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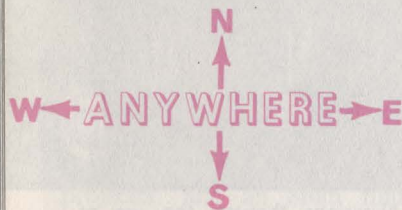
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Directions



By JOHN ELLER

Pastor, First Assembly of God
Valley Park, Missouri

WHICH WAY TO HEAVEN?" asks the motorist. "Turn right and go straight!" comes the reply. So begins another day in the life of Virg Palmer, Christian businessman.

His service station, with eight full-time employees, is located on busy Manchester Road in Des Peres, Mo. Here, in the suburbs of St. Louis, Virg not only offers directions across town but on to eternity as well.

"Business need not interfere with witnessing," says Brother Palmer, "and neither should witnessing interfere with busi-

ness. A day does not pass," he continues, "but that some of my customers hear a word about the Lord."

He hastens to add that witnessing for Christ is not always vocal. He believes *action* is also a factor. Although some of his employees are not professing Christians, his station is known throughout the county for courtesy, cleanliness and the absence of vulgar language.

"That last item," says Virg, "has brought a lot of extra business our way among professionals. Some of our best customers are surgeons, dentists, and local TV personalities."

As a member of the First Assembly of God in Valley Park, Mo., Virg is well known in the St. Louis section as a devout churchman. He initiated the founding of the local Royal Rangers outpost, which has enrolled more than 40 boys and 13 officers in less than one year. An average of 35 can be expected at the weekly meetings.

At the Southern Missouri District Royal Rangers Pow-Wow of 1967, his group won the trophy for the largest number

present. To uniform and provide his outpost with the best in camping equipment, Brother Palmer contributed heavily and spent many hours working with the men and boys.

Expressing his appreciation for the performance of the outpost, he wrote the following in a letter to his pastor:

"There are no words that can express just what is in my heart. To say I'm proud seems very small, but it's the way I feel. I know now what it means to stand teen-feet tall. But even at that height, I feel I stand under every other man in our group. Besides being closer to God, I have a greater confidence in my fellowman."

The first commander in his section to earn the coveted Leader's Medal of Achievement, Virg is frequently called upon to assist in Royal Rangers functions in other areas as well.

An excellent background prepared this man for the work he is now doing with men and boys. Born of English-Choctaw Indian ancestry, he spent much of his childhood roaming the vast wooded areas near his out-



Alert to opportunities to witness, Virg Palmer directs many wayfaring souls to Christ.

state Missouri home. He is now recognized as an expert in cave exploration, the stalking of wild game, and adaptability in the great out-of-doors. An avid sportsman, he makes several hunting trips each year to various parts of the West, keeping his friends supplied with deer and elk.

His love for, nature and knowledge of the woods and wildlife draw men and boys to him like a magnet, and give his witnessing a special appeal.

While serving in Saipan during World War II, Virg received the Bronze Star for bravery, third highest decoration of our country, as he risked his life to save another GI.

"I don't remember everything that happened," says Virg, "but I do recall an explosion in our encampment which knocked my buddy over a 40-foot cliff. I'm not sure how I reached him, but under heavy mortar fire, I pulled him to safety."

Twice he was given the Purple Heart for wounds received in action, and he has an assortment of other battle decorations.

"I was very proud of my service medals," adds Brother Palmer, "but I feel even more honored wearing the Medal of Achievement. This training has prepared me to lead more boys in Royal Rangers to accept Jesus Christ as Saviour. There is no greater commission."

Standing in line to receive his discharge from service, Virg was called out and told to report to the hospital at Jefferson Barracks near St. Louis. There, X-ray tests revealed a large spot had developed on his right lung.



"Clem intended to come but the snow froze his good intentions."

"I think this was the most depressing time of my life," Brother Palmer recalls. "After all I had been through, I was looking forward to a normal life. Now, it looked like an extended stay in an Army T. B. hospital."

Just before he was to be transferred, however, some friends from First Assembly visited him. Upon leaving, they promised to request prayer in church that evening.

"I must admit my faith was very small," confesses Virg, "but I'm sure God heard and answered prayer. Two days later, I underwent final X ray and blood tests. The doctors were amazed to find the spot on my lung gone and the tests negative. The attending physicians said they must have misread the initial prints, but I knew a miracle had taken place. The following day, I was discharged."

Brother Palmer says he was very confused after coming home from the service.

"It was so hard to believe," he says, "that God could for-

give a man who had been instrumental in taking the lives of others. Only after much prayer and counseling with my pastor was I convinced that a man commits no sin in serving his country in war."

Virg has been a Pentecostal believer during much of his life, and has distinguished himself in almost every office of the local church. During the annual observance of Men's Day this past December, he was awarded the "Man of the Year" plaque by the local Men's Fellowship. It was a proud moment for his wife, May, who serves as the local WMC president, and his two sons, Dale and Gale.

In full business partnership with Brother Palmer is Paul Gibbs, a commander in the local Royal Rangers outpost and also minister of music at First Assembly.

The day begins early for Virg as he is on the job at six and works until four in the afternoon. But each day is a new challenge.

"Who knows?" he asks, "someone may want directions to heaven today!"

By E. R. DAVIS

BOYS WILL BE BOYS, they say, but as Christian men we are responsible for every boy under our influence to see that he becomes the *right kind* of boy.

Since the day of my conversion in 1952, I have felt God wanted me to work with boys. Saved in the Free Methodist church in Brownsville, Oregon, I soon was youth leader and scoutmaster in the church.

Though I thought I was serving God faithfully because of all my activity in youth leadership, in reality I was slowly slipping away from God. In 1954, I backslid and for the next five years lived away from God.

Then in 1959, right in my own home, I came back to God with the help of Paul Derr, an Assemblies of God minister. About a month later I was baptized in water and at this time God healed me of stomach ulcers. I was not supposed to eat hot or spicy foods, but that

ROYAL RANGERS

Leadership Training Helps

night after the water baptism service the church had a banquet and I sampled everything on the table. I thank God for healing my stomach.

At the sawmill where I work, the men were a little skeptical of my new salvation experience because I had failed God before. So I praise God that I have been able to be a testimony to the life-changing gospel of Jesus Christ for eight years now.

When I started to attend an Assemblies of God church, I became interested in the Royal Rangers program, I took the Royal Rangers Leaders' Training Course which has helped me learn what the program is and

how I could become involved in it.

Not long after completing the course a Royal Ranger raised his hand in a revival service indicating his need of Christ. I had the wonderful privilege of praying with this boy and leading him to Christ, using the five Scripture verses suggested in the Royal Rangers Leaders' Training Course.

I became a lieutenant commander in the Royal Rangers program in the Assembly of God in Lebanon, Oregon, a post I held for six months. When the need arose for a senior commander, I was chosen.

A boy can become the right kind of boy if he puts into practice what I feel are the six values of the Royal Rangers program:

1. Opportunity to make a decision for Christ.
2. Opportunity to learn the Word of God on their own level.
3. Opportunity to enjoy Christian fellowship of other boys.
4. Opportunity to develop leadership abilities within the group.
5. Opportunity to learn how to work effectively with others.
6. Opportunity to submit to discipline of the group.

Royal Rangers leaders in the Assembly of God, Lebanon, Oregon, are (left to right): Ken Fouts, Buck-a-roos commander; Sonny DeKuyper, Pioneer commander; Kenneth Grove, Trailblazer commander; Pastor H. D. Robeson; and Ervin R. Davis, senior commander.

