An Interview with
John MacArthur

Should the Whole
Bible Be
Interpreted
Literally?

Making Your
Athletic Ability
Count

The Pedestal
Problem

Hungry Strangers

Revival—Where Does It Begin?
Would you devote a few hours of your time to protect your child from sexual assault?

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If you're like most parents, the mere thought of your child being harmed, in any way, makes your skin crawl.

Like most of us, you have done your very best to provide your children with the skills and knowledge that will protect them from the risks they face in the world every day.

We all teach our children things like, "Don't go with strangers..." but did you know that most sexual assaults on children (as high as 80% in some studies) are committed by someone known to either the child or their family.

What was that you said about "Strangers?"

Or, did you know that your child is far more likely to be involved in child pornography by a teacher, coach or youth group leader than the dirty-old-man we so often picture for our children.

In fact, it is sadly true that by doing our very best to raise respectful, obedient and loving children we may, at the same time, be raising children who are unprepared or ill-equipped to deal with the persuasive and manipulative molester.

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Statement of Purpose

This magazine is committed to the historic fundamentals of the Christian faith, biblical separation, and the priority of the local church and world evangelization. Although no magazine or individual can speak for the overall Fundamentalist movement, it is our desire to create a forum to encourage Christian leaders and statesmen to defend biblical Christianity. We will examine matters of contemporary interest to all Christians, providing an open discussion of divergent opinions on relevant issues. The Fundamentalist Journal will also reassert our history and heritage, as well as point the way to the future.
An Interview with John MacArthur, Jr.

John MacArthur, Jr., pastor-teacher of Grace Community Church in Sun Valley, California, is considered controversial by some. In this interview he reveals his Fundamentalist roots and addresses such issues as the role of the pastor, the plurality of elders, and the importance of evangelism.

Q&A

Timothy Dwight: For God, Country, and Yale
Robert A. Peterson

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Timothy Dwight

Treasures from the Text
God So Loved the World—Richard D. Patterson

In Review

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Know someone who deserves a journalism scholarship?
You Said It

Shimei

Well, fans, I have decided to go into youth work! With the passing of the Equal Access Bill and proposed legislation allowing silent prayer in the public schools, now is the time to make my move. All this new religious freedom should not be neglected!

After a great deal of contemplation, I have accepted a position as Equal Access Youth Pastor for a local ministry. My initial duties will involve securing local public schools for available meeting rooms at unscheduled times. Furnace rooms and broom closets are generally free from 3 a.m. to 6 a.m. in most schools. We will be demanding that the room be made available to us at 5 a.m., and insist that our teens be there in force.

One of my other duties will be to conduct Silent Prayer Seminars for public school students! We will discuss the most effective manner to witness through silent prayer. Sessions include “Heads Down, Eyes Closed,” “The Contemplative Gaze,” Folded Hands and Bleary Eyes,” “The Value of the Silent Whisper,” and “Lunchroom Blessings and Other Special Problems.”

Imagine the dynamic impact that can be made through a teenaged army of silent prayer! Our schools may never be the same. In fact, maybe we should just conduct our silent prayer rally in our always accessible closet at 5 a.m. Perhaps that is what we should have been doing all along!

Shimei

All work stops...

Thank you for your excellent publication. The day it arrives in our home all work stops until I read through it. I appreciated "Till Someone Else Do Us Part" by Sheldon Vanauken (June).

Dixie Lee Patterson
Cinnaminson, New Jersey

I take exception...

Allow me to take exception to a conclusion made by David Miller in “Christians and Public Education” (Sept). For decades, the Humanists have been gaining control of public education. They have achieved many of their goals. We feel the pervasive influence of Secular Humanism is devastating to the continuance of liberty in this nation, especially in the government schools.

We must all can to promote private education and home schooling. If we are going to salvaging a generation of people who understand and will fight for freedom. The government schools cannot and will not move in that direction in the foreseeable future—not until our privately educated children move into the administration of the government schools.

Robert McBurney
Baylor University
Waco, Texas

It's one or the other...

I was very disappointed by "Eternal Security Rightly Understood" (Sept). I assumed that the main goal of the Journal was to unite all believing Christians to try to stem satanic Humanistic forces in their onslaught on Christian family and moral values. To use the magazine to push the highly controversial and divisive doctrine of eternal security is questionable. The answer is in a very simple question: Does a Christian lose his free will after he is saved? Can anybody in his right mind believe that he does?

So it is either free will or eternal security.

I appreciate your work, your courage, and your faith, and I will keep praying for God’s blessing on your fight against the forces of evil.

John Haviar
Chicago, Illinois

Movies...

Thank you for your clear and to-the-point words on the matter of movies in "Thou Shalt Not Attend Movies" (Sept). As youth director of a sizable youth ministry, I find that this question arises often. I agree with you 100 percent, but the sad reality is that thousands of young people attend movies that contain filthy language, nudity, and violence! We must continue to pray and work.

John D Freeman
Westridge Baptist Church
Fort Worth, Texas

I just read the article on not going to movies. Edward Dobson told his son that he would not go himself nor should his son go because someone might think they had gone to a bad movie. Why not refuse to go and refuse to allow him to go because 99 percent are bad and any money invested in the industry is ill spent. Goodness should be able to stand on its own, and not have to borrow strength from the theory that one might think I had been to a bad movie.

Vene P Stokes
Gulfport, Mississippi

We welcome your comments and will include them in our Letters to the Editor section as space permits—subject to condensation at the discretion of the editorial staff.
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Party labels lose their value in the battle for moral principles.

The conservative-religious “sleeping giant” rose from a deep slumber in 1980 and is now standing tall and ready for action in 1984. Representing a coalition of millions of Conservatives, this giant is convinced that while foreign and domestic policies are of primary concern, politicians must be forced to address the great moral issues facing our nation. As in 1980, this year’s election brings many of these issues to the forefront. The platforms of the two major political parties clearly are at opposite ends of the poles on these matters, reflecting a division of ideologies that has rarely, if ever, been so distinct.

We must not label one party as all Liberals or as all Conservatives. For within the ranks of each political party there are candidates who represent each point of view. The Conservatives, both Democrats and Republicans, who voted for Ronald Reagan in 1980, will probably do so again—not because of the party he represents, but because of his conservative position on crucial issues. For the same reasons, Conservatives in Virginia will support Democratic Congressman Dan Daniel. Party labels lose their value in the battle for moral principles.

In selecting a candidate to support, I look for those who uphold the principles of the Judeo-Christian tradition upon which the Founding Fathers built our nation. These principles are defined in both the Old and New Testaments.

The principle of the dignity of human life (Exod. 20:13; Matt. 5:21-22). The sanctity of life was once the cornerstone of our society. Today the blood of over 15 million innocent unborn babies is on our hands. Every year 1.5 million lives are destroyed through abortion. Common medical practices now include infanticide for imperfect or unwanted newborns, genetic experimentation, and surrogate mothering. The Giver of all life created man in His own image. God will surely judge a nation for such disregard for His creation.

In 1982, for the first time since the 1973 Supreme Court decision to allow abortion-on-demand, we saw a decline in the number of abortions. I believe pro-life candidates have, and will, contribute to the elimination of this atrocity.

Archbishops John O’Connor of New York and Bernard Law of Boston recently issued a statement to those politicians, either Catholic or of other faiths, who claim to personally oppose abortion, but still vote to allow it and to fund it. The archbishops equated them with the people from the Civil War era who claimed to personally oppose slavery but continued to condone its practice. As we, the church, seek to provide alternatives to unplanned pregnancies and promote the sanctity of marriage, we must look for candidates who will translate our belief that life is sacred into policy.

The principle of the traditional monogamous family (Gen. 2:21-24; Eph. 5:22-33). Some statistics show that half of all marriages now end in divorce and over 60 percent of all children live in single-parent homes. The responsibility of parents to raise their children has been surrendered to the school and deferred to television. The value of the traditional family has been cheapened by the philosophy of self-gratification. Some have tried to redefine the family as any two or more people living together. This could mean two unmarried heterosexuals, or two “married” homosexuals, or any bizarre combination.

Before the church, before government, God’s first institution was the family—one man for one woman for one lifetime. The strength of a society lies in the strength of her families. We must look for candidates who are committed to the primacy of the family, who discourage governmental intrusion into the family, and who encourage the traditional values of the family.

The principle of common decency (Gen. 3:7,21; Matt. 5:27-28; Eph. 5:3-5). Pornography has slithered into our homes, promoting immorality and every form of sexual decadence. Children and women are relegated to mere objects of pleasure. Peep shows were once available only on the seedy side of town. Now magazines and television bring hard-core pornography into the family living room. Infants as young as three months old have been abused for filthy lucre.

Pornography viciously attacks virtue as being out of date and no longer applicable. The results of the desensitizing of moral decency are reflected in figures that show 100,000 children are sexually abused each year.

Some regulation has already been proposed. We need to look for candidates who are willing to stand on the front line of the battle against this $8-billion industry that is attacking our children and our families.

The principle of the work ethic (Gen. 3:19; Exod. 20:9-10; 2 Thess. 3:10). Recognizing that there are people who are truly needy, we must reach out a hand to give assistance. However, today’s welfare state has created an unnatural dependence on government as a caretaker. As Christians, we are commanded to feed the hungry, but we are also encouraged to promote the laborer. We are coming to a place where one generation has followed another onto the welfare roles. The cycle must be stopped. We must look for candidates who are sensitive to the needy and who offer support for a strong economy—providing...
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Several weeks ago we bought a 10-month-old Doberman named Rosey. When we brought her home and put her in our fenced-in yard she began to run incessantly. Now and then she would stick her long pointed nose in a water bucket, grab a lick, and take off again. After two hours of perpetual motion, she flopped to the ground—exhausted. No amount of coaxing could persuade her to move one inch.

Many Christians are like Rosey. They live in perpetual spiritual motion—going, coming, working, giving, attending—busily involved in the Lord’s work. Once in a while they impatiently catch some brief spiritual refreshment, anxious to move on. Finally, they collapse with spiritual exhaustion and emotional burnout. All the preaching and counseling in the world cannot make them move. They are tired, discouraged, and depressed.

Jesus addresses this issue in the opening statement of the Sermon on the Mount. “Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 5:3). Notice that Jesus is talking about spiritual poverty and not material poverty. A number of “intellectual” Christians advocate a return to material poverty, believing that in so doing they will be pleasing God. As sincere and honorable as that might seem, that is not what Jesus is referring to here.

In the Greek language, two distinctively different words are translated “poor” in English. A proper understanding of these words reveals the powerful principle of Christ’s statement.

Work Hard?
The Greek word penes (pe-nace’) comes from a verb meaning “to work hard.” A penes person is one who has few material possessions, but he has a job and must work hard to provide for the needs of his family. He is the kind of person who has barely enough money to pay his bills at the end of the month. He lives from month to month and paycheck to paycheck. Most of us live in that cycle. We labor, toil, and sweat, and somehow we survive. We are “poor”—peses.

It might seem logical to think that Jesus meant, “Blessed are the penes in spirit. Blessed are those who work hard, give a lot of money, go to church, pass out volumes of tracts, and witness to multitudes of people!” However, Jesus did not use the word penes here. He was not implying that the blessing of God is for those who work hard. He was not advocating the philosophy that “God helps those who help themselves,” predominant in the thinking of many Christians today.

For many, spirituality has become more a matter of what I do than what I am (Eph. 4:13). As Fundamentalists we often judge our own spirituality, and that of others, by the number of commitments on our calendars. Like Rosey, we find ourselves in perpetual motion in our attempt to achieve spiritual maturity.

Depend on God
In this Beatitude, Jesus used the word ptochos (ptoe-kos’), from the verb “to bow down” or “do reverence.” A ptochos is a beggar, someone who has no job or security. His only hope of physical survival is that someone will give him enough bread to eat. He is destitute and dependent upon the charity of others. Jesus is saying, “Blessed are the ptochos in spirit.” Blessed are those who are beggars. Those who know that they are nothing and that their spiritual survival is dependent upon an outside source.

This is the antithesis of a penes Christian. It is someone who recognizes that he is absolutely dependent upon God—not his own abilities and activities. Most of us do not like to think of ourselves as beggars. We think that somehow with our intellect, our ability, and our ingenuity, we can really accomplish something for God. As pastors, there is a great danger in utilizing human ability to build a ministry. We are often guilty of relying on clever methods rather than on prayerful dependence upon God. Jesus said that we should be as beggars. Until the principle that we are nothing and Jesus Christ is everything becomes dynamic and vital in our lives, we will be destined for spiritual burnout.

This principle is repeated often in Scripture. In Proverbs 16:19, we read, “Better it is to be of an humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the proud.” The prophet Isaiah states, “For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy: I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones” (Isa. 57:15).

He further emphasizes this point in Isaiah 66:2, “For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the Lord: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.” When we come to God in brokenness and admit our total dependence upon Him, He is then free to do a great work in our lives. We discover the blessing of God in the message of the old black spiritual: It’s “not my brother, not my sister, but it’s me, Oh Lord, standin’ in the need of prayer.”
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Editor’s Note: Fundamentalist Journal has published a number of articles on secondary separation. In promoting our open forum of discussion, we present another view on the subject.

Ahab consulted the false prophets, and they encouraged him to go with Jehoshaphat against Ramoth-gilead. Jehoshaphat was too wise for that, so he asked Ahab, “Is there not here a prophet of the Lord besides, that we might inquire of him?” (2 Chron. 18:6). There was a prophet of the Lord, but he was in prison. Ahab answered, “There is yet one man, by whom we may inquire of the Lord: but I hate him; for he never prophesied good unto me, but always evil” (18:7). That was Micaiah, the bold and true prophet of God.

As the Lord liveth...” (1 Kings 22:14).
It sounds like Elijah as he had stood before Ahab some years previous—“As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word” (1 Kings 17:1).

Courageous Micaiah stood alone against that same enemy, Ahab, and against all that were with him—“As the Lord liveth, what the Lord saith unto me, that will I speak” (1 Kings 22:14). Micaiah boldly prophesied against the matter at hand, openly condemned the false prophets, and predicted failure for the two kings in their venture. For such actions Micaiah was smitten and put in prison with strict rations—while Jehoshaphat stood by. The campaign must go on. One stubborn lone voice would not change things.

God was against the campaign and against the false prophets and against the compromise of Jehoshaphat. Jehoshaphat was responsible for further cruel treatment of a true prophet.

The two kings lost the war. Ahab was slain. Jehoshaphat was mercifully delivered (2 Chron. 18:31), and he returned to his house in Jerusalem.

“And Jehu the son of Hanani the seer went out to meet him, and said to king Jehoshaphat, Shouldest thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the Lord? Therefore is wrath upon thee from before the Lord” (2 Chron. 19:2). The divine verdict against Jehoshaphat was clear.

There was Ahab—a wicked ungodly king.

There was Jehoshaphat—a good and godly king, but a compromiser, clearly labeled as such.

There were the true prophets, Micaiah and Jehu, who separated themselves from...
Ahab, but also from Jehoshaphat. They would not go along, but rather they condemned the entire matter.

Secondary separation has been given a bad name. Few practice it. Many condemn it. It has been made to appear ridiculous and extreme and impractical. So, what’s new? Micaiah and Jehu were against Ahab and also against Jehoshaphat.

Extreme illustration may be found or fabricated to picture the folly of that which is called secondary separation, but straw dummies do not prove anything. We are not speaking of standing aloof or of refusing to keep company with a compromising brother—we speak of official fellowship that confuses people and weakens the — testimony by cooperation with those who cooperate with the enemies.

Harry Ironside wrote of this matter years ago when he wrote about sanctification and separation in Holiness, the False and the True:

But this brings in responsibility. I am not to go on with the evil—protesting perhaps, but fellowship with it still—though it be in a reserved halfhearted way. I am called to separate from it. In so doing, I may seem to be separating from dear children of God and beloved servants of Christ. But this is necessary if they do not judge the apostate condition.

The apostle Paul suffered as a separated soldier, and the wounds that hurt the most were those inflicted by compromising brethren. Many forsook him because of his stand. He stood not only against apostasy but also against believers who corrupted the gospel. The entire letter to the Galatians bears this out. Paul pronounced a curse upon those who mixed law and grace.

Paul wrote to the Thessalonians commanding them, “If any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother” (2 Thess. 3:14-15). The falsehood that Paul fought was a distorted belief regarding the return of Christ—a distortion of belief that resulted in idleness.

Paul had earlier commanded, “Withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us” (2 Thess. 3:6). This reference is to a disorderly walk resulting from distorted doctrine. However one may interpret this and other similar Scripture, it should be clear that there are occasions when a brother should separate from a brother—and that is called secondary separation.

Actually it is just plain and pure and total separation. When we are linked with those who are linked with those who are wrong, we are in a chain where obedient Christians do not belong.

### Separated Christians ought to fellowship with separated Christians.

Let men argue as they will, the cause of truth has been lost in nearly every great denomination because of a lack of separation. Compromise was the cause, and the culprit was the believer who let in the unbeliever.

An interesting statement can be found in a book now out of print, *Breakfast Table Autocrat (Christian in Big Business)* by Ellsworth Day, the biography of Henry Parsons Crowell, a Christian businessman from a generation ago. He has been called the father of Quaker Oats. The biographer states: “Mr. Crowell saw that the battle against the Laven of the Sadduccees was being lost in Christendom by reason of ‘tolerance toward believers who were tolerant toward unbelievers.’”

The battle was lost. The cause is clear. Believers gave away billions of dollars of real estate in the form of churches, colleges, seminaries, and camps. We had to start all over. That was a generation ago, and now we wonder if we have learned anything from history.

The command, “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers” (2 Cor. 6:14) has not been obeyed if we are just one link apart in the same chain. We do not belong in that chain at all. Separated Christians ought to fellowship with separated Christians. I am referring now to official church fellowship.

A woman has a right to say to a man, “I’ll hold your hand when you let go of her hand,” and churches are right when they condemn other churches that are still a part of apostate associations or denominations.

Over 50 years ago a group of Baptists realized that the battle to clean up the Northern Baptist Convention was futile. Apostasy had been tolerated until it became strong. Then the leadership became so corrupted that the Fundamentalist was no longer at home within that family of Baptists. The situation became not only an unequal yoke, but more of a fight than a fellowship. The Fundamentalists were paying a price for the compromise they had tolerated.

The time had come to start all over, and a few churches banded together in what is now known as the General Association of Regular Baptist Churches. There are now nearly 1,600 churches in fellowship with this association. Secondary separation is their platform, and this writer has been happily associated with the GARBC for over 35 years. In part, this is their statement of practice:

Any Baptist church... which is not in fellowship or cooperation with any local, state or national convention, association or group which permits the presence of liberals... shall apply...

In other words, you must “come out from among them” to come into the association. Come out if you want to come in. That caused fundamental churches to separate from other fundamental churches. Call it what you will—separation, secondary separation, or just total separation—the position is good and safe and scriptural, even though Micaiah must sometimes stand against Jehovah when Jehovah insists on union with Ahabs.

It is time to recognize the validity of a time-proven position instead of calling it strange and extreme and ridiculous. Lines should be clearly drawn without confusion.

Let those who stand for truth stand with each other and against error. Separation is not separating believers. Compromise is!
Many people express an interest in revival. There are not so many deeply concerned about it, fewer still burdened for it, and even fewer heartbroken for it. Yet, spiritual revival is not an alternative for the nations right now. It is imperative.

We misuse the term revival to announce the yearly “revival meeting”—a week’s meeting with an evangelist and perhaps a singer. Such a meeting is usually geared to the unsaved. But we cannot revive what has never had life.

The church has never faced a greater challenge from the powers of darkness than she does today.

Walter Nigg wrote a book entitled The Heretics, with this challenging statement: “The history of heresy shows that Christianity is richer in content than its ecclesiastical embodiment. The Gospel holds potentialities which have not yet come to the surface.”

European believers correctly thought of revival as an awakening, such as the nation-transforming visitation from God through George Whitefield and then the Wesleys in England. Or the earthshaking move of the Spirit in New England through Jonathan Edwards, later joined by Whitefield.

True revival is God’s coming to the aid of His sick church. Evangelism is that revived church’s going to a world dead in sin and, under divine power, pulling down the strongholds of Satan. Any true revival can be proven by the fact that it changed the moral climate of an area or a nation. Perhaps the offense of true revival is that:
It cannot be organized.  
(The wind bloweth where it listeth.)  
It cannot be subsidized.  
(It does not need financial backing.)  
It cannot be advertised.  
(There is nothing more self-advertising than a fire, and revival is fire from heaven.)  
It cannot be computerized.  
(God alone knows the extent of His power.)  
It cannot be regularized.  
(We cannot lay a theological track for it to operate on.)  
It cannot be rationalized.  
(It is a divine mystery beyond finite minds.)  
It cannot be denominationalized.  
(It leaps over doctrinal barriers.)  
It cannot be nationalized.  
(Preachers by the hundreds have been flying to Korea to see what God has done in that country. Most have gasped at the packed churches and returned sad that our mechanical services are so sterile.)

A recent television newscast reported that the Episcopal Commission has recommended that homosexuals be admitted to the ministry on the condition that they act "prostitutes tithe? lVe need a revival among us to reach out to the One who "ever liveth to make intercession for us."  
A century has passed since Oliver Wendell Holmes wrote:  
Before Thine ever blazing Throne,  
We have no lustre of our own.  
On that blazing throne sits One who is the Light of the World. When we stand in splendid isolation before Him whose eyes are as a flame of fire, who will dare to "look full in His wonderful face"? Most of us will turn away from His flaming holiness, embarrassed that we were so accepted in a world that could not accept Him. Looking back from that throne over the path of our earthly pilgrimage, "the things of earth will look strangely dim in the light of His glory and grace."

Many express an interest in revival. But not so many are deeply concerned about it, fewer still burdened for it, and even fewer heartbroken for it.

At that awesome time of judgment, we will find that "the harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved" from burning humiliation, as untold billions of souls watch while our life's work is judged and a verdict given by the infallible Judge. Will this crisis find us with swords unblooded in spiritual warfare? Will it find us guilty of violating His commandments, not by intentional opposition, but by sheer neglect or habitual sloth? The writer to the Hebrews repeatedly speaks of "today." Well, this is our "today." How long will it last? Now is the time to correct the slack in our faulty obedience and slim sacrifice.

I am convinced that the church (the body of truly regenerated believers) has never faced a greater challenge from the powers of darkness than she does today. We need a baptism of honesty in the courts of the Lord. Honesty means truth, and truth can be painful.

Let the fires go out in the boiler room of the church, and the place will still look smart and clean, but it will be cold. The prayer room in the church is the boiler room for its spiritual life. When holy passion has ceased to move the intercessors in the prayer room, coldness ensues, power is lost, and mortification sets in. The place still looks viable, but it is no longer a birthplace of souls.

God ignores the cold church. He rejoices in the church hot with the Spirit's presence. He vomits the lukewarm church from His holy mouth.

The lukewarm church in the Revelation was called "Laodicean." I believe this name designates it as a church of mob rule, where everything was decided by popular opinion and majority vote—not by prayer and fasting. It may have had packed church business meetings, but sparsely attended prayer meetings. (Is it like this in your church?)

The city of Laodicea was prosperous, and the church folks climbed on the bandwagon of prosperity. The city had a banking system, flourishing industry, and a well-known medical clinic. Eye salve was a major export, and yet with irony God says, "I counsel thee to... anoint thine eyes with eye-salve? Later he says that, rich as they were materially, spiritually they were "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked" (Rev. 3:17).

The great apostle Paul says that he had "great conflict" (wrestling in prayer?) for the folks at Laodicea (Col. 2:1). He assures the Colossians that Epaphras was "always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God" (Col. 4:12). In the next verse Paul says, "I bear him record, that he hath a great zeal for you and them that are in Laodicea. With all this wealth of spiritual background, the church had founded on material prosperity and was named by Christ as "poor and wretched and miserable." Today we boast of our intellectual ministries, our endless activities, our stimulating programs, and so forth, yet I wonder what the One with eyes as a flame of fire sees in us.

I am often asked to pray for the healing of the nation. I am praying for the healing of the church. Then the healing of America, Britain, and other nations will follow. As the church goes, so goes the world!
The Pedestal Problem

While I was reading through one of the famous Fundamentalist periodicals that regularly come across my desk, something on the two pages before me was making me very uncomfortable. There was no escaping it. Something was wrong, but I could not put my finger on it. In the middle of the paper was a directory of Fundamentalist churches—a regular feature. It had never bothered me before. Why now?

Perhaps because I had never taken the time to really read the ads until now. There were 35 ads for churches strewn across the pages. Every one sounded like a fine Fundamentalist church, but the largest single thing on 33 of the ads was a picture of the pastor. In 25 of the ads, various glowing superlatives described the church—"largest," "greatest," and "fastest-growing." Every ad mentioned the name of the pastor, yet only two of the ads mentioned the name of Jesus Christ.

Because the Lord has given me the opportunity to spend literally scores of hours counseling pastors and their families, I have a deep concern for the Fundamentalist preacher. I am convinced that many preachers today are in trouble—not from external sources, but from the "lusts that war" in our own members (James 4:1).

Preachers pack a lot of power. Like a famous stockbroker, when preachers talk, people listen. Some ministers confuse power with authority. Preachers are to be respected as God's anointed, but when we confuse power with authority we become authoritarian. We take questions regarding procedures as a challenge to our position. We respond personally to contrary votes in business meetings. We assume that questioning our sermon is questioning the Scripture. Questions equal criticism, in
our opinion, and criticism is divisive and not to be tolerated. Our management style becomes autocratic.

A prominent preacher boasted to me that in the 27 years he had pastored his church, the thing he was proudest of was that he had never once allowed his deacons to vote on anything. That type of power is unknown in the New Testament. This lack of team cooperation polarizes boards and congregations into camps and all too often results in splits.

Power that is abused can also lead to a denial of problems. If we begin to feel uneasy about ourselves, we become critical or angry with others. This can easily become evident in our preaching. If anyone suggests that we are preaching "too hard," we can powerfully and convincingly declare that we are just "preaching against sin." Thus the complainer's problem is with the Bible, and the preacher is vindicated.

Not all "hard" preaching is motivated by power; some is motivated by guilt. I know a pastor who constantly preached against immorality. He became exceedingly angry and hostile in his preaching and assured everyone he hated sin and the Devil. In reality, he had been committing immoral acts himself. As his guilt increased, so did the "power" of his preaching.

The Peer-Pressure Problem

The peer-pressure problem is not limited to adolescence; it is especially acute among preachers. If our church has doubled in attendance, we are eager to tell other preachers.

Once I was leading a therapy group for ministers. Approximately 10 of us sat in a circle, and I asked the group to introduce themselves and tell us a little about their ministries. I was soon sorry I had done so. The first pastor glowingly told how his church had grown. Not to be outdone, the second talked about his radio ministry and the thousands of letters he received in response to it. The third extolled his building program, and on it went.

Off to the side of the circle, I noticed one member of the group squirming more and more as his turn approached. He and his chair were almost out of the room by the time it was his turn. He lowered his head, and silence filled the room while all waited for him to speak. "I'm in the wrong place," he sobbed. "My church is a mess. My wife and I don't get along. I am miserable. I've been debating leaving the ministry. I certainly do not belong here with you men. I came here for help. I'm in the wrong group." He bowed his head and quietly sobbed.

When we confuse power with authority we become authoritarian.

The uneasy silence was broken as one man who had raved about the growth of his church admitted that he too had problems and needed help. The radio preacher shared the problems of being away from his children. Slowly a quiet attitude of honesty filled the room. One of the finest group experiences in which I have ever been involved came about because one preacher had been honest.

Preachers seem to love to perform around each other and outdo each other, instead of being honest and asking for help. What an example we could set for our congregations if we pastors would become more helpful and mutually supportive of one another.

The Paranoid Problem

The paranoid problem is similar to the one experienced by Elijah. Having run away from the wrath of Jezebel, Elijah forlornly declared to God, "I, even I, only am left." In the paranoid problem, we feel that we are the only ones still faithful to God. Our church is the only "good" church in town. This attitude leads to a grandiose isolationism, sometimes disguised under the veil of separation. Because we are the only faithful ones, we somehow stand above reproach for our conduct. I have actually been told by pastors who were involved in sin that God would not remove them from the ministry because they were the only men in the area really preaching the Word.

This attitude leads to arrogance and a lack of accountability to anyone—including God.

The Pinnacle Problem

The pinnacle problem is depicted in the account of Christ's temptation, when Satan took Christ up to a pinnacle of the temple. Satan tempted Christ to jump, testing the Scripture that declared no harm would come to Him because of the angels' protection. Too many of us believe that we have that same protection from God; therefore we could never fall into sin.

For any of us to believe that we are above falling is exceedingly dangerous. We all are weak, and we all must constantly ask God to give us what we need to overcome the wiles of the Devil. When I lived in Africa, I often heard the native expression, "Where the crack in the wall is, the lizard comes in." The same is true in all of our lives where Satan will tempt us in our weakest area.

The Personal Possession Problem

The personal possession problem occurs in the life of the preacher when we merge our own identity with that of our ministry. The ministry becomes an extension of ourselves, and we think of it as our personal possession. The church becomes "my" church. The deacons become "my"deacons. This merging of ministry and minister can be dangerous in several ways. First, criticism of the ministry can be perceived as criticism of the minister. If someone criticizes our preaching, he is criticizing us. If someone suggests alternate methods of doing something, he is criticizing our methods.

Seeing the ministry as our own can also lead us to an overinflated idea of our own importance. I counseled a pastor who left a church he founded, and he was angry that it had not fallen apart without him. In fact, since he left, the church had prospered. He failed to realize that if a ministry is founded on Christ, it will prosper even if its founder or pastor is gone.

Perhaps the greatest danger in this problem is the door it opens for us to see ourselves, not Christ, as the head of the ministry. This is a subtle thing, one which most preachers would quickly deny. But I have seen it over and over again. The owner-operator preacher sees himself as the one who makes the ministry go. If he is criticized or questioned, he threatens to
We must make sure that Christ is the head of our church in practice as well as in theory. We are the shepherds, called to minister and serve.

The ProofText/Personal Preference Problem

The proof-text/personal preference problem deals with the deductive nature of Fundamentalist preaching. We preachers take a point we wish to prove and then scurry to the Scripture to validate it. This leads to the dangerous practice of eisegesis, reading into the Scripture, as opposed to exegesis, reading out of the Scripture. Expository preaching must take into consideration the grammatical, historical, and contextual meaning of a passage. When our preparation is hurried and incomplete, we open ourselves to the danger of proof-texting.

We are especially prone to muddy personal preference with Scriptural authority. For instance, those who use Deuteronomy 22 to demonstrate that women should not wear slacks simply are not being faithful to Scripture. I do not believe there is anything wrong with sharing personal preference from the pulpit, but I believe it should be clearly stated as just that. Sound inductive preaching keeps us sharp and faithful.

Preachers seem to love to perform around each other and outdo each other.

The Pride Problem

The pride problem is perhaps the summation of all the problems we have discussed. I have found a real sense of self-satisfaction and pride among Fundamentalist preachers. We are very achievement-oriented and easily find our value in the size of our congregations or in the number of souls won to the Lord, instead of in our worthiness in Christ. Pride is so subtle.

Recently, a well-known Fundamentalist evangelist preached a salvation message to a church congregation, despite the fact that everyone present was thought to be a professing Christian. After the message, he gave the invitation for salvation and no one responded. He became more and more agitated. He came out of the pulpit and shook a finger at the crowd saying, "I've preached this message 499 times and never has no one responded!" He told the church they had ruined his record and angrily left. Pride had its way.

As Fundamentalists, we need to refocus attention from self to the person of Jesus Christ. I am calling for a radical renewal of servanthood to Jesus Christ. If we will not make such a commitment to Christ as Lord and Head of our churches, then our movement is in need of much renewal. We are the servants, He is the Lord. We must remove the emphasis from the men to the Saviour.

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Pluralism, the vogue word that summons the same accolades awarded openmindedness, fairness, and equality, is often a sanctuary for moral compromise, relativism, suppression of truth, and erosion of human worth—qualities hardly deserving plaudits.

Webster defines pluralism as "a state of society in which members of diverse ethnic, racial, religious, or social groups maintain...development of their traditional cultural or special interests within the confines of a common civilization." Defined in this manner, pluralism is the coexistence of different types of people who share a mutual respect for one another's distinctiveness while seeking to live harmoniously within the same society.

America was founded upon and flourished under this type of pluralism—what can be termed traditional pluralism. As a "melting pot," the United States historically has drawn people of all nations, races, and creeds, many of whom have maintained their distinct cultural identities. Pride in and acceptance of these distinctions are reflected in the diversity of ethnic subcultures in some of our major cities and in the rise of ethnic awareness courses in universities and high schools. This type of pluralism can be both healthful and enriching.

Webster's second definition is more philosophical and religious. Pluralism is "a theory that there are more than one or more than two kinds of ultimate reality." This definition provides that there is not one universal truth, but various "truths." Therefore, it would follow from this definition that pluralism allows for no absolute guiding values—only relative preferences.

This type of contemporary pluralism predominates in our society today. The denial of one universal, absolute truth logically leads to an "anything goes" mentality, as illustrated by the breakdown in moral absolutes and the devaluation of human life. Under this view there can be no concrete appraisals of good and bad; all values, and resulting behavior, must be held in neutral.

Such a scheme of thought has never been within the ideological purview of true Christianity. Christianity holds that there are absolutes and there is Truth—with a capital "T"—the Truth given to man from the Creator, and all life is evaluated from this Truth and His accompanying absolutes.

Christianity is dogmatic in that it is based upon revealed, absolute truth. It is controversial because truth divides and causes healthy conflict. Christ, as the Gospels illustrate, was both dogmatic and controversial in His stand for truth.

The belief in Christian absolutes was clearly reflected in early American society and in the writings of those who framed our founding documents, including the Constitution. Regardless of their individual religious doctrines, early Americans, in general, recognized the existence of a Supreme Being whose absolute laws are to be the basis for all man-made laws.

"Nature's God" (as the Declaration of Independence states)—not man—was the ultimate arbiter of justice in providing all people certain absolute (inalienable) rights such as "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

No society can survive under a system of absolute moral relativity. To prevent total chaos and anarchy, there must be some system of laws that places certain restraints on human behavior, including the behavior of those employed by the state. Regardless of how forcefully people insist that "you can't legislate morality," every enactment of law reflects an undergirding moral value. Laws against murder, rape, theft, or even trespass are all examples of legislated moral values. Laws against murder, rape, theft, or even trespass are all examples of legislated moral value. Laws against murder, rape, theft, or even trespass are all examples of legislated moral value. Laws against murder, rape, theft, or even trespass are all examples of legislated moral value.

A great danger in moral relativism is that it removes from the state any accountability and responsibility to the Higher Being. If there are no absolutes to govern,
authorities determine their own "arbitrary absolutes." Again, anything goes.

More and more frequently, changes in America's laws are the product of a small but highly elite group of judges. Constitutionally, judges are not to make law at all; that is a function distinctly bestowed upon the legislative branch in Article I of the Constitution. However, in their role of "interpreting" the Constitution, many jurists have literally created new laws based on their personal opinions.

Reading opinions of the U.S. Supreme Court justices shows how they conjure up disparate meanings for the Constitution. Yet only five of them need to agree on this conjecture to determine a law that is binding.

The potential abuse of this ill-begotten power is nowhere more disturbing than in the life and death issues that have come before the Court. In 1973 in Roe v. Wade when the Supreme Court announced the "right to privacy"—which is not specifically granted in the Constitution—it legalized the right of women to kill their unborn children. Thus, the justices not only created a new constitutional right, but they also stripped the unborn child of his right to life.

This devaluation of human life led to the courts' approval of withholding medical treatment from mentally or physically handicapped newborns. In the "Baby Jane Doe" case, the courts upheld a couple's right to refuse corrective surgery for their daughter's spina bifida.

The proliferation of man's efforts at playing God in children's lives is spreading. A medical program in Oklahoma set up a crude mathematical formula to determine which of several spina bifida infants merited treatment and which could be neglected. Whether a baby passed or failed depended on his projected "quality of life," which was based on his "natural endowment" multiplied by the perceived support of his home and society. Using this formula, if a physically normal baby was born to an unwed, teenage drug addict, the doctors would still give the child a quality of life of zero.

Unborn children are not the only ones whose lives dangle precariously on arbitrary "quality of life" dictums. Colorado's Governor Richard Lamm recently caused outrage when he indicated that some elderly people have a "duty" to die to prevent their being an economic and emotional burden on society. Unfortunately, while Governor Lamm was thrust into the spotlight as an exceptional example of callousness, many share his convictions.

Secularism's influence has saturated all other major institutions of the United States as well. Consider the media. In 1981, 240 representatives of the "media elite"—journalists, editors, TV executives, and so forth—were surveyed by Public Opinion magazine. Results showed that politically, the majority considered themselves "Liberals." When asked about religious involvement, 86 percent admitted that they attend church "seldom" or "never." On moral issues, 90 percent agreed that women have the right to choose to abort their children; 50 percent did not regard adultery as wrong; and only 15 percent "strongly agreed" that extramarital affairs are immoral.

With little regard for moral absolutes, some of the media often apply a double standard. For instance, editors of the Washington Post opposed a city ordinance against pornography because you don't have to like pornography to believe that in most cases it is protected by the First Amendment (May 12, 1984).

Yet when Congress debated the Equal Access Act, allowing students who had formed religious groups the same rights as all other students to use public high school facilities, the Post editors repeatedly protested its passage. The same journalists who so "openmindedly" championed pornographers' rights to free speech saw no problem in censoring the free speech of those who want to gather for prayer and Bible study.

Tragically, the secularists' efforts are often being reinforced by Christians themselves. Some claim that religion is only a personal matter, that it should be confined to church and home. Therefore, many have segregated their lives into "spiritual" and "secular" compartments. Family devotions, Bible study, Sunday worship services, and the like fall into the spiritual category; every other area—business, education, government, and so on, is strictly secular. As a result, Christians have "privatized" their faith and have withdrawn their presence from civil government, education, and other vital areas of public life.

This retreat from society repudiates Christ's mandate in Matthew 5:13. Christians are to "salt" society—to preserve it from moral and spiritual decay. If Christians sincerely hold the Bible to be absolute, inerrant truth, that truth must encompass the whole spectrum of life. Christians must not only submit to its authority in their personal religious practices, they must also uphold it as the objective standard by which every moral and social issue is to be judged.

Jesus commissioned Christians to go to people everywhere, "teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." The "all" embraces much more than evangelism. It means proclaiming His teaching that life is sacred because all people are created in His image; that parents—not the state—are given responsibility to guide their children's lives; that all people are to deal honestly and compassionately with their fellowman, and so on. It means ensuring that the Christian voice is rightfully allowed in the public marketplace of ideas.

If Christians—by personal apathy or external pressures—allow the truth to be muffled, our nation will continue to flounder in a destructive whirlpool of relative values and conflicting laws. Christians will be largely responsible for a culture that breeds crime and immorality, cheapens the value of our families, and unashamedly destroys "inferior" human life.

In some of its decisions, the Supreme Court has affirmed that the First Amendment's intent is to protect and accommodate religion, not to expunge it from all public society. Thus, Christians have a constitutional foundation for protesting outright efforts at censorship. Protests leading to

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**Some Christians have segregated their lives into "spiritual" and "secular" compartments.**

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John W. Whitehead is a constitutional attorney and author. He is president of the Rutherford Institute, a legal organization involved in cases concerning religious freedom and other issues. His books include The Second American Revolution (Elgin, Ill.: David C. Cook, 1982) and The Stealing of America (Westchester, Ill.: Crossway Books, 1983).
responsible litigation have won some favorable court decisions. For example:

After local merchants complained about their "firebrand" message, seven sidewalk evangelists in a South Carolina town were arrested for preaching without a permit. The evangelists charged that the town's vaguely worded ordinance gave city officials virtually uncontrolled authority to restrict "pure speech activity." They claimed the officials tried to curtail the public speaking by dictating their own subjective restraints. When the sidewalk evangelists argued that their constitutional rights had been violated, a U.S. District Court judge agreed. Repudiating the town's ordinance as a "prior restraint upon the rights of freedom of speech and freedom of assembly," he prohibited town officials from further interference with the evangelists' preaching.

Because of her religious convictions, a nurse in Delaware declined an offer to work for an abortionist. When she refused to aid in the killing of life, the state cut off the woman's unemployment compensation benefits. Attorneys for the Rutherford Institute threatened to sue the state for infringing on the nurse's constitutional rights. The state then backed down and restored her benefits.

In these situations the Christians did not disobey the law. They exercised their freedoms protected in the Constitution to express their moral convictions. However, they were willing to pay the price and suffer the consequences of their stand for truth.

The question is, How will the majority of Christians respond? One can look the other way as thousands of unborn children are killed every day. One can retreat into his safe and comfortable world of Sunday services and fellowship dinners. One can nobly pardon his passiveness by claiming that "out of love" he does not want to offend anyone. But the one who accommodates the world's standards instead of exposing them to the light of biblical truth is no longer following Christ in the true sense. Jesus accepts nothing less than to be Lord of the Christian's whole life. No "secular" compartments escape His jurisdiction.

For the Christian, the bottom line is not what is safe, or comfortable, or inoffensive, but what is true. Christians are to light the world and to salt the earth, and that involves moral confrontation. Though our pluralistic society seeks to eliminate effective Christian influence, we must be faithful to secure a truly open marketplace of ideas.
Discipline. No two people have exactly the same understanding of the word or concept, but everyone feels strongly about discipline. To some it is synonymous with punishment and harshness, evoking only negative thoughts and actions. Others avoid it at all costs, feeling each person is a free spirit with the right to express himself as he chooses.

The difficult task of coming to a decision regarding appropriate discipline seems to be magnified in the area of church discipline. Few people have found a comfortable balance between the extremes; many are simply ignoring the whole sticky business.

The responsibility of a church to make and enforce doctrinal codes and rules of conduct is founded on incontrovertible biblical authority. The apostle Paul asked somewhat incredulously of the church at Corinth, "Do not ye judge them that are within?" The directive to a church with a nonrepentant person engaging in open sin was, "Put away from among yourselves that wicked person" (1 Cor. 5:12-13). However, church discipline has always been premised upon three basic biblical laws: love (John 13:34), confession (Matt. 5:23-24), and forgiveness (Luke 17:3-4). To these might be added a fourth, restoration (Gal. 6:1). The primary function of scriptural discipline is healing the offense (Luke 17:3). Only when that is not possible is the offender to be removed from the church. The key to finding the delicate balance of love and correction necessary in a particular situation lies in developing a keen awareness of when discipline is needed, what it should entail, how it should be administered, and what it should accomplish.

The difficulty with handling church discipline problems is that while Scripture provides general principles, it furnishes very few specific procedural guidelines. Matthew 18:15-17 provides that in the case of private offenses where two separate attempts at reconciliation have failed, "Tell it unto the church; but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican" (v.17). Public offenses could normally be dealt with using the guidelines for private sins, although there is no special biblical command to do so. Matthew 18:15-17 leaves much interpretive latitude to individual churches.

What determines the dividing line between public and private offenses? Is it the nature of the offense, or is it the publicity generated by the offense? Should a church be able to enforce its discipline procedure regardless of the impact upon the accused party? Suppose the nature and method of such discipline is not known to some or all church members. If an alleged wayward member resigns, is the church relieved of all authority to discipline that member? Should the method of church discipline be subject to judicial constraints of reasonableness regarding grounds for, or methods of, discipline? Quinn v. The Church of Christ of Collinsville, Oklahoma, is a case in point. In Quinn, plaintiff alleged that her dismissal from defendant church invaded her privacy and inflicted emotional distress upon her. She alleged a lack of understanding of the defendant's disciplinary procedure. Plaintiff asked for $1,200,000 compensatory and punitive damages and at trial was awarded $390,000 by a jury. The scenario for this lawsuit unfolded as follows.

Plaintiff joined defendant church in March 1974.

Sometime prior to September 1981 plaintiff was alleged to have violated the church's moral code.

The three church elders contacted plaintiff on several occasions under Matthew 18 seeking repentance. One of the meetings occurred in the presence of her children outside her house because plaintiff refused...
to go to the church to discuss the matter with the elders. On another occasion the elders approached her at a laundromat and insisted she go to the church with them and discuss the matter.

On September 21, 1981, the three elders sent a letter to plaintiff stating that, since plaintiff had not demonstrated a repentant heart, they would read a statement to the church on October 4, 1981. Plaintiff was to be excluded from the fellowship of the body of Christ.

On September 24, 1981, plaintiff wrote a letter to the church, withdrawing her membership and declaring that the elders had no right to say anything against her in the church. One of the elders responded verbally to plaintiff that she could not withdraw from the church; the church had to withdraw from her.

On October 4, 1981, a letter was read to the church, finding plaintiff in violation of Scripture. The letter read to the church was sent to four sister churches to the church, finding plaintiff in violation of Scripture. The letter read to the church, finding plaintiff in violation of Scripture. The letter read to the church, finding plaintiff in violation of Scripture. The letter read to the church, finding plaintiff in violation of Scripture. The letter read to the church, finding plaintiff in violation of Scripture. The letter read to the church, finding plaintiff in violation of Scripture. The letter read to the church, finding plaintiff in violation of Scripture.

On November 23, 1981, plaintiff filed suit against defendant church and the church elders.

The Quinn case raises some legitimate concern about the autonomy of local churches in imposing discipline. The United States Supreme Court has addressed itself, on a number of occasions, to the relationship between church members and their church, and the right of courts to intervene in internal disputes. For example, Watson v. Jones, 1871:

The right to organize voluntary religious associations to assist in the expression and dissemination of any religious doctrine, and to create tribunals for the decision of controverted questions of faith within the association, and for the ecclesiastical government of all the individual members, congregations, and officers with the general association, is unquestioned. All who unite themselves to such a body do so with an implied consent to this government, and are bound to submit to it.

However, the court has recognized that where both a civil right and an ecclesiastical matter are at issue, a court is free to try the civil issue. Most recently, the Court has upheld the right of the judiciary to decide church property or personnel disputes within churches, but only as long as courts do not have to resolve underlying controversies over religious doctrine.

There is little question that churches have a right to make rules regarding moral standards and church discipline. However, within the broad constitutional parameters outlined by the United States Supreme Court, most state courts have exercised what they perceive as their judicial prerogative to review church discipline cases where "civil, contract, or property rights" are at stake. The modern trend among state courts appears to be to give an expansive interpretation to what constitutes a property, contract, or civil right, although some state courts would hold that church membership does not involve such rights. Courts will not disturb church decisions in ecclesiastical matters, provided of course the church had jurisdiction to decide the matter. But courts have generally not felt that the free exercise or establishment clauses of the First Amendment prohibit them from reviewing church decisions, or in granting remedies to aggrieved parties, where there is evidence of fraud or malice, where church discipline is tied to some vague conditions of membership, or where churches have not complied with their own charters or bylaws in the disciplinary process.

However, where disciplined church members have sought to sue church officials or other members for comments made during a disciplinary meeting, courts have clothed all such comments with a qualified privilege, meaning that no lawsuit would be successful unless the comments were made maliciously or with reckless disregard of the comments' falsity. While a qualified privilege would probably be a defense in every state to a defamation lawsuit, it has not gained general acceptance in an invasion of privacy lawsuit such as Quinn.

In view of the state courts' permitting litigation of church member civil rights in church discipline situations, there are raised a number of problems for pastors, deacons, or other church officers. Courts appear to be little troubled about the inherent contradiction in acknowledging on one hand that churches have complete control over internal doctrinal matters but then on the other hand granting a civil remedy to a present or former church member, even though granting such a remedy might have the effect of negating the church's doctrine or the procedures to enforce that doctrine.

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**No church should refuse to practice church discipline where its standards of faith or practice have been violated.**

Unfortunately, most courts today apparently find such back-door encroachments on religious beliefs to be more palatable than simply addressing outright the moral correctness or incorrectness of a religious belief. Over 100 years ago the United States Supreme Court ruled that polygamy as a religious belief was morally unacceptable and upheld a criminal punishment for the practice of polygamy.

There is something refreshing about a judicial decision that declared a moral standard of what is right and then permitted a penalty for conduct not conforming to that standard.

Today, under the judicially contrived "compelling interest" test, courts apply an amoral reasoning process to accomplish two conflicting purposes. A court can find virtually any religious belief to be legitimate, but then permit a state agency to impose and enforce penalties upon those who hold such beliefs. Such decisions by courts today have frustrated and angered persons involved in church-related ministries, who see the sterile application of civil and criminal penalties to church programs and personnel—without regard to

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moral values—as undermining absolute standards of morality.

The Quinn decision should serve to raise the level of awareness of church officials. No church should assume it is free of possible litigation by following what it understands to be its requirement for church discipline. On the other hand, no truly biblical church should ever refuse to practice church discipline where its standards of faith or practice have been violated. If churches and their officials are going to be subject to judicial scrutiny regarding the standards and methods of church discipline, the following suggestions may be of some assistance.

Church members should be informed regarding the basic requirements of faith and practice, noting that violations of such will result in church discipline. Although such requirements do not have to be separately identified in written constitutions, bylaws, or covenants, there is less likelihood of confusion or misunderstanding if they are.

There should be some notice to church members of the procedures followed when there is an alleged violation.

Some deliberate attempt should be made to familiarize persons with the standards of faith and practice and with the penalties for violations of those standards prior to those persons becoming church members.

Many are simply ignoring the whole sticky business.

Some consideration should be given to the effect of a resignation upon continuance of church discipline procedures. Where the effect of church discipline would be to perform the rather hollow function of removing from membership a person who is no longer a member, it might appear to a court (as in Quinn) that the further continuation of church discipline procedures was for reasons other than correction or exhortation.

The Quinn decision is currently being appealed and there is no assurance how an appeals court will apply the constitutional principles addressed at the beginning of this article to the Quinn set of facts.

Pastors and other church officials involved with church discipline problems cannot ignore the legal implications of their actions. Pastors should investigate their protection under church liability policies, in case litigation arises from church discipline situations. Establishing a written procedure for church discipline would help to avoid problems with hasty or inappropriate action. In all cases requiring discipline, pastors have a serious leadership function to perform, and they need to make certain that they always conduct themselves in a manner that brings honor to the Bible and their Saviour.

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Thanksgiving, the season for counting blessings, also brings an awareness of the needy around us. But reaching out to offer help must be more than a seasonal gesture.

Hungry Strangers
Whose Responsibility Are They?

by Angela Elwell Hunt

"Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee? Or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? Or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Matt. 25:36-40). There is much discussion today about the fate of the poor, the elderly, and the underprivileged. Political Liberals are in favor of taking from the rich to give to the poor through higher taxes and increased welfare programs. Conservatives believe that in matters of government, "less is more." In reality we must find a solution to help those who are unemployed, disabled, sick, and poor.

We cannot rid this country of welfare rolls with the simple wave of a hand. Millions depend on public social assistance for their daily survival. Without the check from Uncle Sam every month, they would suffer and many might die.

So—what is the answer? Should we continue in a socialistic philosophy of "spreading the wealth"? Can we rest knowing that many cheat and steal through welfare fraud, and children grow up to be totally dependent on the government to supply their every need?

God commanded His people to take care of the poor, the sick, the shut-ins. God has given us all things, and we are to be the means to distribute His bounty to others.

In the Old Testament, tithes were used to provide for the Levites, the poor, the fatherless, and the stranger (Deut. 14:28-29). Israelites were encouraged to
receive the poor into their own homes and not charge any interest on loans to them (Lev. 25:35-37). Farmers were commanded not to totally strip their lands of their crops; a remnant was left for the poor to glean the field.

Christ admonished us to feed the poor, visit the sick, and clothe the naked. Because Christ never told us to do anything that we do not give us the power to accomplish, it is amazing that more churches are not involved in social assistance programs.

The Office of Family Assistance in Washington says that in an average month of 1982, 21.7 million people received food stamps. That same year, the federal government spent $10.2 billion to finance the food stamp program. Almost 22 million people needed food in 1982, and they turned to the government for help.

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God commanded His people to take care of the poor, the sick, the shut-ins.

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According to the Census Bureau's Center for Demographic Studies, the 1980 Census showed that 339,053 actual church buildings in the United States. What does this mean? If Christians even church members) were willing to undertake the biblical imperatives of helping the poor, we could easily eliminate the largest public assistance program funded by our government. If each one of those 339,053 churches helped feed 65 people (10 to 20 families), there would be no need for food stamps. There are seven church members for each person on the food stamp program—how easy it would be for seven to sponsor just one person!

Some churches are paying more than lip service to the ideals of helping the poor. One is Grace Community Church, in Sun Valley, California. Jean Spellman outlined the church's "pantry" operation, saying "We designated an area for the food to be kept, and volunteers mapped out a balanced diet for a certain number of days and a certain number of people. The food is then boxed according to family size, so that each family has to do is remove one box from a shelf.

When people apply for help, they fill out a form to confirm that they are really needy, and they are counseled. We want to help, but we don't want to complicate their problem. We used to distribute food certificates, but we found that we could not know what people were buying, and we did not want to contribute to any more problems in their lives."

Stocking the church pantry was easy. Ten thousand people worship in the church each Sunday, so on the first Sunday of the month, each church member brings just one item, the pantry is filled. Since the program's beginning two years ago, the word has spread, and the local welfare agencies often refer people to the church if the welfare checks are late or if there is a special need. Jean estimates that the pantry supplies between 15 and 20 families a week, and requests continue to come in.

Another church with an aggressive social assistance program is Thomas Road Baptist Church of Lynchburg, Virginia. Their "Family Center" provides food and clothing for people who need assistance. The building is staffed by church volunteers and the program is directed by TRBC staff. Dave Fleming, who oversees the program, estimates that the Family Center has helped 25 to 35 families a week in the two years it has been in operation.

The Family Center is unique. It is not located in the Thomas Road Church building, but is in the heart of the downtown Lynchburg area. The Family Center is like a big store—groceries are set up as in a regular store, and the clothing department features clothing on racks, sorted by size. Everything is available, including meats, dairy products, diapers, toiletries, and clothing for all members of a family.

Fleming explained that when a family applies for assistance at the Family Center, often after referrals from the welfare department, police, or other churches, they are visited by a pastor from TRBC to discuss their need. Applicants are also given financial and spiritual counseling, and Fleming reports that one priority is to find work for the unemployed—"We've helped a lot of people find jobs."

The Family Center is able to purchase groceries wholesale, and by using church funds to buy products in bulk, they can furnish the store more inexpensively than if they gathered donated items from church members. Clothing is either used clothing in excellent condition or new. There is no rag-bag stuff at the Family Center.

Scott Memorial Baptist Church, in El Cajon, California, pastored by David Jeremiah, sponsors a "Food for the Hungry" program, which is administered by associate pastor Gene Huntsman. Huntsman says the church "saw the need because there were so many people who would come by the church and ask for aid. We decided to have some means to take care of them right on the spot, so on Communion Sunday night, we have a food offering. We found that this was heartily accepted by the congregation and God has honored it. We feel that helping the needy is the heart of God."

Food for the Hungry feeds three or four families each week who call or come by the church. Volunteers prepare 30-pound boxes of food, available with no strings attached. Also in the boxes are a New Testament and a brochure about the church. Whoever distributes the food fills out a questionnaire on the family for future reference. "Obviously, we know there are some people who take advantage of this, but we feel that this is God's responsibility, and our responsibility is just to feed those who are hungry."

Huntsman says that the excitement of helping others has carried over into other areas of church life. Church members are taking an active part in caring for the homeless and in helping the unemployed find jobs. In transient California, many times poor travelers will be placed in motels by Traveler's Aid, and the church will be called to provide food five or six times a week. Once they sent food to a needy widow in a motel. She later sent them a letter, saying that she was thrilled to know there really was a church who cared. "We want people to know that God gave us the greatest gift of all, and we want to demonstrate the gift of God by the giving of gifts," concludes Huntsman.

Probably any church in America is willing to extend help, food, or money to people who really need it and ask for it. But many churches are beginning to be more aggressive in this area. The government cannot afford to feed the poor forever. Perhaps we should seek not only to supplement the government's role of provider, but also to assume that role for the church. It was our responsibility first.
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FJ-34
When spectacles were first introduced they created quite a stir. Doctors opposed them as harmful to the eyes, and the clergy insisted that trying to restore failing eyesight by artificial means was an act of defiance against God.

At the turn of the century in Evanston, Illinois, a group of Christians decided that the fizz in carbonated drinks was a corrupting influence on the young. They forbade the sale of ice cream sodas on Sunday. To circumvent this rule, ice cream parlors left out the soda and put a topping on their ice cream instead. This new concoction became known as a “Sunday.” People liked it so well they were soon asking for it on other days of the week. Later, under protest, the name was changed to “Sundae,” so as not to connect such a secular object with the Lord’s Day.

When my mother was in her twenties (in the early 1900s), Christians frowned at one of their own appearing in a gown with three-quarter-length sleeves at breakfast. The forearm should be discreetly covered to the wrist. Sadly, with all these rules, many people regarded Christianity merely as a list of “dos and don’ts.”

First-century Christians refused to go to hospitals for medical care, because the pagan hospitals were under the protection of a heathen deity. Neither would they send their children to the schools of that day because the stories of the pagan gods were taught as fact. Their separation was construed as rebellion and severely punished, sometimes even by death.
In comparison, our stance today looks extremely flabby. It is not a matter of persecution with us, merely inconvenience. Why shouldn't we shop on Sunday, work in the yard, do the ironing, or paint the bathroom if we feel like it? Many Christians see nothing wrong with using the Lord's Day in this way. They think nothing of skipping church to reserve a place at the park for their picnic or to get an early start on their fishing trip.

Christians have come a long way from wrist-length sleeves. We allow Hollywood, via the television screen, to invade our homes with dancing, drinking, smoking, and other practices considered taboo a number of years ago. There is no question about it—we are lowering our standards inch by inch, year by year. Where is it leading us? Where will it end? Is this part of the perilous times about which Paul warned Timothy?

Change is inevitable with the passing of time. If it were not so we would still be eating with our fingers as the English insisted on doing until 100 years after Italy adopted the fork. We would still be suspicious of X-rays as a scheme to invade our privacy. We would not have telephones, television, or airplanes, let alone computers and space shuttles. But will technological progress cause us to regress spiritually? Have we become so tolerant that we accept anything and everything? Old-fashioned man-made rules may become extinct, but God's rules do not change. The principles of His Word still urge us to separation from the world and unto holy living. Men's answers differ widely as to what this means. God's Word is the only sure source of direction.

Jesus reiterated the law in these two commandments: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength ... Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Mark 12:30-31).

Do the things we allow in our lives cause our love for Him to cool? This will vary with individuals. Myra had an inordinate love for reading fiction. This passion so controlled her thoughts that she had no desire to read God's Word. In the interest of pleasing God and growing in Him she felt she must give up this pleasure. Her friends thought her extreme and narrow, but she did what was right for her. Paul tells us not to regard with contempt those who follow standards different from our own (Rom. 14:1-5).

In other words, we should not laugh at Myra for feeling guilty about reading fiction, and Myra should not condemn those who feel good about reading a novel once in a while.

The second law concerns our witness to others. Paul wrote, "Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth" (1 Cor. 10:24). And, "Take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumbling-block to them that are weak" (1 Cor. 8:9). Paul was willing to waive his own rights and liberties in order that those about him would not stumble. Whether or not we feel we can handle such things as smoking, social drinking, and so forth, should not be an issue. We are simply not to use our liberty in Christ as license to participate in activities that could cause another Christian to fall.

A plaque on the wall of my childhood home served many times as a deterrent to wrongdoing. It said:

Say nothing you would not like to be saying when Jesus comes.
Do nothing you would not like to be doing when Jesus comes.
Go no place you would not like to be found when Jesus comes.

Paul says, "All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not" (1 Cor. 10:23). What enhances my love for the Saviour and His Word? What hinders it? "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Cor. 10:31).
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Recently my wife brought a bag of cookies home from the grocery store. Because she knows me only too well she said, "Don't eat these cookies all at once; I want them to last until the end of the week." As soon as she left the kitchen I ate all the cookies, but unwisely left the empty bag on the table. Upon returning to the kitchen and spotting the bag she asked, more irritated than surprised, "Did you eat the whole bag?"

"No," was my facetious reply. "I ate all the cookies in the bag."

She and I meant the same thing, but expressed it differently. I understood, of course, that she was not inquiring as to whether I actually ate "the bag." She spoke figuratively, and I literally.

As in our daily conversation, the Bible is full of such illustrative figures of speech. Conservative, Bible-believing Christians are often ridiculed for advocating a literal hermeneutic or interpretation of Scripture. Perhaps because of their love for God's Word and their zeal to protect its doctrines, they overemphasize the literal hermeneutic to the point of crass and even unrealistic literalism. Without proper recognition of the figures of speech in descriptive language, interpreting Scripture can lead to absurd and confusing results. This however should not discourage us from properly applying literal interpretation.

What is the "literal hermeneutic"? It is the method by which the Bible is explained in a strict, straightforward, natural, and matter-of-fact way. This is a standard rule unless a figure of speech alerts the interpreter and cautions him against giving the passage a strictly literal prosaic meaning. Figures of speech are as prevalent in biblical language as they are in our own daily conversation.

A figure of speech is defined by Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary as "a form of expression ... used to convey meaning or heighten effect." Both modern daily discourse and current literature are full of such rhetorical figures. But we are so accustomed to them that, for the most part, we are unaware of their existence. How do we interpret what others say? We interpret everything literally unless there is good reason, because of the presence of figures of speech, to do otherwise. The same rule or hermeneutic or method of interpretation should be applied to the Bible. Instead of saying that we interpret the Scriptures "literally," perhaps it would be better to say that we interpret them "normally" or "plainly"—everything is taken literally unless there is good cause to do otherwise.

In Jesus' statement "I am the door" (John 10:9), the metaphor cautions readers against taking it in a strictly literal sense. This comparison declares that one thing is or represents another. As "the door" is the only entrance into the sheepfold, so Jesus is man's only way into heaven. The Christ we worship, then, is not a literal door, but our sole hope for salvation.

Stronger than metaphor, the hypostasis (implication) mentions just one of the items in a comparison and only implies the other. This figure suggests that one thing is another, and it is used to arouse attention to a high degree. For example, "I have fed you with milk, and not with meat" in 1 Corinthians 3:2, taken literally, says that like a dietitian Paul allowed the Corinthians to drink milk, but gave them no meat. Normal interpretation by hypostasis implies the "milk" and "meat" represent elementary and advanced Christian teaching, respectively. Because of the Corinthians' poor spiritual condition, Paul says he could teach them only simple truths.

People in biblical times, as now, often utilized hyperbole (exaggeration) to define situations. "We were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their..."
sight" (Num. 13:33). This was the report of the spies whom Moses sent into the land of Canaan. Taken literally, the Canaanites were hundreds of feet tall. But hyperbole dispels such notions, for the figure merely stresses the enormous stature of Israel’s enemies.

At one time or another most students are required to read Shakespeare. Actually, they do not "read Shakespeare," but the works of Shakespeare. This expression employs metonymy, whereby the author’s name is used to express his writings. So it is in Acts 15:21: "Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath day." That is, Moses himself is not "preached" and "read," but his writings—the Pentateuch—are preached and read weekly in Jewish synagogues.

In another kind of metonymy, the container is used to express its contents. This is very common in Scripture. "The grave cannot praise thee" (Isa. 38:18); that is, the dead buried in the grave cannot praise God. "Make a joyful noise unto God, all ye lands" (Ps. 66:1); the actual physical "lands" themselves are not summoned to praise God, but the people who live in "all... lands" are urged to glorify Him.

The recognition of figures of speech prevents absurd biblical interpretation. Many fathers more or less anticipate the time when a young man will approach them and say, "Sir, I would like to ask for the hand of your daughter in marriage." Imagine the suitor’s surprise if met with the father’s response, "Well, do you want just her ‘hand,’ or do you want all of her?" But fathers have no trouble interpreting the above request. For by the figure of synecdoche, a part is put for the whole, in this case a part of the body for the whole person. So it is in Genesis 42:38 where Jacob complains to his sons, "Then shall ye bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave." Literally—they will scalp him and cast his scalp into a grave. Normally, by synecdoche, whereby "my gray hairs" represents Jacob himself—his sons will cause him to die with much sorrow.

Recognizing figures of speech not only prevents absurdity of interpretation but also aids in grasping fuller understanding of a verse. For example, Paul tells the Philippians, "I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ" (Phil. 1:8). The apostle avails himself here of the figure catachresis, associating the words "bowels" and "love" together, which usually have little in common. As a man’s bowels are located deep within him, so one’s strongest passions—such as love—come from deep within. In saying that he loves them with "the bowels of Christ," Paul means that he loves his friends with the deepest kind of love.

Sometimes recognizing figures of speech may simply aid the reader in appreciating what an author is saying. Look at Hebrews 1:1-14: Born of a virgin (Luke 1:35)? Was His death a vicarious and efficacious atonement for sinners (Rom. 5:8)? Was He literally raised from the grave (Eph. 1:20)? Did He physically ascend into heaven (Acts 1:9-10)? Will He bodily return to earth (Acts 1:11)? The answer to all these and other such questions is "yes!" For nothing exists in these texts to indicate that they should be interpreted in any other than a purely literal manner. But figures of speech are present in many biblical passages that do demand figurative explanations.

Those advocating a literal hermeneutic do not maintain that the whole Bible should be interpreted in a strictly literalistic manner. Scripture should be explained in the same way that normal, everyday conversation is understood. We can still hold to the inerrancy of Scripture while recognizing these illustrative methods of communication.
God has two textbooks—the textbook of nature and the textbook of Scripture. The laws of God revealed in the textbook of nature have never changed; they are what they have been since the beginning. They tell us of God's mighty power and majesty.

In the textbook of Scripture, the Bible, God has spoken verbally, and this spoken word has survived every scratch of human pen. It has withstood the assaults of skeptics and tyrants. Quentin Reynolds once said, "If I were a dictator, the first book I would burn would be the Bible." Greater efforts have been made to destroy the Bible than any other book. Yet despite the attacks of men, through many centuries, it remains the world's most amazing Book.

The Bible has often been reviled but it has never been refuted. It has never bowed its head before the discoveries of science. The more the archaeologist digs and the more the scientist discovers, the greater the confirmation of the truth of the Bible.

The Bible has a great tradition and a magnificent heritage. W. E. Gladstone said, "The Bible is stamped with a specialty of origin, and an immeasurable distance separates it from all competitors."

It was written over a period of 1,600 years by men of various backgrounds—lawgivers, kings, artisans, farmers, fishermen, and scholars. It was written in different countries, under different social and political conditions; yet in its harmony it is historically, doctrinally, and scientifically correct.

One peculiarity of the Bible is its claim to come from God. The writers claim repeatedly that God gave them their material. Two thousand times in the Old Testament they said that God spoke. To tell more than 2,000 lies on one subject seems incredible. Either God spoke, or they lied!

Jesus Christ quoted frequently from the Old Testament. He never once indicated that he doubted the Scriptures. The apostle Paul said, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works."

The apostle Peter added these words, "Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." The Bible claims to be without a rival. It is not only a word from God, it is the Word of God.

The Bible is permanent. Christ said, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away."

Apart from its divine authority, there is more glowing eloquence, more noble sentiment, more melting pathos, more beautiful poetry between its covers than anywhere else. Macaulay said, "If everything else in our language should perish, the English Bible alone would suffice to show the whole extent of its beauty and power."

The Bible has done more to bless society, to promote brotherhood, commerce, happiness, peace, and liberty in the world, than any other book, and all other books together.

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Harold Rawlings is associate pastor of Landmark Baptist Temple, Cincinnati, Ohio.
It humbles the lofty, and exalts the lowliest. It condemns the best, yet saves the worst. It engages the study of angels, and is not above the understanding of a little child. It shows us man raised to the position of a son of God, and the Son of God stooping to the condition of a man.

The Bible is not any heavier than a knife, but it is sharper than any two-edged sword. It is no thicker than a man's wallet but it contains more riches than all the banks in the world.

Our beloved country owes more than we could ever know to the teachings of Scripture. At the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia, representatives from 13 Colonies came together, each with his own opinion and each so dogmatic that he would not budge an inch. They had almost decided to go back to their homes and form 13 separate nations, when Benjamin Franklin stood and said: "I have lived a long time, and the longer I live the more convincing proof I see that God governs in the affairs of man, and if a sparrow cannot fall without His notice, is it probable that a nation can rise without His aid? 'Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it.' Without His concurring aid we shall proceed no better than the builders of Babel."

God speaks to man through the Scriptures. This is why it is so important to read the Bible for ourselves. Most of the time we are very careful about what we eat and how often we eat, but what about food for the inner man? How easy it is to feed the body and starve the soul. Jesus said, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." The ancient patriarch Job said, "I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food."

If men and women would only spend more time in the serious study of the Word of God, earth's questions would seem far less significant and heaven's answers far more real.

Mark Twain once said: "Most people are bothered by those passages of Scripture they cannot understand; but as for me, I have always noticed that the passages of Scripture which trouble me most are those which I do understand."

The blessings of God can be claimed only where the will of God is known, trusted, and acted upon. If we wish to know what is in a will, we must read the will. If we want to know God's will on any subject, we must read His will. The word "testament," legally speaking, means a person's will. The Bible contains God's Last Will and Testament, in which He bequeaths to us the blessings of redemption. To know God's will we must study His Word.

Dwight D. Eisenhower said, "Like stored wisdom, the lessons of the Bible are useless unless they are lifted out and employed.
A faithful reading of Scripture provides the courage and strength required for the living of our time.

God calls a man blessed who mediates in His law day and night. He goes on to say, "And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.”

The Bible alone has the ability to satisfy the human heart. One of the great differences between man and animal is that man has the capacity to know and worship God. Every human being has an inherent cry after God. This longing for God cannot be satisfied by science or technology.

To love God and to worship Him, you must know Him in a personal relationship. For this reason the Bible was written. The Bible teaches that the only way to bridge the gap between man and God is through Jesus Christ. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”

The Bible is God's “love letter” to us—telling us that His love sent His only Son, Jesus, who gave His life on Calvary for our sins. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” The Word of God is the bread of life without which our spirits weaken and die, just as our bodies do if we do not eat. The apostle Paul said, “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”

In a very moving tribute to the Bible, Billy Sunday takes a word-picture journey through the Scriptures. He describes it this way:

I entered through the portico of Genesis and walked down through the Old Testament art gallery where the pictures of Abraham, Moses, Joseph, Isaiah, David, and Solomon hung on the walls. I passed into the music room of the Psalms and every reed of God’s great organ responded to the tuneful harp of David.

I entered the chamber of Ecclesiastes where the voice of the preacher was heard, and into the conservatory of Sharon and the lily of the valley’s spices filled and perfumed my life.

I entered the business office of the Proverbs, then into the observation room of the prophets where I saw telescopes of various sizes, some pointing to far-off events but all concentrated upon the bright star which was to rise above the moonlit hills of Judea for our salvation.

I entered the audience room of the King of Kings and passed into the correspondence rooms where sat Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Paul, Peter, and James penning their epistles.

I stepped then into the throne room of Revelation and caught a vision of the King sitting on His throne in all His glory, and I cried:

All hail the power of Jesus’ name, Let angels prostrate fall, Bring forth the royal diadem. And crown Him Lord of all.

This sermon was preached at the White House service, Washington, D.C., November 16, 1969.

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The Book

The books men write are but a fragrance blown From transient blossoms crushed by human hands; But high above them all, splendid and alone, Staunch as a tree, there is a Book that stands Unmoved by storms, unchallenged by decay; The winds of criticism would profane Its sacred pages, but the Truth, the Way, The Life are in it—and they beat in vain.

O traveler from this to yonder world, Pause in the shade of God’s magnificent, Eternal Word—that tree whose roots are curled About our human need. When strength is spent, Stretch out beneath some great, far-reaching limb Of promise, and find rest and peace in Him.

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Joe Aldrich is one of those extremely gifted individuals available to the church today. God is using him to help free local churches to present the authentic message of the gospel in their own neighborhoods. At the same time, Joe’s message affirms and rekindles a pastor’s desire to reach his community for Christ.

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About Joe Aldrich...
Former pastor at Mariners Church in Newport Beach, California, and now president of Multnomah School of the Bible in Portland, Oregon, Joe Aldrich is the author of Life-Style Evangelism, Secrets to Inner Beauty, and three Multnomah Press’ “Vital Issues” booklets: Conscience, Satisfaction, and Self-Worth.

Joe and his wife, Ruthie, are the parents of two children.

I'm thrilled with Life-Style Evangelism. If I could place one book in the hands of every pastor in the U.S., it would be this one. Churches must become candidates for God’s blessings. Joe understands this and helps us to move in that direction.

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Finding the Treasure in the Text
by Robert E. Coleman

As the aged Sir Walter Scott was dying, he asked that he might be wheeled into his library and placed before a window that commanded a beautiful view of the River Tweed. And here, his biographer writes, the famous author said to his son-in-law, "Bring me the Book!"

"What book?" he was asked, as there were thousands of volumes in his library.

"Need you ask?" Scott responded. "There is but one Book!" Whereupon Mr. Lockhart took the Bible and began to read.

Where else can we turn for a sure word in this fleeting world? Only the inerrant Scripture can speak with certainty to the deepest yearnings of the soul. It is the revelation of God's redeeming grace, finally and perfectly disclosed in the face of His incarnate Son. As He is lifted up in its pages, our mind is illumined, our spirit convicted, and our faith kindled (2 Tim. 3:15-16; John 5:39; Heb. 4:12; Rom. 10:17; 1 John 5:13). And through trust in Christ, the Lord regenerates and sanctifies our life, and gives joy, peace, and security forevermore (1 Peter 1:23; 2:2; 2 Peter 1:4; John 15:3; 17:17; Eph. 5:26; Acts 15:31; 20:32; Rom. 15:14). From beginning to end, our spiritual life flows out of the Holy Bible.

We can understand, then, John Wesley praying: "O give me that Book. At any price, give me the Book of God! Let me be a man of one Book." Should not this be the desire of us all? Not that other books are ignored, but that our preeminent concern is to learn the precepts of the one Book inspired by God, until the very thought-forms of Scripture unconsciously constrain our thinking.

Such saturation does not come without effort. Learning the Scriptures, like searching for gold, requires discipline and hard work. The riches are usually hidden and must be dug out. Only the person who approaches the task with dedication is likely to mine the treasure.

As a minimum, we need to establish a habit of reading the Bible every day, following some plan that assures coverage of the total biblical message. Taking a daily portion from both the Old Testament and the New Testament is common. Some people will pace themselves to go through the whole Bible every year.

Invariably there will be some areas we will want to pursue in depth. Materials prepared for study may be helpful in getting started. Regular periods for intensive perusal of the text should be set aside, if not every day, then at intervals during the week.

Have several different translations at hand for reference, along with a concordance, Bible dictionary, and commentary. These should not become a crutch. Any disciple of Christ can become a proficient interpreter of the Scripture, if he will let the Spirit lead him, and follow basic principles of study.

Seek to get a perspective of the overall situation through the author's eyes. Before we can adequately understand what the Bible means today, we need to realize what it meant when written. This requires developing an inquisitive mind, asking questions of the text, always probing the meaning and significance behind the words. Recognize the kind of person the writer was. How would his previous experience influence the writing? Try to feel his mood, as well as the character of the audience addressed. Observe the location, period in history, ethics of the time, customs of the people, their needs and aspirations. Note illustrations, descriptions, things compared and contrasted, cause-and-effect relationships. Come to grips with the real issue—the pressing theme dominating the passage.

Inspiration of the Bible is wedded to language, not just thoughts. A knowledge continued on page 55
The principle of God-centered education (Deut. 6:4-9; Eph. 6:4). The fathers of our nation predicated our founding documents on a belief in a Supreme Being. The Judeo-Christian principles permeate their legislative organization and direction. In the sixties and seventies we saw the Supreme Court decide that the First Amendment to the Constitution means that government shall exclude religion from public places, and concurrently, we have witnessed the rise of Secular Humanism, by its founders' definition, a religion that believes in the supremacy of man above all things.

The Secular Humanist philosophy permeates textbooks and teaching methods, and God has been expelled from our schools—no audible prayers, no biblical accounts of the Christmas story, and no recognized Bible clubs. Recent actions such as the equal access bill mark the beginning of a change. We must look for candidates who will ensure that young people will have the freedom to exercise their religious beliefs and that schools refrain from mandating the religion of Secular Humanism.

The protection of the citizenry (Gen. 14:13-24; 1 Tim. 5:8). The free world faces the threat of a constant foe, the Soviet Union, whose goal is to rule the world, taking one nation at a time. Over 40 percent of the world's population is now enslaved by Marxist-Leninism. The thought of war is terrifying, but just as terrifying is the thought of living a life without freedom—where God is denied and where freedom of speech is nonexistent. We must look for candidates who support a strong military defense and who are willing to make a long-range plan for the security and well-being of our children.

I encourage every voter to investigate the positions of all candidates running for office, and compare those positions to voting records. After making an informed decision, I urge you to get involved in the campaign, and by all means, vote on election day, November 6.
The process of developing the person is as important as the performance itself.

How many times have you attended an athletic contest at a Christian institution and left wondering about the attitudes of coaches, players, or fans? How many times have you seen a Christian coach ranting and raving uncontrollably throughout an athletic contest? Have you ever listened to vehement abuse hurled at officials, or insults thrown at the opposition by the parents and other fans during a sporting contest between two Christian schools?

Few arenas equal the field of athletic competition when it comes to putting the acid test to the principles that Christians and Christian schools claim to represent. Ideally, Christians should find in athletics a prime opportunity to show that a proper vertical relationship with God enables positive horizontal relationships with teammates, competitors, and fans. However, rapid action and reaction, under the extreme pressure to win, creates situations where the old nature surfaces all too quickly—before a gallery of spectators, and before there is a chance to consciously allow God to take control and protect our witness for Him.

As only one aspect in a myriad of activities available for the development of the
Winning is a manifestation of the desire to excel; therefore striving to gain the victory is important.

If athletics cannot be an arena for the perfecting of our lives in Christ, for the development of Godlike character, then it should either be changed or stopped altogether.

The Christian needs to ask himself what he desires to gain from participation in athletics, and he needs to evaluate what God would have him gain from his athletic experiences. Wes Neal states in The Handbook of Coaching Perfection, "God's only goal for you is to conform you to the likeness of Jesus Christ." Since this is God's only goal for one's entire life, it becomes the only legitimate purpose for involvement in athletics.

This is not to say that winning is not important and should not be a goal. Winning is a manifestation of the desire to excel; therefore striving to gain the victory is important. The apostle Paul illustrates the concept in Philippians 3:12-14 when he declares how he continually strives to attain the goal and to win the prize to which God has called him in Christ Jesus. Although Paul is referring to spiritual goals and eternal rewards, the precept is applicable to all that a Christian endeavors to do, as all that he does should be a reflection of who he is. Therefore, a Christian approach to athletics should embody the desire to excel to the fullest of one's potential. But winning must be kept in perspective and valued for what it is—victory in a temporal contest.

The problem is that the Christian has adopted the world's concept of success and victory—that only the results flashed on a scoreboard are worthy indicators of winning. Christians need to emphasize that winners in athletics are those who struggle day after day to develop as people conformed to God's expectations for them. Winners are those who endure, those who withstand the trials with perseverance. Only as an athlete internalizes these types of attitudes can he grow in stature and gain the real benefits of competition (James 1:2-4). When an upset at the hand of the underdog or a debilitating injury can be handled with graciousness and joy, then athletics can serve as a springboard for teaching athletes how to cope with living, and the importance of having eternal goals.

The world seems to view personal statistics as paramount and concern for teammates and the team's overall success as secondary. Today's superior athletes insist that a team be molded around them. A person is valued because of his accomplishments—not because of who he is morally or ethically. In fact, there is a tendency to overlook lifestyle deficiencies in heroes that we do not overlook in others.

If Christians are truly committed to developing a godly approach to athletics, unity and sacrifice of self for the benefit of others must be emphasized. Individuals must consider how they can mesh into the composition of the team, what roles they can assume in order to allow the team to best achieve its goals. First Corinthians 12:12-26 teaches the value of all the parts of a body, the need each part has for the others. The passage also amplifies the special importance and consideration of seemingly lesser or weaker parts. Christians need to exercise wisdom when dealing with the many athletes who are not superstars. Special care must be taken to build up and encourage each participant. Athletics should strive to teach people to value one another simply because of who they are, not because of what they do or do not accomplish. Each person needs to be considered as uniquely gifted by the Creator.
and prepared by Him to fulfill a specific function on a team.

Contests should be entertaining, not only for the participants but also for the spectators. The world seems to have lost this concept through the adoption of the "win-at-all-costs" ethic. Reports of fan violence, bending or breaking rules, and asking injured players to perform are vivid examples of how much the unregenerate man overemphasizes a "W" in the victory column. Frequently, Little Leaguers are berated by coaches and parents for failing to perform at expected levels. High school athletes are mandated to attend off-season practices and camps to hone their skills in order to defeat other schools. The pressure to win and the business aspect of athletics have eliminated the fun of competition.

Christians have a responsibility to preserve the fun of playing the game. Christian athletes should leave a contest feeling fulfilled, sensing the blessing of having competed to the best of their ability. Christian parents and spectators should leave the arena with gladness at having witnessed athletes using God-given talents to the fullest. This does not mean that we should not prepare properly, but rather that our preparation should be given a proper perspective, commensurate with the level of our competitive play.

Those involved in athletics have a special relationship and responsibility to each other. The coach is charged with developing the skills and talents of the various athletes and with molding the team as a unit. He is responsible for practice schedules and team disciplinary standards, for mapping game strategies and for instituting adjustments in the game plan as the contest progresses. And the Christian coach is charged with some awesome responsibilities before God. By the very nature of his position, he will have a profound effect upon the lives of the young athletes under his tutelage. Coaches not only train young men and women and expand the limits of their physical skills, they often shape a philosophy for the field of competition that so permeates the athletes' thinking that they apply it to every aspect of their lives. Therefore, the Christian coach must be a mature man or woman of God, one who is sensitive regarding biblical attitudes about the value of people, winning and losing, obedience to rules, discipline, responsibility, and many other areas.

A common view of athletes is that they are a special breed—to be revered and given privileged treatment. Even at the high school level, the athlete is not expected to grow into maturity of Christlikeness. They become the goals of athletic programs rather than the means of building a superstar program. Aspects such as win-loss records and glamorous facilities become secondary to the development of each person's character.

Furthermore, opponents and officials are also made in the image of God, and they are either regenerated people, or unregenerated people in need of salvation through Christ. Emphasis must be given as to how to properly relate to the "other guys" in the game. The importance of recognizing their skills and achievements and not besmirching their accomplishments or character must be stressed.

Finally, the largest and most neglected segment associated with an athletic contest—the spectators. Who are these wildly chanting, beastly characters? The simple truth is that they are no different in their basic composition from those engaged in game competition. A Christian approach to athletics must include a concern for the fans as well as for the athletes and coaches.

As spectators look on during a contest and as they observe the atmosphere within the arenas of our Christian institutions, they must see a distinctive difference. The intensity of play, the skills demonstrated, or the strategies used may not differ from worldly counterparts, but the attitudes Christians exhibit and the aura they exude must be unique. ("By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another," John 13:35).

Christian institutions must nurture within the hearts and minds of all their constituency attitudes that honor Christ and are distinctively Christian. The Christian approach must be distinctively different because the starting point of Christianity is distinctively different. To have an impact on the athletic community, Christians must be a peculiar people with a peculiar ideological bent toward all that they say and do. Their emphasis must be people oriented, and they must recognize that the process of developing the person is as important as the performance itself.

The goal should be to develop individuals who are prepared to exemplify Christ in all that they do. Gary Warner in Competition expressed it best: "It is not what the game does to us but what we do to the game. It is not what the game brings to us but what we bring to the game. Bring Jesus. Or maybe we'd better stay away."
The Olympics have come and gone in a national flurry of excitement and patriotism. Millions of Americans sat glued to their television sets by the hour to watch Peter Vidmar, Mary Lou Retton, and Rowdy Gaines win medals and reestablish America’s reputation as a world leader in sports. The medal winners have been interviewed and questioned about everything from parents to politics, with America eagerly listening to each tale of trial and testing on the road to victory.

We idolize sports heroes. Children and teenagers respect successful athletes and try to duplicate their efforts. Often parents urge their children to at least participate in some sport, secretly hoping to spot a Carl Lewis of the future.

Television brings these athletes “up close and personal,” making us in awe of these ordinary human beings who can perform extraordinary feats. This awe is transferred to other sports—from professional teams to the Little League.

Where, then, does the Christian athlete (and coach) fit in this highly competitive environment? While winning at any cost has become the norm of expectations for today’s secular athletes, winning souls for Jesus Christ must be the norm for the Christian sportsman. How can a Christian athlete use sports to win more than a medal or game? How can athletics become an avenue to win souls for the kingdom of God?

As a professional soccer player in the English First Division with Leeds United Football Club, I had the privilege of representing my homeland of Scotland in matches throughout Europe for 15 seasons. After I retired from playing, I was head coach for Birmingham Football Club for 7 years.

Although I can look back upon my career as both a player and a coach with a great deal of satisfaction, I still regret that I did not know the Lord Jesus Christ as my personal Saviour during this time. So often I was in a position to present the gospel to lost souls in Communist countries, yet I was unable to do so because I too was unconverted! Athletes are enthusiastically welcomed by the governments of Communist bloc nations and can enter their borders without the slightest baggage search. What opportunities I lost to distribute Bibles in these countries!

I came to know the Lord at a small church in Massillon, Ohio, when I was 40 years old. On that day in Massillon I knew that I would never be the same again. I wanted to offer my Saviour all that I had, and I realized that my talent as a soccer coach was part of what I could offer.

Within months of my conversion, God called me to work in California with Athletes in Action, affiliated with Campus Crusade for Christ. As my family and I left England to embark upon what would be the greatest and most demanding adventure of our lives, we left behind puzzled parents and relatives who loved us but who could not fathom why I had relinquished a secure and rewarding career for a coaching job with a team of California soccer players whose quality was dubious at best. In essence, our relatives simply did not comprehend how one could put total faith in God to fulfill his needs.

If anyone doubts that athletics can be a successful tool for evangelization, all he has to do is observe Athletes in Action during a sporting event such as a soccer match. After the match was over, the athletes each gave their testimony to the opposing team and the crowd. Many athletes and fans who would never darken a church door were more than eager to listen to an athlete. This proved to be extremely helpful in presenting the gospel to hundreds. Even more thrilling, and perhaps more effective, were the many clinics that we set up in public parks. Often as many as 200 children and their parents would attend. Our players would coach the children in the fundamentals of the sport; then they would present the gospel to these youngsters, who would give their undivided attention. Preceded by much fervent prayer, these clinics proved to be a great blessing as hundreds came to know Christ as their Saviour.

Realizing this success encouraged me to challenge not only the amateur players from the other teams but also the semiprofessional players we encountered, many of
whom were Mexican. Using one of our team members who speaks Spanish fluently, we were able to clearly communicate the gospel to them. Not only did children and players respond to this unique way of presenting the gospel, but parents would often speak to us about the change in their children's lives. As a result, we were able to witness to the parents and continue to disciple the children in the weeks ahead.

**G**od can use anyone for His glory as long as he is surrendered to Him.

or refer them to ministers of local Bible-believing churches.

After a year with AIA, God called me to Liberty Baptist College in Lynchburg, Virginia. I had no doubts that we were following God's will in moving to Lynchburg, but I wondered if the opportunities for soulwinning would be as numerous as they had been with AIA. Today I know that being at LBC has been the most rewarding experience of my life. Not only do we have numerous opportunities to witness for Christ, but I am also able to invest my life in many young men and women who will go into the world as missionaries, businessmen, teachers, politicians, and so forth. I can share with these young people that God can use anyone for His glory as long as he is surrendered to Him. If He could take me, at 40 years old, and let me help fulfill the Great Commission, I know He can do even more wonderful things in the lives of these young people who have even more years to serve Him.

Working at LBC not only gives me the opportunity to witness on the soccer field, but to return to my homeland once a year, working with great preachers and gospel singers from the ministries here to present the gospel in schools, churches, and prisons there.

While on these missionary journeys, we have doors opened to us only because of my reputation as an English soccer star. For instance, prison governors will allow us to conduct clinics where prisoners sit on the grass and listen as we present the gospel to them. Men who are embittered toward any reference of Christ open up when soccer is used to establish a line of communication.

Frequently they tell us that we are the first to share the gospel with them—much to the chagrin of prison chaplains, some of whom deeply resent our coming in and rocking their boats. As always God is faithful. We often discover at least one born-again prison staff member (a guard, for instance) willing to minister to the new converts when we leave. This is in marked contrast to the occasions when the college soccer team leads members of opposing soccer teams to Christ, and we can use the resources at the Christian Service Office to tell them about fundamental churches in their area.

The Christian athlete's role in carrying out the Great Commission can be a central one—if he is willing to meet certain spiritual criteria and become an effective tool of God. He must be above reproach both on and off the field. He cannot be a witness for Christ unless others see Christ in him. Thus an exemplary character is mandatory. Christians should be able to show that they are different from others when they are under the pressure of the game. This in itself can aid in winning the lost to Christ. For instance, a hurdler in the 1908 Olympics, Forrest Smithson, captured the imagination and hearts of sports fans when he won the 110-meter hurdles running with a Bible in his hand. In addition to winning this event, he also set an Olympic record.

Certainly Christian athletes have come a long way since then. Today it is commonplace for the public to hear world-famous athletes give God the glory for their successes. In America, football teams are seen before a game on their knees praying to God. Such courageous athletes have an extraordinary opportunity to help fulfill the Great Commission.

Whether your involvement is in professional sports, amateur sports, Little League, or a weekday aerobics class, be willing to stand up and be counted for Christ. The Christian athlete does have a definite role in the sports world that the vain goal of winning for self-edification—that of telling and showing the lost that Christ can and does make a difference. The athletic field is a great mission field.

William Bell, English Cup Final/League Championship Medalist, is head soccer coach at Liberty Baptist College, Lynchburg, Virginia.

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An Interview with John MacArthur, Jr.

John MacArthur, Jr., is pastor-teacher of Grace Community Church in Sun Valley, California, where over 10,000 people attend on Sundays. His radio broadcast, “Grace to You,” is heard on nearly 200 stations nationwide, and his tape ministry distributes about 1 million cassettes per year worldwide. John is a fifth-generation preacher. He attended Bob Jones University, Pacific College, and Talbot Theological Seminary. While considered controversial in some circles, in this highly informative and provocative interview MacArthur reveals his Fundamentalist roots. He candidly speaks here on several issues, including the role of the pastor, the plurality of elders, and the importance of evangelism.

Q: How were you called to the ministry?
A: There was never a time in my life when I didn’t feel directed by the Lord toward the ministry. In fact, I never seriously considered anything else. I think the best definition of the New Testament call to preach is found in 1 Timothy 3, where it is referred to as a “desire.” I had a desire for the ministry and for nothing else. I believe that is the indication of God’s prompting the heart. First Timothy 3 says, “If a man desire the office . . . he desireth a good work,” and then it teaches that the church is to evaluate that man by virtue of his fulfilling the qualifications listed there.

Q: Why did you choose Talbot Theological Seminary?
A: It was a personal thing with me. I went to Talbot Seminary because Dr. Charles Feinberg (dean emeritus) was a very dear friend of my father and a man of God and of the Word. All I wanted to do was learn the Bible. My desire to learn was even stronger than my desire to preach. From early in my life I had a real hunger to understand the Bible. Those two things drove me through seminary, and I pursued everything I could to help me understand the Scripture. I avoided everything peripheral to that.

Q: When did you become pastor of Grace Community Church?
A: I worked with my dad while I was in seminary and for a few years following. I preached with him and did everything in the church from cleaning the bathrooms to running the youth program. All through my college and seminary days I taught the college class and worked with various ministries, thus learning

I believe we must preach the truth, call for people to make a commitment, and let the Spirit of God work in their hearts.
the great diversity of functions in the church. For nearly three years I was on the Talbot Seminary staff, doing various tasks but primarily traveling and preaching (35-40 times a month) all over the country in schools, colleges, churches, and conferences. That was very important in terms of helping to refine my preaching. It wasn't something I really wanted to do but something I felt I should do. I really grew to understand churches and schools, and got a feel for where I fit. However, my heart was hungry to shepherd people because I really believe in the local church as God's institution for teaching His Word, caring for His flock, and reaching the lost. The "10 suits-10 sermons" routine did not build deep spiritual character, and I really needed to get into the Word for my own growth, and to satisfy my tremendous hunger to know the Bible. Grace Community Church called me to fill the pulpit after two successive pastors had died of heart attacks. They were an excellent group of about 450 people. The first Sunday night I preached on Romans 7. I spoke about an hour and 25 minutes and didn't even realize it. They were accustomed to 30-minute sermons, and my wife said, "Well that's the end of that. They'll never invite you back." But the opposite happened! They said, "This is what we want." And I said, "That's what I want—a people who want this."

Q: How would you describe your philosophy of the purpose and function of the church?

A: Well, let me put it as simply as I can. I am interested in maintaining a biblical format. I don't care about success methods, or gimmicks, or psychological leadership techniques. I do read and try to interact with what's going on in the culture, but I try to sort out what the Word of God says about the church and follow that.

My background on church organization is quite diverse. I attended Bob Jones University which taught no particular church government position; Pacific College which was Methodist; and Talbot Theological Seminary where I was given a view that was basically Presbyterian. On top of that my dad was a Baptist pastor.

I decided I wanted to go back to the Word of God and find out what the Bible said. The thing that hit me hardest was Ephesians 4:11-12, that the goal of the church was the "perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." So that became my commitment. My philosophy of ministry was that I would perfect the saints and build men around me to assist me in the perfecting of the saints. The saints would then do the work of the ministry, and the body would be built up—not only spiritually, by edification, but also numerically, by evangelization. We are totally committed to both. The ultimate building of the body must come when you add one more voice to the "Hallelujah Chorus."

Q: One of the criticisms of "MacArthurism," if we may use that term, is your perceived lack of commitment to evangelism. Would you address that issue?

A: I believe in evangelism with all my heart and soul. I want to be faithful as a personal evangelist. I want to be faithful to speak on behalf of Christ at every opportunity I have, and I want my people to be that way. At the same time, I will not stoop to manipulation. Short-term evangelism doesn't interest me, nor does preaching an inadequate gospel. I don't want to fall prey to the "cheap grace" approach. I am committed to evangelism, and we literally do everything we can at Grace Community Church to accomplish that. We see hundreds of people saved and baptized every year. We never have a service without an invitation, and we never have an invitation without people coming into our prayer room. I believe that all preaching must basically be persuasively preached. When someone comes to hear me speak, I am trying to urge him to make a decision. In other words, the whole goal of my preaching is to pin the guy to the wall. He is going to have to say "I will" or "I won't do that." At the close of every service I say something like, "If you want to know Jesus Christ, if you want to come to God, if you want to realize the forgiveness of your sins and embrace the Lord Jesus Christ, then I want you to come to the prayer room." I believe we must preach the truth, call for people to make a commitment, and let the Spirit of God work in their hearts. We also have people saved at our baptismal and Communion services. We are also committed to training our membership to do personal evangelism. We have used a four-month program to train over 2,000 of our own people in the past five years. Of our $9 million annual budget, nearly 50 percent goes to evangelism and missions outreach. Mature people are productive; immature ones are not. We believe that if the saints are built up and perfected, they will do the work of evangelism and bring their friends to Christ.

Q: What is your position on the plurality of elders?

A: I believe the staff of a church ought to be populated by two kinds of people—evangelists and teaching pastors. I don't think an evangelist is necessarily...
a guy with a road show. I believe that the biblical evangelist is someone who can go where Christ is not named, bring those people to Jesus Christ, and build them up in the faith. Every church staff needs such gifted men to lead in reaching the lost. I would have an evangelist on my team before a Christian education director or some other popular position. And I thank God for the evangelists we have at Grace who bring in new sheep for me and other shepherds to feed. In the New Testament the early church was led by a plurality of godly men. The Bible calls them elders, overseers, presbyters, pastors, and so forth. I am convinced that the Bible teaches the plurality of pastors. Terms are a matter of perspective. When you look at the pastor in his role as an elder, you see his maturity; in his role as an overseer, you see his responsibility; in his role as a pastor, you see him as a feeder. He is a mature, godly man who feeds and leads. That's all. And to me, that is what God wants to raise up to lead His church—a mature, godly man who feed and lead. I have been wrongly accused of propagating something else. I believe that the Bible clearly teaches a plurality of godly men leading the church, and they do it by feeding and leading. Obviously, it must be that in some very small churches, there may be only one such leader, but the goal is to have a load shared, and responsibility divided.

Q: Are you the pastor-teacher?
A: Yes. Among the plurality of godly feeders and leaders in the church there is diversity of function, though there is unity of office. Note that in the New Testament the word "elder" always appears in the plural, except twice when it is used in reference to the "elder John," because it is singing out one man. In every other church situation it is used in plurality. Let me give you this illustration. Among the apostles you have 12 men, all of whom, according to Matthew 19:28, will sit on 12 thrones to judge the 12 tribes of Israel. There is an equality of position, dignity, honor. In all four lists of the apostles, there are three groups, and the names in the three groups are always the same. The names are mixed in each list, but the first name is always Peter. And within group one Peter presides. In group two the leader is always Philip. In group three the leader is always James, son of Alphaeus. Now that says to me you have leaders over leaders, leaders under leaders, and leaders among leaders. In the plurality of godly leaders there is always diversity. Peter was the recognized leader of the Twelve, the spokesman. Yet, he was not the organizational leader of the church at Jerusalem. That was the role of James, our Lord's brother. No one man was over everything. My particular role by God's ordination and call is to speak in the public worship services of this church. Now that does mean that I have a unique influence in the church, but it doesn't mean that I run the church unilaterally. Quite the contrary. My one authority is the Bible. Apart from Scripture, my personal preferences are no more authoritative than anyone else's, and others demonstrate skills that surpass my own in given areas.

Q: In your role as a pastor-teacher, what are your personal study habits?
A: I believe my role here and my place among the elders in this church is to be that pastor-teacher. My gift is in that area, so I spend my time studying, preaching, and teaching. God has brought other men into leadership, whom the people respect equally, to carry out the other elements of leadership. My week is predominantly spent in studying, teaching, and personal discipleship. On Monday I do radio and write commentaries. Tuesday through Friday I zero in on the messages for Sunday. If I have to write an article or work on a book, I try to do that at home in the evenings.

Q: What are the critical issues facing the church today?
A: First, I think that the whole issue of Scripture is under attack. The frontal attack of Liberalism is denying the inerrancy and authority of Scripture, but there is a rear attack by the Charismatics, who want to add their own experiences and their current revelations to Scripture—undermining the singular uniqueness of Scripture. To have people pull out their own visions and say that Jesus spoke to them directly is ruinous. I think the whole area of biblical authority is up for grabs in Charismatic circles. Sadly, Scripture is also being attacked by people who have split over the King James controversy. But saddest of all is that there is a mass of people in fundamental orthodoxy who say they believe the Bible, but don't teach it, don't preach it, don't even know what it says. As Walter Martin once said, "A 90-day wonder out of the Jehovah's Witnesses can take apart the average Christian in 30 minutes." That is tragic!

Secondly, I think education is a vital issue. I am deeply concerned about educating men for the ministry. I have a great heart for pastors. I find such chaos among the pastors in terms of knowing what the ministry is all about. They have gone through seminary and still don't have any idea what they are doing. The shepherd's heart somehow seems to be missing. We must correct our method of training pastors.

Thirdly, the problems of the family are devastating. They are a symptom of a society that is tearing at the foundation of authority. Family disintegration is going to be much worse two generations from now. We must reverse this trend now.
When Timothy Dwight assumed the presidency of Yale in 1795, he found that the college was a hotbed of infidelity, where not a single member of the sophomore class professed to be a Christian. Led captive by the heady philosophy of the French Enlightenment which was sweeping through America's colleges, the student body was openly ridiculing the idea of divine revelation. Things were so bad that when Dwight met with the senior class, he found they had jokingly assumed the names of the leading atheists and deists of the late eighteenth century.

Considering Dwight's reputation for learning and scholarship, the students supposed that he would follow this latest trend from Europe. On the first day of classes, the question was raised—in jest, no doubt—whether or not the Scriptures "are the Word of God." To their great surprise, Dwight took the question seriously, and straightway demolished every argument the students could muster. One of Dwight's biographers recorded what happened next.

After this, he entered into a direct defense of the divine origin of Christianity, in a strain of powerful argument and animated eloquence which nothing could resist. The effect upon the students was electrical. From that moment Infidelity was not only without a stronghold, but without a lurking place. To espouse her cause was now as unpopular as before it had been to profess a belief in Christianity. Unable to endure the exposure of argument, she fled from the retreats of learning, ashamed and disgraced.

"To commit our children to the care of irreverent persons, is to commit lambs to the superintendency of wolves."

W ith sparkling the Second Great Awakening, a spiritual revival that girded up the nation in its infancy and helped ensure the success of the young Constitution. Timothy Dwight was without a doubt one of America's brightest and best. Long glossed over by secular historians, Dwight is known to most Christians as the author of the hymn "I Love Thy Kingdom, Lord." But Dwight was also a Revolutionary War patriot, a pastor, an educator, a poet, a farmer, a legislator, and as one historian put it, "a leading enemy of the more militant infidelity of the [seventeen] nineties." Indeed, his achievements in any one of these areas would still warrant an honorable mention in history books. He was a true Renaissance man, but without the arrogance that often accompanies such rare men.

Born on May 14, 1752, Dwight was the grandson of Jonathan Edwards, famous for the sermon "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God" which sparked the First Great Awakening. Dwight grew up in Northampton, Massachusetts, where the effects of his grandfather's ministry were still being felt. Reared in an atmosphere of hard work, piety, and learning, Dwight soon distinguished himself for scholarship. He learned the alphabet in one lesson, could read at age 4, and by 6 had a firm grasp of Latin. He was admitted to Yale at 13.
There he shone brilliantly in theology, poetry, and music.

After graduating from Yale, Dwight taught for two years in a grammar school in New Haven. Like almost all early American schools, this little academy was distinctively Christian, not unlike the many Christian schools springing up all over America today. (The first public school board did not meet until 1833, almost 50 years after the Constitution had been adopted.)

Having established a reputation as a fine pedagogue, he was asked to return to his alma mater as a tutor. Dwight consented, and from 1771 to 1777 he remained at Yale developing his Christian philosophy while tutoring undergraduates.

This period of Dwight's life came to an end when he, like many other members of "the Black Regiment," (as James Otis called the clergymen who fought for the Patriot cause) became a chaplain to General Parson's brigade. Between preaching on Sundays and before battles, Dwight composed patriotic songs to encourage the American troops. In "Columbia" he praised the young Patriot was on the side of religious freedom. Lyric like those of "Columbia" confirmed Dwight's belief that the cause had only confirmed Dwight's belief that the war was a religious one, and that the Patriots were on the side of religious freedom. Lyric like those of "Columbia" must have made the heart of every patriot swell with pride. Through poetry and song, Dwight gave expression to the feelings of a Christian education.

Despite his prodigious learning and encyclopedic knowledge, Dwight was no bookworm. Not afraid to get his hands dirty, he could grow corn or raise a barn as well as he could deliver a lecture on French literature. As an educator, Dwight would have disagreed with today's progressive educators who "debunk the hero" and out "infidels" for their use in school literature. His hands were as calloused from hard physical work as his eyes were weary from study. On one occasion several workmen were driving a well for him. When they reached an impass that held up their work, Dwight discovered the problem and resolved it. On another occasion, while on one of his travels, he was entertained in the home of a friend. Neighbors—mostly farmers—had been invited to hear his talk of "higher themes of church and state, and college, on literature, on philosophy." Instead, he was quite content to spend the evening talking about cultivating potatoes and raising sheep. With a wide-ranging intellect Dwight was interested in everything; he took all knowledge as his province.

His studies in the Scriptures, confirmed by experience, convinced him of the necessity of Christian education. Dwight saw the dangers of state-controlled, atheistic "infidel" as he often called it—education. The movement toward statism education was already taking place in Europe, particularly in France and Prussia. Speaking of the Enlightenment philosophers who advocated such a system, Dwight observed:

They are sagacious enough to discern that all persons are best fitted to receive religious impressions in childhood; and that if they are suffered to grow up without them, they will never receive them, or receive them with excessive difficulty. By prescribing and urging this mode of education, they expect to see children habituated to Irreligion, and confirmed, without argument or conviction, in infidelity. In this manner...they have laboured with immense industry and art to possess themselves of the education of children throughout France, Germany, and other countries of Europe. In order to combat this trend in America, Dwight stressed the importance of a Christian education.

Education ought everywhere to be religious education...parents are further bound to employ no instructors who will not educate their children religiously. To commit our children to the care of irreligious persons, is to commit lambs to the superintendency of wolves.

As an educator, Dwight would have disagreed with today's progressive educators who "debunk the hero" and put "infidels" in the role of models for children.
in their place. When he arrived at Yale, for example, one of his first actions was to remove the portrait of Joel Barlow, one of the "Connecticut Wits" whose writings undermined the Christian faith. Instead, he held before his students men such as George Washington. Of Washington, Dwight wrote: "The things which he had done were too great, too interesting, ever to be forgotten. Every object which we see, every employment in which we are engaged, every comfort which we enjoy, we owe to Washington."

Dwight's testimony as a Christian educator is a reproach to some Christian educators today who begin and end class with prayer, only to leave God out of science, civics, or history. Dwight went far beyond this superficial kind of "Christian" education. He not only understood the philosophy of Secular Humanism in his day but was able to refute it point by point and present in its place a consistent Christian worldview.

According to Dwight, the atheism he found so rampant at Yale when he took over was due to "philosophical pride, and the love of sinning in security and peace." In order to combat the growth of infidelity, which was being imported from Europe, Christian Americans had to stop halting between two opinions and stand with the Lord. His clarion call to revival is as relevant today as it was in 1801:

"To this end you must coolly, firmly, and irrevocably make your determination, and resolve, that Jehovah is your God, and that you will serve him only. . . . Let me at the same time warn you, that your enemies are numerous, industrious, and daring, full of subtility, and full of zeal. . . . In this contest you may be left alone. Fear not; "they that be for you will even then be more than they that are against you." Almighty power will protect, Infinite wisdom will guide, and Unchangeable goodness will prosper you. The Christian world rises daily in prayer to heaven for your faithfulness and success; the host of sleeping saints calls to you from the grave, and bids you Godspeed. The spirits of your fathers lean from yonder skies to survey the conflict, and your children of many generations, will rise up, and call you blessed."

Dwight's faithful preaching of the Word of God and consistent testimony before his students led to the salvation of many. In 1802, a revival at Yale saw the conversion of one-third of the student body (75 out of 225 students). As the years passed, more students yielded their lives to Christ and rallied under the banner of the Cross. Thus began the Second Great Awakening, which saw the formation of the American Bible Society in 1816, the American Tract Society in 1825, and the American Home Missionary Society in 1826. Out of Dwight's classrooms came men such as the evangelist Asahel Nettleton and pastors such as Nathaniel Taylor. Through the Second Great Awakening, America's Christian foundation was strengthened and reinforced. By 1832 one commentator could write: "Never before has the Holy Spirit been poured out in so many places at once: Never before has the Lord Jesus gathered so many into his churches, in the space of a single day, to salvation."

America today is in need of men such as Timothy Dwight—men who will yield their talents and lives to Christ and earnestly contend for the faith at work, at home, in the halls of civil government, from the pulpit, and in our schools. Under the leadership of such men, perhaps God will be pleased to grant yet another "Great Awakening."
What Part Hath He That Believeth with an Infidel?

by Timothy Dwight

Laughing at the very distinction between right and wrong, they proclaimed themselves the assertors of justice, and the champions of truth.

As president of Yale, Timothy Dwight was also pastor of the college church, where his solid doctrinal sermons attacked the skepticism rampant in the student body. He defended the authenticity of the Bible, identifying "Infidelity"—disbelief in and opposition toward Christianity—as the enemy of the faith. He was instrumental in spearheading the great student revival at Yale in the early nineteenth century.

This is an adaptation of "A Discourse on Some Events of the Last Century," delivered in the Brick Church in New Haven, Connecticut, January 7, 1801.

Our Saviour informs us, "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil," and subjoins, "Everyone that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved" (John 3:19-20). Here one of the two great causes of Infidelity is distinctly and exactly alleged, namely, the opposition of a heart that loves sin to that truth which demands of all men a holy life. The other great cause of Infidelity is exhibited with peculiar force in 2 Peter 2:18-19: "For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error. While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants [bondslaves] of corruption." And in 2 Peter 3:3-4: "There shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation."

The Infidels referred to here are plainly the authors of vain and deceitful philosophy, of science falsely so called, always full of vanity in their discourses. They are scoffers, walking after their own lusts and alluring others to follow them, promising liberty and yet being themselves, and making their disciples, the lowest and most wretched of all slaves, the slaves of corruption. Philosophical pride and the love of sinning in security and peace are, therefore, the two great causes of Infidelity, according to the Scriptures.

The form has varied. It was first theism, or natural religion, and then total atheism. Yet it has, in three things at least, preserved a general consistency: opposition to Christianity, devotion of sin and lust, and a pompous profession of love to liberty.

In the earlier periods of this controversy there were, however, more frequent efforts at argumentation on the part of Infidels. For the last 20 or 30 years they seem to have despaired of success in this field and have betaken themselves to that of action and influence. In this field they have wrought with a success totally unprecedented. Nor is this at all to be wondered at, if we consider the opportunity of succeeding presented to them by the state of society in Europe. The excessive wealth of that division of the eastern Continent has generated an enormous luxury, the multiplied enjoyments of which have become not only the ruling objects of desire and the governing motives of action, but in the view of a great part of the inhabitants, the necessary means of even a comfortable existence. On these life is employed, ambition fastened, ardor exhausted, and energy spent.

To a mind—to a nation—dissolved in sloth, enervated by pleasure, and fascinated with splendor, the gospel is preached, and heaven presented, in vain. The eye is closed, the ear stopped, and the heart rendered gross and incapable of healing. The soul is of course unconscious of danger, impatient of restraint, and insensible to the demands of moral obligation. It is therefore prepared to become an Infidel, without research and without conviction. Hence, more sagacious than their predecessors, the latter Infidels have neither labored, nor wished, to convince the understanding, but have bent all their efforts to engross the heart.

In the meantime other events highly favorable to their designs have taken place both in America and Europe. The American Revolution drew toward it at this time the eyes of mankind. The novelty of the scene, the enchanting sound of liberty, to which the pulse of man instinctively beats, the sympathy ever excited for the feebler and suffering party, embarked deeply in the American cause a great part of the civilized world. Benevolent men of all countries hoped, when the contest was ended prosperously for us, and ardent men boldly pronounced, that a new era had arrived, that "the iron rod of the oppressor was broken,"
and that “the oppressed would soon be universally set free.”

Among the agents in the American Revolution were many natives of France. These men, returning to their own country, diffused extensively the enthusiasm they had cherished here and thus hastened the crisis to which France was otherwise approaching.

In this great moral convulsion Royalty and Christianity sunk in the kingdom of France. Emboldened beyond every fear by this astonishing event, Infidelity, which anciently had hid behind a mask, walked forth in open day and displayed her genuine features to the sun. Without a blush she now denied the existence of moral obligation, annihilated the distinction between virtue and vice, challenged and authorized the indulgence of every lust, strode down the barriers of truth, perjured herself daily in the fight of the universe, lifted up her front in the face of heaven, denied the being, and dared the thunder of the Almighty.

Elevated to the chair of dominion, she ushered forth her edicts with the gravity of deliberation and the authority of law, and executed them by the oppressive hand of the jailor, the ax of the executioner, and the sword of the warrior. All rights fell before her, all interests were blasted by her breath, and happiness and hope were together swept away by her bosom of destruction.

As if they had designed to give the last wound to virtue, they assumed all her titles and challenged all her attributes to their own conduct. Daily forsworn, and laughing at the very distinction between right and wrong, they proclaimed themselves the assertors of justice, and the champions of truth. While they converted a realm into a Bastille, they trumpeted their inviolable attachment to liberty. With a little finger, thicker than the loins of both the monarchy and the hierarchy, encircled with three millions of corpses, and in the center of a kingdom changed into a stall of slaughter, they hung themselves over with labels of philanthropy. Nay, they have far outgone all this. Two of their philosophers declared that, to establish their favorite system, the sacrifice of all the existing race of man would be a cheap price: an illustrious instance of Infidel benevolence, and of the excellence of their darling maxim, that “the end sanctifies the means.”

It was soon discovered that the liberty of Infidels was not the liberty of New England; that France, instead of being free, merely changed through a series of tyrannies, at the side of which all former despotisms whitened into moderation and humanity. Of the immeasurable evils under which she and her neighbors agonized, Infidelity was the genuine source, the Vesuvius from whose mouth issued those rivers of destruction that deluged and ruined all things in their way. It was seen that man, unrestrained by law and religion, is a mere beast of prey; that licentiousness, although adorned with the graceful name of liberty, is yet the spring of continual alarm, bondage, and misery; and that the restraints imposed by equitable laws, and by the religion of the Scriptures, were far less burdensome and distressing than the boasted freedom of Infidels.

Even sober Infidels began to be alarmed for their own peace, safety, and enjoyment, and that other men might continue still to be Christians. Yet Christians saw with horror their God denied, their Saviour blasphemed, and war formally declared against heaven.

If you intend to accomplish anything, if you mean not to labor in vain, and to spend your strength for naught, you must take your side. You must marshal yourselves in your own defense, and in the defense of all that is dear to you. You must meet face-to-face the bands of disorder, of falsehood, and of sin. Between them and you there is, there can be, no natural, real, or lasting harmony. What communion hath light with darkness? What concord hath Christ with Belial? Will you copy their practices? Will you teach your children that death is an eternal sleep? That the end sanctifies the means? That moral obligation is a dream? Religion a farce?

To this end you must coolly, firmly, and irrevocably make your determination, and resolve, that Jehovah is your God, and that you will serve Him only. His enemies are the enemies of yourselves, and of your children; of your peace, liberty, and happiness; of your religion, virtue, and salvation. Their principles abhor; their practices detest. Before your steady indignation and firm contempt, they will fall, of course. No falsehood can bear the sunbeams of truth; no vice can withstand the steady current of virtue.

The motives to this opposition are infinite. Your all, your children's all, is at stake. If you contend manfully, you will be more than conquerors; if you yield, both you and they are undone. You are endeared by a thousand ties. Your common country is a land of milk and honey. In it a thousand churches are vocal with the praise of your Creator; and four thousand schools receive your children to their bosom and nurse them to wisdom and piety. Your laws, your institutions, your interests, are one. No mixture weakens, no strangers divide you. You have fought and bled, your fathers have fought and died, together. With such an interest at hazard, with such bonds of union, with such examples, you cannot separate; you cannot fear.

Let me at the same time warn you that your enemies are numerous, industrious, and daring, full of subtlety, and full of zeal. Were it a war of arms, you would have little to dread. It is a war of arts; of temptations; of enchantments; a war against the magicians of Egypt; in which no weapons will avail, but "the rod of God." Almighty power will protect, infinite wisdom will guide, and unchangeable goodness will prosper you.
Finding the Treasure
continued from page 39

of the original tongue, while useful, is no requirement for comprehension, provided proper attention is given to grammar and sound exegesis. One way to accentuate insight is to check one translation with another. As a general rule, words should be understood as having their natural meaning, unless a good reason appears to indicate otherwise. Words with an unclear meaning should be looked up.

God’s Word is a unity, and should be seen as a whole. The Spirit of Truth never contradicts Himself. Thus one passage may explain or clarify another. There is no error on earth that may not find apparent support from some isolated text, but no error or practice can stand the light of the complete revelation. Here is where a growing knowledge of the total Scripture is helpful. The Scripture has a wonderful way of explaining itself when given a chance.

When we have learned what the Bible says, in the context of the writer’s purpose, we are in a position to make the universal application for all ages, and our immediate situation in particular. Relate the lesson to daily experience. What does the passage teach about God and His relationship to me? For what am I most grateful? What about my relationship with others? In the home? At work? How are my attitudes affected? Are there actions I should change? Is some sin pointed out I should confess? Do I see any example to follow? What command is there to obey? Do I have a promise to claim by faith?

By memorizing helpful Scripture, we can meditate on His law day and night, and be ready anytime to give an account of the hope that is in us.

Through it all, let us remember that the Bible was written to disclose Christ, the fullness of God, the expression of His Word in human personality. To lose sight of this fact is to obscure the whole redemptive purpose of revelation. Not only is Jesus the Master Key unlocking all the treasures of wisdom, but He is also the Person in whom our life is being conformed through the Word.

Mastering the Scripture, of course, requires being mastered by it. No amount of knowledge can compensate for submission to the claims of Christ. He is Lord! Without this commitment we fall into the same delusion as the religious gentry of Jesus’ day, making zeal for the letter of the law an occasion for self-vindication and vainglory. God resists the proud, but He gives grace to the humble and trusting, those who seek the Lord with their whole heart.

As we grow in grace and knowledge, we will continue to gain new insights—truths that have been hidden from the ages, things kings and queens have desired to look into, but that God has reserved for His own. It is all there for us in the Book. We need not search the libraries of the world to find it, for there is but one! Truly it is the Word of Life.
God So Loved the World

Sometimes the most common things are the least understood. Such may be the case with the beloved "Gospel in a Nutshell," John 3:16. This text is so simple that a little child can catch its basic meaning and believe it. Yet there is depth here for the most profound thinkers. The original text is loaded with spiritual significance. Each word is chosen to express just the right emphasis. The order and phrasing are intentionally designed to make John 3:16 important and crucial not only to its own context but also as a statement in its own right, setting forth the essential nature and truth of Christianity.

John's declaration that God loved the world speaks of a divine total commitment to seek the world's highest good—a life lived out in the fullness that only salvation through His beloved Son can offer (John 10:10; 1 John 4:10).

Indeed, John can rightly be called the Apostle of Love. He employs the verb used here (apagan) some three dozen times in his Gospel and nearly that many in his three Epistles. The noun form (agape) occurs 8 times in the Gospel and 21 times in his Epistles. Both noun and verb are found also in the Revelation. Perhaps this is the reason that although the word translated "so" (houtos) in our verse is rightly translated "even so" in John 3:14, most versions and commentators have properly favored a stress on the degree of God's love: God so loved. God's love is of infinite proportion; God loved the world so very much!

John also speaks often of the world (kosmos), 105 of its 185 occurrences being found in his writings. John frequently employs "world" in its rejection of and opposition to God, and to Christ's mission in particular. This world has as its head Satan, the prince of this world (John 12:31). Although this world hates the Son and knows nothing of Him or of the Father, and seeks only to serve its own lusts (John 7:7; 1:10; 17:25; 1 John 4:4-6), in His great love God provided for the world's salvation through the vicarious substitutionary Atonement of His own dear Son, Jesus Christ (John 3:17; 1:29).

By His finished work Jesus has gained the victory over Satan and the world system so that all the world may be saved, and men of faith everywhere may live victorious lives (1 John 5:4-5). Yea, God leads us to triumph in Christ (2 Cor. 2:14).

O victory in Jesus, my Savior, forever! He sought me and bought me with His redeeming blood; He loved me ere I knew Him, and all my love is due Him—He plunged me to victory beneath the cleansing flood.

—Eugene M. Bartlett

Alive with warm humor and exciting suspense, this enjoyable and fast-moving film will not only motivate young people, but all ages, to a deeper walk with Christ. COACH is a powerful motion picture, rooted in scriptural principles. It lives because it is the real story of Christians courageous enough to face and deal with sin, sin that cripples and robs life of joy and victory, and that robs Christ of His glory.

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In Review

A Christian Critique of the University
by Charles Habib Malik, InterVarsity Press, 1982, 118pp., $4.50.

Reviewed by Margaret A. Schatkin, associate professor of patristics, Boston College, Boston, Massachusetts.

In addition to pursuing a career in international diplomacy (his prestigious posts and assignments in the field of diplomacy are set forth in the Foreword), Charles Malik studied philosophy with Alfred North Whitehead and Martin Heidegger; is the author of numerous books and articles; and has received more than 50 honorary degrees from North American and European universities. In view of his knowledge and experience (which have not caused a diminution of his Christian faith) he is uniquely equipped to appraise the present status of the secular university.

As the author points out on page 25, the essence of the book would be more accurately captured by the title What Does Jesus Christ Think of the University?; however, he settles on the present title as a literary concession. Malik propounds a theory in which Christ conceivably is critical of the universitites (Sorbonne, Oxford, Harvard, etc) were originally founded on Christ; they are Hellenic and Aristotelian: the logos (mind, reason) of God, to whom no truth can be alien and who is in fact the source of all truth. All Western universities, and shows that they are un-Hellenic, and Aristotle, civilization. Highly recommended.

As a result of their deviation (progress?) from their original and benign purpose of serving Christ, the ultimate truth, the universities are not solely un-Christian but are also un-Hellenic, and it is conceivable that if the university is not reclaimed for Christ, the university and the civilization of which it is the crown may go the obscurantist way of history.

Malik analyzes the sciences and humanities as taught in the secular universities, and shows that they are wide of the mark. The emphasis on science, combined with the exclusion of faith; the ready acceptance of the unproved theory of evolution; the popular application of the scientific method to matters beyond the reach of science; the emphasis on the material world to the exclusion of spirit and significance (teleology) all constitute a distortion of the true place of science in the structure of knowledge—which the presence of Christ in the university would correct.

The humanities, which Malik considers the heart of the university, also have been adversely affected by the absence of Christ. Malik lists a number of philosophical errors that dominate the humanities curriculum, including subjectivism, rationalism, skepticism, cynicism, and atheism. He notes on p.84:

The atheism of the age reflects itself in the atheism of the humanities, and the atheism of the humanities in turn rationalizes and confirms the atheism of the age.

As religion and theology today are taught in secular universities from a rationalistic standpoint, little is being done to remedy or correct the atheism implicit in the field of the humanities.

Malik's solution to this dilemma may be controversial, namely the formation of a Christian Institute to monitor the secular universities. He apparently hopes to reform the established secular universities and bring them back to Christ. He suggests that the new Christian institutions must achieve academic excellence, including having Nobel prize winners on their faculties and the creation of great libraries—all in order to gain academic respectability and acceptability in the secular world.

Those who may disagree with the book will nevertheless be fascinated by its thought-provoking aspects. It is the achievement of an author whose background in diplomacy, academy, and religion is second to none—not only to those in the university world but also very generally to those interested in the future of Western, that is Christian, civilization. Highly recommended.
Spotlight on Stress
by Gary R. Collins,

Reviewed by David R. Miller, associate professor of psychology, Liberty Baptist College, Lynchburg, Virginia.

Gary Collins, psychologist, Christian, has written two practical books on the subject of stress and how to deal with it. Each book, Calm Down and Spotlight on Stress, is written in a practical and easy-to-read format, ideally suited to an evening or weekend reading opportunity.

Collins has a unique gift for writing so a reader feels spoken to, making the readable books even more pleasant to get into. These books are filled with everyday, true-to-life vignettes, easily understood and applied, making the reader feel that he knows Gary Collins, his family, and church, and is better off for the acquaintance.

Spotlight on Stress is the more intense of the two books, concentrating on the situations most likely to cause Christians to encounter stress, and the answers found in the Bible and modern psychology. Collins gives many biblical references, as well as statistics and research findings to back up his conclusions. The roots of stress, stress in the home and on the job, the stress of family and husband-wife relationships, religious stress, and many more are looked at briefly but thoroughly.

Calm Down could be considered an answer to the first, offering 23 short chapters with a "how-to-handle" theme. A wide range of subjects is covered—from how to handle pressure, boredom, and shyness, to how to handle aging, hostility, and the future. There is even a chapter on how to handle vacations, of all things!

As I read through these brief books I found myself making quiet little comments like "very good," "nice application," and "well said." These are not psychology textbooks, nor are they Bible commentaries. They are readable, practical books on subjects common to all Christians, and are worth the time spent on them.

New International Dictionary of Biblical Archaeology

This new Regency reference work covers over 800 topics and contains 240 photos and 21 pages of maps detailing the latest discoveries in biblical archaeology. Contributors include F.F. Bruce, E.M. Blaiklock, and Edwin Yamauchi. Articles are alphabetically arranged for easy reference to the history, archaeology, and biblical significance of each site. Highly recommended as a conservative guide to interpreting the world's greatest archaeological discoveries. —E.H.

Choices: Picking Your Way through the Ethical Jungle
by Sandy Lawsen and Dale Lawsen, Harold Shaw, 1983, 64pp., $2.95.

This is an excellent series of Bible studies for teens, guiding the reader through individual Bible passages by having him answer a series of questions. It will work well with one person or as a group study. It does a very good job of communicating objective biblical values and teaching young people how to make decisions. A teacher's guide is available. Highly recommended!—D.B.

A Reasonable Faith: Responding to Secularism

Campolo's latest book is a helpful addition to the current literature examining and refuting secularism. As a social scientist he brings an important new perspective to the discussion. The chapter on moral relativism is especially worthwhile, but the best part is the conclusion, which argues for a true Christian view of being human. —D.B.


This is one of the great classics in a new readable translation. Augustine's autobiography, detailing how God brought him to a dramatic conversion after a long search for truth, is must reading for all Christians. —D.B.

Great Asian Religions

This helpful book provides objective and up-to-date information on the history, practices, social and cultural influences, and beliefs of the seven major religions—including Christianity—found on the Asian continent. No critique or analysis is undertaken, but the result is more insightful and informative for it. —D.B.

Help in Ages Past, Hope for Years to Come
by Robert L. Cate, Prentice-Hall, 1983, 201pp., $5.95.

This series of daily devotionals has been written by a former pastor and current professor of Old Testament and Hebrew at the Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary. The work focuses on a variety of contemporary themes designed to help the believer develop, maintain, and enrich his devotional life with God. It explores the riches of God's Word in some unfamiliar passages of the Old Testament and would
be useful to ministers, Bible study group leaders, and every born-again Christian.

—S.S.

The God Makers

Although poorly organized, this is an important treatment of the true beliefs of Mormonism. The authors concentrate on the central doctrine that human beings become gods—and the paganism that results. Special attention is paid to history and actual social conditions in Utah and among Mormons in general. Well-documented and very valuable resource! —D.B.

The Life and Words of Jesus
compiled by Pat Alexander

Many of the best known and most loved passages from the Gospels (Good News Bible) are gathered together in this book and illustrated with stunning photographs taken in the Holy Land. The book begins in the hills of Nazareth with Mary's song, “The Magnificat,” and ends on Lake Tiberias with Christ's appearance to His disciples following His Resurrection. Beautifully done! —J.B.

God Did It, But How?

You may not agree with all of the particulars, but this is an excellent, short, easily understood examination of the relation of science to the Bible. As far as the general conclusion it delineates, you will not find anything better. The chapter on miracles is especially valuable.

—D.B.

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Jerry Falwell
How can you be so sure the Bible is really the Word of God?" How often has this question been directed to Christians by the unsaved? We could point to many proofs, of course, including the historical, scientific, and prophetic accuracy of the Word of God, or its amazing unity, and so forth. But the greatest single proof is the wonderful power of the Bible to change corrupt humanity!

A socialist once stood on a soap box in New York and, pointing to an old ragged man, proudly announced, "Socialism will put a new suit of clothes on that old man there!"

As he stepped down, a Christian mounted the box and proclaimed, "The Bible will put a new man in that old suit of clothes there!"

An atheist once sneeringly asked a new convert, "Do you believe Jesus actually turned water into wine?" The convert answered: "Yes, I believe He did! But let me tell you something. For years I was a hopeless drunkard. All my money went for booze. But then God's Word gripped my soul, and I'm here to say that Jesus performed an even greater miracle, for He turned wine into milk for my children!"

Probably there is no more sensational example of the life-transforming power of the Bible than the unbelievable story of Mutiny on the Bounty. In 1887 the Bounty, under Captain Bligh, set sail for the island of Tahiti in the South Seas. After a voyage of 10 months, the ship arrived at her destination; a further six months were spent collecting palm saplings. The sailors meanwhile had become so attached to the native girls, that upon receiving the order to embark, mutinied, set the Captain and a few men adrift in an open boat, and returned to the island. Captain Bligh, however, survived his ordeal and eventually arrived home in England.

A punitive expedition was sent out, which captured 14 of the mutineers. But 9 of them had transferred to another island, where they formed a new colony. Here, in the language of the Encyclopaedia Britannica, they degenerated so fast and became so fierce as to make the life of the colony a hell on earth. The chief reason for this was the distillation of whiskey from a native plant. Quarrels, orgies, and murders were a common feature of their life.

Finally all the men except one were killed or had died off. Alexander Smith was left alone with a crowd of native women and half-breed children. Then a strange thing happened. In a battered chest, he found a Bible. He read it, believed it, and began to live it. Determining to make amends for his past evil life, he gathered the women and children around him and taught them too. Time rolled on. The children grew up and became Christians. The community prospered exceedingly.

Nearly 20 years later an American ship visited the island and brought back to Europe and England word of its peaceful state. The British government took no further action. There was no need. The island was a Christian community. There was no disease, no insanity, no crime, no illiteracy, and no strong drink. Life and property were safe, and the moral standards of the people were as high as anywhere in the world. It was a veritable Utopia on a small scale. What had brought about this astounding transformation? Just the reading of a book, and that book was the Bible.
Living Christmas Tree to Present “Sounds of Christmas”

A crackling fire, ringing bells, laughing friends, harmonizing carolers, a crying baby... all the inviting sounds of Christmas will be combined in the Living Christmas Tree's production of "Sounds of Christmas."

In a turn-of-the-century outdoor setting, this year's Living Christmas special is expanded to include 10 new songs from a brand new Christmas musical, "Sounds of His Love," by Don Marsh and Karen Dean.

Dates for this year's Living Christmas Tree are Friday, December 7 at 7:00 p.m.; Saturday, December 8 at 2:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.; and Sunday, December 9 at 2:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m.

Dave Randlett is the director and producer; David Allison wrote the script and is directing the dramatic scenes; Ray Loey conducts the orchestra.

Practice for the special began in August. Three hundred people will be participating, including the singers in the Living Christmas Tree, the chamber choir, concert choir, orchestra, Sounds of Liberty, production staff, and soloists Don Norman, Marc Evans, Robbie Hiner, and Kendra Cook.

Visitors from the whole Eastern Seaboard and the Midwest come each year to see this special Christmas celebration. Approximately 20,000 people view this event annually.

A new Living Christmas Tree album with many of the songs of this year's program will be available in the lobby.

Soccer Team Keeps Testimony While Playing Hard to Win

LBC soccer coach Bill Bell is proud of his team's winning record and he is just as proud of his team's conduct on the field. And rightly so.

A recently released report from the commissioner of referees on the 1983 playing season found LBC tied with Eastern Mennonite for the best record regarding sportsmanship.

The scoring was done on the basis of who had been presented the least number of yellow and red cards—yellow being caution slips and red being ejection notices. Fifteen Virginia conference teams were evaluated. LBC had no one ejected and only three cautions.

During the 1983 season Bell's team compiled a win-loss record of 12-4-1, which was the best ever for an LBC soccer team.

"There's no reason why we can't maintain a good testimony, play hard, and still win," said Coach Bell, looking for even better results as this year's playing season ends in late November.

Jerry Johnston Revival to Be Held

November 4-9 the Thomas Road Baptist Church will be holding revival services with evangelist Jerry Johnston.

While a student at Liberty in 1978, Jerry was involved with an evangelistic team. Today his ministries reach across the nation through rallies, conferences, films, and tapes.

From his home base in Shawnee Mission, Kansas, Jerry preaches on his weekly television program, "Capture America."

He travels across the country with his LIFE School Assemblies, speaking to public junior high and high school students. He has had the opportunity of speaking in over 1,650 schools and to two million students.

God has richly blessed the Jerry Johnston Ministries in recent years. Literally thousands of people have come to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ through Jerry's preaching. Dr. Falwell and his staff believe this could be one of the greatest meetings in the history of Thomas Road Baptist Church.

Calendar Update

October
26
Mark Lowry Concert
Multipurpose Center
29
Dr. Falwell speaks at Baptist University of America

November
1-3
Scare Mare
4
Dr. Falwell and OTGH Trio at Open Door Church, Chambersburg, Pennsylvania
4-9
Jerry Johnston Revival Meetings at LBC
8-10, 13-17
LBC Drama Department presents "A Man for All Seasons"
12
Dr. Falwell speaks at the Jerry Johnston Evangelistic Conference, Baptist Bible College, Springfield, Missouri
13
Dr. Falwell speaks at Lighthouse Baptist Church, Quincy, Illinois
17
Last home football game—LBC vs Carson-Newman College
20-27
LBC Thanksgiving Break
21-27
LBC and TRBC foreign exchange group travels to Haiti
28
Dr. Falwell addresses Life Advocates of Houston, Texas—Breakfast—8:00 a.m.
29
Dr. Falwell speaks at the Church of the Open Door, Los Angeles, California
WASHINGTON—More than 2,000 politically active and religiously conservative women met at the Shoreham Hotel, in Washington, D.C., in September to learn how to "stand up for what's right in America."

Kicking off its first national conference, Concerned Women for America—a 440,000-member organization—gave women instruction in establishing prayer chapters, lobbying public officials, protecting human life and religious freedoms, defending public morals, and using their God-given "uniqueness" to promote the Judeo-Christian ethic.

Hosted by Beverly LaHaye, president of CWA, conference speakers stressed the need for women to pray for the leaders of the nation.

"We are the encouragers, we are the inspirers, we are the motivators," said Mary Crowley, a CWA national advisory board member and president of Home Interiors in Texas, who addressed the conference.

Women came from across the United States, including Hawaii and Alaska, to attend the three-day conference.

Formed five years ago, CWA is headquartered in San Diego and has four objectives: inform women about the nation's eroding Judeo-Christian values and moral standards; expose those individuals and movements working to weaken the American family; organize women into prayer chapters; and lobby public officials.

CWA is pro-life and it supports a strong defense, the free enterprise system, religious freedom in the public schools, and laws that protect the "God-given right of parents to direct the upbringing of their children."

The organization opposes government intervention in church-operated ministries, the Equal Rights Amendment, comparable worth legislation, and special rights for homosexuals. And CWA "deplores" both the pornography industry and the "deteriorating" condition of the entertainment industry.

Barbara Gibbons, a Maryland state lobbyist and former feminist leader, told participants to be informed about the issues, communicate them well to others, develop local "prayer action chapters," write letters and make telephone calls to public officials.

Participants heard from a number of guest lecturers who spoke on issues ranging from President Reagan's commitment to women's issues, to the threat of Soviet expansionism.

Ambassador Faith Whittlesey, director of the office of public liaison at the White House, said President Reagan does not promote people because of their gender, but because of their professional skill—a practice that has opened the door to high-level federal positions for 1,700 women.

John Lenzenziski, director of European and Soviet affairs for the White House, spoke about that "tyranny." Saying America no longer teaches children about the threat of Communist expansionism, he said, "We are more ignorant about this subject than any other age."

Sam Blumenfeld, an author and educator, spoke about the National Education Association, the nation's largest teachers' organization, and its efforts to gain social control over the minds of children in the area of atheism, Humanism, evolution, gun control, abortion, and socialism, to name but a few. Blumenfeld said the NEA wants to remove God from public life because a belief in God also entails a belief in certain inalienable rights. And many of these inalienable rights—such as a right to life for the unborn—interfere with the socialist efforts of the NEA.

Later, Jane Chastain, a national advisory board member, presented the premiere showing of a pro-life film, "Conceived in Liberty," produced by American Portrait Films.

Dee Jepsen, wife of Senator Roger Jepsen (R-Idaho) and formerly a special assistant in the office of public liaison at the White House, said, "There are things women bring and contribute to society that men cannot duplicate. Among them are compassion, a caring heart, and an ability to heal relationships."

"Men seem to have to do things with a lot of huff and puff," she said. "The feminists seem to think men do the important work. But the important work is being done in the home. We shape lives there and send them out into the world." Illustrating, Jepsen said, "Mrs. Nellie Reagan (mother of Ronald Reagan) shaped a President of the United States who is now implementing public policy that is shaping America. Talk about power."

The conference also featured mothers and fathers whom CWA is legally defending as they take a stand for religious liberties: Suzanne Clark, a Tennessee housewife sued for $100,000 by the National Education Association for writing a letter-to-the-editor criticizing the organization; James Glenn, a Louisville, Nebraska, father who spent 193 days in jail for refusing to testify about sending his child to an unapproved church-related school.

Also Carolyn Grove, a Mead, Washington, mother who lost a lawsuit when she tried to prevent public school officials from requiring her daughter to read The Learning Tree, which, among other "blasphemies," refers to Jesus Christ as a "poor white-trash God."

—Martin Mawyer
"The true visionary sees more than the uncharted road to the future. His view also encompasses the well-trodden path to the past. I am convinced that only he whose heart is rooted in history will have the vision it takes to realize high hopes and undertake high enterprises. Winston Churchill said, 'The farther back you look, the farther ahead you are likely to see.'

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InterVarsity Press Bows to Pressure, Withdraws Abortion Book

MADISON, Wis. (RNS)—Bowing to pressure from anti-abortion forces, InterVarsity Press, a major publisher of Evangelical books, has withdrawn from sale a book on biomedical ethics whose author contends that therapeutic abortion may sometimes be "the least tragic of a number of tragic options."

A spokesman for the press's sponsoring organization said the volume of angry responses to the book may signal that abortion is no longer a debatable issue in the Evangelical community.

James McLeish, president and chief executive officer of InterVarsity Christian Fellowship, in Madison, Wisconsin, made the decision to remove Brave New People from InterVarsity's list—the first time in the organization's 43-year history that one of its publications has been withdrawn.

"I am withdrawing the book because it has caused confusion," said Mr. McLeish in a letter sent to persons who had written in to complain. Noting that the book was "being perceived by the Christian public" as supporting abortion, he said he took the action "rather than detract from the campus ministry of reaching students for Jesus Christ to which InterVarsity is called."

InterVarsity Press in Downers Grove, Illinois, the fellowship's book-publishing division, issued the book jointly with the publishing arm of the movement's British branch in Leicester, England. The book will continue to be sold in Britain.

Ironically, protests against the book in England have come from Liberals who thought the author's views were too strongly anti-abortion.

The book's author is D. Gareth Jones, a medical biologist who is professor of anatomy at Otago University in New Zealand. He is an active Evangelical.

Hustler Sues Jerry Falwell

LOS ANGELES—Hustler magazine has brought suit against Jerry Falwell, Old-Time Gospel Hour, and Moral Majority for allegedly violating copyright laws when the Fundamentalist preacher used a satire appearing in the magazine to raise money.

In Hustler's November 1983 issue, the magazine ran a parodic advertisement, headlined "Jerry Falwell talks about his first time," depicting Falwell as a drunkard whose first sexual encounter was with his mother.

Falwell responded by filing suit against the pornographic magazine and its owner, Larry Flint, for libel, invasion of privacy, and infliction of emotional distress. The trial is scheduled for December 3 in U.S. District Court in Lynchburg.

To raise money for the suit, Falwell briefly displayed the article during his TV show and distributed edited versions of the parody to supporters, with requests for financial donations.

Documentary Film Explores Abortion Controversy

ANAHEIM, Calif.—A 58-minute documentary film on abortion has been released by American Portrait Films.

Titled "Conceived in Liberty," the new film presents viewpoints on both sides of the abortion question by some of America's most influential figures.

The film opens with an expose of the notorious 17,000-fetuses incident in West Los Angeles, and moves to an analysis of the U.S. Supreme Court's Roe vs. Wade decision. This section features an interview with Justice Harry Blackmun, who wrote the Court's majority opinion.

Following this are interviews conducted with key persons in the abortion controversy, including Jean Doyle of the National Right to Life committee; Nanette Falkenberg of the National Abortion Rights Action League; Faye Wattleton, president of the Planned Parenthood Federation of America; Congresswoman Bella Abzug; and Paul and Judy Brown of the American Life Lobby.

Legislative viewpoints are revealed in interviews with Senators Jesse Helms, Orrin Hatch, Robert Packwood, and Jeremiah Denton; and with Congressmen Henry Hyde, Henry Waxman, and Robert Dornan.

The film shows a pro-life sit-in; experimentation on live, aborted human fetuses; and a first-time-ever sonogram of a suction abortion, described and explained by Dr. Bernard Nathanson, a New York obstetrician who at one time ran the nation's largest abortion clinic.

The film's interviewer is Jane Chastain, who was the first woman sportscaster, and the first woman in this role to be granted a network contract. Chastain is also a national officer of Concerned Women for America.

Further details on "Conceived in Liberty" may be obtained from American Portrait Films, 1695 W. Crescent Avenue, Suite 500, Anaheim, California 92801.

School Ordered to End School Prayer

WOODBURY, N.J.—For 20 years—even since the landmark Supreme Court decision banning organized public school prayer—the Woodbury school district has permitted students to begin each class with a moment of silence.

But according to the State Board of Education, the school district is violating a recent U.S. District Court order ruling "that such a policy is unconstitutional," said Walter McCarrick, assistant commissioner of the department's Division of County and Regional Services.

The education department has asked
the school district to stop. But the Woodbury Board of Education has refused and, doubling their fists, voted this fall to continue the district’s practice of opening each class with a moment of silence.

The education department has responded, McCarron said, by asking the attorney general to request a “show cause order” in Gloucester County Superior Court. If the court grants the order, the Woodbury Board of Education will have to show why it should not cease its moment of silence.


**November 18 Scheduled as Bible Sunday**

In his message for National Bible Week, President Reagan said, “The meaning of the Bible must be known and understood if it is to make a difference in our lives. The rewards of such effort will help preserve our heritage of freedom and signal the message of liberty to people in all lands.”

In keeping with the President’s thoughts, American churches will celebrate Bible Sunday on November 18, marking the 70th year of unbroken observance. Bible Sunday was begun by the American Bible Society, which was founded in 1816 and is now at work in 180 lands. This year the organization expects to distribute its four-billionth copy of Scripture.

**Vermont Drops Battle with Religious Sect**

ISLAND POND, Vt.—Suffering setback after setback, Vermont officials have dropped their child abuse case against the Northeast Kingdom Community Church here.

Last June more than 90 state troopers raided the homes of this reclusive church commune and took custody of 112 children. Though church officials admit to physically disciplining children, they say it is done by the guidance and love of God.

The state defended its raid, however, saying a sworn affidavit from a religious defeector Roland Church, who said his daughter was beaten by a church elder, Charles Wiseman, for seven hours and was left with 89 welts on her body.

The national media quickly picked up on Church’s testimony, and newspapers and television newscasts across the country were reporting about the “routine” and prolonged beatings at the commune. The state ended its pursuit of the religious commune when Mr. Church refused to appear at Wiseman’s trial because, he said, he fabricated the stories. Sitting shoulder-to-shoulder with Wiseman at a press conference, Church said he lied to justify his defection.

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The nurse appeared in the doorway to the physician's office, energetically waving her arms to get Eric's attention before he drove off. She had gotten two lab reports mixed up while Eric was in for his examination. The "off the charts" blood sugar level she had reported to him just minutes earlier belonged to Mrs. D; his blood sugar level was well within normal limits. When she gave him the new figure his feelings of anxiety gave way to a sense of relief.

Sometimes we can be led to assume the worst and, like Eric, discover that all is well. I fear that the reverse is true, however, when we consider the state of the church in America. A superficial look over many churches across the nation could give the impression that all is well. After all, there are some positive growth trends, and even pockets of renewal. A closer look at the lives of professing Christians presents a disturbing picture.

Not too long ago I heard a man describe the church as bankrupt. What he was referring to was a church devoid of dedicated believers. The man is a former pastor and now spends much of his time working with churches across the nation. His conclusions are not speculative babblings; they are the well-informed judgments of a perceptive man who has been on the front lines of battle. He has seen the churches from within and is not fooled by well-dressed people who file in and out of weekly worship services.

We refer here not to the churches that have been torn from their biblical moorings— they have been bankrupt for some time. Rather we refer to those churches who claim the Scriptures to be authoritative, those churches where the Word is proclaimed faithfully week after week. In some of these churches, marital infidelity has reached the same epidemic proportions as in the so-called secular world. More than 80 percent of the more active members of these churches are doing nothing in the way of teaching their children from the Scriptures. In these same churches real intimacy and fellowship with God and fellow believers is sorely lacking. We find many among these believers who are biblically illiterate and unable to bring faith and practice together in their day-to-day lives.

In spite of the state of the church, there are reasons for hope. First, we have the promises of God. Second, we have His Spirit in us and in our midst. Third, there are signs of life in many believers, struggles notwithstanding, that suggest that people really do want to grow and manifest the fruit of the Spirit in their lives.

This is the type of discipleship that the church, for the most part, is not providing. People not only need to be led, they need to be led by the hand, step-by-step. They need to be nurtured in the Word in their relationship with the Lord, in marriage, in family and other relationships, in the management of finances, in handling their emotions, and in a host of other areas to which the Bible speaks. Children need to be taught, really taught, by their parents. Church members need to be discipled one-on-one by the leadership of the church.

Too much of our ministry in the churches is failing to touch lives. People are slipping through the net of biblical teaching in our churches because the Word is not being made personal through one-on-one ministry. Even when the pastor spends a significant portion of the sermon on application of biblical principle, we must not assume that his people will be able to build the bridge from the pastor’s sermon to their own lives. Men and women need to be shown how God's teaching applies to their circumstances. Effective ministry must be continuous, intensive, personalized, and in the context of the real situations in which people live and breathe.

One man is terminally ill. Another is several hundred thousand dollars in debt. A woman knows all the right answers concerning the Christian faith, but God seems far away. A son rebels, giving his parents fits. A boy wrestles with physical disability. A man tries to break free of a destructive habit. A couple finds their marriage is coming apart. Does the church have anything to say to people like these? I believe it does when its ministry embodies biblical principles that can really make a difference in the lives of God’s people.

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