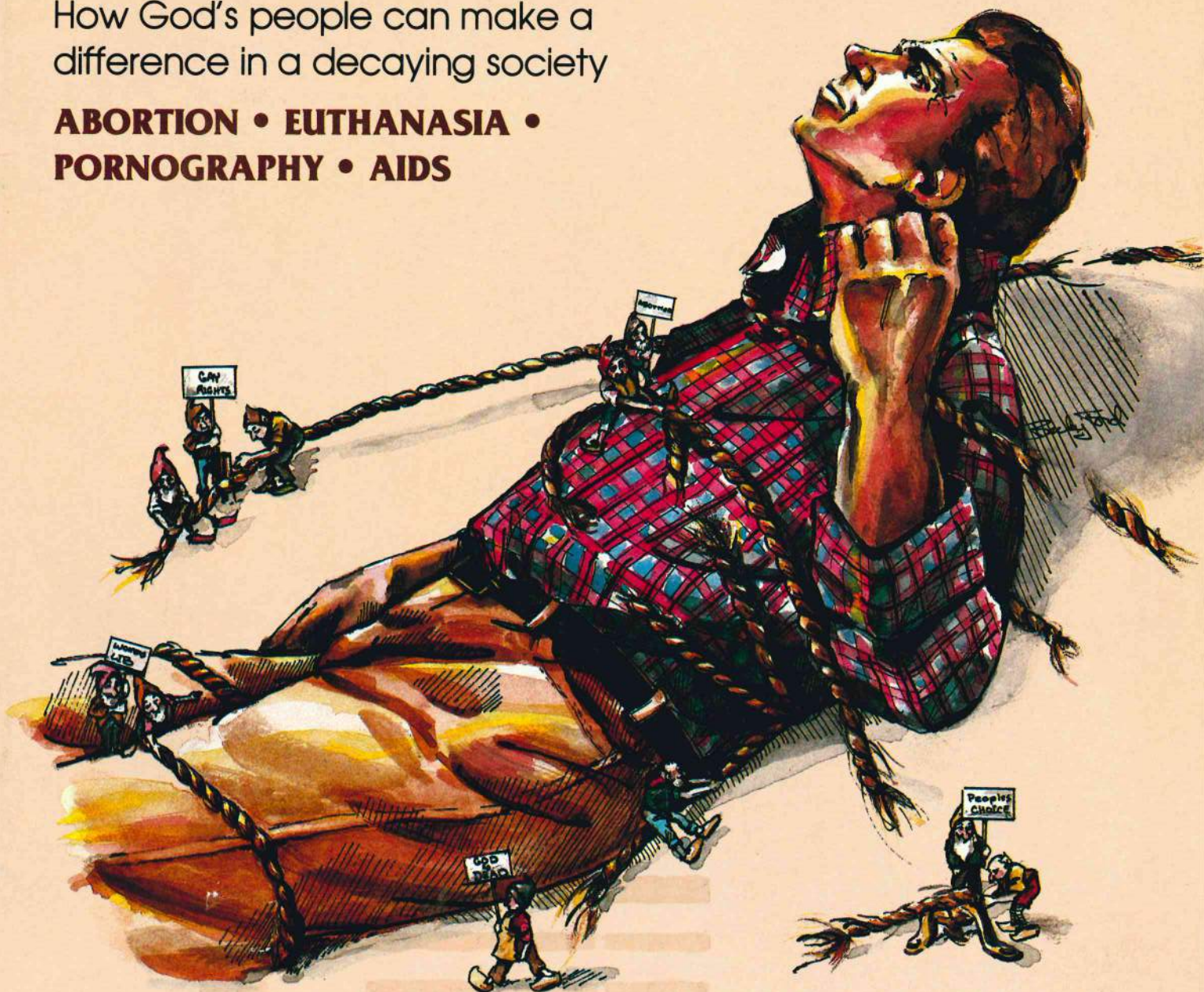


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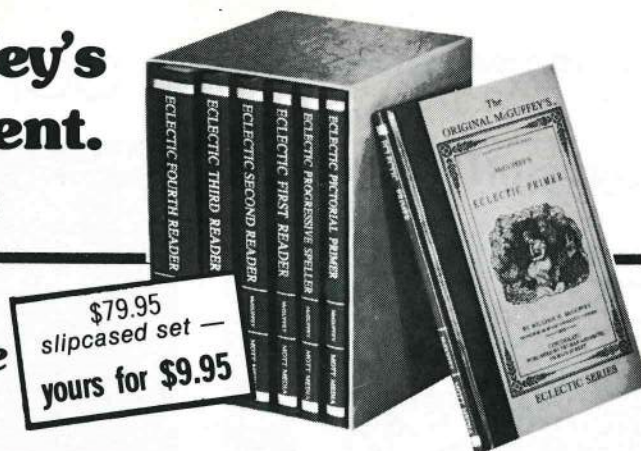
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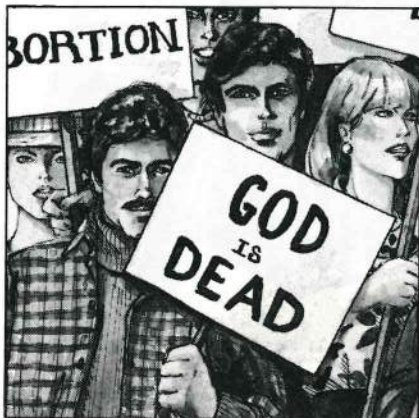
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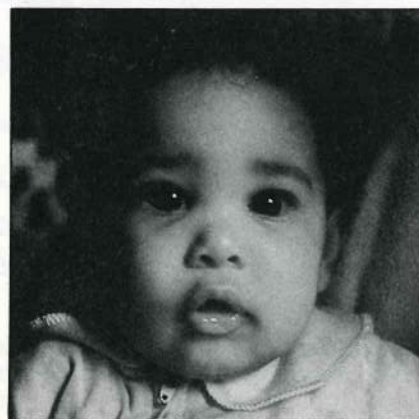
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The need for truth and mercy

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem"

by Bruce Longstreth

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling" (Mt. 23:37 NAS).

This pathos of the Master follows seven woes He pronounced on the leaders of Israel. It is significant because it reveals His redemptive, reconciling heart in a context of frustration and anger at those who knew the truth but failed to obey it.

Israel's reaction to the prophets was to kill them because they exposed evil. But the Lord's desire in sending them was to gather His children. For nearly two thousand years, He tried to gather them; through the lawgiver Moses, the judges, the kings, and the prophets, the Lord repeatedly sent His word to bring Israel back to Himself.

The preaching of the gospel requires that we proclaim not only the "woes" of God, but also His mercy. In the midst of rebellion and disobedience, God's Word is given both to warn of sin's consequences, and to gather the repentant unto Himself.

In this regard, Paul says that we have been given a unique message, one that settles the dispute, heals the differences, and renews the friendship between God and man (see 2 Corinthians 5:18-20). It speaks truth and extends grace. It demands repentance and offers reconciliation.

Believers today face issues demanding not only that woes be pronounced, but also that mercy be extended. It's sad to realize that many of God's people have been asleep while such evils as pornography and abortion have surrounded them, and while unprincipled men have imposed godless values upon them through their own government. At the same time, others who have seen the danger have reacted only in anger, failing to extend God's mercy to the victims of sin's cancerous intrusion.

In this month's issue we are reminded to speak boldly the woes of God against all wickedness while understanding that we are an extension of God's longing to gather the children of this generation.

Using Psalm 2, Ern Baxter warns that God's patience with the heathen may be running out. The Scripture says that He will "vex them in his sore displeasure" (Ps. 2:5). Ern exhorts us to express the displeasure of God at the acts of the wicked, and to challenge "kings" with the lordship of Christ.

Bob Mumford follows with a challenge for the people of God to stop hiding in the convenient excuses that the world has given us, excuses that keep us from getting involved in the process of declaring the truth of God's Word. He explains how our biblical convictions have been eroded, and encourages us to stand up for God and His Word.

The articles that follow these prophetic challenges address some of the ills we face in our society. As we respond to the call to proclaim the truth of God—about pornog-

raphy, AIDS, abortion, and euthanasia—we must be prepared to extend His mercy as well. As God's people face these issues, we trust that the practical mercy of the Church will become evident.

Romans 6:23 says, "The wages of sin is death." But is the gift of God—eternal life through Jesus—still available for this perverted generation? With the increase of sin, is there still an abundance of grace?

As the Church awakens to the dangers that surround it, it must do more than react in anger to what has happened while it slept. It must shake off the slumber of its forgotten responsibility and begin afresh to seek the lost, heal the sick, cast out demons, and declare, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand." □

P.S. This month, we discuss many critical issues facing the Church, but because of limited space we could not cover one of the most challenging—the Christian and alcoholism. In April, we will include one believer's frank testimony of how he became entangled in the web of alcoholism and struggled to break free.



Bruce Longstreth is editor of New Wine and Fathergram.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



Season of Release

We are truly in the "season of release." After reading "The Year of Equipping the Saints" (January), I see that we surely can expect a mighty move of God that we never experienced before. God is bringing His body of believers together in a fresh new way, beginning with our precious leaders.

I was blessed by Charles Simpson, Ken Copeland, John Gimenez, and John Wimber and their humbleness to one another. As they continue to listen and obey God's voice, we as believers will be fully equipped.

Dolores Dover
Elmhurst, IL

A Source of Revival

My spirit leaped within me as I read "The Year of Equipping the Saints." There is much talk of a new revival, even in the Church. One source of this revival will be this unity.

If the various leaders and teachers can unify and finally say, "I don't have *all* the truth; listen also to these men," the Body won't just follow. It will kick up its heels in joy and freedom! And multitudes will come in because they'll say, "See how they love one another!"

Jean Hanel
Kansasville, WI

Key to God's Blessing

I especially appreciated your issue on unity ("Equipping the Saints," January). I am a copastor of Community Fellowship Church, which Charles Simpson and Bruce Longstreth visited many years ago. We have seen God do a new work concerning unity just in the past six months. The Lord has brought together a fellowship of about ten pastors, including Nazarene, Foursquare, Church of God, Word of Faith, and Missionary Alliance. I believe with your magazine that this is a key to God's blessing in our city.

I have also appreciated some of Bruce Longstreth's recent editorials. "Nudges" and "Suddenlies" (January) was excellent!

Clay Sterrett
Staunton, VA

Love Thy Neighbor

As subscribers to *New Wine* and your tape programs, we enjoy your refreshing biblical perspective on current events and the Christian life. However, January's article "A Battle for Religious Freedom" was a startling disappointment, because it appears that not all the facts were presented.

Who complained about Pastor Blanche's church? What exactly constituted the complaint? What

are the other similar zoning ordinances regulating activities not normally associated with a private residence? (One could suspect that religious activities are not the only ones regulated in residential areas—what about clubs, home businesses, parties?) Why did the pastor establish his church without first routinely checking with local authorities in an effort to assure compliance with possible requirements or restrictions?

Based on the apparently limited information and the article's accompanying photograph, it is reasonable to assume that a neighbor or neighbors complained; that Pastor Blanche's church conceivably holds thirty-five or more people, which necessitates ample parking for all of them, greatly increasing the neighborhood's noise level (discussion to and from cars, car doors opening and closing, engines starting, traffic passing by), which affects the neighborhood's traffic flow on a regular basis—three times weekly.

We submit the above lest in the name of "religious freedom" we forget those Christian-principled voters and legislators who out of consideration for their fellow man instituted such ordinances to secure the peace of a residential community.

Has Pastor Blanche done unto his neighbors as he would have them do unto him? Please, let's hear the facts.

Bill and Linda Weltner
Oakland, FL

The questions you have asked are excellent, and we invite anyone to write to us for more detailed information. We would like to answer a few of your questions here.

We requested by letter on May 3 a definition and explanation of the zoning code concerning religious activities in the home. The first complaint was filed by our next-door neighbor approximately May 9. We were given two stop orders by the sheriff's department May 12
continued on page 6

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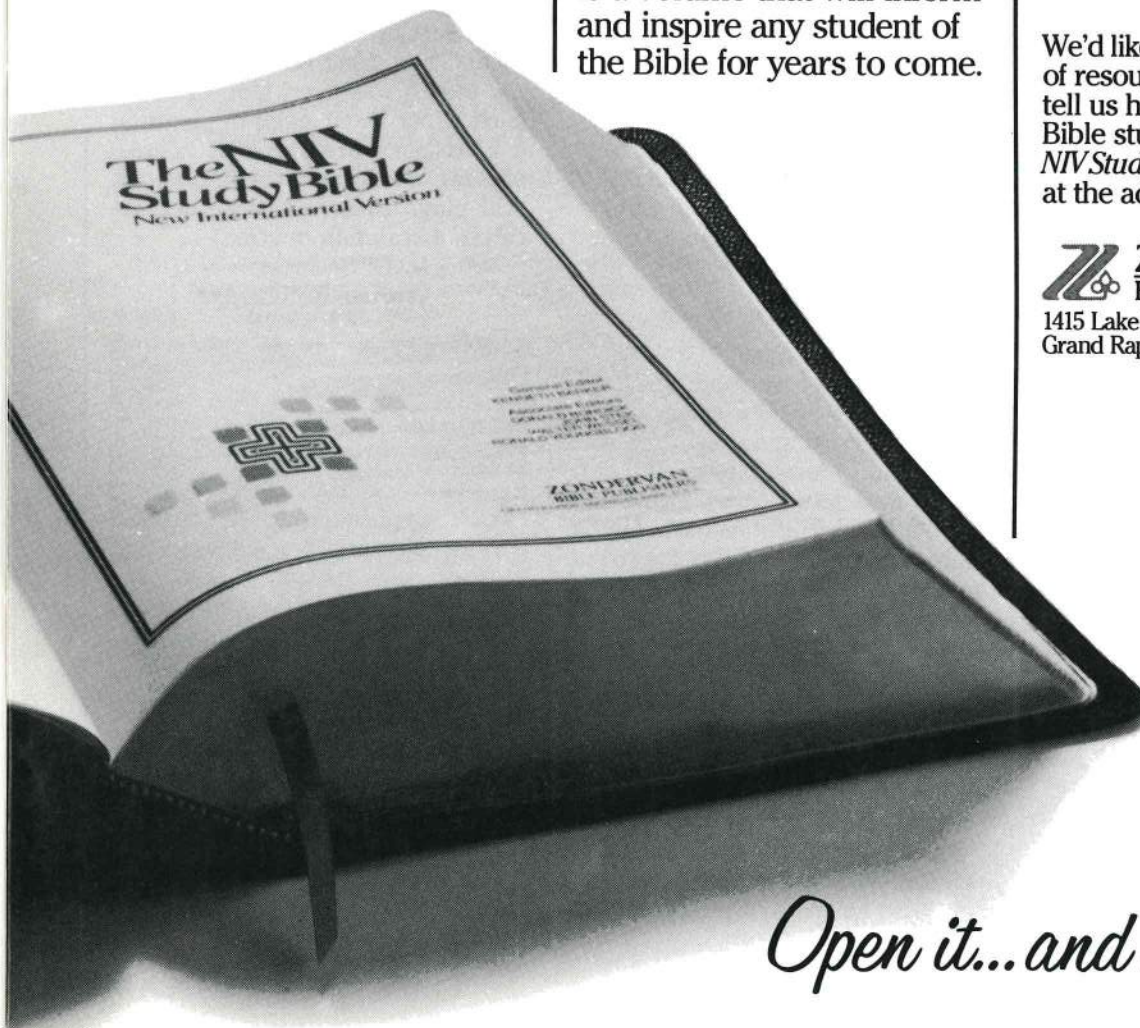
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New Wine will carefully consider all unsolicited manuscripts, although we cannot return them unless accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope. (Please note we do not publish poetry.)

Advertising in *New Wine* does not necessarily imply endorsement by the board of directors or the magazine staff.

Letters

continued from page 4
and May 17 for religious activities in my home, which automatically put me in municipal court as a criminal before even hearing a reply from the city on our previous letter, which did arrive May 30. In this city, it only takes one complaint from one neighbor concerning any zoning complaints to have a zoning official arrive at your door.

It was proved January 3 by the testimony of one neighbor across the street and one of the city witnesses against us in our contempt of court hearing that we had no noise or traffic problems. The reason we have no parking problems is that behind our home is a four-lane street with two additional parking lanes, allowing our twelve families to park and enter our home from the backyard, never having to come into our cul-de-sac. Our neighbors do not even know when we have people over to our home, because when our friends visit during the week, they are courteous enough to park out back and walk through our backyard.

With all humility, we can only urge you to pray that we can continue to remain clean before God in protecting our liberty, not only here in Colorado Springs, but also nationwide.

*Pastor Richard Blanche
2804 Country Club Circle
Colorado Springs, CO
80909*

My Special Christmas

Tonight, as I sat reading "Papa Panov's Special Christmas" (December), I cried and cried. You see, although I raised four children alone, and have three grandchildren, a brother and sister-in-law, a mom and dad, and belong to a beautiful fellowship with a home group, I found myself all alone this past Thanksgiving. There was no room for me at anyone's table. I thanked the Lord all day for my beautiful warm house and my abundant food (I cooked and baked as if company were coming). As I recalled all I truly had to be thankful for, I couldn't help but wonder if I had missed what the Lord had for me that day. Going to

the Word for some insight into God's heart in the matter, the Lord led me to Luke 14:13-14.

Instead of asking why no one wanted to invite me for dinner, I now know I "missed Jesus" by not finding that person or family whom I could have invited to share dinner with me, someone who needed a warm home and good food and the love of Jesus.

Thank you. I repented and was very touched.

Barbara Zachman
Putnam Valley, NY

A Suitable Story

We used "Papa Panov's Special Christmas" as part of our church's Christmas program. One lady read the story as she stood behind a stage curtain. Her husband acted the part of Papa Panov. He and the other characters pantomimed their parts, using simple props. The sanctuary lights were off, so the lights in the choir loft produced a semisilhouette effect. There were many favorable comments, and the message was truly understood.

I had researched my file for suitable Christmas material to no avail. Then, *New Wine* arrived and my search was over! God works in such super ways, even in planning a Christmas program! Of course, nothing can surpass the first one; it still plays to a full house and receives a standing ovation!

R. D. Sechrist
Warner Robins, GA

"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.

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How God's people can combat the empty schemes of the wicked

by Ern Baxter

About a year ago, I had a vision during a conference in Sydney, Australia. I saw a mass of people who were happy and rejoicing as they busily pursued their interpersonal activities. They seemed intoxicated with all that was going on.

While this vast group continued its intoxicated enjoyment, an ugly, threatening claw came down and steadily plucked away their freedoms and rights. As I watched in horror, the vision changed and a small group of people came out from the crowd to challenge the talon.

The interpretation of the vision was that the mass of people was the evangelical, charismatic, Pentecostal, born again crowd. Now that's a good crowd. I'm honored to be a part of it. But we are in great danger because we have failed to recognize and oppose the claw of secular humanism—the claw of improper government agencies that are stealing our children, ruining our economy, and violating God's laws governing society. We have been so taken up with holding conferences, having a good time, and blessing one another that we have defaulted on our mandate to challenge the governments of the earth with the lordship of Christ.

The vision was sobering to me. I realize now that our byword has been, "Get them saved, and God will take them to heaven. In the meantime, keep everyone happy." But all the while we have been systematically robbed, raped, and taken advantage of by a loud-mouthed minority that has almost made Christian ethics passe. Today, the laws of God are no longer honored in secular society. Even our judicial system has changed; no longer does it relate to the absolute laws of God as it once did. Now, it relates to public opinion. If enough people are in favor of abortion, unborn babies will be aborted.

Something inside us must arise to challenge the ugly claw of ungodly sadism, of ungodly feminism, of ungodly secular humanism, of ungodly economic practices, of ungodly pornography. We must see ourselves as more than a group of people sitting at a bus stop waiting to go to heaven. We are the world's hope. We are the salt of the earth. We are the light of the world. Our light reflects the essential light of the world, Jesus Christ. But what are we doing about it?

The State of the Nations

Psalm 2 accurately describes the present state of the nations, as well as what we must do. The first two verses give us a divine revelation of the human condition:

Why are the nations in an uproar, and the peoples devising a vain thing? The kings of the earth take their stand, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against His Anointed (NAS).

This scripture is not someone's idea of what things are like; this is divine revelation. As Christians we do not have the option to reject this evaluation of the nature of mankind. It is God's evaluation.

The King James Version says, "Why do the heathen rage?" Joseph Parker, a contemporary of Charles Spurgeon, rather quaintly said, "Because they're heathen." The word *rage* means "to seethe," "to be in turmoil," or "to conspire." Ungodly men wickedly conspire and the masses devise empty schemes.

Although God saw this long ago, His people are not alert to it. Somehow we manage to miss the signs that our children are being systematically taken from us. It's already happened in Sweden, where children can report their parents if they so much as raise their voice at

them, and can sue if their parents spank them. Comparable legislation could soon be waiting in the wings in our nation.

Years ago, I did a study on the place of children in God's economy. According to His plan, the only people responsible for children are their parents. The state is not responsible for children. It has no right to take them or in any way to interfere with parenting. Yet when the state tells us what we can or cannot do with our children, we take it lying down. Why? Because the state has become our god, and we're only a step removed from the days of Caesar when people were sent to the lions if they didn't say, "Caesar is lord."

Out of Control

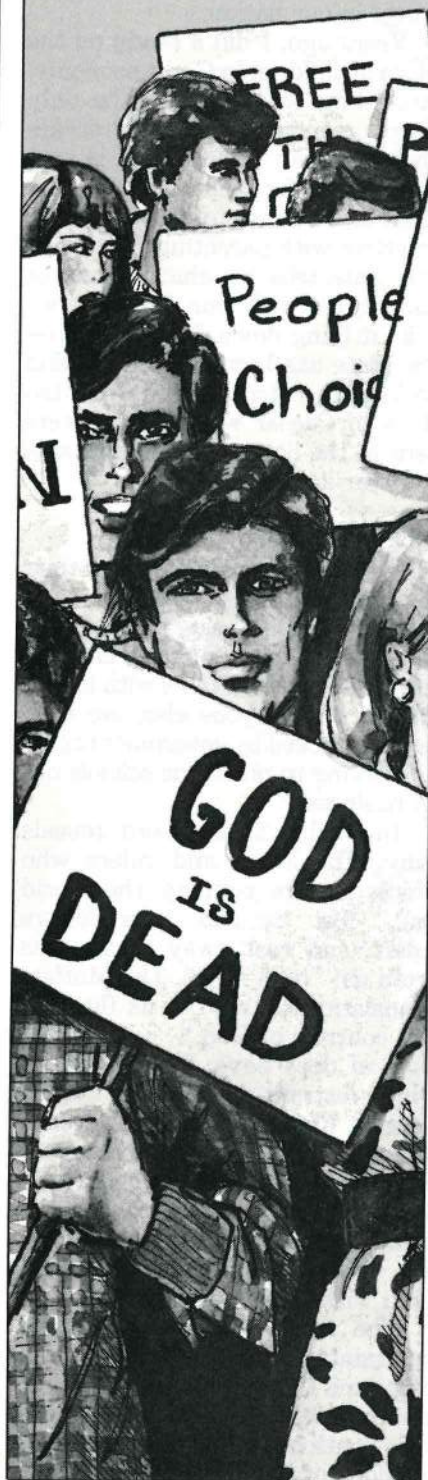
Why are parents who teach their children at home, which is their God-given right, being intimidated? Why, when many of their children are passing state exams with higher marks than anyone else, are they being attacked by government agencies trying to put home schools out of business?

In Psalm 2, the Lord reveals why. The kings and rulers who think they're running the world say, "Let us tear their fetters apart, and cast away their cords from us!" (v. 3 NAS). The Moffatt translation says, "Let us fling off the controls of God."

God does have controls, or divine restraints, but the world doesn't like restraints. The world, for example, is polygamous at heart; it doesn't like monogamy. So unregenerate people glory in their multiple marriages, and many who are living together have not bothered with marriage at all.

The world doesn't want God's restraints on sex. In 1973, the U.S. Supreme Court legalized abortion, and now hanging over the head of this nation are the corpses of millions of babies—some who died

We're in great danger because we've failed to oppose the claw of humanism.



by abortion and others who weren't supposed to survive but did and were put to death after the abortion.

Godless people also don't want divine restraints on their economy. If we operated our personal budgets the way our government does its own, we would be in jail. Our government thinks nothing of flooding the market with worthless money so that what's already in circulation is immediately devalued. Those in government get away with such practices because they think they're above the law. God, however, is jealous over weights and measures. He will have something to say about it.

God's restraints on justice have been discarded as well. I have heard that for murder, convicts spend about five years in prison; armed robbery, two; and rape, two. God has mandated that judges should wield the sword of justice, but because the state has forbidden it, they can only give out lesser, innocuous penalties. People who have murdered once, twice, and three times walk the streets, free to commit more crimes.

God says, "Why do the heathen rage and why do people do these stupid things? People don't want My restraints. They'd rather die prematurely from AIDS or venereal disease, or go down the tube of economic disaster, or watch their children smolder on the coals of Moloch than submit to My laws."

The Need for Unity

As the people of God, we are responsible for much of what is going on. We've sat around, saying, "Praise the Lord! Jesus is coming!" But I'm not sure that Jesus is coming as quickly as some of us think. He is waiting for us to get off our back porches and do what He told us to do—to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world to challenge that claw.

It is heartening to see that a few Christians are being stirred up out of the mass of joyful people, and at great personal sacrifice are banding themselves together in a concerted attack. But it will take more than these few. We can effect change only if we will operate out of a unity comparable to that of the Father

and the Son. If all the Christians in any major city were to come together in some kind of unanimous demonstration, we'd be amazed at what would happen. The Church, however, is so fractured and torn up that it can't get together to make any kind of impression.

In Jesus' high priestly prayer, He enunciated the final form of evangelism:

"...that they may all be one; even as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be in Us; that the world may believe that Thou didst send Me" (Jn. 17:21 NAS).

The unity of God's people is the only thing that is going to touch the world. We will never touch the world if we are fussing, fighting, or fuming. God is going to have to work a miracle, even if it is through judgment, to force us together to see that we need one another to bear the final witness to a godless age.

In the early days of the charismatic movement in New Zealand, a group of Charismatics decided to march up the main thoroughfare of Auckland to a government building. The Salvation Army got in on it with its band, and it was a tremendous supernatural march. Provocateurs and subversives tried to upset the parade, but it was as if angels pinned them against the walls so that they couldn't move. They had to stand there and watch the parade go by. Finally, when the marchers arrived at the government building, even the government people were impressed by it and said, "What do you want?"

They said, "Uh...."

Unity requires more than just banding together for a parade. What's the use of having authority and power if we don't know what to do with it? We have to come together and pray and plan until we can effectively attack the claw of secularism.

What Is God's Response?

The Christians' response to the ungodly activities of our society should be to band together and stand against them. But what is God's response? Psalm 2 tell us

that while the people devise vain things and cast off His restraints, "He who sits in the heavens laughs, the Lord scoffs at them" (v. 4 NAS). God laughs! That seems like a rather strange response, but several times the Bible says God laughs at the wicked (see Psalms 37 and 59).

But laughter is only His first response. Verse 5 says, "Then He will speak to them in His anger and terrify them in His fury" (NAS). God's laughter turns to anger. How long did He suffer Sodom and Gomorrah? How long did He suffer Babylon? How long did He suffer the civilizations that have come and gone, scarcely leaving a trace of having been here? How long will He suffer us?

I firmly believe that God is saying, "All right, America, if you want to legalize abortion, if you want to legalize removing children from their families, if you want to legalize economic dishonesty, then you're going to have to pay the penalty."

It's a fearful thing to fall into the hands of God. I am terribly fearful that we may be living on the verge of death. I'm afraid that God's last chuckle has probably been made. I fear for western civilization. I fear for America. How long can we continue to pile up lawlessness?

The Bible tells us that when the world does evil, God's anger will be expressed in some terrifying form. Before I was saved, I knew something of the terror of the Lord. So did Job: "Then Thou dost frighten me with dreams and terrify me by visions" (Job 7:14 NAS). God terrified Nebuchadnezzar in a dream. He terrified Pharaoh in a dream. And He will terrify the nations.

But if God is going to judge the nations—and I believe He must—He will first purify the "sons of Levi." Judgment will begin in the house of God. We've become altogether too lax about many things: our appetites, our entertainment, and what we permit our eyes to see, our ears to hear, and our mouths to speak. As a result, we've lost the moral dynamic that enables us to address the world. The world looks at us in disgust, because we have nothing to say to it. We can't even put our own house in order.

Paying the Price

First, God laughs, but then His laughter changes to anger. I don't know where He is in that process, but in Psalm 2:6, He gives us the bottom line when He says, "But as for Me, I have installed My King upon Zion, My holy mountain" (NAS). He has set His King upon His holy hill of Zion. Jesus Christ is securely established upon His throne, and He governs the earth.

The Son speaks in response to His Father in verses 7-9:

"I will surely tell of the decree of the Lord: He said to Me, 'Thou art My Son, today have I begotten Thee. Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as Thine inheritance, and the very ends of the earth as Thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron, Thou shalt scatter them like earthenware'" (NAS).

A decree is an unalterable decision of God to do something. Some of His decrees are not revealed, but this one is. The Father has said to Jesus, "You're My Son and I'm going to give You the heathen as Your inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth as Your possession. I'm going to give You the world. Before it's all over, Son, You're going to have the world. You're going to shatter the wicked. You're going to establish the righteous, and the glory of the Lord is going to cover the earth, as the waters cover the sea."

Taking It to the Nations

Verse 10 is the altar call, which He addresses to the kings of the earth: "Now therefore, O kings..." (NAS). We have so demeaned our own gospel that we feel it is only for the people down on skid row. We don't understand that God's intention is that all men come to the knowledge of the truth, and that they are going to come from the top as well as the bottom. When we get a king, we get a nation.

About five years ago, I was in a council of men—a fairly sizable group—when one of my colleagues said quite solemnly and seriously, "Gentlemen, we need to consider how we should address the leaders of nations concerning the lordship

God laughs at the wicked. But laughter is only His first response.



of Christ."

A nervous titter went through the group. After a moment I said, "Isn't that an interesting response to what our brother has just said? I'd like to go on record as saying that this ought not to be received with a nervous laugh, but with some very serious strategy as to how we can address kings!"

We all need to challenge the leaders of the nations with the lordship of Christ. Some may say, "Baxter, do you know who you're talking to? We're a bunch of 'ordinary Joes.'"

No, we're not! We are the elect! We are the sons of God! We are the heirs of God—joint heirs with Jesus Christ!

We can't let the devil bewitch us

into thinking we're no one! Every born again, Spirit-filled believer in this world has got more divine authority in his little finger than the most powerful, degenerate congressman in Washington. We are not going to affect governments by a lot of legislation and flashy business. We rule from our knees. Paul says:

I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, for kings and all who are in authority, in order that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity. This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved (1 Tim. 2:1-4 NAS).

Taking a Stand

I can still see that prophetic company in my vision coming up out of that jubilant, celebrating mass to challenge the claw: "Thus far, and no farther! You have robbed us of our last freedom. Back up, you devil, to the hell you came from!

"Supreme Court, reverse the decision on abortion! Supreme Court, reverse your decisions on education! Reverse the rotten laws that violate the government of God!"

Of course, the ungodly hate every man who dares to speak out against the government's violation of the moral laws of God. But Psalm 2 gives us a divine revelation of the nature of history. Right now, we are at a point in time in America when God's laughter is going to stop, and His hand is going to come down. We're going to feel the brunt of His rod—the anger of God—unless we repent as a nation.

I get so sick of mawkish, flabby, subjective, wishy-washy, weepy Christianity. It's gutless, aimless, and innocuous. We need John Knoxes. We need John Wesleys.

It has been reported that when the French Revolution broke out and ravished France, they fished out of the sewers of Paris alone fifty thousand fetuses that had been thrown down the sewers of that great city. When that ungodly revolution threatened to leap the nar-

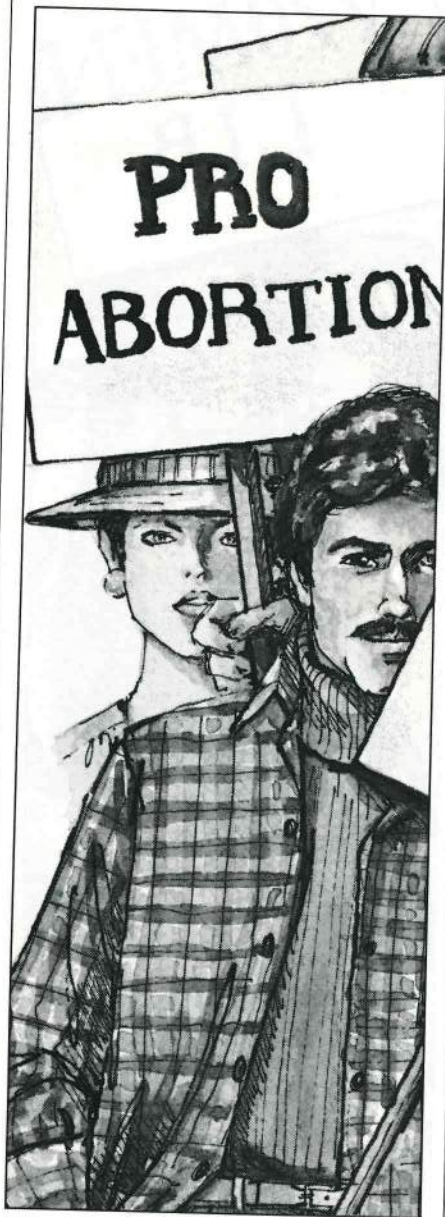
row channel and inflict its demonic powers on little England, God raised up a man by the name of John Wesley, who followed in the steps of George Whitefield. Profane historians grudgingly admit that John Wesley kept the French Revolution on the other side of the channel and changed the life of Great Britain for the next one hundred years.

A Time to Pray

I appeal to every reader to pray for your city, to pray for your government, and to get involved with God in smashing the nations with a rod of iron. We are Zion's staff. The scepter of the Lord goes out of Zion. We're the scepter. We're the ones King Jesus is going to use to turn the tide.

Do homage to the Son, lest He become angry, and you perish in the way, for His wrath may soon be kindled. How blessed are all who take refuge in Him! (Ps. 2:12 NAS).

Although I may paint a fairly dark and foreboding picture, I am personally an eschatological optimist. I believe that Jesus Christ is Lord. I believe that the lordship of Jesus Christ will win historically because it has already won at Calvary. When Jesus destroyed principalities, when He openly made a show of them, when He triumphed over them on His cross, when He rose from the dead and took His place at the right hand of God to reign supreme until His enemies are made His footstool—when that occurred two thousand years ago, the issues were all settled. We are permitted to be a part of the historical process. God through His Son is challenging us to do our part to bring the nations to their knees. □



Ern Baxter, a longtime leader in the charismatic renewal, is a member of the Integrity Communications Board of Directors. He and his wife, Ruth, are based in El Cajon, California, and are engaged in a traveling ministry.

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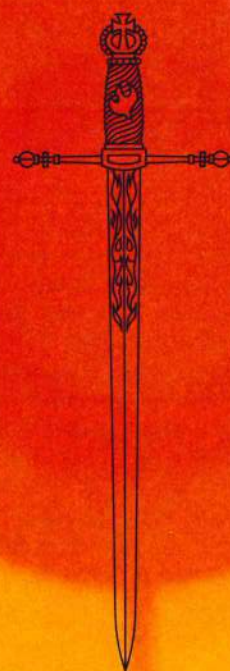
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A call to prayer Changing the U.S. Supreme Court

by Michael Coleman

In the last twenty years, probably no other entity in America has affected the secularization of our society more than the Supreme Court. This judicial arm of the federal government has completely disregarded the laws of God and ruled that abortion is legal, that prayer in schools is illegal, and that Bible reading in schools is illegal. In two decades, the court has waged a fierce battle to take God out of the public life of America—all under the guise of separation of Church and state.

In light of this, what can the body of Christ do to change the Supreme Court's twenty-year trend of taking God out of public life? There is only one way to impact its rulings: corporate intercessory prayer. The Bible says, "Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruit" (Pr. 18:21 NAS).

Just as our words can guide us into either good or bad experiences, the tongue of the Church—prayer and praise in the mouth of the believer—is the rudder that affects

portunity to appoint new justices who could affect our country's direction for at least the next twenty-five years.

We, as the body of Christ, need to be alert to this opportunity, and follow the two steps listed in 2 Chronicles 7:14: repent from our apathy and sins, and seek God fully so that He will restore righteous judges and heal our land.

Through corporate intercessory prayer we can bring God's rule to bear on the Supreme Court. Here are specific ways that you can pray:

1. Ask God to change the direction of the Supreme Court and reverse its posture of taking God out of our public life.
2. Ask God to direct the nine justices and give them wisdom to rule in righteousness and justice.
3. If they refuse to heed His standards, ask God to replace them with righteous judges.

The body of Christ in the United States can rule this country from the prayer closet. Without prayer, we have no hope to change the direction of the Supreme Court, which is slowly removing God from our public—and private—life. But if the body of Christ begins a concerted effort of regular prayer for God's intervention in the court, we will see dramatic action. We could even see the entire makeup of the court changed, which could be the key to overthrowing abortion in our nation.

The prayers of one or two Christians will not be enough. It will take concerted effort to see change. But the effort will be worth it because we will see true justice in our land. □



(Seated, from left) Associate justices Thurgood Marshall and William J. Brennan, Jr., Chief Justice Warren Burger, associate justices Byron R. White and Harry A. Blackmun. (Standing, from left) Associate justices John Paul Stevens, Lewis F. Powell, Jr., William H. Rehnquist, and Sandra Day O'Connor.

How can one arm of government wield such power? The answer lies in the very makeup of the court. The nine justices are appointed for life, and can be replaced only upon retirement or death. Then, the president of the United States nominates someone to fill the vacancy, and the Senate confirms the nomination.

Once the justices are seated on the court, there is very little influence that anyone, including the president and Congress, can exert over them. Therefore, it places critical importance on each justice's character, beliefs, and ideology, because these are the basis of their rulings.

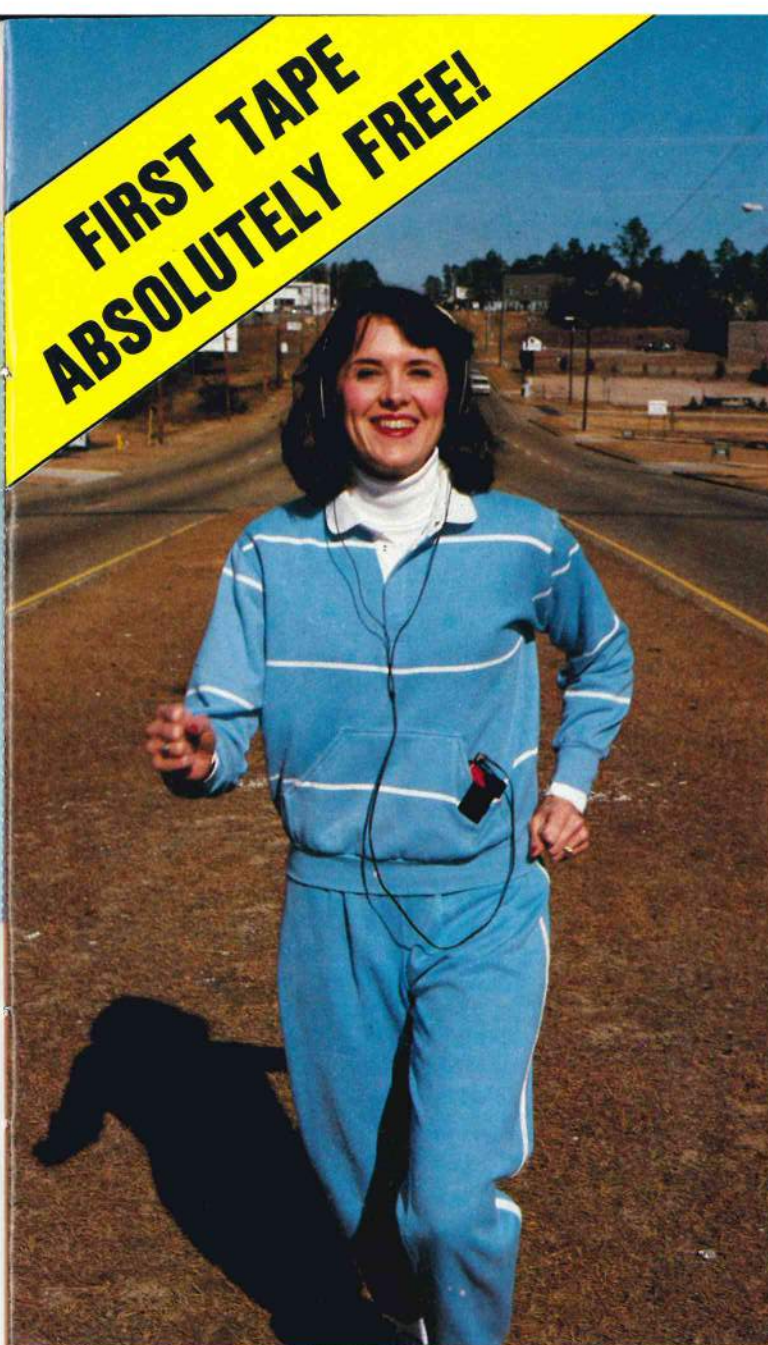
the nations. As the Church in the United States prays, it sets up a spiritual rudder that guides our ship of state and affects the direction of the country.

Psalms 149:5-9 says that our prayers and praise can release a tremendous spiritual power that directs the course of nations.

Affecting the Court

There are practical ways we can use the spiritual power we have at our disposal to affect the Supreme Court. At least four of the justices who now sit on the court are nearing or are past retirement age. Whoever is president when they vacate the court will have the op-

Michael Coleman is publisher and president of Integrity Communications. He has a bachelor of science degree in finance from the University of South Alabama in Mobile, where he resides with his wife, Jeanie, and their three children.



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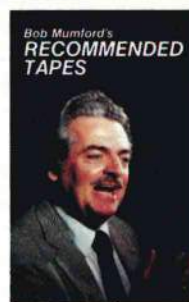
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CONVICTIONS

Is your ability to stand for Christ and His Word being eroded?

by Bob Mumford

Old movies offer some powerful lessons—lessons that our generation could easily miss. *Prisoner of Zenda*, for example, a movie released in 1937, portrays the intense and genuine love between a princess and a commoner. He pleads for her to run away with him, but by her strength and depth of conviction, she stops him cold, replying, “It is my duty to be here with my people!”

Such a response might have been acceptable in the thirties, but in the eighties an appeal to duty or convictions would be looked upon as unusual and outdated—even by people in the Church.

As Christians, we must clearly understand two important points: First, no one can live without con-

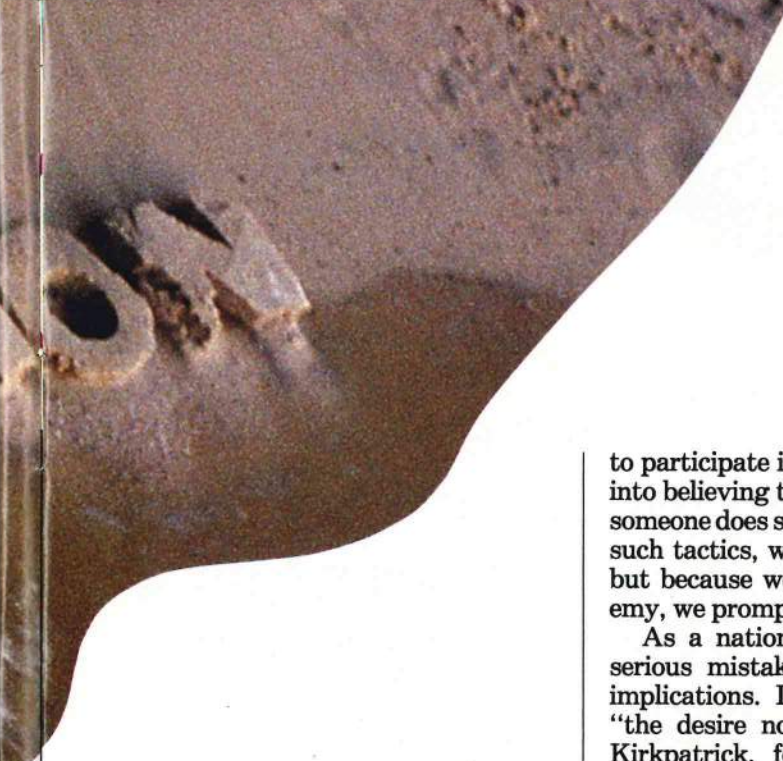
victions. We must have convictions even if our conviction is that we should live without convictions! Second, we should grasp the necessity of finding biblical convictions instead of living by “social norms.” Biblical morality may go out of style, but it does not go out of effect.

Convictions are the *guardrails of life* designed by our creator to help keep us out of the ditch. They are obtained by reading or being taught the Scriptures until our mind and conscience are persuaded of the truth. The Holy Spirit writes words on our hearts, such as, “You shall not commit adultery,” until they become firmly planted convictions.

God has created us to be capable of convictions; He has provided

His Word as the source and content of those convictions; and He has given His Holy Spirit to use conviction to bring us to repentance. This causes us to change and be relieved of the unbearable burden of guilt and transgression. As a result of our convictions, we find life, happiness, and peace.

But living by our convictions is never easy. At times we must suffer for what we believe, being misunderstood or ridiculed as our convictions are made to look outdated, unnecessary, or even prejudicial. Attacks on American society and biblical convictions have been waged through Archie Bunker kinds of television characters, who make many biblical norms, such as patriotism, appear as bigotry and



prejudice, all in the name of humor.

Even if we are willing to face the ridicule that comes with our convictions, we often fail to take a public stand because we're insecure about the necessity to do so. Who is right? What is right? How do we know when we're right? Do we know how to stand for our convictions in a society that teaches "everyone has a little bit of truth"? We need clear, practical help to be able to stand for Christ and His Word when biblical morality seems to be eroding like the sand from a beach in a terrible storm.

A War on Convictions

One reason we struggle so with convictions is that our enemy, the devil, is plotting to destroy our convictions and eliminate the salt and light of God's Word and God's people from modern American society. Spiritual warfare is seldom one of direct confrontation, however. Usually, Christians do well in that kind of battle. If we were denied the "right" to go to church and live a Christian life, we would rise to the challenge, ready to fight, and lay down our life if necessary.

But the devil wages a more dangerous form of warfare—one that destroys our will to resist. It is subtle, insidious, progressive, and often unseen. By constantly hearing, for example, that a person has a constitutional right to create and sell pornography, and that it isn't harmful because we are not forced

to participate in it, we are deceived into believing that it is okay. When someone does sound an alarm about such tactics, we may be awakened but because we cannot see the enemy, we promptly go back to sleep.

As a nation, we are making a serious mistake with long-lasting implications. Dostoevski called it "the desire not to know." Jeane Kirkpatrick, former U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, has called it "the will to disbelieve the horrible." We are trading our freedom to live by biblical convictions for something vaguely defined as security. By giving in on moral issues, we think we can peacefully co-exist with those who do not believe as we do. Those who want to reverse this trend need convictions that are deep and strong.

The Enemy's Tactics

Before we can effectively resist society's departure from biblical standards, we should first see if our own will to resist has been eroded. To do that we need a fresh awareness of the enemy's tactics. If we know how and where we have been attacked, or will be attacked, we can regain territory that has been taken, and prevent further losses.

The first tactic the devil uses is *confusion*. The cacophony of conflicting voices in the moral, political, and economic realms makes it difficult to know whom and what to believe. And when "expert" opinions directly oppose each other, we're in even greater trouble.

One doctor, for example, may prove that marijuana is much more dangerous than previously thought; then, another may follow with the clear opinion, backed by U.S. government research, that marijuana is really a health food and we are slightly retarded if we have not tried it. This is called relativism, meaning there are no absolutes; we

cannot know who is right. Our response to relativism can be biblical, or it can result in despair, eventually eroding our will to resist.

When our convictions are based on the false belief that "everyone has a little truth, and we can't be too dogmatic," we are in direct conflict with the biblical perspective. Jesus said, "He who follows Me shall not walk in the darkness" (Jn. 8:12 NAS).

The second tactic is the *conspiracy* ploy. Is there a massive world conspiracy for one world government? Are the Jews controlling the finances of the world? Is there a giant computer in Belgium preparing us for the mark of the beast? Who is on the Trilateral Commission and the Council on Foreign Relations? Are the "Moonies" behind this or not?

After we've listened to fifty conspiracy theories, it's hard to take any of them seriously. Eventually we let down our guard. To prevent this, we must take our concepts of the future from Christ and His Word rather than reading charts and playing conspiracy games until the issues are so mixed up that we fail to see the real enemy and his ultimate purpose.

The third tactic is *conflict*. As our own will to resist is slowly destroyed and our concept of freedom is blurred, we find ourselves married to two concepts from which there is no easy divorce: personal convenience and personal advantage. These two prostitutes have seduced more warriors who would have been fighting for the cause of Christ and His kingdom than perhaps any others. Once we are committed to personal convenience, measuring everything by how it benefits us, we are loath to leave our warm bed for hardship and conflict in a war already confused, especially one in which conspiracies have become only fantasies. Our response is, why me? Why should I get involved? Can one person make a difference? What will it cost me? I no longer see why I should pay such a price!

The fourth tactic is *contempt*. Principles and convictions for the modern man are too expensive. The popular philosophies are "go with



When we are
faced with an issue that
"rocks the boat," if we are reluctant
to make waves, chances are we've
compromised our biblical convictions.

the flow," "peace at any price," "if it works, don't fix it," and "if it feels good, do it." The modern man is contemptuous of anyone who would dare throw salt into the festering wound of social decay. We have little way of knowing how much we subscribe to his philosophy of life until we are faced with an issue that "rocks the boat." If we are reluctant to make waves, chances are we've compromised our biblical convictions.

It is especially difficult to bear contempt from those who should understand. As Christians, we cannot afford to exercise contempt toward someone who is seeking to stand for truth. Instead, we should be his strength and support. When fellow believers are a source of contempt, they add to the complexity of our being able to live by our convictions.

The fifth tactic is *corruption*. Faced with the philosophy that we "can't beat the system," we give in to pacifism, which leads to surrender. Our will to resist is gone. We no longer believe that the people at city hall are answerable to the voting public, and we cower in the face of their nearly immeasurable amount of corruption. Government of the people, by the people, and for the people seems like an unwork-

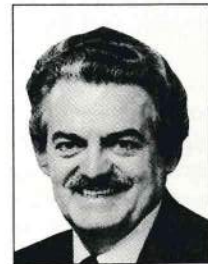
able myth.

The truth is, when political, religious, or economic corruption is rampant, we have reason to be alarmed, but never to despair. By God's grace, we can and we will "fight city hall"! We know that promotion doesn't come from the east or west, Democrat or Republican, but from God. We know He puts one up and puts another down. We know that good government, both civil and religious, brings peace and prosperity to a people. So our conviction is that we can and we will fight corruption at all levels: federal, state, and local. This must include religious corruption as well.

A recent article in a San Francisco newspaper told how the nasty FBI mentally intimidated the poor man who acted as a traitor to his nation by selling military secrets to the Soviet Union. While society feels sorry for this man, biblical morality tells us that treason—in peace or in war—should be a capital offense. When this observation was made at a political rally, those present burst into applause. Their response was a clear indication of the restoration of patriotism, loyalty, and faithfulness—qualities that made this nation great. It was also a clear example that corruption, if

withstood, could and would be changed.

As we face corruption and other moral issues, such as pornography, abortion, and euthanasia, we must take a stand. We must be willing to rock the boat. If we find that we are soft on abortion, we can be sure someone or something has already eroded our biblical convictions and is working at destroying our will to resist. We must return to the Scriptures to renew our perspective, and then find groups active on these issues and join the fight. Life without convictions is mere existence, but a people who are unshakable in their commitment to righteousness are light and salt destined to share in the abundant life God has promised to all who obey Him. □



Bob Mumford has served as dean of Elim Bible Institute in Lima, New York, and as a pastor, evangelist, and seminar teacher. Bob, who travels widely in ministry to Christians of all backgrounds, has also written a number of books about the Christian life. He is a member of the Integrity Communications Board of Directors and resides in San Rafael, California, with his wife, Judy, and their family.

Can one person make a difference? Americans Against Abortion thinks so and is urging all prolife Americans to photocopy, sign, and circulate this petition calling for an end to abortion. We want to encourage our readers to complete the petition and send it to the address below.



Americans Against Abortion A Petition For Life

"We hold these Truths to be self-evident, that all Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness..." —The Declaration of Independence

We the undersigned request the President, the Congress, and the Supreme Court of the United States of America to take any and all action necessary to abolish legalized abortion on demand in this country. We believe abortion to be the taking of an innocent human life and therefore a violation of the constitution of this nation.

Signature

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You can help end the tragedy of abortion by gathering as many signatures as possible. **Each signer must be a U.S. citizen and must sign the petition himself, but there are no age restrictions.** You can photocopy the petition *before* it's signed, or write or call for additional petitions. Key places to circulate are churches, schools, shopping centers, and public gatherings.

Please mail each sheet when completed to help avoid a last-minute rush. Final date for mailing: **April 15, 1986.** Mail to: **Americans Against Abortion, Box 70, Lindale, TX 75771 (214/963-8676).** All gifts to Americans Against Abortion are tax-deductible, and will help with the expenses of this petition drive and other pro-life work.

Come Be A Part Of History At The Americans Against Abortion National Rally!

Join with Melody Green (Director of Americans Against Abortion), dozens of national Christian and Pro-Life leaders, and tens of thousands of others as **we present the signed petitions to President Reagan at the Americans Against Abortion National Rally** on the steps of the Capitol building in Washington, DC, on **May 1, 1986**, the National Day of Prayer. For more information write or call Americans Against Abortion (see above).



Blessed Are the Merciful

Being antiabortion isn't enough anymore.

by Gary Bergel

A few weeks ago the phone rang at such an inopportune moment that I almost did not answer it. But following an inner prompting, I answered and our family life has begun a new chapter because of it.

The call was from a young man who was trying to talk his pregnant sixteen-year-old girl friend out of having an abortion. He asked if they could stop by, which they did. By the time they left, hours later, the girl was settled in her decision not to abort, the young man had re-committed his life to Christ, and we found the circle of our friends enlarged by two. They have visited since, mainly to be reassured and strengthened in their decision, and to learn parenting skills. We, in turn, have been learning about the release and extension of God's mercy.

We are not special and our cir-

cumstances are not unique. Each day, hundreds of prolife volunteers are counseling and ministering in similar situations across the country as the ministry of mercy continues to grow. Ten new and often expressly Christian crisis-pregnancy counseling centers open each month, and as a result, some twenty-five hundred prolife centers now openly compete with Planned Parenthood and other abortion clinic death chambers, which have helped snuff out the lives of more than seventeen million defenseless unborn children since the infamous *Roe v. Wade* decision in 1973. In that decision the U.S. Supreme Court discovered a "right of privacy" in the U.S. Constitution and legalized abortion on demand.

Now, more than one fourth of the children conceived in the United States each year are killed

by abortions. Our national rate of abortion stands at one unborn child killed every twenty seconds, or more than four thousand a day.

The True Issue

Interestingly, mercy rather than abortion remains the true issue to be settled. In 1973, there were few "voices for the voiceless." Only a handful of Church leaders took a prophetic stand against abortion. In fact, a network of some twelve hundred ministers was promoting abortion and referring women to places outside the country for abortions, and entire denominations actually played an activist role in the legalization of it. One of the first U.S. abortion clinics operated on church property in New York City!

I remember well how jarring the Supreme Court's decision legalizing abortion was to my conscience

as a young believer. By the end of that year, I, as many others, had joined in prayer and activism to see the court's decision overturned. God used then, and continues to use, the judgment of abortion to grab the Church's attention and to reteach us His ways.

More and more Christians are in agreement that the Church must fully return to its calling as a prophetic witness and standard of God's Word in the earth. An increasing number of voices is declaring that abortion is wrong, and that's good. But even more importantly, Church and prolife leaders are realizing that to be effective, the prophet must stand in and speak out of the redemptive posture of mercy.

We are learning the truth that the Lord often declared through His biblical prophets: Zechariah said, "Execute true justice, show mercy and compassion" (Zech. 7:9 NKJ). Hosea declared that we are to "keep mercy" (Hos. 12:6). Micah reminded us to "love mercy" (Mic. 6:8). Jesus, the completion of all prophetic truth, taught that mercy is a principle of life and that those who practice mercy will receive mercy (see Matthew 5:7). The first apostles commanded true disciples of Christ to "put on mercy" (see Colossians 3:12). And one translation of 1 Timothy 2:8 is: "Lift up merciful hands, without wrath and contention."

Christians, as conscious recipients of God's mercy and forgiveness, are required to exercise the same toward others. We are required to exhibit in a practical, observable way the same divine loving-kindness that reached past broken covenants and found us in our own sinful need. This demonstration of mercy can come only at the expense of our time, money, convenience, and even religious and national prejudice.

Decrease in Abortions

Throughout the body of Christ, we see brothers and sisters learning the vital relationship between mercy and an effective release of God's truth, virtue, and power. Hundreds, perhaps thousands, of families have opened their homes to care for destitute young women

needing a place to bring their babies to term. Practical helps of furniture, clothing, financial aid, legal assistance for those choosing to put their children up for adoption, and classes in parenting skills are being made available in more and more communities. A fresh movement of mercy is rescuing life, and any church or individual can participate.

Also, many families are choosing to adopt. Contrary to popular belief, there are actually babies currently available for adoption. Mixed-race and black infants are languishing in foster care because Christian families cannot be found for these who are currently "hard to place," but certainly not hard to love. Anyone interested in pursuing such an adoption should feel free to contact Bethany Christian Services, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

As a result of this fresh emphasis on mercy by the Church, the tide is turning. The rate of abortion dropped for the first time in ten years in 1983. Many observers feel that the alternatives-to-abortion movement played a significant role in this decrease. Surveys conducted indicate that approximately 775,000 women were counseled in alternative centers in 1984. Out of those women who were actually pregnant, an estimated 66 percent "chose life." Follow-up studies show that 2.9 percent aborted, and that the actual decision of the balance of the women, 31.1 percent, remains an unknown factor. Initial studies indicate an overall success rate in turning women toward choosing life of almost 60 percent.

Many Christians working to offer alternatives to abortion are motivated by the scriptural mandate of Proverbs 24:11-12:

Rescue those being led away to death; hold back those staggering toward slaughter. If you say, "But we knew nothing about this," does not he who weighs the heart perceive it? Does not he who guards your life know it? Will he not repay each person according to what he has done? (NIV).

As more and more individuals, churches, and organizations heed that scriptural call, we are the privileged witnesses of a vital demon-

stration of God's mercy by the Church. Richard Van Deelen, assistant executive director of Bethany Christian Services, recently said that the prolife movement and the advance of alternatives to abortion "represent the most unified, pervasive, and powerful influence of Christians' pursuing righteousness in the history of our country."

Seven years ago the Lord spoke to my wife and I that we would be adopting. Having natural children, we pursued orphans abroad to no avail, but we learned much. Sixteen months ago, we were granted the privilege of adopting our first daughter, Ruth—a little one rescued from abortion. Her life is a witness that has already silenced a few of God's enemies and challenged many to "love mercy." Ruth stands as a trophy and demonstration of what God desires His Church to be full of—His merciful, redeeming love. □

Scripture marked NKJ: From the New King James Version. Copyright © 1979, 1980, 1982, Thomas Nelson, Inc., Publishers.



Gary Bergel is executive director of Intercessors for America, and a pastor of New Covenant Church in Reston, Virginia. He is the author of the booklet When You Were Formed in Secret/Abortion in America. He received

his bachelor of science and master of arts degrees from the University of Wisconsin, Madison. Gary and his wife, Susan, live in Reston with their seven children.

Getting Involved

For more information: National Right to Life Committee, 419 Seventh St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20004, (202) 626-8800; Bethany Christian Services, 901 Eastern Ave. NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49503, (616) 459-6273.

For further reading: *Abortion and the Conscience of a Nation* by Ronald Reagan (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1984); *Handbook for Pregnant Teenagers* by Linda Roggow and Carolyn Owens (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1984). □

WHEN PREGNANCY IS A CRISIS!

How one community is helping women in trouble
by Michael Lutz

You prolife people are all alike," complained a pregnant teenager as she glared at the counselor sitting across from her. "All you care about is the baby!"

The counselor smiled at her, and then calmly replied, "I don't see a baby sitting across from me. I see a sixteen-year-old young woman who is pregnant and very scared. I want to help *you*! How can I do that?"

For thirteen years, ever since a 1973 Supreme Court decision made abortion legal, we have heard the mounting statistics on unborn chil-

dren killed each year. But another statistic is rarely mentioned: Behind all the abortions stand the millions of women who seek them. More and more, the Lord is encouraging compassion and mercy in dealing with these women—not only to prevent them from having an abortion, but also to help them after they have had one.

Many women are under intense pressure to abort—either because of difficult circumstances in their lives or from husbands, lovers, parents, or friends who insist that abortion is the only answer.

For those seeking an abortion, pregnancy is a crisis! All too often they do not receive the objective counseling, compassionate help, or practical encouragement they need to make a wise, fully informed decision that they'll be able to live with the rest of their lives.

The young woman who accused the prolife counselor of being concerned only with the child made a good point. For too long that has been where we have focused our attention. But every abortion has two victims—the fetus who was robbed of life and the mother who



must live with her decision. For her, the physical, psychological, emotional, and spiritual side effects of abortion can be devastating and long lasting.

Action, Not Just Conviction

A few years ago, the Lord began to speak to our church, Agape Christian Fellowship in Kalamazoo, Michigan, about the plight of women facing crisis pregnancies. We knew that God was asking us as a congregation to do more than just be against abortion; He wanted us to put some action behind our conviction. With much prayer we launched into actively studying how to accomplish what we felt was God's call for us—to set up and operate a crisis pregnancy center.

We had not gotten far into the planning process when one of the pastors asked if I would consider becoming the director of the center. I shared his suggestion with my wife, Jamie. We knew something of this importance should be approached with prayer and fasting, and we set aside three days to seek the Lord.

Once we knew it was His will for us, we launched into the task wholeheartedly. For more than a year now, we have worked with fifteen volunteer counselors and a receptionist to minister to women (and men) who find themselves faced with an unplanned pregnancy.

When a young woman becomes pregnant, there are no easy decisions to be made. Yet in the midst of fear and anxiety, they have to be made. Women are vulnerable at this time in their lives and can easily be exploited or taken advantage of. What may seem like the easiest way out is not the best. They need to understand what is taking place in their body as well as the truth about abortion.

Our motivation for operating the Crisis Pregnancy Center is the love of the Lord. He cares for each young mother who walks through the doors, and wants her to be able to experience His love through all that we do. That's why we start each day with the prayer, "Father, we are here today to help young women. We can't do that unless You bring them to us, so keep us

busy today doing what You called us to do."

"We Want to Help!"

Except for room and board, we offer all our services without charge. They include the following:

1. *Free pregnancy testing.* Many of the women who come to the center are on a limited income, so we have always offered free pregnancy tests. At one time, we were the only organization in town to offer a free test, but the local Planned Parenthood office, which performs abortions, has since stopped charging for its pregnancy tests.

2. *Education on prenatal development, pregnancy, abortion, and alternatives.* All too many women are unaware of facts about fetology and abortion, facts they will need to make their decision. While a woman is waiting for the results of her pregnancy test, we ask her to watch a slide presentation that shows how her baby is growing and what actually happens during an abortion. We also give her printed materials that reinforce the slide program. Thus, she leaves the office better educated and able to make the decision that will affect two lives—hers and her baby's.

3. *Housing for clients who are homeless.* Sometimes pregnant young women tell us that their parents have refused to let them live at home, forcing them to immediately find another place to live. To help women in these situations, we can direct them to nearby homes, or to ones in other cities if they prefer. Many of these are homes of families who have felt the Lord asking them to help in this way. Others provide group home settings.

4. *Clothing and furnishings to accommodate both mother and baby.* Often a desperate young mother asks us, "If I decide to have this baby, what will I do for clothes? I can't afford to buy anything!"

Since we opened, God has continually supplied clothes for mothers and babies as well as cribs and other baby furniture. Not long ago, for example, we received a call from a local church. The young woman on the phone explained that the Sunday school classes wanted to raise money to buy new

baby sleepers for us.

I wish every parent of those Sunday school children could have seen the expressions on their faces when they presented 149 new baby sleepers to us. I wish too that the children could have seen the pleasure their gifts brought to many new mothers.

Not long after that, I was speaking at another church in Kalamazoo when a silver-haired elderly woman told me she was gathering and repairing maternity and baby clothes for the center. Sure enough, a few weeks later we received a large box of well-repaired, clean, ready-to-wear clothes.

The local Lutherans for Life organization had a "shower" for the center and donated many beautiful articles of baby clothing as well as furniture and several cash donations. Still other supporters are garage sale enthusiasts who keep an eye out for usable clothing and furniture.

5. *Referrals for adoption.* If a woman wants to give up her baby for adoption, we can refer her to two nearby adoption agencies. She is free to choose whichever one she prefers. One of the agencies even uses our facilities to counsel women.

6. *Referrals for medical care and other services.* We try to work with the women as much as possible to relieve the burdens that medical and bureaucratic procedures often cause. If a woman, for example, needs another pregnancy test for confirmation, we can refer her to any of several excellent prolife doctors in the area. Other times our counselors accompany young mothers to the local Department of Social Services to help them apply for financial assistance.

Committed to the Women

Our goal is to meet any of the women's needs that we can. One young woman, for example, recently told a counselor that her friends were stealing from her and had even sold her television to buy drugs. The counselor said she thought she needed some new friends, and offered to introduce her to some. The young woman now has several Christian friends who have been able to help her.

Charles Swindoll once said,



At the Crisis Pregnancy Center in Kalamazoo, Michigan, counselors not only offer alternatives to abortion, but also try to meet the women's needs for practical items, such as housing or baby clothing and furniture.

"People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care." One of the most important aspects of what God has called us to do is counseling and friendship. We do not make decisions for our clients, but we will stand with them as far and as long as they want us to.

We are also committed to helping those women who have been exploited by abortion. At that time, almost more than any other, they need compassionate understanding, genuine love, and spiritually sound counseling. Yet all too often they are left to bear the load of grief, guilt, and loss on their own.

When we first opened the center, the Lord told us that we would not see all first babies saved but that we would see second babies saved and the mothers helped. This is indeed happening! Many of the women who decided to have an abortion even after we counseled them are now returning when they find themselves pregnant again. We believe that on their first visit they must have felt the love and compassion of the Lord coming through the

counselors.

Besides being an invaluable service to women in our community, the center has also served to unite the local churches. When the Crisis Pregnancy Center first opened, it was one church's outreach ministry. We believed, however, that God wanted the center to be a community organization supported by local churches, business people, and concerned individuals with a volunteer counseling staff made up of born again women from churches in the city and surrounding area.

Now, after more than a year of operation, our funding is starting to come from those various community sources. Our counsel staff and financial support come from many area churches—Assembly of God, Baptist, Bible, Charismatic, Nazarene, nondenominational, and Wesleyan.

We have learned that true love not only protects innocent human life, but it also helps those who are hurting and in need. True love always seeks to heal, sustain, help, and extend constructive alternatives. □



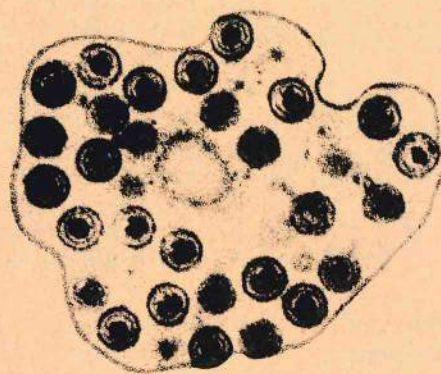
Michael Lutz is director of the Crisis Pregnancy Center in Kalamazoo, Michigan. He holds degrees from Owosso College, Owosso, Michigan, and from Spring Arbor College, Spring Arbor, Michigan. He and his wife, Jamie, have four children and live in Kalamazoo.

Abortion Alternatives

For more information: These organizations have centers all over the country and can direct you to the nearest: Birthright, 686 N. Broad St., Woodbury, NJ 08096, (800) 848-5683; Crisis Pregnancy Center, Christian Action Council, 701 W. Broad St., Suite 405, Falls Church, VA 22046, (703) 237-2100.

For further reading: *Arresting Abortion: Practical Ways to Save Unborn Children*, John W. Whitehead, ed. (Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, 1985). □

VENEREAL DISEASE... HERPES... AIDS... WILL IT EVER STOP?



A medical doctor looks at sexually transmitted diseases.
by Dr. Joseph Troncale

It was the age of overindulgence. It was the age of tolerance for anything in anybody. It was the age of fear of imposing one's own social values on someone else. It was the age of the trivialization of sex. It was the age of anticelibacy. It was the age when early teenage sex was commonplace. It was the age when homosexuality came out of the closet and became almost acceptable to those who once found it intolerable. It was the age of easy, irresponsible oversex, abortion on demand, chlamydia, and genital herpes. And it was the age of AIDS.

George D. Lundberg, M.D., in the June 21, 1985, editorial in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, made this observation about the moral state of affairs in the 1980's. The progression is obvious. Sexual overindulgence ultimately leads to sexually trans-

mitted diseases (STDs) that are incurable and fatal.

STDs, infections caused by bacteria and viruses, are nothing new. The Old Testament recounts Jewish prohibitions against people with venereal disease, and some medical historians believe that people during the pre-Christian era who were thought to have had leprosy might actually have had syphilis. In the late fifteenth century, the prevalence of war in Europe resulted in the spread of syphilis across the continent through soldiers. In those days the disease was literally a plague, and smallpox was so named to distinguish it from "the great pox," syphilis.

In the early 1800's, doctors discovered that syphilis and gonorrhea were two separate diseases, and in the early 1900's, they pinpointed the bacteria causing them. Researchers tried various kinds of potions and drugs against these diseases with little success until the 1940's when penicillin became

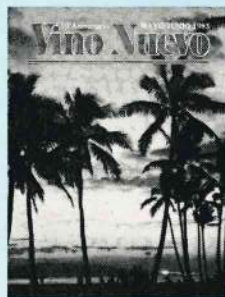
available and was found to be effective against both diseases.

Of course, people became optimistic that the battle against these diseases was won, and in fact, the incidence of infectious syphilis in the United States dropped from a high of more than 100,000 cases in 1947 to a low of 6,516 cases in 1955.

This, however sparked two reactions. First, health care officials relaxed their attempts to control syphilis because it seemed that eradication of it was at hand. Second, sexual promiscuity in the United States increased. As a result, in 1977, an estimated two million cases of gonorrhea and seventy-five thousand cases of syphilis were reported in the United States.

Modern Diseases

The list of STDs is a long one, and many are not extensively publicized outside medical circles. Some STDs, though, have been in the news in recent years. In the last



¿SABIA USTED?

Did you know that when you contribute to *New Wine* above your subscription price, you support a ministry that is bringing the gospel to Latin America?

Vino Nuevo, the Spanish version of *New Wine*, goes to eight thousand readers in forty countries, including Cuba, Nicaragua, and other "hot spots" in Central and South America. Because most of the recipients are pastors and other leaders, at least fifty times that figure are touched by the word of God in *Vino Nuevo* every month.

"Thousands of other people would like to receive the magazine," says Hugo Zelaya, editor, "but we can only publish a limited amount because of our resources. We could easily double our production of the magazine."

Hugo notes that there is a tremendous spiritual battle going on in Latin America. "The warfare is intensifying between two kingdoms," he says. "God is doing tremendous things, but at the same time the enemy is also redoubling his efforts to maintain his own kingdom."

Integrity Communications provides almost all the financial support for *Vino Nuevo*'s operations. We are able to do this because of your faithfulness to contribute.

In an area of the world racked by war, *Vino Nuevo* is bringing the message that allegiance to the kingdom of God is the only allegiance that will provide eternal salvation. We thought you'd like to know. □

decade, for example, herpes simplex type II, a viral STD, made the cover stories of national magazines. People dreaded the disease because it was painful and was associated with morbidity and mortality in children born to mothers with an active infection. But it was also headline news because there was no treatment or cure. Subsequently, medication has come on the market that works against the herpes virus, but it actually treats the symptoms rather than cures the disease. Approximately a quarter of a million Americans are currently infected with genital herpes virus.

In the summer of 1981, the Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta reported that five young homosexual men in Los Angeles contracted *Pneumocystis carinii* pneumonia, a rare disease usually seen in people who have immune system problems. One month later there was a report that twenty-six homosexual males in New York and California had contracted a then rare malignancy called Kaposi's sarcoma. That was the first manifestation of what is known as Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS).

AIDS is a viral disease characterized by a defect in the body's natural immunity against many infections. As was characteristic of the cases mentioned above, people who contract AIDS become susceptible to a variety of rare illnesses. People with normal immune systems are not likely to be infected with these diseases because their system will counter them.

People who contract AIDS usually have symptoms such as fever, weight loss, night sweats, diarrhea, and swollen lymph nodes. Often these symptoms take up to five years to appear.

More than thirteen thousand cases of AIDS were reported in the United States as of last September 23. About fifty-one percent of these people died. Experts expect that the number of cases will double every eleven months.

People who get AIDS generally belong to one of the following groups: sexually active homosexual and bisexual men with multiple sex partners; present or past abusers

of intravenous drugs; heterosexual partners of people who have AIDS or of intravenous drug abusers (prostitutes currently comprise a large part of this category); children born to a parent infected with AIDS; hemophiliacs, because they must use large quantities of blood products, and AIDS can be transmitted through transfusions.

AIDS is caused by a virus called the human T-lymphotropic virus type III. Currently, a blood test is available to detect if someone has been infected with the virus. About ten percent of those infected with the virus eventually get the AIDS syndrome. Although the medical profession is currently researching AIDS, no cure is yet available. Even if one is found, based on the history of other STDs, it appears that AIDS will be with us for years to come.

Cost of STDs

In the January 10 issue of the *Journal of the American Medical Association* it is estimated that the first 10,000 cases of AIDS in the United States cost 1.6 million hospital days, \$1.4 million in expenditures, 8,387 years of work lost, and \$4.8 million because of premature death.

The average total cost of hospitalizing an AIDS patient in Los Angeles is \$16,652. Of this bill, an average of \$5,214 is left unpaid and must be absorbed by the hospital. New York City alone picks up \$45 million a year in unpaid hospital bills of AIDS patients.

The California legislature recently appropriated \$20 million to design a comprehensive AIDS prevention plan. In 1983, the New York Assembly established an AIDS Institute with a start-up budget of nearly \$7 million, and an additional \$2.8 million was approved for 1984-85. The *American Medical News* reported that specific services of the institute include public information programs, support services, such as counseling and hot lines, "buddies" for AIDS victims, family counseling, and referrals. The institute also funds private organizations, such as the Gay Men's Health Crisis Center.

Costs for other STDs include programs funded by the federal

The Church's Response to AIDS

Is compassion waning in light of a so-called gay disease?

Addressing the AIDS Threat

The Kaiser/Perman
in

U.S. Surgeon General C. Everett Koop is
health official in Amer

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Hospitals advised to prepare for repercussions from AIDS

CHICAGO (AP) — The na- Southern Calif in Los th AIDS patients.
tion' d find

government and state governments that operate through local health departments to locate and treat the diseases. The 1985 budget, for example, for venereal disease control in Mobile, Alabama, was approximately five hundred thousand dollars.

The Battleground

AIDS is one of our country's hottest topics right now as a tremendous battle that goes far beyond the walls of gay bars or the Centers for Disease Control is being waged.

At last year's International Conference on Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome, for example, conflicting opinions were stated. One scientist said that "the ultimate control of the syndrome in gay men is probably years away. Until a vaccine, antiviral agent, or other treatment becomes available, behavioral change will remain the major element in attempts to control the syndrome in gay men."

On the other hand, another conference participant called social prohibitions against homosexuality and promiscuity primitive sexual taboos. "When a taboo is broken," he said, "society goes through a transition, searching for new concepts and behavioral standards appropriate to new knowledge." A similar viewpoint was aired by the president of the American Association of Physicians for Human Rights, "an organization committed

to the advocacy of better health care for gay and lesbian persons," who concluded his remarks with a dramatic plea that "societal intolerance" of homosexuals be ended.

The Real Issue

The real issue is the religion of humanistic thought versus the Judeo-Christian ethic based on Scripture. This ethic was not represented in the symposium, but the humanistic viewpoint was aired with the same prominence as the scientific data.

The Greek word *ethos* refers to a way of expressing unwritten laws. In the United States, the *ethos* is constantly changing. Societal norms come and go as any fashion or fad. Sexual promiscuity, or as the humanists call it, "sexual freedom," is an *ethos* that currently pervades much of western society. As a result, homosexuality, once an unacceptable behavior, has now become an *ethos* in our society.

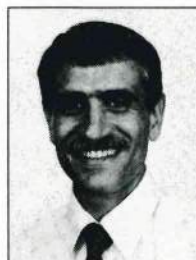
Contrast *ethos* with *nomos*, a law set up as the standard for administering justice. Humanists say that their *ethos* equals *nomos*. Christians say no; humanistic *ethos* is contrary to God's law.

This is an essential point for us as Christians. Sin should not be an emotional issue tied to *ethos*; rather, sin is based solely on *nomos*, the unchanging Word, written in stone, etched into hearts by the Holy Spirit. As the STDs graphically and prophetically

demonstrate, if the *nomos* is defied, payment and punishment are demanded. *Nomos* was given to man not for God's edification but rather for man to protect himself from destroying his own kind.

As a physician and as a Christian, I am aware of what it means to defy the law of God. I see its effects each day. It does not prevent me, however, from extending mercy to those who defy God's laws. Although I can compassionately offer them medical treatment, the Holy Spirit will have to convict those who transgress God's law of their sin. No matter how advanced the medical field becomes in treating the current STDs, the ultimate solution is a change in behavior. We can choose to live by the humanistic *ethos* and suffer the consequences, or we can live by God's *nomos* and live in righteousness, peace, and joy.

"For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 6:23 NAS). □



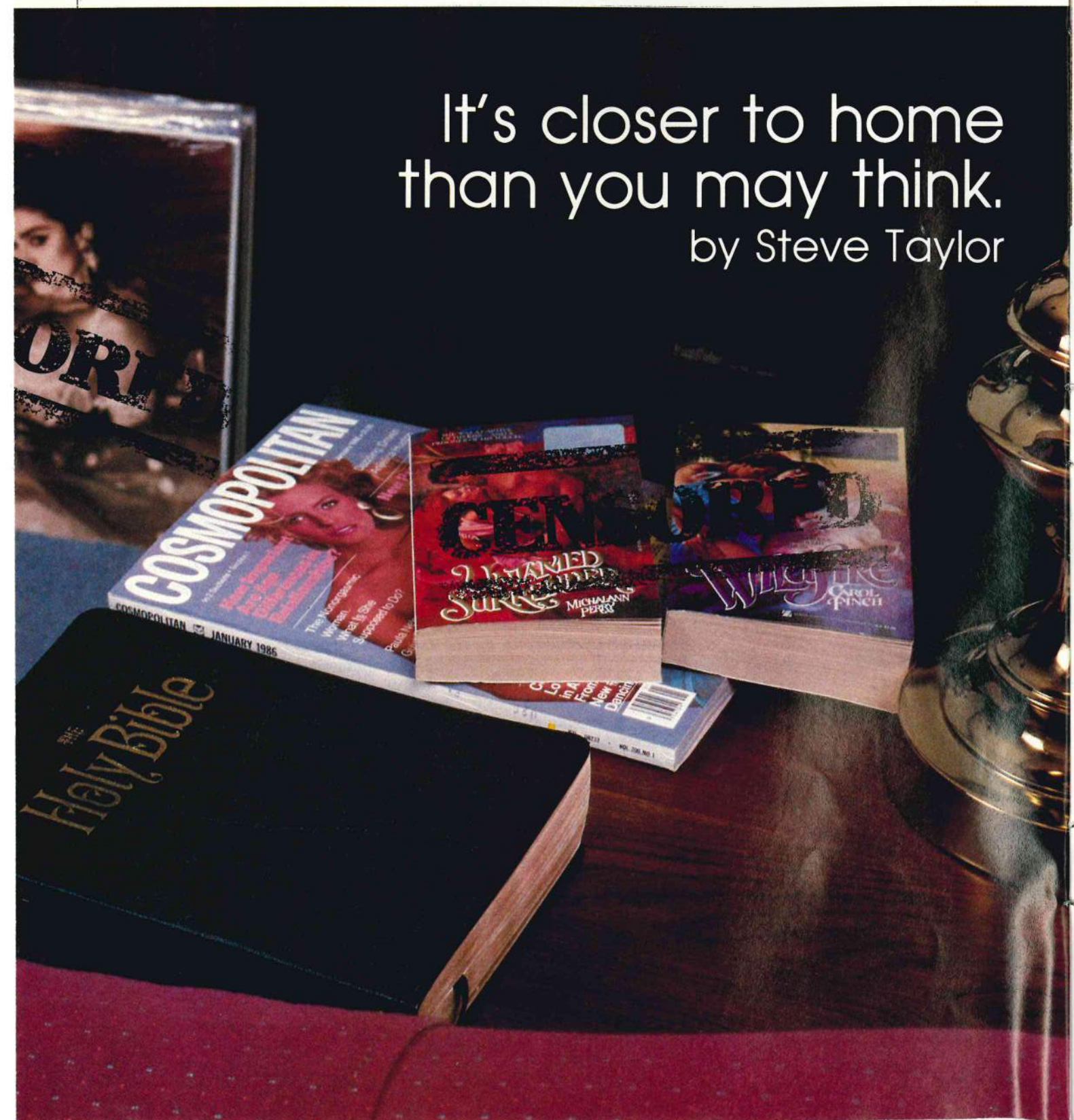
Joseph Troncale, M.D., is assistant professor in family practice at the University of South Alabama, Mobile. He graduated from the university's college of medicine, and did postgraduate training in family practice there. He

and his wife, Lisa, live in Mobile with their three daughters.

PORNO

It's closer to home
than you may think.

by Steve Taylor



GRAPHY

Drop a frog in a pan of boiling water, and he will quickly jump out as expected. Gently place him in a pan of lukewarm water, and slowly raise the temperature. He will fail to detect the change in his environment and the growing threat to his health until he is physically unable to respond. Without moving a muscle he will be parboiled, seemingly oblivious to pain.

Likewise, the Church has often been found sitting in a pot of lukewarm water while someone has been gradually turning up the heat. Slowly but surely various evils have surrounded and nearly overtaken us. But, thankfully, there is time to respond before it is too late.

One of the evils we face that has slowly encircled us is pornography. *Pornography* is an ugly word. We would prefer to ignore its insidious effects, assuring ourselves that it cannot possibly harm us. In fact, President Johnson's Commission on Obscenity and Pornography in 1970 found pornography to be morally neutral and even therapeutic in rehabilitating dangerous sex offenders. Nothing could be further from the truth. Whether directly or indirectly, physically, emotionally, or spiritually, pornography does harm us, as millions of victims can testify.

Pornography has been linked to all kinds of violence. Criminal experts, for example, attribute the behavior of multiple murderers like Charles Manson, Wayne Williams, and John Wayne Gacy in part to long-term exposure to hard-core, or nonconsenting, pornography. This kind depicts scenes of sexual violence, such as rape. Pornography has also been found to be the fuel that often feeds the flames of incest, abortion, rape, lust, adultery, fornication, homosexuality, lesbianism, and pedophilia (sexual abuse

of children).

Research has proven that so-called soft-core, or consenting, pornography stimulates the vast majority of rapists (including homosexuals), whose victims are clearly nonconsenting. Soft-core, which is sold in neighborhood convenience stores throughout our nation, is yielding hard-core results, and victims are found among the very young to the elderly.

In many cases, the victims, such as the children of incest fathers, become the new victimizers as the cycle continues into the next generation. The deep emotional wounds they bear keep them from being able to properly relate as parents, and very often they perpetuate the sins of their fathers on their own children.

Other victims are not nearly so obvious. In marriages, for example, the fantasies of pornographic literature contribute to marital dissatisfaction. Whether the material is photographic, which is aimed largely at men, or graphically written romance novels, which are targeted at women, marriage relationships invariably suffer.

Such material fuels callous, demeaning attitudes and unrealistic expectations. People who permit themselves to be continually exposed to obscene material eventually require increasingly bizarre imagery to attain prior levels of arousal. A normal sex drive, which is to be fostered by mature, married love, slowly dissolves into lust, which can never be fulfilled.

This mirage is often created and energized by demonic spirits, themselves doomed to restlessness and dissatisfaction. When marriages, even Christian marriages, are subjected to this subtle assault, the fruit is destined to be the thorns and thistles of continual frustration. The destruction of many

homes can often be traced to these demonic intrusions, sometimes many years in developing.

The Medium and the Message

Pornography is destructive because of the message it communicates: Deviance is normal, and normal is abnormal. Chaste love is restrictive. Wantonness is freedom. Sensuality is sensible. The Apostle Peter described men who promote such thinking as those who promise "freedom while they themselves are slaves of corruption" (2 Pet. 2:19 NAS). They are the pied pipers of this generation, the social predators whose agenda is built on seduction, deception, and greed. Those who unwittingly respond are drawn down a path that only promises personal and social harm.

It may be a shock for many to realize that the primary vehicle for bringing pornography's deceptive message home is found in virtually every living room in the country. Television has carried more images of sexual violence and explicit sexual activity into our homes than any medium in history. Each year technological advances enhance the ability of industry captains to market their wares and their message with greater and more seductive effectiveness. The siren call of sensuality has never been served to a generation on a more sophisticated platter. Videotape sales and rentals have replaced the old "stag" film of a previous generation as the video industry survives and thrives on R-rated and X-rated movies. Even PG material requires more parental guidance than ever as standards of morality within the rating system disintegrate each year. Last year's X seems to be this year's R.

Limited-access cable will soon make it possible to tune in to live sex "entertainment," which is channeled only into homes that specifi-

cally request it. Television writers, directors, and producers, probably not more than one hundred individuals, are under tremendous economic pressure to bring increasingly explicit, even violent, sexual content to both programming and advertising. "It's what the public wants," they say. Sadly, market analyses of products and ratings concur. From afternoon soap-operas to prime-time serials and docu-dramas (factual or historical material presented in fictional settings), the screen is filled with more and more sexually explicit scenes, involving those who are often unmarried and always unashamed.

Rock music, increasingly pornographic in its own right, has been wedded to video to produce even more seductive fare. Those in the rock-video industry are stepping all over each other in an effort to exploit the bizarre and corner the millions of dollars that are lavished upon these kings and queens of degeneration. Their primary targets are the minds and emotions of twelve-year-old to fourteen-year-old children.

What We Can Do

As Christians we are called to respond to this onslaught, avoiding reactions that neutralize the Church and render it ineffective. One faulty approach is a "Chicken Little" reaction that cries, "The moral sky is falling! Nothing can be done!" Believing that things are beyond repair leaves a moral vacuum into which further immorality is inexorably swept.

Another wrong response is a self-righteous attitude that bars us from effectively reaching out to victims and victimizers alike. Those caught in the web of pornography can hope to be free only when the people of God are themselves free, standing in a righteousness that is not their own. We must deal with the beam in our own eye before we can help the one who has a speck in his. Those most effective in proclaiming redemption will very likely be those who have experienced redemption firsthand.

Our first response to pornography must be prayer. Just as the Allied forces bombarded the coastline of Normandy to soften up the

enemy in preparation for a landing, so we must target our prayer to weaken and destroy our enemy, the devil. We must continually remind ourselves that we do not wrestle against flesh and blood but are rather called to pull down demonic strongholds and to bring away those who have been captured by the devil. Without effectual, fervent prayer the Church will never gain the offensive.

Beyond prayer, there are other practical steps we can take:

1. Monitor television and video viewing habits, your own and your child's, and review the magazines and literature your family reads. Ask the Holy Spirit for discernment in gray areas.
2. Maintain parental control of your child's involvement in sex education courses by monitoring both curriculum and methods. As educators attempt to be "neutral," many young people are being exposed to nontraditional life-styles as though they were viable options.
3. Most communities have laws sufficient to deter illicit business activity. Insist that local prosecutors enforce them. One of our greatest strengths in the war against pornography is concerned local citizens. The merchants of vice tend to follow the line of least resistance, and community standards often fall only by default.
4. Don't be bluffed by cries of First Amendment freedoms. *The Harvard Law Review* recently stated that obscenity and pornography have no constitutional guarantees, no First Amendment protection. Pornography is an assault on both individuals and the family and must be bound by legal restraints.
5. Support the creation of laws that would curb the use of new technologies by the pornography industry. The Federal Communications Commission must be free to exercise its mandate to guard the use of the airwaves.
6. Consider economic boycotts of establishments that sell pornographic literature and of advertisers who underwrite explicit programming on television. In a free enterprise economy, the market speaks with dollars and cents.
7. Write to television executives,

both local and network. They are sensitive to new trends in the marketplace.

Above all, seek the Lord for a strategy that is born of the Holy Spirit. Scripture promises us that "where sin increased, grace abounded all the more" (Rom. 5:20 NAS). Although the short term may require more effective legal restraints, the long-term purpose of God is for the good news of His government to be written on the hearts of men by the Holy Spirit through faith in Jesus Christ. His intention is for those who have grown weary of the bitter fruit of sensual pursuits to find the righteousness, peace, and joy that is possible only in the Holy Spirit. It is our responsibility to offer that opportunity. □



Steve Taylor is senior pastor of East Memphis Covenant Church in Memphis, Tennessee. He is a graduate of Westmont College in Santa Barbara, California, and he and his wife, Maribeth, have three children and live in Memphis.

Opposing Pornography

For more information: National Consultation on Pornography, Inc., 5742 Hamilton Ave., Cincinnati, OH 45224, (513) 521-1985; National Federation for Decency, P.O. Drawer 2440, Tupelo, MS 38803, (601) 844-5036; Parents' Music Resource Center (new address), 1500 Arlington Blvd., Arlington, VA 22209, (703) 527-9466; Morality in Media, 475 Riverside Dr., New York, NY 10115, (212) 870-3222; Citizens for Decency Through Law, Inc., 2331 W. Royal Palm Road, Phoenix, AZ 85021, (602) 995-2600; National Christian Association, P.O. Box 40945, Washington, D.C. 20016, (202) 296-7155.

For further reading: *A Call to Righteousness* by Paul A. Tanner (Anderson, IN: Warner Press, 1984). □

First Abortion, Then EUTHANASIA

Can this next attack on life be prevented?

by Arne Christenson

I recently saw an amazing display on a television news show. The organizers had set up an intricate pattern of thousands of dominoes. When the first one tipped, a massive chain reaction began that eventually toppled the half million dominoes.

That news clip was a spectacular demonstration of an old principle: Tipping the first domino in a line inevitably causes the last one to fall.

A deadly cycle has been set in motion that rests on a similar principle. When a society no longer regards human life as sacred, protections for the helpless begin to fall like tumbling dominoes. In 1973, the unborn lost their right to life, and a movement of death was begun, which could ultimately deprive the elderly and medically dependent of that same right.

The threat of euthanasia—or what is euphemistically called “mercy killing”—may seem remote now, because the scattered examples involve unusual circumstances and complex medical judgment. But these isolated cases are of critical importance because they will establish the principles of a far broader movement.

The abortion movement often focuses on pregnancies that result from rape or incest. Abortion on demand is the rule, but the argument for abortion can center on the exception. Similarly, any euthanasia movement will not begin with a sudden massive attack on the elderly and medically dependent. It will begin with the exceptions; that is where the groundwork is laid.

A change is under way. In a recent poll, sixty-one percent of those questioned said a patient should be able to have a doctor “put him out



of his misery.” That approval of active, voluntary euthanasia has jumped dramatically from thirty-seven percent in 1973.¹ Groups such as the Hemlock Society and the Society for the Right to Die, which are dedicated to repealing laws against euthanasia, now boast thousands of members. People today have softened their stance toward euthanasia, and changes in basic values have played a key role.

A Clash of Values

As with the debate over abortion, the debate over euthanasia begins with fundamental questions about the value of life. A September 1970 editorial in *California Medicine*, the official journal of the California Medical Association, argues that the traditional western ethic that views life as sacred is being replaced by a new relativistic ethic that emphasizes “quality of

life." The editorial points out that this ethic is most clearly seen in attitudes toward human abortion, but goes on to say, "One may anticipate further development...as the problems of birth control and birth selection are extended inevitably to death selection and death control."²

Much of the media passively endorses this ethic by the way it handles stories on euthanasia. In January, two editions of *60 Minutes* studied the issue of eu-

thanasia. One edition included an uncritical look at euthanasia in Holland, where, it was reported, doctors who administer lethal pills or injections kill twenty thousand people a year. No attempt was made to confront the morality of such widespread euthanasia.

The next week, another edition followed up with a story about assisted suicide among the elderly in America. The focus was on the growing number of elderly who

have planned their own suicide or helped their spouses or friends commit suicide. As horrific as these stories were, the belief that assisted suicide was morally acceptable stood virtually unchallenged.

A Christian response to euthanasia needs to begin with a challenge to this secular view of life. Recognizing God as the author of life, believers see life as a sacred treasure. Sanctity of life stems from the reality that we belong not to ourselves but to God:

None of us lives to himself alone and none of us dies to himself alone. If we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord (Rom. 14:7-8 NIV).

Decisions on Treatment

One of the key issues in the euthanasia debate is over treatment for the terminally ill. Take the case of an elderly patient with advanced emphysema and heart disease who has slipped into a coma. Should he be left on a respirator? Should he be resuscitated if his heart stops? Should his guardian feel compelled to authorize any and all treatments that might extend life?

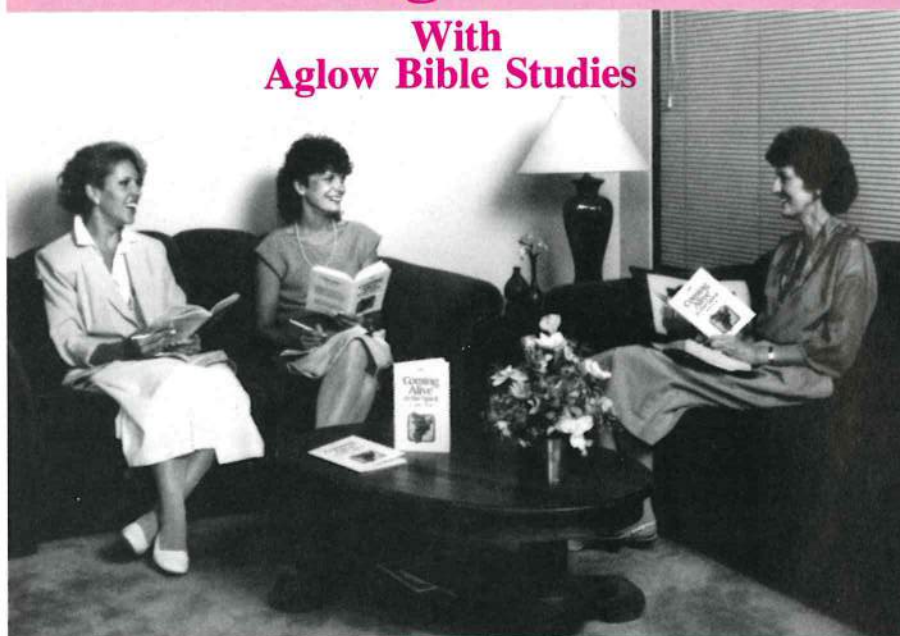
Christians need to establish clear and defensible positions on these kinds of questions. In cases where burdensome and expensive medical treatment offers little hope of improving the patient's condition, there is broad agreement among Christians that a legitimate choice exists. The patient can choose to undergo the most advanced medical treatment, even if it is at the experimental stage and offers little chance of improvement. An example would be Barney Clark, the first recipient of an artificial heart.

On the other hand, a patient can also in good conscience decide to refuse forms of treatment that impose a great burden and offer little hope. Chemotherapy for a patient with advanced terminal cancer is an option; it is not in every case a moral obligation.

Father Robert Barry, a theologian and National Endowment for the Humanities fellow, said in

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an interview, "In medical treatment, a distinction can be drawn between extraordinary treatment, which is painful, expensive, and probably useless, and ordinary treatment, which is not usually costly or painful and is likely to result in clear benefit. Extraordinary treatment allows a choice."

A central question is whether artificial feeding and hydration should be included under these optional medical treatments. In a landmark decision last year, the New Jersey Supreme Court decided that hospitals may withhold artificial feeding from the terminally ill. Artificial feeding can be administered through devices such as a nasogastric tube, which delivers liquids and nutrients through the nose and esophagus directly into the stomach.

Some, such as John Robertson, a University of Texas law professor, think that artificial feeding is an extension of medical treatment and should be discretionary. He says, "If you can legally and ethically take a respirator from a patient, the decision has already been made to let the patient die. Why, then, is it not justifiable to remove food?"³

U.S. Surgeon General C. Everett Koop, however, argues that "withholding fluids or nourishment at any time is an immoral act."⁴

According to Father Barry, a key distinction can and should be made between discretionary treatment and required care: "A respirator replaces a function of the body. It actively forces air into the lungs. A nasogastric tube is a simple device that assists the natural bodily functions. Providing food is care, not a medical treatment. We should make certain that people die from the underlying pathological condition, and not because we have refused to give them basic care to which they are entitled."

The Spread of Living Wills

As a response to questions of treatment and care, living wills have become increasingly prevalent. The Euthanasia Society of America first proposed the concept of a living will in 1967, and since then has distributed millions throughout the country. Individuals sign these wills

before they get sick and typically ask doctors to stop "life-sustaining procedures" in the event of a "terminal condition." Since 1976, thirty-five states and the District of Columbia have passed living will laws to make these documents legally binding.

Because of its broad language, a living will would have to be interpreted by the courts, and as a result, legal precedents could be set that would have a profound impact on what medical treatment would be followed in other cases. What that impact would be is entirely unclear. "In a living will," Father Barry said, "being terminal and incompetent authorizes death. Death depends on who defines those words. You don't know what you're buying."

Dr. Joseph Stanton, a governing member of the Value of Life Committee, said in an interview that a living will is unnecessary and withdraws some significant safeguards: "Any patient can have a guardian appointed to make decisions in the case of incapacitation. The living will would give doctors who withdraw treatment a legal immunity they do not now have. It could very easily be subject to abuse."

The Engine for Euthanasia

Questions about medical treatment and living wills are taking place in an atmosphere of growing support for euthanasia, but active euthanasia is still relatively limited. Economic and demographic trends, however, represent potent forces that could heighten the pressure for euthanasia.

Consider these facts: Four out of five Americans now die in hospitals or nursing homes (only half did thirty-five years ago) usually after long illnesses. One fifth of medicare costs are for people in their last year of life. And as our population grows older, medical expenses, which increased tenfold from 1950 to 1975, could become overwhelming.

The glut of abortions in America further fuels the demographic dilemma. If abortions continue at the present rate, more than forty-eight million people who would have been thirty-six or younger by the year 2009 will be killed. This drastically

continued on page 36

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Getting Along

Is Christian civil
by Max

They called it the "Gideon Project." Like the biblical character Gideon, Matthew Goldsby and James Simmons felt God had told them to go on a mission of destruction. And so early Christmas morning 1984, they blew up a Pensacola, Florida, abortion clinic and the offices of two gynecologists who had performed abortions. Goldsby's fiancée, Kay Wiggins, called it "a gift to Jesus on His birthday." A Pensacola jury called it lawlessness.

In recent years, hundreds of incidents of threats, vandalism, and bombings directed at abortion clinics have been reported. But these actions raise serious questions: How far from God's law must civil authorities go before Christians can disobey? What are the proper means of civil disobedience? Is violence ever justified?

Civil government has a right to our taxes, fear, and honor (see Romans 13:7). Yet, as John Whitehead, director of the Rutherford Institute, a Christian legal aid organization, writes, "Conflict becomes inevitable when the secular authority—Caesar—demands for himself honors that belong only to God."¹

When Caesar assumes that role, or when he passes laws that severely conflict with God's law, Christian civil disobedience comes into focus. Although the Holy Spirit may lead individuals to take radical steps where others have not trod, it's good to have guidelines that adhere to Scripture.

Samuel Rutherford, in his classic on civil disobedience, *Lex, Rex: or The Law and the Prince*, written in 1644, took a more activist stance

than do most modern Christians. Government is sanctioned by God, he wrote, but the state is to be run according to biblical principles. When it acts without a biblical foundation, its actions are illegitimate, and are therefore acts of tyranny. A tyrannical government is immoral, he argued, and consequently a satanic entity. It is not only the right but also the duty of Christians to resist such governments; to do otherwise is to resist God.

When the state is committed to ignoring God's ethical base, he wrote, there are levels of resistance for the individual to engage in. First is protest, generally meaning legal action; second, flight to another government; and third, the use of force. Force does not mean violence, but a compulsion or constraint exerted upon the state. For example, a sit-in at the Supreme Court to protest abortion would exert nonviolent force on the state. Rutherford said one should not jump to steps 2 or 3 without first taking the prior steps.

Salt of the Earth

This restrained but positive response to an unscriptural application of civil authority lines up with Jesus' charge to the Church: "You are the salt of the earth" (Mt. 5:13 NAS). Three aspects of salt illustrate the potential of our response to conflicts with civil authority:

First, too much salt destroys. Conquering armies of old spread salt on the soil of the vanquished country, rendering it useless for cultivation. This abusive use of salt distorts what Jesus called us to.

An example of "too much salt"

With Caesar

disobedience okay?
Heine

is demonstrated in a recent incident involving parents who were arrested for schooling their children at home. The parents simply needed to allow the local school board to review their curriculum, but refused to comply with school officials on the basis that they had God-given authority over their children that the state could not usurp. Ignoring the scriptural command to submit to legitimate authority, these parents determined to broadcast that God was the boss. They were jailed, and rather than enlightening the school officials about God's authority, they probably convinced them that home educators are fanatics.

Second, salt is a preservative. In every age, secular pressures seek to mingle with the meat of God's eternal truths and cause decomposition. The decay is often visible in the social arena, where godly principles are challenged by popular trends or man-made law. This is where Christians can reply to abortionists, "The sanctity of life is a value worth preserving. Here's what God's Word says about it. And this is how we can care for distraught mothers and unwanted babies."

Third, salt enhances flavor. Jesus didn't say, "You are the hydrochloric acid of the earth, burning and corroding every situation you mix with." Rather, He compared the Church to a different chlorine compound—sodium chloride, or salt—that can bring out the best of whatever it is sprinkled upon.

When Christians began harboring refugees from El Salvador and other Central American countries,

those involved believed the biblical mandate to care for the downtrodden and the Old Testament establishment of sanctuaries gave them license to shelter illegal aliens. But a different flavor emerges with the addition of more scriptural salt: a mandate to submit to legitimate authority, perhaps topped with a burden for personal involvement with the spiritual needs in the aliens' homeland.

In the throes of debate on issues such as home schooling, abortion, and sanctuary, much of the unsaved public perceives only a paralysis resulting from the tension of two equally strong opinions. This should come as no surprise. Proverbs 28:5 implies that those who reject God's law can't comprehend godly justice, let alone submit to it. The righteous, having the salt of God's wisdom, are required to apply it for the sake of justice. The proper presentation of a godly perspective can suddenly transform an issue from paralysis to the healthy vigor of resolution according to the living and active Word of God. □

Footnote

¹John Whitehead, "Christian Resistance in the Face of State Interference," *The Theology of Christian Resistance*, ed. Gary North (Tyler, TX: Geneva Divinity School Press, 1983), p. 2.



Max Heine is a business reporter and copy editor with the Tuscaloosa (Ala.) News. He lives with his wife, Edie, and their three children in the Tuscaloosa area.



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Promoting Biblical Truth Through Kingdom Living

Euthanasia

continued from page 33

reduces the number that could support the elderly and medically dependent, narrowing the base on which they must depend.

The appeal to cutting costs has effectively fed the fires of euthanasia in the past. Math textbooks in Nazi Germany presented the medical expenses of the chronically ill in exaggerated terms. They then asked students to calculate the cost of care and compare it to other more "useful" purposes. Speeches, newspapers, and books referred to the chronically ill as "useless eaters." In the wake of this propaganda, the resulting euthanasia movement killed 275,000 patients.

Given its changing values and demographic pressures, our society could also resort to widespread euthanasia.

"If we ever take the step to active euthanasia," Father Barry said, "it will probably be as a result of economic pressure." Stanton concurred: "The demographic changes will put stress on our health care system as never before. There will be tremendous pressure to cut expenses. Already, an internal government memo has mentioned the adoption of living wills as a way to reduce Medicare costs."

A City on a Hill

To stop the slide to euthanasia, the Christian community must proclaim the precious value of God-given life and establish wise standards for treatment and care. Going beyond words, we need to provide a witness in the way we care for our own elderly and medically dependent. As a city set on a hill, we should show the world a different way of life.

My mother recently told me that one of her gifts was caring for the elderly. In the church where I grew up, one of her main ministries was to a group of elderly widows to whom she was a close friend. She would plan their monthly luncheons, keep in touch with their needs, and lend an open ear to their concerns. When one of these widows suffered a stroke, she came to live with us for three years, and my mother supervised all her care.

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lievers need to recognize and honor. Christians need to support and encourage those who want to provide home care as an alternative to institutional care. We need to inculcate in the body of Christ respect and love for the elderly. If we honor and care for our own elderly, it will be a powerful witness to our society.

Forty years ago, most Americans would have considered it unthinkable that we would soon be aborting more than one million unborn children every year. As society compromised its view of life, however, abortion on demand became inescapable. The spread of society's deadly ethic continues. Euthanasia is next in line, and the course is clear. Unless Christians effectively challenge the attack on life, our society will broaden its embrace of death. □

Footnotes

¹Alan L. Otten, "Can't We Put My Mother to Sleep?" *The Wall Street Journal* (June 5, 1985).

²"A New Ethic for Medicine and Society," *California Medicine*, Vol. 113, No. 3 (September 1970), p. 68.

³Susan Tifft, "Debate on the Boundary of Life," *Time* (April 11, 1983), p. 69.

⁴*Ibid.*



Arne Christenson is a legislative aide to Representative Vin Weber (R-Minn.). A graduate of St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minnesota, he served as an editor at Augsburg Publishing House, and has contributed to the *International Lutheran*

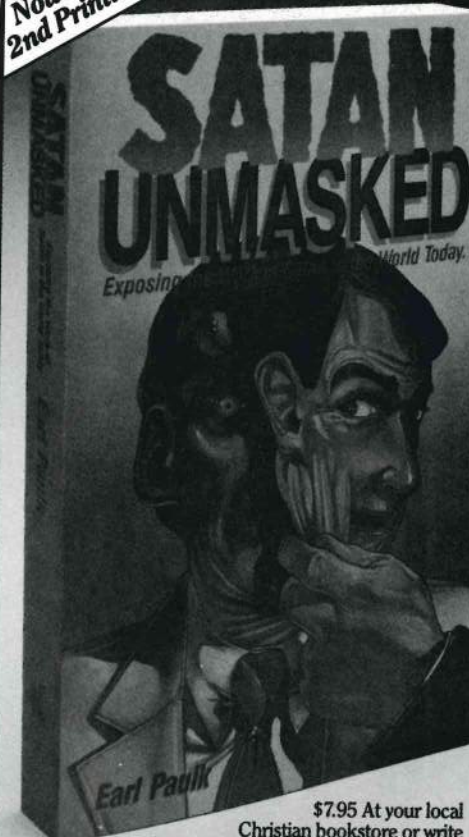
Renewal Center newsletter. He makes his home in Arlington, Virginia.

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For more information: National Legal Center for the Medically Dependent and Disabled, P.O. Box 441069, Indianapolis, IN 46204, (317) 632-6245; The Value of Life Committee, 637 Cambridge St., Brighton, MA 02135, (617) 787-4400.

For further reading: *Last Rights* by Joseph Piccione, 64 pages. Copy available for \$2.95 from Free Congress, 721 Second St. NE, Washington, D.C. 20002. And *Now...Euthanasia* by Father Paul Marx, 106 pages. Copy available for \$2.00 from Human Life International, Inc., 418 C St. NE, Washington, D.C. 20002. □

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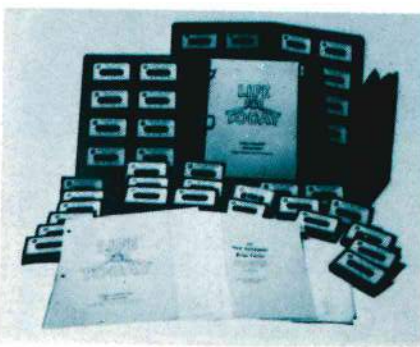
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Quake on the Lake

What happens when Christians pray for their city

by Diana Scimone

For Stephan Witt, the elevator ride up to the eighteenth floor of the Holiday Inn in downtown Cleveland seemed to take forever. When he finally arrived on the top floor of the hotel, he quickly found the room, unlocked the door, and rushed in to pull back the curtains. It was perfect. Down below him, city hall seemed close enough to touch; a little farther away he could see the downtown business district, the stadium, and the lakefront bordering Lake Erie. With a view extend-

ing some forty miles, he could see most of Cleveland.

Noting that the room number was 1812, he smiled to himself as he recalled that 1812 was a year of war for the United States, a year that helped shape the direction of the country. He knew that he too was going to war. The Lord had told him, "You are going to wage spiritual warfare over this city." Along with hundreds of other Cleveland residents who would meet in that Holiday Inn room, he would be declaring war on the principalities

that held the city in bondage.

"It all started last August," explains Stephan, who is pastor of New Hope Church in nearby Brunswick, Ohio. "One day I was studying Acts chapter 16 where Paul and Silas were in prison, and they prayed, and suddenly an earthquake shook the foundation of the prison. I've read that story many times, yet that particular day the Lord showed me it also pertained to Cleveland."

He saw four important points in the passage: First, the earthquake

occurred about midnight, a traditional hour of calamity. Second, there was unity between Paul and Silas. Third, things didn't start to happen until they began to sing hymns and pray together. Fourth, the other prisoners were listening to find out if what they had to say was worthwhile.

"I saw that Cleveland was no different than that prison," he says. "There are people here who are also in bondage—to drugs, alcohol, and pornography. This city is the pornography capital of the country. Reuben Sturman, called the 'pornographic czar' by federal officials investigating him, lives here, and the city is a big pornography distribution center. The term 'rock and roll' originated in Cleveland, and it is the home of the nation's top-ranked rock-and-roll radio station."

The Lord showed Stephan that the jailer in the story in Acts represented key men and women in Cleveland who through their influence are holding people in bondage. "Just as the jailer was roused from his sleep, these people need to be roused from their sleep and their bondage," he says. "The really exciting thing was that the jailer and his entire household committed their lives to the Lord."

"Mistake on the Lake"

During the 1970's when Cleveland became the first city in U.S. history to declare bankruptcy, it was sarcastically called the "mistake on the lake," a term that stuck even in this decade. But as Stephan prayed, the Lord told him that He desires that Cleveland be called "quake on the lake," a city shaken through prayer.

"I don't usually measure revelation by 'chills,'" Stephan explains, "but when I read that passage again, I felt chills all over me because I knew God desired to release people from bondage and open doors for ministry in the city like never before."

He told the Lord that he also wanted to see his city shaken, but didn't know how to go about it. Stephan's year-old church was small—about seventy people—and was located twenty miles outside the Cleveland city limits.

It would have been easy to say, What can we really do? But Stephan was reminded of the scripture from Leviticus: "Five of you will chase a hundred, and a hundred of you will chase ten thousand" (Lev. 26:8 NAS). He decided he had to do something, so he began meeting with pastors throughout the city to formulate battle plans.

The pastors agreed to mobilize their members for a week long, round-the-clock prayer offensive to be called "Quake on the Lake," and they centered their efforts in room 1812 of the downtown Holiday Inn overlooking the city.

They decided to concentrate their prayers during Halloween week. "We had two main objectives," explains Stephan. "First, we wanted to promote unity in the body of Christ. The best common denominator for unity is prayer. You can get people to pray together when you can't get them to do anything else together. Second, we wanted to tear down spiritual strongholds that have kept Cleveland in bondage."

The prayer room was staffed twenty-four hours a day. Some nights as many as thirty-five people spent the entire night in prayer together. "Many times when Christians get together, they just want to fellowship, so we made sure people knew what they were there for. We didn't have punch and cookies—just chairs and prayer lists. But we didn't have to worry. People came in and immediately headed for the windows, sat down or kneeled down, or just walked back and forth in front of the windows. And they began to wage war over the city."

Each day they attacked a different spiritual stronghold—pornography, abortion, church factions, and others. A list of scriptures was made available to assist people in praying. "Whenever I walked into the prayer room, my spirit was provoked. You could do nothing but pray," he says.

One night a security guard walked down the hall outside the room, and after hearing the prayers, said, "Whatever you are doing in there, I can feel the power of it out here." In fact, a few people walked into the room "by accident" and before they left committed their lives to the Lord.

People walking by the hotel reported that they could sense something uplifting in the air. And those who were praying said that although they couldn't see total victory in the natural, in their spirit they knew that things were going to change. Cleveland would never be the same again.

Prayer Works

Stephan explains that the flow of the Spirit changed often during the week. "At times it was quiet and majestic. At other times, it was rip-roaring spiritual warfare."

More than 350 people from 55 churches came to pray. That in itself was an answer to prayer, and fulfilled the first purpose of Quake on the Lake—unity among churches

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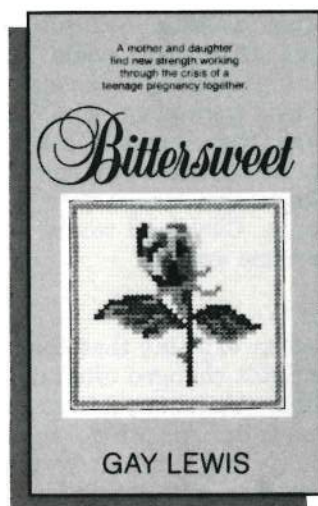
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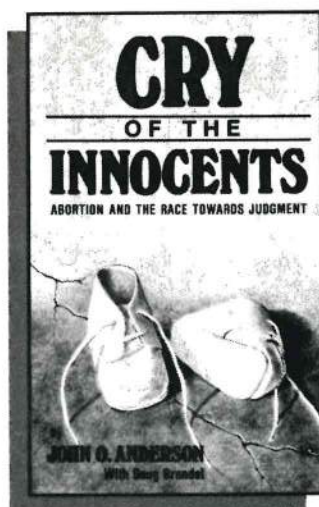
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in the Cleveland area. "I've lived here all my life, and there has never been such wholehearted cooperation in the churches for anything," Stephan excitedly recalls. At least fifteen denominations were represented in all, including Baptist, Catholic, Assembly of God, Methodist, Presbyterian, Episcopalian, Lutheran, and nondenominational churches.

The second goal was also met—tearing down strongholds in the city. "We were specifically praying against Halloween," Stephan says, "asking the Lord to show us areas of satanic worship in the city. The Lord led us to several places where we found evidence of satanism. In fact, students in a public high school were into so much satanic activity that a Roman Catholic priest was called in to talk with them."

Quake on the Lake was held just days before local elections, and Stephan attributes many of the victories at the polls to their prayers.

In neighboring Lorain County, where churches sponsored their own "Quake on the Lake" during the same week, citizens voted seven to three in favor of limiting pornography. As a result, nude dancing is no longer allowed in the city and stores must now put covers on pornographic magazines that they sell. The decision is expected to set a national precedent on limiting pornography.

"We had set aside Monday of that week to pray against pornography," Stephan says, "and that very night on the news we learned the owner of a group of stores in our area had decided to remove pornographic material from his stores."

One of the most important lessons that Stephan and the other prayer warriors learned was the necessity of being aggressive in prayer. "You have to knock and keep on knocking, ask and keep on asking. You wouldn't believe how the enemy fought all our plans, trying to destroy our credibility. But his efforts only spurred the people to unite, and they devoted themselves to prayer that much more."

Still Seeing Results

Stephan believes that as time

goes on they will see still more results of their intensive prayers. For example, the city council recently voted to outlaw any new pornographic bookstores or movie theaters in the city. "The interesting thing was that there was no specific lobbying effort to get the council to do this," Stephan reports. "No one was pushing for it in the natural, but in the spiritual something was happening."

Stephan and other pastors in the city have also noticed a greater spiritual intensity at church meetings. "One Sunday, for example, we had a tremendous service at our church. Later, in talking with other pastors I found out that the same thing happened in at least four other churches that very same morning. God is doing something in our city, and we're just beginning to see it. It's like a dam that bursts. At first you only see a trickle, but soon there will be a great wave of spiritual activity all over the city."

To keep the momentum going, churches in Cleveland are planning a Quake on the Lake Day on the first Friday of every month until they see their city become a city of righteousness.

"We were fighting the prince of the power of the air," Stephan adds, "and we were right up there in the heavens with him. It was an earthshaking time. We were really expecting a literal tremor to happen, because when people cry out to God, there's an earthquake—sometimes literal, sometimes spiritual, but always liberating. It happened throughout the Old Testament. And when Jesus cried out to the Father on the cross, there was an earthquake and tombs were opened and people walked out. When He was raised from the dead, there was an earthquake. In Acts chapter 4 when the believers met together and were praying, the room was shaken."

"It's stirring to know that God wants to shake the cities of America. I really believe we're on the brink of a whole new outpouring of the Holy Spirit." □

Diana Scimone is an editorial assistant for New Wine.

Watchmen on the Walls

John Beckett, president of Intercessors for America, explains that the Bible shows us God's desire to redeem our cities. "Abraham was told that the Lord would have spared Sodom," Beckett wrote in a recent *Intercessors for America* newsletter, "if but ten righteous had been found there" (see Genesis chapter 18).

David freed Jerusalem when it was a Jebusite stronghold (see 2 Samuel chapter 5). Nineveh, an "exceedingly great city," was spared for nearly two hundred years after it repented following Jonah's pronouncement of impending judgment (see Jonah chapter 3). When Daniel was in Babylon in exile, Jeremiah encouraged him to "pray to the Lord on its (Babylon's) behalf; for in its welfare you will have welfare" (Jer. 29:7 NAS). Nehemiah later led the inhabitants of a devastated Jerusalem to rebuild its walls and gates in fifty-two days, withstanding the demoralizing opposition of Sanballat and Tobiah (see Nehemiah chapters 2-6).

In Proverbs, a city rejoices when the righteous prosper, and is exalted by the blessing of the upright (see Proverbs 11:10-11). Isaiah likens the redeemed community to a "city not forsaken" (Is. 62:12).

Beckett explains that Intercessors for America has begun calling for a watch on American cities, reasoning that the well-being of places where we live will greatly influence the well-being of the Church. "We believe the Lord wants the foundations restored," Beckett writes, "and the spiritual Sanballats and Tobiahs driven back. The will of God is for good government, and for quiet and peaceful cities. The intercessor can help bring it to pass!" ☐



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TIPS FOR FATHERS

This welcomed friend taught us much

The Stranger

by Keith Currie

A few months before I was born, my dad met a stranger who was new to our small Tennessee town. From the beginning, Dad was fascinated with this enchanting newcomer, and soon invited him to live with our family. The stranger was quickly accepted, and was around to welcome me into the world a few months later.

As I grew up I never questioned his place in our family. In my young mind, each member had a special niche. My brother, Bill, five years my senior, was my example. Fran, my younger sister, gave me an opportunity to play "big brother" and to develop the art of teasing. My parents were complementary instructors—Mom taught me to love the Word of God and Dad taught me to obey it.

But the stranger was our storyteller. He could weave the most fascinating tales. Adventures, mysteries, and comedies were daily conversations. He would hold our whole family spellbound for hours each evening.

If I wanted to know about politics, history, or science, he knew it all. He knew about the past, understood the present, and seemingly could predict the future. The pictures he could draw were so lifelike that I would often laugh or cry as I watched.

He was like a friend to the whole family. He took Dad, Bill, and me to our first major league baseball game. He was always encouraging us to see movies and he even made arrangements to introduce us to several movie stars. My brother and I were deeply impressed by John Wayne in particular.

The stranger was an incessant talker. Dad didn't seem to mind,

but sometimes Mom would quietly get up—while the rest of us were enthralled with one of his stories of faraway places—go to her room, read her Bible, and pray. I wonder now if she ever prayed that the stranger would leave.

You see, my dad ruled our household with certain moral convictions. But somehow this stranger never felt obligated to honor them. Profanity, for example, was not allowed in our house—not from us, from our friends, or from adults. Our long-term visitor, however, used occasional four-letter words that burned my ears and made Dad squirm. To my knowledge the stranger was never confronted.

My dad was also a teetotaler who didn't permit alcohol in his home—not even for cooking. But the stranger felt like we needed exposure and enlightened us to other ways of life. He offered us beer and other alcoholic beverages often.

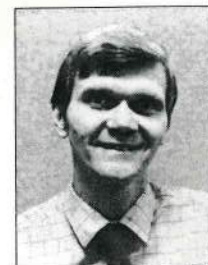
He made cigarettes look tasty, cigars manly, and pipes distinguished. He talked freely (probably much too freely) about sex. His comments were sometimes blatant, sometimes suggestive, and generally embarrassing. I know now that my early concepts of the man-woman relationship were influenced by the stranger.

As I look back, I believe it was the grace of God that the stranger did not influence us more. Time after time he opposed the values of my parents. Yet he was seldom rebuked and was never asked to leave.

More than thirty years have passed since the stranger first moved in with the young family on Morningside Drive. He is not nearly so intriguing to my dad as he

was in those early years. But if you were to walk into my parents' den today, you would still see him sitting over in a corner, waiting for someone to listen to him talk and watch him draw his pictures.

His name? We always just called him TV. □



Keith Currie is principal of Gulf Coast Covenant School, Mobile, Alabama. He is a graduate of Trevecca Nazarene College and Vanderbilt University's George Peabody College for Teachers, both in Nashville, and he and his wife, Patricia, live in Mobile with their two children.

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How to make 1986 the best year yet!

FATHERGRAM

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

How to make 1986 the best year yet!

by Gloria Longstrech

S... (text continues)

THIS MONTH

Rabbit Hunt

by Vernon Strickland

H... (text continues)

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How God changes men and events The Work of the Spirit

As we study the Scriptures, it's essential that we see and understand the work of the Holy Spirit throughout them. The Spirit is God's agent on earth. Wherever we feel the presence of God or see a manifestation of His presence, the Spirit of God is there.

God created the world and works in it by His same Spirit (see Psalm 104:30). When He wants to change men or the direction of events, He sends His Spirit. Jesus, for example, was conceived by the Spirit (see Luke 1:35). The miracles that He did were the function of the same Spirit, and not just the evidence of His divine sonship (see Acts 10:38). Moses, Elisha, Peter, and Paul were others who did miracles through the power of the Spirit. And according to John 14:12, we can do the "works" of Jesus by the same Spirit.

By tracing the manifestations of the Spirit, we can see God at work in biblical history. While some historians, for example, focus their attention on Israel's kings to better understand the rise and fall of that nation, we are more interested in the prophets. Because the Spirit of God worked or acted through the prophets, we see God's perspective on why Israel succeeded and failed when we look at them. This is clearly seen as we study 1 and 2 Kings.

As we study the Scriptures, we see three ways in which the Holy Spirit is active:

1. *Inspiration.* The Spirit inspired holy men of God to write the original documents that make up the Bible. The word used in Scripture for this inspiration means "God breathed" (see 2 Timothy 3:16).

But inspiration of the original documents (which we no longer have) would be meaningless if all further translations and versions were not also controlled by the same Spirit.

Therefore, we come to the second activity of the Spirit in Scripture.

2. *Preservation.* In Jeremiah 1:12, God says, "I am watching over My word to perform it" (NAS). We can best translate the verb "to perform" as "to preserve its meaning and power." We don't have to worry about translators choosing the wrong manuscript version or papyrus fragment from the many conflicting copies available. The Holy Spirit is "brooding" over the men who work with various translations and versions of the Bible.

But even this preservation is not enough to insure accuracy. Something else is needed.

3. *Illumination.* Even if we had the original autographed copies of biblical documents, we would not fully comprehend their meaning with our natural minds. The Spirit enables us to get the essential message from God by illuminating the written word in our understanding (see 1 Corinthians 2:11-12).

The Spirit inspired the original manuscripts, preserved their correct translation through the ages, and illuminates the meaning so that when we read the Bible today, we see the truth in the same way Moses, David, Peter, and Paul saw it.

With these thoughts in mind, we can now look at the work of the Holy Spirit in the Scriptures.

FIRST ASSIGNMENT:

In the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit is hidden in various metaphors and types. The following foreshadow the coming of the Comforter in the New Testament—cloud, wind, spirit, fire, oil, water, and dew. With a concordance, list those types and the functions of the Spirit they indicate as found in the Book of Numbers.

SECOND ASSIGNMENT:

The breath of God was the agent of creation (see Genesis 2:7). What New Testament scriptures show the breath or "wind of God" at work?

THIRD ASSIGNMENT:

Here are several other scriptures that show the operation of the Spirit in the Old Testament. After each group of scriptures, list the operation of the Spirit indicated.

Psalm 33:6 _____

2 Samuel 22:16; Psalm 18:15; Isaiah 30:33 _____

1 Samuel 19:18-24; Ezekiel 8:3; 37:1-14 _____

Isaiah 11:2; 42:1; 61:1-3 _____

Psalm 51:10-19 _____

FOURTH ASSIGNMENT:

For further study, take an unabridged concordance and look up the references to wind, breath, and Spirit of God in the Old Testament. List the functions of the Spirit indicated for each one. This will be a great personal reference for your future study of the Holy Spirit.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

Thomas, W. H. Griffith. *The Holy Spirit of God.* Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1976.

Pink, Arthur W. *The Holy Spirit.* Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1980.

THE WAY I SEE IT

We may need to change our perspective

When God Plays Favorites

by Don Basham

I suppose every child—unless he is an only child—has times when he thinks his parents love his brothers and sisters more than they love him. I am not totally unfamiliar with the problem myself, having been born the youngest of three brothers. Many times I felt my parents favored my two brothers. My problem was that even though they were two and four years older, I wanted to do everything they did as soon as they did it, such as the Christmas I finally got my first bicycle....

I couldn't wait to ride all over the neighborhood, just like my brothers did. So I became angry when my parents restricted me to the sidewalk in front of our house. I wanted to ride in the street like my brothers did, even though my toes barely touched the pedals and I wandered all over the sidewalk trying to keep from falling off.

When I asked why I couldn't go where my brothers went and do what my brothers did, my parents' answer didn't help at all. "Because you're not as old as they are," they always said. I might have been young, but I wasn't stupid. It didn't take a genius to figure out that no matter how long I lived, I never would be as old as my brothers were!

Of course, I saw only my side of the situation. My brothers had a different perspective. They remembered all the times I received special treatment as "baby brother." For example, every six weeks "Hen House Cleanup Saturday" rolled around, and each time my brothers complained loudly that I should share in the task of scraping and shoveling all that icky stuff from the dirty hen house into baskets and spreading it in the garden or flower beds.

"Why doesn't Don have to help?" they cried. My parents' re-

sponse was sweet music in my ears: "Because he's not as old as you are." Of course, the day finally came when I outgrew my cherished exemption from that messy chore. I still remember my brothers gloating as my father said, "Don, you are old enough to help clean the hen house."

Not only have most of us experienced the feeling that our parents played favorites, but at times we may feel that God does as well. The feeling is almost as old as man himself. Cain murdered Abel in a jealous rage because he felt God showed favoritism to his brother Abel by accepting his offering, and became so enraged that he murdered him. Joseph's brothers likewise felt that God played favorites, and they sold him into slavery.

Scripture deals with the problem in the parable of the prodigal son. When the prodigal finally repented and returned home, his grateful father killed the fatted calf and initiated a feast of celebration. The older brother reacted in anger:

"Look! All these years I've been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders. Yet you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!" (Lk. 15:29-30 NIV).

How do we handle it when we feel God loves someone else—maybe everyone else!—more than He loves us? It most often requires a change in our perspective. That's how the father in this story handled it.

First, he reassured his son of his continuing love. "My son, you are always with me, and everything I

have is yours" (v. 31 NIV). Then, he gently adjusted his perspective: "We had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found" (v. 32 NIV).

As my own perspective was adjusted, I eventually came to see that my parents loved me and my brothers equally and that privileges—whether extended or withheld—depended on what they felt was best for us at the time. But that understanding did not come until my wife and I were married and had children of our own.

Then, we made the amazing discovery that while we gave our first child all the love we had, when the next one arrived, we loved her just as much without decreasing our love for the first. With every child, our capacity to love grew, right down through number 5. We never played favorites, but tailored our blessing and our discipline according to what we believed was best for each one.

And so it is with our heavenly Father. Our resentment often stems from our inability to see our situation from His perspective. He loves each of us as if we were the only child He had to love. He is always righteous and always just. He never really plays favorites; He simply blesses and disciplines according to what is best for each of us. Even when we are going through situations that seem terribly difficult and unfair, He is there with us, urging us to go on trusting Him. And if we listen carefully we can hear Him whispering, "You are always with Me, and all that I have is yours." Knowing that can make quite a difference. At least, that's the way I see it. □

Don Basham is chief editorial consultant for New Wine.



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