

## A CALL TO PREACH

G. R. W., age 42; race, English, Scotch-Irish; religion, Pentecostal; education, 5th grade; occupation, laborer; civil condition, married, 9 children; physical findings, negative; I. Q., average or high average potential.

### REASON FOR COMMITMENT

Physician's statement in commitment papers: "I have found him a person indifferent to his responsibilities to his family and to society by reason of his religious beliefs. He holds that the Lord will provide for his family and that he is free to follow his own preferences. It is my impression that he is a psychopathic personality and should be committed for mental treatment."

Report from Dixon State Hospital: R. W., age 42, was seen at our out-patient clinic on September 17 for psychological and psychiatric examination. This examination was requested because of some question of negligence in the death of a 3 year old son. On the psychological he had a full scale intelligence quotient of 90. In the psychiatric examination he exhibited exaggerated religious beliefs, definite ideas of persecution and rather definite delusional and hallucinatory ideation. It is our suggestion that he be committed to a mental hospital for further care."

### HEREDITY AND SOCIAL BACKGROUND

He comes of lower middle class American stock with English and Scotch-Irish strains probably predominating. He was fifth in a family of seven children, because he was the only boy, he may have been somewhat spoiled. His father was a laborer, not much of a church-goer. The mother was a devoted member of a Pentecostal church. Until R. was 11 years of age the family lived in the country near Fairfield. The family then moved to Rochelle. Four of the sisters now live in Fairfield and two in Rochelle. All of them accepted the mother's faith and all of them are well spoken of. The youngest, who now lives in Rochelle, is married to a well-to-do man who is an ordained minister of the Church of God, one of the three Pentecostal sects which has headquarters in Cleveland, Tennessee. There is no record of insanity or of anti-social behavior in the family.

### PERSONAL HISTORY

#### Early Years

R. was born in Fairfield. There is no record of abnormality in the early years. He was a healthy child. He attended country school, walking a mile and a half each way. Largely on this account he was frequently absent. He left school at 16 while still in the 5th grade. He claims to have been really good in arithmetic. The mother, he says, did most of the disciplining. She made use of a switch. Occasionally his father would give him a good whaling.

#### Adolescence and Maturity

Social Adjustments: We have no record of abnormalities in the adolescent period.

He was not much interested in church and he belonged to no organizations. He seems to have had few accomplishments. He played base-ball but was no star. Much of his leisure time was spent in soft-drink joints and later in saloons. There he joined in playing cards and pool. Occasionally he would get drunk.

Sex Adjustments His sexual education was mostly of the back-of-the-barn variety.

He denies any serious conflict over the problem of masturbation. He did have pre-marital sexual relationships a number of times, never, however with prostitutes. At 23 he was married to a girl of his own age whom he met while serving with a C C C camp in Northern Michigan. She was of Finnish extraction and belonged to the Lutheran Church. She had completed three years in a normal college and had a licence to teach. They were married in 1934. She has born him 10 children. She also is a member of the Pentecostal Church and has received the baptism of the Spirit.

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Vocational Adjustments From the time he left school until he was 22 he worked as a laborer at various jobs. In his 22nd year he joined a C C C camp in Northern Michigan. Following his marriage in his 23rd year he returned to Rochelle. There he worked 8 years as canner with the Del Monte Food Company. In 1942 - 43 he worked on his father-in-law's dairy farm in Northern Michigan. From 1943 to 46 he served as night watchman with the Whitman Locomotive Company.

#### THE WORD OF THE LORD

In 1943 while working on his father-in-law's farm he became deeply worried. What brought this on he cannot tell. There had been no outside influences such as revival meetings and no painful events or disappointments. He just got to thinking about things and about where he was going. Under the pressure of this anxiety he returned to Rochelle and began attending meetings at the Church of the Four Square Gospel to which his brother-in-law at that time belonged. It was there that the great event occurred. He responded to the altar call. They read him two verses of Scripture and asked him if he believed. He said Yes. And all of a sudden the load was lifted and his heart was changed. That was the experience of "salvation." A few days later he was "sanctified." That was when he gave up smoking and using tobacco in other forms. Then a few nights later he was "baptized by the Holy Spirit" and "spoke with tongues!" He also did some dancing and once he fell on the hard cement floor without being hurt. He got the call to preach at that time, but he did not heed it. He was hard of heart and he went back to work. But three years later the call came again and this time he listened. To use his own words:

"The call came just like you talking to me. Sometimes you only feel him. When you have a burden on your heart, he will remove it, if you let him. That's like him talking too. That's all a lot of heart trouble is, a heavy burden. Did I ever have a burden on my heart? Yes, when I wouldn't heal or preach. One time I was walking across a bridge and a voice came to me from out of the water. It told me I must pay my tithes. All this made a lot of difference in my life. After that I let him guide me and I started healing."

This call of 1946 ordered him to go down to Fairfield, where he had been born and where four of his sisters were living. There he did odd jobs and attempted to preach. Finding there no Church of the Four Square Gospel, he allied himself to another Pentecostal Church, the Church of Jesus, whose headquarters are in Cleveland, Tennessee, and he is not an ordained minister in that church. He holds a card attesting that fact. As a preacher he has not been successful. He has had no congregation of his own and his attempts to contribute to the services of other ministers have not been well-received. He has thus come to rely chiefly upon work with individuals. He accosts them and tells them about the baptism of the Spirit and about the Second Coming and exhorts them to be obedient to the word of the Lord. His own messages come thru praying. You pray, get a message, open the Bible and there it is. Obviously a ministry of this type will not prove financially rewarding, and it will interfere seriously with productive labor. His entire earnings one year were less than \$400. The Lord did provide, but He did so thru the I P A C. Eventually that aid was withdrawn. It was then, in December 1952, that he and his family returned to Rochelle.

In Rochelle he was given a job as caretaker of the cemetery at \$1.35 per hour. This meant about \$50 a week. This job he held from January till September. Ever since his arrival in Rochelle, he and his family have been living in a made-over chicken house on the back part of a lot next door to Rochelle's chief of police.

Two week's before his admission the family was hit by an epidemic of enteritis and a three year old child died. R. interpreted this as punishment for his failure to obey the command of the Lord and preach, allowing the Lord to provide for his family. He therefore gave up his job at the cemetery. It was this decision which led to his commitment, the initiative being taken by his neighbor, the chief of police. A sensational write-up in the Rockford paper, in which he was represented as re-

refusing to allow the child to have medical care, had a part in the commitment. According to the family physician there was no basis for this charge. He has been called in many times over a period of 17 years and R. always paid his doctor's bills. In his judgment R. was railroaded in. As for working, just let him out and he'll go back to work. His sisters state that they knew nothing of the plan to send him to the hospital. They do not consider him insane. What they did approve was bringing some pressure to bear to get him to work.

### BEHAVIOR IN THE HOSPITAL

He was admitted on September 23. He took his hospitalization with remarkable equanimity. He interprets it as God's will and thruout his five weeks sojourn here he has been friendly, co-operative and efficient. For several weeks he has been working in the ward kitchen, giving full satisfaction. There have been no oddities or mannerisms. He talks coherently and intelligently and without evasiveness. His mood has been appropriate to the situation and to his philosophy of life. Most of his leisure time he spends reading the Bible. He does not go to the dances or the movies. That would be contrary to his principles, but he plays checkers and attends the church services and participates intelligently in the group conferences. Aside from his conviction that his call to the ministry requires him to give up working, his beliefs are in full accord with those of his particular religious sect. There are certainly no delusions of persecution, as stated in the report from the Dixon State Hospital, and the ideation is free from distortion and incongruity.

### DIAGNOSTIC IMPRESSION

Life Situation Social and Vocational Maladjustment on the part of a religious zealot who ten years ago received a call to preach and has acted upon it in spite of the fact that he had a wife and ten children to support. Altho an "ordained" minister of the Church of Jesus, he has never had a church of his own or even a handful of followers. In consequence the provision of the Lord on which he relied has come chiefly from the I P A O and he has been harshly criticized on all sides for neglecting his family.

At the time of his call to preach ten years ago he was an ordinary laboring man of 32, to all appearances happily married and the father of four children. His mother had been a devoted member of a Pentecostal sect, but he himself had shown little interest in religion. Altho of at least average intelligence he had only 5th grade education. His wife, however, had completed three years in a normal college and has a licence to teach. As a laborer he was following in the footsteps of his father and there was no apparent reason for any sense of failure or discontent with himself, unless we may see some significance in the fact that he was at this time working on the farm of the father of his better educated wife.

Reaction Pattern It is important to notice that his "call" was preceded by a period of anxiety and distress. It seems clear that we have here an attempt at problem-solving which was followed by the re-organization of his life around a new role as prophet and preacher. He feels the urge to share with others the blessing he has received. This urge is common to such experiences, but he encounters an obstacle. Most churches make the wise provision that no call to preach is valid until it is recognized and blessed by the group and no would-be preacher is justified in giving up his occupation until some group is ready to support him. R. does find a group which ordains him as a minister, but none which wants him as a preacher. This he has found hard to accept. He believes implicitly in his call and he takes quite literally the scriptural injunction that the minister of the Lord must go forth without purse or scrip and trust in the Lord to provide.

In any case he has taken his stand and has staked everything upon it. The reaction we are dealing with now is the systematized beliefs which are built around his concept of himself as one who is called of the Lord. The disapproval he has en-

countered has been met by the intensification of his faith in himself and in the immanence of the Second Coming.

Personality Organization: Altho this man's conversion experience began in solitude rather than under group influence and altho it was of the dramatic type, there is no evidence of bizarre or incongruous ideation, his beliefs are in full accord with those of his group. The one great difference is to be found in the seriousness with which he takes his own role and his insistence that the Lord will provide for his family. Since he has rebuilt his life around this concept of himself and has for seven years been defending himself against the disapproval of others, it will not be easy for him to modify or abandon it.

Clinical Label: Personality trait disturbance, hyper-religious type.

Prognosis: The assets and liabilities balance up somewhat as follows:

<u>Assets</u>	<u>Liabilities</u>
Sincerity and integrity	Well-systematized beliefs which he can not easily give up.
Efficiency as worker	The economic burden of a large family.
Freedom from gross unacceptable drives	Prejudices and critical attitude of neighbors
Loyalty of wife	
Reasonably sympathetic attitude of relatives	
Absence of incongruous ideation.	

In general the outlook seems not unfavorable.

Treatment: The commissioner at Rochelle, L. B. Harr, assures us that R.'s job is waiting for him whenever he is ready to leave; and R. himself expresses his readiness to take it. Release should therefore not be too long deferred. Care should be taken not to subject him to pressures which might force him to strengthen his defences.

R. is opposed on religious grounds to the use of contraceptives, but his wife might be more open-minded on this subject.

C O R R E S P O N D E N C E

From Clarence Bruninga, Assistant Chaplain  
To Rev. Samuel Officer, Cleveland, Tennessee

I am writing you in regard to Charles Raymond Withrow, a minister in your church, Mr. Withrow, a very sincere and devoted man, is in the hospital because of a charge of non-support of his wife and eight children; his reasoning being that he has been called to preach and cannot remain on the job after receiving this call. In order to help Mr. Withrow to the best of our ability we would appreciate your supplying us with the following information:

The number of members in the Church of Jesus  
The basic beliefs of your church  
How does one become an ordained minister and what are his duties?  
Beliefs as to receiving and following messages from the Lord?  
Should one preach when directed by the Lord without regard to his responsibilities toward his family?

From Rev. Samuel Officer, General Presbytery Chairman  
Church of Jesus, Cleveland, Tenn.  
To Charles Raymond Withrow, Elgin State Hospital.

I am sorry to learn of your being held at this time. I do not know what your trouble is, only I have heard that you have been called to preach and you have been charged with not supporting your family.

Brother Charles, I know when a man feels he should preach, that is a great work to do. I was called when a young man to preach, but I felt I needed to study more about the word and preaching. I worked for some time and built a church building and then I began to have revivals and gathered the people and set it in order. Then I quit the factory, as I had something to back me and support my family. A laborer is worthy of his hire. God will take care of us, but he has a plan to work by and if we work by it, he will bless us.

Brother Charles, I would not tell you what to do, but as a brother I would like to suggest that you continue to work in some place and preach at night to try to gather a people together that you can pastor them. This way you will be able to work and be with your family and preach too. I have done this, so has thousands of others. If there is any way I can help you, please let me know. Jesus bless you and yours.

From Bishop Sam E. Officer  
To Clarence Bruninga.

I have never met Brother Charles, but he has a fellowship card with the Church. He must be a sincere, devoted man and I feel he can be helped in his conviction. I feel he can work and support his family and also at the same time preach. I have done that and so has many others. I am writing him to offer that suggestion. I feel that if they would let him go he would find out for himself that he must work, unless he is an excellent speaker.

I do not know the number of members we have in our church, but we do not have too many, as we are young yet. We teach salvation thru our Lord Jesus Christ, living holy, supporting our own household. We believe in being led of the Spirit, so long as that leading is backed up by the scriptures. It is true that the Lord will speak to a man, but we believe he should be sent by the Church before he goes out. We believe that a man can have more zeal than knowledge. He should wait for some training. God does not want any one to desert their family.

Brother Charles has never been ordained as a pastor by the Church by the laying on of hands. He has only a fellowship card. I hope what I have said may be of help to him.