

## 'GIMME RELIGION' SUPPLANTS PRAYER

We Beg of God After Begging From Everyone Else Fails,  
Declares Preacher Playing Modern Worship.

By Leon M. Siler  
NRA Service Writer  
NEW YORK, Dec. 13.—The average praying American has a bad case of the "gimmies." He is but a professional beggar. His prayer is but a "column of wants."

And the average praying American, thinks the Rev. C. Everett Wagner, minister of the West Side Methodist Episcopal Church of New York City, ought to be ashamed of himself—particularly at Christmas time.

Worse yet, charges the Rev. Wagner, too many of us fail to pay God the compliment of asking Him first for the material blessings we think we need.

"We beg," observes the pastor caustically, "from nearly everybody on earth, and then as a last resource, we beg from the Almighty. And it surely must make the Almighty feel humiliated."

### Age of Artificiality

In an age of artificiality, with home life, neighborliness, emphasis on character and numerous other of life's "finer things" toppling into the discard, the submerging of prayer's rightful spirit is seen by the smilingly candid clergyman as one of humanity's most hurtful tendencies.

Checking of this tendency he regards as a source of humanity's greatest spiritual hope.

"Begging from God," he cites, "is a thing that the vilest of the vile can do. To appreciate God is an achievement."

"The Bible narrates an occasion

## PLAN SERVICES BEFORE EASTER

Chicago Pastor Will Be in Charge of Series.

Dr. Frederick N. Shannon, Chicago Central Congregational Church pastor, will conduct noonday pre-Easter services at Keith's Theater March 1-10, it has been announced.

Evangelism is stressed in the annual series conducted by the Church Federation. Dr. Ernest N. Evans, secretary, said Dr. Shannon is a speaker of ability.

Training classes for workers leading up to the Easter evangelistic campaign will be conducted by Dr. Martin E. Anderson Jan. 11-16 at Roberts Park Methodist Church. The Rev. Thomas W. Grafton, Third Christian Church pastor, the evangelistic chairman, asked pastors to name leaders to attend the classes.

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Rev. Wagner is unable to perceive it. And the pastor-critic's formula for prayer freed of modernity's improprieties?

"Go to God," he responds, "as you telephone a friend. For prayer should link us with God in unselfish companionship."

"Pray with a God-centered mind, not a self-centered one."

"For the Divine that is working every hour of the day and night in both individual lives and in society, we should pray thankfully."

"Reverse the percentages of the characteristics of most of our prayers today—10 per cent praise and thanksgiving, 90 per cent 'gimme'—and the world will regain its slipping hold on right ideals, sound values and flawless standards of conduct."

"When our prayers are merely begging in sanctimonious guise, we 'gimme'."

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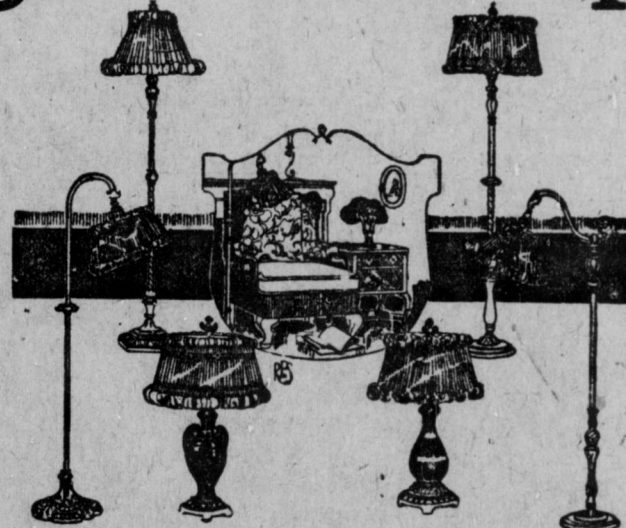
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