

Movin' In a Slow Hurry (December 1986)

I grew up under the tutelage of a wonderful old Southern lady named Willie Mae McGriff. She was an intimate part of our family for over 30 years. It was she who taught me the art of being in what she called a slow hurry.

There were mornings when she arrived at our house moving slow. My mother, who was hyper and sometimes demanding, would push her a little. I remember Will Mae's delightful response: "Don't worry 'bout that, Miss B. I'll get it done. Today I'm just moving in a *slow hurry*."

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What a great way to accomplish the important things!

It was this lesson King David learned so painfully when it came time to return the Ark of the Covenant after it had been released from captivity by the Philistines. Eager to have the ark placed in its new home atop Mt. Zion, David commandeered the first vehicle he could find. It turned out to be an ox cart pulled by a couple of milk cows. That didn't matter to David as long as he got the job done.

While God is a God of enthusiasm (the word "enthusiasm," you may know, comes from two Greek words, *entheos*, meaning "in God"), man's problem is confusing genuine spiritual excitement with impetuosity. Too many of us act like old steam locomotives—blowing off all the power in the whistle, saving little to turn the wheels.

David was not interested in means. His job, as commander, was

to secure the ark on Mt. Zion as quickly as possible.

The story of what happened when David got ahead of God—and tried to do God's work using man's method—is classic. Depending on organization rather than charisma, he assigned men to hurry the process. To David, the completion of the task was far more important than the method used. The results were tragic. When the ark tilted on the cart and one of the men reached up to steady it, he was struck dead. That's heavy stuff. It was God's way of saying He is more interested in the way a thing is done than whether it is completed.

After losing one of his top men because of his haste, David slowed down. He left the ark at the house of a fellow named Obed-Edom. He returned to Jerusalem to do a little Bible study. When all else fails, read the instruction manual.

Three months later he returned for the ark. But his attitude had changed, as well as his methods. No longer was he impetuous. This time he was willing to move in a *slow hurry*.

How had he changed?

He had studied the Bible.

He had sought counsel from wise men.

He was determined to follow God's plan—no matter how foolish it seemed.

He communicated with his people.

He organized his men.

Finally, he moved ahead, but only six steps at a time. After each stage he stopped the procession. They took time to build an altar, offer sacrifices and celebrate before moving on another six steps and repeating the entire process. He was in a *slow hurry*—right on God's schedule.

I shudder when I consider all the projects going on in the kingdom. God has a perfect way for His people to evangelize the world, to spread the gospel through the media, to raise money for building projects. Yet every place I go, following the ark up the road, I hear the sounds of the ox cart.

I wonder: Could it be that God is more interested in how we raise money than the amount we raise?

Paul Garlington, a pastor in Rochester, New York, says folks sometimes ask what he is doing on a certain day. When he says, "Nothing," they try to move in. "You don't understand," Paul tells them, "I'm occupied that day, I'm doing Nothing."

I know a lot of people who have only two speeds—full power and off. They keep passing me in life at full speed. I envy them for their ability to get a lot done in a short period. Yet as I plod down the road like the proverbial tortoise racing the hare, I often see their burned-out ruins.

No engine, especially the human engine, is designed to run at full power constantly.

Throttle back occasionally. Stop and study. Happiness and health come when you learn to move in *slow hurry*.

Believe it or not, God is not depending on you—He wants you to depend on Him.

Jamie Buckingham wrote 153 columns for Charisma over 13 years, first known as "Dry Bones" but later as its most recognized "Last Word." His singular voice was animated by a heart for Jesus baptized in the power of the Holy Spirit in 1967 at a Full Gospel Businessmen's convention. Buckingham provided a steadying force during the scandals of the 1980s, penning the seminal article on the PTL scandal, "God Is Shaking His Church" in May 1986.