

power

Silver Tongue of '49

by Larry Ward
and Henry Pucek

THE HANDSOME young speaker heaved a sigh of relief, and stepped down from the rostrum as the audience burst into tumultuous applause.

Yet he smiled ruefully. Went too fast, he thought to himself, so that lets me out. Well, it was fun trying.

This was no small-time speech contest. This was it—the finals of the national oratorical contest sponsored by Hearst newspapers last June in San Francisco. The first place award was \$1000 and the competition had been terrific, with more than ten thousand students from leading col-



leges and universities entered in preliminary contests across the nation.

And so now he held his breath. Three times before he had attempted to climb to the heights in this national speech tourney. Each time he had ascended a little higher, but each time he had failed. Now, again he seemed doomed to failure.

But a moment later he gasped in amazement. His name was being called—*his* name—as the winner! Twenty-two-year-old Ed McCully of Wheaton College had done it! He had copped top honors in this greatest of speech contests.

But he knew it hadn't been all his doing. As the other contestants, judges and spectators swarmed around, he was thinking of Another, the One who had made it possible. "Thank you, Lord," he breathed. "All the glory belongs to You. I couldn't have done it without Your help."

He was serious about that prayer, for Ed McCully is a born-again Christian whose main ambition in life is to serve His Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ. Most of the other contestants in this national contest had years of high school and college forensics behind them. Ed McCully had competed in two minor high-school contests and taken one college speech course before entering the big Hearst tournaments—and that was all.

For that matter, he's never been one to place too much stock in past performances and experiences. He had never played football; but under Wheaton Coach Harve Chrouser, Ed, a 6' 2", 190-pounder, developed into a fast-stepping end who saw lots of action on the highly-regarded Crusader eleven.

And he had never competed in track, either, until he caught the eye of famous miler Gil Dodds, mentor for Wheaton's orange-and-blue thin-clads. Yet the versatile McCully ran away with a new college record for the 220-yard dash at the respectable time of 22.3 seconds, and also racked up a spectacular 22 second mark for the same distance at the Drake Relays, although this didn't count for the school record.

But his confidence has never been in himself or his abilities. At least, not since the day when, as a serious-minded seven-year-old, he asked his dad the way of salvation. A devout Christian layman, the father opened his Bible and pointed young Ed to the "Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." Together they got down on their knees in the living room, and Ed accepted Christ as his personal Saviour.

Ed admits that he wasn't an outstanding Christian in high school, that it took the Christ-saturated atmosphere of a Christian college and the stimulation of Christian fellowship in the Navy to straighten him out spiritually.

During his high-school days in Milwaukee, Wisconsin—the family moved there from Des Moines, Iowa, while Ed was in the eighth grade—he spent most of his spare time in the band and in literary society activities.

While he was a junior at Milwaukee's Washington High, one of the girls asked him if he would represent their lit society in an inter-society tournament. For some reason—he still doesn't know why—he accepted. Under the patient tutelage of the adviser he practiced tirelessly. Finally, when the big day arrived, Ed presented his oratorical selection with much shaking and lack of confidence. Had he lost, he would have quit "then and there," he says, but he won and his "career" was launched.

In his senior year, he entered the declamation contest in the same tournament—and won again. He also joined the National Forensic League, a speech organization.

About this time, dramatics began to make a real play for Ed's interest. A natural speaker—as his performance in the speech tourneys had indicated—he would have encountered no trouble in getting ahead. He had picked up a little radio experience over radio station WTMJ, playing bit parts for the Wauwatosa Community Guild. He got a story-book start when he was slated to play the mouth harp on a broadcast. When one of the actors failed to put in an appearance, Ed was hastily

pressed into service, and was so impressive that the director promptly invited him to participate in the other programs.

Says Ed: "I had a passion for drama and would have liked to go into it except that I was a Christian." Even though, as he recalls, he wasn't as yielded to the will of God as he should have been, he turned down an invitation to join a community playhouse group because he felt it wasn't what the Lord wanted him to do.

About this time an incident occurred which made a marked change in his spiritual life. Following his graduation from high school, Ed took steps to enlist in the Navy with several friends, but he flunked the eye exam. At his dad's urging, Ed entered Wheaton College in Illinois.

Now he testifies: "I can see where the Lord's hand was in it." The Christian fellowship, the challenge of the daily chapel sessions, the school evangelistic meetings—all these strengthened him spiritually as never before, and prepared him for the testings of navy life.

When he finally did enter the Navy and was assigned to the athletic department at Great Lakes, he kept in touch with Wheaton, enjoyed Christian fellowship and teamed up with another sailor in trombone duets in services and youth rallies, including the big Chicagoland Youth for Christ.

Back in Wheaton after the war, Ed lost no time in getting into speech activity. After finishing one class in speech—the only one he ever took—he entered the Hearst contest, "scared stiff" and telling himself how futile it was. Although this was his first experience in big-time college competition, he took third place in Illinois.

His second attempt, in his sophomore year, found Ed climbing to a higher rung as he placed second. And in his junior year, he finally copped top honors for Illinois. The fellow whom he defeated, he remembers, was an overconfident, blasphemous fellow who had won the National American Legion contest, and expected to take this in stride.

When Ed was announced as the

winner, the other fellow cursed everyone, including the judges. Grins Ed: "I especially enjoyed beating him because of his nasty attitude."

Defeated in the regionals that year by the fellow who eventually won the national contest, Ed bounced back last year to win all the way.

His biggest thrill, outside of the championship itself, was probably the winning of the midwest zone finals in his hometown. Pitted against Ed was a fellow whom he felt sure he couldn't beat, a speaker from Marquette University.

As the final decisions of the judges were read, Ed listened as the fifth, fourth and third places were announced—but his name wasn't read. Then he listened while the second place winner was announced, expecting now to hear his name. But when they read the other fellow's name: "I was stunned," says Ed, "and when they called my name I almost jumped through the ceiling!"

Called up before the 1500 people, he startled them with this testimony: "I want to give credit to One who is far greater than any earthly individual—my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

Flying out to San Francisco with the promotional manager of the Chicago *Herald American*, Ed found opportunity to give a testimony for the Lord and to explain why it would be impossible for him to join in some of the Hollywood entertainment that was planned for the contestants. This made it easier for him all along the way as the man understood his position, and also made it possible for him to get away from a number of activities which he felt

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"Very interesting," said George. "But how do I get this pardon?"

"Only believe," I said. "That's the only thing we can do. You can read about it in God's Word."

Then he smiled, and it wasn't a pleasant smile.

"Thanks for your philosophy," he said. "I heard that from one other guy. I thought it sounded good, too. But I couldn't accept it. I won't tell you why."

There wasn't much conversation among the other passengers now. There was only the hum of the motor, and outside, the December land, desolate and cold in the night.

My speech for the Lord had accomplished nothing, it seemed. "But let him remember what I said, God," I prayed. "Let him remember. He needs You desperately."

We rode all that night, and the next day about noon we pulled into Omaha. I would have a six-hour layover there.

I bade good-by to my sick companion rather sorrowfully. I never expected to see him again. I had failed with him and I wondered if his blood would be on my head. He'd done something for me, though. In his talk of living only a day he'd made me see how important it was to work for the Lord.

As I walked along the streets I gave tracts to people coming out of taverns, and I told some of them about Jesus. And when I bought a paper from a newsboy, I gave him a tract and more than enough money for the paper and asked him to go to Sunday School. So it took me rather a long time to reach my destination—a gospel mission of which I had heard and wanted to visit.

When I'd been at Elmwood a few days I received a letter from my friend on the bus. He had asked for my address when we parted, but I'd never expected to hear from him.

"Dear Tom," ran the letter, "I thought you'd be interested to know that I've finally chosen a philosophy of life. Yes, I chose Christ, and He's everything. It was because of you that I chose Him, but not so much because of what you said as what you did. I told you that another man

had spoken to me of Christ. It was on a train. When he got off I followed him about, and I heard him speak some cross words to a little newsboy. I figured then that this fellow's philosophy didn't mean much to him—if he didn't follow it in his living.

"When you got off the bus in Omaha I followed you about to see how you acted and I was favorably impressed.

"Christianity sounded like what I wanted if it was real. But the only way I could tell if it was real was by finding out how those professing it lived and if it did for them what they claimed it could do. The first man professing Christ disappointed me, but you softened my heart. Now Christ has moved in my heart and praise His name, it is real. See you in heaven, George."

I bowed my head and brokenly thanked the Lord that He had kept my testimony clean. And I knew there was work, much work to be done right now for Him, without waiting until I was a college graduate.



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he wouldn't conscientiously engage in as a Christian.

Ed also found opportunity to witness to one of the contestants—a football and track star—who was surprised to find that one could be a "regular guy" interested in athletics and a Christian, too.

Perhaps Ed's only regret connected with the winning of the national championship was the fact that it made it necessary for him to miss much of the big "Senior Sneak." As president of the 1949 senior class at Wheaton, he had helped in the planning and had anticipated a great last week end with his classmates.

But when Ed finally appeared at the resort where the retreat was held, they made up for lost time. He was greeted by a huge crowd and a boisterous ovation, raised ceremoniously upon husky shoulders, escorted in style to the lake front—

and dumped into the water with a resounding splash, just to "keep him humble."

It was all in fun, of course, for Ed McCully is one of the most sincerely modest and likable persons you would care to meet. Gifted with a ready sense of humor, genuinely friendly, he makes a host of loyal friends wherever he goes.

His plans for the future? He's in law school now at Marquette University. And wherever he ends up, he'll be speaking—speaking for the Lord Jesus Christ. He's one orator who's out and out for the Lord.



how to read the Bible

READ THE Bible, not as a newspaper, but as a home letter.

If a cluster of heavenly fruit hangs within reach, gather it.

If a promise lies upon the page as a blank check, cash it.

If a prayer is recorded, appropriate it and launch it as a feathered arrow from the bow of your desire.

If an example of holiness gleams before you, ask God to do as much for you.

If the truth is revealed in all its intrinsic splendor, entreat that its brilliance may ever irradiate the hemisphere of your life. *selected*



find the where . . .

by J. B. Tweter

HOW WELL DO you know the various incidents connected with Jesus' life on earth? Can you instantly locate the place for each incident related here, for the places are purposely jumbled to test your memory! *answers above.*

1. Where was He when He gave His disciples a preview of His eternal glory?
2. When He turned the water into wine?
3. When He raised Lazarus from the dead?
4. When He healed Peter's mother-in-law?
5. When He gave the "water of life" to a fallen woman?
6. When He raised to life the only son of a widow?
7. When He fed the 5000?
8. When He healed the deaf and blind man?
9. When He healed the ear of Malchus?
10. When they nailed Him to the Cross?
11. When He was baptized of John?
12. When He revealed Himself to the two disciples on the way to a certain town?

5.h; 6.d; 7.c; 8.b; 9.j; 10.k; 11.l; 12.i.

Answers to quiz: 1.e; 2.a; 3.f; 4.g;

- a. Cana of Galilee
- b. Tyre and Sidon
- c. Bethsaida
- d. Nain
- e. Mt. of Transfiguration
- f. Bethany
- g. Capernaum
- h. Sychar
- i. Emmaus
- j. Gethsemane
- k. Golgotha
- l. River Jordan

invitation for Devil John

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east, and I was so glad that I was alive, so I could come and ask you to go to heaven; and now here I am, and I have told you my dream and want you to go."

With other words the old man urged the royal invitation, but the blacksmith stood as one petrified. He could not speak nor move. Father Brown got up, and saying, "Good-by, John; remember you are asked to come," took his staff and started home.

Soon the blacksmith recovered and went to work. But everything went wrong—the bellows would not work properly, the hammers would not strike right, the nails would not go in, the horses would not stand right. "O God, be merciful to me, a sinner!" he began to sob at last, and leaving the shop, he went home. He told his wife of Father Brown's visit. "We will send the horse and buggy and have him come back," she said.

"Yes," he added, "for I mean to accept the invitation, and I want him to pray to God to keep me true and steadfast to the end." *adapted*

