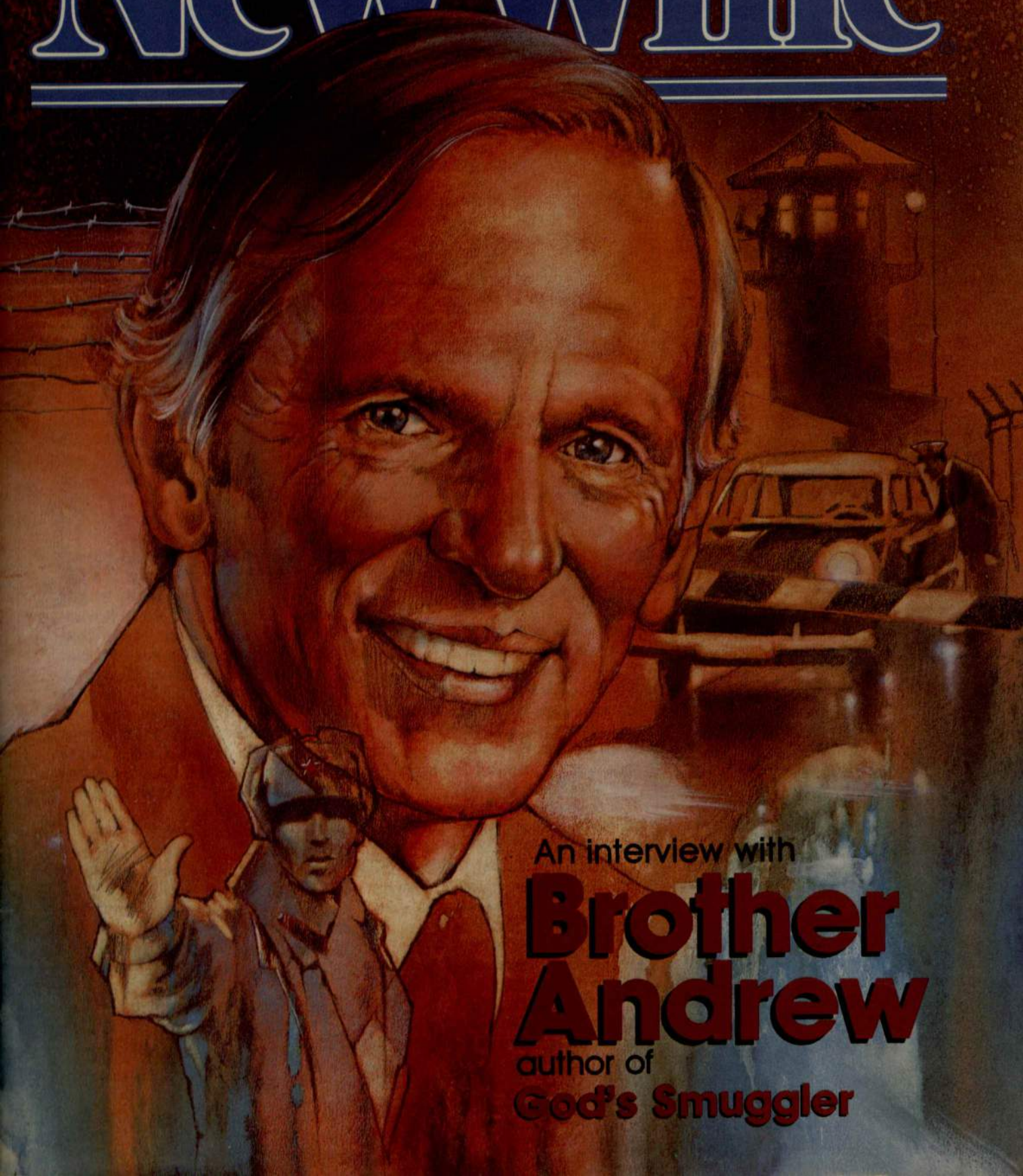


Integrity  
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Magazine

May 1984

# New Wine



An interview with

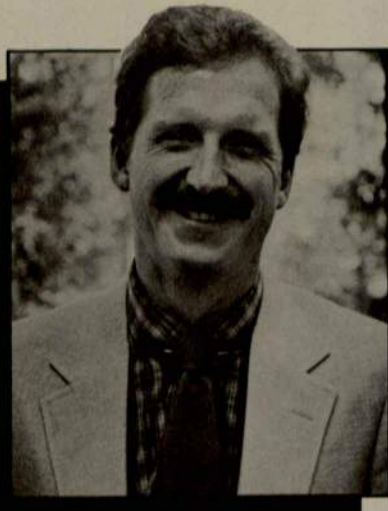
**Brother  
Andrew**

author of  
**God's Smuggler**

Exciting things happen when we discover

# God's Plan for Each of Us

BY DICK LEGGATT



David Lay

**I**n the summer of 1949, a friend of Brother Andrew's spoke the following words to him at a time when he least wanted to hear them: "God has a plan for you, and He's trying to get you into the center of it, and you keep dodging and slithering away" (chapter 4 of *God's Smuggler*). Not long after Andrew heard those words, God began to move in his life in a dramatic way and before he knew it, he had stopped "dodging and slithering away" and was moving in the center of God's plan for him—a plan that has since seen him bringing the good news of the Word of God to thousands upon thousands of people in oppressed countries.

To me, one of the most exciting features of the Christian life is that when we were unaware of or even antagonistic toward God's plan for our lives, He was moving us steadily into a posi-

tion where He could apprehend us and use us. And those of us who have responded to Him can gladly testify with Brother Andrew to a day when this sovereign plan superceded and replaced the ones we had made for our lives.

That simple truth—"God has a plan for you"—can be found numerous times in one of my favorite passages of scripture—Ephesians chapter 1. The part I especially treasure is verse 11:

In him [Christ] we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will (NIV).

*Predestined, plan, works out everything, purpose, will*—all those words let us know that what God has done in our lives is no accident or coincidence. It has been carefully mapped out—even before the creation of the world—by a loving Father who has great plans for us.

When I reread *God's Smuggler* recently, I was deeply moved by the simple truth of God's plan as I saw how God's purpose for Brother Andrew unfolded, changing his life from one of hedonism and adventure-seeking to one of bold and daring service to God's people in oppressed countries, which continues to this day. If someone had told Brother Andrew before God apprehended him that he would spend his life

reaching out to persecuted Christians, I don't think he would ever have believed it. But that's exactly what he's been doing since 1955. In our feature interview this month, Brother Andrew makes us aware of the plight of the oppressed Church, particularly in the Soviet Union and China. His firsthand reports help us know how to pray for our brothers and sisters in these and other countries.

On the topic of prayer, Rousas J. Rushdoony provides an important yet simple insight that could well revolutionize our prayer lives. Following that is an interview with Houston Miles, pastor of Evangel Cathedral in Spartanburg, South Carolina, who explains how his church handled an explosive growth in the early seventies. By building leadership and meeting in home groups, his church has not only survived, but also flourished. The principles he shares are important for preparing the Church today for the harvest we see coming.

Mary Moncrief, a reader from Houston, Texas, shares the triumphant testimony of her weight loss. Mary found help in a committed relationship with God and His people who cared for her. Next, Charles Swindoll, in a reprint from his book, *Strengthening Your Grip*, gives us an excellent exhortation to encourage and affirm others. Last, Charles Simpson concludes his insightful look at the law of accountability, telling us what this principle demands of each person.

What is God's plan for each of us? We hope this issue of *New Wine* will challenge us, just as Brother Andrew's friend challenged him, to respond to God's plan for our lives. The results in Brother Andrew's life have been fruitful and exciting—and the same can be true for us. What plans does God have for your life? □

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Cover Illustration: I.A.M.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



David Lay

# Dear New Wine

### *A Vision for Unity*

I just read the "Letters to the Editor" in the March issue and had to write and tell you I am behind you one hundred percent. Sharing with us the similarities between Kenneth Copeland, James Robison, and the rest of us, and showing us the love that is there is a giant step toward unity.

It was refreshing to be able to see and understand some of what is behind Mr. Copeland's healing message and see that he loves the Lord and is not as dogmatic as I had believed. Unless we are sharing and communicating, we cannot come into the kind of unity I think the Lord is calling us to—it is by dialogue and understanding that we come to know each other, love each other, and each share the *part* of our vision of God with one another so that all of us may be enlarged, see more of God, and love Him more.

Kitty Velkley  
Hummelstown, PA

### *That the World Might Know*

I praise God for the encouragement I received from your March issue, featuring James Robison. I too am happy that there are others in the body of Christ who see the need to endeavor to keep the unity of the faith in the bond of peace that the world might know that Jesus Christ has come.

Gloria Noelliste  
Chicago, IL

### *One of Few on Unity*

Ted Engstrom (December) and Ken Copeland (January) were tremendous blessings. "Perspective on Unity" was particularly interesting. *New Wine* is one of the few magazines today that prints anything about the unity of the body of Christ. Praise the Lord! I'm looking forward to my next issue of *New Wine*.

Percival Cruz  
Manila, Philippines

### *The Easy Way Out*

I have truly been blessed by your magazine this month (March). The article by Bob Mumford, "Personal Advantage," really taught me some new insights. I hadn't realized that Jesus had been confronted with the possibility of going to Greece. I know I am often tempted to take the easy way out and not follow the way of the cross. It encourages me to be able to look at Jesus' experience with the same situation and see how He had victory and overcame the temptation.

I appreciate your efforts and timely articles.

Mary Vincent  
San Antonio, TX

### *Moved by March Issue*

The March 1984 issue blessed us so much. We are so moved by the Holy Ghost and refreshed. "Guarding the Gates" by Bruce Longstreth is a marvelous "tip" for fathers. "Learning by Accident" by Joyce Carr is surely an example of what parents can do to encourage their children to experience God's love and to trust in Him—in all things. What a big boost it is to a child's faith to experience answered prayer.

Thank you also for "A Special Gift" by Don Basham. How great is our Father's love.

Mr. & Mrs. Donald Fox  
Minneota, MN

### *An Important Lesson*

I just finished reading the March edition of *New Wine* Magazine. Everything in the magazine is great spiritual food.

The article "Learning by Accident" by Joyce Carr is a beautiful example of God's loving lesson to a little boy. The rug stained by Kool-Aid caused the child to know that only Jesus Christ Himself can rescue us in

impossible situations—that will remain with the child forever.

Also, the article by Don Basham, "A Special Gift," was to me a very precious way that God has of letting us know of His loving handiwork in all creation.

Barbara White  
Gladstone, MO

### *Insight on Humor*

I must say that I was really impressed by the interview with Bob Mumford (February). It was so honest and good. After having heard Bob on tapes and live, it was really nice to get some insight about his own thinking about his humor.

Tommie Naumann  
Wein, Austria

### *Faith and Doubt*

Don Basham's "The Way I See It" articles are great additions to *New Wine*.

"To Believe or Not Believe" (February) was such a confirmation to me. I do agree with your explanation and understanding of Mark chapter 9.

One Wednesday morning I had planned to drive into town to visit an elderly friend and check his blood pressure, and then attend a Bible study. However, the right front tire of my car was flat, and my husband had already gone to work!

I prayed with all the faith I could muster, got in that car, and started out the driveway. The rumble and slap of that tire really worried me and so I began to praise the Lord for blowing up that tire—I was determined to trust Him, but all the while fighting down the doubt and fear. *What if the tire fell off? What if it ripped to pieces? What would my husband say about my deliberately driving on a totally flat tire?*

I drove those five miles into

town in faith and doubt. My straining ears heard the rumble and slapping sounds taper away to nothing. As I drove up to my friend's house I had a very strong impression in my mind that said, "Don't look at that tire." I didn't. I simply went into the house, checked my friend's blood pressure and visited with him, and then drove on to Bible study. When I arrived, I knew it was now all right to look at the tire. I did and, of course, it was perfect.

I stormed into Bible study and called everyone out to admire my perfect, round, God-anointed tire. We all rejoiced and praised my merciful Father, who answered my faith and ignored my doubt.

Betty Dahlgren  
Sterling, IL

### *Hunger for Truth in Zambia*

We young people at Kabulamema Mission want to tell and express our gratitude for what the Lord is doing through the magazine.

We young Zambians here have had our spiritual views opened by the articles on various topics. Some of the writers' messages on tapes have increased our hunger for more truth from God's point of view about our everyday life even in practical terms.

*New Wine* has enlarged our spiritual view, cleared a lot of confusion in our minds, encouraged us, and we have a new positive approach to life right here on earth.

Washington, Isaac,  
Peter, and Joseph—on  
behalf of many others  
Kabulamema Mission  
Zambia, Africa

Please address all letters to  
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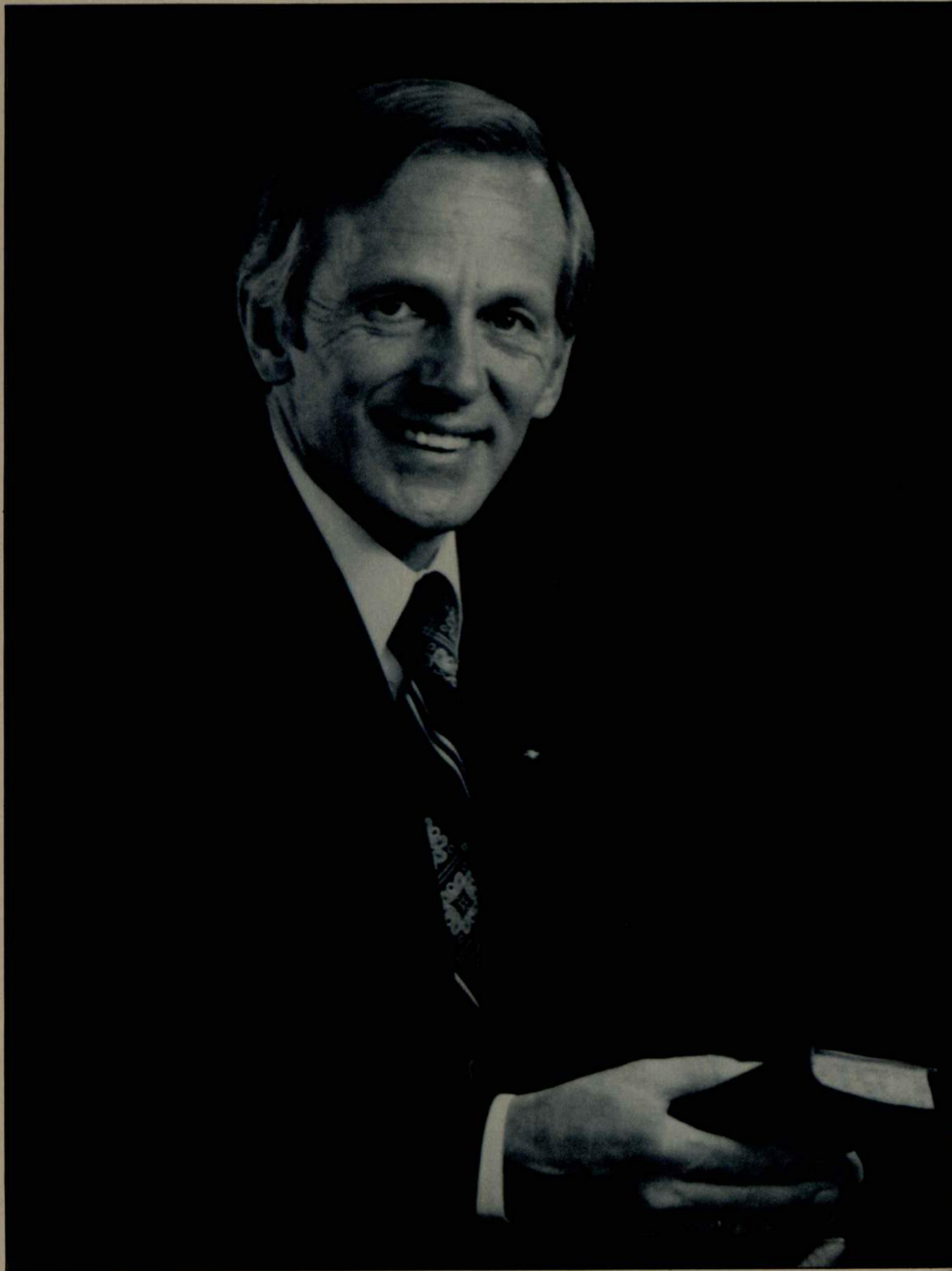
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All Scripture quotations are from the King James or New King James versions of the Bible unless otherwise noted.



An interview with

# Brother Andrew

AUTHOR OF **GOD'S SMUGGLER**

**M**any Christians are familiar with Brother Andrew through his book *God's Smuggler*. Since 1955, he has ministered to Christians worldwide, especially in countries where the gospel is suppressed.

His ministry, *Open Doors* with Brother Andrew, is an international, nondenominational organization that serves oppressed Christians through the distribution of Bibles and teaching materials, as well as by making the Church in the free world aware of the suffering taking place.

Recently we talked with Brother Andrew and he shared with us his burden for Christians in areas such as the Soviet Union and China. We hope that his thoughts will encourage you to pray for these brothers and sisters and the vital ministry of *Open Doors*.

**New Wine:** Where have you been working recently and what do

you hope to accomplish in these areas?

**Brother Andrew:** I have been in almost all the Communist countries, almost all of the Muslim countries, and many of the countries currently experiencing revolution. For example, I was in Angola recently, both the south and the north, Uganda, and Ethiopia. I have also been involved in the work in China and Mongolia, Vietnam, Cambodia, other parts of Africa, Latin America, and now the Middle East. And I have worked in Russia, Siberia, and Central Asia.

But, of course, I have been very much involved in Eastern Europe. That is where my work started in 1955. I have worked there for nearly thirty years and that is where my heart is.

Our ministry has unfortunately been characterized by some as a smuggling ministry, but that is neither an accurate nor complete



Dan Woodring

*Brother Andrew points out that life has gotten more difficult for the Church in the Soviet Union.*

description. We're not smugglers. I only began giving away Bibles after I got behind the iron curtain and the pastors begged me for Bibles because they saw mine. They had either handwritten sheets or nothing at all. They asked, "Can we get Bibles?" And I said, "Of course, you can." Then, because I promised Bibles, I made sure they got them. But that is only a small part of our ministry.

Our ministry is to encourage the body of believers, taking them a step further in their ex-

perience with Christ, strengthening them in their faith and determination, standing with them, praying, and keeping in touch. If there is any need they have, we want to supply it. And by the grace of God, we will. That's what we really do.

**NW:** What are some of the greatest needs you see right now in

of the current state of the Church in the Soviet Union?

**BA:** Recently, life has been much tougher for the Church in the Soviet Union than it had been under previous administrations. The Soviet Union as an ideological state has only one attitude toward the Church, and that is that it has to be wiped

**NW:** How can we more accurately pray for Christians who are oppressed by their government?

**BA:** We need to hear from the people who are involved with the persecutions directly—how they feel, what their hopes are, what their battles are. Therefore, we must do two things: First, get the information, and then find a way to spread it through the body of Christ. That means we must either go over there to listen to them or to get them out; or if they are refugees, we must listen to them, because they have a story that no one can deny. They are not talking about theories; they have lived through the persecution.

We must have this type of information, for unless we know, how can we pray intelligently? I yearn for the day when all the Church can be responsibly informed by knowledgeable people about what is really happening in the Church throughout the world.

**NW:** What is the most impressive situation you have seen recently in your ministry?

**BA:** I would say the experience of the revival in mainland China, where the number of believers is estimated by some at fifty million, has most impressed me. I even have several letters from believers in China and they say there are a hundred million believers. Ten years ago, no one would even think of there being five million Christians in China. This is probably a growth in numbers that has never before happened in the history of the Church.

In some areas of China up to eighty or ninety percent of the entire commune is Christian now. When I speak about a commune, it is not just a collection of farms; it's half a million people.



*Christians in the free world are the lifeline of hope to believers in countries hostile to the gospel, says Brother Andrew.*

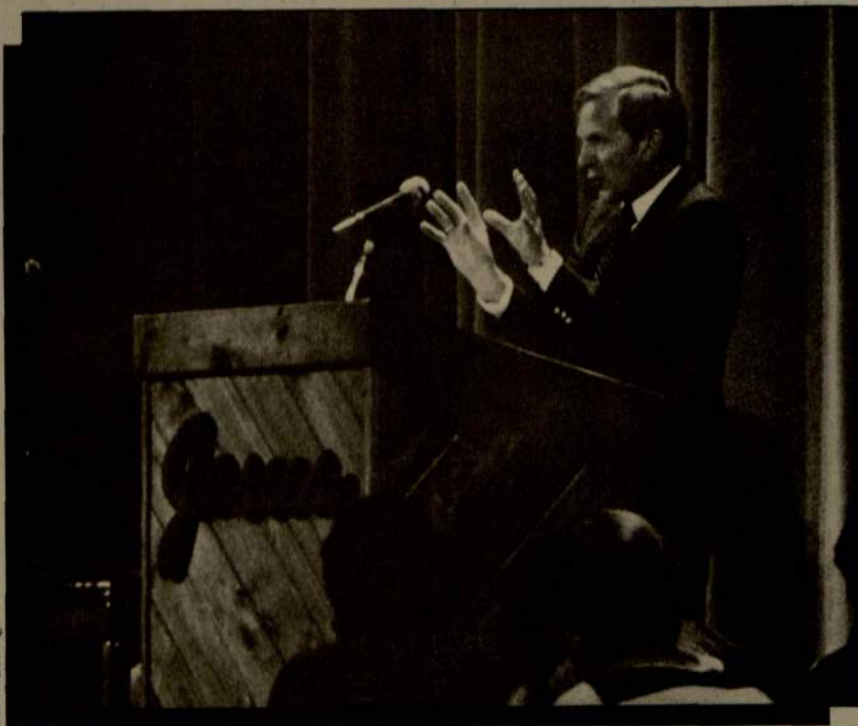
those countries where you have been ministering?

**BA:** Amazingly, they still keep asking for Bibles, and really for two reasons. First, the fact that Bibles are brought in against the governments' wishes is such an encouragement that they get much more liberty in their own lives and ministries, and therefore become better soul-winners. That results in an even greater need for Bibles, because those new believers want Bibles. So the demand for Bibles multiplies by a hundred at a time. Second, because house searches are still being conducted, Bibles are being confiscated and destroyed. Of the existing Bibles, so many are destroyed that there is a constant need for replenishment.

**NW:** What are your impressions

out—period. No interference or threats from America, or any other country in the world, is going to change that attitude.

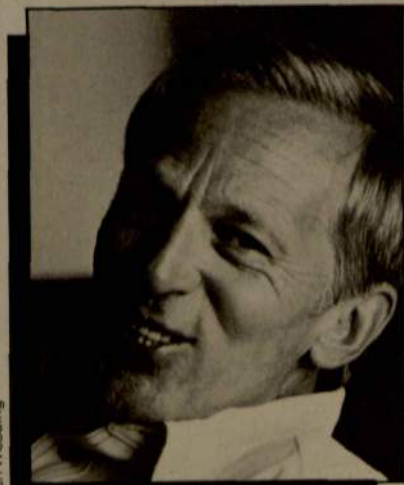
I want to be very emphatic in saying that the Church in the Soviet Union depends entirely on the body of Christ for the help it gets. There is no hint in Scripture that we should look to the state for help. We should look for legitimate protection, the Bible says, and for that we have to pray for our government, but we should not expect any official help from the government for a church in a socialist, atheistic, or Communist state. This applies even more to the Islamic countries. They have only one hope and that's the lifeline that runs through the Body, that runs through us here to those believers.



*One of Brother Andrew's major concerns is making Christians in the free world aware of the persecution taking place in Communist and Muslim countries.*

Some incidents are just amazing. We know of a group of two hundred thousand Christians in one commune, where they only had one Bible. And groups such as this ask us for Bibles.

So I would say the revival in



*Brother Andrew began his ministry in Eastern Europe in 1955.*

China is probably the most exciting thing happening now and to me it is very rewarding. It is also very humbling, because the leaders of the house-church movement there say that Open Doors has had a tremendous role in that revival through being with them at their time of need and supporting them.

**NW:** What are some factors you see contributing to the revival there?

**BA:** I think there are several. One is the absence of denominational structure. The new believers' lack of formal religious background threw them right back to Scripture and to the most primitive form of Christianity imaginable. Second is that because they had given up everything, they had nothing to lose, like the disciples of old.

The third factor is that the

Chinese people have lost faith in the ruling ideology. Many of them have seen that communism is empty. They had been taught to worship Chairman Mao, but now his works are disregarded and it's almost a crime to read *The Quotations of Chairman Mao*, whereas ten years ago, everyone had to read it. The new chairman has his own different little sayings, which has only made the people realize they had no solid basis for their beliefs. Therefore, there is a vacuum. But suddenly the gospel comes in, presented by poor farmers and young people on the move, and it makes an impact like nothing else in their history.

I think that these three factors contributed most to the revival there. But for it to stabilize, I really believe that now they need the Scriptures.

**NW:** How important is it to know the Scriptures in such a setting?

**BA:** Jesus said in one of His discussions with the Pharisees that they erred because they knew neither the Scriptures, nor the power of God. In other words, the reasons for possible error are first, not knowing the Scriptures, and second, not knowing the power of God. Now, if the Chinese know the power of God—and in many ways they know it in China more than in America—they can still err, because knowing the power of God and not having a foundation based on the Word of God can quickly lead to abuse, superstition, or superficiality. So I still see them in a dangerous area, and we must now do all we can to supply them with the Scriptures.

**NW:** Are the people you've been ministering to in Red China experiencing persecution?

**BA:** Yes, Christians in many countries are experiencing it. China now has a new wave of persecution, of which most of the world is unaware. Even when the premier of China visited America, there was no indication of any difficulty. Not a word was said, to my knowledge, about the recent persecution in China. But proportionately, the persecution in Muslim countries is fiercer. There are fewer Christians there and they are far more vulnerable. So that's also one of the main concerns I have in Open

Doors, as we are working in many of those Muslim countries.

**NW:** Do you find God moving more dramatically in those circumstances involving persecution?

**BA:** Absolutely. When we read those tremendous sermons in the Acts of the Apostles, we see they were all spoken in situations of persecution. And I think that living as a minority, or at least as a despised group, in any given society, places people in a confrontation situation where

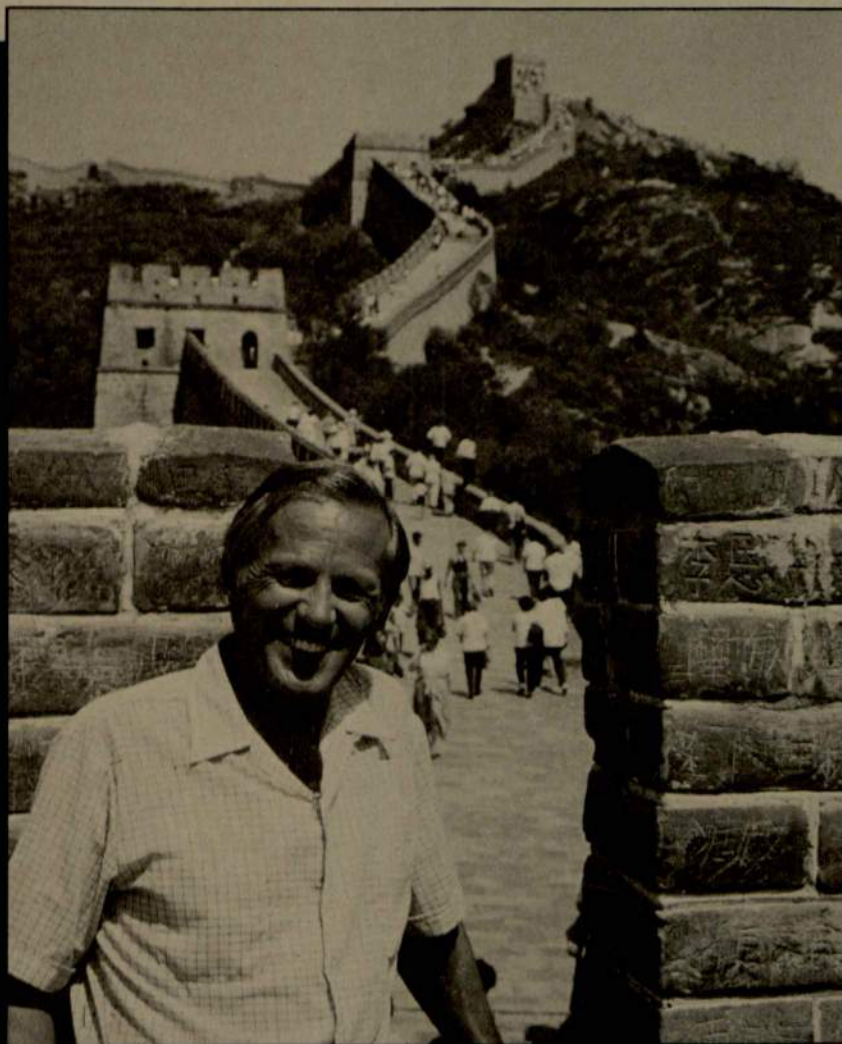
the power of God is more readily manifested, because God has stressed that He will stand with those who are His. That is a secret they have discovered because of their circumstances, and we haven't yet. Maybe one day, God in His grace is going to give us a share of persecution. I think it will do us good.

**NW:** Despite the persecution, are you encouraged in these days as you see what's going on?

**BA:** Jesus preaches two sermons on the end time in Matthew and in Mark. In both cases, the middle verse says that this gospel of the Kingdom must be preached to the ends of the earth and then will the end come. We tend to see wars, revolutions, and earthquakes as signs of the end time, and they are, but according to Jesus' words, persecution and world evangelism are also signs of the end time. I see both developing in our time, so I'm very encouraged to see God is not leaving His children alone.

To a great degree, His children are growing in numbers and strength in these countries where Christians are persecuted, and as our awareness of their plight grows, their fire will spill over to us and we'll be able to share more effectively the knowledge God has entrusted to us. I think God has given us tremendous teaching on the Holy Spirit and on basic Scripture truth, and God has given us wealth, and God has given us the ability to travel. So when the preaching of the gospel and the other signs come together, I tell you, something's going to happen. I'm very encouraged. □

*For more information on Brother Andrew's ministry, write to Open Doors with Brother Andrew, P.O. Box 2020, Orange, CA 92669.*



Dan Woodring

*Brother Andrew is encouraged by the tremendous revival taking place in China, where the number of Christians is estimated at fifty million.*

# Prayer: Talking With Someone You Love

BY ROUSAS J. RUSHDOONY

Why do we make prayer so complicated?



Illustration: L.A.M.

Over the years, I have read many books and articles on prayer. These have contained a number of good points, but basically I am at the least unhappy with, if not somewhat hostile toward, "how-to-pray" literature.

Such works begin with a fundamental fallacy; namely, that we need to be taught how to pray to God. This I find very strange. No one ever had to teach me how to talk to my wife. When I fell in love with her, I most definitely wanted to talk to her! After all these years, when I am away from home, I call her nightly, and we find it difficult to end our conversation. At home, we talk all day long; we share our experiences, reactions, ideas, and feelings. Talking to my wife is as natural as breathing! No more than I needed instructions before I started breathing at birth do I need instructions on how to talk to my wife. I love her, and talking to her is an aspect of the expression of our love. When by God's grace we are born again, talking

to Him is an aspect of our new life, like breathing.

The how-to-pray literature does have, however, a certain value. It concentrates on formal prayer. It tells us how in our

by my failure here. Give me grace to deal with this man." When we are afraid of something confronting us, we tell God so, and we ask for courage to cope with the problem or hurt.

in church, at the dinner table, or in private devotions, my relationship to Him will be cold, formal, and a bit awkward. If I talk to Him in the shower, at my desk as I work, while gardening,

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If we walk and talk with God every hour of every day, we can't help but grow close to Him.

---

devotions, or in public prayer, to praise God, to thank Him, to remember the needs of all His people, the sufferings of the needy, and more. Such prayer involves also the confession of sins, the commitment of ourselves and our hopes, fears, and needs to the Lord, and so on. At the table, in our private devotions, and in public prayer, these prayer manuals and instructions serve a very necessary and useful function. They keep our prayers from becoming self-centered, and they require us to keep our minds fixed on the kingdom of God and all His glory.

#### Conversing With God

But my concern is the prayer that is most basic, our talking to God. By this I mean our one-sentence prayers all day long, by which we silently but continually communicate with God. We thank Him for our night's rest and the day's joys. When we face a difficult situation, we ask, "Lord, give me patience to cope with this problem." Then, later, we thank Him for His guiding hand and care. If we have a difficult person to meet with, we ask, "Lord, I don't know what to say, and I don't want to lose my temper or hurt the Kingdom

But this is only the beginning. I do not talk with my wife about serious and important matters only. I talk to her for the joy of communion with her. We tell each other of our love a dozen or more times daily. I enjoy the sound of her voice, and she mine. The Song of Solomon speaks of this more than once, referring with joy to "the voice of my beloved."

So too when we delight in the Lord, we talk to Him all day long. Is it a beautiful day? "Lord, how glorious is Thy creation!" When I go fishing, the first one to hear about the results is the Lord. Of course, He knows before I do. But talking to Him is life itself. (Last year, on a single cast, I caught two bass, each hitting the plug from different directions when it hit the water. Thanks, Lord, what a thrill!)

#### A Happier Relationship

Prayer is talking to God. Now, when I talk to my wife, I do not limit my conversation to the start of meals, or morning or evening, beginning by saying, "Dear Dorothy . . ." I talk to her all day long, going and coming. The more we talk, the more we enjoy talking to each other. If I only talk to God when I am

or walking, or whatever I am doing, I am much closer to Him and more familiar with Him. I have then a happy relationship in which talking to God comes easily.

I once met someone I had known very well years before. We had been close friends, but about forty years ago, we moved to different areas, and our lives took very different directions. It was a pleasure to see him, but a bit strange. We very quickly ran out of conversation, because our lives had grown so far apart.

So too when our praying is merely formal, at the table, in devotions, or in church meetings, we grow apart from God.

But, if we walk and talk with God every hour of every day, we can't help but grow close to Him. We breathe easier and talk more around someone we love and delight in. Likewise, we pray more easily and are more alive when we maintain a continual conversation with the Lord—talking with Him and walking with Him all day long. □

*Rousas J. Rushdoony, author of Institutes of Biblical Law, is president of the Chalcedon Foundation, an educational organization established to encourage and publish Christian scholarship.*

## THE CHURCH IN ACTION



Mike Reed

# Home Groups

AN INTERVIEW WITH HOUSTON MILES

Making the church ready for growth

**W**hat happens when a church grows too large for one pastor to handle? The Reverend Houston Miles experienced this in 1971 when, after many months of prayer, revival spread throughout the

small church he pastored. Hundreds of people were saved and filled with the Holy Spirit, and many experienced healings and deliverance, as meetings were held in the church nearly every night for four months. The Rever-

end Miles and the other church leaders were faced with the dilemma of giving proper pastoral care to the now large congregation.

After seeking the Lord, they decided to break the church down into small home groups, which could give members the kind of intimate care and fellowship they needed while maintaining the larger church body.

These cell groups have successfully functioned within Evangel Cathedral for more than ten years now, and the church

has continued to grow, with satellite churches established in Georgia, North Carolina, and South Carolina. In this interview, Houston Miles explains how these cell groups were formed and how they work within the larger church.

**New Wine:** Why did you begin to incorporate the "house meeting" or "cell group" concept into your church.

**Houston Miles:** In the early seventies I was exposed to teachings on small group meetings from various sources. But I also saw in the Scriptures the need for the small church, as well as the large church. For example, the Apostle Paul said in Acts 20:20, "I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable and teaching you *publicly and from house to house.*" So apparently they had house meetings in the New Testament.

---

I think in a sense everyone can be a leader. Anyone who has been saved as long as five years ought at least to be able to teach new converts what they've learned in that five years.

---

I look at the house meetings as being churches within the church; a small church within the local setting of a large church. I think the large congre-

gation is important, but I view the house meetings as the best way to provide pastoral care for the people.

Back in 1971, I had become disenchanted with the ministry and even thought about leaving it. But then I thought, *Before I do that I'll at least give the ministry one more chance.* So we organized prayer groups and prayer chains in my church, and we prayed for about six months for God to do something. Then, in August of 1971, people began to just pour into the church. We had hundreds saved and healed and filled with the Holy Spirit. Suddenly, we had all these people on our hands and we weren't prepared for it. One major problem we had was how to shepherd the people. So we turned to the home group. Of course, it took us a while to get off the ground; we had to start slow so that we could train leaders. I took a few men and worked with them over



Mike Reed

*The people in the home groups, says Houston Miles, are contented people. They don't have to be pampered or counseled, and they're looked after if they get sick. They're the happiest people in the church, he says.*

a period of a couple of years.

**NW:** How did you handle the training of these leaders?

**HM:** I started off with one group, the men in my own cell group, and I worked with them. When I felt they were ready, I had them start some other groups. It has gotten to the place now where we are going from addition to multiplication; because each of them then trained other men who then in turn trained more men. All of us together have been working to raise up men to replace us, or to do the work that we were doing. Every month now, we're adding one or two groups, and we've gotten to the place where adequate leadership has been provided.

**NW:** What do you look for in a person whom you are considering as a potential leader? Do you think there are only a special few called to leadership, or do you believe that we all have leadership potential because of what God has done in our lives?

**HM:** I think in a sense everyone can be a leader. The author of Hebrews said, "By this time you ought to be teachers...." Anyone who has been saved as long as five years ought at least to be able to teach new converts what they've learned in that five years. Everyone has that potential. And all saints ought to be equipped to work in the ministry. In Ephesians chapter 4, Paul lists the fivefold ministry gifts given to equip the saints to do the work of the ministry. So there is a ministry for all of us.

But in a more defined sense, there will be those who will lead and others who will follow. Leaders are a special category. But what I look for in a leader primarily is attitude, to see if he loves people. Then I look at his

qualifications according to 1 Timothy chapter 3—things such as whether his home is in order.

**NW:** What do you believe was the catalyst in bringing so many new people into your church in such a short period of time?

**HM:** The only thing I know we

did was pray. I always refer to it as a sovereign move of God because when it happened, it caught us by surprise. Even though we'd been praying for six months, we really weren't expecting it. God slipped up on our blind side!

We were a traditional church, and there was no way we could have planned it or organized it.



Illustration: I. A. M.

## NEXT MONTH IN NEW WINE

**Join with us as we celebrate New Wine's** anniversary of fifteen years of ministry next month in a special forty-page issue. Charles Simpson, Don Basham, Ern Baxter, Bob Mumford, and Derek Prince will look at the history of **New Wine**, the impact of our ministry on the body of Christ, and what they believe the future holds for the Church.

We will review some of the highlights from significant authors and messages that have appeared in **New Wine** over the years and also feature a **New Wine** classic, "Life on Wings," by Ern Baxter, one of his most powerful and inspiring messages.

All this and more in the June **New Wine**

But it happened so quickly, it was upon us almost before we knew what was going on. People just piled in and we had a revival on our hands.

My people were spectators to start with. Folks came in from all these other churches and denominations and just took over the building. It continued every night for about four months. We'd have services until midnight. Fortunately, the revival lasted long enough to finally get my members involved. As time went on, more and more of them joined in. And it really changed the church.

**NW:** Do you think we're on the verge of seeing some more of that take place—another sovereign move of God where people pour into the churches?

**HM:** I think we will see that in the future. God has sent one wave after another. Prophecies are being fulfilled yet we see unfulfilled prophecy. Looking at what God has already done, we see that He is working to restore

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The home meetings meet a need that is not met in the corporate gatherings. People get attention. They feel accepted.

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the Church. Every wave has brought something permanent to the Church in that restoration process, and there's more yet to come. The third chapter of Acts says, "The heavens were to contain Christ until all things were fulfilled spoken by the prophets, until all things were restored." I believe that the best is yet to come because every wave has brought something new. We've

been a building block laid upon previous work done by the Holy Spirit.

I see the next move of God being even greater. As a matter of fact, the Bible even talks about nations being converted in the future. Isaiah chapter 54, for example, says, "Lengthen your cords, stretch your tents, you will break out on the right hand and on the left and your seed shall inherit nations." There are a number of scriptures that refer to nations being converted. I believe we're going to see an outpouring of the Holy Spirit that will change nations, and multitudes will be saved.

**NW:** In that light, then, would you say that the kind of preparation you wish you had had before that revival time in your church is the kind God is calling us to right now?

**HM:** I believe this is an interim period. We're between waves. I believe the present truth for the Church today is: Get ready for the next wave. We must prepare for it. I believe this is the time for sowing, a time for raising up leaders, a time for preparing for what is coming. I've seen the importance of preparation. The church where I was saved later had a great revival but lost almost everyone, simply because we weren't prepared. We didn't have the organization; we didn't have the leadership; we didn't have the teachers; the facilities weren't there. Consequently, we saw almost everyone slip right through our fingers. We only retained maybe two or three persons out of the many who were saved.

**NW:** What have you seen as some of the benefits and advantages of the kind of structure that you have now at your church?



*Miles points out that it is hard to have close fellowship in a traditional church service but in home meetings, there is ample opportunity for developing relationships.*

**HM:** The home meetings meet a need that is not met in the corporate gatherings. People get individual attention. They feel accepted. They can take part in discussions and get questions answered. There's participation, involvement, and body ministry. They not only receive ministry themselves, but they also become active in helping to minister to others. Of course, one of the main benefits of home meetings is the development of relationships. It's hard to have close fellowship in a church service because you're looking at the back of someone's head. But in the home meeting, sitting around the table, talking and sharing and praying for one another, relationships are developed.

We are seeing more and more people becoming involved in the home groups. And the people in these groups, which involve more than fifty percent of the congregation, are the most contented people in the church. We don't have to pamper them; we



Mike Reed

*Miles says it is important for the Church to be ready for revival.*

don't have to counsel with them. They're looked after if they get sick. They're looked after if they go to the hospital. And they're the happiest people in the church. They're taken care of by their group leader. We look forward to the day when we can get all the church members in the home groups.

**NW:** What are some of the challenges you see facing the larger Church right now?

**HM:** I believe this is a time for sowing. The last wave was reaping. And we have reaped a large harvest ourselves, simply because it was a time of harvest. Right now may be a sowing time. As long as the earth remains, the Bible says, there shall be seed time and harvest time. Ecclesiastes 3:1 says, "There is an appointed time for everything, a time to sow and a time to reap."

I think it's also a time that we need to mature and equip the saints, because if we don't, then when all these people come in this next wave, there won't be enough pastors and elders to care for them. We must raise up a multitude of people to take care of all the babes. Babes and more babes, I believe, will be birthed into the kingdom of God. So we've got to prepare for the fields again being white unto the harvest. □

## DID YOU KNOW?

*Did you know that our monthly feature "Tips for Fathers" is provided by Fathergram?*

The valuable information you find in "Tips for Fathers" is just a part of what is available in *Fathergram*, a monthly newsletter ministry to fathers that, like *New Wine*, is a part of Integrity Communications.

*Fathergram* was begun by Charles Simpson and his father, Vernon, who were concerned about the plight of families in today's society. They felt a burden to write a letter to fathers containing practical tips, news, and resource material, and in July 1977 they mailed the first issue of *Fathergram*.

The ministry grew rapidly and in July 1981, Bruce Longstreth joined the staff as editor. Today, *Fathergram* reaches nine thousand households around the world every month.

Christian parents don't have to struggle alone to have a happy home—*Fathergram* is a valuable resource center just waiting to be tapped. For more information, write to *Fathergram*, P.O. Box Z, Mobile, Alabama, 36616. We thought you'd like to know. □

# Losing Weight, Finding Life

BY MARY MONCRIEF

Real relationships and the reality of God's grace were the keys to conquering a weight problem.



***M**ary Moncrief, a reader from Houston, Texas, spent more than twenty years of her life extremely overweight. Because of that, she lived in almost complete isolation, and food became her only friend. But when she met the Lord, she found a true Friend, who opened the way not only for her to lose weight, but also for her to develop meaningful personal relationships. Here is her testimony.*

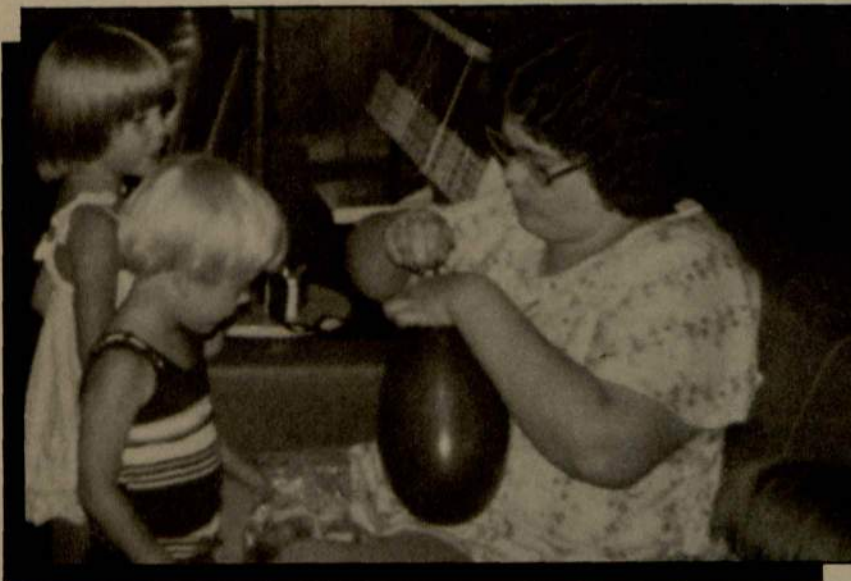
My first day of junior high school was no small disaster. And it was typical of the way I spent more than twenty years of my life because I was so overweight. When I entered my homeroom, I saw that each desk was labeled with a student's name. Of course, they had no idea what we looked like; they just assigned desks by our names.

The teacher told me where my desk was, and I ran to sit down before the start of class. Although the desk was too small, I did manage to sit down in it. But the real problem came when the teacher called us each to come to the front of the room—the desk came with me! There I was, stuck in a desk in front of the entire class! And the teacher had to pry it off me.

## A Life of Isolation

Along with humiliation such as that, being overweight resulted in isolation for me. I hated the way I looked and was so self-conscious that I wasn't able to talk to anyone. Even at home I was alone because we didn't communicate well with one another.

At school, I didn't have any friends, even when I was in grade school. Out on the playground, the girls would jump rope or skip or play tag, but all I



*Mary spent more than twenty years of her life overweight—at one point she weighed nearly three hundred fifty pounds.*

could do was just walk around. I would pace up and down the fence and look into the street. Because of my weight, there just wasn't any game that I was able to play.

And as I got older, when all the kids would go places such as the amusement park, I couldn't even do that. I tried several times but I wasn't able to fit in the rides, and it was too embarrassing.

So I spent my entire life alone at home and alone at school, and I really didn't have anything in my life besides food. Food was my only friend and eating was the only thing I could really enjoy.

### **The Beginning of Change**

Change began to come to my life when I was a teenager, and my family moved to Rapid City, South Dakota. Because we went to a public school there, we began taking religion classes at our Catholic church in the evenings.

At the first meeting the couple that was leading the group gave us each a tract. I opened mine up and it said, "God loves you." I almost started crying be-

cause I couldn't believe someone actually loved me. No one in my entire life had ever told me that. That little booklet helped to spark a sincere love for Jesus, and I decided right then that whatever it would take to be His, I'd do it.

Not long after that, the couple who taught my religion class took me with them after one of our meetings out to a little country church. I don't know who the minister was, but a man was there preaching the gospel, and he was the one who prayed for me. That night the Lord Jesus came into my heart.

The excitement in me continued to grow as I began meeting with some Christians who had something in their lives that I so desperately needed—real, committed relationships with each other. Their friendships had nothing superficial in them. For someone like myself, who had been alienated for so long, it was a dream come true. Unfortunately, my dream was soon altered by a move with my family to Houston, Texas.

### **Searching for Reality**

Immediately I began looking for Christians in Houston who were as serious about committing themselves to the Lord and to one another in meaningful relationships as those folks in South Dakota. I was searching for something genuine and real in the way of a church fellowship, but I didn't have any idea where to look. Week after week I searched the newspapers and looked through the Yellow Pages, and whenever I came upon anything that seemed good, I tried it. I went to all different kinds of churches and groups, and talked to many people. Although no one had any idea of what I was talking about and looking for, I was determined not to settle for anything less than what God had put in my heart.

Then finally a lady, whom I really didn't even know, called me one day and said, "I think I know what kind of people you're looking for. I'm not saying I agree with what they're doing but I know you're looking, so I want to give you the name and number."

Through that contact I found the church God had for me and the people who would be able to help me. As time passed, I became more involved in the church, which was truly what I had been searching for. The people there were committed to the Lord, to each other, and to me. I began to get to know my pastor and his wife better, and found out they cared enough to help me with the problem with my weight. At that time, I was weighing about three hundred fifty pounds, which was a dangerous place to be. I was experiencing a lot of medical problems because of my weight, so really I didn't have a choice any longer—I had to lose weight.



*Mary's pastor, Tim Wood, right, was able to encourage her during her time of weight loss.*

### Developing Relationships

After reading an article about Weight Watchers, my pastor and his wife suggested that this might be the best diet for me. If there was any way in the entire world that I *did not* want to lose weight it was on the Weight Watchers' program—mainly because I knew the amount of self-discipline it would require. I did start, however, and the first week I actually *gained* weight instead of losing, because it was such a big change in eating habits. Eventually, though, I was able to take a little weight off.

But I still hadn't learned much about having real relationships, which I came to see was the first obstacle I needed to overcome. The void in my life that food was filling had to be replaced. It took about three years for me to learn how to communicate with people and enjoy friendships more than food, but as I began to develop a relationship with my pastor, Tim, and his wife, Connie, to learn to walk in obedience to what they were asking me to do about my weight, I saw some real progress.

As I was able to learn how to eat correctly and normally, and

as I was able to walk in obedience, I saw the beginning fruits of victory in my life. In fact, I eventually lost down to my Weight Watchers' goal of one hundred ten pounds—an accomplishment that qualified me to receive all kinds of honors. But in reality, I knew that neither Weight Watchers nor I deserved any credit or awards for my weight loss; my progress was entirely due to God's grace.

My pastor helped me to see one further refinement on my weight situation. He pointed out that for my discipline to be real and not just the result of Weight Watchers' meetings, I needed to be able to live it on my own. For me that was another "new season." But again through God's grace I endured and maintained my weight loss, all the while gaining new life.

### An Entirely New Experience

It's that new life that has been overwhelming to me. For one thing, I am actually now able to go out and look for new clothes. I even feel good about the way I look, whereas before there was just no way.

Shopping for clothes is also an entirely new experience for me. I'm even learning new things about what kind of stores to shop in and which departments to look in; and other practical decisions that make shopping a joy for me now. One day, just for the fun of it, I ventured into one of our finer, more expensive stores. I was trying on some clothes and the saleslady brought in a beautiful ivory-colored wool skirt in a size four. I tried the skirt on and it was too big! I looked at her and said, "Does this come in a size two?" And she said, "No, they don't make them in a size two." That was just amazing, because previously I had trouble finding clothes big enough at shops carrying clothes for heavy

women.

Now, not only can I shop for clothes with joy, but I can participate with my friends in other activities, such as skating and square dancing. I can run and skip. I can even dance before the Lord. It's just all brand-new.

God has changed my enjoyment for food to an enjoyment for Him. I love being in His presence and enjoying His Spirit, enjoying Him. I'll never be alone again.

My weight loss has also given me hope for the future. I have real hope in my heart that one day I will develop a good, strong relationship with a man and get married and have children.

### Victory in Life

I'm grateful to have lost so much weight and to be able to do things I've never done before. But the surprises haven't ceased. Ironically, after all that work, my pastor has now advised me to put back on about twenty pounds to be healthier—I had lost too much weight! Right now, I'm halfway there at one hundred twenty pounds.

With all that I have learned through this experience the one realization that is clearest is that losing all that weight was only possible because God brought me to a place where I was able to walk in a committed relationship with Him and His servants in obedience to His will. I am reminded of Jesus, who because of His relationship with His heavenly Father, was able to walk in obedience and go to the cross and die and give us the ultimate victory over sin and death. And I am honored that God gave me the abundant grace to endure and gain the victory in my life. □

*Mary Moncrief is a New Wine reader who resides in Houston, Texas.*

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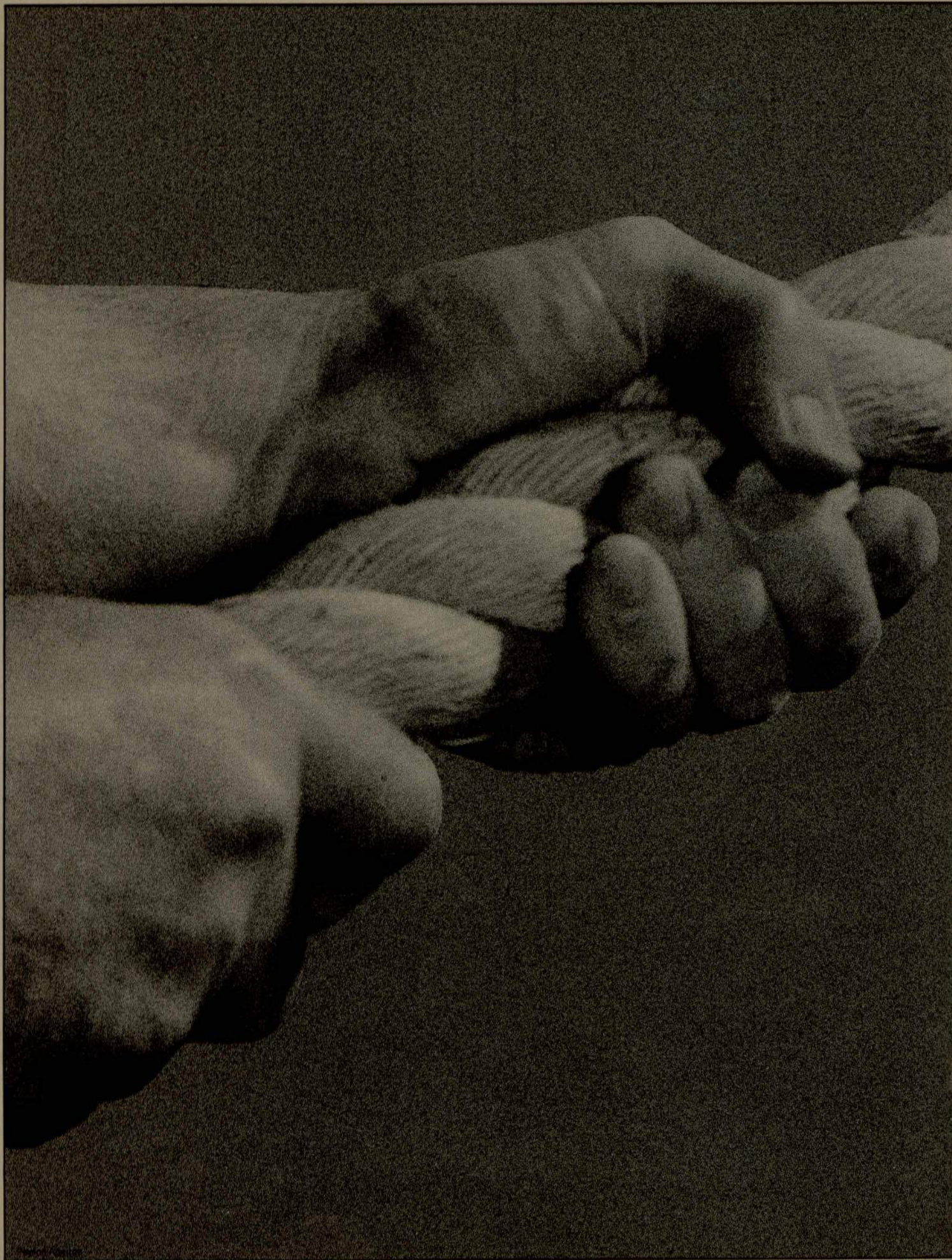
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See page 33 to order.





# Strengthening Your Grip on Encouragement

BY CHARLES R. SWINDOLL

The importance of affirming others

**K**eystone, Colorado, is a ski resort area about an hour and a half west of Denver. My family and I were invited to spend Thanksgiving week at that picturesque spot in 1980 with about five hundred single young adults, most of whom were staff personnel with Campus Crusade for Christ, an international Christian organization. I cannot recall a time when there was a greater spirit of teachability and enthusiasm among a group of people. The atmosphere was electric!

I spoke all week on the subject of servanthood, emphasizing the importance of today's leader being one who helps, encourages, affirms, and cares for others rather than one who pulls rank and takes advantage of them. Many of the things I presented have now found their way into a book.<sup>1</sup> God really changed some lives that week. I continue to hear from various men and women who were a part

of that memorable experience.

By Friday of that week I decided to take a break and hit the slopes (emphasis on *hit*, since it was my first time in all my life to attempt to ski). It had snowed all day Thanksgiving. The ski areas were absolutely beautiful and in perfect condition. I struck out on my virgin voyage with a positive mental attitude, thinking, *I'm going to be the first person who learned to ski without falling down*. Guinness Book of World Records *will hear of this and write me up!*

Don't bother to check. I'm not in the book.

It was unbelievable! You have heard of the elephant man? On skis, I'm the rhinoceros man. It is doubtful that anyone else on planet earth has ever come down any ski slope more ways than I did—or landed in more positions, or did more creative things in the air before landing. I can still hear the words of a ski instructor as she stood before

her class of children, staring at me as I zipped past them. I was by then on one leg, leaning dangerously to the starboard side, traveling about thirty-five miles an hour—completely out of control. "Now class, that is what I *don't* want you to do!" As I recall, I ended that slide a few miles from Denver in a field of buffalo. Even they looked surprised.

Working with me that humiliating day was the world's most encouraging ski instructor (yes, I had an instructor!), who set the new record in patience. She is the one whom Guinness needs to interview.

Never once did she lose her cool.

Never once did she laugh at me.

Never once did she yell, scream, threaten, or swear.

Never once did she call me "dummy."

Never once did she say, "You are absolutely impossible. I quit!"

That dear, gracious lady helped me up more times than I can number. She repeated the same basics time and again—like she had never said them before. Even though I was colder than an explorer in the Antarctic, irritable, impatient, and under the snow more than I was on it, she kept on offering words of reassurance. On top of all that, she didn't even charge me for those hours on the baby slope when she could have been enjoying the day with her friends on the fabulous, long slope up above. That day God gave me a living, never-to-be-forgotten illustration of the value of encouragement. Had it not been for her spirit and her words, believe me, I would have hung 'em up and been back in the condo, warming my feet by the fire in less than an hour.

What is true for a novice on

the snow once a year is all the more true for the people we meet every day. Harassed by demands and deadlines; bruised by worry, adversity, and failure; broken by disillusionment; and defeated by sin, they live somewhere between dull discouragement and sheer panic. Even Christians are not immune! We may give off this "I've got it all together" air of confidence, much like I did when I first snapped on the skis at Keystone. But realistically, we also struggle, lose our balance, slip and slide, tumble, and fall flat on our face.

All of us need encouragement—somebody to believe in us, to reassure and reinforce us, to help us pick up the pieces and go on, to provide us with increased determination in spite of the odds.

### The Meaning of Encouragement

When you stop to analyze the concept, *encourage* takes on new meaning. It's the act of inspiring others with renewed courage, spirit, or hope. When we encourage others we spur them on; we stimulate and affirm them. It is helpful to remember the distinction between appreciation and affirmation. We appreciate what a person does, but we affirm who a person is. Appreciation comes and goes because it is usually related to something someone accomplishes. Affirmation goes deeper. It is directed to the person himself. While encouragement would encompass both, the rarer of the two is affirmation. To be appreciated, we get the distinct impression that we

must earn it by some accomplishment. But affirmation requires no such prerequisite. This means that even when we don't earn the right to be appreciated (because we failed to succeed or because we lacked the accomplishment of some goal), we can still be affirmed—indeed, we need it then more than ever.

I do not care how influential or secure or mature a person may appear to be, genuine encouragement never fails to help. Most of us need massive doses of it as we slug it out in the trenches. But we are usually too proud to admit it. Unfortunately, this pride is as prevalent among members of God's family as it is on the streets of the world.

### Significance of Encouragement

Certainly there is more to encouragement than a smile and a quick pat on the back. We need to realize just how valuable it really is.

A good place to start is with the word itself. *Encouragement*, as used in Hebrews 10:25, is from the same Greek root used for the Holy Spirit in John 14:26 and 16:7. In both those verses He is called "the Helper." The actual term, *parakaleo*, is from a combination of two smaller words, *kaleo*, "to call," and *para*, "alongside." Just as the Holy Spirit is called alongside to help us, so it is with us when you and I encourage someone else. In fact, when we encourage others, we come as close to the work of the Holy Spirit as anything we can do in God's family.

Believe me, when Christians begin to realize the value of mutual encouragement, there is no limit to what we can be stimulated to accomplish. It is thrilling to realize that God has "called us alongside to help" others who are in need. How much better to be engaged in actions that lift



Charles Swindoll is convinced that many people dry up because of a lack of encouragement.

others up rather than actions that tear them down!

The beautiful part about encouragement is this: *Anybody* can do it. You don't need a lot of money to carry it out. You don't even need to be a certain age. In fact, some of the most encouraging actions or words I've received have come from my own

much at birthdays or Christmas, but at unexpected times.

3. Make phone calls. Be brief and to the point. Express appreciation for something specific that you genuinely appreciate.

4. Notice a job well-done and say so. I know a few important people who are successful largely because they have splendid as-

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When we encourage others,  
we come as close to the work of the  
Holy Spirit as anything we can do  
in God's family.

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children at a time when my heart was heavy. They saw the need and moved right in—they "came alongside and helped."

I am absolutely convinced that there are many thousands of people who are drying up on the vine simply because of the lack of encouragement. Lonely, forgotten missionaries, military service men and women away from home, collegians and seminarians, the sick and the dying, the divorced and the grieving, those who serve faithfully behind the scenes with scarcely a glance or comment from anyone.

#### Implementing Encouragement

Maybe a few ideas will help spark an interest in putting our encouragement into action.

1. Observe and mention admirable character qualities you see in others, such as punctuality, thoroughness, tactfulness, diligence, faithfulness, honesty, good attitude, compassion, loyalty, good sense of humor, tolerance, vision, and faith.

2. Correspondence, thank-you notes, and small gifts with a note attached are preferable not so

sistance from secretaries and support personnel within the ranks—but seldom are those people told what a fine job they are doing.

5. Cultivate a positive, reassuring attitude. Think and respond along this line. Encouragement cannot thrive in a negative, squint-eyed atmosphere.

6. Pick up the tab in a restaurant; provide free tickets to some event you know the person (or family) would enjoy; send flowers; give a gift of money when it seems appropriate.

7. Be supportive to someone you know is hurting. Reach out without fear of what others may think or say.

The ability to encourage is developed first in one's home. It is here that this vital virtue is cultivated. Children pick it up from their parents as they become the recipients of their mother's and dad's words of delight and approval. Numerous tests document the sad fact, however, that homes tend to be far more negative than positive, much less affirming than critical.

Allow me to challenge you to

have a family that is different. Start taking whatever steps that need to be taken to develop in your home a spirit of positive, reinforcing, consistent encouragement. Your family will be forever grateful, believe me. And you will be a lot happier person.

I know a young man whose spinal cord was severed in an accident when he was four years old. He has absolutely no use of his legs today. They are like excess baggage stuck to his body. But thanks to a father who believed in him and a wife who absolutely adores him, Rick Leavenworth accomplishes feats today that you and I call unbelievable. One of his more recent ones is backpacking and mountain climbing. In fact, a film has been made that shows him reaching the top of a mountain over thirteen thousand feet elevation—all alone, just Rick, his wheelchair, and determination cultivated over years of encouragement.

I'm giving serious thought to giving up skiing and taking up backpacking. Maybe Rick will be willing to train me. □

#### Footnote

<sup>1</sup>Charles R. Swindoll, *Improving Your Serve* (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1981).

*Charles R. Swindoll is senior pastor of First Evangelical Free Church in Fullerton, California. He is widely known through his international radio program, Insight for Living, and is the author of several books, including Improving Your Serve, Make Up Your Mind, and Home: Where Life Makes Up Its Mind.*

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Part two of a two-part series

# The Law of Accountability

BY CHARLES SIMPSON

Sooner or later, we've got to face up to the reality of responsibility.

**L**ast month we saw that the law of accountability is just as real as the law of gravity. Romans 14:12 says clearly that each of us shall give an account of himself to God. So in God's eyes, there is really only one person ultimately responsible for your life—you!

*We have the choice either to acknowledge or ignore the law of accountability. But one thing is certain—we can't change it. This month we look at the economic implications of this law, and the decision it demands of us.*

The law of accountability is what holds society together. It is what holds families and churches together. In fact, it is what holds the world together. But when we begin to violate that law, things start to come apart. Even those who teach that there is no law of accountability are beginning to lament that gross irresponsibility has led to a sick social order—and yet they continue to deny that law's existence.

As we saw last month, three men—Charles Darwin, Karl Marx, and Sigmund Freud—have influenced society enormously by trying to suspend the law of accountability. And we need to understand one sobering truth: Darwin, Marx, and Freud have become to a great degree the official policy of our land. Our

society is permeated with a Darwinian view of creation, a Marxist view of economics and sociology, and a Freudian view of psychological behavior. But perhaps where we see the evidences of suspended accountability most clearly is in the realm of economics.

## Economics of Accountability

Many people have been overtaken in their thinking with Marxist sociology and economics. Because of the economic theories being taught in schools, most young people have little idea what free enterprise is, or how it works. They aren't aware of the dynamics involved when free individuals cause their resources to interact to make increase. They don't know how wealth is created.

The idea the average young person has is that wealth is like a pie. The whole pie equals one hundred percent of available wealth, and everyone should have an equal share. If someone has a bigger piece of the pie, he is taking away from someone else, who is stuck with a smaller piece. That in a nutshell is socialistic economics, and many have been brainwashed with that kind of Marxist-based philosophy.

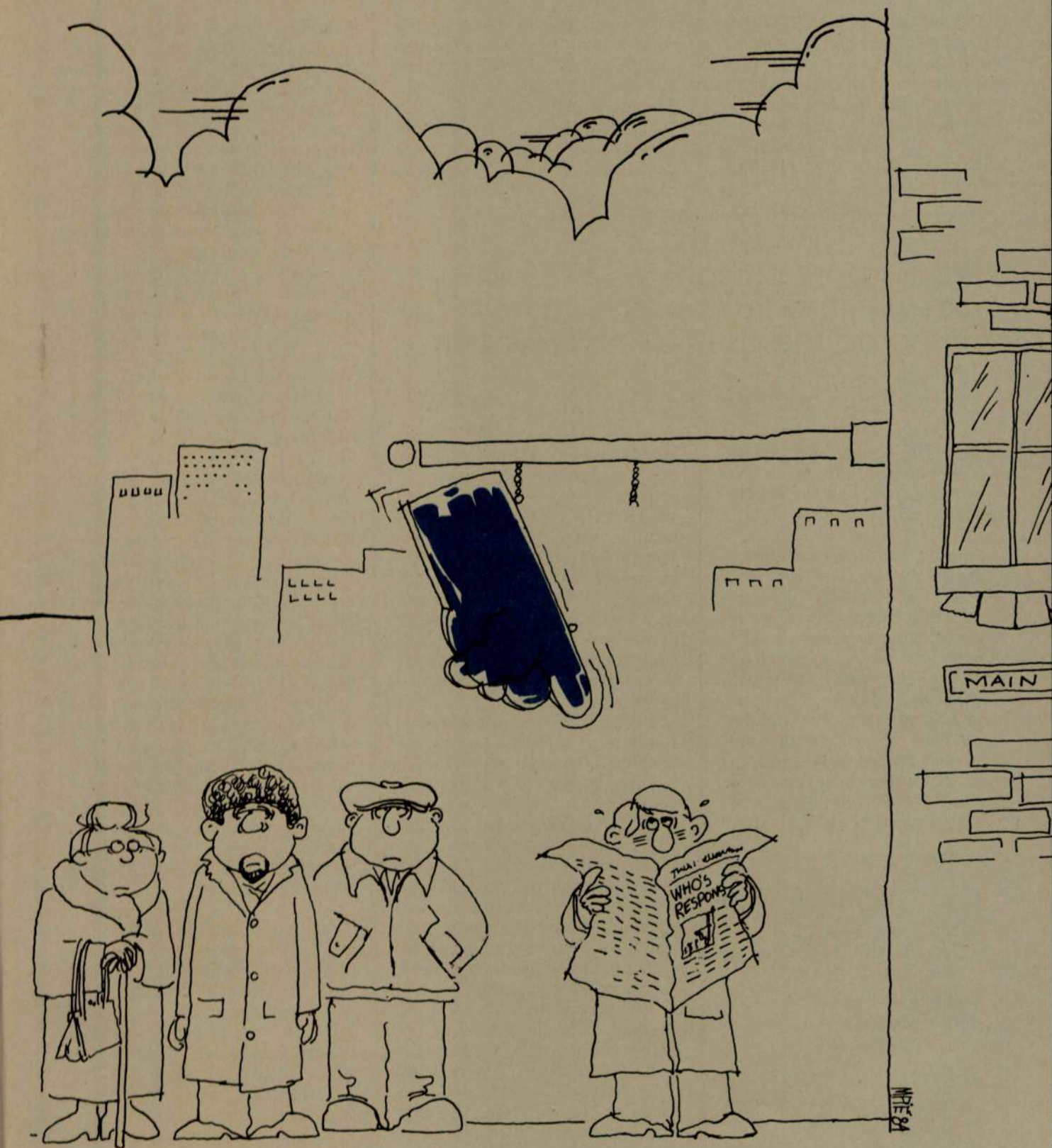
What is wrong with the socialistic idea that there is one hundred percent of everything

and everyone ought to have his fair share? What is wrong is that it rules out God. There is *not* one hundred percent of everything. God is unlimited. God, through us, creates wealth and prosperity. He is able to multiply our resources in our hands just as He multiplied the loaves and fishes in the hands of the disciples.

## Who Is Answerable?

But the greatest flaw of socialistic economics is that it attempts to rule out the law of accountability and its reality. Socialistic societies, such as the Soviet Union, have made the decision that everyone (or the state) owns the land in common. By doing so, they have produced a condition in which everyone's business is no one's business. The land that is owned by the state never produces enough, because no one is answerable for it. Only a bureau is answerable.

In the Soviet Union, ninety-seven percent of the land is owned by the state, and the remaining three percent is owned by individuals. Amazingly, that three percent of the land produces thirty-four percent of that country's crops! Why? Because a man is going to answer for that which is his very own. He'll let the government tractor stand in the field with a flat tire and rust, but he won't allow that to hap-



pen to his own tractor. He'll let the government mule starve, but he won't let his own mule starve. He'll let the government wheat rot, but he won't let his own wheat rot. Was that tendency to be accountable for his own belongings something he was

that, they assigned every man a specific plot of ground as his own and he lived from it. From that point on, the Pilgrims prospered. They took more interest in what they were doing; they worked harder; they were much more productive and they prospered

I wasn't born prosperous, but I was born with the truth, and God has prospered me as I have followed it.

taught? No, it was a principle that was born in him. It's a law of creation, just like the law of gravity.

#### **Prosperity and Responsibility**

Societies that flow with the law of accountability prosper. For the first three years after the Pilgrims came to America they were communal in their societal structure. They were required to function this way by the company in London that was backing them. They worked for the company and owned all things in common. During those first three years, however, roughly half of them starved to death. After

because they flowed with the law of accountability.

Everyone's business is no one's business. But my business is mine, and God will hold me accountable for how I manage it. If we ignore the law of individual accountability or try to oppose it, we will only be frustrated at every turn. But if we acknowledge and work with that eternal law of creation, God will cause us to prosper in Him.

I wasn't born prosperous, but I was born with the truth, and God has prospered me as I have followed it. When I was growing up, I had no idea how poor we were. My father made three dollars and fifty cents a week when I was born, and I just thought everyone lived like we did. We lived in a homemade one-room trailer. But over the years, God honored our commitment to be accountable, and He has been very good to my family.

It's easy to look at someone and say, "He's got it made because wealth was handed to him on a silver platter." That may be, but in most cases, the truth is that somewhere along the line that man learned to acknowledge the law of accountability.

#### **Our Response to the Law**

We are faced with several choices of what to do with the law of accountability. First, we can ignore it, or neglect it. We can neglect our talents, our money, our job—we can ignore it all. But if we do, we will lose what's entrusted to us. The Bible says that the unfaithful servant will lose even what he seems to have (see Matthew 25:29).

A fellow was talking with his pastor one time, and he said, "It wasn't hard to tithe when I wasn't making much money. But now that I'm making a lot of money, it's hard to tithe."

And the preacher said, "God can fix that. Would you like Him to change it back to the way it was?"

Sometimes we don't like our responsibilities, but that's the basis for losing them. Sometimes we don't like to give an account, and we begin to disdain what we have. That is a prelude to doing the wrong thing with what we have and losing it.

The man who had one talent had it taken away from him. What is interesting is that talent wasn't given to the man who had two, it was given to the man who had ten. Jesus gave it to the most faithful man. The point is, God is not after everyone getting his share; God is after His creation being handled the way He wants. And if we don't take care of what He gives us, He will take it away.

#### **We Must Acknowledge God**

A second option we have with the law of accountability is that we can defy God, taking what He has given us as though it is ours. But when we do, we have stolen something. To those who don't tithe, God says, "Will a man rob God? Yet you are robbing Me!" (Mal. 3:8 NAS).

If God has given us the ability to make money (and some

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people have that ability), and we become proud and think, *Well, I'm really smart—look at all this money I've made*, then we're in trouble. If we don't acknowledge God in whatever we have, we become thieves.

The third choice we have with accountability is to be irresponsible. But then we start feeling guilty, because we have been given something to do and we know we haven't done it right. Carrying guilt can make us physically ill. That's why we ought to confess our sins; it rids us of guilt. If we carry all that inside us; if we lie or steal or don't keep our word or don't pay our bills, we may be able to con our way through the complications this type of behavior produces, but something's happening down inside of us. God says that we need to confess our irresponsibility, and get rid of the guilt.

The fourth thing we can do about the law of accountability is we can respond to it in the flesh, saying, "I'm going to be responsible. I'm going to try harder. I'm going to succeed." But responding in the flesh can kill us. Work doesn't kill us—responsibility does.

I've always had an unusual sense of responsibility. When I was in high school, I felt obligated to be involved in everything. I played football, basketball, and baseball, sang in the glee club, and participated in other activities. But by the time I was sixteen, my father said to me, "Son, you're going to have to give up something or you're going to have a nervous breakdown." I was a candidate for it because I was conscientious and responsible, and I felt as if the burden of the whole world was on me. But responding in the flesh will kill us.

#### Our Best Option

The fifth, and best, option we

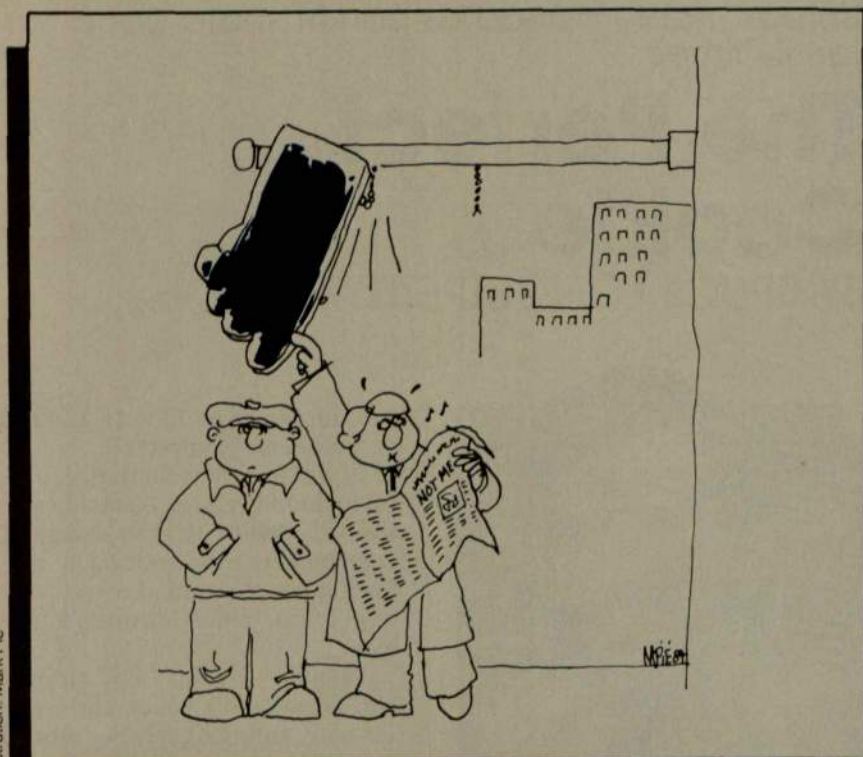


Illustration: Mark Pie

have for dealing with our responsibility is to take it back to God and say, "Lord, I need Your help."

It seems easier to start over again every two or three years, as someone who fills up one house with trash and moves to another one, than it does to face up to our responsibility. But sooner or later, we've got to face the reality of accountability, and when we face it, it's going to kill us if we don't give it to God. The Holy Spirit *can* help us. The best thing we can do with our responsibility is to keep it under the lordship of Jesus Christ. Living with the law of accountability means we don't try to ignore it, but that we accept it and try to function in it with the grace of God.

As those who choose to cooperate with the law of accountability, we must be as sure as we can be of what we're accountable for. We tend to spend a lot of

time worrying and talking about things that are not our responsibility, and neglecting the things we do have to answer for. We must answer for what has been entrusted to us—our talents, resources, and whatever is under our oversight.

As we do this, we will see God's blessing come upon us. By His grace and in the power of the Holy Spirit, we can become the good stewards that He desires us to be. And one day we will hear the Master's voice say, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant. . . ." □

*Charles Simpson is the senior pastor of Gulf Coast Covenant Church in Mobile, Alabama, and ministers extensively in the United States and abroad. He also serves as the chairman of the Integrity Communications Board of Directors. Charles resides in Mobile with his wife, Carolyn, and their three children.*

## TIPS FOR FATHERS

Unreasonable standards can frustrate good family times

# The Perfect Cookie

BY BRUCE LONGSTRETH



Jackie Conn

Last Valentine's Day, I had a tremendous idea for a fun time with my family. "Come on, Ladies. Let's make some Valentine cookies!" I said, inviting my two daughters, ages six and four, into the kitchen. "Hooray!" they yelled as they thundered from the family room to the kitchen table.

"Are you sure you know what you are doing, Dad?" my wife asked suspiciously.

"Oh sure, it's a cinch," I replied.

Zealously, I began to lay out the plan, assigning Mom to roll out the dough, one daughter to cut the cookies, and the other to frost after the cookies baked.

"Mom, show us how to cut out the cookies," I directed.

My wife, still with that doubtful look on her face, took a heart-shaped cookie cutter in hand and demonstrated the technique. Following her example, I attempted to get this "cinch" project under way.

"Look," I said, "it's simple. No, Girls, don't touch the cookies with your fingers. See what I mean? You scrunched it all up—now it's all crooked and ugly looking. No, don't do it like that! You have to do it the way Mom said. Oh nuts, you ruined another one by not paying attention. *Either do it right or not at all!*"

Suddenly, it hit me: What was I trying to do? Was my goal to create a perfect cookie or to enjoy my kids? The truth was that a great time of hilarious fellowship had suddenly turned into frustration at not being able to produce a perfect heart-shaped cookie!

How many of life's greatest adventures are missed because of a "do-it-right-or-don't-do-it-at-all" attitude? An unreasonable fixation with a standard keeps us from enjoying family, friends, job, church, or ourselves.

I read a slogan the other day that sounded like my cookie adventure: "The way you solve the problem is more important than the solution." Apply that to cookies and kids and it might sound like, "The time spent and

the fellowship enjoyed is more important than the cookie produced." In other words, the ingredients of the cookie-making process—gentle direction, patience, praise, humor, laughter, and fellowship—are more important than the perfect cookie.

This "process principle" applies to all of the things we do with our family. "We made it on time!" sounds like "the perfect cookie." But let's look at the process: I lost my temper. I yelled at the kids. I drove seventy miles an hour, ran two stoplights, and tied my wife's stomach up in knots because of the close call with the garbage truck. Still—we made it on time.

The process is at least as important as the end product—if not more important. I believe that if we apply this understanding of the process principle to our Christian life, we'll find it a lot more enjoyable.

What happened to the perfect Valentine cookie? Instead of perfect cookies, we had two little girls whose contagious laughter will long be remembered, a father who was vindicated, a relieved mom, and six dozen slightly warped, overfrosted, fingerprinted, heart-shaped cookies, which were eagerly devoured by two grateful schoolteachers, a shut-in grandmother, an overwhelmed crossing-guard, and a whole bunch of friends and neighbors.

Most important of all, the lesson learned by this often anxious dad was: The greatest joy for God and fathers is not in the perfect cookie, but in the loving ingredients mixed together in a process that makes it a possibility! □

*Bruce Longstreth is editor of Fathergram, a monthly newsletter that helps fathers build strong families. For a sample copy of Fathergram and subscription information, write to Fathergram, P.O. Box Z, Mobile, AL 36616.*

# THE WORD

May 1984

## *I Believe in the Holy Spirit, the Promise of the Father, the Comforter Sent by the Risen Christ, Pictured in Scripture as:*

- I. A Dove That Brings Order, Peace, and Comfort
  - A. The agent in creation and re-creation . . . . . Gen. 1:2; 8:6-12 . . . . . May 1
  - B. The crown for the Prince of Peace . . . . . Mt. 3:1-17 . . . . . May 2
  - C. The comfort for all believers . . . . . Jn. 16:1-16 . . . . . May 3
- II. A Seal That Brings Security and Belonging
  - A. Sealed for restoration . . . . . Jer. 32:6-15 . . . . . May 4
  - B. Sealed for future glory . . . . . Eph. 1:1-14; 2 Tim. 2:19 . . . . . May 5
  - C. Sealed for the day of redemption . . . . . Eph. 4:25-32 . . . . . May 6
- III. An Anointing Oil That Brings Consecration, Illumination, and Joy
  - A. Anointed to demonstrate God's character . . . . . Ex. 30:22-33 . . . . . May 7
  - B. Anointed to overflow . . . . . Ps. 23:1-6 . . . . . May 8
  - C. Anointed for service . . . . . Lev. 8:10-13; Acts 10:38 . . . . . May 9
  - D. Anointed to build . . . . . Zech. 4:1-14 . . . . . May 10
  - E. Anointed to bring good news . . . . . Is. 61:1-11 . . . . . May 11
  - F. Anointed to know the Lord . . . . . 1 Jn. 2:18-29 . . . . . May 12
- IV. A Fire That Brings Purification, Judgment, and Vindication
  - A. A fire that refines . . . . . Mal. 3:1-5; Lk. 3:15-18 . . . . . May 13
  - B. A fire that reveals God's choice . . . . . 1 Ki. 18:16-39; Acts 2:1-4 . . . . . May 14
- V. Water That Brings Refreshing, Fruitfulness, and Evidence of Abundant Grace
  - A. A refreshing visitation . . . . . Ps. 65:1-13; Is. 44:1-5 . . . . . May 15
  - B. A satisfied thirst . . . . . Is. 41:17-20; Jn. 4:1-15 . . . . . May 16
  - C. A heritage for God's people . . . . . Is. 43:14-21; Jn. 7:37-44 . . . . . May 17
  - D. A rain of restoration . . . . . Ps. 72:1-7; Hos. 6:1-3 . . . . . May 18
  - E. An evidence of vindication . . . . . Joel 2:18-32 . . . . . May 19
  - F. An abundant provision . . . . . Lev. 26:1-13; 2 Cor. 9:6-15 . . . . . May 20
  - G. A gracious benediction . . . . . Gen. 27:28; Ps. 133:1-3; Pr. 19:12 . . . . . May 21
  - H. A healing touch . . . . . Hos. 14:1-9 . . . . . May 22
- VI. A Holy Environment That Brings a Place for God's Character to Grow
  - A. A new place to walk . . . . . Gal. 5:16-26 . . . . . May 23
  - B. A new way to live . . . . . Rom. 8:1-39 . . . . . May 24
  - C. A new Kingdom to serve . . . . . Eph. 5:1-21 . . . . . May 25
- VII. Wind That Brings Life and Power
  - A. Life to the dead . . . . . Ezek. 37:1-14 . . . . . May 26
  - B. Life from above . . . . . Jn. 3:1-21 . . . . . May 27
  - C. Life for a new creation . . . . . Gen. 2:7; Jn. 20:19-23; Acts 2:1-4 . . . . . May 28
- VIII. Clothing That Brings Equipping, Endowment, and Strength
  - A. Clothed in the Spirit . . . . . Judg. 6:34; Lk. 24:49; Rom. 13:11-14 . . . . . May 29
  - B. Clothed in a new man . . . . . Zech. 3:1-10; Col. 3:9-17 . . . . . May 30
- IX. An Earnest That Brings a Taste of Future Glory
  - A. The down payment of an eternal dwelling . . . . . 2 Cor. 5:1-10 . . . . . May 31

A monthly Bible study by Bruce Longstreth

Phelps Agency



A father and his children see the power of God

## Lasting Lessons

BY CLINT CONNER

**W**e had crisscrossed our path a dozen times that late fall afternoon, walking close to a mile in the woods that were covered with the current season's brightly colored leaves mixed with the brown ones of the previous year. All at once my older son, David (then eight years old), announced in a tremulous voice that he had lost one of the thimble-size brown boots off the soldier doll he was carrying.

I had had questions about the advisability of the soldier doll as a toy, and had even protested when a relative purchased it for him. So when David reported his loss, I was somewhat certain that the Holy Spirit was confirming my reservations. As I was wishing he had lost the soldier and not just the boot, I heard him say, "Daddy, you told me the other day about how you pray, believing. Would you pray now, believing we can find the boot?"

Reluctantly, I prayed—on my knees, as he requested—yet not

really believing. I then spent the next fifteen minutes, as we attempted to retrace our steps, trying to prepare him for the let-down of not finding the boot, comparing its loss in a woods full of leaves to the needle-in-the-haystack story, which he knew. In the midst of my talk I saw him point suddenly toward some leaves and jump up and down with triumph beaming across his face. "There it is, Dad!" And sure enough, there it was: a little brown boot lying partially exposed amidst similarly colored leaves, hardly visible except that God had given direction to the eyes of a child for His special lesson that day.

David shared the boot miracle with his five-year-old brother, Jonathan, shortly after it took place. And though Jonathan had not witnessed it, the story stuck with him. In fact, Jonathan still remembered it well on a not-so-windy day the following spring, as he, David, and I ran back and forth in an open field near that same woods, trying valiantly

but vainly to get a kite airborne. A number of other people were attempting to fly kites too, but no one had gotten one up.

This time I suggested we pray, remembering the way God had honored our prayers with David's boot. My intention was for the three of us to stand at a distance from the other kite-fliers, look casual—like we were talking—and pray.

Just before we began, the Holy Spirit reminded me of the scripture, Mark 8:38, about what will happen when Christ returns if we are openly ashamed of being Christians; simultaneously, I heard Jonathan say, "Daddy, aren't you going to kneel and pray here in the field like you and David did in the woods over there?"

Somewhat reluctantly again, I knelt down with my sons and we prayed. But not five minutes after we had prayed, a miracle as phenomenal as finding the boot occurred. Our kite suddenly soared aloft, climbed higher, and stayed there high above us. Of all the people trying to fly kites, we were the only ones who were successful.

Those seemingly insignificant but very real miracles are the incidents David, now in his twenties, and Jonathan, two years his junior, have recalled when they have needed faith for far more major events in their lives. And the lessons I learned then have continued to speak to me across the years when I have faced situations that required me to exercise the faith the Holy Spirit birthed in me those days in the woods and the field. □

*Clint Conner is a New Wine reader from Marion, Ohio. A professional counselor for twenty-three years, he now works with the Christian Mental Health Clinic of Central Ohio, and is the author of Not Without Cure.*



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A boy's disobedience leads to an understanding of God's unconditional love

## More Than I Deserve

BY DON BASHAM

I don't find it hard to believe that God loves me; only to believe that He *always* loves me—even when I'm rebellious or disobedient. One scripture that clearly confirms this is the story of the prodigal son in Luke chapter 15. Having ended up penniless and hungry in a foreign pigsty, the prodigal son repents and heads for home. Then verse 20 says:

"But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him" (NIV).

The father's compassionate welcome means so much to me because of my own battle throughout my years as a Christian to fully accept that nothing I do—no matter how foolish or stupid—diminishes God's love for me nor alters the truth that I am His child. Like any small child I struggle to comprehend father-love.

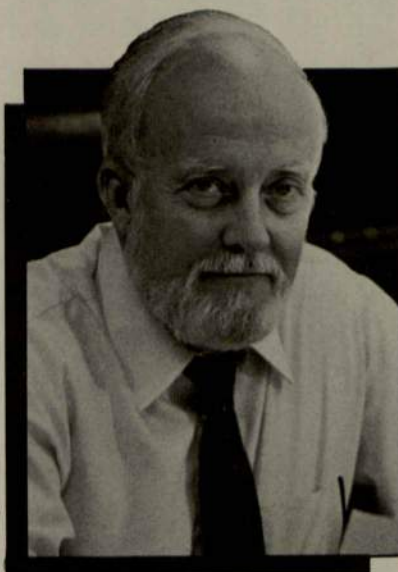
"Daddy, do you really love me?"

"Yes, Son, I really do—all the time."

"Even when I'm bad, Daddy?"

"Yes, Son, I love you even when you're bad."

I remember one incident that made me very aware of the reality of a father's undeserved love. I was seven years old and it was a hot afternoon in 1933 in Wich-



David Lay

ita Falls, Texas, when someone shouted the challenge: "Last one across the street's a rotten egg!" In an instant, nine neighborhood children, ages six to thirteen, bolted into the street, oblivious of oncoming traffic. In fifth place and intent on overtaking the boy ahead of me, I didn't see the car nor hear the squeal of its brakes until it was too late. I was struck from behind and slammed facedown on the pavement, the car sliding to a stop directly over my body, one front wheel inches from my head. Stunned and terrified, I crawled slowly and painfully from under the car. Ignoring the anguished face of the driver as he jumped from the car, I limped into the front yard of my own home. As my father and mother rushed out the door and down

the steps toward me, I finally found breath enough for one long, agonizing wail.

Moments later I was standing in the kitchen shaking like a leaf, my father behind me with protective hands on my shoulders, my mother on her knees in front of me, gently sponging the dirt and blood from my skinned face, elbows, and knees with a damp cloth. I was shaking, not only from the shock of being struck and almost killed by the car, but also from the awful weight of my own disobedience. How many times had my parents warned, "Look both ways before you cross the street!"

I finally cried, "Mother, Daddy, I'm so sorry! Are you going to spank me?" only to be lifted suddenly into the fierce but tender embrace of my father and to feel my mother's tearful kisses cover my face. Until that day when foolish disobedience almost cost me my life, I never really knew how much my parents loved me.

That was fifty years ago, and on more than one occasion I have found that same boundless, unconditional love, only in far greater measure, in my relationship with my heavenly Father. For sometimes, temporarily deviating from His will, I have rushed headlong into selfish worldly traffic only to be knocked flat by some powerful temptation I should have seen coming. Then, hurt and humiliated, I have come to my senses, turned limping in repentance back to Father's house, only to be overwhelmed by the unfailing grace that rushed to embrace me.

The miracle is not just that God loves us, but that He seems to love us most when we are the least deserving. At least, that's the way I see it. □

*Don Basham is chief editorial consultant for New Wine.*

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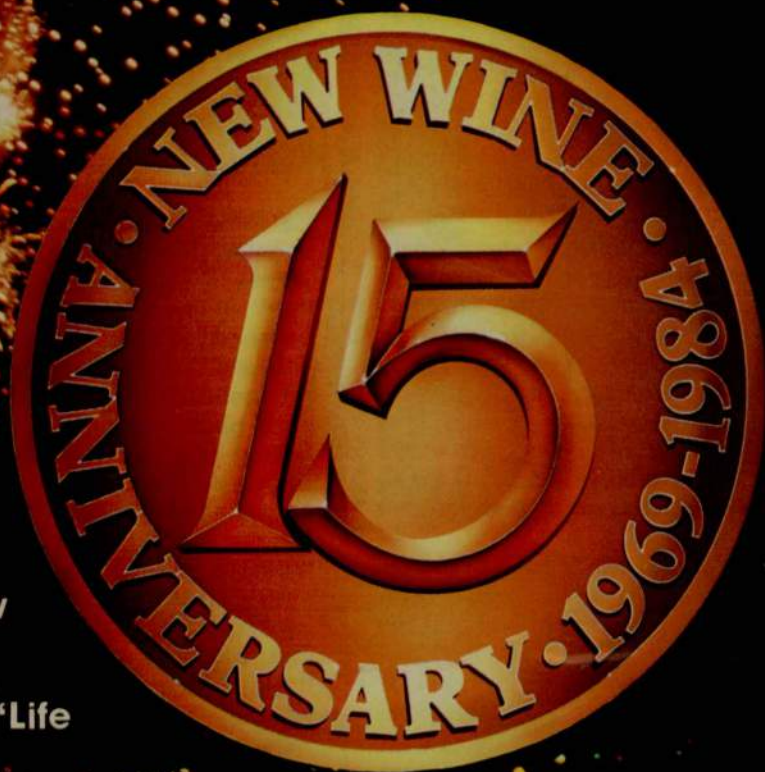
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