

Why don't media give more good news?

George Cornell, one of America's foremost journalists, recently ripped into some of his fellow editors at a gathering of the Associated Press managing editors.

"Why," he asked, "do most newspapers carry an entire section of sports events daily, but only one page of religious news weekly?"

There are exceptions, of course. If a pastor loses his temper and goes after the bank president (who is chairman of his board) with the jawbone of an ass, then that's considered news. In fact, if he catches him and clobbers him, it might even make the front page.

Or, as recently happened, if a prominent minister is found guilty of shoplifting, that will doubtlessly appear in the paper on a weekday rather than waiting for the Saturday religious page.

The press, for the most part, hangs on every word uttered by politicians and entertainers — but seldom reports on the words of a preacher — even if he is speaking prophetically. In other words, what comes from Washington D.C., is more important than what comes from Heaven.

Not only that, but if a politician does happen to say something with spiritual meaning, the media — including the folks who edit TV tapes — have a way of dropping that part from the published remarks.

Hardnosed editors usually look on church news as something to be tolerated. This is not a condemnation on the news media. It is a sad commentary on the fact that in most churches, there isn't enough worth reporting.

However, that is not the case in a growing number of churches. For instance, in one Palm Bay church about three weeks ago, a young housewife dropped by to visit a friend who, three times in the week before, had attempted suicide. The friend was deeply depressed and her husband was considering having her committed to an institution simply to protect her and her children.

The young Christian housewife stood outside on the front walk and evoked the authority of Jesus Christ. She cast out demons of depression and suicide which she felt had invaded the house and body of her friend. She then

Perspective

by Jamie Buckingham

entered the house and went immediately to her friend's bedroom where she reached out and laid her hand on the woman's shoulder — again praying in the name of Jesus.

There was instant deliverance. The woman testified she felt light sweep into her mind, replacing the darkness. That was almost a month ago and there has been nothing but joy and peace in that house since.

Unfortunately, that did not make the newspapers. Until now, that is.

In our own church a man stood recently to tell how his doctor had told him he was going to die from a malignant melanoma which had appeared on his chest. In desperation the man attended a Sunday night healing service conducted by Jimmy Smith. During a prayer time at the altar, the man "collapsed" to the floor. When he returned to his doctor the cancer had disappeared. He stood one Sunday morning, with tears, to tell his story.

The news the next morning on national TV was filled with dark stories of tornados, nuclear threats, and murders. Unfortunately, no one seemed interested in the power of the Holy Spirit who had healed a man dying of cancer.

But maybe that's the way it's supposed to be. If we get so excited about the sensational, we might miss the deeper elements of faith — things which are really impossible to report.

I mean, who's interested in a marriage that lasts for 70 years, or children that don't grow up and go bad, or people who live healthy, happy lives without trauma or crisis ripping them apart, or Christian neighbors who live side by side and never burn each other's houses down?

There is a lot of good news. Let's publish it every once in a while — someplace other than the church page.