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Shimei’s Dust

Everyone is into church renewal these days. I read a book recently by Howard Snyder where he maps out a road to church renewal through some pretty rough territory. He talks about sacrifice, suffering, commitment, cost, servanthood, and poverty. I have a much better idea. It’s called incentives— perks for preachers.

Why are enrollments down in seminaries? Why are there more trained ministers selling insurance than pastoring churches? Why is the pastor’s enthusiasm measurable in inches instead of miles? Lack of incentive!

Most churches assume that the preacher gets paid to be good. Everyone else is good for nothing. Nothing could be further from the truth. Why should the preacher invite new members into the church? He’s going to get the same salary with 100 members as with 200. That means twice as much work for the same pay. Why bother? So the name of the game is “coast.”

Industry has the right idea. Reward initiative with incentives. These are called “perks.” Things like car allowances, televisions, vacation trips, seminars in the Bahamas, new office furniture, and so on. Just think of what this could do for church renewal. We could give the preacher an extra bonus for every 2,000 miles he puts on his car doing church visitation, or a free trip to Disney World for accumulating 500 parking receipts from the local hospital. For every 10 new converts we could present him with a diamond ring during the morning service. For every 100 we could fly him to the vacation spot of his choice. Every $1,000 of new giving he generates could give him his choice of a one-month title exemption or a donation to his IRA of equal value.

With the right incentives more college students would be encouraged to go into the ministry. Pastors would be more diligent, and just think what this would do for the average church. You could even run a contest between all the churches in town for the greatest increase in volume each month. At the end of the year the winning church would be honored at a specially televised rally and its pastor given a new Cadillac. Now that, my friend, would spark renewal!

All this talk about stripes, imprisonments, perils, weariness, pain, fasting, weakness, infirmities. Where do people get the idea that the ministry is supposed to be like that? Take up my cross? Not me, man, unless it happens to be on a gold chain!

Shimei

Deeply moved . . .

I was deeply moved to learn about John Jasper (February), a black preacher who served the Lord in slavery and out of slavery. I had never heard of him before, but I wept openly on reading

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Christian rock ...

I was beginning to think that "Christian" rock was the acceptable norm for youth ministry. So many youth pastors, pastors, and evangelists have put rock music in its place (hell), but never speak out against "Christian" rock. Sad to say, we are seeing the message of Christian music being sacrificed on the altar of "the beat." Why can't Christians see that? Thank you for the articles on this subject. And thank you for the encouragement they gave me.

Timothy F. Totten
Youth Pastor
Immanuel Baptist Church
Kenosha, Wisconsin

I read with great interest your articles on "Rock Music." Christians must face reality and the fact that music is a part of our world. Like it or not, we must admit that "rock 'n roll" is a legitimate art form and will have a primary influence on children and youth. As parents we have the responsibility to teach our children to evaluate all music to see if its message is good or bad, true or false. Condemning without first evaluating the music of our society only drives a wedge between generations.

Sure, a lot of the music is sexually explicit and blatantly culitic in nature, but is that not a reflection of the state of our society? How many parents who condemn rock music are addicted to cigarettes, alcohol, or soap operas?

In regard to the contemporary Christian music, just as missionaries learn the native language before they can witness to their people, we must be able to speak the language of today's youth in order to relate to them. I agree that a throbbing rock 'n roll beat does not lift the name of Christ, but that is not what all contemporary Christian music is. Are we to stay in the dark ages, wear Victorian clothes, and let modern technology pass us by?

If so, we can be assured of never reaching today's youth. As Mike Smith quoted Dr. James Dobson, "Music is one of the most powerful tools for the encouragement they gave me."

Brenda F. Terry
Quinton, Virginia

A gold mine ... 

I wish to commend you on your magazine and the clear, forthright, and unemotional stance for biblical Fundamentalism. I have especially appreciated the section on "Preaching & Pastoring"—a gold mine to learn from other men in the ministry!

Mark D. Cain, Pastor
Emmanuel Bible Chapel
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What Is a Good Church?

Preacher, is there a good church over in so-and-so? When someone asks that question I do not say, “What do you mean by ‘good church’?” I think I know what he means, and I start naming off churches that he might like to attend. But what constitutes a ‘good church’?

The greatest local congregation in church history numbered in the thousands. Shortly after its birth, this church withstood oppression from the powerful Roman government and overcame insurmountable odds. It grew and thrived throughout Jerusalem and eventually reached half the town for Christ. Its strength and commitment sprang from the basic qualities that make a “good church.”

In Acts chapter 2, stability is the first quality of a good church. “They continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine” (v.42). A stable church knows what it believes, why it believes it, and it takes a stand on the truth of God.

Another quality is fellowship. “They continued steadfastly in fellowship” (v.42). There was a sweet stable fellowship there. They encouraged one another. Through hardships and famines, they were breaking bread and observing other ordinances. They came together to remember Christ’s death and His Resurrection and to pray.

In this troubled world, you need to retreat into the fortress, into the refuge of the church of the living God. You need a place to gather with other believers around the Word in fellowship and prayer. That is why the Scriptures say, forsake not “the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is.” A church without stability and fellowship has nothing. No matter how active it is, or how beautiful the building, or how tall the spire, if the church does not have these qualities, it will not be worth your while to go there.

The local church is supposed to be a hiding place, a place of fellowship, a place to internalize the Word of God, to worship, and to pray. The larger a church becomes, the harder it has to work to be sure it does not lose sight of people and individual needs. As it becomes large in numbers, it must try hard to stay small in spirit.

Joy is another trait of a good church. “They, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God” (v.v.46-47). A lot of churches have the atmosphere of a morgue. If you are not depressed upon entering, the prelude will depress you. If the music does not get to you, the pastor, in a cathedral voice he uses only in the pulpit, will get to you. If that does not do it, the special music or the anthem will. If you are still in good spirits, wait for the sermon.

A church should provide spiritual joy, a lift. You ought to leave feeling better than you did when you came in, saying it was good to be in the house of the Lord.

Evangelism is the last characteristic of a good church given in this passage. “And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved,” or were being saved (v.47). What is a good church? Notice the order. A good church has stability, fellowship, spiritual authority, love, joy, and evangelism. If you leave out soulwinning, all the other qualities lose their meaning.

There are Bible-believing churches that do not give a gospel invitation anymore, that do not train people to win souls, that do not tell people the importance of sharing Christ. I believe in lifestyle evangelism, but I also believe in word-of-mouth, word-by-word, sentence-by-sentence, line-by-line evangelism, where you give the plan of salvation so clearly that a person can understand it. But if you do not have both, you do not have anything. You cannot win people to Christ without telling them the plan of salvation. Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God. We must have both.

When you are in a stable church that has a strong, prayerful fellowship, where spiritual authority, love, and joy are present, evangelism is easy and natural.

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Learning from Our Weaknesses

by Edward Dobson

After looking at the strengths of Fundamentalists and Evangelicals last month, I want to give equal time to the weaknesses. That's right, weaknesses. Both groups consist of fallible human beings and are therefore subject to weaknesses and flaws. An honest review will help us recognize those shortcomings and hopefully find avenues of improvement.

**Fundamentalist Weaknesses**

Intolerance. Because of the Fundamentalist's strong emphasis on the truth, he easily becomes intolerant of all who disagree with him. Often quick to judge he has little capacity for self-criticism. Fundamentalist elements become defensive and ingrown.

Absolutism. Frequently, Fundamentalists may have a black-and-white mentality toward issues. They leave little to the gray areas of personal preference and quickly make absolute pronouncements for or against issues. This leaves them inflexible and resistant to change. It often causes them to elevate minor issues into major issues and to paint themselves into a tight corner from which they cannot escape.

Pride of accomplishment. Fundamentalists are practical people. They are doers and builders. They are committed to winning souls and building churches. However, in their desire to do things for God they have a tendency to get caught up in external success. They love to play the "How many are you running?" game or the "How much did you grow?" game. When accomplishment becomes an obsession, a person can become isolated from fellowships, associations, and even personal relationships.

**Evangelical Weaknesses**

Overtolerance. The moderation of the Evangelical movement keeps it from the extremism and absolutism of the Fundamentalists. However, unchecked by Scripture, moderation easily turns to overtolerance. "Let's not be quick to judge" pervades the movement. Tolerance of error leads to contamination by error. As a result, Evangelicals struggle over what to do when someone within their ranks denies the central doctrines of the Christian faith.

Relativism. Because of their moderation, Evangelicals have a dangerous tendency toward relativism in theology, ethics, philosophy, and even personal morals. "If no one has a monopoly on the truth, how can we be dogmatic?"

Pride of intellect. Because of the Evangelical commitment to Bible teaching, the movement is generally characterized by careful biblical scholarship. However, in their desire for knowledge, Evangelicals develop a pride of knowledge. They love to play the "Where did you go to school?" game, or the "How many degrees do you have?" game. When pride of knowledge becomes an obsession, a person can become isolated from people.

Worry over credibility. The Evangelicals are overly concerned about the academic and social respectability. Because of their desire to present Christianity as an intelligent and credible alternative to secular society, they worry whether people, movements, schools, and books have any "real credibility." They fear being labeled intellectually inferior.

Drift to the left. Evangelicals rarely split. They are too loving, kind, and tolerant to get that angry. However, this tolerance allows them to keep drifting to the left. Today there are those espousing everything from neo-orthodoxy to Marxism who still claim to be Evangelical. As a result, the left wing of Evangelicalism is barely discernable from the right wing of Liberalism.

Beyond the weaknesses of both Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism looms the radical fringe of each movement. The extremist elements have taken the weaknesses of their movement to excess. All too often both camps are judged by their fringe tributaries rather than by their mainstream representatives. Like a rubber band stretched to its limit, the extreme fringes have pulled the Conservative movement to the breaking point. If allowed to continue any further, it will only be a matter of time until the historic Conservative consensus is a shattered memory of the past. We must resist this trend and return to the historic fundamentals of the faith that were so clearly established at the beginning of this century.

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Getting Rid of Spiritual Flab

by Tyler B. Flynn

Spring is here! As we shed our bulky winter clothes we are suddenly conscious of the rolls of flab quietly added during winter's inactive months. Health clubs, diet plans, and low-cal food producers are blitzing us with ads, promising us that if we do it their way, we will look as sleek as an Olympic athlete by summertime.

There is another kind of flab, just as cumbersome and unattractive—spiritual flab. We grow it the same way we grow body flab—by taking in more than we burn off. Many Christians are consuming more truth than they are applying.

Like the food addict who habitually reaches for the refrigerator, many Christians cannot resist the temptation of spiritual food. On Sundays they sit down to a big meal of hymns, music, sermons, and prayers. During the week it is Christian television, Christian tapes, Christian magazines, and Christian books. They snack constantly on Christian radio—in the car, in the tub, doing the dishes, waking up, going to sleep. Their downfall is not in exposing themselves to these things, but in failing to apply what they are hearing. There is no way anyone could digest that quantity of truth! The result is flab.

Are you spiritually overweight? Get on the scales for a minute and ask yourself these telling questions:

1. Do you have regular personal Bible study that is relevant and convicting? Most flabby Christians do not. They live off the spiritual experiences of other people, keeping truth at arm's length.
2. Do you suffer from depression? Unapplied truth can be an emotional and spiritual weight that leads to guilt and discouragement. Someone has said that impression without expression leads to depression.
3. Are you spiritually apathetic? Flabby Christians admit to being bored with spiritual things. "I've heard it all before," they say. Because they rarely experience the excitement of seeing God's truth at work, it begins to sound like an old record played over and over again—dull and monotonous.
4. Do you think you have it all together? Flabby Christians do. They have fallen into the trap of equating knowing with doing. They are practicing classroom Christianity. It is much easier to suffer delusions of grandeur in a classroom than in the crucible of real life!

If you fight the battle of the bulge, you know that flab is no fun. Whether physical or spiritual, flab bloats the beautiful contours of a life, leaving its victim unattractive and discouraged. Here are some ways you can shed those unwanted spiritual pounds:

1. Ask God to show you several specific spiritual needs in your life.
2. Make a prayer list of those needs and share it with a trusted friend who will keep a check on your progress.
3. Cut back on your spiritual intake. Do not oversaturate yourself—take a truth at a time and follow it through until it is integrated into your life (see James 1:22).
4. Ask God to place you in circumstances that will exercise your Christian character (James 1:2-4).
5. Become involved in meeting the needs of others.

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14 Fundamentalist Journal
Forgive to Forget

by Jay E. Adams

Nothing more important ever happened to you. The most wonderful event in your life was when your greatest need was met—your need for forgiveness. Yes, Christian, when God canceled the debt charged against you, when He said you were forgiven and free because of the death of Christ in whom you put your trust, God counted you a new person, clean, holy, and pure as His own spotless Son. Forgiveness. Freed from the penalty of sin by the death of Christ who bore the wrath you deserved for your sin. Forgiveness! What a blessing!

But wonderful as it is, forgiveness is but a beginning. Christ paid an intolerable debt you could never have paid. But, like the great divide, on the other side of forgiveness there is a new and joyous obligation of gratitude for what Christ has done for you. You have become a new person—in order to live a new life. As a part of that newness of life, for which Christ has set you free, He tells you:

"Be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you" (Eph. 4:32). As you have been forgiven, forgive others. That is what God requires.

Indeed Jesus said, "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses" (Matt. 6:14-15). That is how important it is for you to imitate your heavenly Father in forgiving your brothers and sisters in Christ.

Sometimes those words trouble people. They wonder whether one can lose his forgiveness in Christ and be lost again. They wonder how God could forgive after He has already forgiven. Clearly, God does not forgive and take back His forgiveness, nor does He have to do the work of forgiving all over again. When you trusted Christ as your Saviour your sins were forgiven. That forgiveness, for sins past, present, and future, was accomplished once and for all, never to be revoked or repeated. How, then, can Christ say what He says here in Matthew 6? As a matter of fact, how can we pray, "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors" (Matt. 6:12)?

The answer to this seemingly unanswerable problem of forgiveness after forgiveness is really quite simple. When a sinner trusts Christ as Saviour, he is judicially forgiven by God. In Matthew 6 Christ is speaking about parental forgiveness. Judicial forgiveness was given once and for all. Here, Christ speaks to those who have become a part of the Father's family. (Note how often the word "Father" appears in such contexts.) He is not talking about God forgiving or not forgiving as Judge, but as Father. Fatherly, or parental, forgiveness has nothing to do with eternal salvation, but everything to do with fellowship with the heavenly Father. That is a prime reason for learning all you can about forgiving others.

There are other reasons to be concerned about forgiveness. Because we are still sinners, we constantly need to be granting and receiving forgiveness from one another. Put two saved sinners under the same roof at close range, as husband and wife, and they will soon need to learn forgiveness. Put two Christians on the same church board for any length of time, and they too will need to develop the practices of forgiveness.
wrong way. We periodically sin against God and our neighbors. That is why we must have a good grasp on the biblical principles and practices of forgiveness.

What is forgiveness? Most Christians cannot define forgiveness and have little or no understanding of its essence. All the years that I have studied and thought about forgiveness, no one ever told me exactly what forgiveness is. One day I said to myself, "If I am to forgive others as God, in Christ, forgave me, I ought to be able to examine God's forgiveness and determine what it is. Then I can emulate it in my own life."

Like many others, I had thought only vaguely about forgiveness. Now I became serious and asked, "When God forgives, what does He do? Clearly, He does not merely sit in heaven and emote! So, what does He do?" As I thought, the passage came to me, "I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more" (Jer. 31:34). As I meditated on that verse two facts became apparent. In forgiving, God was going on record, and He was equating forgiveness with never remembering sins again.

After giving more thought to the first of those two observations, I recognized that, in its essence, forgiveness is a promise. When God went on record, saying He would not remember our sins again, He was making a promise to us. How thankful I am that God did us in the future. And that is precisely what you do when you say, "I forgive you" to another. When you utter those powerful words, you promise three things: "I won't bring up the matter to you, to anyone else, and I won't sit and brood on it myself." God will hold you to your promises, and it is altogether right for your brother to hold you to those promises too.

Learning that forgiveness is a promise should be a freeing experience. If forgiveness were only a feeling, you could not be sure that you could generate the feeling on demand—especially when someone has sinned against you seven times in the same day (Luke 17:4). Yet, Christ requires that of you. Feelings cannot be evoked on demand, but since forgiveness is a promise, not a feeling, you do not have to try to change your feelings.

You can make a promise whether you feel like it or not. Suppose you become convicted over the fact that you have not taken your wife out for dinner in five years. You do not want to go out but you do not feel like going out, but you can promise your wife you will take her out, regardless of how you feel. A promise does not depend on feeling. So, on the way home from church you say to her (against all your feelings), "Honey, I'm going to take you out for dinner this Friday."

Then you forget all about your promise. You have had your worst week in 10 years. Friday arrives. You finally reach home, tired, bedraggled, and hungry. You cannot wait to get inside, remove your tie, take off your shoes, and get a good meal under your belt. You open the front door, expecting the aroma of a delicious dinner to greet you, but instead, there stands your wife, dressed to go out for dinner! Suddenly you remember your promise. You will keep it—against all your feelings—or else!

Likewise, the wonderful promise of forgiveness, the promise not to raise a matter against another again, can be made and kept whether you feel like it or not.

Now notice something else. I have been talking about forgiving, not about apologizing. Apologizing is never mentioned in the Bible. It is the world's inadequate substitute for forgiveness. Too few Christians realize this. Many tend to confuse forgiving and apologizing. When you apologize, you say, "I'm sorry." But that is inadequate for two reasons. First, you have not confessed your sin; all you have done is tell
Another how you feel (sorry). When you ask for forgiveness, however, you say, "I sinned against God and He has forgiven me; now will you forgive me, too, since my sin was also against you?" That leads to the second defect in apologizing: you fail to ask the other to make a promise to close the matter once and for all. When you say, "I'm sorry," either the other person tends to feel awkward, not knowing how to reply or weakly says, "Oh, that's all right" (when it is not, and he usually does not mean it). When you ask for forgiveness, you toss the ball to the other person, asking for a "yes" or "no." In apologizing, you are left holding the ball; no closure is requested from him. When he agrees to forgive you, he has made a promise to which you and the church can hold him. If he says no, you must keep asking, even, if necessary, by means of the disciplinary process outlined in Matthew 18:15ff. Then, one way or another, the matter is brought to a conclusion.

Luke 17:3-4 tells us if your brother says, "I repent" (notice you are to take his word for it), you must forgive him. That is true; but the converse is true as well. Until he is repentant, until he asks for forgiveness, you may not grant him forgiveness. All sorts of erroneous things are being said in Christian circles about forgiving even when there is no repentance. God does not forgive that way, and neither should you. Remember, if he refuses to be reconciled you must bring the matter up to him, then to others, and if necessary, to the church! If you have promised him that you will not do so by saying, "I forgive you," you put yourself in a position where you cannot obey Matthew 18:15ff. Then if later it becomes necessary for you to follow that course, you may not. That is why Jesus says, "If he repents, forgive him."

"But, what about Mark 11:25?" I can almost hear some of you asking about that verse: "And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have aught against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses." Notice two things. First, this forgiveness takes place in prayer, not in conversation with the offending party. You do not grant him forgiveness. Secondly, the forgiveness has to do with your relationship to your heavenly Father, not to the offender. Jesus is simply saying that you must not hold something against another. You must not dwell on the wrong he has done to you and become bitter and resentful. You must not let the sun go down on your wrath. You must put the matter into God's hands and refuse to allow the offense to trigger wrong-doing on your part as well. There is nothing in the verse about granting forgiveness to the offender. This passage has to do with your attitude; you must honestly tell God that you will be ready to grant him forgiveness just as soon as he repents and seeks it. In your heart, as you stand praying, you will have already forgiven him before God. In others words, you will be anxious to grant him forgiveness (i.e., make the promise to him) as soon as it is possible to do so.

One last word. Someone is always ready with the question, "Yes, I know I am to forgive, but do I have to forget?" No, you do not have to forget. Forgiving, actively not remembering the sin against another (i.e., not bringing it up to him, to others, or to yourself), is the way to forget. If you make and keep the promise, you will forget. If you remember how many times Jesus forgives you every day, forgiving will be easier. When you remember that He suffered and endured the Cross to bring you judicial forgiveness, once and for all, it will be easier still. Is there someone you should forgive today?

Jay E. Adams, author and lecturer, is founder of the Christian Counseling and Educational Foundation of Laverock, Pennsylvania, and dean of its Institute of Pastoral Studies. He is also director of advanced studies, Westminster Theological Seminary, Escondido, California. His Ph.D. is from the University of Missouri. His book More than Redemption covers more on forgiveness.
Archaeology: Unraveling the Truth about the Patriarchs

by John J. Davis

1447 B.C. According to Exodus 12:40, 430 years had elapsed between the Exodus and Jacob's descent into Egypt, indicating that Jacob came into the land of the Nile about 1877 B.C. By adding the ages of the patriarchs to the latter date, Abraham’s birth date can be calculated at approximately 2167 B.C.

What, then, does archaeology have to say regarding this period of human history when God revealed Himself to the patriarchs? Many previously obscure patriarchal social customs have now been illuminated by information from the 30,000 tablets found at Nuzi, and the myriad of tablets recovered from many sites, reflecting the culture of the ancient Near East.

In the light of God's special promises (Gen. 12:1-3) the lack of a male heir created deep anxiety in Abraham's heart. In an attempt to resolve this dilemma, he proposed that Eliezer, a servant born in his house, be adopted as the heir (Gen. 15:2)—a solution God quickly rejected. Abraham's answer to this crisis may indicate that he had resorted to a well-known custom of adoption reflected in a large collection of tablets discovered at ancient Nuzi, located about 10 miles southwest of modern Kirkuk in Iraq. Sarah’s presentation of Hagar to Abraham to produce a male heir (Gen. 16:1-2) also reflects a common custom at Nuzi, as does Esau's sale of his birthright to Jacob (Gen. 25:27-34).

Hope for further light on the patriarchal period is now on the horizon due to the recent spectacular discovery of more than 16,000 tablets and fragments at Tell Mardik in Northern Syria. Most of these tablets date from 2350 to 2000 B.C. Seventy percent are economic and administrative in character, 20 percent are literary, and the remainder historical. The collection provides important information of ancient Ebla and the regions surrounding it. Many of the well-known Canaanite deities such as Dagan, Sipis (or Shamash) and Ashtarte (or Ashtoreth) are represented in the clay tablets. Some personal names found in the Bible also appear in these texts. Already names such as *a-b-ra-mu* (Abram), *a-d-amu* (Adam), *d-a-n-ni-Iu-m* (Daniel) have been identified. However, these may not be the same persons mentioned in the Bible.

During the 1940s and 1950s the late Nelson Glueck of Hebrew Union College conducted extensive surface surveys in Lower Trans-Jordan and the Negev. With the frequent use of the Bible during a six-year period, he was able to locate 400 new sites in the Negev alone. Glueck discovered that the wilderness regions of the Negev were extensively occupied during the Middle Bronze Age I (2100-1800 B.C.), which accounts for the relative ease with which Abraham could move through this area with large flocks of sheep and other animals. In fact, Glueck argued that the early second millennium was the only time frame into which the patriarchal narratives would logically fit.

The mention of donkeys as a means of patriarchal travel through these and other regions has presented no problems for scholars, but reference to camels (Gen. 12:16; 24:10ff; 30:43, etc.) has been considered a serious error or anachronism. Camels were not considered to be domesticated until the 13th century B.C. However, because of recent discoveries of camel bones in early archaeological contexts, some have suggested that domestication may have taken place as early as the
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fourth millennium B.C. Evidence from early Dynastic Egypt in the form of painting and zoomorphic vessels certainly allow for the early domestic use of the camel. The presence of camel bones in Middle Bronze layers at Gezer, Megiddo and Taanak provide compelling evidence for the accuracy of Genesis. Furthermore, the camel was known and listed among domestic animals on Egyptian linen texts from Ugarit dating back to the Old Babylonian Period (c. 1830 to 1550 B.C.).

As soil is stratigraphically removed from ancient mounds in Palestine, pottery, bones, tools, walls, houses, seeds, insects, and the remains of food emerge to provide even more light on the daily life of the patriarchs. Similar surveys in the plains of Moab by American scholars and the territories of Judah by Israeli specialists have resulted in the identification of several hundred ancient sites not found on maps.

Discoveries in other countries are also making important contributions to our knowledge of patriarchal practices and customs. For example, when Abraham negotiated for the purchase of a cave for Sarah's burial (Gen. 23:1-20), his discussion with the Hittites was not just the traditional oriental haggling over price. It was exactly according to Hittite law, as would have been expected, since Abraham was a "stranger and sojourner" in the land and obligated to follow the Hittite law in the purchase. Ephron, the wealthy prince, did not want to sell Abraham the cave only, because under Hittite law, he would continue to be responsible for the king's ilku or "feudal services." Abraham, therefore, had to purchase the cave, the field, and its trees.

The discovery of Hittite cities, laws, and trade routes not only sheds light on Abraham's transactions, but also highlights the utter folly of some scholars of 150 years ago who confidently argued that the Hittites did not even exist! They contended that biblical writers had fabricated such names in order to make the military victories of Israel's leaders look more impressive than they really were.

The death of Jacob, his embalming in Egypt, and burial in Canaan (Gen. 50:1-13) provide an interesting opportunity to see the quality of his faith, as well as that of Joseph. When Jacob died, Joseph did not call the Egyptian embalmers to work on his father's body, but the "physicians" (Gen. 50:2). In ancient Egypt the embalmers and physicians were members of distinct professions. Possibly Joseph did not want the embalmers to be involved because of the idolatrous rituals that accompanied their work. According to Genesis 50:3, the embalming process took 40 days and the total mourning period (including the embalming time) lasted 70 days. Archaeological discoveries from the reigns of Queen Hatshepsut and Thutmose III, both of Egypt's 18th Dynasty, make reference to a 70-day embalming/mourning period. Text No. 378 in the British Museum from the Ptolemaic Period reads, "He had a goodly burial after the seventy days of his embalming were fulfilled."

Thus, the details of the biblical account reflect accurately Egyptian mummification practice, and indicate that Jacob's body was mummified, but with the distinctive that the physicians mummified Jacob and not the professional embalmers.

Some have suggested that both Jacob and Joseph had accepted Egyptian religious ideas and were deeply influenced by them. Their request to be buried in the land of Canaan, however, would argue strongly against this idea. No individual committed to Egyptian theological ideas would ever request to be buried in a foreign land, since he believed his gods could only function in his behalf if he were buried in Egyptian soil by traditional ceremonies.

Peoples of the ancient Near East frequently concluded that their gods had real power only on their soil. Recall, for example, that Naaman the Syrian believed that if he were to worship the God of Israel, he would have to take Israelite soil back to Syria with him (2 Kings 5:17). The request of Jacob and Joseph to be buried in Canaan rather than Egypt exhibits a sure testimony to their faith in the covenant promises of God. Their statements do not imply that they regarded the Lord as a local deity, but were only a means of bearing public testimony to their uncompromising faith in the Lord.

Archaeological discoveries continuously demonstrate the historical trustworthiness of the patriarchal narratives of Genesis. No longer can Abraham, Isaac, or Jacob be regarded as fictitious figures from a blurred past. Thanks to archaeological research, they have flesh and bones. The believer, therefore, ought not to apologize for his faith in the complete reliability of God's Word. A century of archaeological discovery underscores the reasonableness of such a faith.

John J. Davis is an author and professor of Old Testament at Grace Theological Seminary, Winona Lake, Indiana. He has participated in 9 archaeological expeditions in Israel and Jordan. Resources available upon request.
The Promise Given to Abraham

by Walter C. Kaiser, Jr.

God's promise to Abraham must rank as one of the four greatest moments in the Old Testament, alongside the promise of a male "seed" to Eve (Gen. 3:15), the covenant made with David (2 Sam. 7), and the new covenant (Jer. 31:31-34). In fact, the Abrahamic covenant presents the whole plan of God and provides the focal point of both the Old and New Testaments. This plan of God is designated the "promise" in nearly 50 separate passages of the New Testament. Throughout the Bible this promise is repeatedly referred to in the words, "I will be your God. You shall be my people, and I will dwell in the midst of you."

The New Testament Assessment of the Abrahamic Promise. So central was this promise of God that for the New Testament writers there was only one eternal promise.

Although the promise is one, it is composed of many specifications, including: the promise of the messianic "seed" (Acts 2:38-39; 3:25-26; 7:2,17-18; 13:23,32-33; Gal. 3:17-18); the gospel with its redeeming power from sin (Rom. 4:2-5, 9-10; James 2:21-23); the promise of a resurrection from the dead (Acts 26:6-8; 2 Tim. 1:1; Heb. 9:15; 10:36; 2 Peter 3:4-9; 1 John 2:24-25); the promise of the Holy Spirit (Luke 24:29; Acts 2:33-39; Gal. 3:14); and the promise of good news for the Gentiles (Gal. 3:8,14,29; Eph. 1:13; 2:12; 3:6-7; 4:23,30).

Notice also that the New Testament writers regarded this promise as the heart and soul of the Old Testament. They taught that it was eternally operative and irrevocable. The apostle Paul argued this way in Galatians 3:15-18.

Surprisingly, the promise was not made just so Abraham and his descendants might be encouraged. God did this so we also might have the same great encouragement.

Genesis 1-11: Preparations. The word blessing most clearly embraces the gracious activity of God in the pre-patriarchal era. In this universal history of mankind recorded in Genesis, the blessing of God extends from His work in Creation over the creatures of the seas and air (Gen. 1:28; 5:2), to Noah and sons (Gen. 9:1).

But the blessing of God went beyond even this, to include the distinctive promises of salvation, as God's gracious gifts were set against three great calamities—the Fall, the Flood, and the scattering after the Tower of Babel.

Genesis 1-11 had ended with a problem. What could be done for the nations at large, who had been so blessed by God in their creation and prolific multiplication, but also had become more and more alienated from the God who had blessed them? The answer was to be found in another blessing, as God would choose one Semite named Abraham and grant him what others might be encouraged. God did this so we also might have the same great encouragement.

The heir or "seed" that was promised to Eve, who would crush Satan's head, is the same heir promised to the patriarch. This seed would ultimately come as our Lord Jesus Christ.

Abraham's Journey

4,000 years ago

Map shows Biblical, ancient and modern names along Abraham's probable route.

The promise of God is His declaration that He would do a number of things for Abraham, enabling him and his seed to be the means of blessing to all the nations who, like Abraham, would put their trust in the promised Seed to come.
The very relationship between heaven and earth changed drastically with the advent of Abraham.

April 1986 21
The Life and Times of the Patriarchs

by Eugene H. Merrill

Ur, a cosmopolitan metropolis of 2200 B.C., was celebrated throughout the civilized world as a center of commerce and culture. The city was a marvel of architecture and design, with broad paved streets and subterranean sewage systems. The middle and upper classes lived in large, multistoried houses with hot and cold running water, and all enjoyed the prosperity and luxuries made possible by Ur's international commerce. Located on the Persian Gulf and at the mouth of the mighty Tigris-Euphrates river, Ur was populated primarily by the Sumerians, regarded as the pioneers of human civilization. These innovative people erected the first great temples and towers, embarked on the first far-flung journeys to sell the fruits of their industry, and first created a system of writing to record their rich legacy for posterity.

This sophisticated urban setting attracted people of other ethnic and linguistic heritage. Most prominent among them was a large population of Semites. These descendants of the biblical Shem, son of Noah, had moved gradually southward from Upper Mesopotamia as early as 3000 B.C. For a time they were the dominant power of Central Mesopotamia. Under Sargon the Great, ruler of Akkad, they established the world's first empire. This political and military machine dominated the Tigris-Euphrates world from the eastern mountains. The Guti controlled Ur at the time of Abram's birth.

Abram, as his name clearly indicates ("great father" in Hebrew), was of Semitic stock. His ancestors must have been among those who had migrated south to Ur in the centuries past. The Sumerians were not prejudiced toward those who moved among them, so it is most likely that Sumerian and Semite alike enjoyed the comforts of life in Ur.

Religion dominated the city's activity. The chief of Ur's many deities was the moon god, known to the Sumerians as Nannar and to the Semites as Sin. Joshua referred to this god when he said that the fathers of Israel worshiped other gods beyond the river Euphrates (24:2-8). But this worship, as ostentatious and impressive as its cult and ritual must have been, was grossly perverted, pandering to the sensual and materialistic side of men. Abram and his father, Terah, were caught up in this system, which served and placated Sin and his pantheon.

Ur and its pagan worldview was typical of the whole earth. The God of heaven, who had created man to be His representative on earth, was without a people. Therefore, He entered the life of an earnest but ignorant worshiper of a Sumerian moon god and called him to be another Adam, one through whom He could mediate His salvation to all men and for all time.

The circumstances of Abram's call from Ur are not clear, but since Terah, the head of the family, left as well, external factors may have prompted the move. These could be related to the conquest of Ur by the Guti. For 100 years (2180-2080) these barbarians foisted their inferior ways on the sensitive people of Ur. No doubt many of the citizens chose to flee rather than endure the indignities of Guti occupation. Possibly, Terah was among those who chafed under the new regime and decided to move.

Abram was born only 14 years after the Guti conquest (2166). Moreover, Terah himself took the initiative to depart, a fact that can be explained only by his personal dissatisfaction in Ur, for there is no indication that he ever came to faith in Abram's God. Finally, Terah's destination is significant, for he went to Haran on the upper Euphrates, the second major center of moon-god worship after Ur.

However it all happened, Abram found himself in Haran, a Semitic city populated by Amorites. There he became at home in the language and lifestyle of his ethnic roots. More importantly, he came to know more about God and became more sensitive to His every bidding.

At last Terah died and the Lord called Abram to an unknown destination. Obediently, the 75-year-old proceeded to make his way to Canaan. On route he almost certainly passed by Ebla, an Amorite city now known to have been the greatest of its time and place. Ongoing excavations at the site, known today as Tell Mardikh, reveal a pattern of life more grand and modern than had been thought possible for that ancient day.

At approximately the time Abram and his entourage left Haran in 2100 B.C. a tremendous political and social upheaval shook the Near Eastern world to its very foundations. The Amorites, especially those of a seminomadic character, began to be pressed for dwelling space and burst out of the narrow confines of Upper Mesopotamia. One element moved southeasterly, down the Euphrates, and eventually founded Amorite states at Isin, Larsa, and especially Babylon. The illustrious monarch of Babylon, Hammurabi, descended from these migrants. A second Amorite flood rushed to the southwest through Canaan and all the...
way to Egypt, carrying like some great river the flotsam and jetsam of Canaanite civilization. Without doubt Abram was part of this massive population displacement. This explains why the land of Canaan lay open before him and how he was able to move about freely and to settle at will without serious opposition.

In order to redeem fallen humanity to Himself, God called out of the paganism of Ur one man, one channel through whom would flow His redemptive grace.

The Bible clearly indicates that Canaan remained divided between Amorites and Canaanites throughout the patriarchal period and even later. The former retained control of the central hill country while the latter were driven to the less defensible, less desirable valleys and plains. The Amorites were primarily agricultural, and years passed before the Canaanite cities were rebuilt and became the obstacles to Israelite conquest described in the Book of Joshua.

Other firm historical ties between the patriarchal narratives and the civilizations of the ancient Near East are impossible to establish until the time of Jacob and Joseph. Following Jacob's return to Canaan from Haran with his wives and children, an event to be dated approximately 1900 B.C., Joseph was sold into Egyptian slavery. His imprisonment and subsequent elevation to minister of agriculture took place in the days of Sesostris II. Subsequently, Jacob and the remaining sons were invited to leave Canaan and settle in Goshen early in the reign of Sesostris III. Details of the Genesis narratives concerning Jacob and Joseph dovetail with all that is now known of the 12th Dynasty of Egypt. The reliability of the Old Testament record is unquestionable in setting these stories against the historical background of Genesis and is lavishly documented from various Egyptian texts. The biblical history of the patriarchal period is becoming increasingly understood.

More important than the historical and cultural aspects of the patriarchal world are the literary and theological purposes of these accounts. Genesis 12 through 50 is not history in the usual sense. Rather it is biographical history or narrative history. The purpose of these chapters is not to give an account of the history of the world, or even of Canaan or Egypt, but to present theological history—to describe God's call of a man (Abram) and of a nation descended from him (Israel) and then to show His promises to them, and His preserving grace which guaranteed their fulfillment.

The best starting point for an overview of the meaning of the patriarchal stories is Moses, the human author of this portion of Scripture. Genesis was set on the Plains of Moab in the year 1406 B.C., just prior to Moses' death and the conquest of Canaan. The people of Israel were poised on the east bank of the Jordan awaiting the command to cross and occupy the land. They had been redeemed triumphantly from Egypt by God's mighty arm and had entered into covenant with Him at Sinai to be His servant people. A major element of that covenant—along with promise of innumerable offspring—was the promise of Canaan as the land of eternal inheritance. But on what legal and moral grounds could the land which lay before them be appropriated as a covenant grant?

Moses provides the answer to this troubling question in the Book of Genesis. In order to redeem fallen humanity to Himself, God called out of the paganism of Ur one man, one channel through whom would flow His redemptive grace. The remainder of patriarchal history attested to God's continued favor. Even the 430-year sojourn in Egypt posed no problem. The promise rested on God's integrity. Thus the promise of God revealed through Moses provided a historical as well as theological rationale for the impending conquest of the land. Seen in this light, the patriarchal period provided a background for understanding God's election, redemption, and promise to His own special people, and through them to the whole world.

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Scornfully observing their youngest brother's approach across the distant fields, the sons of Jacob mocked Joseph and plotted against him: "Behold, this dreamer cometh... Let us slay him, and cast him into some pit." They hated Joseph for capturing the heart of their father and being his favorite—and for daring to dream of having power and leadership over them.

But even as they betrayed him and sold him into Egyptian slavery, God was beginning to mold this young dreamer and prepare him for the day when he, as a type of Christ, would finally be the salvation of those who despitefully used him.

Joseph's life can be sketched around the three sets of dreams that parallel God's working in three distinct periods of his life. The first pair of dreams highlights Joseph's early years from his boyhood until his being sold into slavery in Egypt. Although a story of rejection (Gen. 37), Joseph's privileged position and purity of character emerge in this account. He was the son of Jacob's old age and of his favored wife, Rachel (Gen. 30:22-24; 37:3).

Because of this, Jacob gave special attention to Joseph, and made him the famous "coat of many colors." Joseph's two dreams reinforced his father's favoritism and Joseph's destined supremacy over his family. All of this caused Joseph's brothers to hate him (Gen. 37:4, 11). Nevertheless, God used that hatred to teach him lessons of purity and trustworthiness. Joseph's character is evident in the earliest stages of his life, for his father trusted him to accurately report of his brothers' activities (Gen. 37:2, 13-14).

Apparently, Joseph inherited some important spiritual qualities from the great patriarchs. From Abraham came a basic commitment to God and faithfulness. From Isaac he learned an underlying spiritual sensitivity, making him subservient to the divine will even in the face of death. And from Jacob he acquired the steadfastness to endure hard work and to overcome outright rejection. Because of these traits, Joseph remained in a spiritual posture where God could use him. How necessary that was to be, for when the envy of his brothers reached an uncontrollable pitch, Joseph found himself not only rejected, but sold into slavery and delivered into Egypt (Gen. 37:19-36).

The second period of Joseph's life stretches from his being sold into Egypt until his imprisonment there (Gen. 39:1-40:23). Here the man of faith was tested through the seductive advances of Potiphar's wife. Of course Joseph remained pure—his life had long since been centered in God and His standards for living. (Archaeological investigations of the individual houses and their layout indicate that as Potiphar's steward, Joseph would have had to pass daily through the living quarters to reach the storerooms at the back of the house. Therefore, Joseph was not "off limits," as some have charged.) Joseph's purity of character was tried still further, for lust gone sour led to a lying accusation against him that eventually caused him to be cast into prison.

The dreams of the cupbearer and the baker mark this period of Joseph's life (Gen. 40). Through God's grace, Joseph was able to interpret both dreams, and God used the interpreting of the dreams both to reward Joseph and to care for His chosen people.

In the course of time, Pharaoh also had two dreams, and when none of his magicians and wisemen could interpret them, Joseph, still in prison, was suddenly remembered and summoned. Like Daniel in a later era, who also served the Lord in a foreign land where dreams were especially important, Joseph had been given supernatural abilities regarding their interpretation. Joseph's godly righteousness enabled him to serve God and His people well (Ps. 105:17-24; Acts 7:9-15). Therefore, Joseph interpreted the dreams and was promoted to be the second most powerful ruler in Egypt (Gen. 41:37-57).
Joseph's elevation to power provided the means for bringing the Hebrews into Egypt (Gen. 42:47), thus delivering them from the great famine and giving them the time to develop into a nation whom God would redeem and return to the land of promise (cf. Ps. 105:42-45). The time of Israel's entry into Egypt is relatively easy to determine. According to 1 Kings 6:1 and Exodus 12:41, some 910 years had elapsed from their entrance into Egypt, or 480 years after their Exodus, until the end of the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel. Since that date can be affixed as c. 967 B.C., Israel would have entered Egypt c. 1877 B.C., shortly after the beginning of the reign of Sesostris III of Egypt's 12th Dynasty (1878-1842 B.C.). At this time the land of Goshen, where Joseph settled his family (Gen. 47:1-12), was not greatly populated. Semites often settled there because it was ideal for raising cattle. All of this fits the biblical picture well. During the reign of this particular Pharaoh the property of the powerful governors was brought under the control of the crown. Although Egyptologists have not been able to learn the secret of this renewed concentration of power under Pharaoh, the biblical record clearly states that it was accomplished through Joseph (Gen. 47:13-26).

Joseph was indeed a remarkable man. He was God's distinct choice for a difficult transitional era. His faithfulness to God was to be a means of blessing for his own people and for the society in which he lived. He increasingly came to understand that whatever happened to him or in whatever way others intended their actions toward him, God was in it all, overruling everything for His glory. "God meant it unto good" (Gen. 50:20).

Certainly Joseph had prepared himself to be in a spiritual condition where God could use him. Not only did the better qualities of his forefathers find a balanced combination in Joseph, but his own faithfulness and purity rendered him a productive servant for God. Who would have thought that the young man who brought a faithful report (Gen. 37:2) would one day be second only to Pharaoh himself (Gen. 41:40-45; 45:7-8)? However, there is no great secret to such a happening. Joseph had simply administered his God-given abilities faithfully, whether in his own home, in Potiphar's house, in prison, or in the palace.

Numerous parallels have been drawn between Joseph and the Lord Jesus. Like Joseph, Jesus was a beloved son (Matt. 3:17), was rejected by His own (John 1:11; 5:43; 7:5, etc.), was tested (Matt. 4:1-11; Heb. 2:18; 4:15), was betrayed for silver (Matt. 26:14-16; Acts 1:16-20), and yet was ultimately triumphant and exalted to a position of honor (Acts 2:33; 5:31; Col. 2:15). However, far greater than Joseph, the Son of God has been given "a name which is above every name. That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow... and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2:9-11; cf. Rev. 11:15).

The experiences of Joseph and our Lord Jesus can also be reflected in the life of the Christian. The believer, too, often faces rejection and the hatred of others (Matt. 10:22; John 5:18-21) and is often confronted by testings and trials (John 16:33) so that he may emerge victorious, as did Joseph (Rom. 8:35-37; 1 Cor. 10:13). "Thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ" (2 Cor. 2:14). By learning Joseph's "secret" of surrender to God, the believer learns the secret of successful living. As was the case with Joseph, God's rightful lordship over our life—all of it—is best for us (cf. Gen. 50:20 with Ps. 73:23-28). A commitment to God's Word causes us to hunger for it and allows it to master us, molding us into a life of consistent purity and holiness (cf. Gen. 39:2-6, 8-9 with Ps. 119:9-11, 65-68, 105, 111-112, John 15:7). The result is a life of faithful work (cf. Gen. 45:5-8 with Matt. 20:28; 1 Peter 3:16) for Christ, so others may come to know Him as Saviour (2 Cor. 4:10-15; 5:14-6:1) and enter into the full joy of the Master's own promise, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10:10).

At life's end, may it be said of us, as of Joseph, that all of our life was "by faith" (Heb. 11:22; cf. 2 Tim. 4:7-8).

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Teen Suicide
A Cry for Help Heard Too Late

by Mike King

Teenage suicide. A final act of frustration. A cry for help heard too late. A topic not easy to discuss—and one we would rather not have to. The tragedy of teenage suicide hits 15 families every day. Christian families are not immune.

Why does it happen at all? What can we do to help stop it?

"Pregnant Teen Kneels on Tracks, Is Killed by Train." The headline in the Baltimore Evening Sun immediately caught my eye. Two teenagers, with their lives ahead of them, had decided to terminate those lives by throwing themselves in front of trains. One was 14-year-old Melissa, who was in her ninth month of pregnancy. She had skipped school with her cousin, who tried to convince Melissa not to kill herself, but Melissa refused to listen. She felt that her life was not worth living. As she knelt on the track facing the oncoming instrument of death, the train hit her at 100 mph. Four days before Melissa's death, a 17-year-old had bowed his head like a fullback and charged into a high-speed train.

The statistics of teenage suicide are cold and cruel. In every age group in America, life expectancy is going up—except among teens. Every day an average of 15 young people, over 5,500 a year, succeed at taking their own lives. Approximately 400 teenagers make some kind of suicide attempt every day, but are not successful. But that is not the whole picture. Fatal car accidents are responsible for 37 percent of deaths among 15- to 24-year-olds. According to the National Centers for Disease Control, accidents and homicides are the leading causes of death in young people age 15 to 24. Suicide ranks third. Many forensic specialists estimate that at least 25 percent of these accidents are actually suicides. Add those deaths, plus the many suicides that are covered up and not reported as such by coroners and other officials, and suicide may be the number one killer of teenagers in America today.

At least 75 percent of suicides gave some kind of indication of what they were about to do, but some never let anyone know the severity of their problems or feelings. If we become aware of some of the reasons for suicide and the signs of a suicidal person, we can make a difference in these escalating statistics.

Sociologists are diligently studying biological and social factors to find clues to the development of suicidal tendencies, including the part heredity plays in personality, depression, and suicide. The severe depression that causes some people to consider suicide may be totally medically related, something as simple as a chemical imbalance. However, most depression and suicidal thoughts are caused by events or perpetual problems. These social factors cover everything from family structure to the political, economic, and moral climate in an individual's environment. Even a "deep" commitment to Christ does not exempt a teen from the possibility of suicide.

The breakdown of the traditional family is the biggest social factor affecting the climbing suicide rate today. Divorce and adolescent suicide have risen proportionately in the last two decades. Considering that nearly half of all marriages end in divorce, the absence of communication in the home, the number of mothers working, fathers more committed to their careers than to their families, and the high mobility in our society, the lack of stability needed for balanced and proper development of children is not surprising. Derek Miller, head of Northwestern University Institute of Psychiatry, said, "For adolescents this is the worst time to be growing up since the Middle Ages when the bubonic plague created chaos."

Teenagers need someone to confide in, to really open up to and talk to. A common denominator among suicidal young people is a lack of real communication with their parents. "I can't talk to my parents about anything," is a common cry. Teens need more than a superficial dialogue with Mom and Dad. Sadly, some teenagers feel the only way they can get their parents' attention is to kill themselves.

Teenagers need guidelines. When parents fail to set parameters, a tremendous void is created. Consistent standards, boundaries, and certain limitations will provide security for a teenager going through the adolescent transitional process of becoming an adult.

Expectations can be carried too far, though! Some parents place too much pressure on their teenagers. This especially applies to middle- and upper-class families. Parents who are driven...
with the obsession of making their children successful in life, "or else," may find out that the "or else" is too costly. Your teenagers need to know you love them unconditionally, regardless of the circumstances. A strong, loving, and communicating family is the best preventative measure in the midst of the adolescent suicide crisis in our society today.

Other social factors affect the suicide problem, but many of them are still directly, or at least indirectly, related to a child's home life. Some adolescents kill themselves to escape a problem they feel is insurmountable because they cannot see a solution to their dilemma. What might appear to be insignificant to a parent may be overwhelmingly traumatic for a teenager. In the book *The Savage God*, Alfred Alvarez states, "As in love, things which seem trivial to the outsider, tiresome or amusing, assume enormous importance to those in the grip of the monster, while the sanest arguments against it seem to them simply absurd." Breaking up with a girlfriend, a poor grade, or being cut from the baseball team may be enough to send a teenager to the brink of suicide.

*TIME* magazine observed a couple of years ago that the average adolescent lives as if his teenage years were his last fling in life. Any teenager involved in drug and alcohol abuse is a prime candidate for suicide. Seventy percent of suicide victims had alcohol in their bloodstream, according to *U.S. News and World Report*. Dr. Mary Griffin in her book *A Cry for Help* stated that nearly half of the teenagers who killed themselves were high on drugs or alcohol shortly before they took their own lives. Many teenagers seem to believe the line in the popular rock song "Fame"—"I'm gonna live forever!"—Death is not a real concept to the average teenager who has the crazy idea that he is invincible. Death cannot be reversed. So, in the words of Bill Blackburn, "Suicide becomes a permanent solution to a temporary problem."

The media has an influence on the suicide rate. Much of television conditions viewers to think there are easy solutions to problems. A program may present a problem so complicated that the CIA, FBI, and KGB working together for 10 years could not solve it, but a smooth detective solves it in an hour. He always gets his man. When life does not work that easily for a teenager, his problems seem larger than life.

### How We Can Help

- When confronted with a young person who is contemplating suicide, allow him to talk. Listen carefully for a plan. The more specific the plan the more serious the situation.
- Inventory with him the resources available for dealing with his pain—family, God, church, teachers, friends, and so forth.
- Encourage him to think about the reason for and the results of his potential action. Try to restore rational processes.
- Suicide, by and large, occurs in the absence of a sense of futureness. Help the teen envision a future.
- Don't preach or blast the young person for his feelings.
- Give attention to the creation of a support network that will sustain the individual through the crisis situation. This would include friends, relatives, teachers, or pastors. Move slowly, drawing in one or two support persons at a time.
- Don't be afraid to refer to an outside counselor if you feel the young person is still considering suicide. Sometimes parents are afraid of what others will think of them if they know that their child is contemplating suicide. Don't let pride keep you from asking for help.
Teens are also influenced by their favorite Hollywood rock stars, who make a hedonistic lifestyle look glamorous. Most teenagers have a hard time realizing that what they are seeing on the silver screen is fantasy. When they measure their real world against the fantasy, they become hopelessly frustrated.

But there is more than a philosophical effect. The media can also directly affect the suicide rate, as exemplified in the movie Deer Hunter. Set in the Vietnam War era, this movie portrayed a group of soldiers playing Russian roulette. This drama depicted them as real men. As a result, over 30 documented cases of suicides seem to have been an acting out of this scene. One involved a 14-year-old junior high boy in Kansas City who, after watching Deer Hunter on his home video machine, got his dad's .38 caliber handgun and gathered several of his buddies together. He described the awesome movie scene and then, changing the “rules of the game,” he removed only one of the six bullets in the gun, spun the cylinder, and blew his brains out on the first shot.

A seventh grader at Peekskill Middle School in New York, hung himself after watching An Officer and a Gentleman. The movie portrays a young naval officer who hangs himself. Peekskill police believe the movie may have influenced the student's action.

Rock star Ozzie Osborne's song “Suicide Solution” and rock group Blue Oyster Cult’s song “Don’t Fear the Reaper,” advocating teenage suicide, are the height of irresponsibility in the face of human tragedy.

Teenagers in our culture face exorbitant pressures. Dr. Michael Peck, a leading suicidologist says, “Many of these kids have poor coping mechanisms for the enormous stresses they face.” This can be clearly seen through the written feelings of a 16-year-old who killed himself. “Dear world, I don’t want to get my hair cut. I don’t want to tend kids. I don’t want to see Tina at school Monday. I don’t want to do my biology assignment or English or history or anything. I don’t want to be sad or lonely or depressed anymore. I don’t want to eat, drink, talk, breathe, sleep, move, feel, or live anymore. Mom and Dad, it’s not your fault. I’m not free. I feel ill. I’m sad and I’m lonely.”

The Judeo-Christian heritage places infinite value on the individual. That is why Christians care about the alarming statistics—and they are alarming. These statistics represent individuals for whom Christ died. Perhaps because this remains a somewhat silent issue, a thorough examination of the societal values involved is too painful. Traditionally, because of the stigma of suicide in Western culture, this subject has simply not been discussed, but suicide is another social issue that Fundamentalists must address!

The ultimate solution is Jesus Christ. Jesus said in John 10:10, “The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.” After weeping for the two young people who died in Baltimore, I was doing an assembly in a public school near Kansas City. Following the assembly, an attractive cheerleader asked to talk to me. She began to probe into why I seemed to have it “all together.” I shared my testimony with her, and she immediately asked how she could also receive Christ. She said she was burned out on life and had no reason to live. She had considered suicide. I presented the plan of salvation with joy. On the gymnasium bleachers, she prayed and invited Christ to save her and give her a purpose for living. Not only did she get victory over her suicidal thoughts, but she used her popularity to win many of her friends to Christ, and eventually her parents. She is in Bible college today. Jesus Christ is the answer teenagers are searching for!

Today I got a letter from a teenager. After explaining why she is considering suicide, she closed the letter with a statement that millions of teenagers in our homes, churches, and schools are making in some form or another. “I'M CRYING FOR HELP, BUT NO ONE HEARS ME!!!”

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Shoring a Sensitive, Sensible Heart
A Counselor Tells What to Do When Your Child Is Depressed

by Andre Bustanoby

Depression and suicide among the youth of the nation have become a matter of national concern. According to the National Institute of Mental Health, various studies indicate that at any given time as many as 20 children in 100 are suffering from depression and that this rate is increasing.

Christian parents find it difficult to conceive of their children being among these statistics. But knowing Christ and living in a Christian home can actually aggravate depression in a young person. He sometimes thinks, “I shouldn’t be depressed; I’m a Christian, and I have a wonderful Christian home!” This teenager’s despair is aggravated by feeling that he has no reason for depression—something must, therefore, be terribly wrong!

Signs of Depression. What can be done for the young person who suffers chronic or acute depression? First of all, parents should be aware of the symptoms. They may include severe impairment of the child’s school performance; severely disturbed social adjustment; eating and sleeping problems; feelings of despair, helplessness, and hopelessness; psychomotor retardation (such as slow speech response), and possibly suicidal ideas or threats. Children may also show a persistently sad face, withdrawal, great agitation, aggressive behavior, or psychosomatic illness or complaint of illness when they really are not ill. Though the child may show these symptoms, the parent can expect him to deny anything is wrong.

Why Kids Get Depressed. Some kids are depressed over the loss of a parent through death, separation, or divorce. The statistics are really educated guesses, but some feel that 5 to 10 percent of children from two-parent homes are depressed, as compared to 30 to 50 percent of children in single-parent homes.

One reason children of divorce get depressed is that they are caught in an unsolvable situation. The custodial parent may be quite happy to be rid of the child’s other parent. Divorce terminates the marriage, but divorce does not terminate the parent-child relationship, which the child hopes will go on. But how does a child show love and loyalty to both parents when they seem to hate each other so? Depression is a psychological reaction to an impossible dilemma. Giving up, which appears as a symptom of depression, seems the only alternative.

Though nothing can be done about the divorce, the child can be helped by understanding parents. The child who knows his parents care about his dilemma, and will respect his need to love and be loyal to them both, has the best chance of getting over his depression.

Sometimes a son or daughter becomes depressed when a parent, because of the loss of a spouse in divorce or death, turns to the child for companionship, conversation, and comfort. Even when the husband is still present, a woman may often turn to a son for companionship, conversation, and comfort that the husband should be providing. This is particularly difficult for the child because she cannot show that he is overwhelmed with his mother’s needs. She is counting on him! Consequently, some children are required to grow up too fast, and they miss out on their childhood.

Another major cause of depression is lack of self-esteem. Teenagers frequently suffer from low self-esteem, though they may attempt to cover it with what appears to be aloofness or toughness. They lack self-esteem because they feel they are not doing well in a competitive society where
parents have high expectations. Sometimes they feel they are a disappointment to their parents. This is a critical issue in a home where Christian values are held high. Christian parents often think they are giving leadership to their children by pointing out where the children are failing to live up to the expectations of both the parents and God. To the child it is further evidence of his failure as a person and as a Christian.

Sue is a good case in point. Her parents sought counseling because she did not seem to care about anything. When asked why she was apathetic, she could not give an answer. She simply did not know why.

Upon closer examination I discovered that her family was the "perfect" Christian family. Her father held a very responsible position in the federal government and was an outstanding Christian leader. Her mother was an excellent mother and a leader of women in the community. Her older brother and sister also had leadership qualities.

Sue finally told me, "I can't keep up with them—being a straight-A student, being active in all these organizations, and being 'Miss Leadership.' I just don't measure up."

Sue did not perceive herself as a leader, but was not able to establish her own identity as a follower, and an artistic, introspective person. To do so would disappoint her parents. So she just dropped out of life and withdrew into herself. Her parents were able to help by valuing and respecting the qualities she did have.

Another source of depression is poor body image and a feeling on the teen's part that he is terribly different from the rest of the kids in his peer group. Parents who tell their kids that what other people think should not matter, or that Christians ought to be different, do not understand the developmental task teenagers face.

The teen is in the process of breaking away from dependency on parents and establishing an identity of his own. If he feels that he does not fit into his peer group—because he is ugly, too fat, or too thin, or weird—he will be blocked in making this transition. Often this is why teens reject parental values. They mistakenly think that becoming a separate individual requires that they turn their backs on parental values. This often results in confrontation between parent and teen, with the teen being made to feel he must choose between parental values and his own identity as a separate person. Some teens outwardly rebel. Others give up the struggle, retreat within themselves, and manifest all the signs of depression. Faced with the irresolvable dilemma of growing up as distinct individuals who, at the same time, must behave as little replicas of their parents, they give up.

What Is a Parent to Do? When a child shows signs of depression the parent must first admit there is a problem. Parents are sometimes reluctant to do this because they see it as a reflection on their parenting skills. The divorced parent who has custody of the child may be reluctant to admit to a problem because that may encourage the non-custodial parent to prove the custodial parent is unfit.

In two-parent homes the problem sometimes is ignored because of the father's insensitivity to his children's emotional needs. Either he is not as close to his children as the mother is, or he thinks that paying attention to feelings is unnecessary. When men like this become Christians they often have the attitude, "It doesn't matter how you feel. You simply believe what the Bible says and do it." But feelings are important.

Here is where Sue's parents missed the boat. They were out of touch with her emotions and unaware that they unwittingly made her feel she was not measuring up.

To help dispel Sue's feeling of isolation and lack of acceptance, they learned to talk about how she did feel, instead of telling her how she should feel.

Before seeking professional help, parents should take a look at this checklist of don'ts and dos:

*DON'T attempt to be reassuring when you see signs of depression in your child. Reassurances generally do not help, and often they come across as evidence that the parent does not understand. The child feels that if people really understood how badly he feels they would not be so glib with assurances.

Christian parents sometimes do this with Scripture—giving assurances like, "Don't you know that God cares and promises to take care of you? He tells us in the Bible that..." Scripture is appropriate, but the choice of Scripture and the timing must both be right.

In His earthly ministry, Jesus did not start with a sermon. He ministered as a Christian home!
likely you will leave the impression that you are trying to understand him and needs. Your child may feel he cannot expressing how he really feels, the more are not judging or evaluating him. *DO accept your child's dependency

Miracles and proclaimed Himself, on the authority of Old Testament Scripture, ministered. Having touched us in our pain, He authenticated His divinity with authority of Old Testament Scripture, touching our children with our caring before we open the Bible.

*DON'T urge the depressed child to "snap out of it" or "pull yourself together." This has no more effect than reassurances. And it can also make the parent appear callous. The child will conclude that the parent simply would not say these things if he really understood how hopeless the situation looks.

*DON'T probe, examine, or ask questions about the cause of the depression. The child either will not respond or will give one-word answers. When someone is hurting, an analysis of why he hurts comes across as callous.

*DON'T interpret. For example, "You're depressed because you can't get your way." Even though there may be an element of truth in the statement, you will appear heartless, and will alienate the child even further.

*DO show your child that you are aware that he seems sad, forlorn, hurt, or dejected. Try to identify the exact feeling and the degree of it. Describe it to him as, "You're feeling terribly sad today." Say it with a rising inflection, so if he chooses to hear your statement as a question and wishes to respond he will feel free to do so. The closer you are to expressing how he really feels, the more likely you will leave the impression that you are trying to understand him and are not judging or evaluating him.

*DO accept your child's dependency needs. Your child may feel he cannot cope. Because of your maturity you are able to help him explore options he may not have thought of. But do so without forcing a solution on him. Say for example, "Do you think it would help if you...?" Or, be willing to be part of the solution. Don't just tell him that you are willing to help. Propose specific solutions, but leave them open, so the child is able to assess their workability. Say, for example, "Would it help if I...?" By approaching problem solving in this manner you are able to gain more information about the problem. You need to understand why you feel as you do, but maybe his position is a bit extreme, and yet he does not have to defend his position.

*DO be patient with your teenager's apparent rejection of your values. Remember, he is in the period of breakaway. Anything that remotely resembles the parental viewpoint or the parents' way of doing things runs contrary to the instinct of breakaway and becoming a separate individual.

Once your teen successfully goes through breakaway and becomes an independent adult in his own right, he will be free to reexamine the values his parents taught. But at this critical period of his life he needs your patience and understanding to make the break.

Remember that the first task in dealing with a depressed person is understanding and caring—to stand with him in his pain and despair. Having dispelled his isolation by being there and having made a connection with him as a caring person, we then are in a position to pray and read Scripture with him.

Christian parents often think they are giving leadership to their children by pointing out where the children are failing. To the child it is further evidence of his failure as a person and as a Christian.

*Do be sensitive to your child's feelings of low self-worth. Depression usually is the result of loss or the inability to solve a problem, which leaves the depressed person with self-doubt and a poor self-image. Self-reproach is a common response. The child feels guilty, ashamed, or weak because of his inability to cope. Again, this is especially important to Christian families because we are sure that "Christ is the answer." But this puts an extra burden on the child. He thinks, "I must be beyond God's reach because everything is so hopeless." The parent is in a position to help the child appraise the situation in a more realistic light—one that is less punishing.

For example, the child who feels responsible for the death of a parent, or for divorce, should be asked, "What would you have done differently?" The child who feels that he is a big problem to his Christian parents and that he is ruining an otherwise perfect Christian home should be asked, "How good must you be before you will have a happy Christian home?" The child may be placing an unreasonable burden on himself. The parent must send the message, "I understand why you feel as you do, but it seems that you're being too hard on yourself." There must be a subtle transaction here. If the parent were to say this, the child would not feel understood and would reject the parent's perspective. But by implying it the parent gives the child an opportunity to consider that maybe his position is a bit extreme, and yet he does not have to defend his position.

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A Preventive Outreach to Teens
Jerry Johnston reaches into public schools with his message against suicide and drugs.

by Michele Prince

The voices of the first students trickling into the called assembly echoed through the gymnasium. A group of sophomores and juniors detoured to the courtyard to share a cigarette in the afternoon sun before the assembly began. Inside, the echo faded as the murmuring of the crowd swelled and ruptured into a rumble of shuffling feet and noisy conversation.

"Who's speaking?" a 15-year-old boy asked his friend.

"Some guy's going to tell us all about drugs," the friend laughed.

Onto the floor, center stage, walked a thin, casually dressed man. His baritone voice bellowed into the microphone, "All right, let's hear it for the ninth grade."

The freshmen cheered.

"OK sophomores, you can do better than that, can't you?"

More rousing applause.

"Where are you, juniors?" the young man boomed.

This time louder applause, cheers, and howls.

"Now, how about the seniors. I spent three of the best years of my life in the 12th grade!"

Again, applause, whistles, and cheers.

"My name is Jerry Johnston," the preacher began, "and I'm here today to talk to you about a tragedy many of you have thought about—the problem of teenage suicide."

The preacher continued with statistics. In the last 30 years teenage suicide has tripled in the United States; 14 to 18 teens commit suicide every day; over 400 others attempt suicide daily; and last year between 5,000 and 6,000 teens took their own lives.

The crowd was silent.

Johnston went on to tell the story of Jay, a teenage suicide victim who felt there was nothing more to live for. He told the story of Christy, who overdosed on Valium. And then the story of an expelled 14-year-old drug user who "got stoned every Friday and Saturday night."

"On the way home from a party one night he got sick and vomited blood. He was admitted to a hospital where it was determined he had a bleeding ulcer. He bribed a doctor there for some pharmaceutical downers. He intended to commit suicide. After being discharged he went home a 68-pound burnout."

"That 14-year-old burnout was me, Jerry Johnston."

The students listened as he told how some friends invited him to a summer Bible camp. He sat alone in the back row at the camp services all week. Finally Cherry Gibson invited Johnston to sit with her. At the end of the service he went forward and got saved.
"Jesus Christ has turned my life around," Johnston testified.

Before the assembly ended, Johnston played a tape of a suicide victim’s farewell message to his mother.

"Well, my whole mind is gone... can’t think... There’s so many things... I can’t face... You might hear it sooner or later, Mom, but your little boy has turned into an LSD addict. I’m sorry, Mom. That’s bad news. It really is... I don’t know what’s real and what isn’t real... I really don’t know what to say actually... I have thought it over many times and there really is nothing to live for... So I’ll close with a statement that this is Dexter Gardner speaking, I am signing off."

Johnston, a 25-year-old evangelist from Kansas City, has been preaching the gospel and traveling the country with LIFE, the name he has given his school assemblies, for eight years. He has spoken at 2,000 schools and to more than 2 million teenagers. His shocking approach gets young people’s attention and lets them know that the answer to life’s problems is not drug abuse or suicide; which Johnston says are sometimes interrelated problems.

His approach is graphic and often shocking because, "Life is that way," he said. "I deal with people who are hurting and in deep sin. I’m dealing with reality and my approach relates effectively."

Johnston attributes his effectiveness in relating to teenagers to his knowledge of the drug scene. In talking to teens one-on-one he repeatedly deals with their common concerns of wanting to be loved and understood, of looking for meaning and purpose to life, and of how to get off drugs and alcohol and make sense out of life.

"I always relate Christ to them, and they listen," he said.

While Johnston feels that the country will see an escalation of teenage suicide in the next two to five years, he optimistically looks upon that speculation as the greatest opportunity to reach young people with the LIFE-giving message of the gospel.

"Young people are looking for meaning in life. Materialism, alcohol, drugs, and sex have left them empty. We are experiencing a greater evangelistic harvest than ever before."

"A lot of parents are out of touch with what is going on, and even in Christian communities there is a lack of vital communication."

Though Johnston cannot preach or extend an invitation for students to accept Christ at the public school assemblies, he does share his own experience and conversion to Christianity and invites the students to come to auditoriums or churches where his crusade meets for several evenings.

"LIFE is a pre-evangelistic tool to develop rapport in a community," Johnston said. He plans to eventually extend the LIFE ministry into a camp for teenage drug users and alcoholics.

Jerry Johnston Ministries, based in Kansas City, was incorporated in 1979, and in the last six years has seen more than 75,000 receive Christ as Saviour. In addition to the LIFE assemblies, Johnston carries on a full slate of meetings in 150 churches yearly. He addresses many civic groups such as Rotary and Kiwanis, and speaks on radio programs, at juvenile correctional institutions, and at Christian colleges, speaking 25 to 35 times a week.

Johnston’s wife, Chris, and their three children, Danielle, 5; Jeremy, 3; and Jenilee, 6 months, travel the country with Johnston. He met Chris at a crusade in Holland, Michigan, and they were married in March 1979.

"Chris is a right hand to me," he said. "She helps with research for my sermon preparation, she assists our CPA with the books, she’s my confidant and encourager."

Now that the children are getting older and Danielle has reached school age, Johnston is tapering down his speaking schedule to accommodate the needs of his family.

"I’ve made them a priority. God doesn’t want me to throw them off for the sake of souls."

But "tapering down" will not be an easy task for Johnston’s appointments secretary. The Jerry Johnston Ministries has not experienced a dying of revival, but on the contrary, cannot keep up with the demand.

"There’s a hunger out there. The response is greater today because of the complexity of man’s problems, and as we revise down our schedule we’re going to plan a greater and more thorough outreach for Christ in each city we visit."

Johnston preaches a strong gospel message, one he describes as a "double barrel shotgun permeating the community." He emphasizes Christian commitment and dedication and believes that judgment, beginning at the house of God, is imperative for revival.

He has learned two things about people in his ministering to them: they will respond to strong preaching if it is administered in the spirit of love, and they are hurting. "A lot of people camouflage their pain, but they have problems and are looking for someone to whom they can relate."

The young evangelist has also learned something about himself.

"I depend completely upon God’s grace and development in my life. Without His daily instruction I could not carry out what He has called me to do. It is a continuous growth process."

Jerry Johnston was 15 years old when he preached his first sermon. Twenty-two received Christ at that service, where he gave the illustration of Lazarus coming from the tomb. Now, 10 years later, Jerry Johnston is preaching with the same excitement he had as a new convert, and with more enthusiasm. His sights are set on winning the world to Christ.

Michele Prince is a free-lance writer in Lynchburg, Virginia.

For more information on Jerry Johnston Ministries, write P.O. Box 12193, Overland Park, Kansas 66212, (913) 492-2066.
No one likes to hear about it, but the facts are undeniable. Suicide rates among the adolescent population are increasing at an alarming rate. Between 1950 and 1980 successful suicides among adolescents increased by more than 200 percent. Five times more girls than boys attempt suicide, while five times more boys actually kill themselves. A recent established suicide hot line in Chicago averages one call every 20 seconds.

Numerous myths about suicide abound in our society. Suicidal persons are believed to be insane, the victims of bad genes, or basically inferior. None of these myths are founded on reality.

Adolescents who decide to take their lives are usually struggling with a number of issues. Frequently they are vexed by the lack of a feeling of belonging or bonding. This feeling may have deep roots in their childhood. Some feel that the common denominator in teenage suicides is that these adolescents failed to bond with their mothers. Suicide data indicate that the bonding of the baby with a loving mother is the single most important key to feeling good about one's self and life.

Other social phenomenon that contribute to the rising suicide rate include the loss of culture and community, alcohol and other drug abuse, disintegration of the family through divorce, negative feelings over school marks, loss of an intimate friend, and incest.

Adolescent suicide is also a developmental issue. Adolescence is a time of great introspection. Adolescents are possessed by the ideal of perfection. They know how things ought to be and are energetic in criticizing institutions and persons of their shortcomings. At the same time they are critical of themselves. While they are intellectually in love with perfection, they are biologically a mess. They have “zits,” fat, and their hair is never “right.”

Adolescent suicide is also a spiritual issue. Young people raised in our society are often alienated from God and man and erasure of self seems an acceptable solution.

Most teenagers give some warning signs of their intention, either to friends or family members. These actions are usually a cry for intervention and should be carefully noted and monitored—and taken very seriously.

- Expressions of worthlessness
- An I-don't-care attitude
- Expression of loneliness
- Lack of energy
- Alcohol or drug abuse
- Antisocial behavior
- Changes in eating and sleeping habits
- School problems
- Giving away possessions
- Prolonged depression

We must realize that our adolescents are not immune to the tendency to periodically consider suicide as a way out. Churches and schools need to be more aggressively involved in parent education and family enrichment.

We need to learn how to communicate more effectively with adolescents. We need to understand them and accept their introspection, egocentrism, and criticalness as part of a developmental process and not the result of a personal war they are carrying on against society. We need to know what we believe and why we believe it. We need to major on acceptance, dialogue, and our unalterable commitment to them—no matter what. We need to believe that armed with the power of God's spirit we can always start anew on the foundation of forgiveness in Christ. When trust and bonding is not present, we need to confess our failure to God and the child and pray and work for its inception.

We need to protest the literature and media presentations that cheapen life and glorify suicide as a heroic act. In our families we need to continuously challenge the values of a culture where suicide is becoming a popular way of resolving the riddle of life. While lovingly holding before our children the hopefulness and joy derived from a lifestyle rooted in the values of the Word of God, we can model and teach those values with the certainty that they are right for every generation.

Ronald E. Hawkins is director of counseling at Liberty University, Lynchburg, Virginia. He holds a D.Min. from Westminster Theological Seminary, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and is completing further doctoral work at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, Virginia.
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James M. Gray,
President of MBI 1904-1934

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Obviously God places greater demands

divorced and remarried, are to be ex-
cluded from those offices. This inter-
pretation is based upon the principle
that God places greater demands on
people in leadership positions than upon
anyone else.

In Leviticus 21 God legislated matters
of holiness in priestly conduct and
duties. A man had to meet certain re-
quirements to be a priest. Notice the
guidelines in verse 7. “They shall not
take a wife that is a whore, or profane;
neither shall they take a woman put
away from her husband; for he is holy
unto his God.” The Old Testament pro-
hibited priests from marrying women
who had been divorced. Notice the dis-
qualifications for priestly office: “For
whatsoever man he be that hath a
blemish . . . a blind man, or a lame, or he
that hath a flat nose, or anything
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footed, or brokenhanded, or crook-
backed, or a dwarf . . .” (v.v.18-20). Obviously God places greater demands
on people in leadership roles.

God is teaching the same principle
in 1 Timothy 3, placing greater demands
and requirements upon those who
assume spiritual leadership in the
church—pastors and deacons. These are
not suggestions, but qualifications to be
found in the lives of men who feel called
to leadership in the church.

The phrase “husband of one wife”
excludes those who have been divorced,
or divorced and remarried, from assum-
ing the pastorate or becoming a deacon
in the church. In verse 4 Paul adds that
the pastor must rule his own house well
and have his children in subjection. The
word “rule” means to manage. The
pastor and the deacon must manage
their own houses well. Divorce is the
ultimate act of mismanagement in one’s
household. Although there are legitimate
grounds for divorce and people can be
free to remarry, divorce is always the
result of sin. Therefore, one who
mismanaged the affairs of his own
house does not qualify scripturally for a
leadership position in the church.

Can a man who was divorced and
remarried before he was saved hold the
office of pastor or deacon? No. Even if
the divorce took place before the man
was saved, he is still excluded from
these offices of leadership. Furthermore,
God would not call a man to that office
knowing a previous divorce disqualified
him.

Some believe that 2 Corinthians 5:17
promises that since “all things are
become new,” a previously divorced
man could become a pastor. Although
certainly our sins are forgiven when we
are saved, the consequences of some
sins have ongoing results in our lives.
For example, if someone is heavily in-
volved with drugs before he is saved, his
burned out brain is not replaced when
he becomes a new creature in Christ.
Someone once asked me, “Do you
mean that a homosexual, a child
 molester, a rapist, or a murderer can be
saved and become a pastor, but because
I’m divorced God cannot use me?” The
Bible is clear that a man must first
prove himself and then rise to the office
of pastor or deacon. We know that
through the forgiveness of God a man
can rise to leadership, but it must be
clear in the minds of those who ordain
him that all his problems are past,
forgotten, forgiven, and reconciled.
However, God has put the no-divorce
requirement on the offices of pastor and
deacon, and we have an obligation to ac-
cept that as legitimate.

What then can divorced people do in
the church? Can they teach a Sunday
school class? Can they sing in the choir?
Can they be evangelists? A divorced per-
son can do all of those things, providing
God has called him to those narticular
tasks. This limitation in 1 Timothy 3 is
specifically for pastors and deacons.
Many people who have been divorced
and remarried, and have sought the
forgiveness of God, have been mightily
used of God in the church—apart from
the offices of pastor and deacon.

Have you used a Scofield Bible, prob-
ably the most widely read Bible in the
twenty-first century? C.I. Scofield
was divorced and remarried, but God used
him in a wonderful way to influence the
lives of thousands of people. Divorced
people can and ought to serve in the
church.

Suppose someone has been involved
in premarital relationships and later is
married. Is that person in violation of
the one-woman-husband qualification
because he has had a sexual relationship
with someone other than his wife prior

by Edward Dobson

This is a true saying, if a man desire the
office of a bishop, he destreih a
good work. A bishop then must be
blameless, the husband of one
wife . . . one that ruleih well his own
house, having his children in subiection
with all gravity (1 Tim. 3:1-4).

L ast month we studied the qualifi-
cations of a pastor and deacon.
According to the above passage,
people who have been divorced, or
divorced and remarried, are to be ex-
cluded from those offices. This inter-
pretation is based upon the principle
that God places greater demands on
people in leadership positions than upon
anyone else.

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in 1 Timothy 3, placing greater demands
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assume spiritual leadership in the
church—pastors and deacons. These are
not suggestions, but qualifications to be
found in the lives of men who feel called
to leadership in the church.
to marriage? Does that exclude anyone who has had premarital sex from becoming a pastor or deacon? No. I believe the Scriptures are clear that the sexual act does not constitute a marriage.

We have defined marriage as a covenant, an agreement of companionship. When Jesus met the woman at the well, He said, "Go call your husband." The woman replied, "I don't have one," and Jesus agreed. "You have said well, you have already had five husbands and the person you are living with is not your husband."

Jesus acknowledged that marriage is more than two people living together and having a sexual relationship.

Whenever I counsel young people who have made that terrible moral mistake, I often find that someone has told them, "Because you have had a relationship with that person, in God's eyes you are married to that person." That is not biblically true. I always tell young people, "It may be the will of God for you to go ahead and get married, but you have made one mistake—don't make another by marrying the wrong person. Seek guidance and the advice of your parents and come together with a corporate decision that is indeed the will of God."

Although premarital sex does not exclude a person from rising to leadership within the church, what about extramarital sex? What should happen when a pastor or a deacon has an adulterous relationship with someone? Does that act or that relationship exclude that person from ever becoming a pastor or a deacon for the rest of his life? Even though his marriage may stay together and the sin falls under the forgiveness of God, is the adulterous man excluded from leadership in the church?

There are two extreme approaches to this question. The first approach is, "Well, my pastor committed adultery, but since God has forgiven him, we forgive him. He can stay on as our pastor." The other extreme is, "Our pastor committed adultery, he made a mistake, he sinned against God. Let's beat him down for the rest of his life so he will never do anything for God again."

The latter approach is taken too often. The biblical approach is somewhere between these two. When someone in the position of leadership violates moral integrity, he forfeits the position of leadership—because he must be blameless. We must then turn around and ask, "How can we lead you to repentance? How can we assist you toward restoration? How can we help?" According to the Word of God, we have an obligation to discipline. Church discipline necessitates the forfeiture of leadership, but at the same time we must love, forgive, and restore that person so that after a period of time he can prove himself and his integrity again. We should help him find a different area where he can continue serving the Lord.

Can a widower remarry? Suppose a pastor's wife dies and he remarries. Technically he is not a one-woman husband, but I believe he is perfectly legitimate as a leader in the church because the underlying principle here is integrity of lifestyle and character.

What if a man feels the Lord has called him to be a pastor, but his wife has been previously divorced? Technically he meets the biblical requirements, but his wife does not. I personally believe that we are wise to reserve the position of blameless leadership for men who have not been divorced and whose wives have not been divorced. There is no clear statement in the New Testa-
ment about this situation, but because of the principles of Leviticus 21, I feel that God wants His leadership to be above reproach or question.

What should the church do with divorced people? First and foremost, the church should stress reconciliation. We ought to preach the ideal of marriage and give people the basic principles for success in their marital and family relationships. When marriages begin to fall apart, we ought to be instrumental in helping couples achieve a reconciliation. The church is the place where we can pray, teach, and guide people through the difficulties of marriage.

Next, the church ought to have an attitude of restoration. We are to meet people at their deepest point of need and restore them. People going through a divorce are experiencing extreme emotional and spiritual problems. A great sense of guilt, failure, loneliness and the devastation of their self-image overwhelms them. Divorced people often feel more at home in a singles' bar than in a church. We ought to be committed to loving, forgiving, accepting, and rebuilding them.

B. R. Lakin used to tell us how to respond to divorced people: “Be quick to forgive, slow to judge.” But suppose the guilty party in a divorce remarries another. Are they living in a constant state of adultery?

There is no constant state of adultery. To say that it is constant would make divorce the unpardonable sin, which it is not. Someone who willfully violates Scripture to divorce and remarry can seek the forgiveness of God and be restored into fellowship in the church.

Suppose a Christian wants to divorce his wife on illegitimate grounds. First, we must exercise church discipline. We should go to that individual personally, plurally, and publicly—to do all we can to hinder the divorce. If he proceeds with his plan, we must exercise discipline by putting him out of the church while praying that he will seek God's forgiveness. If he does repent, we should reconcile him into the fellowship of the church, even if he has remarried. Once he has the forgiveness of God and has genuinely repented, we ought to restore him, reconcile him, and eventually find him a place of service for the Lord.

What about wife abuse? Does a person who has been physically abused have the right to divorce and remarry?

This problem is increasing in our society, and church families are not immune to it. Some people suggest that because a woman should be in submission to her husband she is obligated to stay with him no matter what the situation. That is ludicrous advice. If a woman is being physically abused and the welfare and emotional well-being of the children are in jeopardy, she ought to separate from her husband. She should find help from family or friends, at a home for battered women, or within the church. While this is not the basis for a biblical divorce, a battered woman has every right to separate from her husband for her own protection and for the protection of the children.

The church must never drop the banner of marital permanence. We should always preach that God's intention is one woman, one man, for a lifetime. We also must resist judging and discarding those who have gone through marital problems, divorce, and remarriage. We must love and accept them. We must be quick to forgive and slow to judge. Our church should be filled to capacity with sinners saved by grace, who can reach out and meet others at their point of need.
"At sixteen I got pregnant. Abortion seemed like the only solution—even to my parents. "But nobody told us that such a quick, easy answer would have such a lasting, devastating effect. No one mentioned the guilt and the grief."

"At eighteen I got pregnant again. But this time I was determined to find another solution. That's when I met some people who cared enough about me to help save my baby. "The godparent home gave me love without judgment. And the encouragement and support I needed before my baby was born. "Today he's growing up happy and loved with his adoptive parents. And I've got a beautiful future too—knowing that I did what was best for both of us."

"Jerry Falwell's If I Should Die Before I Wake is the rest of Jennifer's story. A true account of compassion and hope that tells how you can become part of the solution. You'll learn ways to help set up everything from crisis hotlines and counseling centers, to shepherding homes and adoption agencies. Plus you'll have all the biblical and scientific facts surrounding abortion. Including how the different techniques affect mother and child. Never before has there been such a positive perspective on abortion or such a comprehensive plan of hope. Pick up your copy of If I Should Die Before I Wake. And be part of the solution we've all been looking for."

When Wisdom Was Not Enough
by David Jeremiah

When the history of my generation has been written, one of the saddest chapters will concern the moral defeat of many of our Christian leaders. Hardly a month passes without the news of some respected leader’s fall into disobedience and sin.

Each time that news reaches me about another fallen warrior, I find myself reflecting on Solomon. He was, according to the testimony of his contemporaries, the wisest and wealthiest king who ever lived. And yet, with all his advantages and successes, in the end he failed God and made a fool of himself.

Solomon had an incredible appetite for wealth. He had been given so much by God, yet his whole life seems to be characterized by his lust and greed for more. An illustration of that is graphically presented in 1 Kings 6-7. We cannot help but observe that Solomon took twice as long to build his own house as he did to build the house of God. He also lavished upon his own house wealth, and beauty, and riches.

This incredible wealth was in direct disobedience to God, who had specifically warned against personally motivated accumulation of riches (Deut. 17:14-17). Solomon set his heart upon wealth, and this is the first reason for his downfall.

Solomon had an incredible appetite for women. “But king Solomon loved many strange women . . . of the nations concerning which the Lord said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall not go in to them” (1 Kings 11:1-2).

Here is “the wisest man who ever lived” trying to keep 1,000 women happy. In doing so, he violated his own instruction and disobeyed his own commands. The words of warning, which he passed on in his proverbs, became the indictment of his own soul (Prov. 5:20-23).

At first his sin was immorality and sensuality, but in the end, it became gross idolatry. His heart became the problem. When Jehovah appeared before Solomon the second time at the completion of the temple, He instructed him to walk before God as his father David had walked, in integrity of heart (1 Kings 9:4). In his sin, “His heart was not perfect with the Lord his God, as was the heart of David his father” (1 Kings 11:4).

The shipwreck of Solomon was surely one of the most terrible tragedies in all the world. Everyday sensuality made him, at the end of his life, nothing more than a castaway. His wisdom failed to teach him self-control. The only legacy he left was a son more foolish than he was.

How did it happen? Just where in his life did Solomon begin to give ground to the enemy? He did not become an idolater overnight. His demise was a gradual process. It was not a blowout. It was a slow leak.

Somewhere along the way, Solomon’s quest for wealth began to replace his quest for the Word of God. One day his appetite for women replaced his appetite for God.

If you would ask the fallen when it happened, they would tell you the time when it became known. But if the truth were revealed, you would trace their fall to some moment in the distant past when they let their guard down, for just a moment, and allowed the enemy to get his foot in the door.

Solomon was the wisest man who ever lived, but he was not wise enough to evaluate the power of small concessions.

David Jeremiah is senior pastor of the Scott Memorial Baptist Church in San Diego, and chairman of the board of Christian Heritage College, also in San Diego. Adapted by permission of Mott Media, Inc., Publishers, pp.85-93.

Word Study

Persecution—Prosperity preachers fail to recognize that the New Testament does not promise believers wealth, riches, or earthly comforts. Rather, it anticipates that Christians will follow their Lord in facing opposition and suffering persecution for their faith (2 Tim. 2:1-12; 3:12). The New Testament does not view this as an odious prospect, but as a privilege (1 Peter 4:16; 5:1-9), an important part of developing godly character qualities (1 Peter 2:19-20). Christians should not despair when suffering adversity. Instead, they should ask God what He has to teach them, and they should rejoice in having the privilege to follow the example of their Lord.

Defenselessness: A Window to God
by Bud McCord

What a terrible feeling it must be to be defenseless when confronted by an enemy bent on our destruction. How do we look an enemy in the eyes knowing we have run out of ammunition? Where do we hide when a suicidal driver fueled by promises of eternal life upon our death drives a truckload of dynamite in our direction? To what country can we travel searching for a haven against a disease whose...
passport is our own body? Where do we run when the earth shakes in all directions and the buildings fall across the path?

At the precise moment when a man realizes he has no defenses, what races through his mind? I have heard stories of deathbed confessions, fox-hole religion, promises of reform, and reliving one's entire life in a split second. Could this be life's most frightening moment? Could this fear have a purpose in God's wisdom and plan?

Perhaps fear is a window through which we can see more clearly than we ever have. Perhaps this window allows us one last chance to reach for God when our final defenses have fallen.

As the end of human history approaches, the Bible teaches that the final defenses will fall one by one until men are face-to-face with a world without security. The last human defense is the heart and it too will fail for fear. As the wars, earthquakes, floods, and sicknesses back us against the walls of the falling mountains, to whom will we run?

Just as a patient trembles when the anesthetist makes him defenseless against the surgeon's knife, our world and all of its peoples are trembling with fear. God's corrective surgery is terrible to contemplate in its efficient removal of man's tormentors. The result is the absence of fear and security in Him.

How defenseless we are without Him. The truly wise have already entered into His rest. Let us continue to call others to Him while His shelter can still be found.

Comforting the Bereaved

What is the ministry of comfort? The Greek word translated "comforter" simply means "one called alongside to help." Perhaps the best translation would be "encourager."

We often seek to comfort people by trying to make life easy for them, by pampering them. But God comforts His children by putting within them the kind of courage and strength they need to face life honestly and live it faithfully. The best thing we can do for suffering people is to be the kind of encouragers who help them face their trials honestly, work through their feelings, and see God give them His divine enablement.

We can minister comfort by our physical presence. To know that God is with us in the valley is wonderful, but having our flesh-and-blood brothers and sisters in Christ standing with us is also wonderful.

We can minister comfort by what we say. The temptation is to say too much, to respond theologically to people's words and not to their feelings.

We can minister comfort by sharing the Word of God. But we must not share God's truth the way a pharmacist mixes a prescription that he never takes. We must share the Word that is meaningful to us.

We can minister comfort by praying, the kind of praying that gets through to God and opens the fountains of His grace. You do not minister true comfort by preaching a sermon over God's shoulder, but by leading people next to God's heart and showing them how sufficient He is for every need.

We can minister comfort by mobilizing the church family and instructing them how to encourage and not just sympathize. Each congregation needs a mature couple to be in charge of the ministry of comfort, to work beside the pastor.

The pastor can minister comfort by preaching the Word. This applies not only to the funeral message, but also to his week-by-week ministry from the pulpit and in the classroom. He must unite the congregation in a fellowship of caring.

The time devoted to ministering to broken hearts is not spent; it is invested. Death is not an accident; it is an appointment (Heb. 9:27). The church family that learns to grieve together and encourage together will reap spiritual blessings that can come perhaps no other way.

Adapted from Comforting the Bereaved by Warren W. and David W. Wiersbe, Copyright 1985, Moody Bible Institute of Chicago. Used by permission.

Comforting Ways

1. Go to those who are bereaved as soon as possible, even if it is inconvenient for you.
2. Be swift to hear, slow to speak, and slow to react to words and feelings that may appear "un-Christian."
3. Do not try to explain everything.
4. Share the promises of God.
5. Avoid saying, "I know just how you feel." Nobody will believe you, and the statement accomplishes nothing.
6. Words often fail, so express yourself through a loving hug, a handshake, even a simple touch. Just being there is a ministry.
7. Do not be afraid to "weep with those who weep."
8. Remember that grieving is a difficult process that takes time.
9. Visit regularly during the weeks after the funeral.
10. Keep confidence. Don't turn the experience into a sermon illustration, unless the family gives you permission.

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Effective Altar Calls

by Howard Erickson

The scriptural principle paramount in the invitation is that people are not brought to Christ by our coaxing and pleading, but by the conviction and prompting of the Holy Spirit.

During Peter's first sermon on the Day of Pentecost, the Spirit clearly brought conviction, for in the midst of his sermon, people who were pricked in their hearts cried out, "What shall we do?" After this working of the Holy Spirit Peter proceeded to tell them how to be saved. His invitation resulted in 3,000 responses.

During Peter's second sermon there was no opportunity to present an invitation because he was arrested before finishing. However, at least 5,000 were converted due to the work of the Holy Spirit. People responded to the clear message of Jesus Christ.

Charles H. Spurgeon once said, "The best way to preach sinners to Christ is to preach Christ to sinners. Exhortations, entreaties, and beseeching, if not accompanied with sound instructions, are like firing off powder without shot. You may shout, and weep, and plead, but you cannot lead men to believe what they have not heard, nor to receive a truth which has never been set before them." For an invitation or altar call to be effective, it must follow a meaningful message. When God's Word is presented forthrightly there will be a response, for His Word will not return to Him void.

Some say no invitation is necessary, as no one comes to Christ unless the Father draws him, and some will come with or without prompting. However, we can be used as effective instruments, inviting "whosoever will" to respond to the drawing of God's Holy Spirit.

The invitation should not be forced, but a natural conclusion to the message. Deliver it in your own style, keeping in mind that you are being used by God to draw people to Him.

Spurgeon believed in closing every sermon with an address to the ungodly. He pushed for an immediate conversion, giving the unsaved no rest in their sins. He asked church members to pray especially for decisions and to encourage those near them to respond. Spurgeon avoided personal language and to encourage those especially for decisions church members to pray without prompting. He ushered for an immediate response, for His Word forthrightly there will be a clear message of Jesus Christ.

Above all, the preacher must exemplify the love of Jesus. Spurgeon stated, "Great hearts are the main qualifications for great preachers... Spare neither labour in the study, prayer in the closet, nor zeal in the pulpit."

We do not preach and then invite people to respond for the sake of numbers, but for the sake of individual souls. "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men... For the love of Christ constraineth us" (2 Cor. 5:11,14).

Two Clear-cut Cases for Therapeutic Abortion

by Harold L. Willmington

A therapeutic abortion occurs when a pregnant woman is persuaded (often by her doctor) that her unborn child presents an emotional or mental threat to her general well-being. Therefore, the most practical and painless solution (for the mother at least) is simply to kill the offending baby. There are two well-known instances in history where this interesting standard of unborn human life could certainly have been applied.

The first case involved that of an older woman, wife of a respected religious leader, living in a large southern city. Present-day advice to her would have been: "Do you really feel it wise to complete this birth? Consider your age. The psychological strain upon you will be much greater than that of a younger woman. Then too, as an older parent, don't you think you'll have real problems adjusting to this infant? I mean it might even affect your relationship with your husband. No, all things considered, it would be far better to terminate the potential problem right now."

The second case had to do with a teenage girl, engaged to a struggling young tradesman, living in a small northern town. Here there could be no doubt. A quick abortion would immediately solve the embarrassment and downright hostility that would develop if the unborn baby was not destroyed.

Two simple and clear-cut cases for therapeutic abortion! Not quite. Could even the most calloused present-day abortion mill operator bear the thought of Elisabeth (the older woman) and Mary (the teenager) with trembling hands and hearts awaiting the sharp instrument of some ancient abortionist?
Would Jesus Use Pulpit Counseling?

by Gary R. Collins

Has pastoral counseling become a fad?

Articles, workshops, and pastors' seminars discuss it frequently. Counseling is part of the curriculum in many Bible colleges and seminaries and consumes hours from the schedules of busy pastors. Counselors continue to write books about it. But is counseling really needed?

The Bible describes Jesus as Counselor (Isa. 9:6), and His whole ministry demonstrated His caring concern for people. He counseled with Nicodemus at night, with an adulterous woman near a well, and with two confused believers on the road to Emmaus. Every pastor knows that Jesus healed the sick and did pastoral counseling with the needy.

But Jesus also preached. In proclaiming the Word of God, He encouraged the afflicted, challenged the complacent, and brought hope to the discouraged. Maybe there were people in those congregations who, like the woman with the issue of blood, were afraid to ask for help. Perhaps there were some who did not want to disturb the Lord. Others may have been too ashamed or embarrassed to talk about their problems. These people were not reached by pastoral counseling, but through the Lord's public people-helping ministry.

The best public helpers are practical, clear in what they say, and aware of human needs. Hurting people do not need condemnation. Few can change just because a speaker says, "Stop worrying." We must talk, instead, about practical and realistic ways to win over depression, giving clear illustrations, and showing specifically how to apply scriptural principles.

Elijah was a committed believer, but he reached a low point when he collapsed under that juniper tree and asked God to take away his life. He was physically exhausted, emotionally afraid, and spiritually weary, but God sent help. The Lord's angel gently instructed him to take care of his physical needs, listen to the Word of God, move away from his depressing circumstances, and seek help from another believer who was able to bring fellowship, encouragement, and maybe a little counseling.

Many in our congregations can learn from such an example, and most can apply it to their own lives. Remember, however, that some people may be too depressed, distraught, or hardened to understand what you have said. Others may misinterpret some part of the message.

The possible disadvantages are far outweighed, however, by the practical guidance that may be given week after week. When we seek His help, the Holy Spirit will direct us as we prepare our helping message. He gives speakers the power to communicate and helps hearers to understand without distortion.

Some of these hearers will return later for one-to-one counseling. Their presence will convince you that pastoral counseling is no passing fad. It is here to stay, but its effectiveness is greatly enhanced when the counselor can also give practical help from the pulpit.

Church News

Nathan Miller, 1985 Liberty Institute of Biblical Studies graduate, held the organizational service for his new church, Hot Springs Baptist Church in Hot Springs, Virginia, on January 5. Ken Chapman of the institute assisted.

YouthQuest Conference '86 will be held at Thomas Road Baptist Church April 10-13. The theme is "Solving the Problems of Young People." For more information, call 1-800-628-2000.

WASHINGTON (RNS)—An alliance of 28 religious denominations has attacked a proposal in Congress to strip church pension boards of their tax-exempt status, comparing the move to taxation of religion.

The proposal was passed by the House of Representatives in December, as part of the Tax Reform Act of 1985. The Senate has taken no action yet.

While criticizing the pension-board proposal, churches have welcomed another provision of the bill to reinstate favorable housing provisions for clergy, which the Internal Revenue Service had done away with. Ordained ministers would be allowed to deduct mortgage interest and real estate taxes and, at the same time, exclude housing allowances from taxes.

The tax-reform bill would repeal the federal tax status of the nonprofit pension groups by treating them as commercial insurance companies. Under the measure, employees of denominational agencies would also lose the right to contribute to an individual retirement account (IRA) if they have put as much as $2,000 into a church plan.

Joseph Ton of the Romanian Missionary Society will be the guest speaker in an evangelistic crusade at Harvard-Radcliffe April 14-18.

Nilson Fanini, pastor of the First Baptist Church of Niteroi, Brazil, and president of the Brazilian Baptist Convention, recently returned from crusades in Communist Angola and Mozambique, Africa.

For the second time, Pastor Fanini was permitted by these governments to preach the gospel and bring in 10,000 Bibles.

Over 2,500 people accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour during the crusades. For more information about this Third-World Ministry, call 214-907-0808.


The Denver campus, located in Broomfield, Colorado, has been sold. The final commencement for Denver Baptist Bible College and Seminary will be held on May 2, 1986, at South Sheridan Baptist Church in Denver.
in 1851 America was on the brink of upheaval. The Civil War lay just ahead, and the influx of European immigrants was beginning to swell the Eastern seaboard. Economically, the country was entering the industrial age. And spiritually, modernism and science were beginning to threaten Christianity. God raised many men to present the gospel to lost men and women. A.J. Gordon, A.B. Simpson, D.L. Moody, and R.A. Torrey were but a few men of vision and power who began great works, great schools, and great movements. They were initiators, and others were needed to build on their foundations. James Martin Gray was such a man.

Born in New York City in 1851, Gray was raised in what he called a "nominal" Christian home. He attended an Episcopal church where he was confirmed at age 14. Upon entering seminary, his goal was not so much a divine calling as finding a comfortable profession. In fact, Gray had not yet received Jesus Christ as his Saviour. He told of his seminary conversion in the Moody Bible Institute Monthly:

"I cannot but believe that had I died during that period, moral youth that I was and church member besides, I should have died in my sins."

"My conversion came while reading a book, Laws From Heaven for Life on Earth, by Rev. William Arnot of Edinburgh, Scotland. It was a series of brief homilies upon the Book of Proverbs addressed to young men. I did not care for my Bible, but this book had a strong attraction for me.

"On a memorable night in the quiet of my own room, after an exciting evening among worldly people, my eye fell on this sentence: 'Every soul not already won to Christ is already lost.' It was an arrow of conviction to my soul. Quicker than I can express it, an overwhelming sense of my lost and hopeless condition fell upon me. I knew that I was not won to Jesus, and yet I knew that I ought to be. There was nothing in my life, professedly Christian and outwardly clean as it was, to indicate that I belonged to Him, or that He possessed or controlled me. Hell seemed open to receive me, and my soul was hanging over the abyss...."

"The prayer of the publican came to me: 'God, be merciful to me a sinner!' I am not ashamed to say that in agony I uttered it with my face on the floor. And God heard it. He always hears that prayer. He put the everlasting arm under me that night. He lifted me out of the miry clay, planted me upon a

Early in his pastoral ministry, Gray was convinced that teaching Bible prophecy could both comfort and challenge.
First, Gray experienced a deep and profound work of the Holy Spirit. He recalls that "Romans 15:30 did that for me. The thought that the Spirit was a person who loved me and dwells in me suddenly filled my life. Later study in 1 Corinthians revealed that my body is His temple and that by Him I have been baptized into the mystical body of Christ."

The Holy Spirit's work in his life led to a longing to master the Word of God. He prayed much for insight into Scripture, and the Lord answered in an unexpected manner. While dining one day in the home of a church member, Gray met a man of obvious spiritual depth and asked about the source of his spiritual power. The man told him that it sprang from his habit of reading whole books of the Bible. He would read an entire book at one sitting and then review the same book several times until he had the sense of possessing it.

Gray tried it. He later developed a system based on this approach called "synthetic Bible study," which is the basis for "Bible synthesis" courses at Moody Bible Institute and other colleges. But the immediate result in his pastorate was his change from topical to expository preaching. He later wrote, "Oh what a change, first in the preacher, and then in his preaching, and then in his people!"

During his years in Boston, Gray attracted the attention of other churches and groups. A.J. Gordon was beginning his Bible and missionary college, which later became Gordon College and Seminary. He asked Gray to teach courses each semester. Gray so impressed him that when asked by C. I. Scofield to form a three-dean structure to lead the school, Gray accepted and set out for Chicago. He did not realize that Torrey had decided to set out on an extended evangelistic campaign and resigned from his position at MBI. Scofield also declined the invitation.

Many of Gray's friends advised him not to take on such an administrative
believing that the same Spirit to whom the New York Times commented, “He is only a few blocks from Mary Baker Eddy while in Boston. Thus he became familiar with Christian Science and eventually illuminated its errors. The *New York Times* commented, “He is satisfied to limit his criticism of Christian Science to its biblical claims of divine inspiration. These he annihilates like a scholar and a gentleman.”

Darwinism also came under the jab of Gray's skillful pen. His learned and scholarly approach to “The Errors of Millennial Darwinism” frustrated Darwinism's proponents. In reply they paid him backhanded tribute, saying, “The attack of Dr. Gray is so comprehensive that when he is answered by chapter and verse. 3. Read each book continuously, not by chapter and verse. 4. Read a book repeatedly, until you have mastered it.

Gray led the institute for 30 years, considerably longer than any other president in its history. A discussion of his accomplishments could reasonably focus on the buildings, budgets, and programs that grew under his and Crowell's direction.

But a truer picture of how God used Gray at Moody Bible Institute comes from his spiritual legacy: Combating error. This period of American history was marked by attacks on traditional Christianity. Modernism, Darwinism, and higher criticism grew in influence and opposition. An able spokesman, Gray wrote countless pamphlets and articles to expose the unbiblical nature of such teachings.

While earnestly contending for the faith, Gray was always a gentleman, thus gaining a wide audience. He lived only a few blocks from Mary Baker Eddy while in Boston. Thus he became familiar with Christian Science and eventually illuminated its errors. The *New York Times* commented, “He is satisfied to limit his criticism of Christian Science to its biblical claims of divine inspiration. These he annihilates like a scholar and a gentleman.”

Teaching prophecy. Early in his pastoral ministry, Gray became convinced that teaching Bible prophecy could both comfort and challenge believers. He emphasized the Second Coming of Christ to challenge his people to holy living and evangelism. In one of the most comforting of his studies, “The Progress of the Believing Dead,” he traced his understanding of the position of those who have died in faith from Abel through his generation. Apparently, clear teaching had not been presented regarding the fate of believers who had died.

Gray's emphasis on the Second Coming came when premillennial theology was just developing and being challenged. He contributed greatly to establishing this doctrine in both the institute curriculum and in pulpits across America.

**Synthetic Bible study.** Gray's method of synthetic Bible study has opened Scripture to thousands of lay people, because he called it “How to Master the English Bible” and did not rely solely upon the original Greek and Hebrew. He taught the system to thousands in churches in America and Great Britain and then brought it to MBI. Its basic points are simple:

1. Begin at the beginning, Genesis. 2. Read the Book itself, not books about it. 3. Read each book continuously, not by chapter and verse. 4. Read a book repeatedly, until you have mastered it.

Gray's emphasis on the Second Coming was instrumental in preserving clear doctrine for future generations.

Teaching prophecy. Early in his pastoral ministry, Gray became convinced that teaching Bible prophecy could both comfort and challenge believers. He emphasized the Second Coming of Christ to challenge his people to holy living and evangelism. In one of the most comforting of his studies, “The Progress of the Believing Dead,” he traced his understanding of the position of those who have died in

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The Obligation of Love

by James M. Gray

Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever... Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisy, and envies, and all evil speakings, as newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: if so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious (1 Peter 1:22-23; 2:1-3).

I have chosen as my theme “The Obligation of Love,” and I would lay the emphasis upon the command, “See that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently.”

All the books of the New Testament were written for Christians. Peter addresses his readers as the “elect” of God. They were elect, so Peter says, “according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.” In other words, the Father chose them, the Son redeemed them, and the Holy Spirit separated or set them apart unto God forevermore.

Peter proceeds to point out in his introduction that this election, or salvation, is equivalent to their New Birth unto a living hope. And this living hope, in turn, is described as an “inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away.” It is an inheritance reserved for them in heaven, while they are kept for it “by the power of God through faith.” It is an inheritance, or a consummated salvation, ready to be revealed to them “in the last time.”

Growing out of this hope and expectation on our part, are certain obligations for every one of us to carry, and the particular obligation I am now to speak about, is love—“See that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently.” The first point Peter stresses is that we have received the spiritual capacity to fulfill this obligation of love. “Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, [therefore] see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently.”

Divine grace has put us in the place where we are enabled to do this and now we are called upon to do it.

But how did divine grace put us there? How did it bestow this capacity upon us? The answer is, “Ye have purified your souls.” Ye have made them morally clean.

And how was it done? How do we thus purify our souls? “By obedience to the truth, the truth of the gospel, the truth of God’s Word. They had heard that truth and believed it, and acted upon it. They had received the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord and were now on redemption and resurrection ground.

Yet what explains their obedience to the truth? Through what process, then, did they come into such a blessing? “Through the Spirit,” the text says. The Holy Spirit had awakened faith and wrought obedience in their hearts. As Paul told the Corinthians, “No man can say that Jesus is Lord, but by the Holy Ghost” (1 Cor. 12:3).

Therefore, if any hear these words today who have not yet purified their souls in that sense, what an urge it lays upon them to inquire of God about it without delay! “If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?” (Luke 11:13).

What have we been enabled by the purification of our souls to do? It is “unto unfeigned love of the brethren.” We never could have done that before, we were never in a position where we could have done it, and for the best of reasons, because we never had such brethren before, we were never one of them. These are not our brethren after the flesh, neither are they such brethren as men meet when they enter upon the same employment or the same craft with them. They are those who have been “born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.” They are not only a divine, a supernatural brotherhood, but for that very reason an eternal brotherhood. Having come to Christ, having purified our souls in that sense, we have also come to them whom we can love and who can love us in return.

“See that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently.” You have been enabled to do it, you are in a position to do it, you have the spiritual capacity to do it, now see that you do it!

See that ye do it, leaves no loophole of escape, does it? But that raises a burning question in our minds. How can we love another just because he is a Christian, when we do not know him very well, if at all? Or how can we love him when he may lack the qualities that awaken love? How?

The difficulty arises from a misinterpretation of the word “love.” We think of it as in the natural sphere, but here it is the supernatural. We think of it as the passion or emotion experienced as between parent and child or husband and wife. But such is not the love commonly impressed upon us in the Holy Scriptures. It is the love of which Paul speaks in the inspired
born babe! There it lies by its mother’s milk. It does that, and what happens?

The instinct to imbibe its mother’s do. Its Creator has bestowed upon it that ye may grow thereby,” that ye am mistaken. There is one thing it can obtain strength to do what you ought may obtain the power, the strength to very description of you which Peter not. But he says, “I somehow lack the to do. “As newborn babes,” he says, Iay aside and live above these things. He side unable to do a thing for itself.

What is more helpless than a newborn babe! There it lies by its mother’s side unable to do a thing for itself. Everything must be done for it. No, I am mistaken. There is one thing it can do. Its Creator has bestowed upon it the instinct to imbibe its mother’s milk. It does that, and what happens?

It opens its eyes by and by. It recognizes its mother. It plays with its hands and feet. It smiles when you press your finger on its chin. It gets up on its knees, it creeps on the floor, it stands by a chair, it walks, it talks, it romps and plays! It has gotten beyond milk and digests strong meat now. It puts away childish things; it has become a man! That is what the milk does.

What a perfect analogy we have here! The “word” that Peter speaks of is the Bible, of course, the revelation of God and from God. And it is the classic of I Corinthians 13. It is the spirit in one which “suffereth long and is kind,” which envies not, “is not puffed up,” which does not behave itself discourteously, which “seeketh not its own,” is not selfish, not provoked, “thinketh no evil.” That is scriptural love!

“Wherefore,” Peter goes on to say in our text, that is, because you are born again, because you are brethren in the one family of God, because by believing the truth you have purified your souls unto unfeigned love of the brethren—for this reason, “lay aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings.” That is scriptural love!

Examine the words more closely. Lay aside all malice. That word is generic. It stands for all badness or all depravity in its aspect toward others, and its particular expressions are guile, the art of deception or lying in wait; hypocrisies, with their many masks and disguises of insincerity; envying, the grudging and repining at our neighbor’s good; evil speakings, such as railing, slander, detraction, insinuation, the inventing or propagating of injurious reports. How low and dirty these things are! And yet what Christian has not failed in love to his brethren in some or all of these things? And what has he to say for himself? What excuse or explanation can he make? He has none. He is dumb. He confesses that he ought to lay aside these things. He really desires to do so, and he loathes and despises himself because he does not. But he says, “I somehow lack the power, the strength. In the presence of the obligation of love, I seem as helpless as a babe!”

Now you have said it. That is the very description of you which Peter gives, or rather which the Holy Spirit gives. He says you are a newborn babe, and then he graciously tells you how you may get out of that condition and obtain strength to do what you ought to do. “As newborn babes,” he says, “desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby,” that ye may obtain the power, the strength to lay aside and live above these things.

What is more helpless than a newborn babe! There it lies by its mother’s side unable to do a thing for itself. Everything must be done for it. No, I am mistaken. There is one thing it can do. Its Creator has bestowed upon it the instinct to imbibe its mother’s milk. It does that, and what happens?
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Peer pressure is greater today than at any time in human history. Most of this pressure contradicts the traditional values parents want to give their children.

Television, movies, magazines, and the public schools’ teaching of explicit sex education without benefit of moral values have all worked toward the current wave of sexual permissiveness. The results are seen in the 1 million unwed girls who become pregnant each year and in over 20 percent of our teenagers who contract some form of venereal disease.

Our present society is hardly a fit environment for virtue to flourish. In fact, some high schoolers are ridiculed by their peers for still being virgins. The saddest statement the father made was, “The biggest mistake we made was taking our children out of Christian school last year.” Keeping your child morally pure in today’s culture is tough enough. While Christian schools are not perfect, they do provide an environment more conducive to maintaining moral purity.

I shared with that heartbroken father the advice my mother gave me when I was 17. I challenged her to do the sensible thing: active.” Her words crushed those Christian parents. Suddenly their family world and dreams crumbled in disappointment. Their younger children were watching how they handled this situation.

In their call to me they said, “This is not like her. She has always been such an obedient girl.” That is usually the case with Christian families.

Should You Pay Taxes?

Scripture clearly teaches that Christians are to obey the laws of man—as long as they do not require violation of God’s laws. Since the law requires that we pay taxes, and Jesus Himself paid tribute (tax), we should consider taxpaying to be part of our Christian responsibility.

But is it wrong to pay less than maximum taxes? Certainly not! While tax evasion is immoral, unethical, and illegal, tax avoidance is moral, ethical, and sanctioned by the government. Judge Learned Hand of the U.S. Supreme Court made this very clear in 1947 when he stated: “Over and over again, courts have said that there is nothing sinister in so arranging one’s affairs as to keep taxes as low as possible. Everybody does so, rich or poor; and all do right, for nobody owes any public duty to pay more than the law demands: taxes are enforced exactions, not voluntary contributions.”

This opportunity to reduce taxation is implied by Scripture to be a responsibility for Christians. When Christ said, “Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s” (Mark 12:17), He was speaking primarily of the insignificance of Caesar’s claim over men’s lives—relative to God’s claim. However, a Christian is not to needlessly give the government money, but rather should actively seek legal means to reduce his taxes and preserve funds for the other areas of his life.

Even if the tax laws are drastically simplified this year, there will always be planning techniques to help reduce tax liability. Consult a financial planner or tax advisor for help.

When it comes to dealing with the IRS, Christians should be “wise as serpents, and harmless as doves” (Matt. 10:16).

Paul G. Barringer is a certified financial planner. He heads Financial Advisory Services in Lynchburg, Virginia.
10 Helps to Talking with Your Teen

by Ron Hawkins and Deborah Huff

Nothing can facilitate the development of a healthy parent-teen relationship better than a good communication system. Here are a few helpful hints for starting or keeping the system open in difficult times.

• Face your child and make direct eye contact. The old saying that the eyes are the window to the soul applies here. You want to talk with your child and you want honesty. This is critical to any resolution.

• Remind your child God loves him and ultimately has answers for every human situation (1 Cor. 10:13). Assure your child that you are committed to helping him discover those answers. Do not be shocked if he answers, “You don’t care about me. You only care about…” This is a typical reaction. Here you must remember to keep your feelings out of the picture. Focus on reaching the child. To further the conversation use such statements as “I didn’t know you felt this way. I do care about you and what happens to you. What have I done to make you feel that way?” Or, “We all have times when we don’t care, and I want you to know that right now I care enough for both of us.”

• Avoid asking “why?” Always sounds accusative and puts the child on the defensive. It encourages an excursion into subjectivism. Try, “Tell me what happened.” Or, “How did that happen?” “How could we as a family, with God’s help, deal with that?”

• Never mock or make fun of your child’s feelings. This will only drive him further from you.

• Hold the sharing of your solution until you are certain you have heard the whole story. Prayerfully wait for the unfolding of all the facts. Summarize and repeat back what you have heard to be sure you do understand. Ask if your child has a solution to the problem. Perhaps just your objective listening has helped him find his own. Explore the alternatives with the child and avoid mandating. Try to generate insight as well as impart information.

• Keep shouting, accusations, and blaming out of the conversation. They will set up roadblocks to communicating with your child.

• Keep trying. Talking with volatile teenagers is extremely difficult. Control your hurt feelings and do not try to defend yourself. There will be a time when you can do so, but not at the beginning. Most importantly, if the conversation ends, try again. Always verbalize your commitment to the child, and let him know that you intend to do only that which is in his best interest.

• Do not beat your child with Bible verses. Make a biblical application when it is relevant and appropriate. He will sense when you are using Scripture to fit your purpose, and it may lead him to distrust or resent God’s Word. Let the Holy Spirit be your guide.

• Create a stage conducive to conversation. Turn off the television and the radio. Take the phone off the hook. Forget the household chores. Cleaning can wait. Give your child 100 percent of you.

• Love him—simply love him no matter what he says. Your unconditional love is paramount to any communicating. Avoid being critical at all costs. This is not the time for analysis and prescriptions.

No one knows your child better than you do. No one can reach your child better than you can. But if you think the problems or depression are getting out of hand, do not hesitate to contact your pastor or professional counselor for help. Your child’s life is in the balance. When you have gone through the acceptance, listening, and affirmation, do not be afraid to move into prescriptions that are biblically informed, psychologically sound, and rooted in your vision of what is best for the child.

What About Colon Cancer?

by Gregg Albers, M.D.

We often listen halfheartedly when someone discusses a health problem, but when a disease affects a close relative, friend, or public figure we realize, “It can happen to me.” Such was the case with President Reagan’s hospitalization for colon cancer, a very prevalent disease and an extremely preventable one.

The American Cancer Society suggests that 130,000 cases of colon or rectal cancer will be found this year. Only lung cancer, due in a great number of cases to smoking, kills more people per year than colorectal cancers.

Studies of the diets of other societies show that fiber and certain foods may be “protective.” Diets high in specific types of fiber apparently decrease an individual’s risk of developing cancers, by moving the stools more quickly through the intestines. Diets low in fats, and high in fresh fruits and vegetables provide more protection from cancers than typical “junk” or fast-food diets.

Colorectal cancer prevention involves more than establishing good diet habits, however. Regular physical examinations, stool-blood tests, and scope exams of the rectum and colon are necessary to find early cancers in their curable stage. After age 40 periodic digital rectal examinations, repeated stool testing for blood, and occasional sigmoidoscopy are recommended to find early polyps and cancers, and remove them. Please contact your family physician for more information.
In Sandy, a Heart for God, Leighton Ford tells the story of his 21-year-old son who died of heart failure. Ford's portrayal of Sandy as an active, committed Christian is an excellent testimony. More importantly, Ford does not gloss over the painful feelings of loss when parents lose a child. There are no meaningless platitudes, no blithe statements about God's ways being higher than ours. This is a riveting account of victory over pain too great to be imagined. Anyone who has lost a family member will understand when Ford says, "Time, they say, heals. Time also sets ambushes." (InterVarsity Press, 1985, 179pp., $9.95) —A.H.

How to Raise Confident Children uses God's Word as a model blueprint for Christian parents whose heartfelt desire is to raise godly children. A book that will challenge parents! (Richard L. Strauss, Baker Book House, 1984, $4.95) —J.B.

Mom, Can We Still Keep Roger? provides a physical, emotional, and spiritual boost for the mothers of preschoolers. It is light and humorous, yet practical, sharing many ideas for daily activities with little ones. (Freda Ingle Briggs, Baker Book House, 1985, $4.95) —J.B.

Explaining Death to a Child

How do we explain death to a child? By being open and honest and not giving the child more than he or she can digest intellectually or emotionally. We should not give the impression that we know all the answers, and we must beware of dangerous analogies. To say that little brother "has gone to sleep" could make the child fear going to sleep at night. Or the child might wonder why little brother does not wake up.

Another dangerous explanation is, "God has some work for Mommy to do in heaven." Is God's work in heaven more important than the mother's work in her home on earth? Does God need her more than her children need her? Could she not "work for God" just as well on earth? God must be very selfish!

Emphasizing the physical cause of death, such as sickness or accident, is usually unwise. Many people become ill and do not die. Why did Daddy die? Many people experience automobile accidents and come out unscratched. Why did big brother get killed?

"Grandma has gone to heaven" may be a true statement, but it can create confusion, because Grandma's body was put into a grave in the cemetery. Older children may be able to grasp the idea of the person's soul leaving the body and going to be with Christ, but it is not likely younger children will.

Perhaps the best analogy is the one Paul uses in 1 Corinthians 15:35-50, the planting of the seed. Children are acquainted with trees and flowers and realize that they grow, produce fruit and flowers, and then "die," only to reappear in the spring. This is a law of nature that has been instituted by God. Our bodies are like seeds. We plant the body in the ground in the cemetery ("God's acre"), and one day it will be raised in glory and beauty, a new body fitted for eternity.

Adapted from Comforting the Bereaved by Warren W. and David W. Wiersbe, copyright 1985, Moody Press, Moody Bible Institute of Chicago. Used by permission.
Robert R. Lavelle: A People Helper

by Russell Pulliam

At 70, Robert R. Lavelle deserves retirement, but Christ's death and the needs of Lavelle's low-income, predominantly black community in Pittsburgh keep him going in an unusual line of service for the Lord.

He is executive vice president of the Dwelling House Savings and Loan Association, but not a traditional banker. He helps poor people own their homes and prays with customers who fall behind in their payments. Despite robberies, Dwelling House is maintained in a poor community in Pittsburgh, to be available to those in need.

"We recognize our responsibility, where we are, to use our resources to help any poor, black, or otherwise deprived person to have the opportunity to help himself. When this occurs, he is able to help someone else," he says.

Even with all the risks and competition, Dwelling House still makes a profit. In 1982 it had the ninth best record in the nation among savings and loan associations of its size. "When you help another person get what he needs for fulfillment, that person has to respond to your needs. That is how you get your profits," Lavelle explained.

His efforts have increased home ownership in the Hill District from 12 percent in the early sixties to 40 percent today. Black Enterprise magazine named Dwelling House as its Savings & Loan Association of the Year in 1984.

While the interest rate is kept lower than the market rate for home buyers, savers receive the 5.5 percent passbook rate, giving Dwelling House the capital to keep monthly mortgage payments low enough for poor families. Savers come from 45 states and four foreign countries to help in this business/ministry.

"Many people write and praise God that they can save at a place that is helping people," Lavelle says. "I want to show that, despite what people think, Christian love and sound banking can be reconciled."

This unusual approach to business also opens doors to share Christ with others. "The needs of this community are so great," he says. "It seems like I spend a lot of my time just talking to people, encouraging them. Someone might ask, 'Why are you doing it?' That's when you get to tell them about Christ.'"

Lavelle learned about Christ and a life of service to others from his parents, his mother, a semi-invalid, kept witnessing to her son, telling him he was a good person, a good son, a good father, and a good husband—but not a Christian.

Her death prompted his conversion to Christ in 1964. "I carried the guilt of knowing about Christ while rejecting Him," he recalls. "When I finally couldn't carry the burden any longer, I surrendered my life completely."

"When a child has believing parents, he or she has everything," he now says. "It took me a long time to understand... but the Lord was patient with me and permitted me to struggle through disbelief. Yet I couldn't refute the evidence of my parents' belief because they were examples of their faith. Our children learn a lot more from what they see us to be than from what they hear us say."

Until the time that Dwelling House meets all the needs of the poor and black and otherwise depressed communities of the Greater Pittsburgh area, "there is a real need to make the existence of the poor known and to meet the needs of the people. That means you are swimming upstream, and the current is rough," Lavelle concludes.

A Teen's Trial by Fire

by Mel Johnson

"Remember—everybody will be going!"

The seniors listened to their class president as he described the senior class two-day breakaway. The majority applauded with approval—except one beautiful girl.

She stood to her feet and said, "No, everybody is not going. I'm not!" She took her stand against the majority and won. The class president with a snicker and a tone of ridicule said, "Well, how many agree with her?" To his amazement many hands went up. It brings us back to a few years ago in history.

The music began. The king had ordered it. All the people were falling forward on their faces—all except Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Perhaps somebody yelled, "Get down—they'll kill all of us." They didn't look at the rest and they didn't pay any attention to the guards hurrying toward them. They stood looking straight forward with conviction. Soon they were in the furnace, enveloped by the flames.

Then they were silent. They were alive. The ropes were gone and the three of them walked unharmed in the fire.

They had chosen to stand. In the furnace they walked with the God of heaven. They were not forgotten by God and they shall be remembered forever, because they chose to stand. So will the courageous senior.
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- MATTHEW 16:18

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The story is told by Cathleen Crowell Webb, the woman who came forward with the story that caused a media sensation last year. Author Marie Chapian helps Webb tell her story.

Surely Cathleen is telling the truth, yet how could she ignore the plight of Gary Dotson through nearly two years of criminal proceedings and six years of imprisonment? Even more baffling is how she could contain the story for approximately four years after she became a Christian.

The whole tale is crowned with irony as the lies of an imaginary rape, concocted to cover a possible pregnancy, were quite readily accepted in 1977—and the truth was rejected in 1985 by the same system that put Dotson behind bars.

Cathy's story is interspersed with observations by Chapian, as she tries to sort out Webb's troubled natural and foster home background. Marie and Cathleen dig through the background of neglect and rejection, which left the child living with the threat that she would be sent back to the state if she did not please those around her.

To gain favor she covered the parts that did not please with lies. That process became second nature to her and laid the groundwork for the tale she would later weave.

On top of the network of lies, Cathy had a growing ability to put the untruths out of her head. That way they did not bother her young conscience. This is the only reason she can give for her calloused indifference to the real victim of the crime—Gary Dotson.

The book is worth reading. It raises the consciousness of the reader and reveals a turbulent story of two families waiting for a resolution to this legal and moral dilemma. (Fleming H. Revell, 1985, 222pp., $15.95)

N.D.W.

**AN EXCERPT FROM**

**FORGIVE ME**

by Cathleen Crowell Webb and Marie Chapian

Reviewed by Ann Wharton, free-lance writer and assistant professor of journalism at Liberty University, Lynchburg, Virginia.

The reader is left with a feeling of ambivalence as he puts down the book *Forgive Me*, which details the story of a fabricated rape and the real victim, an innocent man sentenced to prison for a crime he did not commit.

I had the desire to do what was right; I also had fears. It took time to gain strength and courage from the Lord, because I had no courage of my own. I was petrified because of my fear of losing David and the kids.

God's Word ministered to me powerfully. He said, "I will never leave you, nor forsake you," so that we can boldly say, "The Lord is my Helper. I will not fear." He began to fill me with the strength and courage I had asked for. He wasn't just making me correct the evil I had done. He was going to help me do it. I knew the time was now ripe and the Lord would enable me; with Him I could conquer my fears, if I would simply trust, obey, and do the will of the Father.

The author compares the Book of Proverbs to medicine: you could not live on it by itself, but you have to ingest it as needed for good health. Indeed, the Book of Proverbs covers the entire range of man's well-being: physical, mental, spiritual, and even financial. Alden's goal is to reconstitute these highly concentrated doses, so the reader clearly sees their meaning and application, a task he does very well. After a brief introduction (perhaps too brief), he comments on every single verse, a feature lacking in some commentaries on the book. Appeal to the Hebrew text is found only where critical, and there are constant applications to contemporary man, always exegetically based. Although having so many comments begin with the words "verse so-and-so" is a little tiresome, the content is always quite accurate, clear, and practical. By his use of applications Alden has maintained the goal of the Book of Proverbs when it was compiled: to enable man to live skillfully in every area of life. (Baker Book House, 1983, 222pp., $12.95)
Malachi: God's Unchanging Love
by Walter C. Kaiser, Jr.

The subtitle of the first book indicates immediately that Kaiser's interest is far more practical than theoretical. The content of these books bears this out. He wants to bridge the gap that has unfortunately often existed between the detailed study of the biblical text and the actual delivery of the sermon that is supposed to be based on it. To enable the preacher to get from his study to his pulpit without losing the exegetical nuggets he has dug, or boring the people to whom he will present them, Kaiser has fashioned the "syntactical-theological method" of exegesis. The goal of exegesis remains "the practice of and the set of procedures for discovering the author's intended meaning" (p. 47, his emphasis). The word syntactical especially emphasizes the context as the key to exposing the writer's meaning; the word theological denotes the core message of the passage in question, which can be discovered only by paying proper attention to the "analogy of (antecedent) Scripture." Appropriate prescriptions for both aspects of exegesis are fully set forth, including a chapter on homiletical analysis.

Kaiser also practices what he preaches, as evidenced by the second book which demonstrates the principles espoused in the first. He outlines Malachi in five key sections and constructs his outline to reflect a theological transition from Malachi's day to our own, rather than simply an outline of what Malachi says. For example, the first three verses are titled "Our God's Elective Love" rather than, say, "God's Election of Israel." The book is filled with the usual technical explanations and is rich with illustrations and applications as well. It ends with two appendixes: one showing how Kaiser constructed his commentary in accord with his own method and a second that affirms the usefulness of commentaries for the Bible student.

These volumes should be taken as a helpful step in the right direction of preaching biblical content in a way that will edify, not bore. (Baker Book House, 1983, 268 pp., $11.95 and 1984, 171 pp., $6.95) — N.D.W.

Daniel
by John C. Whitcomb

John Whitcomb's new commentary on Daniel in the Everyman's Bible Commentary series is superb. This volume is a concise treatment of the dispensational (pretribulational and premillennial) view of the prophecies of Daniel. Whitcomb argues clearly for the unity and historicity of the book as a sixth-century B.C. product of the deported Hebrew prophet himself. He systematically unravels Daniel's prophecies of the 70 weeks and the rise and fall of the kings of the north and the kings of the south, culminating in the ultimate confrontation between Christ and the Antichrist. (Moody Press, 1985, 173 pp., $5.95) — E.H.
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LU Relations Office Receives Awards

The Council of Advancement and Support of Education recently notified Liberty University that the LU Office of University Relations has won two awards in the annual CASE District III Awards program.

The Award of Excellence was given to the department's 1985 multimedia presentation used in the university's Visitor Center and in the recruitment program. A Special Merit Award was also given for the overall student recruitment program. Liberty won over many prestigious colleges and universities in the Southeast.

The awards program was established to recognize the creative work of institutional advancement professionals throughout the district. Thirty awards in four categories were given at the CASE conference in Atlanta, February 9-12.

Hancock Building—Quality Addition to LU Facilities

The newest addition to the LU campus, the Hancock Athletic Center, was officially dedicated on February 12. The two-story building houses a locker room for 120 athletes and 15 coaches. Both the training room with whirlpools and the weight room for indoor drills have artificial turf floor covering. Plenty of office space and meeting rooms provide a central headquarters for LU athletics. Even the media has noted that the facility has "major league written all over it."

This complex was given by Arthur L. and Angela H. Williams in honor of her parents Sidney Lanier and William Gates Hancock. "I believe this new facility will help us in our quest to become competitive on the NCAA Division I level," said Jerry Falwell. "It has already helped us attract several top caliber athletes who previously would not have considered Liberty."

"I trust that this structure will serve as a constant reminder of God's faithfulness to this university," concluded Falwell in the dedication ceremonies.

LU Establishes Oxford Study Centre

Liberty University President A. Pierre Guillermin has announced the formation of the Oxford Study Centre, a working relationship with Wycliffe Hall, Oxford, giving Liberty students the opportunity to study in the oldest university in the world. A limited number of exceptional students will spend four to six weeks in residence at Oxford each summer with the centre dean and one other Liberty faculty member.

This arrangement reflects Liberty's position as a school where orthodox theology is infused by a spirit of intellectual vigor, international concern, and theological relevance. Oxford University was a focal point of scholarly activity as early as A.D. 1117 and today ranks as one of the leading universities in the Western world. Oxford scholars who have heavily influenced Western world history include John Locke, Lewis Carroll, C.S. Lewis, John Wesley, John Wycliffe, William Tyndale, and George Whitefield.

Terry L. Miethe, professor of philosophy at Liberty University, has been appointed the adjunct professor at Wycliffe Hall, Oxford, and dean of the Oxford Study Centre. He commented, "The credit for the foresight to go ahead and work out this unprecedented opportunity for an institution like ours must go to President A. Pierre Guillermin, who saw the potential and gave the go-ahead to establish the Oxford Study Centre."

Dr. Falwell with the Hancock family: Gary and Linda Bishop, April Williams, Art Williams II, Angela and Art Williams, Dr. and Mrs. Hancock, Sidney and Bud Ogletree.

Terry Miethe, dean of new Oxford Study Centre

CALENDAR

March
28—LU Spring Break Begins

April
6—Dr. Falwell speaks at Temple Baptist Church, Detroit, Michigan (11:00 a.m. Service)
10-13—LU College for a Weekend
10-13—TRBC Youth Conference
18-20—LU Spring Arts Festival
21-23—Jerry Falwell Pastors' Conference
Looking Back... 1970-1971

The new sanctuary opened in 1970. The church's budget reached $1 million for the first time and the staff had grown to 80. Two education buildings were completed and occupied by Lynchburg Christian Academy. The church purchased four new color television cameras.

In 1971 average attendance for the 15-year-old church was 4,857. As a major part of the church's ministry, Liberty University was founded with an initial enrollment of 154 students. Houses were purchased around the church to use as dormitories. The church and schools now needed 200 employees. To underwrite financial expenses of the college, the 15,000 Club was formed. The first TRBC Living Christmas Tree was performed.

Church Mother — A Treasured Title

In 1961, Mrs. Lorna Watts became the church mother. For 25 years she has been the oldest surviving charter member. What does the title mean? “I think it means a lot to everybody. It means more than anything in the world to me,” said Mrs. Watts.

In a special publication honoring the church's 25th anniversary, Mrs. Watts wrote, “I have been a member of Thomas Road Baptist Church since its first day of existence. I love my church, and I love my pastor, Dr. Jerry Falwell, just like my own son. I believe in what my pastor has always unashamedly preached—the gospel—the death, burial, and Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. Many years have passed since our church was first begun, and Dr. Falwell has weathered many storms. Now in these trying times my prayer is that God will strengthen him and let him continue to preach the gospel to the world.”

Mrs. Watts was ill with heart problems for over three months, but she was glad when she was strong enough to attend church once again. The 87-year-old church mother can often be seen sitting on the large porch of her home, where she lives quietly with her daughter.

OTGH Travel Changes Name

The Old-Time Gospel Hour Travel Service, now in its fourth year, has changed its name to University Travel. Formed to meet the need for Christian expertise in the automated field of travel planning, University Travel is not just a tour operator. As a full-service travel agency, it has access to all airlines and makes complete reservation and rental arrangements at no charge to customers.

With the volume and connections, especially international, University Travel can usually obtain lower rates than can the individual who makes his own arrangements.

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John F. Walvoord
Staunch Conservative Retires
from Dallas Seminary

"He has provided strong leadership to the seminary, and he has always had a keen dependence on the Lord in any situation."
by Michael Fluent

Presidential changes occur at Dallas Theological Seminary just a bit more frequently than the return of Halley's Comet. In fact, for only the second time in its 62-year history, Dallas Seminary finds itself in a transition at the top.

On April 1 John F. Walvoord concludes 33 years as president and 50 years as a faculty member at the seminary. Taking over the helm is Walvoord's longtime friend and colleague, Donald K. Campbell.

"Dr. Walvoord has been a joy and a delight to work with," says Campbell, currently the school's executive vice president. "He's the epitome of Christian leadership."

Under President Walvoord's leadership, Dallas Seminary became the fourth largest seminary in the world and one of the most respected academic institutions in Evangelicalism. Walvoord is one of the world's leading Conservative Evangelical theologians. A specialist in biblical eschatology, Walvoord's extensive ministry includes two dozen books, hundreds of magazine and journal articles, and innumerable appearances at church gatherings and Bible conferences.

"His stamina is amazing," says Andy Wileman, director of public relations at the seminary. "The amount of work he does plus all his traveling would kill a 30-year-old man!"

And the 75-year-old Walvoord intends to keep away from the rocking chair. Effective April 1 he becomes chancellor of the seminary and plans to devote a full-time work schedule to public relations and similar functions.

"One of the projects underway," says President Walvoord, "is 'Vision Two Thousand.' It is a 15-year program of events for Dallas Seminary. The first step is to enlarge our library 200 percent to about 60,000 square feet. It will cost nearly $7 million, but the impact is exciting to contemplate."

Large projects have been part of the Walvoord legacy at Dallas Seminary, especially since the early 1970s. His tenure as president witnessed several campus expansions, a 10-fold increase in students, and the inauguration of both the Dallas Seminary Video Ministry and the school's award-winning quarterly magazine, Kindred Spirit. The seminary's 13-acre campus in east Dallas now supports nearly 2,000 students in seven graduate degree programs.

Walvoord personally holds seven graduate and undergraduate degrees. Although recognized as a gifted scholar and administrator, John F. Walvoord initially charted a different course for his life.

The Sheboygan native grew up along Wisconsin's southeast coast, where he enjoyed a Christian upbringing that included memorization of the Shores Catechism in his hometown Presbyterian church.

When Walvoord was 12, a Baptist minister visited the Presbyterian church's young people's group. "I did not hear a word he said," he recalls, "but I was very much impressed with what I saw. He was retired, in his seventies, and was the picture of contentment. He had been the pastor of little country churches all his life, and never had cut a big swath. But he was content. So I said to myself, 'If that is what it means to be a preacher, that's for me.'" One year later, John Walvoord went forward at an altar call to commit himself to full-time ministry.

The family moved to Racine in 1925. There, a Thursday night Bible study in Galatians left a lasting impression. "The speaker said you cannot be good enough to be saved. I thought I was good enough. I went to church all the time and read the Bible continually. But the speaker, William McCarrell, stressed the grace of God. If I was not saved before, I was saved then."

John Walvoord attended Wheaton College, where he consciously yielded himself to the Lord. "To me, yielding yourself to the Lord meant going anywhere and doing anything. And I figured the hardest job was to become a missionary." Throughout college he immersed himself in missions activities, and studied to prepare himself for that field. China was his goal.

But the first step to China was more education. One of his early struggles was deciding between Princeton's seminary and Dallas Theological Seminary. On paper there was no contest. Princeton was 100 years old with a well-established faculty and curriculum. And it was Presbyterian.

Dallas was seven years old, had 65 students, and claimed, at most, five full-time teachers.

We do not believe in sloppiness. After all, the Lord's work should be done with excellence—not wastefully, of course—but with excellence."
“Every time I opened the catalogs, I would decide on Princeton. But when I prayed, I sensed Dallas was the right one. Finally I sought the advice of J. Oliver Buswell, then president of Wheaton. He said, ‘If I were you, I would go to Dallas. You will get a good education there.’ That settled it for me. No facts. Just his saying ‘go.’ So I did. Since then, I have always tried to be careful in giving advice. If a student comes to me for my advice, he just might follow it! I know I did, and it changed my life.”

John Walvoord nourished the missions dream through his senior year at Dallas. Yet something was wrong. He prayed about China Inland Mission, but received no peace. He considered India, but again did not think it was right. He candidated at a rural church in Wyoming, thinking it would be a mission field, of sorts. But there was still no peace.

Then he recalled an earlier invitation from Lewis Sperry Chafer, founder and president of Dallas Seminary. Chafer wanted the 25-year-old Walvoord to become the school’s registrar. Originally, Walvoord (he now had a Th.D. from the seminary) declined the offer because he did not want to pursue a career in education. But now, after several closed doors in missions and the pastorate, he considered the possibility and asked God to have Chafer renew the offer. Ten days later the invitation came again, and on March 13, 1936, John F. Walvoord began his career at Dallas Seminary as registrar and associate professor of systematic theology.

Two years earlier he had assumed a Fort Worth pastorate, a position he held through 1950. When Chafer suffered a stroke, Walvoord became the president’s assistant. President Chafer died in August 1952. That October, the seminary board elected Walvoord to the presidency, and he was officially installed as Dallas Seminary’s second president in February 1953.

The ensuing decades pushed both the seminary and its president to national prominence. Dallas Seminary earned a reputation for a gifted faculty and a superb curriculum. The school’s watchword was “excellence.”

“That has always been our goal,” reflects Walvoord. “Whether it is education, a first-class public relations team, or a system-six letter, we have expected excellence. We do not believe in sloppiness. After all, the Lord’s work should be done with excellence—not wastefully, of course—but with excellence.”

Also earning high marks is Walvoord’s management style. He strives for teamwork and considers each employee vital to the school’s performance. As a result, the seminary’s personnel structure lacks many of the usual layers of cumbersome management.

“Dr. Walvoord has always developed leaders at the seminary,” says Wileman. “He likes to take young people and put them in positions where they grow and develop their talents. You could call it an informal sense of discipling.”

“The seminary family has only the highest respect for Dr. Walvoord,” says Roy B. Zuck, academic dean and professor of Bible exposition. “He has provided strong leadership to the seminary in so many ways, and he has always had a keen dependence on the Lord and on His will in any situation.”

That high respect follows John Walvoord to his chancellor’s position. But his leaving the faculty prompts the demise of the tradition of upperclassmen telling freshmen: “Take everything you can from Professor Walvoord.”

Michael Fluent is a freelance writer in Dallas, Texas.
Well, exc-u-use me!

The Bible further explains that we are not justified in blaming either God or the Devil for our sins. James 1:13-14 says, “Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.”

This characteristic of blaming others for our sins has become an integral part of society today. We love to demand our rights, but we dislike taking responsibility for our actions.

The Pharisees in Jesus’ day came under this description when they said that Jesus cast out demons by Beelzebub, the prince of the demons. Jesus told them that they had committed the unpardonable sin, the sin of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit (Matt. 12:31). When someone’s conscience becomes dead, he can no longer experience the conviction of the Holy Spirit, which is necessary for salvation. As Proverbs 29:1 says, “He, that hath a ready ear, shall hear; and the fear of the Lord shall protect him.” Those who persist in excusing themselves for their sins will one day have to appear before the Great White Throne described in Revelation 20. No excuses will be accepted there. There will be no court of appeal, no dismissal for some technicality. The one determining factor will be whether the person’s name is written in the Book of Life. If not, his destination is the lake of fire.

But, what is this Book of Life? How does one get his name in it? It is the record of those who are saved. John identifies them. “And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life” (1 John 5:11-12).

If you have received Jesus Christ as your Lord and Saviour, having confessed to Him that you are a sinner in need of forgiveness, your name is written in the Book of Life. Jesus has excused you. His is the only excuse God will accept.

Russell J. Asvitt is a free-lance writer in Concord, California.
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Values Clarification Needs Clarification

To ensure that non-Christians would not be exposed to Christian dogma, American public education in the sixties substituted “values clarification” programs for Bible reading and prayer in the classroom. Concomitantly, and not coincidently, building moral character in students began to fade from the educational scene.

As Conservatives cast searching looks at these values clarification programs, textbook adoption, and other questionable educational practices, the new authorities cried, “Censorship.” Neutrality, they declared, was the key. And that neutrality is to be achieved today, according to the National Education Association, by educators themselves, unaided by outside influences.

On page 173 of the 1984-85 edition of the NEA Legislative Program, the attitude toward outside involvement in the determination of curriculum is set forth. It states that teachers and librarians must “have the right to select instructional/library materials without censorship or legislative interference.”

The NEA also objects to the Hatch Amendment, which protects pupils against unwitting and unapproved psychological testing, increasingly inserted into public school programs across all grade levels and curriculum materials.

According to the NEA newsletter of April 16, 1984, the NEA opposes the Hatch Amendment. “Enforced as currently written, the Reagan administration’s child privacy regulations [the Hatch Amendment] would mandate that all instructional materials— including teacher’s manuals, films, and tapes—must be made available for parental inspection.”

And why not, responded Phyllis Schlafly in a 1985 newsletter. “Who do the NEA officials think they are that they can deny parents the opportunity to inspect the materials being used on their own children?”

The neutrality to be achieved through the new programs of values clarification somehow fell apart. Designed to help students think through a moral dilemma and reach a conclusion, the programs often reject traditional values taught at home and in the church.

The dream of neutrality was and is illusive. According to William J. Bennett, U.S. secretary of education and former director of the National Humanities Center in Research Triangle Park, North Carolina, who addressed the point in an article in the Summer 1981 issue of the American Educator: “Values education programs are not all neutral, in subject matter or techniques.... They are, in fact, biased in favor of particular ideologies. Interestingly, none of the biases I have observed are biased toward conservative values or toward the mixed liberal realism of the founding fathers.”

Educators may not initiate “trendy” philosophies into the classroom when they have promised to be neutral.

In addition, according to Bennett, the values education programs not only view traditional moral education as useless, they also provide “an impoverished view of morality” by the use of little games with unrealistic objectives and lacking a full range of moral options.

Ethics teachers in colleges reap the harvest of public school experimentation with values education. Christina Hoff Sommers, a professor of philosophy, addressed the subject of values teaching in an article in the Summer 1984 issue of The American Scholar.

“As a college teacher coping with the motley ideologies of high school graduates, I find this [presentation of moral choices similar to choices in a cafeteria line] alarming. Young people today, many of whom are in a complete moral stupor, need to be shown that there is an important distinction between moral and immoral decisions.”

Illustrating her point, she wrote: “Values clarification blurs the distinction [between moral and immoral decisions]. Children are queried about their views on homemade Christmas gifts, people who wear wigs, and whether or not they approve of abortion or would turn in a hit-and-run driver as if no significant differences existed among these issues.”

This sort of teaching has roused the ire of Conservatives and caused many educators to take a second look at the teaching of ethics in the public schools. The American Federation of Teachers, with a membership of 580,000, has involved itself in the evaluation. An affiliate of the AFL-CIO and labor organization for teachers since 1916, the group’s Educational Issues Department is addressing the problem.

According to Marilyn Rauth, executive director of the department, “Kids come out with no values at all. Kids come out wishy-washy. And the public has rightfully complained.”

Another group, the National Council for Better Education, has attracted more than 30,000 members since its inception in 1983. One-third of those members are teachers or former teachers.

Founded by former public school teacher Sally D. Reed, NCBE’s primary goal is to return the control of public education to the American people and to the communities it serves, Linda Clark, NCBE director of communications, stated.
Because of the pressure, schools are making changes. Some base their new programs for "consensus values" on such documents as the United States Constitution and the Bill of Rights, which provide core values. Classical and contemporary literature are also sources for the teaching of values.

Some look for sources that stress civic (community) or basic values. One thing is clear: the values are of a non-controversial, nontheological, nondogmatic nature.

The American Federation of Teachers has prepared units on four major consensus values: responsibility, honesty, courage, and compassion. Materials in each of the units have been taken from classical and contemporary literature, folk tales and fables, newspapers, court cases, music, art, and film.

For example, the theme of responsibility is developed around a statement from Abraham Lincoln, a court case, quotations from the biblical account of Cain and Abel (Am I my brother's keeper?), the poem "He Ain't Heavy... He's My Brother," selections from Steinbeck's Of Mice and Men, and Marjorie Kinnan Rawling's The Yearling, as well as others.

The unit on honesty is similar, utilizing these as well as other accounts: the stories of Pinocchio and George Washington and the cherry tree, selections from Les Misérables by Victor Hugo, and Tolstoy's War and Peace.

On another front NCBE and Reed have made a highly visible attack against the NEA through her book NEA: Propaganda Front of the Radical Left.

**"Many young people are in a complete moral stupor. They need to be shown that there is an important distinction between moral and nonmoral decisions."**

So potent is the manuscript that the NEA has answered her charges in its own 31 Flavors of Extremism. A second publication by Reed provides a rebuttal to the NEA responses.

"It's just the beginning of a campaign to draw nationwide attention to the devastating discrepancy between what the nation's educators say they need and what the union hierarchy says it wants," Reed contends.

That discrepancy is highlighted through the results of a poll of 1,007 educators conducted by NCBE and released last June. Fifty-one percent of the teachers who responded were NEA members. Issues covered in the poll included abortion, voluntary prayer in schools, forced busing to achieve racial balance, gay rights, and the use of union dues to lobby for aid to the Contras in Nicaragua.

Results showed the closest category was gay rights in which educators split their opinions 47 to 45 percent against such rights. They favored the restitution of voluntary prayer in schools 53 to 43 percent; disapproved federal funding of abortion by 59 to 37 percent; objected to the use of dues to lobby for aid to the Contras by 80 to 20 percent; and opposed busing to achieve racial balance by 68 to 26 percent.

Reed campaigns to enlighten educators and the general public concerning the actions of the NEA, which run counter to what she feels is in the best interest of American education and what can be classified only as activities not related to education.

She also has a special plan to turn the educational process back to the local communities through Educational Enterprise Zones by the severing of federal and state monies and controls.

Preliminary plans are under way, with a number of school districts already interested in setting up local autonomy for their educational process.

School boards interested in establishing their district as an educational enterprise zone must first apply to the state for release from financial and other obligations to the state.

NCBE is not concerned about the loss of federal and state funds because the major source of income for local districts is the local tax structure. The federal funds constitute about 7 percent of the income; and while state funds vary from one location to another, the amount supplied to the school is a great deal less than that generated from within the community itself.

To help with the organization of the system, four parent/teacher committees would be formed. Each would work with one of the following areas: teacher activities, student activities, curriculum selection, and textbook selection.

"We think it will work," Clark said.

The purpose of the trial zones is to put the plan to the test. NCBE is initially interested in school systems that have more than one high school, one junior high, and one elementary school, so parents in the district have a choice. Parents will sign up to enroll their children in the program.

If the suggestions do not satisfy everyone, it must be acknowledged as an improvement when students are taught there is a difference between right and wrong and that some things are right and others are wrong; when they are taught that they do have a responsibility to others and to society; and when they are taught such values as courage, honesty, integrity, and compassion.

The original voices of those in the wilderness are being joined by others who see the need for a meeting on common ground, for the building of a strong and principled educational system to undergird and further develop these United States of America.

— Ann Wharton
Supreme Court Upholds Aid to Blind Ministry Student

In a unanimous decision, the U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that state aid can be distributed to students who use the funds for religious education. The High Court ruled that the state of Washington will not violate the Constitution if it grants vocational rehabilitation aid to a blind student studying to become a minister. Justice Thurgood Marshall, writing the majority opinion, stated, "The establishment clause is not violated every time money previously in the possession of a state is conveyed to a religious institution."

In 1979 Larry Witters, who suffers from a degenerative eye condition, applied for state aid from the Commission for the Blind to attend the Inland Empire School of the Bible in Spokane. But the Commission rejected the young man’s application saying the state’s constitution forbade such aid. Washington State’s constitution reads: "No money or property shall be appropriated for or applied to any religious worship, exercise or instruction, or the support of any religious establishment."

A state trial court upheld the Commission’s decision. But the state Supreme Court ignored the state’s constitution and said such aid violates the U.S. Constitution’s "establishment clause" because the aid would have "the primary effect of advancing religion." The Supreme Court rejected that argument, saying the use of neutrally available money for religious education did not "confer any message of state endorsement of religion."

Because the money is given to Witters, who is making an independent choice of education, the court said it is clear that "any aid provided under Washington’s program that ultimately flows to religious institutions does so only as a result of the genuinely independent and private choices of aid recipients... The decision to support religious education is made by the individual, not by the state." However, the Supreme Court ruling does not assure Witters he will receive state aid. Justice Marshall suggested that the "far stricter dictates" of Washington’s constitution could possibly be used to deny the student the rehabilitation aid. He also said Witters could be denied aid if the state could prove that Witters must be supervised by the state during college instruction.

Furthermore, Justice Marshall indicated that state aid could be unconstitutional if more than a "minuscule" amount of the budget went to religious education. Five Supreme Court justices have expressed dissatisfaction with Justice Marshall’s narrow ruling.

The case will now go back to Washington’s Supreme Court to determine whether the state’s constitution permits such aid.

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**NEWS BRIEFS**

**PRESENTS**

**EXPOSURE DAY**

Under the direction of Coach Ron Bishop, EXPOSURE DAY is conducted in order to provide an opportunity for Christian basketball players (grades 9-12) to exhibit basketball talent. An evaluation of each player will be made and sent to Christian college coaches. Recommendations and assistance in serving athletic scholarships for worthy athletes will be provided.

**MIDWEST EXPOSURE DAY**
Baptist Christian Academy
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Host: Duane Schnelle
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**SOUTHEAST EXPOSURE DAY**
Baptist University of America
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Host: Ken Lassiter
May 17, 1986

Dan C. Alexander leads Save Our Schools.

**New Group Formed to Fight NEA**

The 150,000-member Save Our Schools lobbying organization has formed a foundation to expose the Liberal activities of the National Education Association—the nation's largest teachers' union.

Called the SOS Research and Education Foundation, the organization will also research the problems facing public education.

First on the agenda of the new SOS Foundation is to publish 100,000 copies of the book, *Who's Ruining Our Schools? The Case Against the NEA Teacher Union*.

Dan C. Alexander, president of the SOS Foundation, said the book will "expose the NEA as a radical political union that does not represent the views of parents, students, or even the majority of American teachers."

He added, "Our new SOS Research and Education Foundation will serve as a watchdog of the NEA and will publish subsequent findings on its activities."

**Mayor Koch Introduces Gay Rights Law**

Mayor Koch of New York City is still undeterred in his efforts to secure special civil rights protection for homosexuals.

Defeated last year when several courts struck down his executive order that would have forced city-funded agencies to hire homosexuals, Mayor Koch began the New Year by introducing a "homosexual-rights" bill in the city council.

Saying that many homosexuals have "encountered prejudice," "hostility," "physical violence," and "distrust," the bill declares "that discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation exists, that it unjustly threatens the well-being of thousands of New Yorkers, and that it should be prohibited in regard to employment, housing, land, commercial space, and public accommodations."

Though the bill has strong support in the city council, the new majority leader, Peter Vallone of Queens, is opposed to the bill. "I oppose it in conscience," Vallone told the *New York Times*.

The city council has voted on a homosexual rights bill for the last 15 years. Only once was it passed out of committee, and then it was defeated by the full 35-member council.

This year, however, the bill already has 14 sponsors, and it needs only 18 votes to become law.

Currently, 51 cities in the United States have homosexual rights laws.

**Lawsuit Asks Court to Overturn Ban on Braille Playboy**

It costs taxpayers $103,000 a year, and it is read by only 1,000 blind people, but almost a half dozen groups have filed suit in federal court to overturn a congressional ban on publishing *Playboy* magazine in Braille.

*Playboy* has been published in Braille by the Library of Congress since 1970. But that practice was halted last July when the House of Representatives passed an amendment forbidding the Library of Congress to continue further publication of Braille editions of *Playboy*. 
Representative Chalmers Wylie of Ohio, who sponsored the amendment, said in floor debate last summer that Playboya articles contain "talk about wanton idleness, of wanton and illicit sex, and so forth." He added that most blind people in his district feel there is a better way to spend the money.

Currently, the Library of Congress spends $33.8 million annually to publish 36 magazines in Braille.

The lawsuit claims that the ban on Braille editions of Playboy is a violation of free speech and amounts to "blatant, paternalistic censorship." The lawsuit asks the court to order the Library of Congress to continue publication of Playboy in Braille editions.

The lawsuit is filed by the American Council of the Blind, the Blinded Veterans Association, the American Library Association, Representative Vic Fazio of California, certain blind readers of Braille magazines, and, of course, Playboy Enterprises.

Supporters of the law say the House of Representatives has a constitutional right to decide how money is spent and that separation of powers prevents the courts from telling Congress how to allocate that money.

**Christian Musicians ProducE Pro-Life Album**

Saying they want to "rescue the unborn," over 100 Christian recording artists, musicians, technicians, and their families have donated their time and talents to produce an album they hope will benefit the Christian pro-life movement.

The album, "Fight the Fight," is intended to be a fund-raising tool for the Christian pro-life movement, said Buddy Owens, executive director of Live Oak Records, which released the recording in late January.

Written by Anne Herring of the contemporary singing group 2nd Chapter of Acts, "Fight the Fight" is "a call to Christians for prayer and action against abortion in the United States," promoters say.

"Neither Live Oak Records, nor any of the artists, musicians, publishers, or retail outlets will receive benefit from 'Fight the Fight.' All proceeds from the sales of this recording and related products will be given to Christian pro-life organizations," said Owens.

"In addition, we are inviting Christian pro-life groups on both national and local levels to order bulk copies of 'Fight the Fight' at cost for use in their own fund-raising efforts."

Artists include: Scott Wesley Brown, Debby Boone, Dallas Holm, Pam Mark Hall, Sandi Patti, and Pat Boone.

For more information write: Fight the Fight, P. O. Box 1210, Lindale, Texas 75571-1210.

There is a sense of revival and turning back to our Judeo-Christian roots and the faith of our Founding Fathers."

Fellowship of Christian Athletes, begun in 1954, added 742 campus student groups between 1984 and 1985. Executive Vice President Jack Roberts says, "I think the reason for our more than doubling the number of huddle groups in the last four years has nothing to do with what we have done on a national level. The reason is we are in our second generation of FCA—those who were involved with us in high school years ago are now adults and want their children to be involved in FCA. These people are willing to give their time and talent, and they become the arms and legs that allow us to expand so rapidly."

**Religious Student Groups Growing Consistently**

A recent newspaper story by the New York Times News Service proclaimed, "Fundamentalist Student Groups Multiply on Nation's Campuses." The article noted growth among several religious student groups, including Fellowship of Christian Athletes and Campus Crusade for Christ, and interviewed professors who gave varying reasons for the renewed interest in religion. Reasons cited included the country's Conservative trend and the mental confusion brought about by a questioning university environment.

Student groups are growing. Campus Crusade had organizations on 40 campuses in 1960; today there are 85,575 campus organizations. Don Beehler of the group's national administration says, "There are a lot of reasons for growth. One is this country's growing interest in spiritual things. Students are eager to share their life-changing experience with Jesus Christ with other students.
Abraham continued from page 21

(Isaac and Jacob), received only the promise and not the reality of the promise (i.e., living in the land itself). Nevertheless, the others believed God when he solemnized His offer of the land in His covenant (Gen. 17:8; 48:4). Again, the text has become 20 repetitions of this offer of the land.

So there it is in all its splendor—the covenant God made with Abraham, with its threefold elements of an heir, and inheritance, and the heritage of the gospel. Note that one element is not intelligible without the other, and each has implications for the other as they present a cumulative effect. The heir or “seed” that was promised to Eve, who would crush Satan’s head, is the same heir promised to the patriarch. This seed would ultimately come as our Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus is Lord of all—including history and geography. To demonstrate His lordship, and the all-embracing nature of His Word, He deeded the land of ancient Canaan to Israel in perpetuity. This grant had nothing to do with natural rights, merits, or prior claims; it was all of grace. It would show that what God had spoken, He was able to complete and to fulfill in human experience.

Moreover, Israel would stand as the great watermark of history in signaling that all the lands and wealth of the nations belonged to God just as much as did the heart, soul, and interior aspects of mankind. Thus exactly where east met west, where three continents of earth (Africa, Asia, and Europe) came together, God placed His mark, His seed, His land, and His message for all the nations of the earth, if they would but hear.

Furthermore, this covenant is a one-party obligation. There are no conditions stated, implied, or added later. The promise to Abraham will always be God’s gift, and it will be His work to maintain its provisions in perpetuity.

Significance of the Abrahamic Promise. Few promises of Scripture function in such a strategic and foundational way as the Abrahamic covenant. Without it, we would have been deprived of one of the earliest and most seminal statements of the gospel (Gal. 3:8). Here in embryo form is anticipated the coming of Messiah, the work of God’s grace, and the close connection between God’s gift to Israel and the resultant blessing of all, Jew and Gentile, who would believe. The apostle reduced all this to one word, the “gospel.”

Embedded in this unique promise are the seeds for a worldwide missionary vision. From the start God’s reason for blessing Abraham and his seed was so that all the families of the known world should receive the same blessing. This missionary use of the Abrahamic covenant is made even more explicit in Psalm 67:1-2 and 7, which could be read in the Hebrew, “May God be gracious to us and bless and make His face shine on us (see. Num. 6:24-26) in order that . . . your salvation may be known among all nations. God will bless us (Israel) so all ends of the earth will fear Him.” The missionary task has never been optional or a secondary add-on to the program of God. It has always been central, even in the Old Testament.

Finally, the Abrahamic covenant signals the bonding of the state of Israel to the future as well as to the past. No matter how many hardships or even threats of extinction, Israel may face, God has promised His hand will be upon her, and in the end He will restore both the land and the blessing to the fullest.

This act of restoration will simultaneously signal the nations that God is still Lord of all history and all people. Sadly, most will miss this point, and will instead attempt to solve “The Jewish Question” in such ruthless ways that God Himself will finally intercede, to the great dismay of all the nations gathered in Israel, to deal a final devastating blow. Thus the best evidence for the existence and power of God is the Jewish nation.

God will conclude history by remembering His promises. Unlike a cashed check which no longer has any value, each fulfilled promise from Abraham’s day to ours has only given us further confirmation of God’s dependability, and expanded the hope of all the world in the beauty and blessedness of the magnificent plan He gave.

Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., is academic dean and vice president of education at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. His Ph.D. is from Brandeis University, Waltham, Massachusetts.

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A few weeks ago I entertained some friends at a Hyatt coffee shop in Dearborn, Michigan, accompanied by my 15-year-old son, Devin, a committed baseball fanatic.

Immediately upon entering the Hyatt, Devin noticed the California Angels arriving in preparation for a game the next afternoon at Tiger Stadium. He located pen and paper, and set about to obtain some autographs for his growing collection.

Upon his return to the restaurant, he proudly displayed the autographs of Rod Carew and Bobby Gritch. His enthusiasm was tempered, however, because one of the players had not only refused, but had treated Devin rudely when he asked for the signature.

That athlete did not make any friends that night. Spoiled baseball players with multimillion-dollar contracts do not help their images when they seem to care little what paying fans think of their behavior. But I lost no sleep over this arrogance. These things tend to right themselves in time—fans are not stupid. I suspect that by the time this player is 50 he will be in the annual old-timers game, eagerly offering to sign autographs for fans who cannot quite remember who this aging athlete is.

What does bother me, however, is the tendency to see this same celebrity image applied to the ministry. There is hardly a time when I finish speaking as a guest at a church or conference that I am not approached with requests to autograph Bibles. The whole concept is troubling and at times amusing.

All the signatures have "Dr." in front of them and look strangely like they were obtained at a medical convention. Bible-signing can be very humbling. On occasion, when I have spoken at the same church several times, I have had to tell a child that my name is already in his Bible. This is a painful reminder to us both that he does not really know me. I am not even sure what these signatures mean. I don't think they are endorsements. I recently saw Peter Ruckman's autograph on the flyleaf of a New International Version.

Interestingly, some signatures are scrawled on the same page by men who will not speak on the same program, or who write critical articles about one another in religious journals. The autograph seekers probably confuse these luminaries because they do not understand the finer points of ecclesiastical separation. I wonder if God considers this ecumenical Bible-signing a compromise. Perhaps the concept of secondary separation does not extend this far! Being on a page together must not be like being on a platform together.

All the signatures have "Dr." in front of them and look strangely like they were obtained at a medical convention. In the Scripture, people are simply known as Phoebe, Priscilla, Aquila, Andronicus, Barnabas, John, Paul, or Jesus. But in the flyleaf they are always tagged, "Dr."

I am sometimes tempted to sign some unknown or less-known name like Tertius or Quartus—slaves whose names Paul included in Romans 16. Aren't they important enough to be there? Are only those with the speaking gifts asked to sign? Why not ask the janitor who stays behind to lock up to give his autograph? Pretty important man, I think.

The truth is, the whole practice of putting autographs in the flyleaf of God's Word does not make sense. It violates what Paul said about the relative importance of all the body in 1 Corinthians 12:12-28. It also embarrasses me.

I always sign Bibles when asked because I don't want to look like some reluctant, pompous athlete, but I feel stupid, and I always want to preach a sermon to those who ask. I really can't see Paul autographing a parchment of Isaiah!

Truman Dollar, pastor of Temple Baptist Church, Detroit, Michigan, is a published author noted for his thought-provoking and unpredictable insights on current events. He shares his views in this column each month.
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