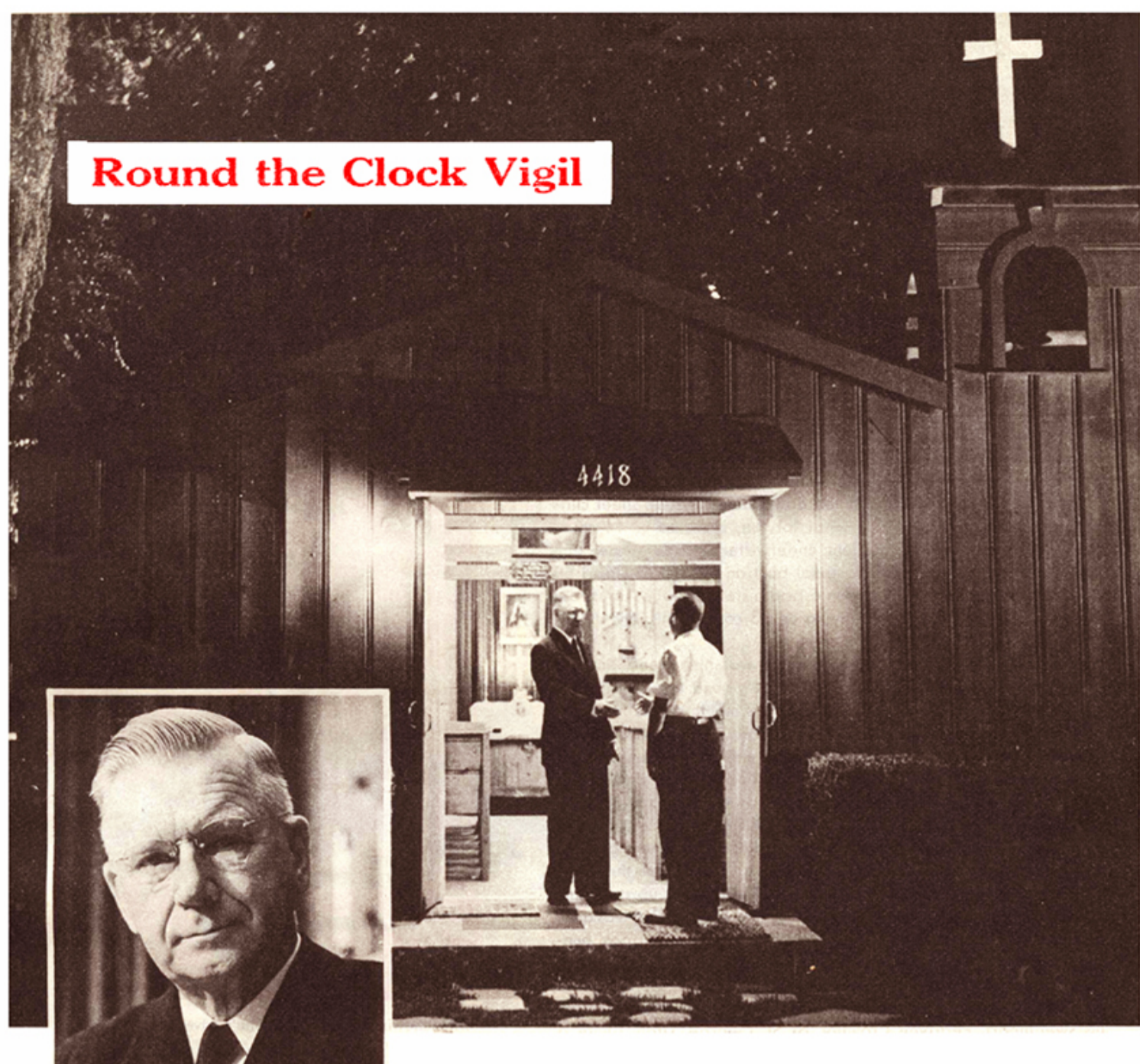


Round the Clock Vigil



After midnight Rev. John H. Wells (inset) welcomes a visitor to his all-night church

THROUGHOUT THE NIGHT candles glow in a small church in North Hollywood, Calif. The doors are wide open. A car pulls up; its driver walks quietly across the broad lawn and enters. A couple leave the bus at the corner and visit the church on their way home. Later, a troubled woman who has been walking the lonely streets sees the lighted church and crosses the threshold. All night long they come by ones or twos, some to meditate, others to seek during the dark hours spiritual guidance to meet their problems. Waiting for them is John H. Wells, the pastor. A small sign at the entrance assures night visitors that he is ready to talk to them at any hour in his small office adjoining the church.

The hunger for spiritual help from darkness to dawn is familiar to John Wells. Twelve years ago ill health forced him to resign his pastorate in Canada. Recovery was slow, and during it he drove aimlessly through the West, hoping that the change of scenery would refresh his dampened spirits. Often during the lonely nights he felt a great need to talk with another minister. But wherever he went he found the churches closed. "If I ever have another church," he vowed, "it will be open day and night. The soul doesn't come alive on Sunday mornings only, and some day I'll build a church where people can pray whenever they wish."

Build it he did—with his own hands. When he arrived in California, he realized that he could regain his former happiness only by returning to the work to which he had already dedicated his life. He borrowed \$500 from a church mission society, found an available lot, and became a carpenter.

Once he had completed the building, which he named the Little Brown Church in the Valley, he kept his vow by keeping its doors always open to all. It is nonsectarian, and today it includes a Sunday school and a parsonage. Its regular membership is large.

American

M A G A Z I N E

O c t o b e r , 1 9 5 4 : p . 5 6

OldMagazineArticles.com