store, bought throw rugs. He asked the children, "Have any of you ever been to a Chinese Sunday School?" They all sat on the floor.

Every space in the church was occupied all the time, there was no place for decoration or casual use. After the ushers collected the money, they counted it in the only hall of the church. Since there was no table, they stacked the coins and bills on the floor. Once Hyles returning out of the pulpit to his office, saw the men on their hands and knees, "Whose winning craps?" he asked. When he looks back on the Miller Road Baptist Church he observes, "A church doesn't necessarily need space to grow, it just needs the power of God."

Miss Jo Strickland, the first secretary at Miller Road Baptist Church changed Dr. Hyles' office procedures. The first morning in the office, she saw Hyles turn on the lights, adjust the heat, and type many of his own letters. She tried to type the bulletin, but Hyles insisted on doing it. After seeing Hyles "piddle" around the office, doing secretarial tasks, she said in exasperation, "You'll never have a big church unless you learn to delegate authority." She stuck a needle in his male ego telling him he had to be an executive, a lesson he had never learned.

"I don't even like the word executive, I'm a pastor," he told his secretary. But Jo Strickland had worked in many offices and knew her pastor would have to learn to let people help him.

To get the office running right she had him repeat each morning, "I am an executive." Here Hyles learned the important lesson that leadership is not what one does, but what he gets others to do.

The Sunday School was averaging 350 when Hyles came up with the wild idea of "Beat the devil Sunday". He knew that Satan's number was 666, so he announced a Sunday School goal of 667. He held up five devil masks at the teacher's meeting and announced those who didn't meet their goal would have to wear it in the morning service. Finally, he got the chairman of the deacons to put on a screaming red devil's suit, with pitch fork and pointed tail. For eight hours on Saturday, the deacon-devil walked the streets of Garland, knocking on doors announcing, "I hate Jack Hyles and the Miller Road Baptist Church . . . don't go to that church at 9:30 on Sunday morning." The devil visited shopping centers, exhorting people not to go to Miller Road Baptist Church. The little tile building was averaging 300 in Sunday School and couldn't even seat that many, but 952 came to "Beat the devil Sunday." A crowd of people covered the church lawn, a great number of adults came down the aisles for salvation and baptism.

Many criticized the "Big day" claiming attendance will drop to its previous level, but from that peak attendance, the Sunday School never dipped under 700 again. Miller Road Baptist Church became the talk of Garland. A Methodist family who lived four doors away came, "We hear you yelling every Sunday. We came to see what you look like." When Hyles left Garland, Texas, there were over 4,000 church members in a town of 28,000, one out of every seven people in a city belonging to the church. The church became so influential, that when a mayor ran for election, he counseled with Hyles seeking to get his endorsement.

Up until this time Hyles ran all over the platform as he preached adding gymnastics, animations and a little dramatics. However, as the crowd reached 1500, he had difficulty holding their attention and felt he was losing his effectiveness. People were coming down the aisles for salvation, but something was missing. He felt that the church was getting too big for him. Jack Hyles decided to resign Miller Road Baptist Church, so he went to his office late one Saturday evening, intending to remain there until 11:00 A.M. the following morning, when he was to preach. He wrote his letter of resignation, putting it on the desk. Hyles prayed at his desk, then walked behind the pulpit where he continued praying. Next he knelt at the altar. After he returned to his office a knock came at the door about 1:00 A.M. "What's wrong, preacher?" said a

deacon, S.O. Barnett. The deacon had been unable to sleep, God moved his heart to find out what was troubling his pastor.

"I'm going to resign, the church is too big for me. Hyles explained. The two men began praying together, claiming the power of God. They prayed until the sun came up. That morning Hyles preached with new power, he had been given fresh oil from God.

His fourth year at Garland, Hyles reported more baptisms than any other Baptist church in Texas, and the next year he baptized more than any church had baptized in the history of Texas. He was asked to speak at Southern Baptist Sunday School Conventions, training unions, conventions, and evangelistic meetings. Hyles was scheduled to preach some revivals in the largest Southern Baptist Churches in the state.

Evangelist Lester Roloff came and preached for Jack Hyles when all other Southern Baptists had boycotted him. Roloff had been criticizing Southern Baptists for owning a store that was leased for liquor sales. Next, Jack Hyles preached in Lester Roloff's evangelistic tent. Also, Hyles invited John R. Rice to preach at Miller Road Baptist Church. Dr. Lee Roberson, Highland Park Baptist Church in Chattanooga came for a leadership convention. These men were not approved by the denomination and clouds of opposition gathered on the horizon. Some of the influential Baptist leaders took it upon themselves to advise the young preacher boy from Garland. They invited him to a meeting at a Cafeteria in Dallas. The room was packed with a noon luncheon crowd when the preachers sat down to talk. "We might as well get to the point,!" one of the preachers announced to Hyles.

"If you run with John R. Rice, Lester Roloff, and all of the other independents, you'll lose your denominational opportunities. Two or three of the other gentlemen reinforced the opinion, they tried to speak logically to the young preacher boy, showing him he would become a radical if he fellowshipped with radicals.

"I'M NOT FOR SALE!" Hyles yelled and pounded on the table. Soup spilled and coffee sloshed. Hyles' outburst momentarily silenced the cafeteria as people looked away from their noon meal. "You can't buy Jack Hyles," he told the gentlemen, walking out the cafeteria leaving them to their lunch.

Immediately, Hyles received cancellations from many of the large meetings he was scheduled to hold in Texas. He looks back, "I cleared my calendar in one day." Preaching meant everything to Hyles and losing opportunities to preach to great crowds was a blow.

Lester Roloff heard about Hyles' trouble and phoned in his typical fashion. "This is Lester . . . welcome to the fraternity of the free," he said in his low Texas drawl.

Hyles told him he was dead as far as the ministry. Roloff reminded him, "Nobody is resurrected without dying first." Hyles looks back on the situation and comments, "I'm not against denominations, I'm against a boss telling me what to do . . ." Hyles thought he was losing great opportunities to preach, but now he turns down over 1,000 revival meetings a year that he cannot begin to accept.

Hyles' problem with the Southern Baptist left an unsettling effect on his church. Some members were not sure they wanted to attend an independent Baptist church, a few people left. The waters were muddied by a letters received from some Southern Baptist leaders, sent to many of his members warning against becoming an independent Baptist church.

Shortly thereafter, Jim Lyons, assistant pastor phoned, "A tornado just hit the building and its gone." Hyles thought he was just kidding and made a crack, "I'm Napoleon." Lyons assured him of his seriousness, Hyles put his trousers on over his pajamas and hurried down to Miller road. Already in the early morning, spectators were satisfying their curiosity. The roof had been ripped off of the education unit and dumped on the next church building. Pianos and chairs were splintered. Much to Hyles' amazement, the church was the only building in Garland hit by the tornado. Across one street was a shopping center, homes were on the opposite side of another street, both were missed. The tornado seemed to crush Hyles dampened spirit. That evening he wrote out his resignation, intending to read it from the pulpit the following Sunday morning. Hyles preached on the problems of Job, likening the church's problem to the man in the Bible. His sermon developed well but it was an average message until he turned to chapter 39 and read, "I will answer out of the whirlwind." While speaking the idea hit him-the tornado was God's victory sign. He preached it, one lady shouted, "Hallelujah" from the choir. Others said, "Amen." Hyles tore to shreds the resignation on the pulpit, the people not knowing the meaning of his actions.

Hyles received a letter from the First Baptist Church of Hammond, stating that their pastor Owen Miller had resigned and gone to California. An application was included, he was asked to fill it out. The church had already received 67 applications, but Hyles was not interested. Garland was Texas-his friends were there as well as his mother. His wife's folks were in the same county, and he wanted to live and die in Texas.

Hyles received a second letter reminding him that millions lived in the Chicago area. "Will you pray about coming?" asked the letter.

A third letter came from the persistent church, they invited him to come and preach in their pulpit. His answer to their request was a simple, "No."

After a while, they were willing to compromise. Since he wouldn't come and preach for them, they sent an invitation for him to preach at CBMC (Christian Business Men's Committee) in downtown Chicago. Hyles envisioned a large Hotel ballroom, filled with many influential businessmen, and agreed to speak, flying to Chicago. There were only six men there that day, plus some of the pulpit committee. His main influence was the message over the radio. That evening, Hyles met with the committee at The Town and Country Inn, once again telling them he would not come to their church and preach a candidate sermon.

"Will you pray about it?" Hyles reluctantly said, "Yea" and flew back to Texas, giving no further thought about the First Baptist Church, Hammond, Indiana.

Later, he was driving from Oklahoma City to Garland about three A.M. when he remembered his promise to pray about the Hammond church. He prayed as short as possible,

"Dear Lord, do you want me to preach at Hammond?" Around the next bend, a flashing red neon sign stated, "Hammond welcomes you." It was an all night service station and Bar-B-Q stand in Denton, Texas. He thought the sign was circumstantial, not wanting to risk his whole life on a quirk of luck.

The next week Hyles was driving to Toccoa, Georgia to speak at a Bible conference. One of the deacons of Miller Road Baptist Church was with him. Hyles was behind the wheel as they left Little Rock, Arkansas heading for Memphis, Tennessee. He remembered the previous week's circumstances regarding the neon sign, he wasn't sure what to make of it all. Once again he prayed, "Do you want me to preach at Hammond, Indiana?" Later, he dozed at the wheel, only to be snapped back into reality, he jammed the brakes and skidded towards the back of a truck, bumping it slightly. Looking up at the back of the truck, he saw the words, "Hammond, Indiana." He decided that God was speaking to him and if the church invited him *once* more, he would go and candidate. As he drove into the gate at Toccoa Falls, an announcement blared over the loud speaker, "Is Jack Hyles on the grounds?" God was working providentially, and as he got out of the car, someone gave him a message to call the First Baptist Church, Hammond, Indiana. He spoke into the receiver, "I'll come preach."

Hyles candidate at First Baptist Church, Hammond, Indiana, July 19, 1959. That morning he preached on "Adoption" from Romans 8. That evening he preached, "Redigging the Wells."

When he returned to Texas, he went to see his mother, as he talked with her, he agonized over the decision.

"Son, you're not going to preach in a yankee church, are you?" His mother looked at him with all seriousness. He could fight the decision no longer. God was calling him to Hammond, Indiana.

The resignation was prepared, and this time there was no turning back. Hyles announced, "Tonight, I want to read something of great interest to you." He began reading the resignation. First a lady gasped and began sobbing uncontrollably. Hyles attempted to continue reading. Three or four ladies went scurrying for the door, handkerchief in hand. Hyles had been their only pastor and had won most of them to the Lord. Halfway through the letter, a lady's muffled scream was echoed by several others crying. The people couldn't hear him read and he had to wait until order was restored. After the sermon, he didn't want to meet anyone, slipping out of the back door, he found his secretary on her knees, in the wet grass, praying, "Dear God, Miller Road, without brother Hyles, is like a home without a mother."

The moving company picked up his furniture early and he lived the last few days in a motel in Garland. As he drove around the city, he realized he had knocked on every door in town. He kept passing homes where he had led people to the Lord.

"I cried every day" testified Hyles. The church gave him a farewell party, he cried there. On the final Sunday morning, he preached with the power, God helping him get through the message without breaking down. That evening was his final message.

Hyles knew he could never preach that Sunday evening, so he called a friend and asked him to preach, telling him he was leaving town. No one else knew he would not show up Sunday evening. He decided to leave town early and head for Hammond, Indiana. As they were driving out of the city, Hyles whipped the car around 180 degrees and headed back for the home of Mike Green, a teenager who was sick in bed. Mike had been saved under the ministry of Jack Hyles and called to preach. He was a all-star football player, and an outstanding young men in the church. He was on his way to Bob Jones University. Hyles walked into the bedroom and without saying a word, walked over and hugged him. Mike didn't know what to say. The two men looked each other in the eye, shook hands, the goodbye's were brief. Hyles was saying "Good bye to Garland." He had not gone to the home of the wealthy or influential, although he loved them just as much. "I had to say "Goodbye" to someone, and I loved Mike, he symbolized my work at Miller Road. The future is with young people." Mike excelled himself at Bob Jones University and today is a preacher of the gospel.

On their way to Hammond, they stopped for prayer meeting at Bethel Baptist Church, Joliet, Illinois. He confessed, "Maybe going to church will cheer us up." That evening, the pastor read his resignation.

When a pastor leaves a city, it is different than a layman. A pastor can't go back to visit without creating problems for the new pastor. He can't write his friends, he must sever all relationships, and follow the Scriptural exhortation, "Forgetting those things which are behind, I press toward . . ."

Hyles arrived in Hammond on August 27, 1959, the temperature reached 100 that day and went over 100 for the next ten days. He announced to the people, "I brought the hot weather with me from Texas." Little did he realize that many in Hammond resented his love for Texas.

When they arrived at the parsonage, people were working there, a new home had been built for the pastor, the flooring had not been finished in the living room. They walked onto the subfloor. The family was unsettled for several weeks.

When he first came, many criticized Hyles southern accent. For a while he worked on elocution to get rid of the Texas drawl, but with time, gave up culture lessons and became his own man.

The auditorium at the First Baptist Church had a huge dome that was the landmark of the city. The auditorium seated over 1,000, had beautiful stained glass windows and a large horseshoe balcony. That first night in Hammond, he went to the auditorium, knelt behind the pulpit and asked God to bless his ministry in this new church. Then he went down to the altar, opened his Bible to Psalm 1 and read it through, just as he had done in the other churches.

Next, Hyles did something unusual. He sang a solo behind the pulpit, "Lord, Send the Old Time Power" . . . That Pentecostal Power." He walked up and down the aisles singing every verse of the song, intermingling his song with prayer for soulwinning power. That evening, Hyles knelt at every pew in the auditorium, asking God to annoint his ministry with power so those who sat there would feel the conviction of the Holy Spirit.

After Hyles had prayed, he got in his car and drove around the Calumet region, asking God to send conviction upon the area.

That first Sunday the congregation sang, "Amen" at the end of each hymn. Hyles had never heard it sung although he had seen it printed in the hymn book. So while the congregation sang "Amen" Hyles ignorantly began making announcements.

When they came to the end of the second song, Hyles had figured, "When in Rome, do as the Romans." So he was prepared to sing, "Amen" at the end of the song. He bent over the pulpit and sang deeply in his base voice, "Amen". But the organist and congregation had sized up the new preacher, she left off playing and the congregation left off singing. Hyles sang an "Amen" solo.

"I believe God," was the first sermon Hyles preached at Hammond. The outline was basically what he was going to stand for.

"I believe God concerning the Bible. The Bible is the Word of God, verbally inspired, and I'll preach it all the time I'm here." I believe God concerning Jesus Christ. "I believe He is the virgin born Son of God. I believe He is above sin, died for our sins, was crucified on the cross, rose again after three days and three nights and is coming back visibly to earth to receive us."

During the invitation, a couple came down the center aisle and Hyles jumped off the platform, meeting them at the front, kneeling with them at the altar. Stairs were at the far end of the platform and in order to continue the invitation, he climbed back on the platform. After the service, a little lady remarked, "If you think jumping off the platform was ungraceful you should have seen yourself climbing back up."

Everything in Hammond seemed strange to Hyles, the pulpit didn't fit, the chair didn't fit, the stained glass windows were too formal; like a horse out of the corral, he felt he belonged back in Texas. But God gave him an inner insurance he belonged in Indiana.

That first week, he visited Mrs. Seibert, and found her dressed and ready to attend a social meeting of ladies. The distinguished, premature grey headed lady greeted him from behind the screen door, but did not invite him in. "Can I tell you how to get to heaven?" Hyles asked.

"Yes, if you hurry. I'm on my way out." She did not volunteer to open the door and invite him in. When he finished the plan of salvation, he asked, "Can I pray with you?" Her answer was, "Yes, if you'll not linger." Mrs. Seibert was touched by his prayer, she invited him in where she received the Lord. Hyles testified, "When I went back to the pulpit, it fit; when I sat in the chair it was comfortable; the dark stained windows suddenly became beautiful."

With time resentment grew among sections of the congregation. Many times the phone rang and when a member of the Hyles family picked it up, a voice said, "Go home rebel," and hung up.

“Within that first year, the church withdrew from the American Baptist Convention. There were many burdens and bitter feelings, but Hyles praised God for the encouragement of his people during those difficult days. At the same time, a petition circulated throughout the church, asking for the pastor to leave. Someone scribbled across the top, "Go home, rebel." At the same time, Hyles preached at the Bill Rice Ranch in Murfreesboro, Tennessee. There he asked the Lord to let him resign. He began praying at 10:00 at night and prayed throughout the night. At 5:00 A.M., when the sun was beginning to come up over the Tennessee hills, he surrendered, "Alright, Lord, I'll stay in Hammond."

The children had many pressures. Young Dave Hyles asked, "Don't make me go to church tonight." Every morning a "For Sale" sign showed up on their lawn, usually from a different realtor. On one occasion, somebody dumped a box of whiskey bottles on his lawn, the garbage cans were set on fire. It was impossible to keep a decent lawn, someone would always drive over it at night, or when the family was away at church.

During the tribulations, a church in the Dallas area voted to call Hyles without his preaching a candidate sermon. He confesses, "I wanted to go and flew to Texas to tell them we'd come." But on the plane back to Hammond, I decided, I can't leave Hammond. God wants me in Hammond."

The tug from Miller Road Baptist Church was a reality. Hyles visited Garland, Texas, and borrowed a key to the church from a secretary. Late one night, around 1:00 o'clock, he slipped in to the church and knelt at the pulpit, giving the church back to God. "I buried that church that night and preached its funeral from the pulpit. When he finally left the darkened building, God took the burden away from him to return to Texas. When he was on the phone returning to Chicago, he felt, "I'm going home."

He now realizes God was preparing him as an example to many young preachers who would have to fight denominationalism. He states, "How can I encourage young preachers to stand alone if I didn't do it."

When the vote came to dismiss Hyles, he decided, "If I get 75% of the vote, I'll stay." After all the votes were counted, Hyles received 78% of the count, so He stayed in Hammond.

On June 5, 1964, Hyles received a call at 1:10 in the morning, "You'd better come downtown, the church is burning." The words of the fire chief electrified Hyles. An arsonist had set fire to three of the buildings, when he arrived, flames were spurting out from every part of the old auditorium. The church had just completed a new auditorium building, and had occupied it three months before. Hyles looked down in the basement of the new building and saw firemen wading in water up to their knees. He stood on Sibley Street in the dark, crying, when one of the pastors, Jim Lyons, put a hand on his shoulder, "Preacher, we've been through a lot together." He walked around the back alley and came up behind the new building, putting both hands on the wall, and could feel the heat inside. He began to pray and the fire chief yelled, "Are you crazy? That building might go at any moment." He yelled at Hyles to get out of the alley. However, the determined preacher did not respond cheerfully to orders. He placed both hands flat on the

building and prayed, "Lord, spare this building." Then he made a second request from his Father, "Lord, show me you love me."

God answered that first prayer in that there was some smoke and water damage in the new building, but within one day they had it cleaned up and had services there the following Sunday.

God also answered the second prayer. When Hyles got home from the fire, his wife gave him a letter from Russell Anderson, a millionaire he had never met, but who later became co-founder of Hyles-Anderson Publishing Company and Hyles-Anderson College. Inside the envelope, Anderson stated, "I heard you preach in Pontiac and it brought blessing to my heart. I know you must get discouraged sometimes, enclosed is a gift of \$500". Hyles responded, "No one ever gave me that much money in my life. I took it as a sign from God." The Lord had shown Jack Hyles that he was loved.

