



NEWSLETTER

Responsible Relationships by Don Basham

Last October marked the tenth anniversary of the occasion when four Bible teachers—Bob Mumford, Charles Simpson, Derek Prince and myself—were joined by God in a committed or “covenant” relationship.

On that particular evening, the four of us (Ern Baxter was to join us in that relationship some three years later) had gathered to discuss how to help a certain Christian leader whom we all knew and respected. This man had fallen into deception and immorality and needed to step down from leadership and ministry until he could get his personal and family life back together.

Unfortunately, our efforts to help him did not succeed. But as we met together that night, God revealed how easily any of us could fall into similar satanic snares, pointing out our need to submit ourselves to one another for oversight, correction, support and direction. In obedience to God, we did precisely that.

In the decade that has followed, we have seen tens of thousands of other Christians come to the same awareness and in turn join themselves to us and to others in responsible, committed relationships based upon the New Covenant in Jesus' blood.

Out of the challenge, the excitement and the pain of those ten

years, I have come personally to certain realizations which I see confirmed again and again. I would like to share seven of them with you.

1. *Responsible relationships between Christians require recognition of delegated authority and submission to it.*

For too long, too many of us have practiced “doing our own thing,” as if what we said and did has little relationship to the rest of the Body of Christ. Fiercely insisting upon a radical kind of independence to “find and follow God's will” regardless of the needs and rights of other believers, we have proclaimed our “freedom in Jesus Christ.”

But no effective society, either spiritual or secular, can function without the establishment of authority and submission to that authority. Armies need generals, nations need presidents, schools need principals and families need parents. In the same way churches need apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers, elders and bishops, not only to proclaim truth but to govern and care for individuals and assemblies.

Only when our spiritual awareness begins to shift from “my Father” to “our Father” and from “Jesus and me” to “Jesus and us” do we finally discover that our own individual spiritual welfare is inextricably linked to the welfare of our local church and the whole Body of

Christ. Sacrificing our strident independence so that we can fit in with the rest of the Body and those whom God has placed in authority is one of the first steps in the slow, painful, yet essential process of growing toward spiritual maturity.

2. *Responsible relationships between Christians require a personal commitment as total as we can make it.*

My father-in-law used to tell a favorite story about a farmer who rejected the attempts of a salesman to sell him new equipment guaranteed to double his crop production. "Son, I don't need any of that fancy new stuff," he said, "I'm only farming half as good as I know how to now!"

Unfortunately, many Christians are like that farmer—half motivated by a low level of commitment that produces only a fraction of the fruit that should be in their lives.

Our ability to face and overcome challenges is directly related to the strength of our commitment to the Lord and to each other. Tentative and half-hearted commitments cannot provide the kind of foundations on which the Kingdom of God can be established.

3. *Responsible relationships inevitably provoke criticism and opposition.*

Paul stated the problem to Timothy clearly: "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (2 Tim. 3:12). Any time we are engaged in an important work for the Lord, someone will criticize and condemn what we are doing.

Opponents and enemies are as much a part of God's plan for our lives as are our supporters and friends. Although no one enjoys the strain and pain that gossip, slander

and criticism force us to endure, persecution and opposition build maturity and holiness in us. If no one ever criticized or opposed us, we would become not only sloppy, but unbearably smug. Peter stated it well:

Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you:

But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings.... (1 Pet. 4:12-13).

4. *While what we are attempting to do is profoundly important, we need to realize that we are not the only ones trying to do the will of God.*

Something a little perverse in each one of us makes us want to believe that no one else is quite as good as "our group." We feel sure that God has spoken to us, calling us to our particular task or ministry, but we are not sure God has *really* called other people to do what they are doing. We are like John who said to Jesus, "Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name; and we forbade him, because he followeth not with us" (Lk. 9:49).

Our problem with being certain God has called us to a particular task and experiencing His blessing in it is that we tend to become proud in our success and critical of those who either are not doing what we are doing, or else are doing it a different way or with a different group.

Millions of Christians who are faithfully attempting to serve God may have never heard of us or of what we are doing! We need to establish and maintain a much broader perspective which will continually remind us that we are only a small part of the Body of Christ. And while it is true that our

contribution is greatly needed by the rest of the Body, it is just as true that much is being done by the rest of the Body of Christ that God intends to bless and enrich us with. What the rest of the Body of Christ has to give us is *more* important than what we have to give it.

5. *Responsible relationships not only provide blessing and protection, they provoke discipline and sacrifice.*

Most of you who read *New Wine*—in fact most of us who have been touched by the charismatic movement—have at one time or another been primarily “blessing-oriented.” That is probably natural for anyone who has been powerfully re-introduced to God’s miraculous provision. But while we remain eternally grateful to God for His abundant grace, manifested through His miraculous gifts, we must go beyond a preoccupation with blessings to acknowledge that blessings alone do not produce maturity—discipline and sacrifice do.

In agriculture, an abundance of rain, sun and nutrients in the soil will produce extravagantly wild growth. But the wise husbandman knows that such luxuriant growth requires pruning to produce abundant fruit. God is a wise husbandman who prunes accurately and relentlessly. Though His pruning and discipline are painful, they are essential for the maturity we all seek in Christ.

6. *Living in responsible relationship requires a sense of humor.*

In Romans 12:3, Paul advises every person “not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think.” Religious, hypocritical people scarcely ever see the humorous side of any situation and nearly always take themselves too seriously. People with a well-developed sense

of humor, on the other hand, rarely take themselves too seriously. They are able to face all kinds of serious, even critical, situations, yet maintain a sense of perspective that keeps them from being overwhelmed by the circumstances.

For us to find peace and fruitfulness wherever God has placed us, for us to forsake our own plans and be willing to lay our lives down for each other, for us to be able to withstand the particular strain of personal spiritual warfare encountered in relationships with others, a healthy and vigorous sense of humor is indispensable.

7. *Living in responsible relationships with each other requires a servant’s heart.*

Someone has said that covenant means “your welfare at my expense.” If that sounds drastically demanding, it is only because so many of us are accustomed to living selfish lives in which we often interpret the Christian life more in terms of what we can get than what we can give.

It is significant that the very last lesson Jesus taught His disciples at the Last Supper just before His betrayal by Judas was a lesson on the importance of serving. The Scriptures are filled with examples of faithful and unfaithful, righteous and unrighteous servants. Some stories serve as warnings to us; others encourage us to higher and more noble kinds of service.

A man with a true servant’s heart finds it right to put another’s welfare ahead of his own. That is what living in responsible relationship with one another is all about. In fact, that is what Christianity is all about!

The cost of responsible relationships—submission, criticism, humility, sacrifice and servant-

hood—is a painfully high price to pay. Many of us may think this kind of commitment is a radically demanding, abnormal brand of Christianity. But we are probably tempted to think so because most of us practice a rather undemanding, subnormal Christianity. Our hope is that we will nevertheless find the goal of maturity to be worth any price, and press on to attain the high and holy purpose God has for those destined for life in His Kingdom. ●

See page seven for pertinent study materials to supplement this article.



Pro-Life Impact

by Bob Robinson

It has been approximately a year since *Intercessors for America* published *When You Were Formed in Secret/Abortion in America*, a booklet contrasting the beauty of birth with the atrocity of abortion. In that year's time, an estimated 1,500,000 abortions have been performed in the United States. However, in that same year's time, over half a million of the abortion booklets have been distributed by IFA and nearly 100,000 by *New Wine Magazine*. Some of the booklets have ended up in strategic places. For instance, every member of the platform committee at last year's Republican National Convention received a copy of the booklet. Though we cannot be certain that the pro-life plank in the Republican platform can be totally attributed to the booklet, undoubtedly its influence contributed to their stance.

Equally encouraging has been the booklet's wide distribution into the homes of individuals all across America and abroad, for only by the responses of individuals to the abortion issue can the battle against abortion ultimately be won. As more people are educated about this issue, more of them will take an active stand against legalized abortion in America.

The impact of *When You Were Formed in Secret* and other anti-abortion efforts is evidently being felt—already we are seeing a change in the attitude of the American people. In Congress, Senator Jesse Helms and Representative Henry Hyde have introduced bills that could deal a severe blow to the abortion movement. If either bill is passed it will legally acknowledge that human life begins at the day of conception and will give individual states the authority to decide the legality of abortion.

Another area of encouragement besides the wide distribution of the booklet and the prospect of further legislative action has been the eagerness of many pro-life groups across America to utilize the abortion booklet in counselling pregnant women. Because of its widespread acceptance and effectiveness, *Intercessors for America* is making tentative plans to translate *Abortion in America* into Spanish and possibly other languages.

The significant impact of *When You Were Formed in Secret/Abortion in America* exceeds our hopes and desires. Even so, we cannot be fully satisfied until the lives of unborn children everywhere are respected by individuals and protected by law. ●

Copies of this booklet are still available in multiples of ten. See order form on page seven.

Changing the Face of Television

by Dick Leggatt

In our interview with columnist George F. Will in the July/August issue of *New Wine*, he commented that consumer boycotts, if widely practiced, could help to eliminate objectionable programming from the media. One of the most prominent organizations which has advocated such consumer boycotts is the Coalition for Better Television (CBTV), based in Tupelo, Mississippi, and directed by Rev. Donald Wildmon.

The organization's main purpose is to "watchdog" television programming and inform consumers of which advertisers consistently sponsor inordinately violent or suggestive programs, and which sponsor more wholesome ones. Those sponsoring objectionable programs may then be targeted for economic sanctions by the viewing public. CBTV's concept is that a decrease in these companies' profits would send the message to them that supporting offensive programs with their advertising dollars is inadvisable. Their consequent refusal to sponsor such unwholesome programming could well result in its withdrawal from the media.

The concept is reasonable, legal and workable. Even the prospect of boycott has already had a cleansing effect on some TV programming. If you would like more information on the Coalition for Better Television, you may contact them at:

P.O. Box 1398

Tupelo, MS 38801

A recent announcement by a major company gives us an occasion to take a positive approach in

addition to using the prospect of a boycott. One of the directors of Procter and Gamble, the nation's largest TV advertiser, announced that their company had withdrawn advertising from fifty program episodes which they regarded as objectionable. We called Procter and Gamble for information on their action. Barry Smyth, a public relations director for the company, informed us that this decision did not reflect a new policy for Procter and Gamble, but rather an ongoing implementation of long-standing guidelines in their advertising policy. Asked what criteria Procter and Gamble uses in determining which programs to sponsor, Mr. Smyth replied, "We choose programs which we feel provide a good environment in which to present the character and heritage Procter and Gamble has maintained over the past 140 years." He went on to say that they choose not to sponsor shows in which there is excessive sex, profanity or violence.

We feel that a positive approach which complements the consumer boycott is to express tangible support, both by letter and by patronage, for companies which demonstrate high moral standards exemplified by the stance Procter and Gamble has taken.

We urge you to write and express your appreciation to Procter and Gamble for their decision by addressing your comments to:

The Procter and Gamble Company
Consumer Relations
P. O. Box 599
Cincinnati, OH 45201

If your intention would be to express support for them by your patronage as well, they would be able to send a list of their products from this office if you request it.

Additional Tips on Writing:

In his *New Wine* article, "The Myth of Neutrality," Franky Schaeffer urged Christians to take a more active role in writing letters to express their views. Whether you are writing to an elected official or a small businessman, these tips will help your letter be most effective and best received:

1. *Be concise.* Get quickly to the point of the letter so that your purpose doesn't get lost in a maze of words.

2. *Be courteous.* No matter how irate or concerned you may be, to harangue your reader will not accomplish your desired effect. Remember that you are writing to win him to your point of view.

3. *Be correct.* Inaccurate details will damage your credibility. Make sure the information you communicate is correct.

In regard to correctness, it is important to address elected officials properly when writing them. The following are the correct forms to use when corresponding with elected officials.

U.S. Representative:

The Honorable John Smith
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515
Dear Mr. Smith:

U.S. Senator:

The Honorable John Smith
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510
Dear Senator Smith:

The President:

President Ronald Reagan
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, DC 20500
Dear Mr. President:

New Wine: A Family of Ministries

by George Gundlach

With the publication of our June 1981 issue of *New Wine Magazine*, we entered our thirteenth year of publication. We gratefully acknowledge both God's provision in sustaining and blessing this ministry and the faithfulness of our readers for their prayer and financial support. In the past twelve years *New Wine* has grown from a single magazine into a family of ministries touching a quarter of a million people each month. *New Wine* now has a significant outreach in each of the following ways:

1) The first and most prominent aspect of this ministry is *New Wine Magazine* itself. Today it is read by Christians in the U.S. and in over one hundred other countries.

2) *Vino Nuevo* is the Spanish language counterpart of *New Wine*, published by Christians in Costa Rica with our support. It is read throughout Central and South America and Spain, and by Spanish-speaking Christians in the U.S.

3) *Restore Magazine* is another publication receiving support from *New Wine*. *Restore*, utilizing much of the content of *New Wine*, is published by Christians in Australia and sent each month to more than 8,000 readers in that country, New Zealand, and the South Pacific area.

4) *New Wine Tape of the Month* is mailed monthly to 5,500 listeners in the U.S. and Canada, allowing them to hear recently delivered messages by members of our Editorial Board and other speakers.

5) *New Wine* books are a recent addition to our outreach. These

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Further Study of Don Basham's Theme

Covenant Relationships by Charles Simpson

Charles offers a comprehensive study of covenant with emphasis on the two basic types of covenant and the essential elements of each.

CL4 **Cassette Tape \$4.95**

How to Enter Into Covenant by Charles Simpson

Charles provides a practical discussion of how to enter into covenant, including a look at the basic purpose of covenant and the cost and blessing involved.

CL5 **Cassette Tape \$4.95**

Beyond Blessing to Obedience by Don Basham

"I've come to see that maturity is formed, not on mountains of miraculous blessings, but rather in the inevitable valleys of struggle which divide those mountains. And if we seem to be spending more time in the valleys of struggle than on the mountains of miracles, perhaps it is because in His wisdom, God has decided that our need for maturity is more pressing than our need for miracles."

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(cont. from page 6)

fast-reading, practical, problem-solving paperbacks are aimed at helping Christians mature in their daily walk with God.

6) Correspondence with our readers is another important part of *New Wine's* ministry. When readers write asking for help, we do everything we can to give it to them. We also pray for all our readers in our staff meetings and for their specific needs when they are made known to us.

7) Finally, our most recently added outreach is *New Wine* Conferences. By conducting meetings in cities throughout the United States, we hope to have personal contact with our readers and other Christians, providing scriptural, contemporary teaching by familiar *New Wine* authors and others, en-

couraging unity in the Body of Christ, and meeting people who desire the kind of ministry *New Wine* provides.

In these ways *New Wine* is much more than just a magazine—it is a ministry whose purpose is to help people solve problems and grow into the maturity God desires for them.

As a reader you can take an active part in this ministry. Here's how: 1) Share your views and comments through regular correspondence. 2) Touch the lives of your friends and relatives by sending them *New Wine*. 3) Pray for us. 4) To the extent you are able, support *New Wine's* ministry financially.

Thank you for your commitment to this ministry. We value our relationship with you and look forward to giving another good report twelve years from now in 1993. ●

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New Wine

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