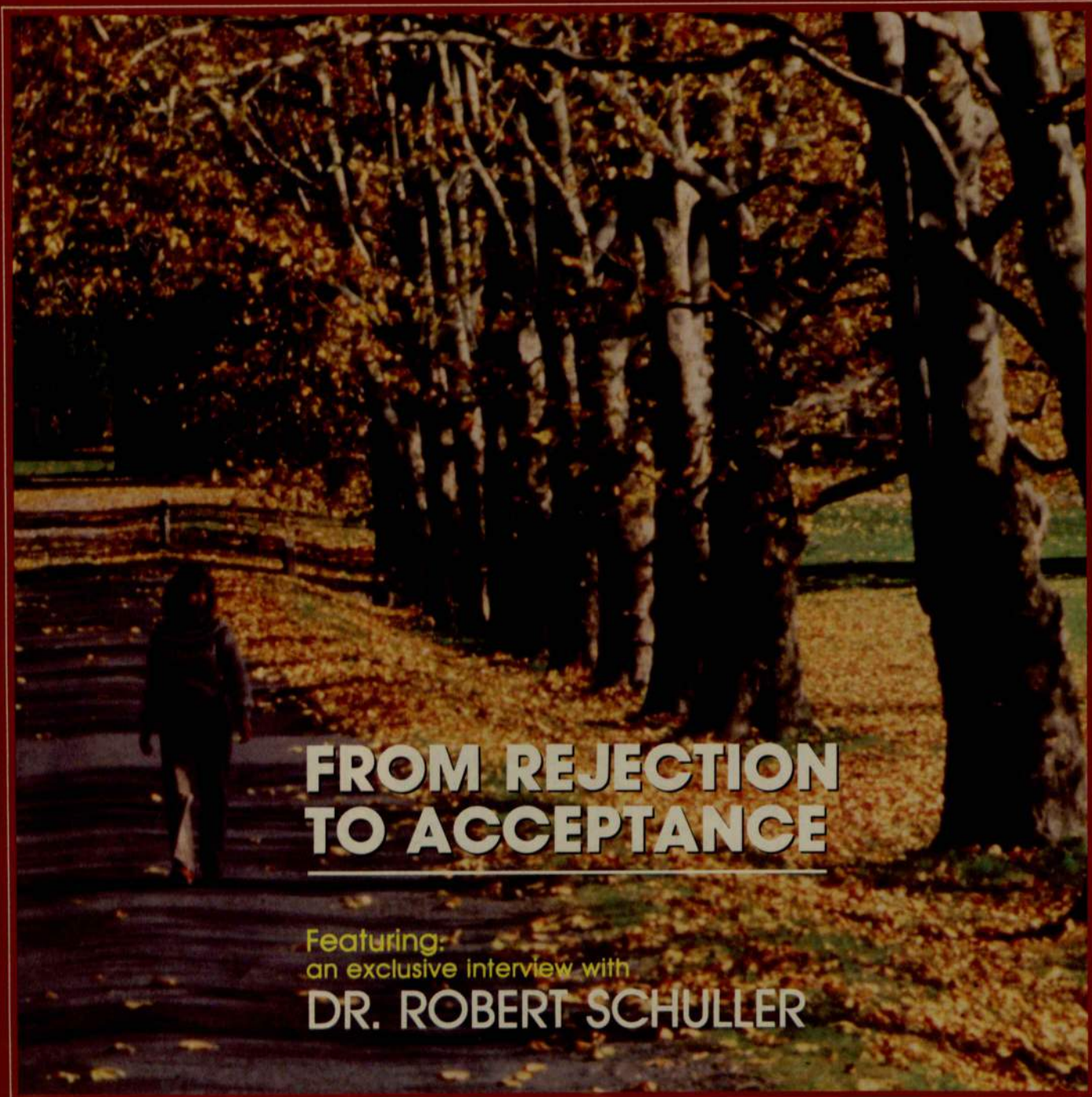


Integrity
Communications®
presents

Special election feature
by Charles Simpson

Magazine New Wine®

November 1984



FROM REJECTION TO ACCEPTANCE

Featuring:
an exclusive interview with

DR. ROBERT SCHULLER

A reminder of our acceptance in Christ, because

Everyone Needs to Belong

BY DICK LEGGATT

In his book *This Way to Happiness*, Clyde Narramore recounts a story from *The New York Times* about a little boy sitting between two women on a city bus. When the lad's dirty shoes accidentally brushed against the dress of one of the ladies, she indignantly told the woman on his other side to keep her child's feet on the ground. "He's not my boy," she replied. "I never saw him before."

After some questioning the boy revealed that he didn't have a mother—or a father. In fact, his parents were dead, and his caretaker relatives shuttled him back and forth between families on the bus, which he had to ride alone.

"I never get lost," the little fellow explained. "But I get lonesome sometimes. So when I see someone that I think I'd like to belong to, I sit real close and snuggle up and pretend I really do belong to them."

The article concludes by saying, "This little boy, in his artless, childlike fashion, had expressed a universal need. . . . Everyone wants to belong."

According to what Robert Schuller states in his book on self-esteem, that need for love and acceptance is the deepest need of every human being, and the one best met by the love and acceptance of Jesus Christ.

Schuller's emphasis on that theme is one reason why we include in this issue an interview with him, which follows our feature article by Derek Prince, a

practical, scriptural examination of the pain of rejection and the provision of acceptance in Jesus Christ.

Continuing with the theme of acceptance, Jim Reid writes an insightful article on our security in the Lord. Next is a unique perspective on rejection and acceptance as experienced by our military men and women when they returned from the Vietnam War—a special November tribute in observance of Veterans Day.

Two other days in November are especially significant to all Americans. The first is Thanksgiving, a time when we gather with families to celebrate the goodness of God. All of us here at Integrity Communications pray God's richest blessings for you on this special holiday and throughout the coming year. The second very significant day is Election Day, November 6. As we focus on the importance of that day, our final article, by Charles Simpson, provides timely and needed clarity on a question of great concern to Christians, What should be our posture toward government?

We trust that our focus on acceptance in this issue will be encouraging to you. Let's face it—you and I are very much like that little boy on the bus, longing to belong to someone. The good news is that we do. But no matter how many times we have heard how Jesus brings us from rejection to acceptance, you and I need to hear it confirmed again and again. And that's what this issue of *New Wine* is all about. □

Magazine New Wine

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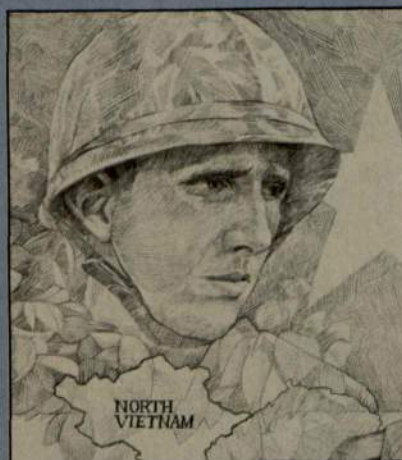
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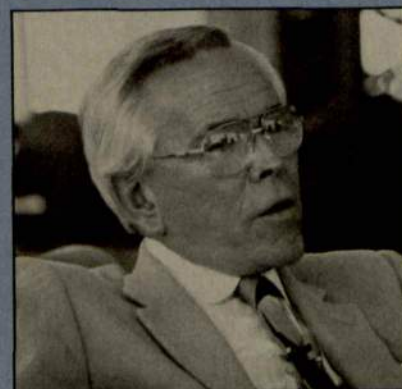
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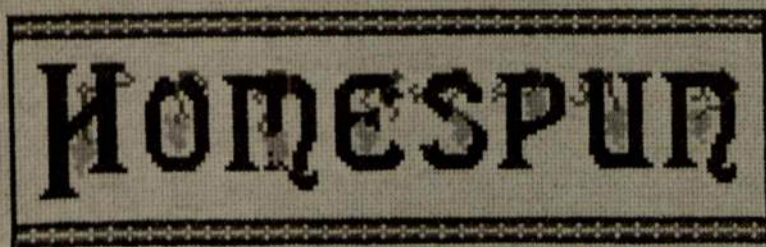
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Cover Photograph:
Ewing Galloway

A young girl's persistence pays off

The Last Shall Be First

BY DAVID HERR



As the father of two lovely but distinctly different daughters, I have had to rely on the Lord for wisdom and understanding to deal with situations I could never handle on my own. One such occasion was our community's annual Summerfair days.

Both my daughters have always enjoyed sporting events. The older one, Brittni, is eight years old, tall and thin, and runs like the wind. In fact, most of the time she can outpace boys her own age.

Brittni has run in the Summerfair races for the past two years and has won medals every time. Each of those years, her little sister, Karly, has stood on the sidelines and watched as Mom and Dad cheered her big sister on to victory. All this attention and approval obviously had an effect, because this year Karly decided she too would run in the fifty-yard dash—just like her big sister.

Now this would have been a

fine decision except for one minor detail. Karly favors her father physically: She tends to be built somewhat like a fireplug and runs like one too. As soon as she said she wanted to run, I knew it was not going to turn out as she hoped.

Sure enough, she finished last, and the look of failure was painfully etched all over her little face as she fell down just before crossing the finish line.

My heart ached for her, and I felt as if I had failed as a father by not protecting her from the hurt she was experiencing.

The mistake Karly had made was a very common one. Watching her big sister receive our approval by running and winning, Karly had assumed she had to be just like her sister to gain our love. Trying to reassure Karly of our unconditional love for her even after her last-place finish, I said, "Karly, you don't have to run fast for Mommy and Daddy to love you. We're each good at different things. God made you

special and we love you just the way you are."

She wiped the tears from her eyes and, although I wasn't sure I had really been able to console her, she at least managed a smile. But then with a note of persistence in her voice, she said to me, "Daddy, I want to enter the broad jump."

Oh, no! I said within. I looked toward the children lining up for the next event. *Why does my sweet little girl with the short legs want to enter the standing broad jump?*

In spite of my reservations, I agreed to let her try and it wasn't long before all the contestants had finished their jumps. We had a half-hour wait before the officials announced the names of the five finalists. But when they did, Karly's name was one of the ones announced. It was a toss-up whether Karly or I was more surprised to hear her name included in that illustrious group.

Thank goodness! I thought. At least she'll get a ribbon for fifth place to help her get over the disappointment of her disastrous finish in the running event.

"All finalists please report to the awards stand!" blared the loudspeaker. The five excited girls sat on the ground as one of the judges read their names, leading up to the winner. Fifth place... fourth place... third place... still no Karly Herr. When the judge announced the name of the second-place finisher, Karly's eyes grew five sizes as she realized she had won first place.

And no one was more surprised than Karly—with the possible exception of her very proud father. As we rejoiced together, I thanked the Lord, who was able to turn my daughter's painful loss into an unexpected victory. □

David Herr is a New Wine reader in Newville, Pennsylvania.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



Dear New Wine

Power of Prayer

Thank you for faithfully sending me *New Wine* and for your ministry of encouragement. It was good to read what was shared by Billy Graham (July). We have just ended Mission England—Billy Graham sharing at 5 football grounds throughout the country. In the 8-day crusade at Liverpool, about 47,000 people were counseled of the nearly 225,000 attending. We saw this as God at work through the power of prayer.

Enu Lleiaol
Cheshire, England

Finding the Answer

Dick Leggatt's editorial "Tougher Than Barbed Wire" (August) came at just the right time for me. My nine-year-old son, Greg, asked me to write you and tell you his story.

He was hit in the head with a swing, which left a nasty cut. We prayed right away for Jesus to stop the bleeding and let no infection set in, but later as we were cleaning it he asked me,

"Why did God let this happen to me?" I didn't know what to say. Then a few days later my *New Wine* came and I read Dick's article. Praise God! That was exactly the answer I needed.

I read the article to Greg and he could relate to Dick's son Tuffer very well. Thank you so much.

Carolyn McPhee
Mississauga, Ontario

Another Lesson in Love

As I read the September "Homespun" about the pillow for the drunk, my thoughts drifted back to a lesson of love in our lives.

Bob Mumford was speaking in our town and my husband and I were handling the book table. As my husband carried the books into the building, he saw a young girl lying on a bench in the lounge, apparently ill. He thought of the blanket and pillow in the car and that maybe he should offer it to her. But then he hesitated, thinking, *That's not very spiritual*. He went over to her and asked if he could pray for her. She said, "I'd

rather have a blanket."

It was a lesson to us that meeting physical needs is the first step in the act of showing love.

Nita Ulery
Marion, OH

Please address all letters to "Dear New Wine," P.O. Box Z, Mobile, AL 36616.

About New Wine

New Wine Magazine, published monthly by Integrity Communications, seeks to promote the maturity of the Church and the individual Christian by publishing scripturally sound content that is personal, action-oriented, and timely. We implement this purpose by including a wide diversity of Christian authors to communicate the message of the kingdom of God to all men.

As a reflection of our desire to be open to all that God is saying and doing, we at *New Wine* regularly feature material from Christian leaders and groups of diverse points of view. Their appearance in *New Wine* does not mean they totally agree with us on every issue, nor we with them. It does mean we recognize them as Christians who are saying something that we all need to hear. We recognize that virtually every ministry has its controversial aspects. We deliberately choose, however, not to highlight those areas of controversy but rather, in the interest of Christian unity, to present their views in the context of a more primary issue: the lordship of Jesus Christ. Our desire is to emphasize the common commitment to Him we share with the Christians featured in *New Wine*, and their contribution to the purposes of God.

All Scripture quotations are from the King James or New King James versions of the Bible unless otherwise noted.

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As a result of my ministry over the past number of years, I've become convinced that probably one in five persons in the United States is affected in one way or another by the problem of rejection. Rejection, simply defined, is the sense of being unwanted or the sense that, although you want people to love you, no one does. Or it can be the feeling of wanting to be part of a group, but feeling excluded—somehow always being on the outside looking in. And I believe one reason so many people suffer from this problem today is because of the form of our society and its pressures, particularly those causing the breakup of family life.

If I were to ask you, "What is the opposite of rejection?" you would probably reply, "Acceptance," which is the correct answer. So in this article we'll concentrate on how to move from rejection to acceptance.

A Wounded Spirit

Let's begin our study with a picture of rejection found in Isaiah 54:6. This is a very poignant picture of a broken-hearted married woman.

"For the Lord hath called thee as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, and a wife of youth, when thou wast refused," saith thy God.

I think the picture here is of a young woman, fairly recently married, who finds that her husband doesn't love her. Maybe he has no time for her or shows no interest in her—possibly he's even preparing to divorce her to find another wife—so the scripture describes her as "forsaken and grieved in spirit."

There is a type of wound which is very, very hard to bear,



How to successfully move

From Rejection to Acceptance

BY DEREK PRINCE

and it's described quite accurately in Proverbs: "The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity; but a *wounded spirit* who can bear?" (Pr. 18:14, italics mine). This woman was obviously suffering from just such a wound in her spirit.

Even psychologists and psychiatrists acknowledge that there are some things that are so wounding and painful that the mind refuses to focus on them. It just turns a blind eye in that particular direction. Nevertheless, the wound is there—deeper than the mind, deeper than reason, deeper than the memory—it's in the spirit.

Rejection very frequently is

in that deep area—the spirit. And often, because it's so deep, many people do not even realize their problem is rejection.

How Rejection Begins

Let's consider some examples of how this may arise. Rejection can begin even before a child is born. I've discovered that if a woman carries in her womb a child whose coming she resents, that child is frequently born with a spirit of rejection.

This type of rejection is especially prevalent among people in one certain age group in the United States—children conceived during the depression. Why? Because many families already had



too many mouths to feed, and the thought of another little life coming into the world produced a feeling of bitterness. "Why do we have to have another child?"

A similar problem may develop in a child conceived out of marriage. In most cases of that type there are tremendous problems involved for the mother, and she may come to resent and hate this child who is coming into her life and creating problems for her. That child too may be born with a spirit of rejection.

Then again, a child may be born and not receive love and thus suffer rejection. I've come to the conclusion that every child is born into the world look-

ing for the love of a father and the love of a mother. Every child is created that way. But in many cases, particularly in modern America, every child is not loved. Or, even if the child is loved, the parents may not know how to express their love. I've talked to a number of people who said, "Well, I suppose my father loved me, but he never knew how to show it. All his life he never took me on his knee or did anything to show me that he loved me." Or the same may be true of the mother. As a result, the child gets this feeling of, "I'm unwanted."

I've noticed that in a family with two or three children this

sometimes occurs. Suppose the first child is brilliant, clever, and knows all the answers. The next child who comes along may not be so brilliant. But then the third child is clever like the first. This second child just never feels in the same category with the others. Somehow the parents are always praising the youngest child or the eldest child, but they don't say much about the middle child. The result in many cases is that the second child feels rejected, unwanted. "My parents love my older brother and my younger brother, but they don't love me."

Time Is of the Essence

Rejection may also come later in life. Like the woman we read about in Isaiah, a wife may love her husband and have a picture in her mind of what married life should be. She'll imagine how her husband is going to love her, and how she'll be blessed with children. But somehow it turns out otherwise. Maybe the husband loves her for a little while, and then he gets interested in another woman. Or he may be one of those men who doesn't know how to show love. After a while this young woman feels, "My husband doesn't want me. He doesn't care for me. He doesn't devote time to me."

Time is one of the most important factors in this situation. If you talk to many children today who are bitter and rebellious toward their parents, they'll tell you this: "Our parents gave us clothes, an education, a car, a swimming pool—but they never gave us their time. They never gave us themselves."

Reactions to Rejection

Rejection is a problem that brings others in its train. I'm going to outline briefly for you the two different lines of reaction

that proceed from rejection. Neither of these, of course, is an absolute law, but they are situations that occur consistently enough to indicate a definite pattern.

In the first line that proceeds from rejection, the next reaction down the line is *loneliness*. Loneliness is a very terrible thing. This modern world of ours is filled with lonely people. Some even sit in church every Sunday and yet never cease to be lonely.

Loneliness leads to misery, and all of us know people who always seem to be miserable.

Then misery and loneliness frequently lead to self-pity. You're always feeling sorry for yourself. "Nobody understands me. Others can, but I can't. Why did God make me like I am?"

The step following self-pity is often depression—moods of gloominess that settle down over you. I can describe these moods in detail because I've often had them myself.

Depression can lead to something even more serious, which is despair, hopelessness. "It's no good. I might as well give up." And then despair will almost inevitably lead to one of two things which is final. One is death; the other is suicide.

There is a difference between death and suicide. Death is the desire to die. Saying "I wish I were dead" is a very dangerous thing. You don't have to say that many times before a spirit of death comes in.

Suicide is more radical. "I might as well end it all. What's the good of living? Take the whole bottle of pills. Swallow them now." Or, "Go ahead—jump in front of that train and end it all."

When Hardness Sets In

That's one line of reaction stemming from rejection. But there's another possible line which leads in a different direc-

tion. The first step in this progression from rejection is hardness. "Well, if they don't love me, so what? Who needs them anyhow? I can do without them."

Then hardness leads to something I've had occasion to

**What broke
Jesus' heart
was not
rejection by
His own
people, but
rejection by
His Father.**

analyze—indifference. "I don't care! I've been wounded enough. Nobody's ever going to hurt me that much again. I'll put up a barrier that nobody will ever get inside." I've discovered that in the spiritual realm the name for that barrier is indifference. Outwardly you're friendly. You talk to people and you joke, but there's something inside you they can never get through.

After indifference comes rebellion. "Well, they're against me, so I'll be against them. I hate them. I hate their religion. I hate their church. I hate their God." You'd be amazed at the number of people who have told me that at some time in their life they've actually said, "God, I hate You!" That's a terrible thing to say, but I've talked to scores of people who have said, "God, why did You make me this way? Why did You bring me into the world at all?"

Then rebellion quite often leads to something which isn't as obviously connected, but is closely associated to rebellion in

Scripture: witchcraft. 1 Samuel 15:23 says, "Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft." When I say witchcraft, I mean the whole occult realm—going off to seek false spiritual experiences through the Ouija board, the fortune-teller, or the seance. Many fail to realize it, but that's really the expression of rebellion—turning from the true God to a false god. It's the breaking of the first commandment: "Thou shalt have no other gods before Me." And if Saul can be used as an example, witchcraft also leads ultimately to spiritual and physical death (see 1 Chronicles 10:13-14).

So we see from both of these lines of reaction that the consequences of rejection's presence in a person's spirit can be devastating.

The Solution to Rejection

To such radical problems stemming from rejection, the gospel offers radical solutions. I want to show you the Scripture's answer to this problem of rejection. And I'll tell you something: It works! I've seen scores of lives radically changed—not temporarily, not superficially, but *radically*.

Every solution God has for every problem in our life stems from the cross. The cross is where God provided the solution to all our problems, and in relation to the cross, Jesus dealt with this specific problem of rejection.

Over the years, the Lord has shown me one basic principle about the cross; that it was an *exchange*, a divinely appointed exchange. On the cross, to satisfy eternal, divine justice, God caused to meet together upon Jesus all the evil that was due by justice to the human race so that in return, by faith, the one who repents and believes may receive all the good that is due by justice to Jesus. Jesus took the evil that we might receive

the good. This is very simple, very basic, but when you once begin to understand it, it will open up endless avenues of blessing for your soul.

God made to meet together upon Jesus all the evil so that we might receive all the good. And the longer I meditate on this, the more complete I see that the exchange was. Here are just a few aspects of the exchange:

1. Jesus was punished for our sin that we might be forgiven.
2. Jesus was wounded for our sicknesses that we might be healed.
3. Jesus was made sickness itself that we might have health.
4. Jesus became poor for our sakes that we might have His wealth.
5. Jesus died our death that we might have His life.

But recently, while I was meditating on this message, God said to me, "There's another side to that exchange. What about rejection?" What does Isaiah 53:3 say? "He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief."

Jesus' Rejection

For three and a half years He gave His life totally to doing good: to forgiving sins, healing sickness, delivering those oppressed by demons. He did nothing but good. At the end of that period, His people to whom He belonged, the Jewish nation, were given a choice by their Roman ruler of whom they would prefer to have—Jesus of Nazareth or a criminal named Barabbas, who was guilty of political insurrection, robbery, and murder. By one of the most amazing and tragic decisions in all human history, the entire nation, incited by its religious leaders, rejected Jesus and instead chose Barabbas, the political rebel.

So the people said, "Away with Jesus. Crucify Him! We

don't want Him! We'll have Barabbas, the thief and the robber." How did Jesus respond? He prayed to the Father to forgive those who were crucifying Him. He was not concerned about what was happening to Him. He was concerned about what would happen to them. The marvelous example of Jesus is that though He was in agony and rejection, He was not concerned about Himself. He was concerned about those who had rejected Him. What a pattern that is.

Forsaken by the Father

When I examined Jesus' exchange on the cross in terms of the problem of rejection, I realized something startling—that although He was rejected by men, the final agony of Jesus on the cross was rejection by His Father. If you read the accounts right near the end of that awful experience, He said, "My God,

Him. Why had He rejected Him? The Scriptures say God is "of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity" (Hab. 1:13). And when Jesus was made sin with our sinfulness, God averted His eyes and stopped His ears to the cry of His Son.

After that, there was only one more cry that came from the lips of Jesus, and then He expired. I believe it's literally correct that He died of a broken heart. What broke His heart was not rejection by His own people, but rejection by His Father.

For every person reading this article who has suffered the agonies of rejection, I want to tell you right now: Jesus experienced the deepest pangs of rejection, even being rejected by His Father, and He bore it for you that you might be saved. If ever there was good news for this generation, that is it.

No matter if nobody wanted or loved you, when you come to God through Christ, you become a member of the best family in the universe, and God has no second-class kids.

my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Mt. 27:46).

And there was no answer from heaven. For the first time in the history of the universe, the Father turned a deaf ear to the Son's cry. Then Jesus knew that His Father had rejected

Accepted in the Beloved

What's the opposite of rejection? It is *acceptance*. I love the King James Version of Ephesians 1:6, because it says God "hath made us accepted in the beloved." Jesus, God's true and only begotten Son, was rejected

that we who were unworthy rebels might have His acceptance with the Father. So the deepest remedy for our problems is to believe that Jesus bore our rejection that we might have His acceptance with the Father.

Sometimes there are problems with earthly parents that can never be resolved. But, friends, no matter if nobody wanted you, nobody loved you, your parents weren't even married—when you come to God through Jesus Christ, you become a member of the best family in the universe, and God has no second-class kids.

God's family is the best family. There's no family quite equal to it. Even if your own family didn't care for you and your own father rejected you and your mother never had time for you or your husband never showed you love, God still wants you.

Rather, He says, "I'm interested in you. I want you. You're welcome. Come in. I've been waiting a long time for you."

Like the Prodigal

It's like the father in the story of the prodigal son. He was out there looking for the boy to come home. No one had to come and say, "Your son's come home," because the first one to know it was the father. He knew it before all the rest of the family.

God's attitude toward us in Christ is like that. We're not rejects. We're not second-class citizens. We're not just servants. When the prodigal came back, he was willing to be a servant. But the father would not hear of it. On the contrary, he said, "Bring out the best robe. Put shoes on his feet, rings on his fingers. Kill the fatted calf! This, my son, was lost and is

rejections—all the agony, the heartache. Second, this exchange has taken place: We are accepted because of His rejection. We are "accepted in the beloved." You must lay hold of those two facts. Sometimes you don't need to do any more than this to overcome rejection.

A Simple Declaration

A few years ago at a conference, I was walking to a preaching assignment, and I literally bumped into a lady who was going in another direction. She was kind of out of breath and said, "Oh, Brother Prince! I was praying that if God wanted me to meet you, I'd meet you."

"Well," I said, "you have. What's the problem? I can give you about two minutes. I'm due to be preaching." She started to talk, and after about half a minute, I said, "Wait a minute. I

You're God's masterpiece, the thing He's devoted the most care to of all He's created in the universe. If that doesn't make you feel good, I don't know what will.

You're accepted. You're the object of His special care and affection. Everything He does in the universe revolves around you.

When God says we're accepted, He doesn't mean we're just tolerated. We don't bother Him. We don't upset Him. We don't disturb Him. We never take too much of His time. The only thing that upsets Him is when we stay away too long.

He doesn't push us off into a corner and say, "Wait. I'm too busy. I don't have time for you."

found, was dead and is alive again" (see Luke 15:22-24). The whole household was turned upside down to welcome the prodigal.

Jesus said, "Likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth more than over ninety and nine just persons which need no repentance" (Lk. 15:7). That's how God welcomes us in Christ.

So you've got to understand these two basic facts: First, Christ on the cross bore our

know your problem. I don't have to listen anymore. Your problem is rejection." I told her, "I want you to say these words out loud after me." I don't remember the exact words, but this is more or less what I said: "God, I thank You that You are my Father and I am Your child. Heaven is my home. I belong in the family. I'm not rejected. I am accepted. God loves me. He wants me. He cares for me." I said, "Amen," and "Good-by—I'm going," and took off.

About a month later, I got a letter from that lady in which she said, "I want to tell you those two minutes you spent with me and those words that I spoke have completely changed my whole life. I've been a different person ever since." Why was she different? Because she realized what it means to be accepted in Christ.

Troubled With Rejection

For many people, the simple declaration of their acceptance in Christ resolves the problem. But for others, it takes more than this. So I'm going to tell you in a little more detail the simple steps you have to take if you are troubled with rejection. I believe the Holy Spirit will show you whether or not you are.

1. *You have to forgive those who have rejected you.* This is essential. You say, "Well, my father is dead."

This has been said to me many times, and each time I reply, "That doesn't matter because it's not for your father's sake you're forgiving. It's for your own sake."

The forgiveness is not for the one who's dead or far away; it's your end of the relationship that we're talking about. *You* have to forgive for your own sake. Let me remind you of something I've said many times: Forgiveness is not an emotion; it's a decision. Don't say "I can't." If the truth be told, it's "I won't." But if you can say "I won't," you can also say "I will."

2. *You have to lay down bitterness, resentment, hatred, and rebellion.* These are the four reactions which so frequently accompany deep-seated rejection.

3. *You have to accept the fact that you are accepted in Christ, that God accepts you.* Let me emphasize again that this doesn't mean He just tolerates you. He

loves you. He's interested in you. He cares for you.

4. *You have to accept yourself.* Sometimes that's the hardest part. I tell children of God to never belittle themselves, to never criticize themselves, because we're God's handiwork. "Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, 'Why hast thou made me thus?' " (Rom. 9:20). It's not your business. God knows what He's doing. Just trust Him. It's not humility when you criticize yourself as a Christian; it's rebellion. Never belittle yourself. You're God's workmanship, His masterpiece, the thing He's devoted the most time and care to of all the things He's ever created in the universe. You're at the top of the list. If that doesn't make you feel good, I don't know what will.

Obtaining Release

Now that we've looked at the different aspects of rejection, I just want to say that if you have this problem and want release from it, you can get that release. Perhaps it's an area in your life that you've never faced before, and now the Holy Spirit has laid bare something that your mind refused to acknowledge. If the Lord has shown you that you need to be freed from rejection, and now you'd like to take practical action, I urge you to speak the following declaration out loud:

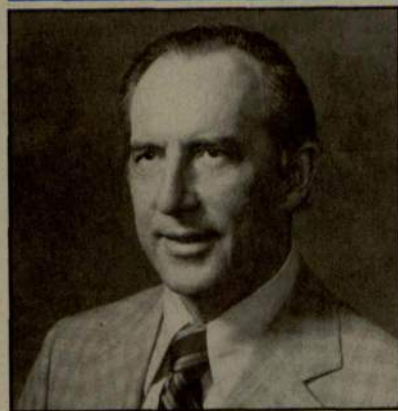
Father, I forgive. I lay down bitterness, resentment, hatred, rebellion. I thank You, God, that I'm accepted in Christ. I'm a child of God. Heaven is my home. I belong to the best family in the universe. There's royal blood in my veins.

Lord Jesus Christ, I believe You're the Son of God and the only way to God. You died on the cross for my sins, and You rose again from the dead. I repent of all my sins, and I forgive every other person, as I would

have God forgive me: all those who have rejected me and hurt me and failed to show me love. God, I forgive them all now. I trust You for Your forgiveness, and I believe, Lord, that You accept me right now as I am in Christ. I'm accepted. I'm highly favored. I'm the object of Your special care. You really love me. You want me. You are my Father.

Lord, I want to thank You. And I want to tell You one more thing: I accept myself in Christ the way You made me. I'm Your workmanship. I thank You for what You've done, and I believe that You've begun a good work and will perform it until the day of Christ. Lord, I release myself now from any dark, evil pressure. I release my spirit to rejoice in You. I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. □

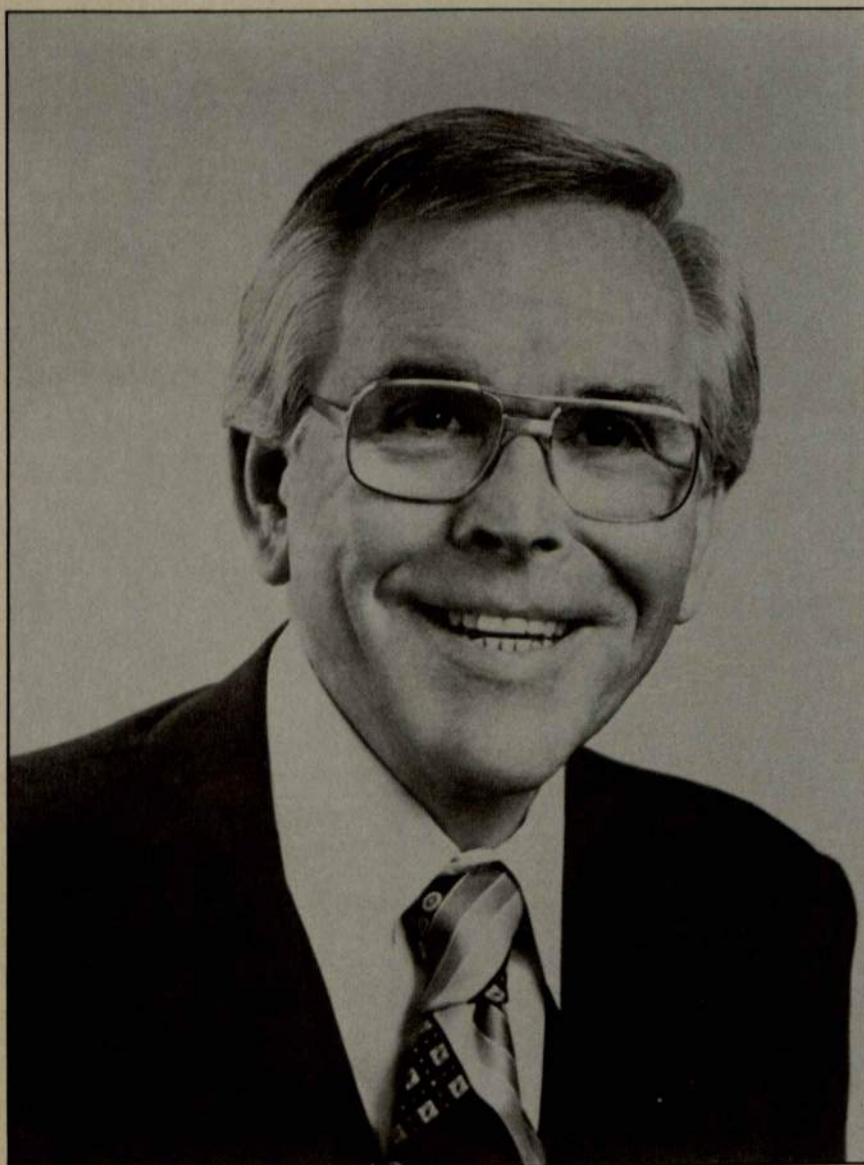
This article originally appeared in the September 1977 New Wine.



Derek Prince was educated as a scholar of Greek and Latin in Great Britain at Eton College and at King's College, Cambridge. His radio program, Today With Derek Prince, is aired on seventy stations around the world. Derek and his wife, Ruth, spend part of the year ministering in Israel, and the remainder of their time in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, where they are also involved in ministry.

Reaching Out to a Secular Society

An interview with Dr. Robert Schuller



*I*n introducing this interview with Dr. Robert Schuller, let me say that I am the first one to admit that I'm not an expert in theology (I don't do Greek or Hebrew). So an immediate decision I faced before this interview was how to regard the criticisms theologians had leveled at his ministry. What I decided was to keep their remarks in mind, and at the same time work as objectively as possible toward finding out about Dr. Schuller for myself.

I was already aware of the obvious—that Dr. Schuller is pastor of the ten-thousand-member Crystal Cathedral in Garden Grove, California, site of the most widely watched of all televised church services, *The Hour of Power*. I was also aware of the popularity of his “possibility thinking” messages. But as I examined his material, including *Tough Times Never Last, But Tough People Do!* and *Self-Esteem: The New Reformation*, I found not only a depth that contradicted the stereotype of shallowness so often applied to Dr. Schuller, but also a breadth that reached out beyond the walls of the Church to society at large.

I could see why he had been criticized: Some of his statements and terminology are unorthodox (a term we all use for anything not done the way we would do it). At the same time, what he shares in his books is a refreshing and down-to-earth perspective on God's activity in our lives.

Finally, when the time came for the interview, I found Dr. Schuller gracious and articulate, exuding a love and enthusiasm for Jesus Christ, His Word, and His people that backed up what he said in his books and messages.

I wouldn't presume to have the "final word" on Dr. Schuller's ministry or his theology. Although each of us has a serious responsibility to exercise discernment, thankfully the final word is solely the Lord's. I do know this: Dr. Schuller has something to say that every Christian would do well to at least evaluate for himself. And that's the reason for this interview.

—Dick Leggatt

New Wine: People often tend to stereotype ministries, and some might sum up yours as "possibility thinking" or "positive thinking." But how would *you* characterize the emphasis of your ministry?

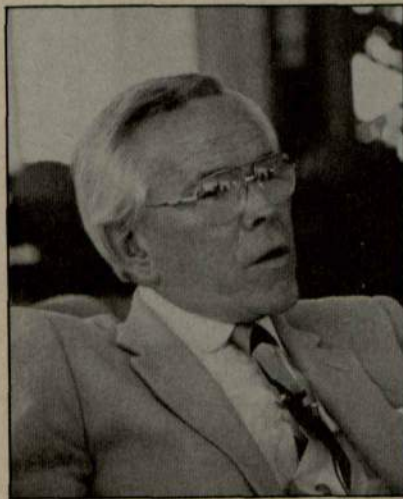
Robert Schuller: I don't have a problem if they use those names, because those are secular terms that communicate the biblical concept of faith to a secular culture. When I talk about positive thinking or possibility thinking, I'm talking about only one thing, faith, which the Bible commands us to have.

The core of sin is lack of faith, because with God all things are possible. When you talk about someone's sin as degradation, decadence, and depravity of his character (though at times it is necessary to do so), it's very insulting to him and you offer no hope. But if you say that sin has as its core a lack of faith, you're not demeaning the human person. You leave room for communication and there's hope for salvation.

Too many people think of sin primarily as something bad that we *do*, and only secondarily as a condition that *exists*. I believe that sin is a human condition before it is a negative behavior in the eyes of God. And Scripture proves this because it tells us if we obey all the commandments,

meaning we never do anything "sinful," but if we don't have faith, our life would still be most displeasing to God. Hebrews 11:6 says, "Without faith it is impossible to please Him." Scriptures honor faith above works. We are saved by grace, but it is through faith, not through works.

The essence of Christ's ministry is that if you have faith, you can say to a mountain, "Move!" and it will. Nothing is impossible if you have faith. Now that's positive thinking! When Jesus was in His own hometown,



Dr. Robert Schuller says an experience with the Holy Spirit is the best way to deliver someone from shame and give him a sense of value.

He was prevented from performing many miracles because of the unbelief—lack of faith—of His own kinsmen. You can go way back to the fall in creation and see the first result of the fall: Adam and Eve lost faith. They were scared and hid from God because they were guilty. Their guilt was nothing but a lack of faith and confidence that they would be accepted in their relationship with God. Guilt is a lack of faith. Fear is a lack of faith.

I don't mind if people say that the core of my ministry is

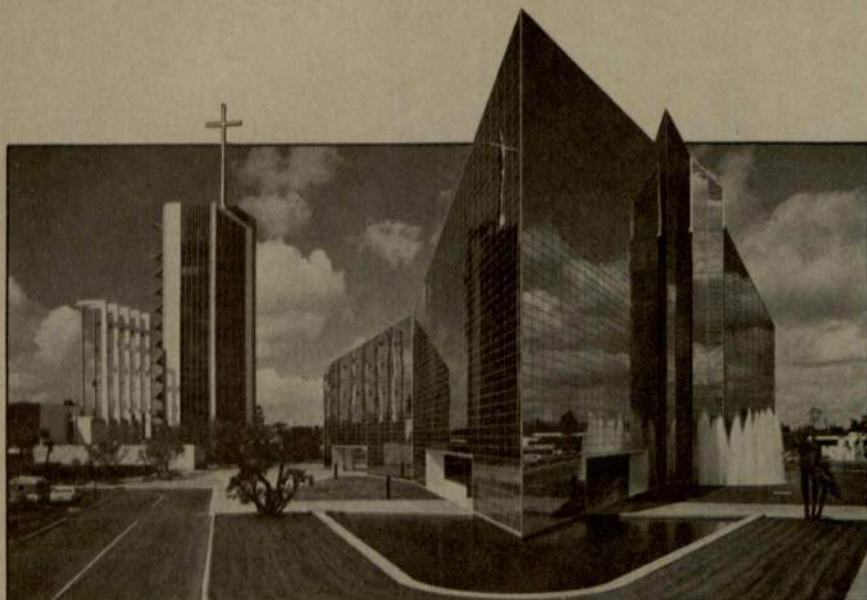
possibility thinking or positive thinking as long as they understand what I mean by it and that my emphasis is on biblical faith. Many people ask me why I don't preach against sin, but I'm actually doing it all the time—positively—when I try to inspire people to have faith. Sin is a human condition before it's a negative act. That's why I don't start out by telling someone that he's bad or that his behavior is bad or sinful. If he doesn't yet see it, how can he adequately repent?

NW: How would you define sin and repentance?

RS: Sin is first of all a lack of faith, so I have to first create faith in the minds of unbelievers. Then we move to repentance, which is changing the course of the human condition. People are used to repentance being negative—self-flagellating and self-condemning. We have to learn to teach positive repentance in a way that's challenging.

Real repentance is more than saying, "I'm sorry I did all these bad things." I don't disregard that, but that's very negative, incomplete, and inadequate—because living a perfect life without faith is still displeasing to God. So you haven't preached real repentance until you've challenged people to believe. And really challenging them to believe is challenging them to make a commitment to do the impossible that God calls them to do for His glory.

NW: An example of what you're explaining is when you prayed with John Wayne in the hospital. Didn't the Lord say, "Don't lay a heavy 'sin' message on him. Just introduce the thought of Jesus Christ into his mind"? That seems to characterize your ministry—the positive aspect rather than the heavy repentance.



*Dr. Schuller is founder and senior minister of the ten-thousand-member Crystal Cathedral in Garden Grove, California, the oldest Reformed Church in America. From this pulpit, Dr. Schuller reaches the largest television congregation in the world with *The Hour of Power* program.*

RS: Yes, I went to pray with him, but I never led him to an actual commitment at that point. It was almost as if the Lord was saying, "Just present the gospel to him, and later on I'll be able to draw him to Me." I don't think anything is more important than being controlled and guided by the Holy Spirit. And that's exactly what happened. The Lord really met John Wayne in his last days.

A while after he died I was at a luncheon and Wayne's daughter came up to me. She said, "I know you and my dad were friends, but did anybody ever tell you that a couple of weeks before he died he was in the hospital watching you on television?" She said he heard me give an appeal, asking listeners to get on their knees and ask the Lord to really come into their lives. "My dad was so sick," she told me, "but he got out of his hospital bed, dropped to his knees with his arms folded on the mattress, bowed his head, and just gave his life to the Lord."

I have a strong belief in the power of the Holy Spirit. If you really believe in the power of the Holy Spirit and in the power that

comes from Jesus' being alive, then all you have to do is lead a person into a personal encounter with the living Jesus—and the Lord will do the work within him. You don't have to force him into a commitment or lay a guilt trip on him. Jesus will do it His way.

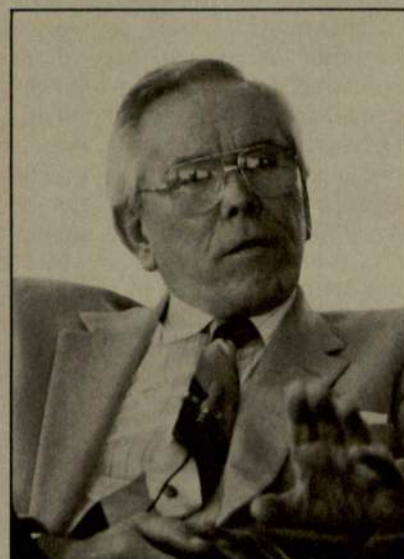
NW: A lot of what you're saying will come as a surprise to many people—your emphasis on the Bible, on Jesus and the Holy Spirit, and what you really mean by "positive thinking." You've gotten a lot of negative press by both the secular and Christian media. How do you handle the way some Christians represent your ministry as not being based on Scripture?

RS: In some ways I have been saddened. Sometimes I have been hurt, and in other instances I have felt angry—the latter particularly when people attack me on their platform, by name, and do not ask questions but are accusatory, judgmental, and do not give me equal time. Nor do they preface their criticisms with, "If I understand him correctly." There was an article written about me in

which the author presented questions about me and my ministry—actual questions it seemed he wanted answered. But when I asked the magazine for the opportunity to answer those questions, they would not give me a chance. I call that non-Christian journalism, and I think it is very, very bad. That makes me angry.

More often than not, however, I'm saddened because I think a lot of critics who say I don't preach from the Word do not realize that in the final analysis a person is not saved by the book, but by the blood. I believe the Scriptures are the Word of God, but before we are able to understand some of the problem passages presented there, we must be saved by grace and through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

There's a reason why you don't hear me filling my messages with Scripture quotes. It's not that I don't believe what they say—the Bible is God's unerring Word. But in my messages I'm trying to communicate with people who have been poisoned to believe that the Bi-



Dr. Schuller says we need to teach repentance in a way that challenges people to do God's will.

ble is full of a bunch of myths. So if I want to convert them, I just don't begin by quoting the Bible. They'd turn me off in the first paragraph.

Instead I try to bring them around by getting them to see that with God all things are possible in their lives—no matter what their circumstances might be at the moment.

NW: In your book *Self-Esteem: The New Reformation*, you say that the question the Church really needs to ask is, "What are the deepest needs that human beings must face?" Can you expand on that?

RS: One reason the charismatic movement is succeeding is that unknowingly it meets the deepest needs of human beings. Many people have never realized it as such, but the deepest need we have is the need to feel good about ourselves.

We tend to think of theology as something that deals only with God. But that's not true. Theology must also deal with humanity. You cannot understand the theology of God unless you understand who this human being is. We have abandoned answering that question spiritually and left it to the professions of psychology and psychiatry. That's deplorable! Psychologists and psychiatrists can offer us help in understanding the human person, but the real answers are in the Scriptures. That's where we learn about the human person. Secular understanding must only complement and supplement scriptural teaching.

There is no therapy such as an experience in the Holy Spirit. Nothing could be conceived, contrived, or comprehended that could as efficiently deliver someone from shame and leave him with a wonderful sense of value and personal esteem. There is no substitute for an experience in

the Holy Spirit. There's nothing like it! So the secret of success in ministry is to find a need and fill it with the Holy Spirit. We must have a positive proclamation of the gospel with a strong emphasis on the Holy Spirit and on saving people from their lack of faith, moving them into a faith that gives them a strong rela-

tionship with Christ and the Holy Spirit.

How can we do it—how can we really feel "I am a beautiful person"? It can only happen with Jesus. It is impossible to have Jesus in your life and have the Holy Spirit fill your life and not feel absolutely terrific about yourself. □



Jack Hayford on unity

NEXT MONTH IN NEW WINE

In the spirit of the season of peace on earth toward men of goodwill, Jack Hayford shares his thoughts on Christian unity. In a frank interview, he says that we need to love each other even if our differences cannot yet be resolved.

There might be only two fellows on a ship, but it doesn't guarantee that they will have fellowship, says Bob Mumford, who tells us very practically how to be better brothers and sisters in Christ.

In a touching testimony, you'll read the story of how a young Buddhist couple made its way from Malaysia to the United States, and met the Lord at a Christmas celebration.

All in the December **New Wine**

Maximum Security

BY JIM REID

The biblical way to overcome fear and insecurity

A recent newspaper article reported that four men managed to escape from the maximum security unit of a state prison. Although the facility was designed to confine them, they nonetheless managed to make their way past armed guards, protective alarms, and electronic devices. In spite of this security system, the prison was not escape proof.

Security is one of man's most fundamental aspirations. We work hard to protect ourselves and our families by building security systems—insurance against financial disaster, against intruders in our homes, against anything that might threaten our peace.

These security systems are designed to keep outside dangers from coming in, but more often than not we discover that the enemy already resides within. These are the enemies that can disrupt our internal peace—fear, rejection, and other symptoms of insecurity. The Apostle Paul acknowledged his battle with both external and internal insecurities: "We were harassed at every turn—conflicts on the outside, fears within" (2 Cor. 7:5 NIV).

When God created man, there was nothing in Him or in His world for man to fear. So there was no reason for Him to give man built-in defense mechanisms against fear and insecurity. But Adam's failure to obey God changed this paradise. By his disobedience, something totally foreign and alien to God's design entered man's existence—fear. Not only did Adam become fear-

ful of what was outside of him, but also of what was within him. And that insecurity and fear has been handed down from generation to generation.

Sometimes the security systems we build in order to deal with these insecurities work well. Yet, like that prison, even the finest of our protective systems suffers from cracks and leaks. No matter how "escape proof" we might think they are, we can't always keep back the fear, rejection, and insecurity that are an inevitable part of our existence. Somehow, they manage to penetrate the walls of our security system and come to the surface.

Manifestations of Fear

Why aren't we totally able, by our own plans and designs, to deal with the internal insecurities we face? There is a simple reason—God wants us to rely on Him. He alone can give us the power to be secure, because the only true security is in Him. We see this in the promise Jesus gave us:

"My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand. I and the Father are one" (Jn. 10:27-30 NIV).

Jesus' promise—that we cannot

be snatched from His hand nor from the Father's hand—is security in the maximum sense.

With that basic understanding, let's examine five ways that fear, rejection, and insecurity manifest themselves when they surface in our lives, and the provisions our Father has made to deal with them.

1. *Fear of ourselves.* Have you ever doubted your abilities, or felt inadequate for the job at hand? This type of insecurity manifests itself when we succumb to questions about our self-worth or when we entertain negative thoughts about ourselves. Low self-esteem is a major problem for most people.

2. *Fear of others.* Saul had to deal with this immobilizing type of fear. Although God chose him to be king out of all the sons of Israel, Saul still saw himself as insufficient and inadequate. As a result, he was more concerned about pleasing the people than pleasing God. When the Lord gave him a direct order—take no spoil after defeating the Amalekites—Saul disobeyed and let the people keep whatever they wanted. When he finally realized his sin, he rightly placed the blame on his insecurity: "I feared the people and listened to their voice" (1 Sam. 15:24 NAS).

3. *Fear of decision.* The parable of the talents (see Matthew 25:14-30) gives us an example of the power of this fear. A man gave each of his slaves a certain number of talents. The slave who received one talent held on to it out of indecisiveness, look-

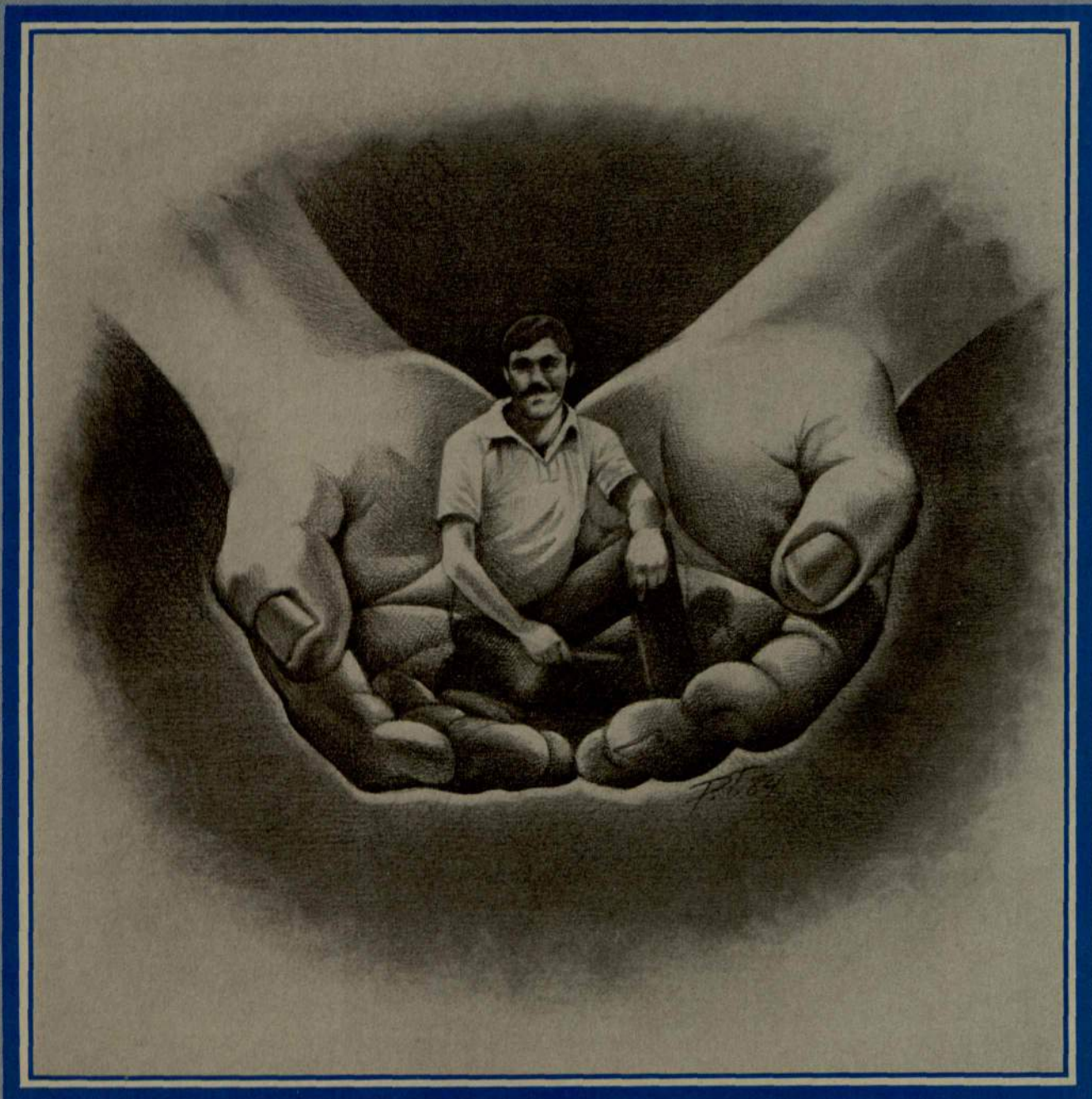
ing at it day after day, wondering, *What should I do with it?* Possibly the Holy Spirit was even showing him what to do—some place to invest it—but the slave was afraid to make a decision. When he saw how others were increasing their talents, he became even more paralyzed by

his fear and indecision.

4. *Fear of failure.* Failure can cripple us with fear even before we act. When Joshua was challenged with the great task of leading Israel, all indications were against his ever successfully completing the job. He could have given into the fear of fail-

ure, but instead took courage when God spoke to him: "As I have been with Moses, I will be with you; I will not fail you or forsake you. Be strong and courageous" (Josh. 1:5-6 NAS).

5. *Fear of the future.* When we watch television or read the newspapers, we can't help but



fear the future. There is so much pessimism about the future that people are often afraid of what they "think" will happen. When Satan cannot make us fearful in any other way, he throws thoughts and speculations at us (see 2 Corinthians 10:5)—especially those that pertain to an uncertain and seemingly ominous future.

False Security

One way we deal with fear, which is nothing more than insecurity, is by building false security. Often this involves building a false identity as well. Jacob, for example, was jealous of the security that his older brother, Esau, was to inherit by way of the patriarchal blessing

guaranteed to the firstborn. By pretending to be his older brother, Jacob tricked his father into giving him the blessing that was rightfully Esau's. He got the security he was after, but to get it he had to assume a false identity.

When we aren't secure in our own God-given identity, very often we decide to take matters into our own hands, using whatever methods we can to make ourselves seem "greater." Like Jacob, we begin to rely on crutches—artificial supports we use to buttress our own sagging self-image. There are at least four common crutches we lean on for support.

1. *Abilities and accomplishments.* What we do often becomes the basis for who we are. It's wonderful to achieve great things for God, but the person who finds his security solely in what he can accomplish with his own hands and mind is skating on thin ice. The trap is that if he doesn't keep producing, or if one day he fails in a task, his self-esteem will melt.

2. *Social position.* Family name and social prominence can be tremendous blessings, but in and of themselves they are never enough to give a person his full and complete identity.

3. *Knowledge and education.* It's fine to strive for a good, solid education and to use it for God's glory, but we should never let our education dictate who we are.

4. *Religion.* Although it's vitally important for us to be involved in a church and give our time and money to spiritual causes, we need to be careful not to let spiritual activities or "religious works" be a cover for our inner fears and insecurities.

Antidote to Fear

Paul cautions, "Be on the alert, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong" (1 Cor.

Did You Know?

Did you know that we want to hear from you?

Because **New Wine** is above all a ministry to our readers, we need to know if we're helping you grow in your walk with the Lord.

Take a moment to jot us a note. Is **New Wine** Magazine useful to you? What has God been showing you through the magazine recently? Is there one article in this issue that stands out in your mind? Why?

Or is there something you haven't liked in a recent issue? Perhaps there's a topic you'd like to see us cover in the future. Please write and give us your comments.

Our staff reads each and every letter that comes to us, and we'll be glad to answer any questions you might have about what you read in **New Wine**.

If God has used **New Wine** to help you mature as a Christian, it would bless us to hear from you. And it will help us to help you—which is, after all, why we're here. We thought you'd like to know. □

16:13 NAS). God doesn't want us to stand on crutches; He wants us to stand on our own two legs, just as He made us, and to accept ourselves as He created us.

We can only do this by admitting that our own security systems are futile, by removing all of our carefully constructed pretenses, and by boldly revealing ourselves for who we really are. When we admit our failures, fears, and weaknesses, we can then ask God for help.

If we want to experience this "maximum security," we must not just *know*, but *believe* and *act* on the following three scriptures.

1. The first scripture is Romans 8:14-15.

For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, "Abba! Father!" (NAS).

In Paul's day, slaves could address their masters as Father, but they were forbidden to call them Abba, which connotes unreasoning trust and security. It is a term signifying the intimacy reserved for a child and his parent.

The new covenant that Jesus brings us is not one of slavery and fear, but a unique relationship in which we are the Father's special adopted children, permitted to call out, "Abba! Father!" This is the relationship that will permit us to overcome our fears by saying, "You are my personal Father, and I'm related to You in the same way that Jesus is related to You."

There was not a trace of insecurity, fear, or false identity in Jesus. He could look to the Father and say to the disciples, "If you've seen Me, you've seen the

For just a moment
in history the Father
rejected His
beloved Son that
we might find
acceptance and
security for the rest
of our lives.

Father, because We're one. We're just alike" (see John 10:30 and 14:9).

2. The second scripture is John 17:22-24.

"The glory which Thou hast given Me I have given to them; that they may be one, just as We are one; I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, that the world may know that Thou didst send Me, and didst love them, even as Thou didst love Me. Father, I desire that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am, in order that they may behold My glory" (NAS).

The Father and Son have something so special in their relationship that we might tend to be intimidated by it and consider it beyond our grasp. But God is inviting us to draw near, instead of standing at a distance, to behold His glory, and to be changed by it. "Come on in," He invites us. "You don't need to be insecure. You don't need to be fearful. You don't need to stand far off for fear of being rejected. You've been re-

ceived as a son."

3. The third scripture we must believe and act upon is Mark 15:33-34.

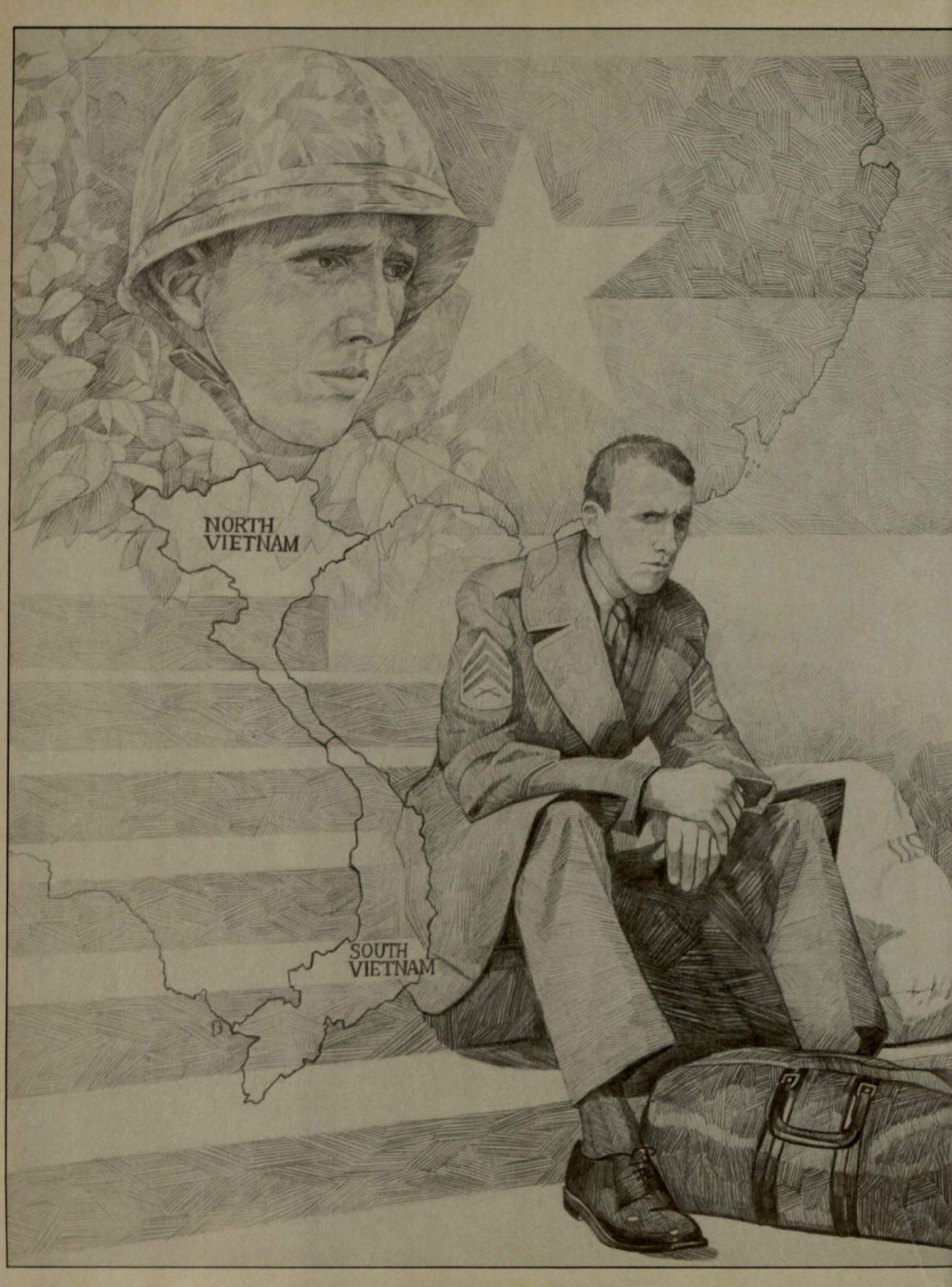
And when the sixth hour had come, darkness fell over the whole land until the ninth hour. And at the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice... "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" (NAS).

When Jesus uttered this cry on the cross, it was because the Father, for the first time in eternity, had turned His back on the Son. Their relationship had been broken, and Jesus felt the immense, crippling insecurity of rejection and being totally alone. That familiar fear that daily grips our hearts came upon Him. "Why have you turned away from Me?" He asked of His own Father. In that moment, the Son of God took all our insecurities upon Himself.

It was then that our Lord dealt a final blow to the fear and rejection that all of us inherited from Adam, who first experienced it. So that we might find acceptance and security for the rest of our lives, the Father rejected His beloved Son for just a moment in history. Because of Jesus' rejection and redemptive actions on Calvary, we have eternal security.

When rejection, the fear of ourselves, the fear of decision, or any other fear sneaks in to hack away at our security, we can stand tall on Jesus' maximum security—a security we cannot escape from. This is the promise God has given us. And this is the promise on which He wants us to stand firm. □

Jim Reid is a pastor in Dothan, Alabama. He and his wife, Sandy, reside with their three children in Headland, Alabama.



NORTH
VIETNAM

SOUTH
VIETNAM

The Unwelcome Heroes

BY DICK LEGGATT

Vietnam veterans look back at the rejection they faced.

At the end of an evening, just before heading to bed, I quickly flipped the channels on the television to see if there was something worth watching. A Christian call-in show arrested my attention. The host was weeping as he asked the viewing audience to pray for his last caller—a Vietnam veteran who was battling feelings of rejection and depression. I understood the emotion of the situation, because I had long carried a deep concern for these men—the unwelcomed, rejected heroes of my own generation.

As I have talked with some of my close friends who are veterans, one fact has clearly emerged—the men who served in and survived Vietnam have had to face a brand of rejection unprecedented in American society. For the first time in our nation's history, American soldiers returning to their home soil were not only denied a proper welcome, but were often greeted with scorn, indignation, and hostility. For many, it is a scar on their spirits that remains tender to the touch.

In this month when we observe Veterans Day, it seems appropriate to deal with this issue's

topic of rejection and acceptance from the unique perspective of the Vietnam veterans. But rejection is not something faced only by these men. Each of our lives bears the scars of the awful effects of rejection. But there is a word of hope in the amazing testimonies you are about to read—for each of these men affirms that the acceptance we find in Jesus Christ is the only lasting solution to the rejection each of us will inevitably encounter.

Mission in Frustration

Today Ron Milton is pastor of New Covenant Christian Church in East Lansing, Michigan. Back in 1970, Ron was a young GI stationed with an Army helicopter unit just outside Da Nang in the northern part of South Vietnam. His duties included assigning assault helicopters for firepower and transportation for ground troops. It was a time of intense fighting, and a time morale among American soldiers was very low. "We sensed a lack of purpose there," explains Ron. "Most of us had gone to Vietnam thinking we were doing something patriotic. But we were frustrated because we were fighting from a defensive pos-

ture, knowing we weren't giving it our best or accomplishing what we could."

To relieve the frustration, many of the men fell into drug and alcohol abuse, which only added to the personal problems some of them already faced. "Ten thousand miles from home, I was constantly around men who were losing their wives, or going through other traumas," says Ron. "It was not what I had in mind in going over there."

For Ron, who had gone into the Army at age seventeen and two years later found himself in Vietnam facing these circumstances, it was an unsettling time. In the midst of that turmoil, a hardship in his family meant a sudden return home. Ron thought his homecoming would be the happiest day of his life, but it turned out to be even more unsettling than his time in Vietnam.

Welcome Home

Landing in California after the long flight home, Ron took a taxi from San Bernardino to Los Angeles, where he was to face a rude awakening.

"I was with two or three other military people in the cab. As we got into Los Angeles, we drove

past a college campus where students were protesting the war. I hadn't had much exposure to the 'revolution' when I joined the Army in 1968. But this was January 1971, and I was seeing it for the first time. As we came upon this protest, our cab had to slow down and stop for the

families that had broken up as a result of the war. All of that was packed into such a short period of time, and then suddenly we were back. I felt like saying, 'Hey, somebody! Don't you want to know what just happened to me?' But nobody wanted to know, or at least it seemed that way.



Ron Milton, who in 1970 was a 19-year-old soldier stationed outside Da Nang, says the Americans in Vietnam were frustrated by a lack of purpose.

crowd. A girl carrying a sign saw our uniforms, walked up to the cab, and cursed right in my face, using an obscene gesture.

"That was our welcome home. And the longer I was home, the more I realized how symbolic that girl's 'welcome' was."

Back home again in Lansing, Michigan, Ron wanted to pick up his life where he had left off. Although he felt a need to talk to someone about his Vietnam experience, few people wanted to listen. Those who did listen frequently ended up giving him the standard arguments of why he shouldn't have gone.

"I had just spent three years of my life in a situation that I didn't fully understand. I was still trying to sort out the lack of purpose we felt, the sense of guilt, shame, and defeat, along with the pain over friends who were killed or wounded there, or

"If I could have seen it from a redemptive viewpoint, I would have gained from it. But I didn't. I was bitter. I identified with the veterans who felt cheated—who felt they were sent to do a job in Vietnam and then weren't allowed to do it. When they got back, they were discarded. The country was in no mood to treat them as heroes or even appreciate their efforts, because we lost the war. So the country chose to ignore them, or in some cases, to condemn them verbally. Even those who supported the war seemed to remain silent because of the guilt and shame attached to it."

Settling the Issue

Ron's reaction after his homecoming was radical. "I just wanted to be antisocial. I got involved in undercover activities—taking drugs, selling drugs, and

being an all-out dropout. That's what I did for about a year."

As he tried to deal with the rejection on his own, Ron's situation went steadily downhill, and could have gotten much worse if it weren't for a confrontation with the gospel. Ron was converted to Jesus Christ, an experience that brought answers to the basic issues of his life. "When I met the Lord," he explains, "I finally started to settle the whole Vietnam issue."

According to Ron, for many Vietnam veterans, the issue is still unresolved. "Many veterans are still reliving those days in Vietnam, trying to resolve the same questions that have been running through their minds for years. From my perspective now, I know that the solution for them is Christ, who can redeem all things and show them that all things work together for good. He can resolve the resentment and settle all the issues.

"A lot of veterans just want to be heard. If we can listen with an understanding attitude, saying, 'Tell me what you went through,' I believe it might help. If you know a veteran who's struggling, ask him what the war was like for him. He may not want to talk about it, but your interest might be just the thing to help him open up to the gospel. Apart from a relationship with Christ and an understanding attitude among Christians, I don't know what else we can offer them. I do know this: A country that sends its sons off to war needs to care for those sons when they come home—win or lose."

The Enemy Within

Kevin Davenport, now a pastor in Saddleback Covenant Church in Mission Viejo, California, was an infantry platoon leader in the central highlands of Vietnam in 1971. His two main duties were protecting his base

from Vietcong infiltration and conducting search-and-destroy missions in the central highlands. But Vietcong and North Vietnamese were not the only enemies Kevin had to worry about.

"The dangers from within were as great as the dangers from without," he says. "Because of the tremendous morale problem among the men, a lot of

them turned to drugs. At one time in the platoon I led, at least eighty percent of my men were heavily into drugs of some sort—eight of them were on heroin.

"There was tremendous cynicism and sarcasm—the feeling that what we were doing didn't count. When you feel like your hands are tied in a war you're not really trying to win, it

creates a morale problem. It was frustrating."

When he finished his tour of duty in Vietnam, Kevin's return home was marked by the support of his family. But outside his family, he felt little or no acceptance. And after risking his life in Vietnam, he faced the frustration of not finding anything at home meaningful enough to give his life to.

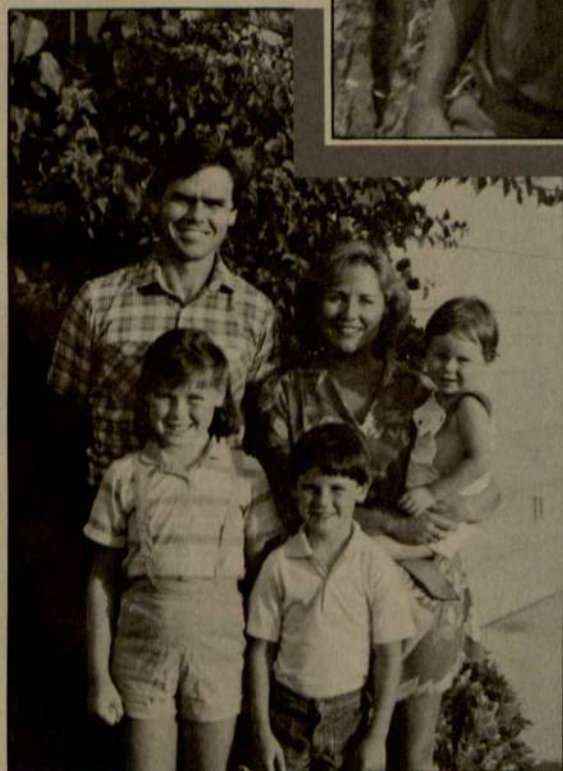
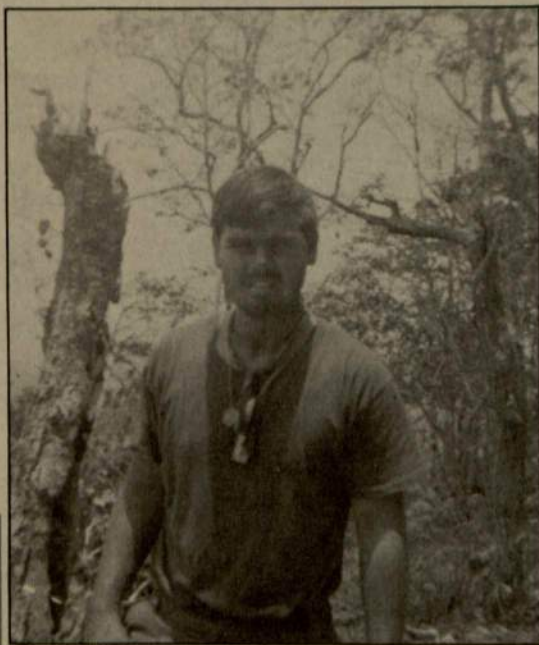
Kevin finally found something he could totally give himself to—the kingdom of God. "Once I did that," he says, "the adventure came back in my life. After being in a situation where I had to be willing to lay my life down, I wanted to find something that would cause me to live my life with all the marbles on the table, so to speak. That's really what I felt when I found the Lord.

"I'm convinced that the only thing that will fill the void and replace rejection, guilt, and fears is a man coming to a place of peace with his God, asking Christ into his life to wash him and set him free."

On the Line for God

David Knight, pastor of The King's Community in Spokane, Washington, had served as an infantry officer during the Korean War. In 1967, he was sent to Vietnam, and because of his prior experience, was assigned as a chaplain to an infantry battalion in the Mekong Delta. As chaplain, David lived with the men, ate with them, and went with them when they went out to fight.

During the Tet offensive in 1968, in David's battalion, 150 men were killed in action and more than 1,000 were wounded in action. In most cases he was with his unit when the casualties occurred, placing him in a position to minister to the men, talk with them, and bring them to



Kevin Davenport is shown above as an infantry platoon leader in Vietnam in 1971. Kevin and his wife, Dudley, now have 3 children, from left, Erin, Matthew, and David.

the Lord. Other opportunities for ministry opened up as well.

"I had to counsel a lot of men who were fearful, or who had problems with drugs, alcohol, or their families back home. My work was made more difficult by the mood change in America that took place with the Tet offensive. Before that time, the men were soldiers who did their jobs without question, feeling that they were over there to set the world free from communism. But when the men began to pick up indications in letters from home that the country was beginning to pull away their support, it affected them deeply. They became more difficult to handle."

One soldier David worked with was one of the many who received Dear John letters from their wives or girl friends. This man's wife wrote him to say she had found another man, and as soon as he was released from Vietnam she was going to file for divorce. Just a week before he came home, she wrote him again to say that, simply as a gesture of kindness, she would meet him at the airport. Indeed she showed up at the airport—and brought the man she had taken up with as well. With the Lord's help, this soldier was able to pick up the pieces of his life and go on. Though an extreme case, the kind of rejection he felt upon returning home was typical of what others faced.

Helping Embittered Vets

David's last year as a chaplain in the Army was spent ministering to returning vets.

"When the men came home, it wasn't as conquering heroes; they felt like they had to sneak into the country and try not to be recognized. When I came home, I was told by the Army to keep a low profile.

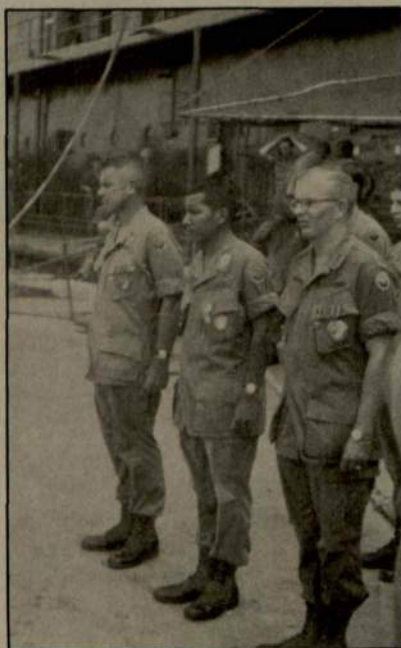
"There were no victory pa-

rades, no ticker tape parades, no mention of Vietnam. Instead, we were called baby killers. We were a vicarious offering for the guilt of a country that didn't want to accept guilt itself.

"I was a Spirit-baptized Christian at the time, and God gave me the grace to live with the accusations and try to minister to the needs of the guys who were embittered. Even so, the enemy really worked me over with the unjust treatment. But I realized you can't expect justice in the world; our trust needs to be in the Lord."

In his work with the returning vets, David had to deal with the anger and frustration among those men, the feeling that no one really understood them.

"My job as a man of God was to make them feel that, although the country had rejected them, God loved them. I tried to get them to forgive the people they felt bitter toward, and tried to



David Knight, left, and two other men, Captain Dick Delgado, center, and Captain Ron Pease, right, are decorated for a 1968 battle in the Mekong Delta.

give them hope that the day would come when the sacrifice they had made would be understood and appreciated by the nation.

"I also tried to build up their self-image by getting them to love and accept themselves as God did, so they might be able to go on and lead a productive life."

David recognizes the fact that some veterans are still suffering from the rejection they had to face, and need acceptance as much as ever.

"We need to bring these men to the point where they can accept themselves as God accepts them, a point of stability where they can believe in the Lord, and believe they can go on and live a productive life.

"What we can do is tell these veterans we are proud of them and we're happy they are back. I think that as a nation we're doing that now—the nation's mood has begun to change. I feel that maybe for the first time, the Vietnam vet is feeling that someone appreciates him and what he did. That has been a blessing to me, and it's been a blessing to a lot of guys who were over there."

What Now?

These dramatic testimonies are not intended to open old wounds or produce a guilt trip. Rather, they are a reminder to us of the devastating effect of rejection and the overcoming power of acceptance. Even more, they are a reminder to us that there is a world full of rejected people around us—not just Vietnam veterans, but neighbors, friends, and even family members—who are waiting for us to reach out and touch them with the very love and acceptance we have found in Jesus Christ. □

Dick Leggatt is editor of New Wine.

THE CHURCH IN ACTION

The following is taken from the text of a speech given by Charles Simpson on August 9, 1984, at a meeting of the National Integrity Foundation in Washington, D.C. We reproduce this message here because we believe that statements concerning the relationship between Church and state made by the presidential candidates and the press during the campaign need to be placed in a proper biblical perspective.

Historically, many Christians have held the opinion that any involvement with politics or society's issues is "worldly" or "unspiritual," and they have used this notion as an excuse for noninvolvement. But I believe that reluctance to deal with these practical matters represents a passivity and procrastination that are fundamentally ungodly. We do in fact have a biblical basis for involvement in civil and world affairs.

Judaism and Christianity are cultures. They are ways of living and ethical systems ordained by the Lord God Jehovah. The God who ordered the cultures that we refer to as Judaism and Christianity also ordered those cultures to influence all other cultures. He commanded them to be the light of the world, and the light to the world. He says in Psalm 96, "Say among the nations..." (v. 10 NAS), and in Matthew 28:19-20, "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations... teaching them to observe all that I commanded you" (NAS, italics mine). Failure to influence the nations is rebellion against God on the part of the cultures He has ordained. Because our God is not passive, we cannot be passive. Faith, by its very nature, is active.

Neutrality in moral matters is ungodly. It is fundamentally un-



The Church-State Connection

BY CHARLES SIMPSON

Is there a link between God and government?

godlike, for God is never neutral about moral issues. Not only is it ungodly—it's unrealistic in the face of an ever encroaching, aggressive secularism. To be a godly person is more than being good—it is to wage moral warfare against unrighteousness.

Linked to the State

Concern for the society and government around us is not just a nice idea—it is a scriptural commandment. Paul wrote in 1

Timothy 2:1-4:

First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, for kings and all who are in authority, in order that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity. This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the

knowledge of the truth (NAS).

Christians are linked inseparably with both God and the state. Jesus our Lord said, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's; and to God the things that are God's" (Mt. 22:21 NAS). In effect He said that we are debtors to God and the state; we have an obligation to both. Implicit in Paul's words to Timothy is the recognition that we can better render that obligation when God and the state are in harmony. It is important to us that the purpose of God and the purpose of the state be in harmony, because we are inseparably linked to both.

Effect of Evangelism

The Apostle Paul suffered and died from the disharmony between the state in which he lived and the God whom he served. Out of his own suffering (and eventual martyrdom), Paul stated, "Pray for all men, especially for those who are in authority—for rulers and leaders," because he knew the truth that good government protects the social climate in which we obey God and evangelize nations. I might add that in turn evangelism creates the kind of people who support good government. We need to know that and not be apologetic for evangelizing, realizing that the government owes a debt to our evangelization. Good government depends upon a moral society.

Evangelism is more than evangelizing the soul; it's evangelizing the life and the behavior. Failure to evangelize society to the divine ethic causes social disintegration. In the face of social disintegration, government must become either ineffective or tyrannical. In the face of anarchy, people will inevitably choose tyranny over anarchy. The best way, and

the only way, to avoid tyranny is through evangelism.

We Have No Choice

Romans 13:1 establishes the linkage of God and the state. Paul says flatly that there is no authority except the authority that comes from God. Putting it another way, there is no authority outside of God. And God our ruler has said that we are to submit to higher powers. Because God has put His Spirit, a Spirit of government, in our hearts, and because He has commanded us to submit to the higher authorities, we are forced by that mandate to face the issue of government. We have no choice but to face the issue of government and live with it. All the escape routes have been eliminated.

There's a story about a man who went to a small Cajun village in south Louisiana, where he wanted a fishing guide on the bayou. So he asked someone, "Who's the best guide?"

Someone answered, "That'd be Pierre."

The man went to the end of the dock where Pierre was and asked him to take him fishing, and Pierre agreed. But as they were going down the bayou, the man realized there was no rod and reel, no tackle, and no fishing line in the boat. He was puzzled by that fact until they got to a clearing, and Pierre said, "Now we fish." He pulled out a stick of dynamite and threw it over in the water. Boom! The fish came up to the top.

The man said, "That's illegal." When the Cajun didn't say anything in reply, the man said further, "By the way, I'm the new game warden!" Still saying nothing, Pierre simply lit another stick of dynamite and let it burn awhile. Then he handed it to the man, and said, "You fish with me or go back to the dock."

God hasn't given us much choice either. He has said, "Submit to the government." We can't be anarchists; we've got to live with it. We either fish or it's going to blow up in our face. We either get with it, or it'll get with us. We're linked to it. We can't get away from it.

Realizing that we are inextricably linked to government should then lead us to recognize a vital truth: Faith in God is the linchpin of lasting social order. Any notion that God's people have the option to select a quiet corner in which to meditate and remain uninvolved with the progression of society is fundamentally anti-God, anti-Christ, anti-Bible. Furthermore, it's not what's happening. And any notion that if we leave government alone, it will leave us alone is very naive. We are linked both by God and events to the state.

What Linkage Doesn't Mean

But that linkage has created many misconceptions, which we must address with clarity. There are four things that linkage between God and state does *not* mean. First, it does not mean that because we're God's people we have all the truth and we tell everyone what to do, whether they like it or not. It does not mean baptism "under the sword," which is what some people fear we mean. We need to be careful to say that, because we believe God is involved in the affairs of men, we do not equate God with ourselves. Most of us who have tried to take responsible action realize sooner or later there's a fundamental difference between God and us. God, with all of His power, works by and through human volition. God, in spite of His sovereignty, has limited Himself in what He does in a man's life to human will and human volition. Any people who truly know God *persuade* rather than *persecute*.

The second thing that linkage does not mean is a clergy-run government. The Church itself is a testimony to that. If clergymen were generally good at government, the Church would be in better shape than it is now.

Third, linkage does not mean that the government is the servant of the Church. The Church and the government are both servants of God. The Church is not God, and it is not Christ in the headship sense. We are His body, His instruments, and His servants in the earth.

The fourth thing that linkage does not mean is that taxes go to the Church. The biblical principle is that the tax goes to the state, the tithe goes to the Church, and if both do their job serving God, we will have abundance. Taxes and tithes are both bargains when the state and the Church mutually serve God.

Linkage between God and state does not mean that the Church tells people what to do, whether they like it or not; it doesn't mean a clergy-run government; it doesn't mean a government that serves the Church; and it doesn't mean a Church run by taxes.

What Linkage Means

What does linkage between God and government mean? I believe it means that the Church produces a people of godly character by the power of the Holy Spirit; and the state protects the atmosphere in which the Church does God's will. The Church produces a people who reflect and serve God, and the state protects an *atmosphere* in which they serve God. I think it's fundamental to remember that planners and framers of the Constitution viewed one of the principle goals and responsibilities of government as that of protecting the people, enabling them to do what is in them to do.

**We will either
affect public
opinion or
become the
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ethic that's
invented by a
majority.**

Second, linkage means that the Church takes a prophetic and pastoral posture and declares the purpose of God to the civil hands that hold the power levers. The Church is primarily prophetic. Though the Church should not run the civil government, it should have something to say about what kind of people run the civil government and *how* the civil government is run. Linkage between God and the state means that God's spiritual leaders speak prophetically and pastorally to the civil leaders who hold the power levers.

Third, linkage means that the Church establishes the moral climate out of its divine fellowship with God, and the state establishes a just and productive society. The Church must set forth the ethic—the moral climate. It does so because of fellowship with God, not out of any inherent official power. When the Church loses its fundamental relationship with God, it loses its authority to say anything to

anyone. But as long as the Church is the legitimate representative of what the Holy Spirit is saying, then out of its divine fellowship it sets forth the moral climate. In that climate the state can govern and establish a just and productive society.

Linkage between God and the state means that the state protects people as they serve God's purpose; that the Church takes a prophetic and pastoral posture to the state in support of the state's responsibility; and that the Church establishes the social, moral climate so that the state can govern a just and productive society.

Successors of Jeremiah

Linkage between God and the state is biblical, historical, and practical. People who try to put Christians on the defensive for being involved in government are either ignorant of the history of our nation or have a desire to diminish the Church's ability to serve God. At the same time, Christians who defend themselves as though they're doing something novel are ignorant as well. Linkage between God and state means that a spiritually sensitive people will not be bamboozled, hoodwinked, and flim-flammed out of their God-given privileges by some vested interest. It means that they will not be intimidated by secularists into subservient silence. It means that they will not abdicate the office of moral consciousness to those who deny God and invent novel notions or "new moralities" (which are usually the old immoralities). Linkage between God and the state means that active Christians establish themselves as the successors of men like Jeremiah, who addressed the nations of Babylon, Moab, Syria, Ethiopia, Egypt, and Arabia. Passive Christians disqualify themselves as successors to historic, biblical

leadership. Some men may climb down, some may fall off, others may be pushed off, but the platform from which Isaiah, Jeremiah, and the Apostle Paul spoke is still there.

Linkage also means that justice, economics, family life, and laws on how they operate are still God's business. God is like the entrepreneur who put a thousand dollars on the ticket counter and said to the clerk, "Give me a ticket."

"Where to?" asked the clerk.

"Anywhere. I have business all over."

God has business all over—which includes civil affairs.

What Linkage Requires

I have said what linkage does not mean and what it does mean. Now I want to say what it requires. Paul says it requires prayer. "First of all, pray for those who are in authority." Prayer is action toward God and concern toward the object of prayer. Linkage demands action. This November we're going to elect officials who will establish public policies that we will live under. Linkage between God and the state requires action of prayer and it requires voting participation.

Good government protects the social climate in which we obey God and evangelize nations. In turn, evangelism creates the kind of people who support good government.

REMEMBER: **FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 2, IS A NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER AND FASTING.**

The linkage between God and state also requires that we give ourselves to affecting public opinion. In my estimation, one of the great tragedies of contemporary Christianity has been that we've interpreted Scripture to mean that God's will is that we disdain public opinion. We cannot afford to disdain public opinion because public opinion is the formulator of public policy in our nation. Our government is often described as a government of the people, by the people, and for the people. But I believe that has come to mean government of public opinion, by public opinion, and for public opinion.

When God is removed from the conscience of the ordinary citizen, the majority can become a tyrannical mob. Once loosed from its moral moorings, public

opinion can become an intimidating monster. History reminds us that Jews and Christians and other minorities have frequently been the targets of the majority's demented will. No serious thinker has ever believed that the majority was always right. And it's vital that the majority has the kind of ethic that when it is right, it still does not become tyrannical, dominating, and overbearing. Might does not make right. Only God does. We will either affect public opinion or become the victims of some popular ethic that's invented by a majority. That ethic will be choreographed by the enemies of God.

Influence of Public Policy

Recently, Bob Jones University lost its tax-exempt status because of its policy of forbidding interracial dating. What got our attention was not that the government ruled against Bob Jones University, but that "public policy" was the basis of the court's decision. For the first time that I know of, the government courts used public policy as a means of enforcing regulations. That precedent has frightening implications for us in the future. Will public policy on feminism or homosexuality or genetic engineering or family definitions force the Church to change or be persecuted? Is the new formula, public opinion plus public policy equals religious persecution? Unless we affect public opinion, I

believe it will happen. Government of the people, by the people, and for the people is no better than the ethics of the people who govern.

Linkage between God and state requires that we face the reality of a growing hostile, popular ethic that is hedonistic and secular. Daniel Yankelovich, a noted researcher of public opinion, wrote:

The self-denial ethic is dead. The duty-to-self ethic is dying. In their place we need an ethic of commitment—a turning of our attention to our connectedness with the world.... Any viable social ethic has real work to do: It needs to bind the individual to the society; it needs to synchronize society's goal with those of each person...[that is, the ethic of self-denial] holds society together and keeps it from degenerating into a chaos of competing interests.¹

That new ethic he speaks of sounds to me a lot like the ethic born out of the covenant love of God.

Public Opinion's Shift

Linkage also requires that we recognize that public opinion is liquid; it's mercurial; and it's volatile; and so are its ethics. When I was a child, my public school teachers read from the Bible and prayed before the class. They did as my father's public school teachers did, and my grandfather's. Public opinion has shifted so drastically that public policy has totally changed regarding those matters. All of those practices are now forbidden. The nuclear family, once normal, is now only one of several options that can be classified as family. These changes I speak of have taken place in one generation. In one generation we have

moved to a point where two lesbians can go to their doctor and buy a sperm from a sperm bank and raise children. We now have a loose, ambiguous, and highly secular national ethic.

The question facing us is not, Can public opinion be changed, thereby changing public policy? The question is, *Who* will change public opinion? Will we? Or will we forfeit the process given us by men of biblical values? When ethics are divorced from God, and science and technology are divorced from ethics, one gets into the same atmosphere in which Hitler's scientists made lamp shades out of human skin. It's the same atmosphere that produced genetic tampering without regard for the divine image. While it purported to produce a super race of super intellects, it produced a monster.

Influence of the Church

Today, once again, society is witnessing a technology that has run off its moral foundations. There are many fears out in society about the linkage between God and government. Some fears are founded on past ecclesiastical abuses—and there have been some. Some fears are "straw men" that hide the real quest for a totally secular society. The true situation borne out by surveys is that Dan Rather has far more influence than Jerry Falwell. Speaker of the House Thomas P. "Tip" O'Neill has far more influence than Billy Graham. And Federal Reserve Board Chairman Paul Volcker has far more influence than Cardinal Bernadine. The Church is twenty-sixth in factors that influence American policy. It's ranked beneath many forces that most of us wouldn't recognize—forces that certainly don't recognize the Church.

I'm concerned about a society that would be led by untested academic notions, ambitious power

structures, and technology divorced from ethics—technology that can let us walk on the moon but can't help us walk on the earth like men and women. While some have fanatically warned about Christianity's "motor-scooter power," we've been hit by the freight train of secularism. We've been hit but not killed; sobered, but not intimidated.

We have a biblical basis and responsibility for involvement in the affairs of our world. There is no excuse for further passivity and procrastination. It is time to stop the runaway momentum of secularism in our society. It is time to reassert the power of God in the earth, and to say what David said: "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof." □

Footnote

¹Daniel Yankelovich, "Toward an Ethic of Commitment," *Industry Week*, Vol. 209 (June 15, 1981), pp. 62-63.



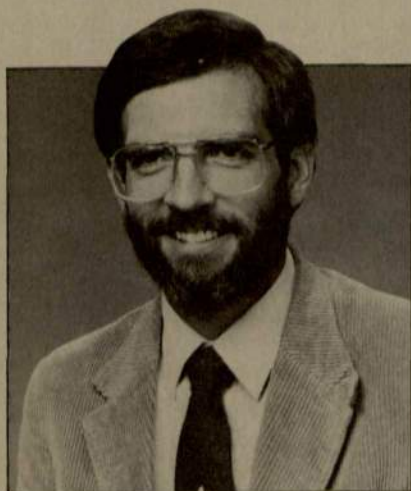
Charles Simpson is the senior pastor of Gulf Coast Covenant Church in Mobile, Alabama, and ministers extensively in the United States and abroad. He also serves as the chairman of the Integrity Communications Board of Directors. Charles resides in Mobile with his wife, Carolyn, and their three children.

TIPS FOR FATHERS

Children must learn the value of

True Confessions

BY BRUCE LONGSTRETH



Most of us, when confronted with our own failures, can't resist the temptation to excuse ourselves by blaming others for our predicament. Shifting the blame is such a common, everyday occurrence that even when it happens in glaring ways, we seldom notice.

After hearing of Miss America's recent resignation because of some questionable photographs, I imagined how the crowd might have responded to her press conference remarks had it happened the way I dreamed it.

Watch how a glaring example of blame shifting is missed as a dethroned beauty queen addresses a crowd of imaginary fans:

"I'd like to take this opportunity to place the responsibility for my moral failure on several people who have let me down at crucial times in my life.

"First are my parents. They were always too busy. When I got in trouble I just couldn't go to them and tell them what happened."

(Loud applause from the crowd: "Parents are the reason kids go bad!")

"Second is the Church. Its self-righteous hypocrites and dogooders know nothing of real life. They couldn't teach me the difference between right and wrong."

(Crowd is starting to feel better and cheers loudly at this point: "The Church never did anything good.")

"Third, I'd like to put most of the responsibility for this mess on the photographer who shot those horrible pictures of me when I wasn't looking and then sold them without my permission to that wretched magazine."

(Crowd yells in enthusiastic support: "Some photographers just don't have any scruples.")

"And finally, I'd like to put the remaining responsibility for my actions on a wicked society that would allow this kind of thing to happen. Thank you."

(And the crowd, not knowing that it was the "wicked society" being blamed for the woman's misconduct, yells back, "Shame on society for its awful behavior!")

As we watch the replay of this imaginary event, we may find our place with either the sympathizers or those who requested her resignation. But our real place ought to be up there with the guilty party who refuses to take responsibility—because each of us, at one time or another, has been guilty of blaming others for our own failures and mistakes.

The Bible tells us this tendency is as old as Adam, who blamed

his wife and then went one step further—he blamed God for his failure to obey. But then, and now, God prescribes a true confession of guilt as the only cure for our persistent practice of faulting others for our failure.

It's rare these days to ever hear a true confession of guilt, but it sounds like this: "What I did was wrong. But I did it by my own choice and I am now reaping the consequences. I alone bear the responsibility for my poor choice."

How does God respond to that kind of true confession? The Bible says, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 Jn. 1:9 NAS).

Knowing that is the Lord's response, we fathers must teach our children the importance of a genuine, prompt confession of guilt. Here are some ways to do that:

First, give your child a good example to copy. Sometimes we need to admit to our kids that we simply blew it! A side benefit of our confession is that our kids will know that fathers are human too.

Second, be diligent to correct your child's attempts to excuse his wrongdoing by faulting others.

Third, refuse to accept the blame for your child's wrongdoing. It may sound humble to blame yourself for everything your child does, but it may never develop a sense of personal responsibility in him.

And finally, as the spiritual leader of the home, lead the family to a place of confession to God, who alone is able to fully cleanse and forgive all wrongdoing. □

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

November 1984

I Believe in the Universal Church Because...

- I. God's Government Reaches to the Ends of the Earth
 - A. The Lord possesses the heathen. Ps. 2:1-12 Nov. 1
 - B. The Lord is worshiped by the nations. Ps. 22:22-31 Nov. 2
 - C. The Lord is feared by the peoples. Ps. 67:1-7 Nov. 3
 - D. The Lord commands all to be saved. Is. 45:20-25 Nov. 4
 - E. The Lord's salvation is seen by all. Is. 52:7-15 Nov. 5
 - F. The Lord's greatness is known by all. Mic. 5:1-5 Nov. 6
 - G. The Lord will govern the earth in peace. Zech. 9:1-10 Nov. 7
 - H. The Lord redeems from every kindred and nation. Rev. 5:1-14 Nov. 8
- II. The Church's Commission Is Universal
 - A. To all nations and every creature. Mt. 28:16-20; Mk. 16:14-20 Nov. 9
 - B. From Jerusalem to the remotest part. Acts 1:1-11 Nov. 10
- III. The Church's Response Was Directed Outward
 - A. "In one place" Acts 1:12-2:4 Nov. 11
 - B. "From every nation under heaven" Acts 2:5-41 Nov. 12
 - C. "At ease in Zion" before the persecution. Acts 4:23-37 Nov. 13
 - D. The scattered Church at work in Samaria. Acts 8:1-25 Nov. 14
 - E. The gospel extended to Ethiopia. Acts 8:26-40 Nov. 15
 - F. The first Gentiles baptized. Acts 10:1-48 Nov. 16
 - G. The church at Antioch. Acts 11:19-30 Nov. 17
- IV. The Church's Growth Extended Throughout the World
 - A. Cyprus and Pisidian Antioch. Acts 13:1-52 Nov. 18
 - B. Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe. Acts 14:1-28 Nov. 19
 - C. Philippi. Acts 16:1-40 Nov. 20
 - D. From Thessalonica to Athens. Acts 17:1-34 Nov. 21
 - E. Corinth. Acts 18:1-17 Nov. 22
 - F. Ephesus. Acts 18:18-19:7 Nov. 23
- V. Apostle Paul Had a Global Vision
 - A. "I must see Rome also" Acts 19:8-22 Nov. 24
 - B. "I must finish my course" Acts 20:17-38 Nov. 25
 - C. "I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die" Acts 21:7-40 Nov. 26
 - D. "Brethren and fathers, hear my defense" Acts 22:1-21 Nov. 27
 - E. "I obeyed the heavenly vision" Acts 26:1-32 Nov. 28
 - F. "Keep up your courage . . . I believe God" Acts 27:1-44 Nov. 29
 - G. "Salvation has been sent to the Gentiles" Acts 28:1-31 Nov. 30

"The Word," a monthly Bible study by Bruce Longstreth, is a seasonal study of basic teachings about the creation and fall of man, the person and work of Christ, and the nature and destiny of the Church. Next month, we will study the apostolic church. We encourage our readers to use this feature daily, both for personal Scripture study and family reading.

COULD YOUR DEMONIC

Answer these ten questions and then

1. *Do you constantly make excuses for not praying?*
2. *Do you find yourself too tired or unable to cope?*
3. *Do you have problems with depression, anxiety, or fear?*
4. *Do you have some unexplained physical malady that just won't go away?*
5. *Is there arguing, tension, and disunity between you and your spouse or children?*
6. *Do you have trouble concentrating or remembering things?*
7. *Do you find yourself constantly struggling against unclean thoughts?*
8. *Do you have trouble controlling your weight?*
9. *Do you harbor harmful thoughts about other people?*
10. *Do you think your family would be better off if you were to die?*

All Christians face problems like these at one time or another. But, if after you have prayed, fasted, and applied self-discipline, they still "just won't go away"—evil spirits may be affecting your life.

Until you rid yourself of demonic oppression, you can never find complete happiness and fulfillment. This oppression reflects itself in various ways. Relationships with friends and business associates may become strained. You may discover an ever-increasing gap between you and those you love. Your body may never completely heal. You may be constantly nagged by being

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PROBLEMS BE N NATURE?

ns as honestly as you can read on.

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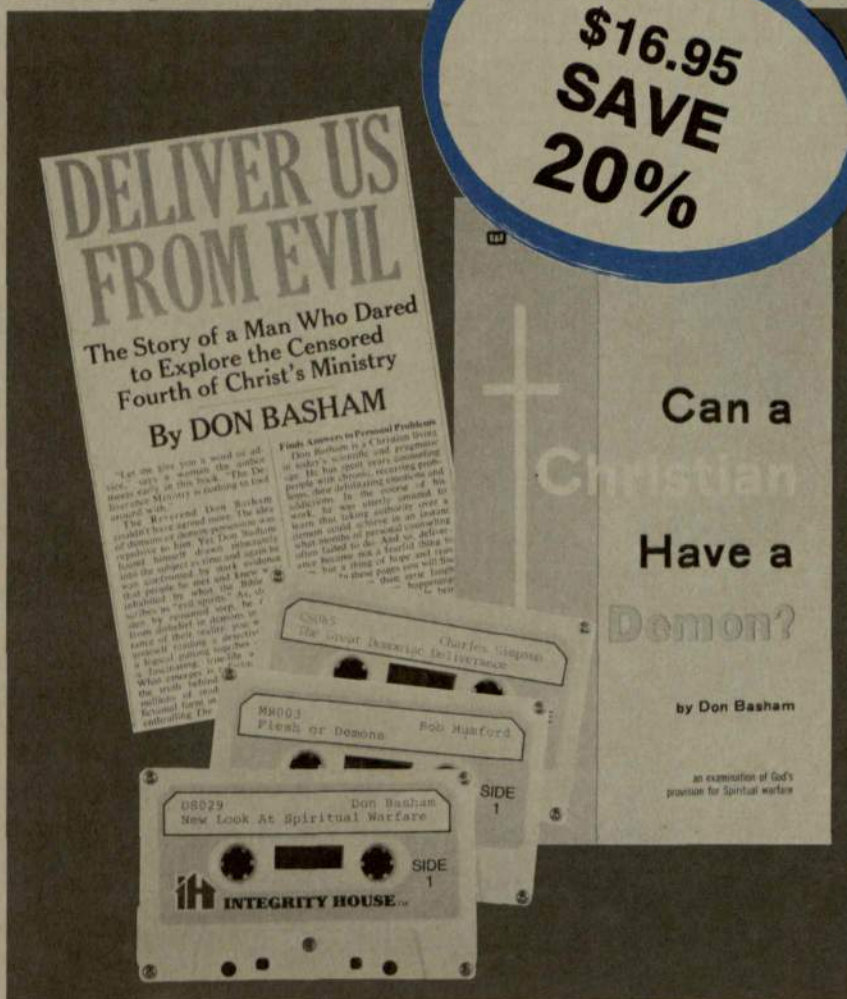
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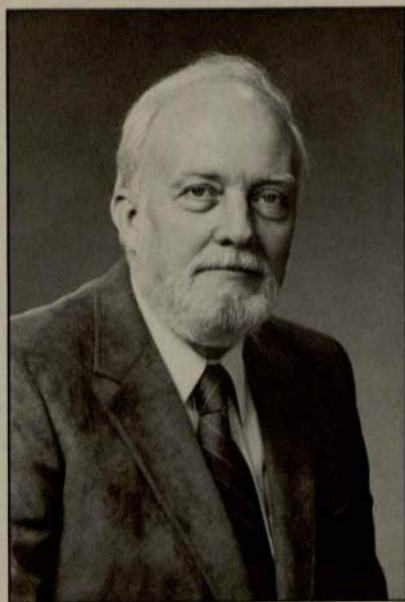
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Our intercession may bring a miracle, but it's

Behind the Scenes

BY DON BASHAM



To be an intercessor is one of the unique privileges we have as Christians. In spiritual warfare, any one of us can become a casualty, stricken and unable to get into the presence of God without faithful friends to bring us before the Lord. One such man who relied on his friends in this way is found in the story of the healing of the paralytic in Mark chapter 2.

The incident took place early in the public ministry of Jesus when great crowds gathered everywhere He went. Some of the people came to see Him out of curiosity, some to receive help, and some simply to find ways to condemn Him. Such was the crowd that filled the house in Capernaum where Jesus was teaching. But that day four men

came with yet another motive. Carrying a paralyzed friend, they had one purpose in mind: to get their friend into the presence of Jesus so he could be healed.

Getting into God's presence isn't always easy. Sometimes we have to overcome strong resistance; sometimes it takes perseverance and painful, sacrificial effort. This was such a time. Not only could the four men not get close to Jesus, they couldn't even get near the door! Lesser men might have given up, but love for their brother filled the four with desperate determination.

Imagine the scene: The room is packed with people listening to Jesus preach when loud noises begin to break out above them. Suddenly dirt and debris from the ceiling shower down on their heads—and on the Lord's head as well. They shield their eyes with their hands and squint up at the ceiling—or what used to be the ceiling. For now great portions of the roof have been ripped away, allowing sunlight to stream down into the room from overhead. Through the large gaping hole four anxious faces peer down.

Imagine the indignation of the crowd, the hisses of disapproval from the scribes, the dismay and anger of the homeowner! Who are these ruffians? How dare they wreck the house and interrupt the meeting! And what's that they're lowering through the hole?

The crowd looked up through the haze of dirt and debris and saw rudeness; they saw lack of

respect; they saw deliberate destruction of property. But that's not what Jesus saw. He looked up through that haze of falling debris and saw faith. He saw the desperate, loving faith of men who were willing to endure whatever condemnation might follow their reckless act. He saw faith in the form of eight dirty, bloody-fingered hands gently lowering the pallet with its pitiful load until it rested directly in front of Him.

Immediately the Lord responded to that faith. The scripture here is magnificently understated: "When Jesus saw *their faith*, he said to the paralytic, 'Son, your sins are forgiven. . . . Get up, take your mat and go home'" (Mk. 2:5, 11 NIV, italics mine).

To the astonishment of everyone except Jesus and the four roof-bound friends, the paralytic jumped to his feet, folded his mat under his arm, and walked out of the room in perfect health.

It is interesting that Jesus never spoke to the four men on the roof, nor did the healed paralytic pause to look up and thank them as he left the room a whole man. There was no public acknowledgment, no public praise for them. But I suspect that failing to receive recognition never fazed the four men left on the roof. They were too busy rejoicing and too filled with gratitude for what the Lord had done for their friend.

That's usually the way it is when you become an intercessor, for intercessors aren't public figures and intercession is not a public ministry. People may never know the part you played in helping a miracle happen. But *you* know, and you know that God knows—and that alone should be quite enough. At least, that's the way I see it. □

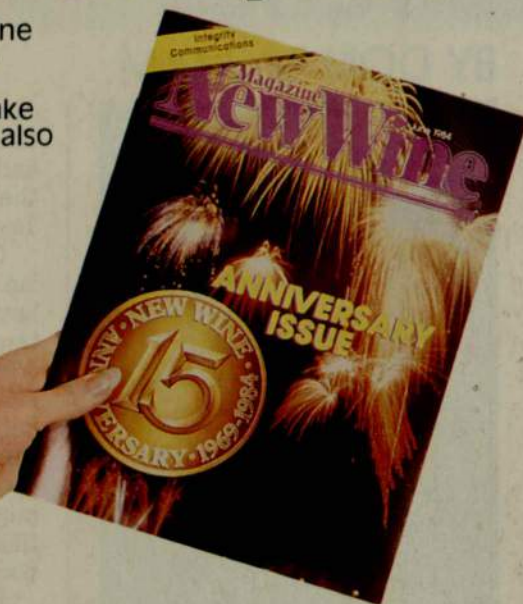
Don Basham is chief editorial consultant for New Wine.

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