

Magazine **New Wine**®

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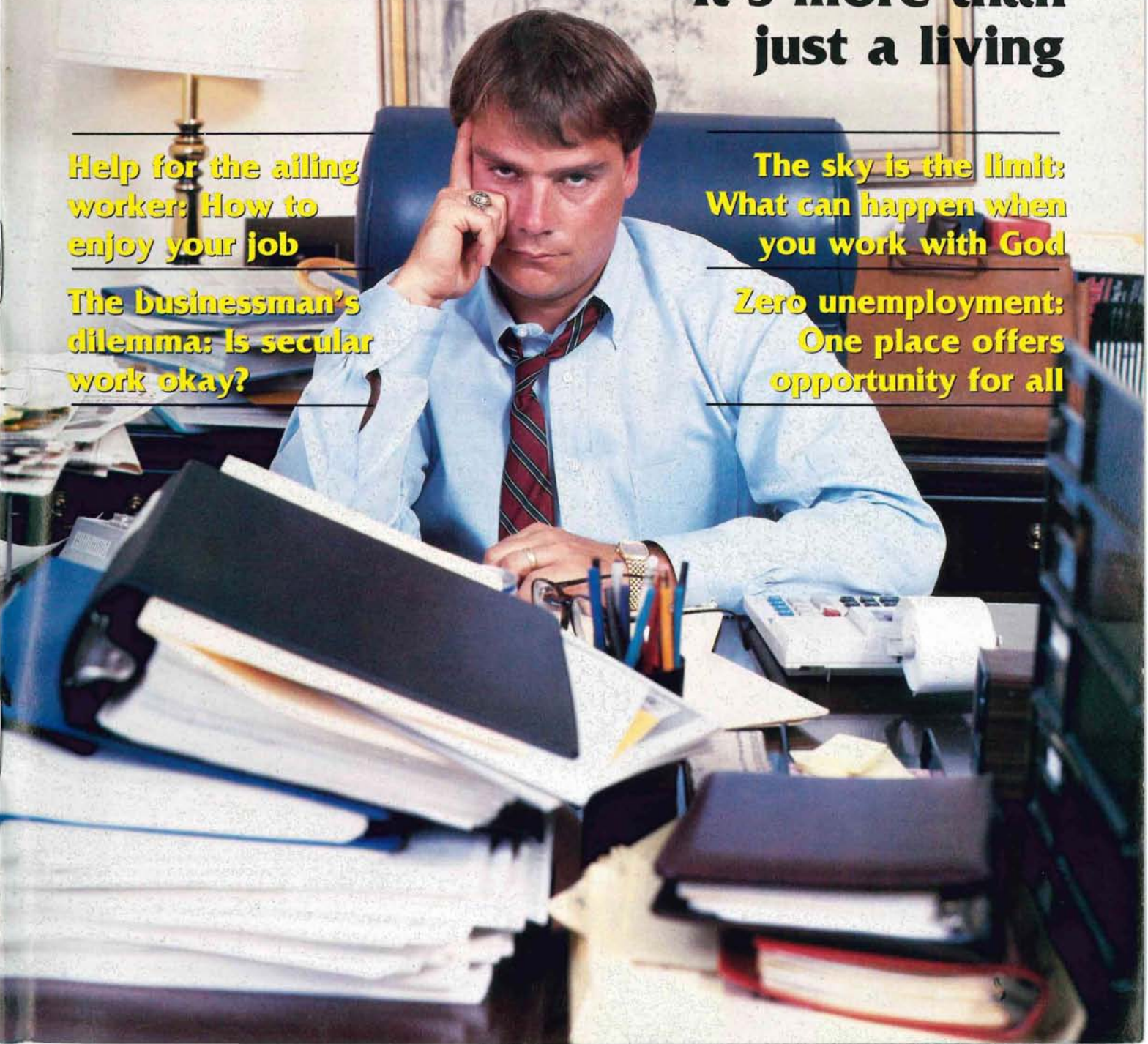
Working 9 to 5: **It's more than just a living**

**Help for the ailing
worker: How to
enjoy your job**

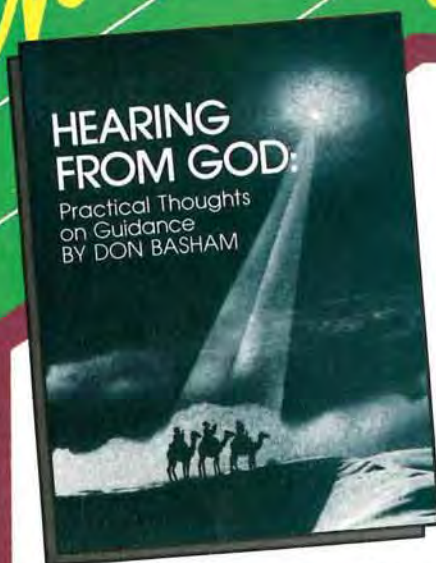
**The businessman's
dilemma: Is secular
work okay?**

**The sky is the limit:
What can happen when
you work with God**

**Zero unemployment:
One place offers
opportunity for all**



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Joy to the world, there's hope in our work

The Third Stanza

BY BRUCE LONGSTRETH

At first, it seemed a bit strange for us to be singing "Joy to the World!" in the middle of the summer. Wasn't it a Christmas carol? But as I listened once again to the familiar words, I realized that it was indeed a song for all seasons. In fact, when Isaac Watts wrote "Joy to the World!" in 1719, he didn't have Christmas in mind at all. He had seen a glorious vision of the kingdom of God come to earth in Christ and wanted to declare that vision through this hymn.

An even greater tragedy than confining this song to Christmas is that often worship leaders introduce it by saying, "Let's sing 'Joy to the World!'—the first, second, and fourth stanzas." In so doing, we miss the heart of Watt's vision. So for those who have been denied the rich blessing of this hymn, and for poor Isaac, who always wished better things for his music, we include the important third stanza:

No more let sins and sorrows grow,
Nor thorns infest the ground;
He comes to make His blessings flow
Far as the curse is found.

The "curse" was put upon Adam—and all mankind—after he sinned (see Genesis 3:17-19). God had created man to rule, subdue, and extend his influence throughout the whole earth. His management of creation was

righteous oversight of every area of life because of his relationship with the Lord God. But when he sinned, a curse was pronounced and the human race was doomed—until Christ came and proclaimed, "The kingdom of God is among you" (see Matthew 4:17). The sweaty toil, the bread of sorrows, and the fatalistic return to dust at the end of a difficult life are over because the Lord has come.

We hear that statement afresh in Matthew 28:18-20 prior to Jesus' return to His Father. He tells us that all authority is given to Him, and that as we go from place to place we are to bring all nations under His lordship. For most of us, He is not suggesting that we seek to evangelize the world by abandoning our normal routine; but rather through our everyday lives, He wants us to declare the good news of the kingdom of God. That truth makes the work we do, the place we live, and the contacts we make the most exciting adventure possible. It combines "secular" labor and "spiritual" ministry into "Kingdom extension."

With that truth in mind, this month we take a fresh look at the world of work. Charles Simpson calls us back to the biblical work ethic, and contributing editor John Beckett shares how putting that ethic into practice resulted in tremendous growth for his manufacturing company.

Joseph McAuliffe, editor of *BusinessGram*, shares the trans-



On assignment at the Eckford farm, Bruce Longstreth is welcomed by an overly friendly group of fire ants.

formation of his views on work and wealth. Then, Don Litton offers a test for our vocational vision. You'll probably laugh, cry, and grimace with John Stanko as he tells about God's on-the-job training program.

Other work-related articles include a profile of Jim Eckford, a successful young farmer in Starkville, Mississippi, and a look at the work ethic of the eighteenth-century Moravians.

Scripture tells us that we are saved by grace to walk in "good works." We want to encourage our readers to see their vocations as "good works" ordained by God to extend His kingdom. We desire each person's job to be a year-round carol of praise to the King: "Joy to the world! The Lord is come!" □



Bruce Longstreth is editor of New Wine and Fathergram.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



Rebuilding the Hedge

Bob Mumford's article "The Trampled Hedge" (July) is on target and I agree with it one hundred percent. Regrettably, my past experience testifies to the verity of it.

I am approaching fourteen years as a Christian; for most of them I was a "roller coaster Christian" with a mentality that was "do what I want and then get forgiveness." As Mr. Mumford has said, "It's easier to get forgiveness than permission."

The Lord spoke softly but firmly some eight years ago that I should abstain from alcohol. I did not listen or obey, and slowly my appetite for alcohol increased. Four years ago my "hedge" began to get trampled.

I painfully remember how His grace and mercy that I once enjoyed seemed to lift, and alcohol became my master. My children began to have "unusual accidents"; my job began to fail; I withdrew and went into a shell. I knew in my heart the Lord was

lifting His protection from my family and me.

I began crying out to the Lord for the gift of repentance; don't ask me how, but He gave me the capacity to repent, receive forgiveness, and return to my first love, Jesus.

Two years have passed since the Lord turned me back to Himself. I'm not out of the woods yet, but He has shown me blessed mercy and compassion, letting me visit and pray for the sick, oppressed, and lonely, just doing the works of Jesus, which I am called to do.

Name withheld

Keeping Watch

Reading Dr. Tedla's dismay ("Ethiopia: A Lesson for Us All," July) concerning how little is being reported about Ethiopia and the gross violations of human rights in that country made me wonder again why the press and many of our leaders are so given to what one writer called "selective indignation."

Injustice is injustice, and it needs to be recognized as such. We Christians forget too quickly what the essence of man's fallen nature really is. To continually condemn South Africa while not calling for a reckoning on the part of the Soviet Union, Nicaragua, or Ethiopia (among others) is to throw up a smoke screen.

The hope of mankind is still to be found in Jesus Christ and His kingdom. The sound we make to the nations will be only as clear as our own convictions that this is true.

Jerry Noah
Lexington, KY

Three Cheers for Rachel!

Rachel Laust's story ("Against All Odds," July) is heartwarming, not only because of her deep desire to live, but also because it could only have been instilled from the love and security her parents offered her.

As the primary nationwide parent support group concerning Down syndrome, we are privileged to hear of similar success stories, all emphasizing the strength of families who have a child with Down syndrome and of the child himself.

We applaud your interest in true-life stories of strength and love where the issue of quality of life never raises its head. Our congratulations to Rachel and her family for having won their battle "against all odds."

Diane M. Crutcher
Executive Director
National Down Syndrome Congress
Chicago, IL

Praise Him in the Highest

I greatly appreciated Terry Law's article "Call to Worship" (July). Many Christians have for some time been aware of the demonic nature of so much of modern secular music, but I imagine that few of us have realized the

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New Wine Tape of the Month, *Fathergram*, Integrity House, *Plumbline*, Bob Mumford's Recommended Tapes, Hosanna! Music, Intercessors for America, *BusinessGram*, *Vino Nuevo* (Spanish edition of *New Wine*), *Restore Magazine* (primarily circulated in the South Pacific and Southeast Asia), *Wieder Herstellung* (West Germany)

New Wine Magazine seeks to promote the unity and maturity of the Church and individual Christians by presenting sound biblical teachings and testimonies from a variety of Christian authors.

New Wine will carefully consider all unsolicited manuscripts, although we cannot return them unless accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope. (Please note we do not publish poetry.)

extent of the very deliberate spiritual attack that has been launched against God's people via rock music. Brother Law has graphically stated the situation.

I am so grateful for his encouraging closing words on the renewed emphasis on praise and worship in the Church. As the battle lines become more clearly drawn, I believe each of us individually and each congregation corporately become more and more responsible to protect the spiritual turf in our own sphere. Praise and worship are wonderful weapons! As our God is exalted, His enemies must fall back.

I have discovered a very significant release of the Holy Spirit in my office work as I practice the privilege of worshiping quietly at my desk. At least the King is enthroned in my small area! What if every Christian everywhere...!

Catherine Rood
Lexington, KY

S.O.S. for Families

This month's issue on the family (June) was just great. As parents of small children, we greatly appreciated all the encouragement and exhortation. Because our children are so small, their well-being often seems to take precedence over our marriage relationship. I hope that sometime soon you'll deal with marriage itself; couples today seem to be under fire at every stage in marital relationships. We certainly are.

Linda Giard
Melbourne, FL

Investment in the Future

Your June issue on the family was great. May God be praised through Jesus Christ as readers put the articles into practice to repair broken families and strengthen the strong ones so that God's grace and mercy may be evident to all.

Although I'm single and only

twenty-two years old, sound teaching is beneficial no matter what your status.

Henry D. VanWeerden
London, Ontario

A Refreshing Drink

New Wine has been "water in a dry land" for me this year, bringing spiritual refreshment and new thoughts to keep me growing. I have been a student in Amsterdam away from my family, and have grown to really appreciate the family of believers worldwide, including you!

I was a bit afraid of the charismatic gifts for several years after becoming a Christian because I saw some of my brothers and sisters neglect another God-given gift—reason. Now God has broken through, united me to those Christians, and brought me closer to Him with the gift of tongues.

I am glad, because I see coming in *New Wine* a better balance between the mysteries of the Spirit and the reason of the mind. Thanks for feeding my mind as well as my spirit! God bless you as you continue in His work to build up His Church.

Terri Jennings
Amsterdam,
Netherlands

"Dear New Wine" is your platform to express your point of view about a *New Wine* article, to pose a question, or to disagree with a point we've made.

If you'd like to respond to a specific article, to question a writer, or to share how God spoke to you or challenged you, this is your opportunity to do it. Send your letters to "Dear New Wine," P.O. Box Z, Mobile, Alabama 36616.

THE WORD

September 1985

I Believe in the Unity of the Church Because...

I. Jesus Prayed for It		
A. The testimony of unity	Jn. 17:20-26	Sept. 1
II. The Saints Are Called to It		
A. The maintenance of unity	Eph. 4:1-16	Sept. 2
III. God Blesses It		
A. Unity's reward	Ps. 133:1-3	Sept. 3
B. Unity's joy	Ps. 122:1-9	Sept. 4
C. Unity's strength	Eccl. 4:9-12	Sept. 5
IV. Sin Destroys It		
A. Unity anguished	Ps. 55:1-23	Sept. 6
B. Unity seems hopeless	Ezek. 37:1-28	Sept. 7
C. Unity frustrated	Gen. 11:1-9	Sept. 8
D. Unity scattered	Dt. 4:21-31	Sept. 9
V. Repentance Restores It		
A. Restored in humility	2 Chr. 7:8-16	Sept. 10
B. Restored sovereignly	Jer. 31:1-40	Sept. 11
C. Restored personally	Mt. 5:21-26	Sept. 12
VI. Biblical Metaphors Illustrate It		
A. One fold and one shepherd	Jn. 10:1-30	Sept. 13
B. One vine, many branches	Jn. 15:1-17	Sept. 14
C. A functioning body	Rom. 12:1-8	Sept. 15
D. One body, many members	1 Cor. 12:1-31	Sept. 16
E. Christ's fullness	Eph. 1:15-23	Sept. 17
F. Christ's body	Col. 1:15-29	Sept. 18
G. A bride	Eph. 5:22-23; 2 Cor. 11:1-3	Sept. 19
H. God's temple	Mt. 16:18; 1 Cor. 3:1-23	Sept. 20
I. A holy nation; the people of God	1 Pet. 2:1-10	Sept. 21
VII. The Church Originated in It		
A. All together in one place	Acts 1:12-14; 2:1-4	Sept. 22
B. All together with one voice	Acts 4:23-37	Sept. 23
VIII. The Saints Are Commanded to Keep It		
A. Unity of heart and voice	Rom. 15:1-13	Sept. 24
B. Unity of mind, spirit, and purpose	Phil. 2:1-11	Sept. 25
C. Unity of the Body	Eph. 4:25-32	Sept. 26
D. Unity of love	1 Jn. 3:11-24	Sept. 27
IX. The New Covenant Establishes It		
A. One loaf	1 Cor. 10:16-17	Sept. 28
B. One new man	Gal. 3:25-29	Sept. 29
C. One holy dwelling	Eph. 2:1-22	Sept. 30

A monthly Bible study by Bruce Longstreth



WORKING WITH GOD

With a biblical understanding of work and wealth, we can establish the kingdom of God on the earth.

BY CHARLES SIMPSON

It seems as if *work* and *rich* have both become four-letter words. But it stands to reason that when work is degraded, wealth will be also.

Someone once joked, "Work doesn't bother me. I can lay down right beside it and go to sleep." But the poverty that results from wrong thinking about work is no joke. Many people have slept while opportunity knocked and went away.

More than three thousand years ago Moses said to Israel, "It is He who is giving you power to make wealth, that He may confirm His covenant which He swore to your fathers" (Dt. 8:18 NAS). God gives us the ability to prosper, and that prosperity indicates that He is with us. It also supports His desire to establish His kingdom here on earth.

Work and wealth are valued by God. Increase of resources is confirmation of proper management, proper understanding, and diligent effort. The Scriptures, inspired by the Holy Spirit, say a great deal about work and wealth. God works (see Genesis 2:2 and Psalm 104:24); Jesus works (see John 5:17; 9:4); the Holy Spirit works (see 1 Corinthians 12:11); mankind works (see Genesis 1:28); apostles work

(see 2 Thessalonians 3:8); and we are even told that we should enjoy work (see Ecclesiastes 2:24).

If work and wealth are indeed a part of God's plan for us, I have to wonder why they have both been so degraded. I believe it's because people, including many Christians, have an unbiblical perspective of work and wealth. By looking to the Scriptures we can regain a proper understanding and a fresh view of the work that God has called each of us to do.

The Biblical Work Ethic

I would interpret the biblical work ethic as God and man laboring together to cause creation to prosper, thus returning abundance to God and man. Biblical gain comes within the framework of mutual benefit to all: God, mankind, and creation itself.

When I think of work, I think of Nehemiah, who lived at a time when Jerusalem was in ruins. Nehemiah, cupbearer to King Artaxerxes, gained permission to rebuild the city walls. He and those few who labored with him accomplished the task in fifty-two days—less than two months—because "the people had a mind to work" (Neh. 4:6 NAS). The benefit they received was the fulfillment of having restored the walls

of Jerusalem in accordance with God's will, and being able to dwell safely.

When people have a mind to work, they can do great things. I recently heard a commercial that said, "The promise of America is opportunity, not guarantees." Throughout its history, the United States has been a mecca for people seeking opportunity. It has been said that even those who hate it want to live here. It's not that the country has superior resources, but that it was founded on a superior ethic—a biblical attitude toward morality, work, and wealth. Most of the early officials were managers of farms—entrepreneurs and pioneers with faith.

The prime minister of Greece is a notable example of just how much opportunity this nation offers. He came here as a young man with twenty dollars and prospered to become a university professor with several degrees. Eventually, he returned to Greece to become prime minister on a socialist and anti-American platform. In a recent interview he said that his success could only have happened in the United States and that he viewed it as a place of opportunity even for those who attack its foundation



The biblical work ethic is God and man laboring together to cause creation to prosper, thus returning abundance to both God and man. Gain comes within the framework of mutual benefit.

and existence.

Whatever opportunities the United States or any other country offers, they are nothing compared to the opportunities that God offers. With Him all things are possible to those who believe.

Noah believed that and constructed a huge ship that took a hundred years to build—without power tools. With that ship he saved his family and many animals, and became a patriarch in the messianic genealogy.

Abraham believed it, and built a family, a financial empire, and many nations, having only a barren wife and a promise.

Moses believed it, and took slaves from Egypt, and created a nation of industrious people that exists to this day.

David believed it, and parlayed a sling and five stones into a king's scepter. He gave scores of millions of dollars from his own pocket to build the temple.

Jesus believed it, and took a few fishermen, worked with them, and produced the kingdom of God that will eventually rule all nations.

If we believe that all things are possible with God, we too will accomplish amazing results. Many Christians, however, are not being fruitful in their labor, and I believe it is the result of a lack of vision.

Task and Vision

Julius Joske, president and founder of a chain of high-quality department stores, once said, "Vision without task is fantasy. Task without vision is drudgery. But vision with task can change the world."

People who lose their sense of purpose or vision will eventually lose their motivation to work, their resources, and their identity. They become "nobody doing nothing."

How far that is from God's purpose for man! We are created

in His image to manage His creation. And we still do not have any idea how big that is (see Hebrews 2:6-8)!

Here are several biblical visions for work that will enable us to maintain our motivation and to be fruitful.

God Is the Fountainhead

First, we must see God as the fountainhead of our vocation. Apart from God, we make no sense, and our work makes no sense. Isaiah said, "I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, lofty and exalted" (Is. 6:1 NAS). Out of that revelation he discovered himself and his life's work. Self-awareness and subjectivity, apart from God, are a trap and a poor basis for interpreting life and work. Our immediate feelings and perspectives are usually inadequate, if not distorted.

Instead, we should seek God until He reveals Himself to us and gives us a higher perspective of ourselves and our work. Then, we can look at our vocation and calling in the light of His purposes. If we have seen the Lord and have heard Him commending us to our work, then everything else will fall into place.

Whenever subjective "moodiness" returns, we should return to God, allowing the Holy Spirit to give us a fresh perspective of our life and labor. We must walk in the Spirit with regard to our work.

Members of a Corporation

Second, we should see ourselves as members of the corporation that runs the whole of creation under God Himself (see Psalm 24:1 and Genesis 1:27-28). God does not want to do it all by Himself. He wants to use people. As His servants, we are part of His management team.

I once heard about a minister who said to a farmer, "You and the Lord have a mighty nice farm

here."

"Yes," the farmer replied, "but you should have seen it when the Lord had it all by Himself!"

God's intention is not to have it all by Himself. He created mankind to rule over the works of His hands. Through our vocations, we are helping to manage creation and society.

Working With God

Third, we should see ourselves as working *with* God. We can work *for* Him, but it's even more wonderful to work *with* Him, sharing in the expenditure of His power.

Many times I have turned to Isaiah 40:28-31 to remind myself to rely on God's strength to do the task He has given me.

Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Everlasting God, the Lord, the creator of the ends of the earth does not become weary or tired. His understanding is inscrutable. He gives strength to the weary, and to him who lacks might He increases power. Though youths grow weary and tired, and vigorous young men stumble badly, yet those who wait for the Lord will gain new strength; they will mount up with wings like eagles, they will run and not get tired, they will walk and not become weary (NAS).

Another helpful scripture is Ephesians 1:18-19:

I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you may know...what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe (NAS).

We must see ourselves relying and depending upon the Spirit of God for strength, power, direc-



Bob Mumford on guidance

Next Month in New Wine: The God Who Guides

Bob Mumford, in an excerpt from his classic book *Take Another Look at Guidance*, cautions us to make sure we know where our guidance is coming from. It could be the Lord; it could be our flesh; or it could be the devil.

Larry Christenson discusses a common problem in seeking guidance: When do we rely on principles and when do we rely on "hearing from God"?

Houston Miles offers a biblical perspective on how God guides us into His plan and purposes.

Plus, Dr. Larry Lea, pastor of Church on the Rock in Rockwall, Texas, begins a two-part series on prayer. His practical insights into the Lord's Prayer, which have caused phenomenal growth in his church, can revolutionize our prayer lives.

All in the October *New Wine*



God does not want to run the world by Himself. He created mankind to rule over the works of His hands. Through our vocations, we are helping manage creation and society.

tion, wisdom, or whatever it is we need. We should work with God, leaning on the everlasting arms, believing that with God, things will be accomplished that are beyond human ability.

Important and Productive

Fourth, we should see ourselves as important to, and productive in, God's purposes. With Jesus as our Lord and the Holy Spirit as our energizer, why shouldn't we produce results for God? Whatever our vocation is, it is important to God, our family, our church, and society. We cannot afford to take our life, resources, and opportunities for granted.

One way we can see our usefulness is to pursue relationships with people who see value in us. Jesus died for each of us, and we are valuable to Him. If we are the hundredth sheep that strayed, He came to find us, and He did so because He has a productive purpose for us. We should think on this as we labor.

When I was a boy, I worked for a man who had me digging a sewer. He was not a churchgoer, but nevertheless, he was a hard worker. My father, a minister, wanted me to work for him so that I would learn to be diligent. One of our church members saw me digging the sewer line and complained to my boss that such work was beneath the dignity of a minister's son. He replied, "I don't ask that boy to do anything I don't do myself."

All honest work is honorable, if not enjoyable. The world cannot run without sewer lines and those who maintain them. We are all important to the overall operation of creation and society.

Rewards of Labor

Fifth, we must believe that it is God's will for us to enjoy the rewards of our labor. God is our master, but He is not stingy or

selfish. When the Israelites were enslaved in Egypt, they were abused and kept in poverty, but God renewed His covenant with them (see Exodus 19:1-8). Moses later reminded them that God had given them the power to make wealth as a confirmation of the covenant. Deuteronomy chapter 28 makes it clear that as they obeyed the covenant, they prospered, but when they turned from it, they suffered poverty, disease, and defeat.

Proverbs chapters 10 and 11 also tell us that laboring with God in divine understanding will bring prosperity. Prosperity is not sinful, and the successful person should enjoy the fruit of his labor. Any thought that honest gain should bring guilt is from the devil, who would have us all poor and sick. If we have succeeded, by the grace of God, we should give Him the tithe (one tenth of our earnings), take care of our family, save some of the seed for future sowing, and enjoy some of the fruit of our labors.

Second Timothy 2:6 says, "The husbandman that laboreth must be first partaker of the fruit."

Giving to the Needy

Sixth, we should see ourselves as givers to the needy. Ephesians 4:28 says:

Let him who steals steal no longer; but rather let him labor, performing with his own hands what is good, in order that he may have something to share with him who has need (NAS).

This verse contains much of the biblical work ethic. *Labor should result in our having something to give the needy.* Nothing enhances one's own identity and increases his sense of worth like being able to give to another in need. This is a major purpose for work and prosperity. But if we don't work and prosper,

we cannot give, and needs will not be met.

I don't criticize the prosperous for a couple of reasons. First, as one of God's stewards, I want to prosper; and second, prosperous people can be the strongest supporters of God's work and give the most help to the needy.

It has become fashionable to criticize financial success. This is characteristic of equalitarianism and socialism alike. But instead of giving in to envy and criticism, which are even older than equalitarianism, we should cultivate our own opportunities to prosper. We must exercise faith so that we can have the resources to give to the needy.

Dr. Charles Jarvis, a noted speaker, has said, "God gave human beings two ends, one to think with and one to sit on. Success depends upon which we use most. Heads you win...."

Greater Opportunities

Seventh, we should see ourselves as being prepared for an even greater opportunity. Luke 16:10-12 gives us three important principles associated with work: faithful in a little, given much; faithful in money, given spiritual riches; and faithful in another's, given our own. In each of these principles is promotion.

It would greatly help us in our vocation and service to God to see our current task as preparation for a higher calling, instead of a blind alley. When we fail, we shouldn't see it as final, but simply as a manifestation that we need to repeat the lesson. Failure is fertilizer for ultimate triumph.

Many people reach a stage in life where they see no more worlds to conquer, or have lost their will to go on. This often happens to retirees. Such a condition is most tragic and can bring on serious illness or even premature death. Rest, spiritual renewal, and reading the Word are all an-

tidotes for such an attitude.

Still another antidote to the "dead-end syndrome" is associating with people who have faith for the future and who believe they are going somewhere. Jesus kept His eyes on the goal ahead. Paul alludes to the athlete who strives for the crown. One of the healthiest approaches to work, especially work that does not seem fulfilling, is to see it as a door to greater opportunities in God's purpose.

Through these seven visions we can maintain our motivation and achieve prosperity. But do we really believe that working with God has infinite possibilities?

Moses asked, "Lord, what shall I do?"

The Lord answered, "What's in your hand?"

"A rod."

"Use it."

With that rod Moses did miracles. A dead stick became a shepherd's staff, a prophet's pointer, and a ruler's scepter.

The entire Church of Jesus Christ is in an upsurge of spiritual power and evangelism. The New Testament communicates evangelism as a message with power that changes the way people live and societies operate. Included in our message must be the calling for mankind not only to work *for* God, but to work *with* God. All of our labors must be seen in cooperation with the initiative and power of God. Then shall the people of God reveal to the nations the power, the honor, the riches, and the glory of God. Work is more than an obligation; it's an opportunity to reveal the excellency of God. □

Charles Simpson, senior pastor of Gulf Coast Covenant Church in Mobile, Alabama, 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.

TAKING CARE

The world's largest manufacturer of residential oil

BY JOHN BECKETT

Twenty-one years ago, I began working for my father in our family's manufacturing business. He was the genius, the entrepreneur, who saw us through the lean years when most men would have quit. At the age of sixty-six he brought alongside his only son, forty years younger.

We worked together for a year and it was the most rewarding year of my life. For the first time he was not just my parent and provider, but also my employer, mentor, and model. He passed away after our first year together, and the weeks following his death marked the first time in my life I really got serious about prayer. God heard me and answered in some wonderful ways. He brought the key people I needed, kept the company afloat financially, and gave wisdom to help me chart a steady course.

Of course, God's grace made the devil mad. Six months after I assumed management of the company, a raging fire swept through the plant, virtually destroying it. But our dedicated work crew of twelve, along with some cooperative suppliers, kept us going without delaying a single shipment of our product.

In spite of the devil's attempts to destroy our Christian business, we made twenty-five thousand residential oil burners that year—four percent of our industry's consumption.

Today, by God's grace we pro-

duce more than half the burners made in America, and have become the world's largest manufacturer of our particular product. Now, 160 employees share the same dedication of the original twelve, and work in one of the most beautiful manufacturing plants in Ohio—again a testimony of God's grace.

Words cannot describe the goodness of God that I've seen in our business. Yet at times I used to wonder if it was His highest calling for me—other "more spiritual" vocations seemed more godly. But today I know I am where I belong. Being in a vocation in industry isn't a second-class ministry if that's where God has called us. It's a high calling, a biblical calling, and a place of great reward for those who follow it.

The Bible and Business

Over the years, I have tried to see God's perspective on business, and I've found that the Scriptures are rich in example, wisdom, and insight, and provide a foundation for understanding. Colossians chapter 3, for example, describes the attitude we should have toward our work:

Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus....Slaves [servants], in all things obey those who are your masters on earth, not with external service, as those who merely please men, but

with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord. Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men; knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the *Lord Christ* whom you serve (vv. 17, 22-24 NAS, italics mine).

We also find in the Scriptures basic insights about labor. Genesis 1:1 says, "In the beginning God created..." (NAS). God is the author of work, and His work was to create. When God created man He blessed and commissioned him to be fruitful, multiply, subdue, and rule—in a word, to labor. God established the pattern for labor, and then commissioned man to follow that pattern, ruling over all that He had created. In fact, man was placed in the garden for that purpose—to work, or to labor.

When man fell, it affected all creation, including the commission to work. That which had been a blessing became a curse: "Cursed is the ground because of you; in toil you shall eat of it....By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread" (Gen. 3:17, 19 NAS).

When Jesus defeated Satan on the cross, He reversed this consequence, restoring work to its proper place in our lives. He once again established labor as blessed. In Matthew 11:27, Jesus says, "All things have been handed over to Me by My

OF BUSINESS

burners operates on Kingdom principles.



John Beckett, center, president of R. W. Beckett Corporation in Elyria, Ohio, manufacturer of more than

half of the residential oil burners made in America, discusses a new product with his management team.



Beckett, age seven, left, and his parents study one of their original burners in the 1940's. In 1965, a fire ravaged the



plant, center, but the company was rebuilt and continues manufacturing residential oil burners today, right.



Father" (NAS). Hebrews 2:8 says that all things are in subjection to Christ. I believe that "all things" includes labor.

The Paradox We Face

We are confronted with a paradox: In spite of Jesus' victory, unredeemed elements of society still seem to be under Satan's control. This is especially so in the business world, where so much of regular daily activity is ungodly and even demonic in orientation. There is manipulation, exploitation, greed, and confrontation. The answer to the paradox is this: Although in reality Jesus' victory is complete, it must still be worked out in everyday life by God's people.

We face this struggle of working out Christ's victory daily in our Christian lives. Romans 6:6 tells us that we are dead to sin and that our old nature has been crucified with Christ, but verse 11 exhorts us to reckon ourselves dead to sin, not letting it reign in our bodies. From God's perspective, then, we are dead to sin, but we have to work it out and make it a reality day by day.

The same is true in our vocations. Jesus died to redeem the business world and to make all things whole, but it's up to us to make His victory a reality in the

business arena.

What we encounter as we approach our work in this light is summed up in one word—*warfare*. While on one side there is a satanic conspiracy continually trying to nullify what Jesus did on the cross, we stand on the other side, struggling to bring His victory into reality. As Christians, we must recognize our work is right in the center of this warfare. Our commission requires confrontation—not on a human level, but with spiritual forces contending for our lives, our vocations, and all else that Jesus has died to redeem. That is the conflict we Christians face in our personal lives and in the business world as well.

Saints and "Secular Work"

If we are going to engage in this warfare, we must be settled in our job as our calling, realizing that the challenge for us is not that much different from the one that the saints faced in the early Church.

We often think of the Apostle Paul as a missionary, evangelist, and builder of the Church. But consider Paul the businessman, entrepreneur, and tent maker. He wasn't on quite the scale of Monsanto or General Electric, but he had to plan, set goals, find mar-

kets, deal with vendors, buy materials, establish prices, sell to customers, supervise employees, and pay taxes.

No doubt the Lord Himself faced many of these same practical matters as a carpenter, a trade the Bible tells us He pursued even during the time of His public ministry.

It is significant that throughout the Scriptures the giants of faith had strong ties to what we call "secular work." They tended sheep, built cities, wrote music and poetry, served kings, were kings, practiced medicine, caught fish, collected taxes, taught school, and built products—all while serving God or preparing to serve Him.

The call to business is just as legitimate and godly as any other call. I find people in business today who continually struggle with guilt and engage in secular work solely to make money for extending the gospel outside their "secular" work. They fail to see that work itself is the calling.

A Practical Pattern

Over the years, I've come to have peace with my call to business. The more fully I've embraced that call, the more God has embraced me in it, adding blessings beyond my greatest hopes. From

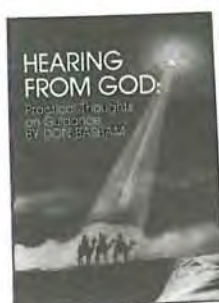
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There are 160 employees at the Beckett Corporation. Beckett takes great interest in his workers, personally in-

terviewing each of them before they are hired and making sure they are in their calling once employed.

that basis I have been able to make Christ's victory effective in my business, which has involved several lessons.

The first lesson has been on prayer. Our business endeavors need to be bathed in active, believing prayer, especially in light of the warfare surrounding them. In our company, a group of managers gathers regularly to pray for the company—for our goals, for difficulties we face, and for our employees.

A few years ago, as we were coming into a time of economic recession, the Lord impressed on us the importance of taking each day as it came, fully trusting in Him to provide. We were called to a new level of faith, and God blessed us as a result. We maintained our full work force, kept all our customers, and emerged from the recession stronger than before. In fact, we gained several new customers when our competitors got discouraged and cut back on their sales activity!

We've seen employees healed and receive salvation, in some cases long after we began praying for them. Several years ago some strange, unexplained fires began to break out in the plant, and we offered an open invitation to our work force to gather for prayer. More than a third of our

employees came, and we prayed to bind the demonic forces behind the fires. It was Satan's last pyromaniacal attempt there!

The second lesson for making Christ's victory effective in my business has been on planning. Our planning includes describing the complete mission of our company and setting both general and specific goals and priorities. We find that such planning, coupled with flexibility to adjust, allows the Holy Spirit to guide and direct us. Each year, both general management and employees in various departments (such as marketing, engineering, and production) spend several days together, usually away from the plant, for this goal-setting process.

The third lesson has been on placement. Employee placement is a critical function. It involves finding God's will concerning whom He wants employed, and then making a real effort to place each employee in his area of calling. We don't always succeed, but it's a worthy goal. I personally interview each prospective employee before he is hired, much as elders in the Old Testament watched the gates to see who came in and out. Then I meet with new employees to help orient them to the company, telling them what they can expect of us

and what we will expect of them. Their first impressions of the company do much to shape their future attitudes.

Some employees have had several different jobs within the company, each change being an attempt to place them more effectively by calling. They experience great peace and security when they can actually use their callings and gifts.

The fourth lesson has been on principles. We live in a day when secular humanism with its ever-shifting criteria for right and wrong seeks to nullify principles rooted in the Judeo-Christian ethic. We make Christ's victory effective when we learn God's ways and obey them. From Scripture we learn about sowing and reaping, diligence, fidelity, honesty, obligations to employees and employers, justice, and authority.

Once each of our Christian managers took several chapters from Proverbs and examined them to see which passages were relevant to us in our business. We were quite amazed to see how much this one book alone speaks to businessmen. Sometimes the advice is painful; it cuts across "conventional wisdom," often in direct opposition to popular methods in the world. When followed, however, it brings peace. God's



Beckett admires a portrait of his father, R. W. Beckett, who founded the company in 1938. John became president in 1965, after his father's death.

laws are all designed to bring liberty, not bondage.

The fifth lesson has been on persistence. Every business faces trials, but as we know from such scriptures as James chapter 1, God allows these trials to help form our character and equip us for even greater work.

Usually we cannot anticipate the trials. For us, the death of my father and our plant fires were but a few of the trials that God used to bring us to a better place in Him. Additional trials have shaken our complacency, pressing us into Him. "Staying power" is essential in these times of testing. We must walk in the quiet confidence that God will bring us through, and that in His sovereignty, He controls the outcome. We can rest assured that just as the Lord prayed for Peter when Satan asked to sift him like

wheat, He intercedes for us.

The sixth lesson has been on productivity. Stewardship is a measure of how productive we are with what God entrusts to us. The parable of the talents shows that God disdains idle resources and needless waste. Even after the miracle of the loaves and fishes, Jesus had His disciples gather up the leftovers.

We make Christ's victory effective when we see that each resource—whether people, market opportunities, product quality, or financial assets—is used wisely. To our shame in America, we have let largely godless nations surpass us in productivity and quality. The work ethic in the Far East, for example, far surpasses our own. Left uncorrected, our slothfulness will ultimately destroy our remarkable productivity, which has enabled

us to bless the entire world with the fruits of our labors. Christ-directed businesses should be at the forefront of personal and corporate productivity, generating the surplus that is so necessary for the larger mission of meeting worldwide human need and proclaiming the gospel to every creature.

The seventh lesson has been on proclamation. The work place offers unique opportunities to reach the unsaved. Proclamation begins when believers, especially those in authority, set an impeccable example of integrity and moral ethics. But it also requires active outreach through prayer and Spirit-led witness to reach employees and other business contacts. Among my greatest rewards in business are leading people to the Lord and influencing spiritual growth.

Work is among the highest of our callings, especially when we understand it from God's perspective. Jesus died in part to redeem our work; therefore, our work is sacred, an area of our lives He wants to bless.

If our calling in business is truly from God, then there is no greater work for us. God delights in pouring out His grace to bless organizations that align themselves with His principles as He works through us to make Christ's triumph over all things a vivid reality in the business world. □

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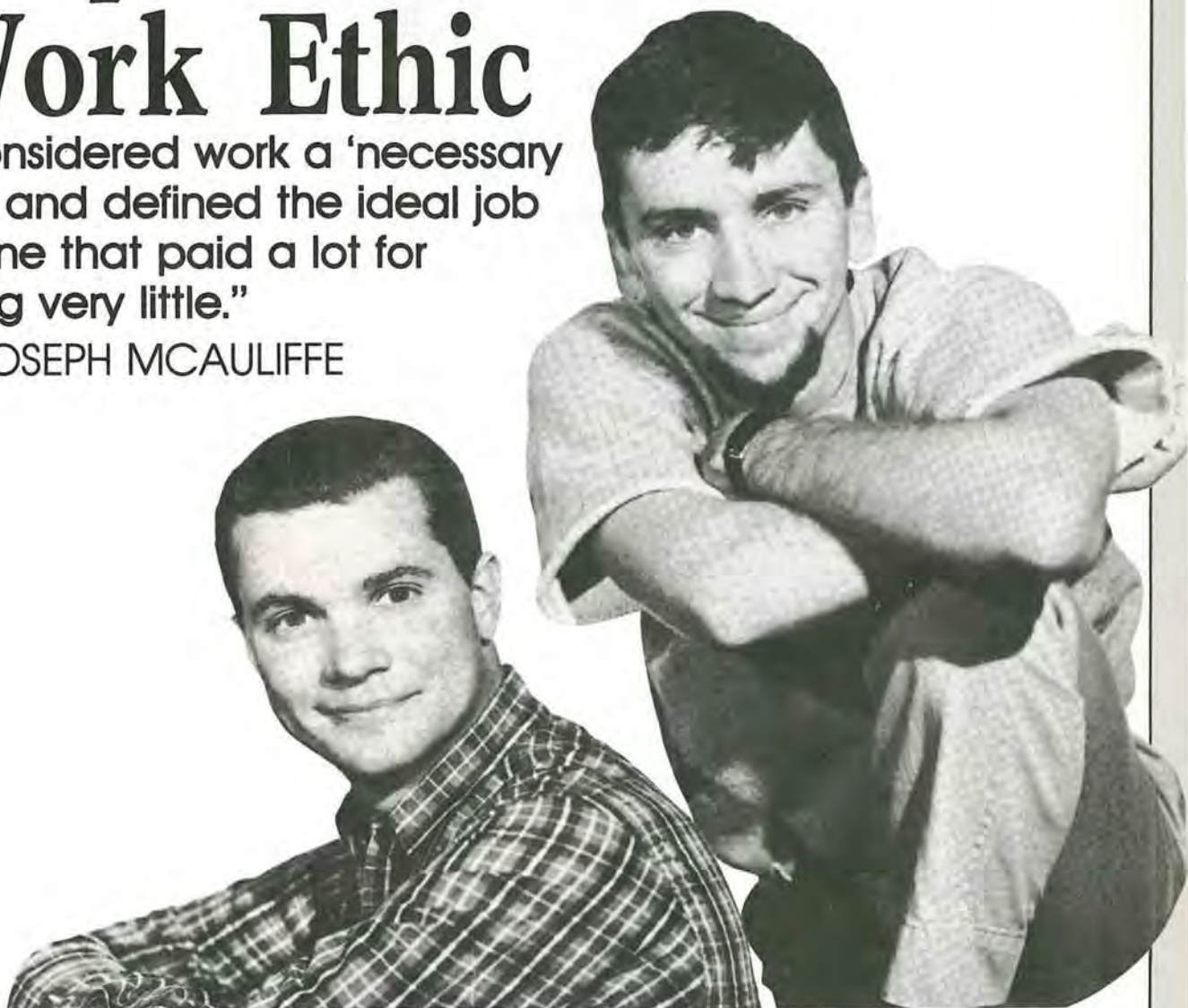


John Beckett, a contributing editor to New Wine, is president of R. W. Beckett Corporation. He also serves as president of Intercessors for America, an officer and board member of the Religious Roundtable, and an advisory board member of National Integrity Forum. He and his wife, Wendy, reside in Elyria, Ohio, with their six children.

The Maynard G. Krebs Work Ethic

"I considered work a 'necessary evil,' and defined the ideal job as one that paid a lot for doing very little."

BY JOSEPH MCAULIFFE



As I recall, my first distinct perspective of work was imparted to me through Maynard G. Krebs, the sidekick to the star on the *Dobie Gillis* television show in the fifties and sixties. Maynard was notorious for engaging in a catatonic seizure every time Dobie's father suggested that he might want to consider looking for a job.

I adopted Maynard's work

ethic in high school, and like my friends, considered work a "necessary evil." We defined the ideal job as one that paid a lot for doing very little. I was seemingly fortunate to have had several of these, which always provoked both the admiration and envy of my friends. My favorite job was being the supervisor of the electric golf carts at a country club near our home. My duties were to unhook each of the thirty-five

carts from their batteries and drive them to the front of the men's locker room. My only other responsibility was to rehook them to their batteries when the golfers finished their rounds. Rarely in my seven-hour shift did I actually have to work more than an hour.

In the late 1960's I became a hippie and joined the counterculture movement with its definite bias and disposition against work



and wealth.

But since I have become a Christian, I have gained a new perspective on these concepts that are widely misunderstood in our day. This is not surprising, because work and wealth are both means to the same end, and both cannot be fully comprehended apart from God. Work and wealth when properly understood are tools for establishing the kingdom of God on the earth.

Man and Work

Modern man's relationship to work can go to either of two extremes. He either despises work or worships it. The despiser of work is one who lives for the weekend and who derives little, if any, satisfaction from the fruit of his hands. More often than not he exercises his most creative and productive resources in determining how to avoid any more work than is absolutely necessary.

The worshiper of work, on the other hand, bows his knee to the altar of employment and can rarely be found outside his work environment. For him, a Sabbath is a trip to the rest room, and a vacation is when the wife and children visit Grandma so that

he can carry on uninterrupted in his endeavor.

Both the despiser and worshiper of work are escapist in their approach to work. The Scriptures teach that work is a godly activity that is to be conducted based on our relationship to God (see Colossians 3:23-24).

Like everything else in life, work cannot be properly related to apart from God. When we abstract God from work, we either strip it of its proper meaning, acknowledging only its utilitarian worth, or we make it an idol.

Extremes in Wealth

People often resort to conflicting extremes in their approach to wealth, just as they do with work. Many people worship wealth as a god, while some actually despise it. Again the problem is one of perspective. Wealth, like work, is a vital part of a whole, which is the kingdom of God. Of course, to make an end out of wealth is idolatry, but the tendency to do that is not an acceptable reason to reject the intrinsic value of wealth itself. When wealth is brought in subordination to the Lord Jesus Christ, it can be appreciated and utilized in such a way as to make it a wonderful

blessing of God.

Work is the primary means to wealth, and wealth is an important means of extending God's kingdom in the earth. Christians who have given sacrificially have enabled the gospel to be carried to virtually the entire world. Stanley Tam, a successful businessman in Ohio, has been able to finance fifteen new churches overseas each year from the wealth he has generated by consistently applying biblical principles to his enterprise.

Wealth is the product of godly labor. It is an expression of the creation mandate of being fruitful, multiplying, and subduing the earth. We must remember that God is the true source of our giftedness, which enables us to work. God's power, not merely our own human ingenuity, enables us to generate wealth, and the wealth that is entrusted to us is to further God's covenantal purposes in the earth.

The prophet Isaiah spoke of a time when the wealth of the nations would come to the people of God (see Isaiah 60:5). This wealth has come and is yet to come in much fuller measure to God's people. He has ordained this period to be a time of accomplishing His ultimate purposes. As God's people endeavor to diligently work hard with discernment and faithfulness, they will receive the fruit of their labors and be able to help establish the kingdom of God on this earth. □



Joseph McAuliffe is senior pastor of Tampa Covenant Church in Tampa, Florida, and is also editor and publisher of BusinessGram. He and his wife, Kay, have four children and live in Tampa.



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ZERO UNEMPLOYMENT

The body of Christ offers opportunity for everyone.

BY DICK IVERSON

Recently I watched a fascinating television series called *The Body Human*. Each week a particular part of the anatomy was featured and its function explained in depth. The series was a captivating journey into the delicate and intricate workings of each member of the body. It was mind boggling to see such a wide variety of cells and organs all functioning in harmony with each other—brain cells, vital organs, muscle fibers, and bone solids all performing their distinctive duties, collectively producing a fluid, coordinated movement of life and limb.

The early apostles used the harmonious function of the human body to describe the local church, calling it the body of Christ. Christ the head expresses His will, purpose, and direction, giving guidance to the individual members who work collectively and corporately to carry out His will and fulfil His purpose.

The church, however, must be more than a theological statement of "head and body." It must make a concerted effort to see that His will is done in every aspect of its program. To do that, each person must fulfil his role.

Every member of the church is capable of contributing his part, because God has sovereignly given enabling gifts to each one. Not all gifts are the same; different gifts are distributed to each member according to the calling and task God assigns him.

This gives each member of the congregation a unique sense of

worth. "The pastor can't run the church alone; he needs me!" "The body of Christ is incomplete without my contribution!" "I fill that missing part with my special gift!" Each person is needed and wanted.

"Freddie the Freeloader"

Being an active part of the body causes life to flow from one member to another. As each part does its work, sustenance and nourishment spread throughout the whole body. "Freddie the Freeloader" has no place in God's design. He's the member who lives in a "receiving-only mode" and wonders why he fails to fulfil God's purpose for his life. But if he is not "fitly joined" to the body in a give-and-take relationship, someone else carries his load. Paul writes about this situation when he says, "For every man shall bear his own burden" (Gal. 6:5).

Freddie does not realize that by his selfishness he is alienating himself from the "life of God," which flows through His body. His freeloaded will not produce lasting happiness. He will eventually end up frustrated and isolated from the life of God.

Still others who do not fit into God's plan for His body are those who aren't joined to any one church. I've counseled many people who are extremely talented, but they come into my office with deep feelings of misery and discouragement. "I know I have talents and gifts but my life is empty," they say.

"Well, what body are you

joined to?"

"Not any, really. I just move around sharing my gift in various churches, doing my thing here and there, not really connected to any particular body."

It is no wonder they're miserable. In the human body, life ceases to flow to an amputated member. Spiritual life as well cannot flow to someone who is running around unconnected to any local church. The most effective outreach ministries are those that overflow from a relationship of commitment to a particular living body.

The Key Question

The key question for the local church is this, "How can people be encouraged to cease being freeloaders and spectators, and become vital, functioning members of the local body?" Someone has observed that many Americans are overweight spectators sitting in the grandstand watching overworked athletes. Certainly the goal for the Lord's body is to be alive and well with each member healthy and functioning so that Christ's Church can minister to the needs of the world. But how can this goal be realized in its full potential in each local church?

I realize that there is no hard-line, set-in-concrete solution with specific steps that can be applied to all situations. Let me share, however, six ideas that have helped several of our churches greatly increase the degree of commitment and participation of their members.

The Word of God

First, to be totally committed to "body life," the congregation must know "what saith the Word." The Word of God is our standard for belief and practice. If the Bible teaches body life, then that's the pattern we must follow.

In our churches, we teach on the subject of body ministry several times a year. This keeps the principle of commitment to each other fresh in the minds of our members, and it provides a chance for new members to learn about this vital subject. We strive to plant the Word of God in such depth that it will take strong root and produce lasting fruit in actual practice.

We stress the need for each member to be properly related to the body, and also the importance of knowing their function in that relationship. The scriptures that best deal with these topics are found in Paul's epistles: Romans 12:3-8, 1 Corinthians 12:1-31, and Ephesians 4:4-16.

We must not be afraid to teach and reteach these truths. It can mean the difference between a dismembered corpse and a living body. It will end frustrations and bring spiritual maturity to each member.

Prophetic Discernment

Second is the confirmation of spiritual gifts through prophetic discernment. The prophetic ministry has continued from Old Testament times through the early Church and on to our modern era. It's how God speaks to His people.

Paul wrote to Timothy, his son in the faith: "Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery" (1 Tim. 4:14).

Some churches have times of formal prophetic ministry with the whole church fasting and praying (see Acts 13:2). Other



churches have a less-structured prophetic ministry to their members throughout the year. Either way, God delights in speaking into the lives of His people.

It's exciting for a person who has felt called to a particular ministry or has carried a certain burden on his heart for years to hear a prophetic word confirming that call or burden. The individual may not have shared his concerns with anyone, but then the Lord speaks through one of His prophets and God's call becomes obvious, not only to that individual, but to the church leadership and congregation as well.

God has endowed the church with spiritual gifts to meet its every need. Through prophetic discernment He encourages all members to release the gifts they have received for the well-being of the whole body. Who else but God could have designed such a wonderful plan? No one is slighted

or overlooked; all members are important.

Everyday Practice

Third is the importance of providing ample opportunity to put into practice the doctrines we teach about body ministry.

One of the major turning points in my ministry occurred in 1969 as I listened to Bob Mumford teach. He stated that our task as leaders was not just to be organizers, but recognizers as well. Preachers often get caught up in the busyness of administrative duties, and in that all-consuming task fail to understand that the most important facet of their calling is to recognize gifts God has sovereignly distributed to the members of the flock and to help them mature in the use of those gifts.

When we sense the Spirit stirring up a gift in an individual, we provide an environment for that

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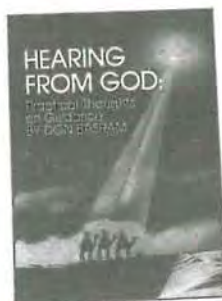
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gift to function. Encouraging him to participate in an appropriate "project" will facilitate the growth of his gift. If it is teaching, we place him in a team teaching situation. We also encourage him to take an active part in home meetings as a way to use and grow in his gift. There are also opportunities given for hospitality, showing of mercy, exhortation, healing, and many other gifts. Women's Bible study meetings are another area available for exercising gifts.

It is also important to put those who are just starting to exercise their gift with those who are more experienced. This relieves the pressures of fear, uncertainty, and timidity, and provides a guard against pitfalls, temptations, and other dangers common to inexperience.

Oversight of Ministry

Fourth, the leadership of the church should have patient oversight of body ministry. It would be ideal if each member could recognize his gift, get all the necessary tools, and begin to minister with maturity. But it doesn't usually work that way. Body life is not only concerned with gifts and talents, but also in the correct use of the gifts, the proper motivation for using them, and the character quality of those who minister.

Leaders must not rush members into the use of their gifts. There is a tendency when we have needs in the local church to want those needs met right away. But God is interested in each individual and the life of the whole church. He moves slowly and systematically to accomplish His purpose. Nevertheless, when He is finished and that particular person starts to move in his gift, watch out! His ministry will prove to be powerful, life producing, and as our teens say, "totally awesome." If we force a

member to function prematurely, it will hinder the flow of life in the body. To wait patiently for God's perfect timing will contribute immeasurably to the whole body.

Periodic Evaluation

Fifth, we have found that a member's ministry to the body is enhanced through periodic evaluation. Jeremiah says, "Cursed be he that doeth the work of the Lord negligently" (Jer. 48:10).

Some evaluation is the result of common sense. If a person is obviously doing well in his area of responsibility, we would then increase his area of influence. It is important to note that in the church and the kingdom of God, promotion is horizontal, not hierarchical. "Promotion" in the church expands service; it doesn't elevate a person in dominance. The greatest in the Kingdom is he who serves the most.

Other evaluation comes to the attention of the elders by the prompting of the Holy Spirit. Quite frequently the Holy Spirit leads an elder to give a word of knowledge or prophecy to a member while walking down the hallway or during a "chance" meeting on the street. The Holy Spirit continually encourages, gives new direction, provides insight, or speaks a word of wisdom to any member who is diligent and who wants to increase the effectiveness of his ministry to the body. Sometimes just a few words of encouragement, inspired by the Holy Spirit, have meant the difference between a person finding success in his gift or simply burying his talent.

Intercession

Sixth, intercession is the most important of all the steps we take to help members function properly in the body. Each corporate meeting in our church is preceded by a half hour during which we

not only worship and praise God, but we also take time to gather into small groups and pray for each other. We ask the Holy Spirit to release the people to minister to those standing next to them. It is not just the worship leader praying for the people; it is the people praying for each other.

We have seen many miracles occur during this prayer time. Each member has the opportunity to exercise his spiritual gift. Healing, deliverance, release from bondage, words of knowledge, and other supernatural manifestations often occur as the spiritual gifts are stirred up to meet the needs of the body.

Besides the corporate prayer before our Sunday meetings, we require the leadership elders to be men of prayer. As church leaders they are responsible to intercede on behalf of the whole body, praying that God would supply needed gifts for use in the local church.

These are just some of the ways that God's people can be encouraged to quit being free-loaders and spectators, and to become all that He intends for them. Like the fascinating intricacies of the human body, the Lord's body can be a wonderful maze of individual parts working together in harmony. Every member needs to understand the importance of every single member in the body, and to realize there is a real flow of life when each one functions in his unique, special gift. □



Dick Iverson, senior pastor of Bible Temple, Portland, Oregon, is a contributing editor to New Wine. He and his wife, Edie, live in Portland.

If our vocational vision is blurred, it may be

Time for a Checkup

BY DON LITTON



Many people are unaware of it, but we spend about sixty percent of our lives on the job. That can be either good or bad, depending upon whether or not we like our work and see it as part of God's plan for us and His kingdom. There's a quick and painless test that can measure our vision to see if we're looking at our jobs through God's eyes or through our own. Do these symptoms sound familiar?

Symptom: "If I have to spend one more day in that pressure cooker of an office, I'm going to explode!"

Diagnosis: Blurred vision. When our work entails pressure, deadlines, long hours, and what seem to be unfair assignments, it's easy to develop a spiritual astigmatism that distorts our perspective. In fact, our vision can become so fuzzy that we'll hate the very thought of showing up for work. Distracted by a multitude of daily frustrations, we often fail to remember that God brought us to our place of work, and He will equip us to meet the challenges we face there. He is as interested in our fulfilling the task where He has placed us as He is in whatever we may consider the larger issues of life.

Symptom: "What possible reason could God have had for placing me in this job? All I'm doing is shuffling papers!"

Diagnosis: Spiritual myopia. This symptom develops when we fail to have a long-range vision of our task. We must realize that what we do today is connected to tomorrow's task and that today's faithfulness means tomorrow's fruitfulness. Also, what we fail to do today will be required of us again at some future date. Our diligence to perform today's

assignment will prepare us for the future endeavor if in no other way than developing our character. Unless we see our work through God's eyes, we'll never understand how it fits in with His overall plan for us.

Symptom: "I can't come in to work today. I—uh—don't feel well."

Diagnosis: Down-in-the-dumps depression. If blurred vision and spiritual myopia go uncorrected, they'll quickly develop into a much more severe illness—a continual state of depression. It's easy to spot: When our ups become fewer and far between, and our downs become more and more frequent, we're in trouble. A renewed vision of our place, along with God's grace to accomplish the task, is a sure cure for a depressed attitude.

Symptom: "What I really want to do is to win Cambodians for Christ, but the devil's got me glued to this two-bit assembly line."

Diagnosis: Classificationitis. When we divide our activities into spiritual and unspiritual, our activities divide us and result in an inner turmoil that is difficult to overcome. The only cure is seeing that all our work comes from the Lord.

Symptom: "Did you hear what he said about me? I hate working with non-Christians!"

Diagnosis: Critical attitudes. They begin in the mind and end up in the heart. The Bible commands that we have a good attitude toward our bosses and learn to resolve conflicts that arise on the job (with the person involved, not fellow employees). Coffee-break murmuring can be



dangerous. God killed fifteen thousand Israelites because they murmured.

Symptom: "If only I could get out of this dead-end department and land that position in research, I'd have it made in the shade."

Diagnosis: Status fever. Matthew 6:33 says to seek first the kingdom of God and then all our material needs will be given to us. Position and money are unimportant to God. We must replace the fever for status and recognition with a burning desire to do the will of God. The ultimate status symbol is the cross.

Symptom: "I'm sick of hearing about his accomplishments! It sure would be nice if someone noticed *my* abilities for a change."

Diagnosis: Greener-grass syndrome. We begin thinking we're not as appreciated as we should be, and before we know it, we start thinking about what it

would be like to work somewhere else. Soon we offer God a little help in making it happen. Discontent is cancerous and dangerous. We must be able to say that we know God has put us where we are.

The Cure

If we are suffering from any of these symptoms, chances are it's because we're not abiding by God's principles of employment. The cure comes from making certain that we are doing what God has ordained for us to do and that we're content doing it. Then, we can have a proper attitude toward our work.

When a company closes its doors because of bankruptcy, the cause isn't necessarily poor cash flow or bad finances or a faulty product. More often than not, the problem is with the people who work for the company. When employees develop bad attitudes toward their employers, fellow workers, and jobs, the results can be devastating and far-reaching.

Bad attitudes are not unique to non-Christians. In fact many of God's people have the wrong attitude toward work: They see their job as the most unspiritual activity of their life, or even as a devilish plot to rob them of "the good life." But if we view our work from God's perspective and get a fresh vision of what He has called us to do, we can have the joy, contentment, and success He desires for us in our employment.

Through my own work experience and study of the Scriptures, I have found several biblical principles of employment that can revolutionize our attitude toward work.

First, God controls kingdoms and companies. In Daniel 5:21, we read that God rules over the realm of mankind and sets over it whomever He wishes. God is the one who puts people, including our bosses, in authority over us.

Did You Know?

Did you know that there's an epidemic spreading throughout the country?

It's an epidemic that's not reported in any medical journals. The target of this frightening disease is the family, and it works by diluting the clear family roles delineated in the Scriptures. During the past two decades the sickness has been quietly spreading. It's no coincidence that during this same time period the rate of divorce has skyrocketed—even in Christian families.

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With a fresh vision
of our calling, we
can have the joy
God desires for us
in our employment.

Second, we are employed by Christ, not our company. On Sunday morning we often come into a high place of worship, but we must not leave the experience of being in God's presence to church, one day a week. Our mountaintop experience on Sunday morning must have relevance Monday morning when our feet hit the pavement the start of the workweek. This is often difficult, because we separate our spiritual lives from our work lives. The cure for that is to realize that we are employed by Christ, and our focus even at work should be toward pleasing Him.

Third, our future depends on God and our response to Him. Psalm 75:6-7 says that promotion does not come from the east or west but from above. God exalts men in their due season. His promises and rewards are dependent on His plan for our lives and our response to Him as the plan unfolds.

Fourth, our circumstances are designed by God. He controls the events in our lives to cause us to grow spiritually and to help us fulfil His call on our lives. God's

thinking is, *I've ordained the man and the plan and I will set about to accomplish this goal and this calling through his circumstances.*

Fifth, we must count our superiors worthy in our thoughts, words, and deeds. Most of us are afraid to speak against God and would not dare to criticize Him, but we don't always feel that way about our boss. In my twenty years of working, I have yet to publicly criticize the company I work for or the management in it. I believe our future depends on our being faithful to avoid the trap of criticism.

Sixth, we must trust the Lord to direct our career. If we are committed to God, all our planning is done in submission to His overall plan. We must trust the Lord to direct our employment, our future, and our career—wherever we're going.

A good spiritual thermometer doesn't measure church activities, prayer time, or the number of people we fellowship with or share with. Instead, it takes our temperature on the job. The people we work with are good thermometers of how we are doing, because they're the ones who see and hear us on a daily basis. We might just find that we need an attitude adjustment, but it will make our job a lot more pleasurable and meaningful, and we'll see ourselves as an integral part of God's plan to further His kingdom on earth. □



Don Litton, a pastor of Houston Covenant Church in Houston, Texas, has fifteen years of business experience in general management. He holds bachelor's degrees in theology and science, and received a

master of education degree in administration from the University of New Orleans. Don lives with his wife, Beverly, and their three sons in Houston.



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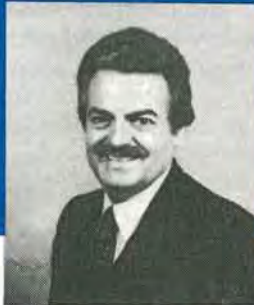
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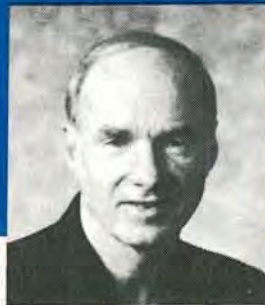
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The Prepared Worker

A look at how God used several unusual jobs to equip a church administrator for his work

BY JOHN STANKO

I clutched the steering wheel of the Ryder rental truck on the last leg of a two-thousand-mile journey. I had packed, loaded, and along with one other man, driven fourteen thousand pounds of household goods from Mobile, Alabama, to Los Angeles for a family the Lord had called halfway across the country.

As I wearily approached the Los Angeles city limits and anticipated the job of unloading the truck in the pouring rain, I wondered almost without thinking, *Lord, how do I get into these situations?*

He quickly answered me. "I prepared you for them!"

I recalled the many jobs I had worked in my life, and I knew He was right. At the time I had those jobs, they seemed so insignificant; they were just duties to perform and a means to make money. Yet God used them all to add something to me and to prepare me for what was yet ahead in my life's journey.

The Moving Company

During the summers of my college years, I worked for a moving company in Pittsburgh. My ulterior motive was great pay and lots of travel, but I got more than I bargained for.

I soon found that I was a 160-pound weakling in a world of real he-men who lift pianos up and over tight spots. One time a driver told me to move a refrigerator. When I asked where the hand truck was, he gave me a cloth strap and told me to use it to put the refrigerator on my

back. When I refused, he went in himself and came out like the Incredible Hulk, refrigerator and all. He then turned in a complaint concerning my "refusal" to carry my share.

Another time I found myself on the bottom end of a washer that was being gingerly lowered into a basement. It seemed unusually heavy—and it was. When I reached the bottom I saw my helper at the top of the stairs laughing at my solo trip down. My back has never been the same.

As I recalled those events, I saw that through such experiences, I learned how to lift furniture and appliances, how to pack boxes, how to pack a truck, and how to execute a move from start to finish. Without my knowing it, God was preparing me for the more than seventy-five families I have helped relocate since I became a Christian. The Lord prepared me so that I could save those people thousands of dollars and many headaches.

I also thought of my first job after college graduation. I worked in the admissions office at Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, interviewing prospective students and visiting high schools on behalf of the university. Here I had a master's degree, yet I was only making six hundred dollars a month. I was indignant! The world, I was convinced, was waiting for me, and this job, so far below my talents, was holding me back.

But the Lord held me there, and in this job that I viewed as menial, I learned skills that I

would need in other jobs the Lord had waiting for me. I learned not only how to counsel students, but also what they wanted and how they thought. I learned how to cooperate with a staff of peers. Now, ten years later, I am a full-time pastor and church administrator, and I work with youth; every day I use what I learned from that "inferior" job that taught me to be sensitive to the needs of others.

Financial Aid

My next job was the altar upon which God sacrificed my dreams, ambitions, and pride. Once in a moment of stupidity I had muttered, "I never want to work in financial aid. How dry and boring!" I thought I was talking softly enough, but God heard me and within a year I was director of financial aid for a large school for beauticians in downtown Pittsburgh.

I soon found myself in the midst of seven hundred students of various moral (and immoral) persuasions. I administered more than one million dollars in federal financial aid and I didn't even have a secretary. I did all my own typing, copying, and phone answering, and made my own appointments. I worked nights, Saturdays, and holidays. I served everyone on staff, and handled many responsibilities in addition to financial aid. And to top it all off, I was paid almost entirely by commission.

But God taught me that He was in control. I learned that with His help I could do what seemed to be impossible. (When I

The Prepared Worker

left, they hired two people to do my job and they had only half the students!) During my time there, I witnessed to several people lost in a dismal life of depravity and sin. The Lord showed me the importance of each person, no matter how lost or bewildered, and He caused me to learn the names of each student—some three thousand in almost four years. He also sharpened my administrative skills, causing me to be faithful in details.

I could have continued reminiscing, but we had finally arrived in Los Angeles. Within two days we had finished unpacking and were on our way to the airport for the flight home. I reflected on Ephesians 2:10: "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them" (NAS).

I thought that God not only creates the good works but He also prepares us to accomplish them. I was His workmanship and it gave me a sense of awe that God had worked so much into me, even before I became a Christian. I knew I could look to the future with tremendous hope; whatever was ahead, God would equip me to accomplish it according to His purpose. □

John Stanko is a pastor and church administrator at Gulf Coast Covenant Church, Mobile, Alabama. He received his bachelor's and master's degrees in economics from Duquesne University in Pittsburgh. He resides in Mobile with his wife, Kathryn, and their two children.

Editor's note: We've had many requests for reprints of John Stanko's article in the October 1984 *New Wine*, "Unmasking Halloween," on the occult origins of the holiday. Many readers passed out copies of the article to their neighbors, sent them to their local newspapers, or gave them to their children's teachers. If you would like to order copies of the issue in which this article appeared, please see the response form on page 21.

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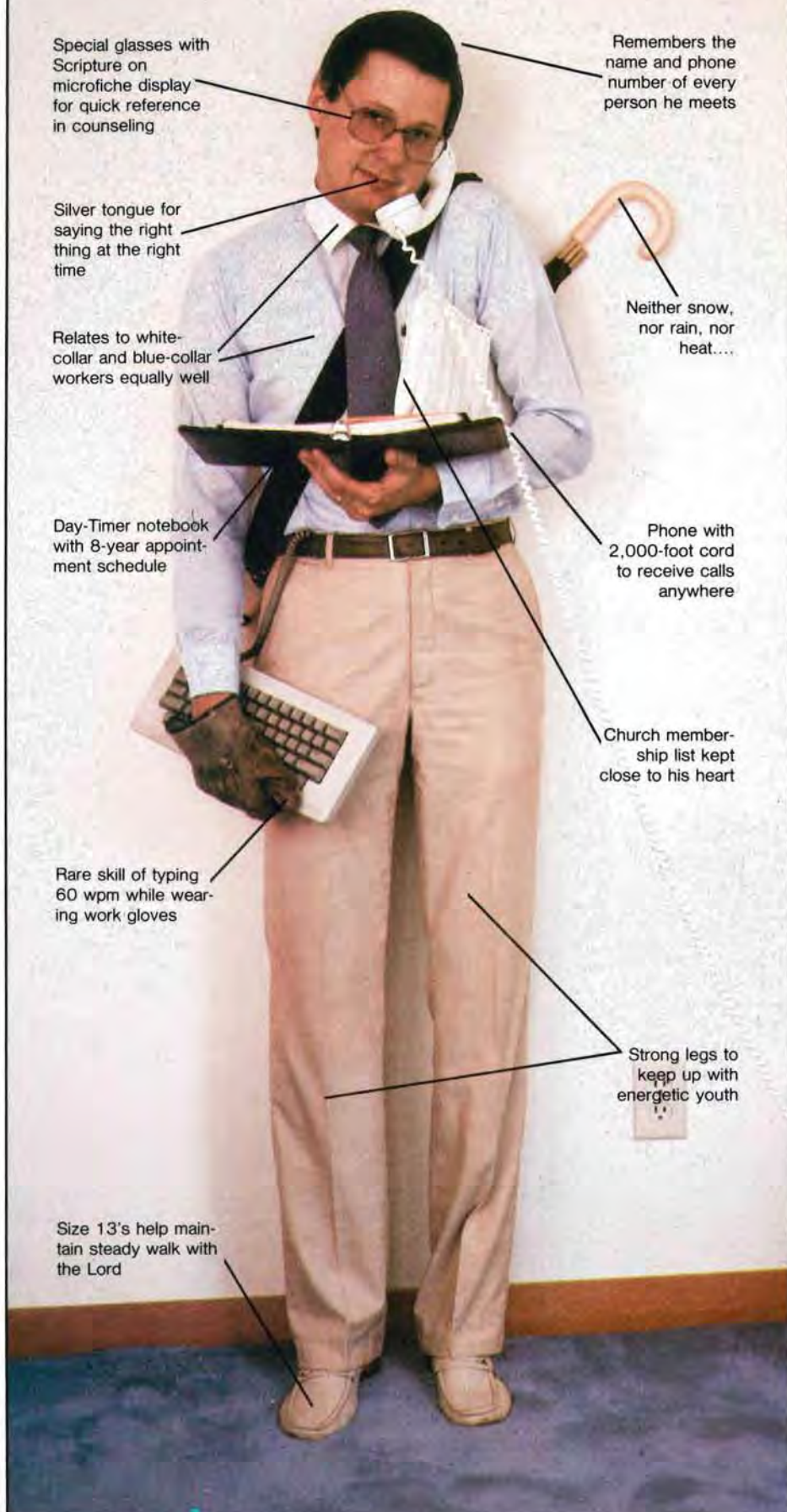
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The Cream of the Crop

Award-winning dairy farmer
Jim Eckford finds success through
prayer and hard work.

BY JACKIE CONN



Home on the range isn't necessarily a place for encouraging words and clear skies anymore. In fact, today's rural picture is dark and distressing for the most part, because of the farmers' economic crisis. *Farm Journal* reported recently that a third of the 679,000 family-size farms in the United States are experiencing financial stress. That group of farmers owes about half of the total farm debt.¹ News accounts tell us about unbelievable tragedies, such as the father of ten children who found suicide to be the only solution to his desperation, or the farmer who literally waged war on the men who were serving him legal papers until he was killed by a SWAT team.

But while many farmers and their families are being evicted from the land they have owned and worked for years, a few success stories are being reported. One is that of James W. "Jim" Eckford IV of Starkville, Mississippi. Jim, who is twenty-four, was recently honored as Mississippi's Outstanding Young Farmer for 1985-86 by the state Jaycees. By virtue of that award, he is also in competition for the national title.

The Lord's Favor

It's certainly not a booming farm economy that makes a farmer a success these days. The fact is, young entrepreneurs are the most vulnerable to financial failure. But Jim isn't depending on an earthly economy to make him successful. Instead, he simply attributes a large part of his good fortune to the Lord's favor.

"The Lord has saved my neck a lot of times," says Jim, who has farmed since he was fifteen. "After I graduated from college, I planted seventy acres of soybeans, which for me at that time was a pretty good-size investment. But we had a terrible

drought that year. The first of August is a real critical time because the beans start putting out blooms and are ready to form the pods. If you don't have the rainfall, they're just not going to make anything. So I prayed, and sure enough, I got a three-inch rain right in my field. No one else around me got any at all."

The net result from that intervention was that Jim harvested an average of forty-two bushels an acre while his neighbors averaged eighteen. Jim says the special-delivery rain cloud has arrived several times. Once his neighbors asked him if he was doing some sort of rain dance. "No, we just pray a lot," he replied.

Not only has the Lord helped him grow his soybeans, but He has also provided wisdom for the proper time to sell the crop. "The year I got the forty-two bushels an acre," Jim says, "the price for soybeans was going up across the country. One day my dad called and said the beans had gone up to \$9.20 a bushel. He said he felt as if we needed to sell, which was just confirmation of what I was already sensing." They sold, and the beans never got any higher than the \$9.20 they got for theirs.

The Lord has poured out bushels of blessings on Jim, giving him a supernatural helping hand, but he also attributes his prosperity and recognition to the use of sound business principles, integrity, and hard work—the ingredients necessary for success in any endeavor.

The Kingdom Farm

Although Jim has had some success with soybeans, his bread and butter is dairy farming, a business that is more financially stable than row cropping.

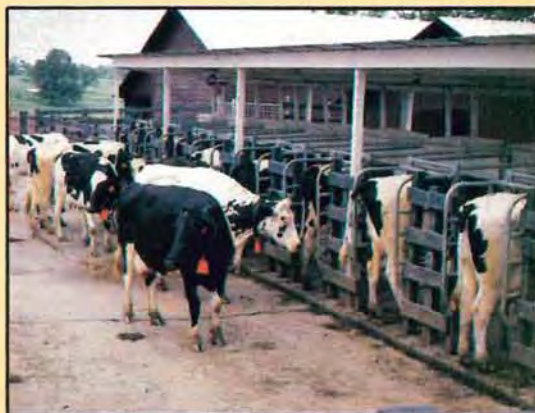
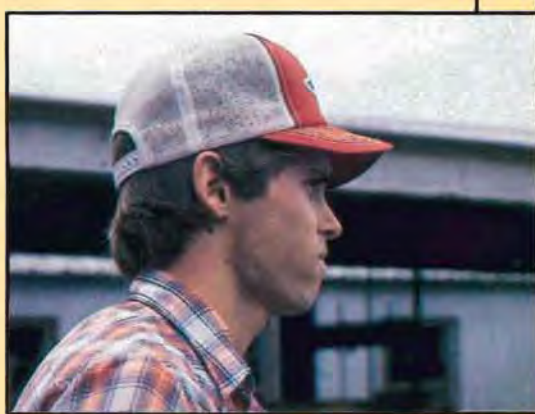
In 1975, Jim's father, Jimmy, bought their farm mostly to fulfil what he calls that "something in you that makes you want a piece

of land." They were in the dairy business until 1981, when they sold their herd because Jim was in college and was unable to help run the farm. Jim points out that the Lord blessed that as well, "It was one of the highest priced sales in the state." A little more than a year ago, however, they got back into the dairy business.

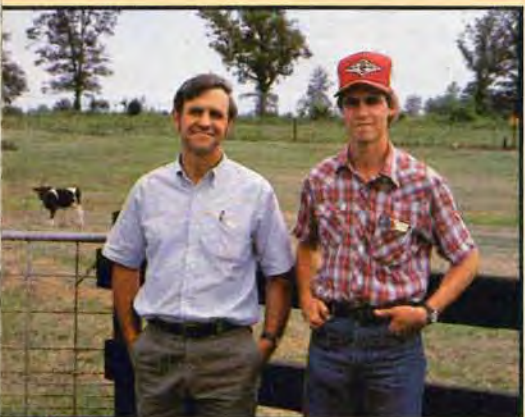
Jim graduated from Mississippi State University in Starkville with a degree in agriculture economics, and is now the general manager of the farm, which they have appropriately named Kingdom Farm. He supervises three men, and takes care of the herd and the farming. He and his father, who is his partner, own 580 acres and are renting 350 more this year. Their crops, which include corn, sorghum, and soybeans, are mostly for the feeding of their 330-head dairy herd.

Jim's father also owns a dairy supply franchise, and has equipped the farm with state-of-the-art technology that not only looks good, but also saves them a lot of money and labor. The milk-producing cows, for example, wear a bright orange device around their necks that has obviously replaced the cowbell. When a cow gets hungry, she enters a feed stall, and the "necklace," which transmits an FM radio signal, identifies her to a computer that then allows an individualized food ration to enter her stall. Food for the cows is a major expense, and the amount of wasted food has been reduced by fifteen percent with this equipment.

The computer also enables Jim to keep track of how much each cow eats and produces, which may or may not be good for the cows. By monitoring their eating habits, Jim can notice any illness much quicker than usual, because not eating is one of the first signs that a cow is sick. On the other hand, when the cow isn't producing much milk con-



Jim Eckford, top, is general manager of the Kingdom Farm, a dairy farm with state-of-the-art technology in Starkville, Mississippi. The dairy cows, middle, wear bright orange electronic "necklaces" that communicate with a computer for their feeding. Jim and his wife, Jennifer, live on the farm with their daughter, Katie, bottom.



While at the Kingdom Farm, editor Bruce Longstreth, top, met a famous Mississippi pest, the fire ant. He also got the attention of two calves, middle, who seem to be having a conversation about his awkward reaction to the ants. Meanwhile, Jim and his father, Jimmy, bottom, relax outdoors.

sistently, he knows it's time to sell her.

A High Moral Standard

Sown into those good business techniques is the high moral standard that has been a trademark of the Eckford family for generations. Of course, at a place named Kingdom Farm one would expect integrity. Jim says his father has always emphasized the importance of excellence in his work. "It has been our desire," Jim says, "that our farm be the cleanest and the best, because we want it to be a Christian testimony. I guess that's what has pushed me the hardest."

Jim's father credits his own father for instilling a high moral standard in him. "Even though he wasn't a Christian most of his life, he taught me about discipline, sacrifice, and financial responsibility."

His goal for his businesses is to do anything to promote goodwill. "It's very important," he says, "to make sure we do what we said we would do."

One thing his son Jim has certainly learned is the value of hard work. He often puts in eighty-five to ninety hours a week.

A Basis for Values

The basis for their values is their desire to live by Kingdom principles, a heritage that Jim's father began in the Eckford family in 1972. "I had been successful in business, and by the world's standards I had it all," he recalls. "But my wife and I were having problems—I was away from home a lot.

"My wife, who was already a Christian, mentioned one night at supper that a man was in town ministering, and all kinds of miraculous things were happening. Something clicked in me and I decided to go with her to a meeting.

"The guy actually preached

about what God was doing in Africa. But I sensed he had something I needed, so I told him, 'Man, whatever you have got, I want it!'" He met the Lord that night and the following evening he and his wife received the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

Jim had been doing whatever his dad did for a long time. "I remember he would smoke cigars, so I would try to smoke cigars," Jim says. "When he got saved and filled with the Spirit, I knew it was real and I wanted it too. I was twelve when I got saved, and three months afterward, my dad prayed for me to receive the baptism."

It was three years later, when they bought their farm, that Jim knew he was called to be a farmer. "It has been rewarding that the Lord gave me a vision and ten years later, I'm seeing it come about," Jim says about his farming success. "The Lord gave me that award, which I see as a platform to tell others about Him." Looking over at the sign at the front of his property that says, "Kingdom Farm," Jim adds, "I think I'm going to get a new sign and put at the bottom, 'To God be the glory.'" □

Footnote

"Outlook/Washington," *Farm Journal* (April 1985), p. 14.



Jackie Conn, an editorial assistant for New Wine, received her bachelor of arts degree in journalism from Louisiana State University. She and her husband, Henry, live in Mobile, Alabama.



A NEW LOOK AT AN OLD TRUTH

How the eighteenth-century Moravians celebrated life through work and worship

BY MICHAEL MCCARTY

In our Economy, the spiritual and the physical are as closely united as a man's body and soul, and each has a strong influence on the other. As soon as all is not well with a brother's heart, so soon we notice it in his work. But when he is happy in Jesus' wounds, and his love to the Lamb is tender, then one notices that also immediately in his outward conduct."¹

—August Gottlieb Spangenberg, Moravian Bishop

We live in an era when employees are demanding more and more pay for less and less work. In some parts of the world a thirty-five-hour workweek is the norm. This trend is not surprising in light of the secular view that labor is a shackle to be removed as we become more civilized. Some even declare that a day is coming when all work will be automated and man will be able to devote himself to leisure.

However desirable this utopia sounds, as Christians we should

realize that our vocation is much more than a way to meet financial needs. An example of the Christian attitude toward work is found in the Moravians, who established communities in America in the eighteenth century.

The Moravians excelled in incorporating a man's vocation into the very heart of church life. They believed that they were part of a holy brotherhood, and each man regarded his vocation as part of the Lord's provision for the rest of the body of Christ, and the world at large. Because they were part of the family of God, all they had, whether a physical skill or a spiritual gift, was from the Lord and was to be shared.

It has been said that the Moravians "celebrated life through work and worship.... Their labor for a community of believers serving God and each other stood in stark contrast to the isolated settlers around them."² In other words, they insisted on a practical religion. A person's vocation served several purposes. It met his own

physical need, allowed him to bless the rest of the Christian community, and provided a platform to manifest God's love to those in physical and spiritual need.

The Twentieth Century

Although particular skills and needs have changed through the centuries since the Moravians, the spiritual purpose of labor has not.

As Christians we should remember that our primary purpose in life is to manifest the good news of Christ's lordship. Our so-called secular employment is actually God's means for advancing His kingdom into the "unsettled" enemy territory. In 2 Corinthians 5:20 Paul reminds us that we are to be ambassadors for Christ. Because the majority of Christians are not "full-time" ministers, one of the primary places of our ambassadorship is at our place of employment.

Because we probably spend more time on the job than anywhere else, it is important that we view it correctly. Our job can be something to be endured or it can be a platform for the fulfilling of God's purpose for our life. □

Footnotes

¹Jacob John Sessler, *Communal Piety Among Early American Moravians* (New York: AMS Press, 1971), p. 103.

²Clifford E. Mullen, "Unity and the Unitas Fratrum in Wachovia, North Carolina: 1752-1759," research paper, Mississippi State University, 1983.



Michael McCarty, sales manager for a dairy equipment dealer, received his bachelor of arts degree from Mississippi State University, where he is studying for his master's degree. He and his wife, Amy,

live with their two children in Starkville, Mississippi.

TIPS FOR FATHERS

When a father is there, but not really there

"Where's Dad?"

BY DICK LEGGATT

Even though the 1980 Winter Olympics took place more than five years ago, one image sticks vividly in my mind. I can still see Jim Craig, goalie for the U.S. hockey team, as it had just dramatically defeated the Soviet team in the finals to win the gold medal. Craig stood on the ice with an American flag draped over his shoulders, looking up to the stands, mouthing a single question: "Where's Dad?"

In the midst of victory and celebration, the foremost thought on his mind was making contact with his father.

"Where's Dad?" is a question that a lot of children ask, but often their fathers are standing right in front of them. Sometimes, for example, they ask it right after Dad has come home from work—a time when many fathers are there, but not really there. I know, because my kids have frequently asked that question as I've walked into the house with a vacant expression on my face after a draining day of work. As I stand right in front of them, I'm mentally miles away, and they know it.

The question "Where's Dad?" reminds me of a silly game we play with our youngest child when she crawls into bed with us on a Saturday morning. Either my wife, Cindi, or I will pull the covers over her and ask in mock astonishment: "Where's Elizabeth?" All the while a telltale lump squirms and giggles under the covers—a dead giveaway.

It's a silly game, but it always produces a laugh.

Unfortunately, it's not such a funny game when the children are the ones asking, "Where's Dad?" There, obvious to everyone, is a "telltale lump" back from a hard day at work. But contrary to the game we play with Elizabeth, everyone knows that even though Dad is there, he's not really there.

Here are some of the symptoms I look for to let me know I'm guilty of being a disappearing dad:

1. I ask my sons (or even my wife) how the day went, and realize five minutes later that I never heard the answer.
2. I sit down in the first available chair at home and catch myself staring off into space.
3. I respond to a question the fourth time it is asked rather than the first time.
4. I answer a question I haven't really heard with, "Yeah" (a dangerous response if one's ten-year-old son has just asked if he can borrow the car).

Most of the time I hit the front door after work with a hale and hearty, "Hi, Honey! Hi, kids!"—with no problem getting instantly involved with my family. But for those fathers who, like me, sometimes find it hard to switch gears and dive right into family life from the workday, let me share this insight:

Jesus said in Matthew chapter 11: "Take My yoke" (v. 29 NAS). It's no mistake the command to take His yoke is given to the

"weary and heavy laden"—the exact condition we may face after a day of work. His promise is that the yoke is easy, or as some translations put it, "it fits well." Our role as a father is a yoke that the Lord has uniquely designed to fit us in each of our situations. He knows exactly what we need to do our job as dads.

This truth can help us on days when we're weary to take a simple step of faith to consciously "switch yokes" as we head home after work. The switch can take the form of a very simple prayer: "Lord, before I step into my house, I take on Your yoke for me there as a husband and father. I'm the only one You have made to fit that yoke. You've made it just for me, and You'll help me to fill it."

That step of faith may not give a sudden burst of enthusiasm or energy, but we can be certain that God is at work to strengthen our desired response to our wife and children. God is faithful, and if we look to Him and take His yoke, He will supply the strength and ability we need so that our family will never have to ask, "Where's Dad?" □



Dick Leggatt, a former editor of New Wine, lives in East Lansing, Michigan, with his wife, Cindi, and their four children.

For more on successful fathering, you may be interested in *Fathergram*, a monthly newsletter that provides insights, tips, and testimonials from fathers who care about their families. To subscribe, see the enclosed card or send \$9.95 (special price) to *Fathergram*, P.O. Box Z, Mobile, AL 36616.

A three year old asks the Lord to heal his father

God Knows Noses

BY LEO FREE

A few years back I was bedfast with severely infected sinuses. My head throbbed with pain from the swollen and infected nasal passages and from the intense pressure around my eyes and temple area. Because of the infection draining in my ear passages, I couldn't even turn my head without great difficulty. The over-the-counter remedies I took not only brought no relief, but they actually seemed to intensify my misery.

I was actively involved with a little Pentecostal church at that time, and I had made countless requests for prayer to bring about my much needed healing. I called upon the elders, the pastor, and my dear wife for prayer, and I prayed for myself constantly. Anxiously I awaited relief but for some reason it never came.

Anyone who has suffered from severely infected sinuses with the accompanying head, eye, ear, nose, and throat pains knows that what I was requesting was an immediate healing, not a gradual or long-term one. "God, heal me now—please!" was my fervent petition. I knew that God healed, having seen and experienced many healings before. But as the days and weeks wore on, I wondered if it was God's will that I be healed of this particular infirmity.

During one of my three-year-old son's occasional inspection tours through my bedroom to see how his daddy was doing, I received sudden inspiration. The only one whom I had not asked to pray for me was Joshua.

It had not crossed my mind to ask a three year old—a mere "babe" in every sense of the word—to pray for me. I now reasoned, in my state of agonizing pain, that the innocent prayer of a child would surely reach God. How could He refuse a little child's prayer as he asked that his father be healed?

I called Joshua to my bedside and told him that Daddy was in much pain. "Would you please pray and ask God to bless your daddy with healing?"

My son was not unfamiliar with this kind of prayer, as he was practically born in church and attended up to four meetings a week. He had heard many prayers for the sick, prayers for deliverance, and other demonstrative prayers.

Moving closer to my bed, he puffed up his little chest with boyish pride that can only come from being needed by his father. He reached out and firmly grasped my nose with his chubby little hand and began to pray. "Lord Jesus, You know my daddy's nose and how it's supposed to work and how it's not supposed to work. Just bless Daddy's nose to do Your will...."

His little voice began to rise as the "anointing" took over.

"So now, in Jesus' name, I command hell fire and damnation to come down and fall on Daddy's nose!"

I stared in shock at this innocent child who had uttered this prayer, and immediately released myself from his grip, all the while inwardly pleading with God not to answer his prayer. Joshua's eyes sparkled with pride at the



opportunity to help his daddy. He gently patted me on the head and said, "It'll be okay now, Daddy. You just get your rest." And he confidently retreated from the room.

I drifted off into a fitful sleep, still in pain and still pleading with God, trying to explain to Him why He shouldn't answer my son's prayer. After all, I had all the hell fire and damnation that one nose could stand.

But the Lord in His wisdom and grace did answer that prayer. Jesus heard not just a three year old's words, but also his heart. When I awoke a few hours later, the infection had begun to break. The very next day, the fever was gone and I was on my feet without any trace or aftereffect of sinus infection.

Oh, yes, one other thing. My sinus attack and Joshua's prayers happened in 1976, and I have not had another severe sinus attack since. After all, Jesus knows my nose and how it's supposed to work. □

Leo Free is a New Wine reader who lives in Big Spring, Texas.

The key to being a happy child is to know we're

Pleasing Father

BY DON BASHAM

We were in the home of our son, Glenn, recently, and I watched with pleasure as he encouraged his son, Michael, who was just learning to walk. It was obvious that no small part of Michael's motivation to succeed was the delight it brought his father. He would take a few wobbly steps before hitting the floor, and immediately Glenn was there to scoop him up in his arms, hug him, and encourage him to try again.

It doesn't seem all that long since I was encouraging Glenn to take his own first faltering steps, and I can easily recall early times with my own father as I was learning to run. I remember the thrill of racing across the grass, the wind in my face, with the loving figure of my father hovering alongside, saying, "Faster, Son! Run faster!"

An even greater thrill came when I was sixteen. My father took me on my first deer hunt. The day started miserably as I missed a big buck that jumped up right in front of me. He disappeared into the brush before I could get a second shot. At noon, far back in the hills of central Texas as my father and I sat together eating our sandwiches, he tried to console me.

"Don't be too hard on yourself, Son," he said. "Everyone misses at first. Next time you get a shot, take a deep breath, aim carefully, and then squeeze the trigger."

Later that afternoon, a seven-point buck jumped out ahead of my dad and plunged into a grove

of scrub oak trees. "He's coming your way!" I heard my father call. Suddenly, about eighty yards in front of me, the buck burst out into a clearing. All I remember was the sound of my rifle and the buck falling.

"I got him, Dad!" I cried. "I got him!"

I was bending over the deer counting the points on his antlers when my father joined me. I will never forget the sound of his voice as he hugged me and said, "Son, I'm proud of you!" It was about the greatest day in my life, not just because I had bagged my first buck, but because I had successfully applied the skill my father had imparted to me *and he was proud of me!*

That was almost forty years ago, and even as I pen these words the memory of my father's approbation warms my heart once more. If anyone were to ask me—then or now—what was most memorable about killing my first deer, I would say, "The knowledge that I had pleased my father."

Of course, spiritual applications can be made from the stories I just told. One of the obvious truths about the life and ministry of our Lord Jesus was that He lived to please the Father. Jesus said, "...for I always do what pleases him" (Jn. 8:29 NIV).

In a very real sense, Jesus developed His ministry by the training He received from the Father through the Holy Spirit.

"I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself; he

can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does. For the Father loves the Son and shows him all he does" (Jn. 5:19-20 NIV).

Not much makes a man happier than to have his son achieve some worthy goal or conduct himself in some exemplary way simply because he desires to please and honor his father. Our heavenly Father was no different in regard to His own Son. On at least four occasions in the gospels we read where the Father spoke from heaven declaring His approbation. In Matthew 3:17, for example, He says, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased" (NIV).

Reduced to its simplest terms, the primary responsibility of every believer is to live a life pleasing to the Father. Of course, we won't always succeed, but that should be our goal. I didn't always succeed in doing those things that pleased my earthly father, but I was a far happier son when my days were spent in ways designed to win his approval.

I'm not sure there is any more satisfying feeling in the whole world than the one that comes to a child when he knows he has succeeded in pleasing his father. And nothing makes the heart of a father happier than a child who has set his heart to do those things that please him, both our father on earth and the One in heaven. At least, that's the way I see it. □



Don Basham is chief editorial consultant for New Wine.

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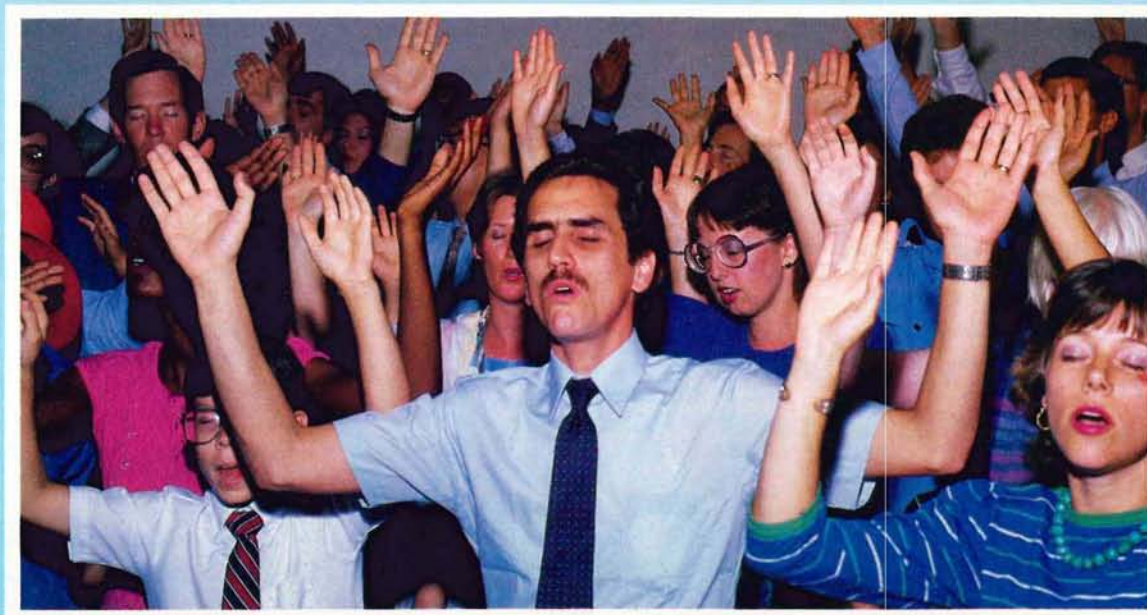
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