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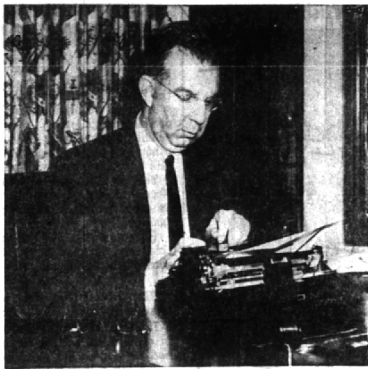
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REV. DR. HAROLD DeWINDT estimates he uses about half his fingers in the self-taught system with which he types his sermons himself. Here he uses the portable typewriter which sits beside his desk in the study at Kirk in the Hills.

How He Writes His Sermons:

Found Sermons Boring Rev. Dr. DeWindt Says

By JULIE CANDLER

"I was bored silly in church as a young person. I went into the ministry as a reaction against that kind of dullness," said Rev. Dr. Harold C. DeWindt.

He removed his dark-rimmed reading glasses, placed them on the big, carved desk in his high-ceilinged, beautifully appointed study at Kirk in the Hills Presbyterian church.

He was far from dull as he spoke, with a sense of humor and colorful figures of speech.

"I made up my mind," he continued, "that the preaching of Christianity in the pulpit ought to be something pretty exciting and moving."

TALL AND STRAIGHT even as he sat at his desk, the gray-haired minister with the peaked hairline, looked squarely at us.

"I have three criteria in selecting material for a sermon," he said. "One is interesting? Two, is it interesting? Three, is it interesting?"

If it's not, Dr. DeWindt feels the congregation will only half listen, and the purpose of his preaching is defeated.

To make it interesting, he spends an average of 20 hours a week writing his sermon. When he preaches he employs every method he knows to give the sermon interesting variety in pace, inflection, volume.

"THESE THINGS ARE of transcendent importance," he said. "Preaching is a matter of communicating truth. A man's gestures, his face, are all instruments he should employ."

He pointed out how the singer, the actor, voices material that others have written for him, while the minister both writes and delivers

his message. In selecting subject matter for sermons, the deep-voiced minister works most often on the basis that he is "doing personal counseling on a group scale." He considers he will preach to an individual, not a congregation.

BUT FIRST HE listens. As he talks with people about their problems, as he makes his pastoral calls, hears a question on Christian doctrine, he finds ideas for sermons.

When people voice questions or

problems, he knows they are thinking about them. They will probably find sermons on those subjects interesting.

So he tries to "keep my finger on the parish pulse, as well as the national and world mind."

AFTER HE SELECTS his theme from a file of about 150 "embryo" sermons he is collecting material on, he spends Thursday organizing it, then typing a first draft.

Before he begins, he places before him a 3 x 5 card, stating the basic idea of the sermon in 10

words or less. (If he can't state it in 10 words, the thought won't be clear, he believes.)

He writes a second draft Friday. To write his third and final version, he goes into his study at the Kirk parsonage at 8 a.m. Saturday.

"STICK WITH IT until it's completed, sometime between 4 and 7 p.m.," he explains.

Written out word for word on four single-spaced sheets of paper,

the sermon is before him as he delivers it to someone.

When the service ends Sunday morning and he greets his listeners at the door, he is cheered when someone says, "That's exactly what we were talking about last week!" or "You must have been reading my mind."

Then he knows it has been interesting to someone.

He has brightened up "sermon dullness," as he set out to do when he decided to become a minister.

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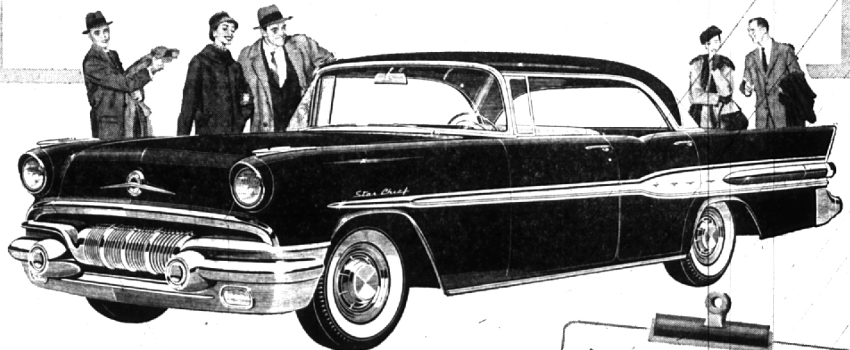
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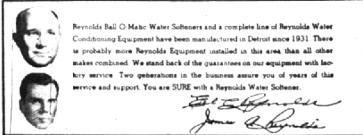
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