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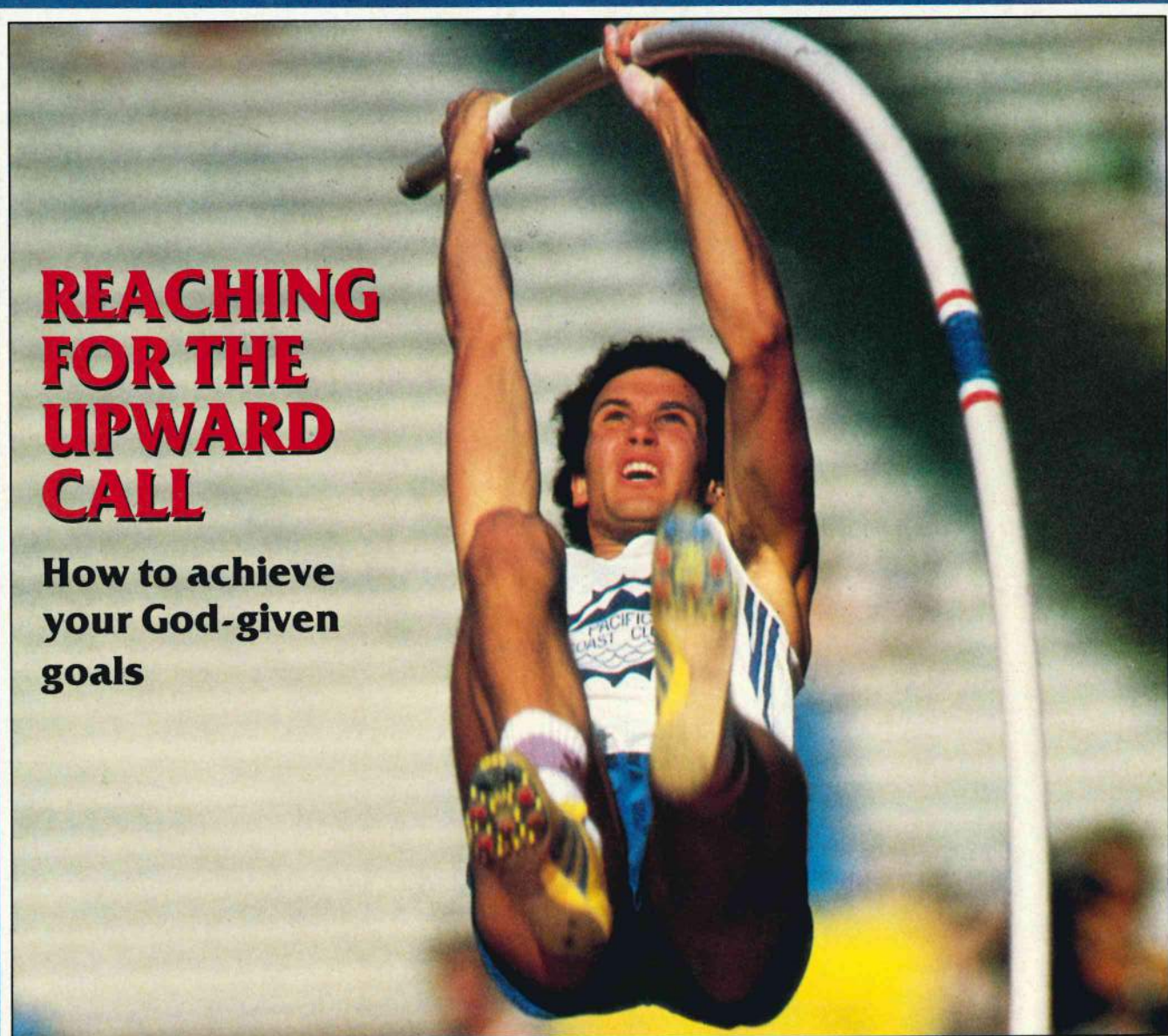
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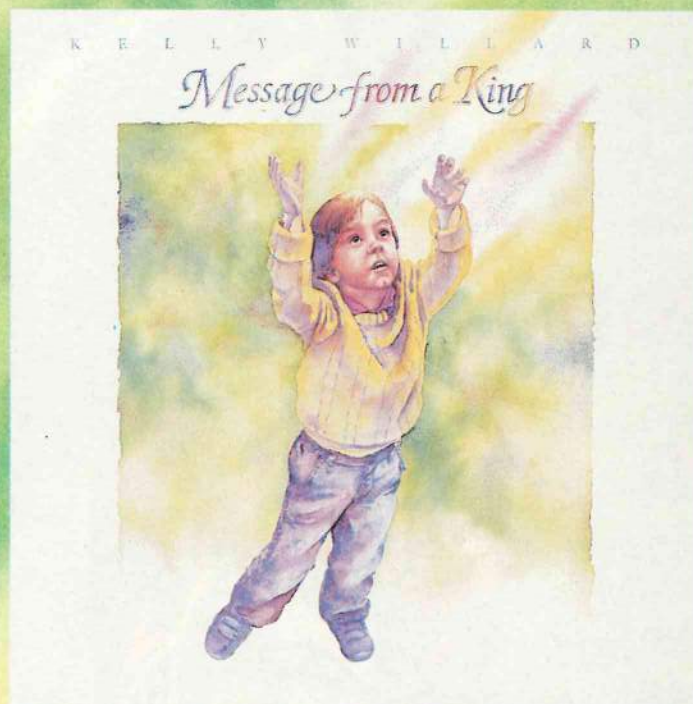
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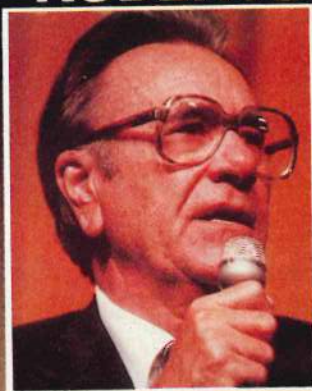


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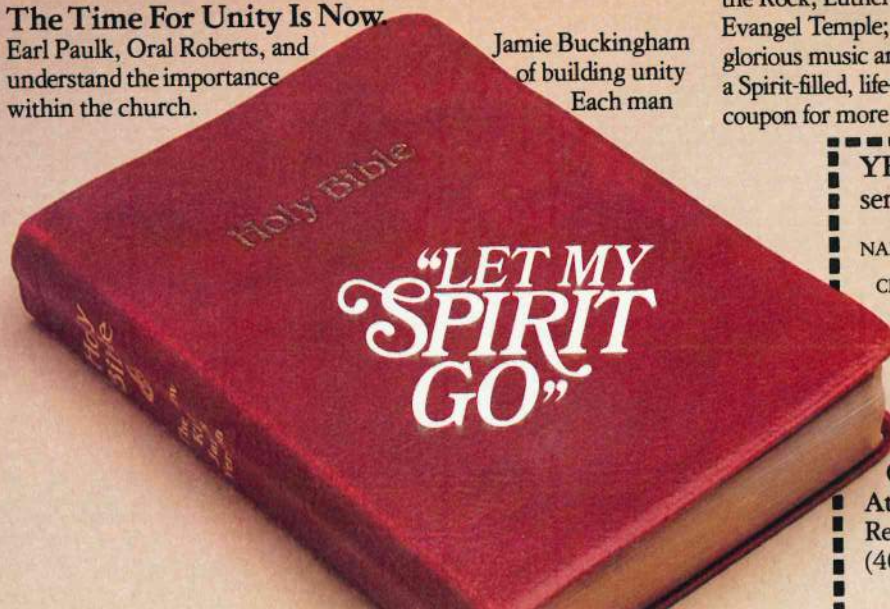
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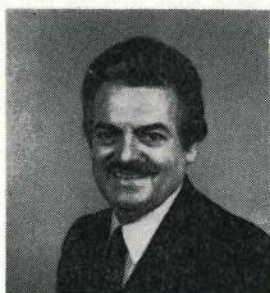


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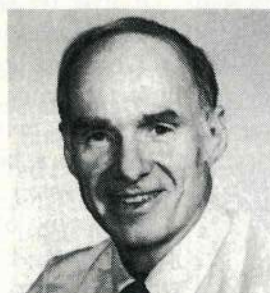
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EDITORIAL

How we can fulfil God's call Running the Race

by Bruce Longstreth

An old gospel hymn, describing one man's salvation experience, says, "Something got ahold of me." That is good theology as far as Paul the apostle is concerned because he says in Philippians 3:12, "I was captured by the Lord Jesus, and my lifelong ambition is to fulfil the purpose for which I was captured" (free translation).

It may be difficult for some to acknowledge that when they accepted Christ as Lord and Savior they, in fact, became His captive. But for Paul, who in another place says that he is a bond slave of Jesus, that admission comes easy.

A trophy of God's irresistible grace, Paul persistently wondered why the Lord bothered to track down and strike blind the Church's chief persecutor as he hurried along the Damascus road on his way to incarcerate the saints in that city. He marveled even more that the Lord would entrust to him the responsibility of preaching the gospel to the Gentiles.

Paul, however, did more than sit around, wondering why God had "apprehended" him. In that same letter to the Philippians, he says that he is straining every nerve and running forward in haste toward the goal, that he might fulfil the purpose and obtain the prize that the Lord has promised for all who finish the race set before them (see verse 14). He is saying, in effect, "If you feel like I do, if you see yourself as Christ's captive, captured for a high and holy calling, join me in the race."

This issue of *New Wine* is for all who desire to run the race that the Lord has set before them. Charles Simpson looks at how Elijah pur-

sued God's call on his life, knowing that the "chariot was waiting" for him at the end of the road. Contributing editor R. J. Rushdoony then tells us where we can find God's marching orders to send us into battle.

In "Where There Is No Vision," John Duke explains that having a personal vision is vital to sustain spiritual life and growth. Then Erik Krueger says that just as the environment Jesus grew up in enabled Him to fulfil His destiny on earth, so it is important for us to create an atmosphere in which we can fulfil God's call on our lives. And finally we offer a shocking report on how false arrests for child abuse are threatening the future of families.

At the close of Paul's life, he said to Timothy:

The glorious fight that God gave me I have fought, the course that I was set I have finished, and I have kept the faith. The future for me holds the crown of righteousness which the Lord, the true judge, will give to me in that day—and not, of course, only to me but to all those who have loved what they have seen of him (2 Tim. 4:7-8 JBP).

Our hope is for more than goal setting, for more than inspiration to "get up and get going." We hope for more than better definitions and new insights into God's will for our lives. Our hope is that the saints in this generation will receive a fresh view of the author and the finisher of their faith, and in that vision finish the course and obtain the prize that the Lord, their captor, has set before them. □

LETTERS

"Dear New Wine"

Touched by "Burnout!"

I've had a subscription to your magazine for a few months now, but I haven't received such a blessed article which touches my life like Dick Iverson's "Burnout!" (July). I've just finished it, and have begun to schedule all the suggestions he has made.

Pastor Kevin Nuber
Erie, PA

Finding the Right Key

I just had to write and express my thanks for the excellent article, "Keys of the Kingdom," by Charles Capps (June). I have read Matthew 16:19 and never understood it. What a revelation! His comment that "too many people are waiting for God to move, not realizing that He has already given them the keys" is so true. I never realized this. Thanks so much. It definitely puts a new outlook on my Christian walk.

Laurie Popson
Dallas, PA

A Timely Word

For some time now I have been struggling greatly with criticism, gossip, and being judgmental. I am a Christian in my beliefs, so I have known all along that these things were wrong and that God hates these things. I hate them too! I have, however, been unable to find out the correct way in which to deal with myself on these serious offenses because I didn't know how.

Then, lo and behold comes the June issue of *New Wine*. As I began to read the list on the cover about what topics would be discussed inside, I immediately recognized that God would use this issue to minister to me and to gently correct me and "lead me in the way I should go." I couldn't help but feel like this issue was written just for me! Each

article pricked my heart greatly.

Pamela Kortright
Rio Piedras, Puerto Rico

Icing on the Cake

Since receiving the June issue ("And God said: Putting the power of God in your words"), I've decided to reconsider canceling my subscription. I had to read it right away because of the one-line introductions to your articles on your front cover. I have read it from cover to cover. *Marvelous, excellent.* When I found that you supported the Scripture memory system by the Navigators, that just put the icing on the cake. My husband and I are personally involved financially with three of the Navigator staff members. Your June issue is very good and what a topic!

Connie Newman
Grinnell, IA

A Case for Obedience

Thanks for Don Basham's very brief, but very poignant article ("Immediate Retribution," June). This (obedience to God's delegated authority) is an area in which many Christians fall short. Besides demonstrating a rebellious attitude, it is also very prideful to decide that "I don't have to follow the posted rules." It's also presumptuous to assume that "I know better than the people who put up that sign."

If we all did better in obeying delegated authority, for example, through speed limit and stop signs, leash laws, and coupon expiration dates, we'd see our children growing up more solidly in the Christian faith. They often know what the rules say better than we and they have eagle eyes to see if we obey those rules!

Mrs. S. R. Stella
Augusta, GA



Gerald Alfred Awuah is a New Wine reader in Secondi, Ghana.

Don't Talk to Strangers

I appreciated Keith Currie's article, "The Stranger" (March). It reached me at the right time, when I was very busy listening to one of the stranger's adventures and movies instead of having a time for God in His Word and prayer.

After reading it, I felt in my spirit God rebuking me. I became sorry for wasting my time instead of using it for God's glory. I immediately left the stranger alone and went to pray.

Let us be careful about this stranger because the devil can use him to deceive us and to steal a lot of our time for God.

Gerald Alfred Awuah
Secondi, Ghana

Please address all letters to "Dear New Wine,"
P.O. Box Z, Mobile, Alabama 36616. Note
that letters may be edited for length.

When I think of a prophet, in my mind I picture Elijah the Tishbite—the rugged, direct, and powerfully gifted prophet—standing alone against the forces of evil. He was the John the Baptist of the Old Testament, a prophet of repentance and fire.

But there was more to Elijah than the freeze-framed photo of a man of God on Mount Carmel calling down fire. There was something else, something weaker brothers and sisters can also identify with.

Loneliness

The image of a lone man of God against evil is what causes us ordinary folk to admire Elijah so much. He was alone in King Ahab's chamber, rebuking him; he was alone at the brook Cherith, in exile awaiting God's direction; he was alone in Zarephath, exiled from the land of his kinsmen; and he was especially alone on Mount Carmel, against all the false prophets. But he was even more alone when Jezebel singled him out for martyrdom because he killed the false prophets. Loneliness deepened as he left his servant at Beersheba and ran from Jezebel. Finally, in the desert under a juniper tree he prayed, "Lord, let me die. I and I alone am left."

One would think that when he brought repentance and rain to Israel after three and one-half years, Elijah would have been a national hero. Elijah must have thought so as he outran Ahab's chariot back to Jezreel, the capital city. But he was no hero there. Instead when he arrived, he received word from Jezebel, "In twenty-four hours you are a dead man!" He ran.

After three and one-half years of being a fugitive, he was once again running. Jezebel's javelin of rejection had struck his heart; his will was broken.

The Real Issue

Elijah means "Jehovah is God." His very name was a mission statement. Baal is not God; Ashtoreth

is not God; Jehovah is God. Faithfully, he had called the nation back to the true God. But now after he had given his all, he was still a fugitive—rejected.

When he had begun his ministry, as recorded in 1 Kings 17:1, *Jehovah* was the issue:

"As the Lord, the God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, surely there shall be neither dew nor rain these years, except by my word" (NAS).

But somewhere along the journey Elijah became the issue. Ahab, not wanting to deal with God, made Elijah the issue. Elijah had caused the drought, hadn't he? It was Elijah who was troubling Israel. "No," Elijah responded to Ahab, "you are the troubler." He had kept a clear perspective. God and His righteousness were the issue. But after Mount Carmel came a real let down. Elijah began to focus on himself: "I and I only am left."

Our spiritual enemy wants to make the *messenger* the issue: the pastor, the evangelist, the ministry, the money, the church, and the personality. But not one of those is the issue. *The will of God is*. We are just messengers. But in the war of words, charges and countercharges, opposition and loneliness, it is so easy to lose perspective. "Maybe I am the issue. Maybe if I just dropped out. I have finished my work. Oh, Lord, why can't I just die?"

God knew where Elijah was, there under the juniper tree. Elijah was sleeping and hoping that he was dead. An angel awakened Elijah with food. "Eat this."

Elijah ate, and went back to sleep. So deep was his pain that he scarcely noticed or cared that he had been visited by an angel, that he had eaten supernatural bread.

Again, the angel awakened him, "Arise and eat this. The journey is too hard for you." Truer words were never spoken. God's purpose is too hard apart from His power and His

presence and a right perspective.

There was no rebuke in the angel's voice, no answers to the wrenching questions Elijah had. There was just help to get where he had to go—to the mountain of God.

Elijah got up and continued his

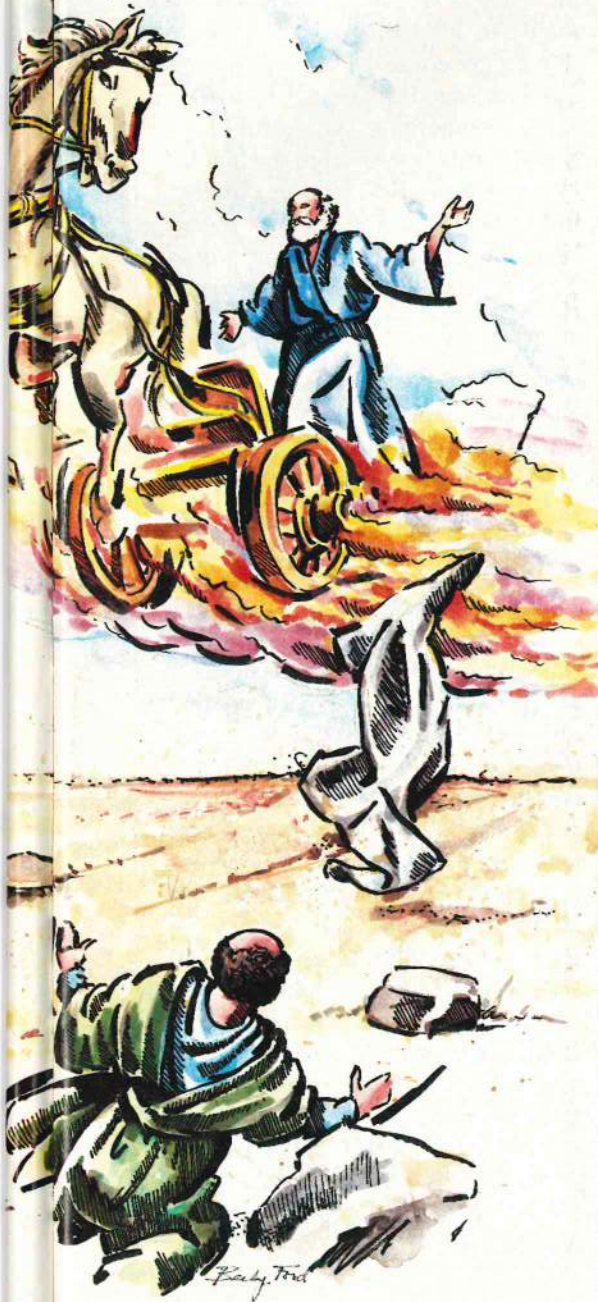
The C



Like Elijah,
we can be renewed
in our purpose
and vision.

by Charles Simpson

Chariot Is Waiting



journey. He would not eat again for forty days. He had to have answers.

The Cave

Soon Elijah was in Sinai's deserted mountains, where Moses and Israel had sought answers centuries

earlier. Finding a cave, he made his way deep into the darkness. The bearded, sinewy old prophet squatted in the darkness against the wall. "I and only I am left and they are trying to kill me. I have been zealous and I have obeyed. Now, I am all that is left."

Elijah had come from Carmel, where he spoke his heroic prayer, to Sinai, where he was in a deep cave of introspection. Elijah had quit. The two places were poles apart. Deeper and deeper into himself he fled.

A voice penetrated the cave. Whether he knew it or not, he had fled to the mountain of God. "Elijah, what are you doing here?"

Elijah was not startled, embarrassed, or apologetic. No, his real problem was with God. He presented his complaint. "I have been zealous. I obeyed. Now, I am the only one left and they are trying to kill me."

"Get up, Elijah. Go stand before the Lord. He is passing by outside the cave." Was Elijah waiting for the Lord to come in and sit with him? He didn't move. "The Lord God before whom I stand," he had said so confidently to Ahab three and one-half years earlier. But now it was different. He had stood before God and Israel for three and one-half years, but he had been hurt—deeply. He couldn't stand any longer.

Outside, a thunderous crashing wind was blowing. But God wasn't in it, and Elijah had no heart for curiosity. He had seen too much to be looking for *anything*. Then, the earth suddenly began to tremble violently. An earthquake! The cave was no place to be in a trembling mountain. But nothing would have suited Elijah more than for the mountain to crush him. God wasn't in the earthquake.

Elijah was squatting, unshaken in his resolve to be angry. A fire swept past the mouth of the cave. Mysterious and powerful, the fire warmed and crackled at the mouth of the cave, but Elijah was not intrigued. He had seen supernatural fire before. He had the gift of fire at Mount Carmel. And besides, the

old prophet knew God, and knew the sensational fire was not the answer for which he searched.

Soon everything was quiet. Then a gentle voice like a soft breeze moved past the cave. It was refreshing, touching something deep inside Elijah. It drew him, as only Jehovah could. "Elijah, what are you doing here?"

Elijah got up and went to the mouth of the cave. He was standing before the Lord again.

"Lord, I have been zealous for You. Israel has forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altar, killed Your prophets, and now I am the only one left, and they are trying to kill me."

"Elijah, go back north. When you get there, anoint Hazael king of Syria and Jehu king of Israel and anoint Elisha prophet in your place. They will finish the work you have begun. By the way, Elijah, you are not the only one; there are seven thousand who have not bowed to Baal."

As I read those lines, I wanted to call out to God, "Wait, Lord! Aren't You going to explain to Elijah why he got hurt? Aren't You going to comfort him?" But there was no mothering or sympathy here. God's answer to Elijah was simple, "I am not through with you; the greatest is yet ahead," and "You are not the only one!"

It was enough. Elijah had heard God. He had regained his sense of purpose and his perspective had been corrected. The fear of Jezebel, the hard questions, and the hurt all faded before his renewed sense of mission.

The feelings of loneliness and rejection had dropped off like feathers from an eagle, molting high in the cliff. Renewed in purpose and vision, he would soar higher—the chariot was waiting.

New Disciple

Elijah found Elisha, son of Shaphat, his new disciple, plowing with twelve pair of oxen. Elisha was strong, sturdy, and productive.

Elijah walked alongside the startled plowman and threw his mantle across Elisha's shoulders, retrieved it, and walked away.

"Wait, my master," Elisha cried. The significance was not lost on him. "Let me go home and say good-by."

"Do whatever you like," Elijah said. "I have done nothing to you."

No zeal here, no possessiveness, no persuasion. That all died in the cave. He moved on toward the purpose of God and the waiting chariot. He had obeyed. The rest was God's. Elisha said good-by to his family and friends and ran after Elijah to find his own call from God.

Elijah went on resolutely toward the purposes of God with Elisha following along. Meanwhile, Ahab and Jezebel continued to grieve God and plundered all that was good in Israel. Naboth, a righteous man, refused to sell his inheritance to Ahab. Ahab pouted and whined his displeasure to his wicked wife, who plotted against righteous Naboth. False witnesses testified against him. He and his heirs were killed to serve Ahab's avarice and Jezebel's sense of power.

Ahab had no sooner walked into Naboth's vineyard, surveying the fruit of his greed, when Elijah stepped out from the vines. Elijah was back.

"You have found me, O my enemy," Ahab squealed.

"The dogs will lick your blood, Ahab, in the very same place Naboth was killed."

And so it was. Ahab was mortally wounded in battle and as his chariot returned, its floorboard was full of blood. As servants washed it, the dogs gathered according to the word of Elijah.

Elijah anointed a new king. Jehu would finish the work with Jezebel. And Elisha would anoint Hazael and thus finish his master's task.

An Opportunity to Quit

One day at Gilgal, Elijah turned to his servant, Elisha. "Stay here," he said. It was not a command. It was an opportunity to quit—perhaps

much like the one he gave another servant earlier at Beersheba. But this disciple was different.

"As the Lord lives and I live, I won't." Elisha followed a man whose face was turned toward a meeting with Jehovah.

"Stay here," Elijah offered.

"No." Elisha followed on south to Jericho and finally down in the Jordan Valley to the river. Elijah took off his mantle and smote the flowing waters. They parted, as the Red Sea had for Moses and as the Jordan had for Joshua. Even the river knew Elijah had a rendezvous.

Across the river, Elijah turned suddenly to Elisha and looked intently. "What do you want?" It was the first time Elijah had asked. Elisha had followed and watched. Ministering silently to the mysterious man, Elisha was unnoticed and unnamed in the events and exploits recorded about Elijah in Scripture. But now Elijah's dark eyes were peering out from those shaggy eyebrows.

"What do you want, Elisha?"

There was no hesitation. "A double portion of your spirit."

"That's not mine to give," Elijah replied. "But if you see me when I go, you will get what you ask for."

Elijah had not been preoccupied with Elisha. Elisha had followed freely. It was a spiritual relationship. Now, the real test had come. Would God give Elisha eyes to see what Elijah had seen? When had Elijah first seen the fiery chariot? We are not told. But he had seen the fire. Three times he had called it down. But today it would call him up.

Into the Chariot

They continued walking and talking. There it was coming from the horizon. Elijah had expected it and walked from the cave to meet it there. The chariot had been waiting, but now it waited no longer.

Elisha saw it and cried, "My father, my father, the chariots of Israel and His horsemen!" They both saw it coming toward them, but

only one got in. And the mantle came drifting down.

The thing that drew them both to that place, the thing that they both saw, finally separated them; there was only one seat in the chariot. They both understood that. No man can load up his chariot. The day finally comes when the destiny that has joined us also separates us.

But something powerful happened. Elisha's eyes were opened for the first time. He saw the chariots in the heavens. Not one, but many. Years later, he and his disciple would be surrounded by the Syrian army. His servant's eyes would be yet unopened to God's resources. His servant would cry out in fear. But Elisha's simple prayer would be, "Lord, open his eyes."

The heavens were full of chariots of fire.

"How long have you known, Elisha?"

"Known what?"

"How long have you known that the heavens were full of chariots?"

"Since the day the Lord opened my eyes I have been able to see chariots. I have seen into the heavens and the purpose of God."

We can train, but only God can cause men to see purpose. Purpose is a golden rope that pulls us out of the self-swamp. It carries us past weak Ahabs and wicked Jezebels. It tugs at hearts when we would stay at Beersheba or Bethel or hesitate at Jordan.

Those who want want to gain the mantle of power must pursue the chariot of purpose. The chariot is waiting. The chariot with room for one. It is waiting but it will not wait forever. □



Charles Simpson, senior pastor of Gulf Coast Covenant Church in Mobile, Alabama, ministers extensively throughout the United States and abroad. He is also chairman of the Integrity Communications Board of Directors.

When Good Men Do Nothing

How our action or inaction can change the course of history

by Michael Coleman

Edmond Burke, an eighteenth-century British statesman, once said, "The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing."

There is something positive that Christians can do so that evil does not triumph. As the "salt of the earth," we have an opportunity to flavor and influence our society by participating in campaigns and elections this November. Consider how just a few votes have changed history:

1. In the 1948 U.S. Senate race in Texas, Lyndon Baines Johnson won a runoff election by only 87 votes.
2. In the 1960 presidential election, if a total of 118,000 more people in Illinois and Missouri would have voted for Richard Nixon, he would have won instead of John Kennedy.
3. In the 1976 presidential election, if 7,000 people in Ohio and 3,000 in Hawaii had voted for Gerald Ford, he would have won the election instead of Jimmy Carter.
4. In the 1980 congressional elections, 11 of the 34 Senate races were won by candidates who had 51 percent of the vote or less. Ten of those races were won by Republicans, which resulted in the shift from a Democratic-controlled Senate to a Republican-controlled one.
5. In the 1982 elections for seats in the U.S. House of Representatives, a shift of less than 26,000 votes in Missouri, 8,000 in Rhode Island, and 5,000 in Vermont would have changed the results in those states. In the Senate races that same year, in approximately 5 states, less than 35,000 people could have changed 6 Senate seats if they had voted differently.

Becoming a Strong Force

If all those elections were influenced so greatly by a handful of

votes, we must seriously consider what kind of impact Christians can make in our country. Although much has been said in recent years about the increasing voting strength of Evangelicals, we will not become a strong force until we become a unified force. At present, the evangelical voting record is no better than that of the general public. Bob Dugan, head of the National Association of Evangelicals, says, "Sixty percent of the general public votes in a presidential election. Twenty percent of the general public is evangelical. If we voted at a higher rate than the general public—say at seventy percent—we could make a difference in the upcoming election."

An increase from sixty to seventy percent would mean Evangelicals would have 22.6 percent of the total vote, instead of 20 percent. "It doesn't sound like much just to have an extra 2.6 percent," Dugan says, "but in 1980 if the majority of an extra 2.6 percent of the vote had been cast for Democratic Senate candidates, then the Republicans would not have gained control of the Senate."

Inaction can have serious consequences. Take, for example, a congressional race in Alabama. In 1964, voters in that state elected John Buchanan, a conservative Baptist minister, to the U.S. Congress. Gradually Buchanan moved from right to far left, and in 1980 lost the Republican primary to a Christian, Albert Lee Smith. Christians and other conservatives supported Smith, who went on to win the general election. Buchanan went on to become chairman of the archliberal organization People for the American Way.

Smith served for two years with wide support, yet in 1982 when he

ran for reelection, he lost. A close look at the vote reveals why: From 1980 to 1982, the Democratic vote remained virtually the same, but Republican participation dropped by more than sixteen thousand. Even though Smith was a popular incumbent, he was defeated because his supporters assumed he would win and did not bother to work for his reelection or to go to the polls on election day.

The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing.

Being a good citizen means more than voting once every four years in presidential elections. It means more than voting in local or state elections. It means getting involved with our time and our financial resources in backing candidates who take stands for the principles we believe in. It means determination and perseverance until our goals are met. It means following the biblical injunction:

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 (1 Tim. 2:1-3 NAS).

It is God's will that we have good government. If God wants us to pray for it to come about, then He also wants us to take action so that it will come about.

The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing. □

Michael Coleman is publisher and president of Integrity Communications.

God has a unique call and purpose for each of our lives. He wants us to break out of mediocrity, out of a dull and aimless existence, in order to step into a life of purpose and vision, fulfilling the assigned task he has set before us. He wants us to play a part in the restoration of his church so he can effectively reach this world with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Well and good, you say. But how do we go about it? What can we actually *do*, in concrete, practical terms, that will help us keep our divine appointment with destiny?

Appreciate Your Acceptance

Each of us, all day every day, is fed a steady diet of lies about what it means to be an acceptable person. Our culture, especially through the media, bombards us continually with subtle, and not-so-subtle, messages that tear down our self-esteem. "You've got to be cool to be accepted." "You've got to produce." "You've got to measure up." "You've got to use this product to be a real man (or woman)." "Your skin is aging and your teeth are dingy. You don't wear the right clothes, have the right car, or use the right cologne. You're not thin enough, either, and your hair is drab."

The situation is compounded by the fact that our enemy, Satan, uses accusations as his number one weapon against us (see Rv 12:10). He wants us to feel unworthy as individuals, and especially as Christians. "Who are you trying to kid? You call yourself a Christian? You really expect God to forgive you, after all you've done?"

God wants to free us from the lies of our culture and from the slanders of Satan. He wants to shatter worldly counterfeits and the bondage of legalism and to empower us to rise above Satan's fiery darts. He wants us to lay hold of this simple but revolutionary truth: that he loves us and accepts us, not because of what we do or don't do but because of who we are—his children, saved by his grace, for-

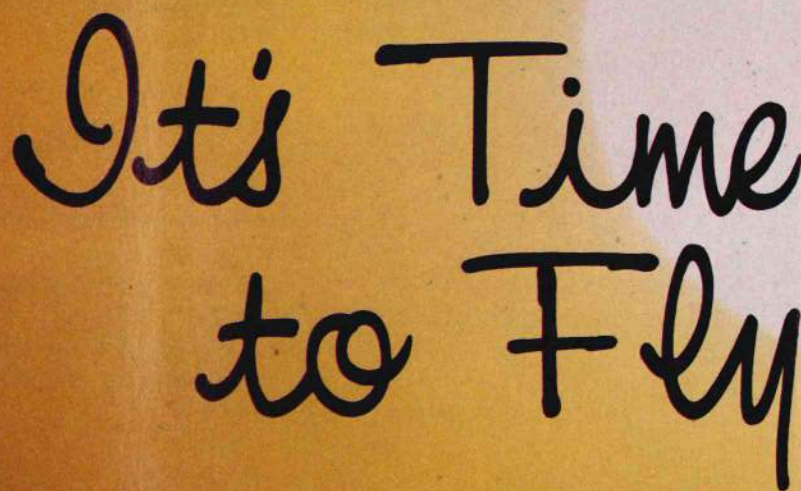
given by his mercy, adopted into his family, being transformed into the image and likeness of his Son Jesus Christ.

Celebrate Your Value

We are constantly underselling ourselves because of imagined or self-imposed limitations. Sometimes

making?"...Do you question me about my children, or give me orders about the work of my hands?" (Is 45:9, 11).

The Lord is the master potter, and we are the clay, molded and formed by him exactly the way he wants us to be.



It's Time to Fly

Practical help for achieving your calling
by Larry Tomczak

we even blame God for our supposed shortcomings. "Why did you make me like this, God? Is this really the best you could do?"

God has a sobering word for us on that score.

"Woe to him who quarrels with his Maker....Does the clay say to the potter, 'What are you

"We are God's workmanship," Paul declares (see Eph 2:10). The original language of Scripture implies that "we are *continually* his workmanship"—not a finished product but a magnificent work in progress. The word translated "workmanship" carries the sense of "creative masterpiece." Did you realize that you are a masterpiece of

the God of heaven?

Embrace Discipline

In my Bible I have written the words, "Go for it!" above a passage that has inspired me for years:

Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one

my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize (1 Cor 9:24-27).

The Greek word for "competes" is *agonizomai*, from which we get our word "agonize." It calls to mind the kind of training and discipline

our inadequacy and to receive God's grace so that we can go forward in "the strength of his might."

The passage also says, "Run in such a way as to get the prize," and points out that in an athletic competition there is only one prize and, therefore, only one winner. In our case, the emphasis is not so much on the singularity of the prize but on the attitude of the competitor. Launch out, not halfheartedly or with a loser's mentality but as a winner, determined to please the Lord and accomplish God-given tasks for his glory.

Break Out of the Routine

God is a God of newness. Scripture speaks of the new covenant, of new wine, of a new and living way, of a new song, of having a new name, and so on. "Forget the former things," God tells us through the prophet Isaiah, "do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing!" (Is 43:18-19).

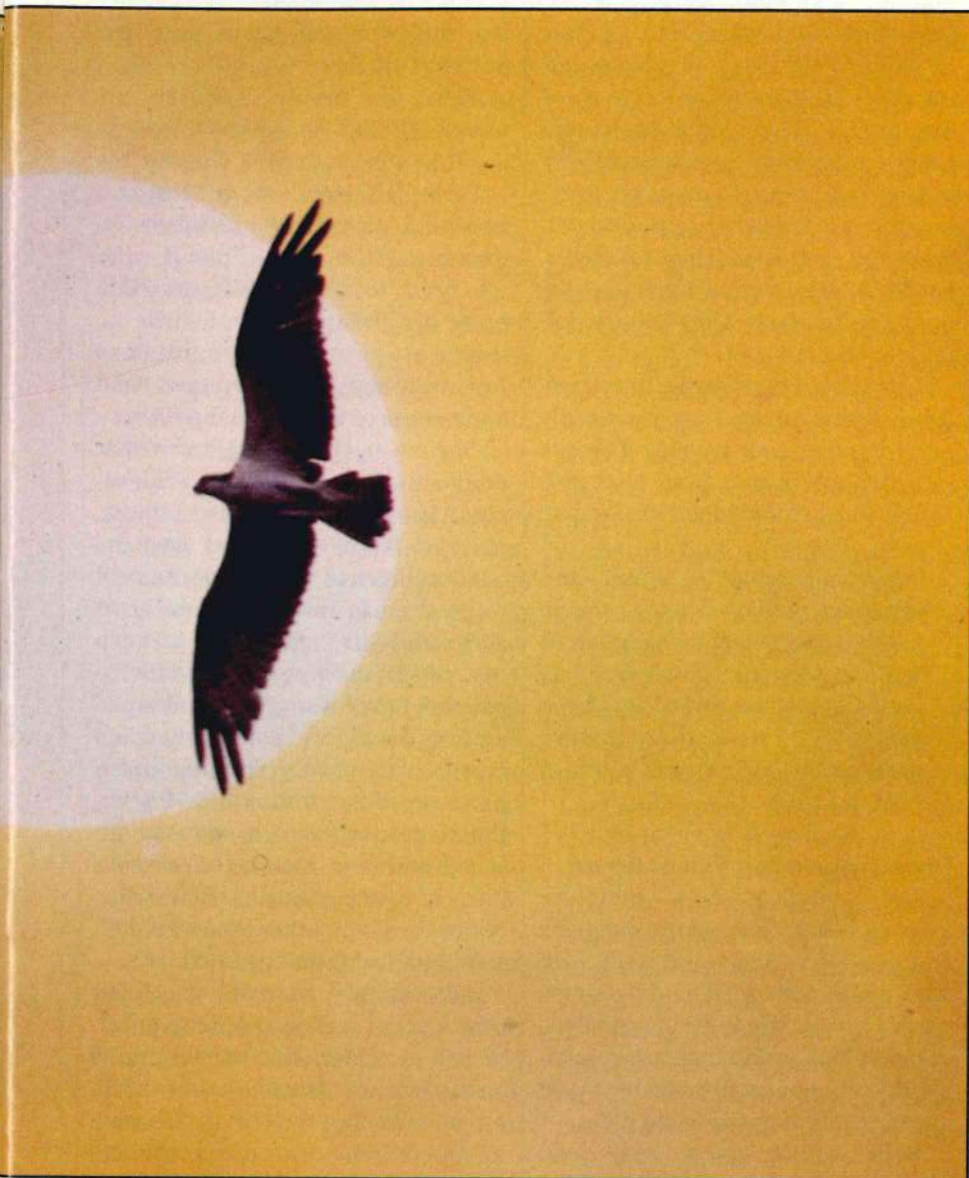
What about you? If you are going to rise above mediocrity and be used by God, you must not be content to drift through life on the river of routine.

For a start, ask God to instill in you a pioneering spirit. Then look for opportunities to get "out of the rut" you may have inadvertently slipped into.

By books, tapes, or conferences, expose yourself to the exciting things God is doing in the world today. Resist sitting in the same seat all the time or traveling the same familiar path. Reach out in love to some new people. Pray and then involve yourself in a sphere of service you have thought about but never done. Rather than ordering "the usual" for lunch, try something you have never eaten before. Doing new and different things—or even doing familiar things in a new and different way—can give fresh perspective and help you cultivate a more adventurous and flexible way of life. Wait on God and then open your eyes to the vast world of opportunity surrounding you.

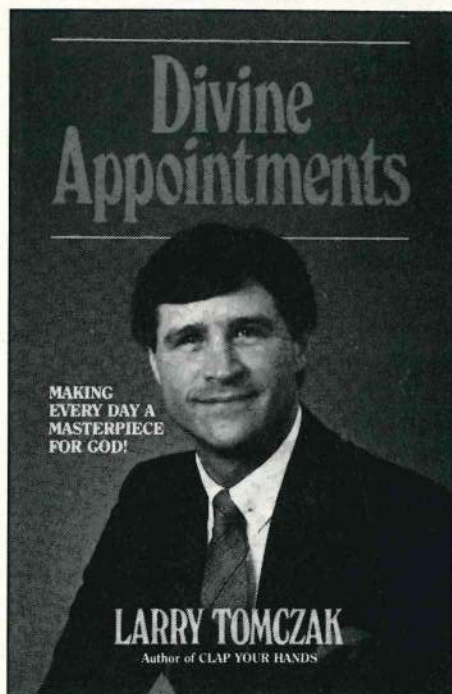
gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. Therefore I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air. No, I beat

a champion athlete goes through in preparation for the Olympics. The point of the passage is that we must likewise embrace discipline in our spiritual life—learning to regulate our conduct by principle rather than by impulse. Of course, by discipline I do not mean mere self-effort or willpower but rather the act of humbling ourselves to admit



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Learn How to Fail

It may be obvious that if we are going to try new things, we are occasionally going to experience failure. "The righteous man falls seven times," the Scriptures promise us, "yet he rises again" (Prv 24:16). I am convinced that God is more pleased with those who step out and fail than with those who sit back and do nothing out of fear of failure. God can vindicate our mistakes and bring good out of our failure. The ability to handle failure in a positive, productive way is crucial if we are to make progress in pursuing our divine appointment. Remember the stories of Peter, David, Moses, and other heroes of our Christian faith. They had enough faith to risk failure.

Don't let failure make you fearful of trying again. Turn your trials into triumphs, your stumbling blocks into stepping-stones, your tests into testimonies. Follow Paul's example:

Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. All of us who are mature should take such a view of things (Phil 3:13-15).

Draw Inspiration From Others

"Iron sharpens iron," Scripture teaches, "and one man sharpens another" (Prv 27:17). And again, "He who walks with wise men becomes wise" (Prv 13:20). Putting ourselves in touch with wise, stimulating, faith-building people will help us move ahead in our own Christian life.

Some of the people who can inspire us most are those zealous Christians in our sphere of life whose examples in character, not personality, we are to emulate. We need to make it a point to follow their example in Christ so that their faith and zeal can "rub off" on us. Scripture warns us that "bad company corrupts good morals," so we must carefully choose the company we keep. Fortunately, this principle

also works the other way around: good company strengthens us in our walk with the Lord.

Discover Your Gifts

The value of your life as a Christian will be determined by the degree to which you use what God has given you. Stated differently: "What you are is God's gift to you. What you make of yourself is your gift back to God."

How are we to discover our unique God-given gifts? Of course the first step is to seek God for his will. But we also need the confirmation and assistance of others in exercising the gifts. This is why we need to be a vital part of a body of Christians who believe in, teach on, and give opportunities for meaningful development and expression of the spiritual gifts.

Moreover, though we know that intellectual or academic achievement is not the same as holiness, we also know that God gave us our intelligence as a powerful tool to be used in his service. As good stewards, it is right for us to keep our minds sharp and alert, able to process new information and make decisions and form value judgments crisply and clearly. Maintaining a program of inspirational and devotional reading is one way to do this. Another is to enhance our abilities in evangelizing, child-rearing, counseling, and other areas through seminars, conferences, and tapes.

Interestingly enough, one thing that brings many people a greater self-confidence is learning how to speak in front of an audience. You don't need to become an electrifying orator, but learning to express your ideas and speak on your feet can be a tremendous boost to your self-confidence. How are we going to preach the gospel to all nations if we can't explain it to our next-door neighbor or make a simple presentation to our class? Nervousness is natural. But we can overcome it with practice and with faith in the enabling power of God.

Give Yourself to Others

We must be careful not to focus so intently on "what *I* can do to pursue *my* unique calling in life" that we forget that the whole point of the Christian life is serving others. We live in a selfish, materialistic culture which emphasizes the importance of "looking out for number one." But Jesus declared, "It is more blessed to give than receive" (Acts 20:35). He also said, "A man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions" (Lk 12:15).

John D. Rockefeller, Sr., drove himself hard to be a success. He became a millionaire by age twenty-three and in twenty years was the richest man on earth.

One night as he struggled to fall asleep, he came to his senses as he realized his "house of cards" was tumbling down around him. He realized that he could take nothing with him beyond the grave.

The next day he embarked on a new way of living. Rather than hoarding money and possessions, he began to give them away to those in need. Establishing the Rockefeller Foundation, he channeled his fortune into hospitals, research and mission work, and gave away a portion of his riches to scores. His contributions eventually led to the discovery of penicillin. Cures for malaria, tuberculosis, and diphtheria also resulted from his giving.

At the age of fifty-three, John D. Rockefeller seemed destined for imminent death. The resolution to "give rather than get" altered his life so dramatically that he eventually lived to the ripe old age of ninety-eight!

Jesus put it this way: "Give, and it will be given to you" (Lk 6:38).

One Step at a Time

God tells us in his word not to "despise the day of small beginnings" (Zec 4:10). Many times people set goals that are unrealistically ambitious, and their enthusiasm quickly fades. An old saying goes, "How do you eat an elephant? One

bite at a time." As you seek the Lord concerning some of the challenges that lie before you, remember to move forward one step at a time. As you make steady progress, your confidence will be bolstered and you will be able to pick up the pace. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you set appropriate goals and then to help you meet them.

An old story tells of a young boy who thought he had found a way to trick the village wise man. He caught a bird and held it in his cupped hands. Then he asked the wise man, "Is the bird alive or dead?" The old man realized that if he answered, "It is alive," the boy would crush the bird between his hands and kill it; and that if he answered, "It is dead," the boy would simply open his hands and let the bird fly away. So he looked the young man in the face and said, "My son, the answer to that question is in your hands."

As we seek to fulfill our divine appointment in life, we too need to recognize the extent of what God has placed in our hands. He has given us his Holy Spirit, his word, his call, his power. He says to us this day, "I have set before you this day life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life" (Dt 30:19). "He is at work in us for his good pleasure," and he challenges us today by saying, "In your hands you hold the seeds of failure or the potential for greatness." It is my conviction that in this hour of church restoration to reach a lost and hurting world, we can rise up and claim our divine appointment and so fulfill our unique destiny as the people of God.

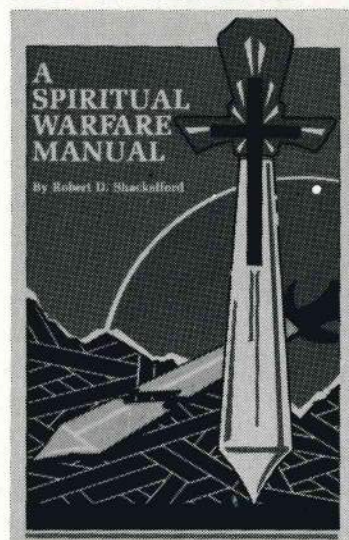
How about it? Will you "go for it"? □

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Larry Tomczak is editor of *People of Destiny Magazine*. He leads an apostolic team in planting churches, and is a board member of *Intercessors for America*.

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What do most church members do when they open their Bibles? True enough, all too many do not read the Scriptures and are content to let their pastors tell them what is in the book. Others read simply out of duty, and except for an occasional verse, nothing registers on their minds. Still many others read devotionally, as though the Bible were only addressed to them for their own peace of mind. Such readers act as though the Bible were a supercharged aspirin tablet that removes life's headaches and makes the world palatable.

But the Bible actually is God's marching orders for His covenant people to enable them to exercise dominion and to subdue the earth. To read Scripture as though its one intention is to give us peace of mind is humanistic. The center of all Scripture is the glory of God. Our Lord's command is clear-cut: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things [that the Gentiles seek] shall be added unto you" (Mt. 6:33). To seek God's righteousness is thus our command word, our marching order. *Righteousness* is an old-fashioned word; it is a translation for a Greek word that can also be rendered as "justice." We are to seek God's justice.

Dominion Men

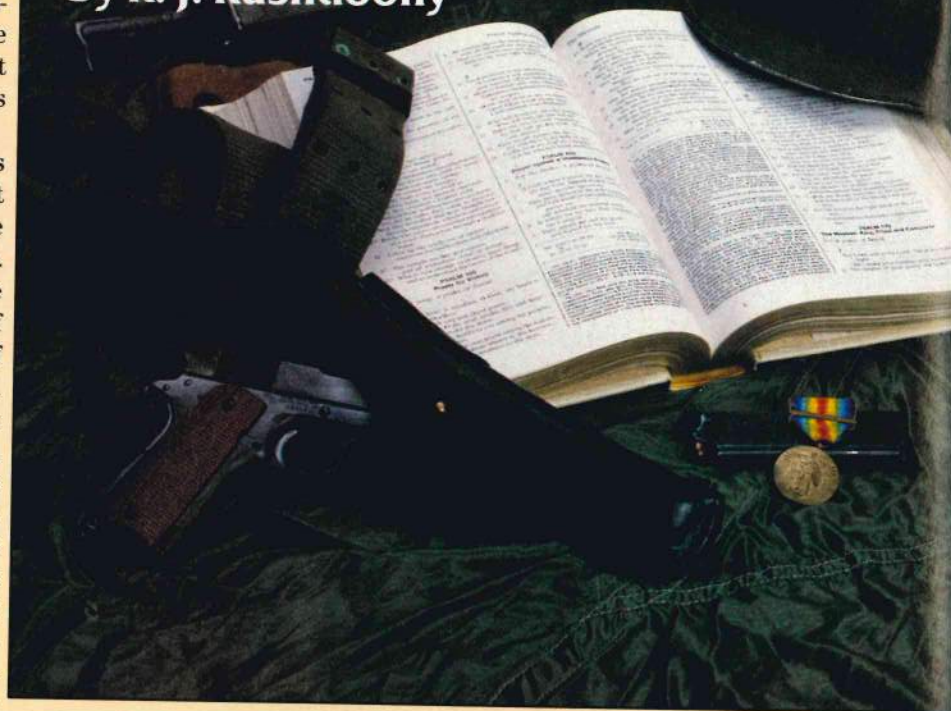
The Lord God did not create us to find a snug little nest in our corner of the earth. Our Savior, Jesus Christ, did not shed His blood on the cross to give us peace of mind. His atonement reconciles us to God the Father, whose law and covenant we broke in Adam and in our fallen nature. Christ satisfies the justice of God to make us a new creation (see 2 Corinthians 5:17) so that we, who once were all unrighteousness or injustice, might now, as redeemed men, obey the Lord to the end

that the righteousness [justice] of the law might be fulfilled [put

MARCHING ORDERS

Reading the Bible only for peace of mind is humanistic.

by R. J. Rushdoony



into force] in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit (Rom. 8:4).

We are regenerated and given the gift of the Spirit to be dominion men (see Genesis 1:26-28). What Adam and his seed could not do because of sin and the fall, we in Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit are commissioned to do. Our Lord commands us, saying:

"All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto

the end of the world. Amen" (Mt. 28:18-20).

Our Lord, who has all power everywhere, does not commission us to retreat into quietism, pietism, or a corner of our soul for spiritual peace. The banquet table of the Lord and His peace are on the battlefield, where as David says, in the very "presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over" (Ps. 23:5). The overflowing cup of blessing and peace is given by our Lord in life's most difficult places: in battle, facing our enemies, in the very "valley of the shadow of death" (Ps. 23:4)!

Preparing for Action

The Word of God, the Bible, is

given to men preparing for action. The Puritans of seventeenth-century England marched to that Word, and four percent of the population commanded a nation. History has never been commanded by majorities, only by dedicated minorities. The world has yet to see the mighty works of God that shall be accomplished by Spirit-filled Christians who live not "by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Mt. 4:4). It was not far from Milan in September 386 that Augustine, in a garden wrestling with his spiritual crisis, heard a child calling out, "Take, read!" He then read the Scriptures, not to find peace of mind (that was a by-product), but for the glory of the Lord. The divine Son commands us today, "Take, read," so that we may hear, believe, and obey.

It's when we take and read that we find answers to the problems of what is now history's darkest age. A higher percentage of mankind has been killed in the twentieth century than ever by man-made evils. War, slave labor-camps, genocide, mass executions by states, mass murders by groups of men, man-made starvation, revolution, and more have taken their toll, not merely by the millions or tens of millions, but by the hundreds of millions. The end is not yet. The evil nations, heedless and contemptuous of our Lord, continue in their arrogance toward greater destruction.

In the Word of God we find our marching orders for today. As the hymn says, "The Son of God goes forth to war. Who follows in His train?" Does the cause seem difficult or hopeless? Are we too few compared to the enemy? Do we say with Elisha's servant as we see man's hosts and power, "Alas, my master! how shall we do?" (2 Ki. 6:15)?

Elisha answered, "Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them" (v. 16). When the young man's eyes were opened, "he saw: and, behold, the

mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha" (v. 17).

We Are God's Instruments

We have a world to win for Christ and we have a host of injustices to overthrow: abortion, the sin of humanism in high places and low, state control over Christ's realm, homosexuality, the sexual "revolution," the disregard of God's justice by capital and labor, humanistic education, a world of need, and much more.

In this world, even poorly armed pygmies kill elephants! How dare Christians, led by One to whom "all power is given...in heaven and in earth," fail to conquer powers lesser than their King!

Because our Lord made all things ("All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made" [Jn. 1:3]), all things must serve Him and be under His dominion in and through us. We are God's instruments in the restoration of all things to His rule. The first Adam and the fallen humanity of the first Adam have brought only sin and death to the world. The last Adam, Jesus Christ, and we, the new humanity of the greater Adam, have a duty to restore all things unto our God and His dominion (see 1 Corinthians 15:45-50). Every area of life and thought must be brought into captivity to our Lord Jesus Christ (see 2 Corinthians 10:5). Before the end can come, when Christ delivers up the Kingdom to God the Father, "all rule and all authority and power" must be placed under Him, "for he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet" (1 Cor. 15:24-25). Only then shall the last enemy, death, be destroyed (see verse 26).

More Than Conquerors

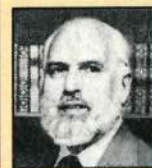
How do we read our Bible? It is the command word for those who are called to be more than conquerors. It speaks to every area of life and thought: weights and measures, food, children, husbands

and wives, work and management, rulers and ruled, scientists and artists, and more. It is God's governing word for all of life, economics, politics, learning, the family, and so on. It is the governing, ruling word.

If we try to limit God's Word to our personal needs (and it does speak to those needs), we are reducing God and His Spirit to being our private chaplain, a dangerous affront to His majesty. If we abuse or limit God's Word, it will be a judgment against us. The Word of God can no more be limited to our personal spiritual needs than a roaring lion can be chained with a rotten thread to a toothpick stake!

That mighty Word is full of glorious promises to all who will believe and obey. They are covenant promises. God in His covenant gives us His law as an act of love and grace, and He summons us to hear, believe, and obey His every word. For those who do, there are some remarkable promises. One of the most amazing sentences in all the Bible concludes the verse in Psalm 138:2: "Thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name." That is so audacious a sentence that I would never dare say it had not God said it first. God, whose person and being are set forth in His holy name, and whose name represents His very being, tells us that He magnifies or holds more important to Himself His covenant word and promise to us than His very being! God said this, and in Christ, who died for us, He demonstrated His faithfulness to His Word. Dare we be anything other than faithful? Dare we be anything less than conquerors?

We have a summons and marching orders from the King of kings. It is the Word of God, the Bible. Take, read, and go forth to conquer. □



R. J. Rushdoony, a New Wine contributing editor, is president of the Chalcedon Foundation.

Life Is a Goal Mine

How to set goals and accomplish them by John Stanko

Where am I going?
“What am I doing
with my life?”

“Should I plan for the future?”

“But aren’t goals unspiritual?”

Those questions about the future confronted me a few years ago. On the one hand I knew I had to look ahead, but on the other hand I struggled with the feeling that goals were somehow unspiritual. *Shouldn’t I just be open to and led by the Spirit?* I wondered. *And aren’t goals inconsistent with a day-to-day walk with the Lord?* Hoping to put this matter behind me, I decided to search the Bible for answers.

As I began studying, I was surprised by what I found. Everywhere I turned in the Bible, I was struck by the spiritual nature of goals and plans. Even Jesus had goals. He knew what He was about and where He was going. In Luke 13:32 Jesus responded to those who told him of Herod’s desire to see Him by saying, “Go and tell that fox, ‘Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I reach My goal’” (NAS).

On another occasion He told His disciples, “My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to accomplish His work” (Jn. 4:34 NAS). I saw that Jesus’ food—to do the will of His Father at all times—was also His goal, and He kept it before Him throughout His ministry. That goal helped Him face the rejection and scorn of His people so that He could achieve His purpose in life.

Paul Had Goals

The Apostle Paul had goals as well. He told the Corinthians, “Therefore I run in such a way, as not without aim” (1 Cor. 9:26 NAS, italics mine). Paul’s life had an aim, and he likened someone who did

not have goals to a runner who wanted to win a marathon, but who also wanted to run an aimless course without a beginning, clear boundaries, or a finish line.

In Romans, Paul stated what his goal was for his ministry: “And thus I *aspired* to preach the gospel, not where Christ was already named, that I might not build upon another man’s foundation” (Rom. 15:20 NAS, italics mine). Paul aspired, or set a goal, to preach to those who had never heard the gospel, and ultimately planted churches in most of the known world despite difficult circumstances.

As I studied Jesus’ and Paul’s ministries, I saw that having a goal is scriptural, and that it often releases a powerful spiritual dynamic that enables a godly person to accomplish the will of God.

What Is a Goal?

From my study of the Scriptures, I’ve discovered that for the Christian a goal is a vision of how it is before it is. A goal is a faith statement that takes the believer from present limitations to future possibilities. It’s a target that gives us something to go after in both prayer and action. It’s also a statement that says, “I believe God wants me to do this by this date, and by His grace, I’ll do it!”

Paul tells us in Philippians 3:14, “I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus” (NAS). That verse gives us the anatomy of a good goal:

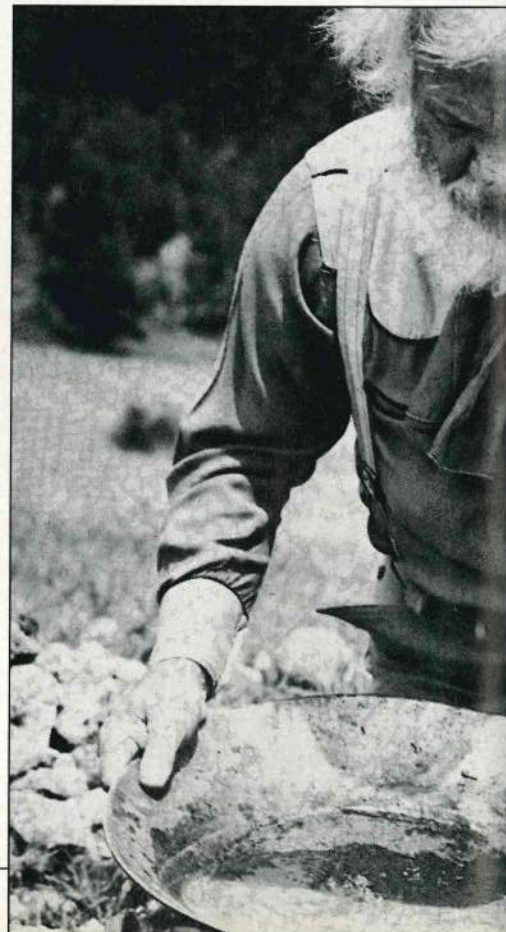
1. *It introduces tension and opposition.* Paul had to “press on” with a greater force than the one pressing against him, trying to keep him from moving. A godly goal takes us out of our comfort zone into a realm of positive effort and accomplishment.

2. *It holds a “prize.”* Paul didn’t

press on for the fun of it. He pressed on for a prize, a definite result that would tell him he had won. An achieved goal carries with it a gold medal that says, “I played by the rules, overcame obstacles, and got what I was after.”

3. *It is upward.* A godly goal brings us closer to God, and builds a little more of Jesus’ image and character in us. An accomplished goal brings us to the place where we can hear, “Well done, My good and faithful servant,” the words that every child of God wants to hear.

4. *It involves a call.* We do not decide for ourselves what our goals should be. Rather we must discern what God has called us to do, set that as our goal, and then throw all our energies and resources into fulfilling it. That’s what Jesus did; that’s what Paul did; and that’s what we need to do as well.



Character Weaknesses

Knowing about goals is great, but the truth is, few of us ever set them. When I reflected on why I had not set more goals in my life, I found that I had several character weaknesses that undermined my resolve:

1. *Lack of diligence.* In some matters, I was too lazy and too disinterested to put forth the effort to succeed. I was coasting on God's grace, assuming that He would make everything turn out all right. It was too hard to plan far into the future anyway. But as I thought hard about my finances, for example, I came to realize that in ten years my children would be ready for college and that without a financial goal, I would eventually pay for my lack of diligence.

2. *Unbelief.* From time to time, ideas would pop into my head: "I should learn Spanish." "We need a bigger house." "I need to write a book." But as I would consider them further, I would almost always decide they could not be accomplished. Today I have learned to pursue many

of my ideas by putting them on paper in the form of goals. The last two years of my life have been my most productive because I've begun to believe God for goals beyond my capabilities.

3. *Fear of failure.* My biggest hang-up was a fear of what others would think if I tried and failed. That fear caused me to set elementary goals that were easily attained but far below my capabilities.

I read last year that baseball player Pete Rose, who broke Ty Cobb's base hit record, had more than four thousand career hits, but that he also had more than ten thousand career outs! He had "failed" ten thousand times to achieve his goal of getting a hit, yet he was on the brink of baseball immortality.

Greatness involves the risk of failure, but we are more prone to failure and to mediocrity without goals than with them. The danger for believers is that when we do nothing, God usually does the same.

What Now?

Having faced the character weaknesses that hindered my goal setting, I next set aside several hours, cleared my desk, and went to work. I started to set specific measurable goals in the various areas of my life: savings goals, reading goals, personal goals, career goals, family goals, and spiritual goals. I decided, for example, to read one spiritual book a month, and to read the Bible through in one year. I also set a goal to have three thousand dollars in my savings account at the end of the year.

Next, I wrote down my goals in a notebook, and then set a date when I would like to accomplish each goal. Some goals I completed early, some on time, and still others I didn't complete at all. But I was flexible and came to understand that unexpected obstacles produced the tension that tested my resolve and commitment. Now, I'm more concerned about what I'll do when I reach a goal than what I'll do if

I don't.

After I set goals and dates to achieve them, I developed plans. When I decided to read through the Bible, for example, I took the number of pages in my Bible and divided by 365 days. My plan was to read a minimum of 3.75 pages a day to complete my goal. It went so well that I finished the Bible in eight months and spent the other four reading the Bible in a different version.

When my goals and plans were in place, I shared them with people I trusted. By telling my wife, my children, my pastor, and my friends, I solidified my resolve to do what I had said. When people knew what I was doing, their interest and follow-up questions helped keep me motivated.

Finally, I began to work as soon as possible on achieving the goals I set. Talking about them was not enough. Faith, which is the foundation of every goal, requires action, and the sooner I acted, the better the chance I had of fulfilling my goals.

God is a God of goals and plans. He has a goal in mind for the earth, for the Church, and for each of His children. He also has a plan to go with each goal. It is an expression of God's nature for us to set our goals according to His will, and then act according to the plans we have made to achieve them with His help. □



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Editor's note: This article is adapted from John Stanko's seminar, "Life Is a Gold Mine: Can You Dig It?" The five-part series also includes discovering spiritual gifts, setting goals, ordering priorities, getting organized, and the role of faith and vision. For more information on hosting the seminar, contact John Stanko, Integrity Communications, P.O. Box Z, Mobile, Alabama 36616; (205) 633-9000.

Yes, Martha, you are pregnant." My mother looked at her doctor in shock and a bit of dismay. At age forty-two she had not planned to have a fifth child. When she came home and shared her "news" with my father, Ralph, they consoled themselves: "After four lovely daughters perhaps God will finally give us a son."

So when Mother was greeted with news of yet another daughter, it was little wonder that her first response through tears was, "Oh, poor Ralph, poor Ralph." But their adjustment was brief and they tell me I became the delight of everyone's heart.

For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb....My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be (Ps. 139:13, 15-16 NIV).

I feel as though the God of the universe "wove me." He took Daddy's feet, Mother's merciful temperament and her mole behind her left ear, and Grandma Kunkle's left-handedness and artistic bent. Where *did* that temper come from? Thankfully, through it all He also wove a golden thread of my great-grandmother's, my grandmother's, and my mother's love and hunger for Himself. Even before they were, "He wrote my days in His book."

God brought me to Himself while I was in high school. Right from the start I wanted whatever He had for me. I felt there was a purpose for my life, although it was not one I readily understood.

Then, fourteen years ago, a significant experience helped me discover what that purpose was. After a fruitful summer of ministry in Scandinavia, my husband, Paul, and I planned to go home to begin our

family because we had been married eight years. However, as our departure time drew near, Paul felt the Lord wanted us to remain in Europe and have our first child there. Because I wanted to be home to share that most precious time with my mother and family, I felt isolated and alone. I became homesick and angry.

Knowing Him Better

One day we were going by train from Stockholm. I was staring blindly out the window as the Swedish countryside whirled by. My heart was aching, and my eyes were blurred with tears. Suddenly the Lord spoke to me: "The only way you will get through this difficult time is by a greater revelation of who I am." My heart leapt; the word struck such a deep chord. If staying in Europe would enable me to know Him better, then that was where I wanted to be. We did stay and our son Matthew was born there.

On the train that day I began in a new way to seek the Lord. I determined to know Him for myself in the way my husband knew Him. I realized that in my extremity, depending on Paul's vision and relationship with the Lord would not suffice. God desired me to know Him for myself, and to have my own vision for His purpose for Paul and me.

As I sought God and came to know Him and His ways, I found that He desired me to be fruitful. I knew that meant laying down my own desires and my own way. As Jesus said in John 12:24:

"I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds" (NIV).

But what did that mean for me practically? I sensed He was calling me to concentrate on loving and caring for my husband and family, choosing their good at my own



THE UN JOU

A woman's perspective
God
by Reb

expense.

We returned from Europe after two years and began a church in Lexington, Kentucky. I was again pressed on every side: a baby, a new home, and lots of activity and responsibility revolving around Paul and the church. One evening Paul came in from an out-of-town trip only to drop his suitcase and go back out the door to a meeting. I finally got the baby to bed and began to unpack Paul's suitcase. With every dirty shirt and sock I became more frustrated and angry. I finally threw his shoes into the back of the closet. As they banged

FOLDING IRNEY

ective on staying open to
od's plans
becca Petrie

to the floor I heard the Lord say, "It is a privilege to serve a man of God." I understood even more clearly that fruitfulness for me meant I was to "fall to the earth and die" for my family, and not to be surprised when serving them seemed costly.

I am a person who loves clarity. When I know what is required, I can really give myself to it, really dig in. So I did. Now, I had the answer to God's purpose for my life.

An Open Home

About a year later, Paul told me he felt a young man he had been

ministering to should move into our home. By this time I was expecting our second child and we had just enough bedrooms: ours, Matthew's, and a nursery. Providing a home for this young man would take my nursery and my privacy, and maybe even our family life. Again, my tears. Paul held me close and spoke the next word in the process of my fruitfulness. He said, "Darling, the Lord doesn't bless a home and close it up to the members of that family for their happiness alone. He blesses a home to open it and use it for the healing of His body." As we stood in our breakfast room that day, I realized my neat little world was shaking and the Father was taking me a step further by asking me to open our home and my heart to His people. I knew I didn't love them enough. But God assured me that He loved them and if I would let Him, He would love His people through me.

Thus my adventure of extending myself to the people of God continued. Often the cost seemed great but the realization that I was moving deeper into the Father's purpose for me made that "dying" a great joy.

As we moved to California, and then back to Lexington, the process continued. Then one early morning as I was walking in our new neighborhood, I somehow sensed I would be teaching a women's Bible study there soon. I thought, *Oh, no, Lord! Not with my family's needs, Paul's ministry and traveling, our frequent houseguests, and our dear folks in the church. There aren't enough hours in my day to reach out to my neighbors.* But sure enough, within the year I was invited to share with a group of neighbors on a weekly basis. Paul was excited about it but said I should only commit myself for six weeks, because by this time our third child had been born.

That study group led to two others in different neighborhoods where many women heard the gospel for the first time. Some came

to Christ, and received the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Others came to understand their place in their home and their relationship to their husband and children. It was truly a "fruitful" season.

First, the Lord had turned my heart to Himself. Then, He had called me to extend myself to my family, to open my home to His people, and to reach out to my neighbors. But He still wasn't finished.

To the Nations

A year ago, as we returned from a trip to Africa, the Lord spoke to Paul that we were to return to Europe. This was not a complete surprise, as we felt for years that His full plan for us extended beyond the United States. The timing, however, was a surprise. We had expected to move "sometime after the children were grown."

But our times are in His hands. As I write this, I'm awaiting the birth of our fourth child. We are preparing to move with a team of four families to establish a base of ministry in Brussels, Belgium, and Psalm 67:7 has become a reality to me, "God blesses us, that all the ends of the earth may fear Him" (NAS).

I soon may well be on another train, this time in Brussels. But now there are no tears. The One who formed me in my mother's womb with a plan and purpose, and then called me to Himself has faithfully and patiently led me to serve my family, His people, my neighbors, and now the nations. At this time of new beginnings I am so grateful that He has fully prepared me for what He has called me to do so that I might fulfil my part of His great plan. □



Rebecca Petrie lives with her husband, Paul, and their children in Brussels, Belgium.

Where There Is No Vision

The critical importance of having a personal vision

by John Duke



Once read in a magazine these words about vision: "As fundamental as the necessities of life—food and water—so is the need for one to have vision enough to act."

The Scriptures also have something to say about vision: "Where there is no vision the people perish" (Pr. 29:18).

Why do both the secular press and the sacred Word put such a premium on vision? What does it provide that without it we perish but with it we can succeed? Let's look at the scriptural examples of the necessity of a vision, and then at what happens when we get one.

Israel's Vision

Israel was a nation born of God, and its rise and fall were directly related to its ability to hear the messengers of God. Whenever Israel's kings were obedient to the vision and revelation of the spiritual leaders, it prospered. But when it failed to have a clear vision or to walk in the counsel of those who had a vision, Israel wandered from its purposes. During the period of the Judges, for example, there was no king and "everyone did what was right in his own eyes" (Judg. 21:25 NAS). To be without vision, understanding, and insight of God's

purpose is to walk after one's own counsel and understanding, and as the Scripture says, those without vision perish.

The Hebrew word for *perish* means "to loosen," "to expose," "to dismiss," "to go back," "to set at naught," "to uncover," "to make naked," "to disintegrate," or "to wander."¹

Another translation of Proverbs 29:18 says, "Where there is no revelation, the people cast off restraint" (NIV). Without a vision, or revelation of God's will, we are ungovernable; we dismiss the restraint of authority and turn to our own ways. Without a vision, we give way to fragmentation and lose the cohesive element that holds everything together.

Just as the promise of perishing comes where there is no vision, so does the promise of prospering come to those who walk in the revelation of God's purpose. Second Chronicles chapter 26 says:

Uzziah was sixteen years old when he became king, and he reigned fifty-two years in Jerusalem....And he did right in the sight of the Lord according to all that his father Amaziah had done. And he continued to seek God in the days of Zechariah,

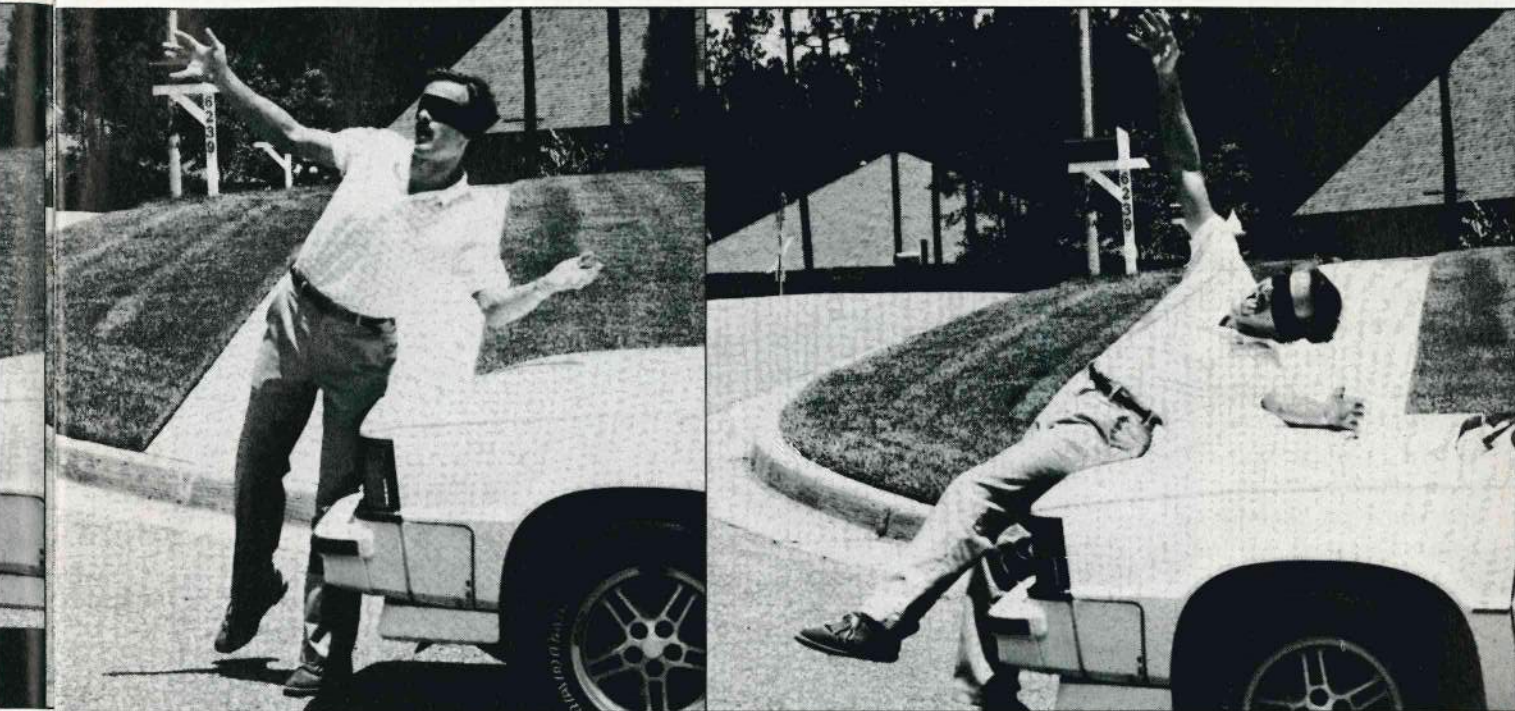
who had understanding through the vision of God; and as long as he sought the Lord, God prospered him (vv. 3-5 NAS, italics mine).

The Bible is filled with the stories of men like Uzziah, who prospered because he sought the Lord's vision for his life. In Hebrews chapter 11, for example, we find the heroes of faith, who endured "seeing him who is invisible" (v. 27). Their heritage clearly demonstrates the advantage of those who see.

A Three-Step Process

For those who see, there is usually a three-step process in pursuing the vision: birth, death, and fulfillment. We can see that process in the lives of Moses, Joseph, and Abraham.

Moses' vision was born when he chose to suffer affliction with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of Pharaoh's courts. He gave up the throne of Egypt for the cause of delivering his people out of slavery. But the vision died when he was rejected by his people and was forced to flee to the desert for forty years. The vision was resurrected at the burning bush when Moses turned aside "to see." What he saw moti-



vated him to pursue his original vision of delivering the Israelites out of bondage, which he did through the supernatural power of God.

Joseph's vision was birthed in a dream when he saw himself ruling over his mother, father, and brothers. The vision died when he went through a series of events that began when his brothers sold him into slavery. The supernatural intervention of God eventually caused the vision to be fulfilled, placing Joseph not only over his family, but over all of Egypt as well—second only to Pharaoh.

The words of Psalm 105:19 speak of the death and fulfillment of Joseph's vision: "Until the time that his word came to pass, the word of the Lord tested him" (NAS).

Abraham was given the vision of becoming the father of a multitude, and the death of that vision came when his wife, Sarah, remained barren. Abraham and Sarah tried to help God by having a son through Sarah's handmaid, but it was not God's plan, and the conflict between that seed and the true seed of promise continues to this day.

Eventually Abraham and Sarah gave birth to the child of promise, Isaac, by the supernatural power of God. Not many years later,

Abraham was so convinced that God would fulfil the vision concerning Isaac that he could obey His command and offer him up as a sacrifice to God.

The process that those men went through is the same one that every Christian with a vision will go through. At some point, our vision tests us because it appears to be lost, but eventually we find its fulfillment through the supernatural power of God.

Pursuing a Purpose

My personal vision came in 1973 when a group of men and I spent three days seeking God together. After some time, one of the men began to pray the Lord's prayer, but when he came to "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done," he stopped. I shall never forget the scene that followed. Each of us fell prostrate on the floor and the words kept echoing in our hearts, "On earth as it is in heaven! On earth as it is in heaven!"

That day, a vision of the kingdom of God on earth was born in my heart. It is a vision that has not ceased to be the object of my pursuit.

God has called the Church not only to model His kingdom, but also to extend it. He has called

each of us to receive a vision of the Kingdom on the earth and to be engaged in the pursuit of that purpose.

Although our vision may dim, and at times appear dead, we can rest assured that it will be fulfilled. And one day we can say with Paul, who was faithful to his vision:

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing (2 Tim. 4:7-8 NAS).

That is a promise to all those who pursue the vision. □

Footnote

¹Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible (New York: Abingdon Press, 1973), p. 97.



John Duke, presiding pastor of Gulf Coast Covenant Church, Mobile, Alabama, is a member of the Integrity Communications Board of Directors.



A RICH LEGACY

The environment that made Jesus successful will help us too.
by Erik Krueger

Every four years the Olympic games intrigue and fascinate us as we watch fine young athletes strive toward the fulfillment of their desires and dreams. The popular movie *Chariots of Fire* details a long-ago Olympic struggle as two men labor to achieve their destinies. One of the main themes of the story is that it takes more than giftedness to achieve high and noble goals; it takes diligence and training as well.

Jesus Himself had to run the race with endurance with His eyes fixed on the Father so that He might bring many sons to glory through His life. In the process, He learned obedience through the various experiences and trials that prepared Him for His destiny.

Like the winning athlete who has totally surrounded himself with a life-style of discipline and training, Jesus fulfilled His Father's desire in large measure because of the

surrounding Hebrew society, which disciplined and trained Him. There are seven characteristics of that society that deserve our attention today; if we make them a part of our environment, we ensure the success of ourselves and our children.

The Fundamental Unit

1. *Family.* Jesus, the Son of God, was born and nurtured in a family. In Hebrew society, the family was the fundamental unit, one that pro-

duced a climate of stability. Today, two thousand years later, the family is still the main building block for society. So when the well-being of the family is eroded, society begins to decay and eventually falls apart completely.

The Scriptures' emphasis on God as a Father is essential and foundational to the nature of family. Satan, in contrast, seeks to destroy the family, especially by blurring the husband-wife roles, and by alienating children from their parents. The Hebrew family, with its strong patriarchal emphasis, was a firm foundation for the life of Jesus and a necessary ingredient in encouraging His pursuit of His heavenly Father's purpose.

2. *Heritage.* The emphasis upon family brought a strong and rich sense of heritage to the Jews. Jesus had a deep awareness of His roots. His knowledge of those who had "walked before Him" gave Him a better understanding of where He fit in God's plan for history. Heritage can provide coordinates to stabilize our lives in the present, and give us bearings for our future direction. Without heritage, we often feel as if we are drifting. We have a rich heritage recorded for us in the Bible, which helps us discover our destiny in Christ. As with Jesus, this sense of heritage helps us know who and what preceded us so that we can better align our lives with God's purposes in our generation.

3. *Fellowship.* When Jesus was just twelve years old, He went to Jerusalem with His family to celebrate a feast. At the temple, He asked questions of the elders and was drawn into fellowship with them. Through that time of dialog, He discovered more about the Father's business and purpose for Him. A culture with a strong emphasis on family and heritage creates a stable and secure environment that fosters fellowship. Meaningful fellowship can bring life into focus for us because God uses others to speak to us. It can help us to see our destiny and understand God's

intentions for us.

His Father's Business

4. *Work.* The Hebrew society had a strong work-ethic. For eighteen years, from the time Jesus was twelve until He was thirty, He was a carpenter; it was practical preparation for only three years of ministry. Such basic labor may seem to be unusual preparation for the important ministry of the Messiah, but it was there that Jesus learned discipline under His earthly father's authority. Even Jesus, the Son of God, perfect in character, as a man needed to be trained and needed to learn the practical realities of this life to achieve His destiny.

5. *Discipline.* The Book of Hebrews tells us to endure hardship or suffering as discipline: "For what son is there whom his father does not discipline?" (Heb. 12:7 NAS). The Apostle Paul knew that hardships produce discipline, and he certainly experienced both, but many Christians don't like to talk about such things. They tend to think of the hardships they experience as a sign of something wrong in their lives. But during times of trial, God may not be after something "bad" in our lives; rather, He may be trying to work maturity in us the same way He did in the life of Jesus. Hebrews says, "He (Jesus) learned obedience from the things which He suffered" (Heb. 5:8 NAS). Our spiritual forefathers, such as Abraham, grew strong in faith and gave glory to God through the trials and hardships they endured.

6. *Scriptures.* The Hebrews were well acquainted with the Scriptures and relied upon them for training, heritage, education, and perspective. Jesus always honored the Scriptures. No one was as wise as He was, yet He relied on the Scriptures as the foundation for His teaching and instruction, and for dealing with trials and finding God's perspective. When tested and tempted by Satan in the wilderness, He relied on the Scriptures, and the result was victory.

Devoted to Prayer

7. *Prayer.* Prayer was an integral part of Hebrew life. Jesus didn't just talk about prayer; He devoted Himself to it. Even as the Son of God, He never considered Himself to be self-sufficient. Through prayer He constantly received direction and strength for His life and ministry.

While Christ was here on earth he pleaded with God, praying with tears and agony of soul to the only one who would save him from [premature] death. And God heard his prayers because of his strong desire to obey God at all times (Heb. 5:7 TLB).

Even at Gethsemane, Jesus agonized before His Father, exercising Himself in prayer to discover the Father's will and reconciling Himself to it. He found victory in His life because He relied on His Father through a living relationship of obedience cultivated through prayer. In prayer He now passes on His life to us as our high priest who lives forever to intercede for us. He also teaches us to pray (see Matthew 6:9-13).

God carefully orchestrated the elements of Hebrew society to enable Jesus to fulfil His destiny. The emphasis on family, heritage, fellowship, work, discipline, Scriptures, and prayer enabled Him to find His calling and to reach it in victory. The rich legacy that brought Him success will bring us success also if we focus ourselves on the same elements. Then we will one day be able to look back at the race we've run and hear the Father say, "Well done, My good and faithful servant." □

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Erik Krueger is a pastor of New Covenant Christian Church, East Lansing, Michigan.



In determining an approach and attitude toward our work, we can look at Jesus as our example. "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to accomplish His work" (John 4:34). Jesus considered His work on earth as important to His life as the food that sustained Him physically. He did not, as we are inclined to do, think up various projects on His own and then forge ahead with His plans. In fact, He did nothing on His own initiative, seeking instead the will of the Father in all things (John 5:30). Jesus determined what it was that God wanted Him to do,

and then He got on with the prescribed business. His was a perfect working relationship with the Father: the One initiating, the Other following through. In John we read Jesus' answer to the Jews: "My Father is working until now, and I Myself am working" (John 5:17). Jesus and the Father worked together.

This is the way we are to function in relation to Christ. Jesus said:

"I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me, and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing" (John 15:5).

Jesus' role is to initiate and empower; we are to bear the fruit. Such an arrangement constitutes a unique partnership between God and man.

The Nature of a Partnership

Several years ago, I helped put together a partnership comprised of 10 individuals whose aim it was to produce and market a Christian film. My job was to do the actual producing and marketing; the others involved were to put up the necessary funds. Our tasks were not equal, but as each of us fulfilled his part of the bargain, the project was com-



Our Partnership With God

Planning the future in faith
by Bruce Cook

pleted. Such is the nature of a partnership.

In a partnership between God and man, the partners certainly are not equal in terms of power and authority, but as God and man work together, each fulfilling his specific function, a predetermined goal is met. In fact, what may have been deemed impossible from the human viewpoint is often accomplished as a matter of course. Such is the result of allowing God to work through us.

When we enter into a partnership with God, the division of labor will always follow the same format. Let's

focus first on God's role in the partnership. Three ways God is involved will greatly influence how we should plan:

First, God has promised to *direct* us. "I will instruct you and teach you in the way in which you should go; I will counsel you with My eye on you" (Ps. 32:8). In another Psalm we have God's promise to direct the way of those who fear Him. "Who is the man who fears the Lord? He will instruct him in the way he should choose" (25:12).

Second, God has promised to *meet our needs*. "They who seek the Lord shall not be in want of

any good thing" (Ps. 34:10). God has promised to "supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:19).

Third, God has promised to *reward* us, for "He is a rewarder of those who seek Him" (Heb. 11:6). This last promise is not as much emphasized in our Christian teaching today, but it is certainly as valid as any of the other promises of God.

Amazing as it may seem, the God of the universe has actually promised to direct our steps in all that we do, to provide us with whatever we need to accomplish our goals, and then to reward our efforts. Such an arrangement is almost too wonderful to contemplate, but it is only half of the bargain. We must fulfill our functions as well.

Our Role

The Bible tells us that our responsibility is to have faith and to act in accordance with that faith. Just as we once entered into a relationship with God by means of faith (Eph. 2:8-9), so are we to continue to live by faith (Rom. 1:12) at every moment of our lives, for it is faith that serves as the catalyst to release God's tremendous power to work in us and through us. Jesus could do no mighty works in Nazareth because of their unbelief (lack of faith).

To say that our part is simply to have faith may at first sound trite and oversimplified, but a careful examination of genuine faith as the Bible describes it reveals that this is not the case. A child once described the phenomenon of faith as "believing a thing is true, even when you know it's not." We laugh, but I'm sure we all can identify with that statement because we have been guilty of exercising that kind of "faith."

For some Christians, faith entails basic unbelief in a scriptural precept or promise coupled with a tiny hope that *maybe* it is true. When we want a promise to be fulfilled, we try desperately to muster the faith (which we regard as a

feeling) to enable God to act, and then we try to somehow sustain that faith until the job is done. We're like a little boy with an ice cream cone on a hot day—licking away frantically at the confection before the whole thing melts away. This is *having faith in faith*. Fortunately, God has something better in mind for us. Genuine faith, the Scriptures reveal, is a different proposition altogether.

A Lesson in Faith

Several years ago while on a ski trip with a friend in central California, I learned an interesting lesson concerning faith. After a really perfect day on the slopes, we decided to make one more run—all the way from the top. We hopped into a gondola, along with five high school girls behind us in line, and together we began the ascent to the top of majestic Mammoth Mountain. Halfway to the top, the gondola stopped—300 feet above ground. A half hour

passed and, as the sun went down behind the mountain, it began to get cold. Another half hour went by and by then the gondola began swaying violently in the wind. One of the girls started to cry; another actually passed out. Things were not looking good. Suddenly, we heard a scuffling noise on the roof and a head appeared, upside down, just outside the window. It was a ski patrol who had inched his way down the cable to our aerie prison!

Producing a strap the size of a wide belt, the officer explained our means of escape: "This strap is attached by means of a cable to an automatic clutch on top of the gondola. One at a time, I want you to place the strap over your head and under your arms, and then step out the door. Don't worry; the clutch will enable you to descend slowly." A moment of silence followed as we digested this information. Then looking at me, the patrol commanded, "You go first."

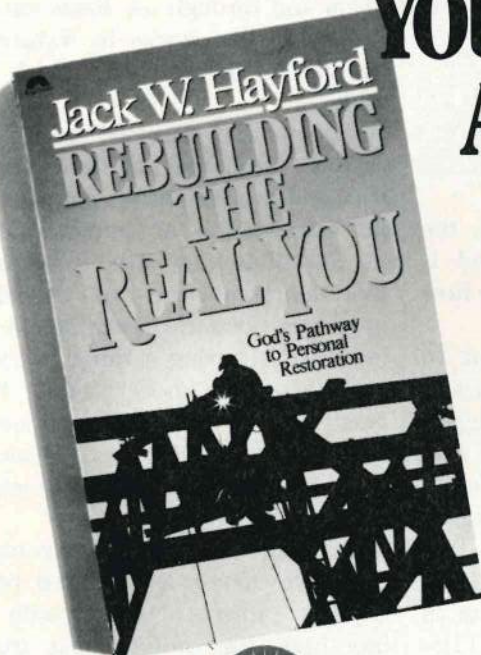
I am a graduate of Georgia Tech and I know something about engineering. I would gladly have provided the equations governing an automatic clutch, but I did not especially want to test the efficacy of such a device. Since I had no choice, I hid my apprehensions as best I could, secured the strap as instructed, and went straight down—v-e-r-r-y slowly. Now, believe it or not, there was faith involved in my safe landing that day. The *amount* of faith I had is not the issue. Let's just say I had enough of that commodity to actually take the steps required of me. What really saved me was the object of my faith. The automatic clutch proved reliable. It did exactly what it was supposed to do. The object of my faith was worthy of my faith.

God Is Reliable

Such is the nature of biblical faith. It is certainly not the amount of our faith that causes God to

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intervene on our behalf—the Lord Himself speaks of faith as small as a grain of mustard seed having the capacity to move whole mountains (Matt. 17:20). God works in our lives because He is perfectly able and willing to do that which He has promised (Rom. 4:21). God is utterly reliable. Since He has promised to direct us in the way we should go, to meet our needs, and to reward our efforts, we should take Him at His word to do so.

Abraham understood this principle well. Look at his situation 25 years after the Lord had promised that Abraham would become the father of many nations. Still childless and about 100 years of age, Abraham “contemplated his own body, now as good as dead...and the deadness of Sarah’s womb” (Rom. 4:19). The prospect of producing a child at their ages was impossible from a human standpoint:

Yet, with respect to the promise of God, he [Abraham] did not waver in unbelief, but grew strong in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully assured that what He had promised, He was able also to perform (4:20-21).

Eventually, God honored Abraham’s faith. A son was born to him from whom came “as many descendants as the stars of heaven...innumerable as the sand which is by the seashore” (Heb. 11:12).

When doubts assail us, we would do well to follow Abraham’s example, refusing to dwell on the “impossible,” choosing instead to focus on God and His Word. This does not mean we should be unrealistic regarding what is going on around us; it simply means that we need not let our circumstances get us down, for circumstances are often poor indicators of how God is working in our lives.

The New Testament gives good advice along this line: “Fixing our eyes on Jesus,” is the reminder in Hebrews 12:2. In Matthew, the vivid

description of Peter trying to walk across the Sea of Galilee at the command of the Master again underscores the need to keep our eyes on Jesus. Peter did fine until he looked down at the stormy sea (his circumstances). Then he began to sink. That day Peter learned a lesson about where his focus should be.

The primary truth concerning biblical faith is that it involves simply taking God at His Word and then clinging tenaciously to the object of our faith [God], regardless of circumstances.

Faith Demonstrated

A second truth concerning faith is that faith always involves action. “Faith without works is dead” (James 2:26). Another episode in the life of Abraham reflects this.

We are told that Abraham was called by God to resettle in an undesignated location far beyond the borders of his ancestral home, a location that he [Abraham] would later receive as an inheritance from God. Without hesitation, Abraham packed up his family and his belongings and “away he went, not even knowing where he was going” (Heb. 11:8, TLB).

At what point in this account did Abraham actually demonstrate his faith? When God told Abraham He had a land prepared for Him, Abraham believed God. But his belief became faith when he actually moved out and took a first step toward the unknown destination. Because of his faith, God revealed to Abraham the next step of the way, and as Abraham acted on the new information, the next step was revealed, and so on.

This is typical of the way in which God works in our lives. If our response to a clear calling from God is to ask for a detailed blueprint of the whole plan, then God will probably counter with silence. But if we simply take the first step He asked of us, demonstrating our faith through action, then God will provide the information and strength

needed to proceed further.

One reason that many of us do not step out in faith is that such action involves risk from a human perspective. In reality, however, the real risk lies in *not* obeying God, trusting instead in our circumstances, which are uncertain and subject to change. When we shrink in fear from a calling from God, we fail to discover the utter reliability and faithfulness of the One who sustained Abraham, and who wants to come through for us as well.

We’ve come a long way, haven’t we, from the childish definition of faith at the beginning of this chapter. We have seen that true faith does not involve forcing ourselves to believe something we suspect is not true, but that it is based on two key elements: *belief* in the reliability of God and His Word, and *action* which is based on that belief. Combining these two elements, perhaps we can redefine faith as “acting on the conviction that God will perform what He has promised.”

It is this type of faith that is called for in a partnership between God and man. Our role in such a partnership is to have faith. Nothing less on our part will do, for God has deliberately limited His ability to work in our lives without the catalyst of genuine faith.

As we consider these truths, let us not allow our lives to be like those in Nazareth where the Lord could perform no mighty works because of unbelief. Rather, let us join with God in faith and discover for ourselves that, given such a combination, nothing is impossible. □

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Bruce Cook is president of Leadership Dynamics International, in Atlanta, a ministry of biblical leadership training for executives.

When a Church Deci

For a church pursuing its God-given goals, spiritual and numerical growth are inevitable. We recently talked with C. Peter Wagner, an expert on church growth, to get his thoughts on how a church can achieve its optimum growth potential.

New Wine: What's usually behind a church's decision to grow and reach out to newcomers?

Peter Wagner: The motivation for growth in a church that isn't growing most often comes from the pastor. Sometimes the Spirit of God will move on him and direct him in that way. He may read books on church growth and decide that God has something better than stagnation for his church. He may also attend a training seminar and decide there to lead his church in growth or he may simply have a burden for reaching lost people for Jesus Christ.

NW: Is it inherent within the nature of a church to want to grow and be productive?

PW: It's part of the nature of a biblical church, but it's certainly not part of the nature of the majority of churches in America. In fact, the majority of churches don't want to grow because of the price to be paid for growth.

NW: What is the price of growth?

PW: First, the pastor has to be willing to assume the responsibility for growth. But many pastors say, "Growth is the responsibility of this committee or this board of elders or the congregation or God Himself." They're not willing to assume

the responsibility for growth because they're not willing to risk failure.

Another price they have to pay is sharing their ministry. For a small church to become a large church, the pastor has to share ministry with professional staff people and with lay people. Many pastors don't want to do that.

An additional reason churches don't want to grow is that some pastors don't believe that people without Jesus Christ are really lost, so they're not motivated from that point of view. Others believe that small is beautiful; they're small and they want to stay small. They may even think that big is carnal and small is spiritual.

NW: Would you tell us about the so-called church growth movement?

PW: Yes. The church growth movement started with Donald McGavran in India in 1955, and then spread through other Third World countries. In the United States it started in 1972. During the early days of the movement here there was little contact with the charismatic movement. But in this decade, a strong emphasis has been placed on the Holy Spirit, prayer, the supernatural, and signs and wonders.

NW: What is your background in the church growth movement?

PW: After I was ordained in 1956, I was a missionary in Bolivia for sixteen years. Then in the late 1960's, I studied church growth under McGavran at Fuller Theological Seminary, and in 1971 I joined him on the faculty there.

NW: Where is the strongest



church growth movement?

PW: Right now it's at least as strong in the United States as in any other country, and probably stronger. But you must distinguish a strong church growth movement and strong growth of churches. The church growth movement is a group of leaders, pastors, denominational executives, professors, and others who identify themselves with McGavran's teachings. We have a North American Society for Church Growth, and those who belong to it are part of

requirements for church membership are more strict, more vigorous growth occurs. That's just the opposite of what many people think.

NW: What is the first step a church can take to grow?

PW: The first step is to diagnose the health of the church and to find out where it has been and where it is right now. Several diagnostic tools, such as books, clinics, and consultants, are available to do that. For example, I've written a book on the seven vital signs of a healthy church, *Your Church Can Grow*, and another on growth-obstructing diseases, *Your Church Can Be Healthy*. The principles in them have been tested for about a decade. Just as a doctor has to have information when he or she diagnoses an illness, so church leaders must have information. It's part of the technology that we've been developing in church growth to help pastors, most of whom have not been trained in diagnosis.

Once church leaders have found the problem, they need to set goals. There are good ways and bad ways to do that. Part of the process is to discover and verbalize what we call their philosophy of ministry, which answers two questions: Whom has God called us and equipped us to reach, and how we are going to do it?

Next, they need to know their market. They need to have a good handle on their community and know which part they can best reach. Then they need to mobilize their ministry, which means helping everyone in the church discover, develop, and use their gifts—not just the nine gifts of 1 Corinthians chapter 12; the list I use has twenty-seven different spiritual gifts. Once they do that, they're ready to move out. They know their philosophy of ministry, they know people's needs, they know their gifts, and they can reach out and grow. □

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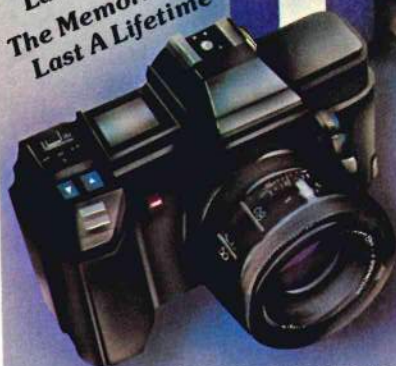
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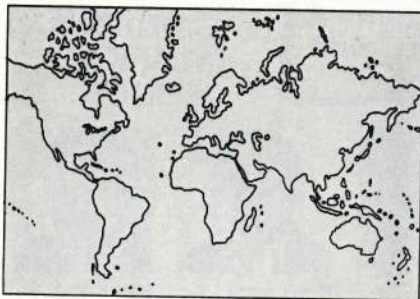
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An international update

RENEWAL IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

by Stephen Simpson

Two years ago this month I traveled to the United Kingdom and other parts of Europe to gain a perspective on what God was doing there. During the course of three weeks, I conducted more than forty interviews with religious, political, and social leaders.

We published a report on that trip in the January 1985 issue of *New Wine*, and it was my conclusion at that time that the United Kingdom was on the verge of a major outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

Now, as I write this brief report, I am again in the United Kingdom, visiting England, Scotland, and Northern Ireland. I am happy to say that an outpouring of the Spirit has indeed begun to take place.

As my father, Charles Simpson, has conducted meetings across the region, we have sensed a fresh responsiveness to the Lord among the people here. Many have come forward for prayer following the meetings and the power of the Holy Spirit has swept over each congregation.

One meeting in Bangor, Northern Ireland, lasted well into the night as people prayed for one another and worshiped the Lord long after the meeting was dismissed.

In fact, a worship revolution is taking place across the United Kingdom. One Church leader reports that it's almost impossible to gather any large number of Christians together for a meeting without the worship becoming "charismatic," even among non-Charismatics.

Evangelism Explosion

Another exciting development is in the area of evangelism. Terry Virgo, a longtime leader in the "house

church" movement, told me that in his twenty-five years of ministry, he has never seen so many conversions. He said the Lord is telling him and other leaders that building up the Church is not an end in itself, but is for a purpose: to impact the nations for Jesus Christ.

Summer in the United Kingdom is traditionally a season of scriptural teaching and training at the many nondenominational "Bible weeks" across the region. It is estimated that more than fifty thousand people participate in these times of worship, teaching, and fellowship annually. Many campsites and car parks are now filled to capacity as greater numbers of Christians come to be spiritually equipped, not only to lead "moral lives," but also to bring the kingdom of God to this region.

Among the Anglicans and other major denominations, leaders such as John Wimber have helped to "renew the renewal" that blossomed in the early 1970's. In fact, Wimber has made a tremendous impact on the entire body of Christ in the United Kingdom with his healing and teaching clinics.

In the nondenominational "house church" movement, men, such as Arthur Wallis, Barney Coombs, Bryn Jones, Tony Morton, Gerald Coates, Stephen Thomas, Stanley Jebb, and Virgo, continue to pioneer by planting many new churches while maintaining strong teaching and leadership.

Other men, such as Brian Hayes of Edinburgh, Scotland, Peter Yarr of Belfast, Northern Ireland, John Kelly of Bangor, Northern Ireland, Keith Parker and Ross Paterson of York, England, John Rogers of Market Weighton, England, and Paul

Bullivant of Kingston-upon-Hull, England, are having a significant impact in the northern United Kingdom, which has been less saturated by ministry in years past. A number of those men told us there is a growing sense of openness among leaders to one another, and although there will not be (and should not be) one centralized "house church" denomination, the Lord is bringing about greater unity in the Spirit among various groups.

One of the major struggles in the body of Christ in the United Kingdom has been to overcome a "turf" mentality geographically, theologically, and relationally. As various groups recognize their need for one another, further unity will come. Such unity is desperately needed, because the United Kingdom, like many other regions, faces many challenges: unemployment, high taxes, humanism, terrorism, and a political party that would abolish church schools if in power.

In each one of those difficulties lies a tremendous opportunity to reach men and women for Jesus Christ, and the growing number of Spirit-filled Christians is not intimidated by those situations. God is, in fact, using them to bring people into His kingdom.

The United Kingdom is an important part of our spiritual heritage. As God moves there, the rest of the world is impacted in a tremendous way. Will you put it on your prayer list? I believe that we will be blessed as we labor together with our fellow Christians there. □

Stephen Simpson is editor of Charles Simpson's Ministry Report.

BOOKS OF INTEREST

The Big Book of Home Learning by Mary Price (Crossway Books, 1986, 347 pages, \$17.50). The complete and definitive resource guide for home schoolers, listing hundreds of books, games, publications, software, education programs, and the like.

Circumstances and the Role of God by John Boykin (Zondervan Books, 1986, 221 pages, \$12.95). Boykin challenges conventional wisdom about God's role in our lives as he explains how to make sense out of circumstances.

The End of Man by John W. Whitehead (Crossway Books, 1986, 304 pages, \$7.95). Whitehead, founder of the Rutherford Institute, looks at the future—and potential dehumanization—of man in light of the computer age.

Excellence in Leadership by John White (InterVarsity Press, 1986, 132 pages, \$5.95). Nehemiah is a model for present and future leaders to learn how to overcome obstacles, achieve goals, and accomplish the work God gives them.

Getting Through the Going-Through Stage by Robert A. Schuller (Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1986, 222 pages, \$14.95). Getting through the valley requires going through the right healing process. Psalm 23 leads the way.

Knowing the Face of God by Tim Stafford (Zondervan Books, 1986, 256 pages, \$12.95). Can we know God—face to face? God wants to be known, and Stafford offers specific ways He chooses to open up to us in our present circumstances. □

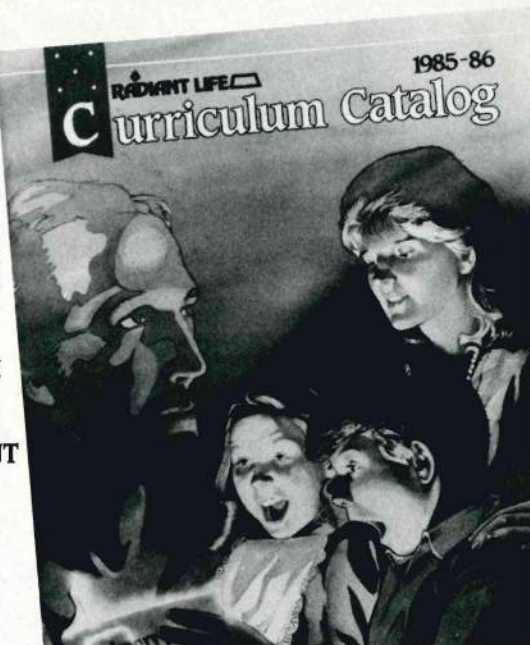
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The Family on Trial

How false arrests
for child abuse are endangering
the rights of families

by Diana Scimone



By the time I hung up the phone, I was furious. I'd interviewed Peg Doe (not her real name) for half an hour, and the more she talked, the madder I got.

Slowly the events of December 1982 unfolded. A few weeks before Christmas, she explained, an emotionally disturbed neighbor called a child protection hot-line and made an anonymous allegation that Mr. Doe

was sexually abusing his children, and that drugs were used in the home. In his opinion, the neighbor explained, the Does' two-year-old daughter was sexually promiscuous because of the way that she sat on his lap.

The child protection agency did not do anything until the man called back and repeated it. But rather than investigating it themselves, as they were required to by state law,

they called the police who made an unannounced visit to the home. Mr. Doe was not in at the time, but his wife politely yet firmly denied the charges. The police told her not to worry, saying they had to investigate the charge, but that probably nothing more would happen.

On December 20, however, Mrs. Doe and her children were waiting for Mr. Doe to arrive home for dinner when two deputy sheriffs

and two city police knocked on the door. All four were armed, and one of them had a court order to remove the Doe children, an order that was granted based on the sworn petition of a social worker who had never met the Doe family. In fact, the social worker later admitted that her petition contained false statements.

"It was an absolute nightmare," says Mrs. Doe. "The children had no idea why the police and the deputies wanted to take them from me. One of my daughters hid under her bed, screaming that she hadn't done anything wrong."

Mrs. Doe could do nothing to stop the officials, and stood by helplessly as two of her three children were literally dragged, kicking and screaming, from their home. Sixteen days later, a county social-worker finally met with the Doe family. Based on his interviews with the Doe parents and children, he determined there was no basis for the charges against Mr. Doe. The county subsequently withdrew the charges and returned the distraught children to their parents.

An Epidemic of Arrests

Child abuse is shocking. But even more appalling is that what happened to the Does is not at all unusual. Of the 1.3 million cases of child abuse reported last year, 845,000 of them, or 65 percent, were later ruled to be unfounded or dismissed after investigation.¹ In New Jersey, for example, only 18 percent of complaints of suspected child sexual abuse could be substantiated.² Also, according to data collected for the federal government by the American Humane Association, about half the children maintained in foster care facilities (estimated at about 300,000) were in no immediate danger and could have been left safely at home.³

Even sadder is that many innocent parents who could not afford a lengthy trial, or who were convinced by coercive social workers to plea bargain, are now in jail.

Dr. Ralph Underwager, a Lutheran minister and psychologist who heads up the Institute for Psychological Therapy in Minneapolis, estimates that hundreds, if not thousands, of innocent persons are in prison, wrongly convicted of child abuse. Their "crimes" range from spanking their children to taking pictures of them playing in the bathtub. One man, whose child was bruised while sliding down a hill using a pizza pan as a sled, was accused of abuse and thrown in jail. He subsequently spent \$40,000 and one and one-half years trying to clear his name.

How does a system that was originated to protect the rights of children now violate the rights of parents and families? Child abuse legislation was first proposed because of a legitimate need to protect children who were being abused, and since 1964, all states have enacted laws that require teachers, social workers, and most medical professionals to report suspected child abuse and neglect. Ten years later, the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act of 1974 set up special grants for states that established child protection criteria, including immunity for people who report child abuse. As the bureaucracy surrounding those laws grew, more offices gained control over child protection services, and as child abuse hysteria swelled, they were given even greater authority to act.

Speaking Out

Parents who have gone through false allegations and arrests are now banding together to change laws. VOCAL, or Victims of Child Abuse Laws, is a Minneapolis-based organization of three thousand parents in one hundred chapters around the country.

"The intent behind the child abuse laws is basically good," explains Mrs. Doe, one of VOCAL's cofounders. "However, we believe that a blatant disregard of the laws is largely to blame for many of our situations." VOCAL members also believe that many child abuse laws

are written so vaguely that they are easily misinterpreted. As a result, laws that are passed to protect individuals are being used to tear families apart.

Douglas Besharov, an attorney who was the first director of the National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect and one of the drafters twenty years ago of New York's child abuse laws, says, "The problem is that because we have become oversensitive to child abuse—fearful

State v. Family

The threat to the family unfortunately extends much further than false arrests for child abuse. Here are some other laws and programs that also threaten it:

- Many parents who are acquitted of child abuse are nonetheless listed on a register of "suspicious" parents, and are carefully monitored for a year or more. Some are forced to take parenting classes in which state workers tell them the "best" way to raise their children.

- From 1975 to 1985, the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services has awarded approximately \$5.5 million in grants to community groups and agencies to develop child abuse prevention programs that, among other things, teach school children about hot lines so that they can report their parents for excessive punishment, and urge people to help uncover incest cases by keeping their eyes open for parents who hug and kiss their children in public.

- The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has funded "school-based multidisciplinary teams" consisting of social workers and psychologists who enter schools to look for signs of abuse. They can examine a family's source of income, living conditions, and history; those who don't measure up to state standards face therapy and loss of their children. □

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6. Prison ministry: special outreach to prisoners.
7. International outreach: literature and teaching materials sent to 135 nations.

If you would like more information on this new division, or want to support any of its activities, contact John Stanko, director of ministry services, Integrity Communications, P.O. Box Z, Mobile, Alabama 36616; (205) 633-9000. Ministry services is just another way of saying that we're here to serve you, and we thought you'd like to know. □

that every second child might be an abused child—social workers and the police are overreacting to situations that really present no danger to the child, where there's no real evidence of abuse. They remove children and ask questions later. That's 'defensive' social work."

Twenty years ago, child abuse laws required reporting only suspicious, nonaccidental injuries. Now, people who work with or care for children are obligated to report suspected child abuse and neglect under laws that are so vaguely worded that often people make reports based on uncorroborated evidence just to protect themselves from being indicted for *not* reporting. In fact, anyone may report any act of suspected child abuse at any time. Most cities have hot line telephone numbers and consider virtually all calls as serious, no matter what the nature or circumstance of the call, or the relationship of the caller to the person he is turning in. Anonymous calls are always accepted to encourage those who might not wish to identify themselves. All reports are turned in to the local child protection office, which leaves resolution of the problem to "an already, overburdened, undermanned, underpaid, and undertrained staff," according to LeRoy Schultz, a social work professor at West Virginia University.⁴

Where Is Due Process?

When a report is investigated, police are authorized by law to enter a house, search it, and seize whomever or whatever they wish: evidence, parents, or children. In every other instance of the law, police need a search warrant, but not when investigating suspected child abuse. In a number of states, social workers are legally permitted to remove children from their homes and put them in a foster home before they actually investigate abuse charges. And even in other states where laws do not grant social workers such broad power (such as Minnesota, where the Does live), social

workers need only file a petition with a family or juvenile judge, and if it is granted, they can legally remove children from their homes before investigations take place. In fact, Corey Gordon, the Does' lawyer in the multimillion-dollar lawsuit they have filed against the county, says that in the largest metropolitan county in Minnesota the family judge has never denied a petition for such a court order.

Even if charges are later proven false, social workers have "good faith" immunity, making it difficult if not impossible for them to be sued for wrongfully removing children. Yet if a social worker decides to leave a child in his own home while investigations take place, and the child is further abused or even dies from injuries, the social worker *can* be sued for damages on behalf of the child; there is no immunity for social workers who decide to investigate first and remove later. Hundreds of social workers, in such cases, have been arrested and charged with professional malpractice, and some have even been indicted for negligent homicide. As a further deterrent to cautious investigation, social workers remain liable for actions that took place years ago because most statutes of limitation do not take effect until a child reaches eighteen years of age. "The balance in the law is too heavily in favor of removing a child," says Besharov.

Unfounded arrests have reached epidemic proportions. One survey, for example, turned up at least one social worker who attempted to remove all children suspected of being abused from their homes just to protect herself from liability.⁵ As more and more children are removed from their homes, there is a corresponding rise in federal and state expenditures for child protective programs and associated foster care services—now exceeding \$3.5 billion a year. Yet because the bureaucratic shuffle of unfounded cases occupies much of social workers' time, children who

are in legitimate danger are often overlooked.

An Antichurch Bias

The current laws and practices not only threaten parents but also the Church. Besharov reports that some states now require clergymen to report suspected child abuse. "There have been lawsuits against Catholic priests who in the privacy of the confessional hear these things," he says. "That is a terrible, terrible mistake. Sure, child abuse is a serious problem, but it's not any more serious than organized crime or drug dealing or murder, yet no one is suggesting that we break the priests' penitent privilege of confidentiality for those crimes. It's just another example of where our tradition of valuing religious freedom and the strength of our churches are being weakened."

Such an antichurch bias is widespread. Mrs. Doe knows that firsthand. "When you take the classic profile of an abuser," she says, "there is a strict, rigid, authoritativeness, which psychologists equate with religion." When she was finally allowed to see her children, she gave her daughter a card with an angel on it, and told her that God would send angels to protect her. Later when a psychologist asked the child to draw a picture of her family, she included an angel hovering over them. The psychologist concluded that her drawing of "mythical creatures" was evidence of a thought disorder.

Another woman who was falsely arrested told VOCAL that visitation with her daughter was cut off because she and her husband brought the child a Bible. Still another woman was told by social workers that because she went to church every morning she must feel guilty about something. Underwager says such a view is typical of "mental health professionals who have made an empire out of child and sexual abuse." One psychologist, for example, testified at a family court hearing that the most powerful predictor

that a person is an abuser is a high level of religious faith.

"Application of child abuse laws, and the system that has been developed," Underwager adds, "is a systematic assault upon the family by the full coercive power of the state."

A social worker, for example, told a parent who had been falsely accused of abuse, "You are going to hate me when I have finished with you. We take families and tear them apart and then we put them back together the way we want them."⁶

Under attack in this war on child abuse is the biblical view that the family is the fundamental unit of society. Both Church and state have a duty to protect the family, not to control it. "The family is the foundation upon which American society rests," asserts VOCAL, "and any activity that weakens the family is a threat to our entire society."

Contrast that with the shocking doctrine of *parens patriae*, or "the parenthood of the state," which is advocated not only by many social workers, but also by many judges and other members of the legal profession. As early as 1839, for example, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court recommended that when natural parents are unequal to the task of education, they should be supplanted by *parens patriae*, or common guardianship of the community.

What Can We Do?

In the face of these attacks against the family, many otherwise fighting Christians simply shake their heads and hope that the system will right itself. But we cannot afford to take that chance. After all, "child saving" has become a lucrative business; psychologists who question children can earn one hundred dollars an hour, and experts who testify at trials can expect one thousand dollars a day or more. Child saving is a self-propagating industry that shows no signs of dying out.

But there is something we can do. We can start by learning about

NEXT MONTH IN NEW WINE: MIGHTY IN BATTLE

Charles Simpson on taking action against our enemy.

Larry Lea on the warrior's prayer.

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Beverly LaHaye, Phyllis Schlafly, Dee Jepsen, and Connie Marshner on becoming a woman of valor.

All in the October *New Wine*

Remember:

Friday, September 5, is a national day of prayer and fasting.

This month, please focus on these topics for prayer:

- 1986 elections, that God would restore righteousness in local and state governments, and in the federal government.
- Our children, that they may live and grow in a safe environment in school, at home, and at play.
- Continued victory for the Christian community in the battle against pornography.

"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God" (Phil. 4:6 NAS).

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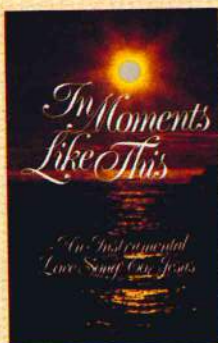
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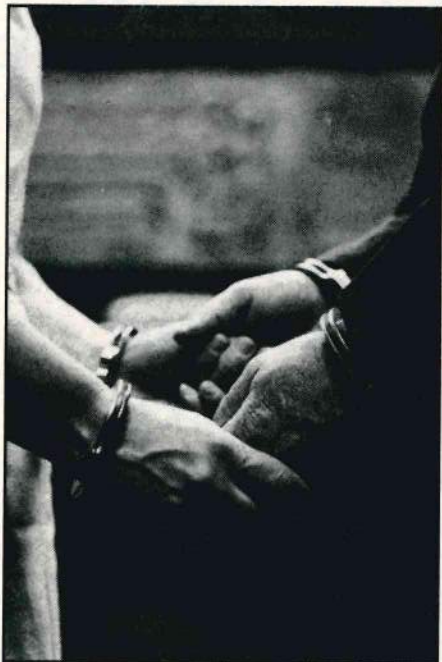
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laws that guarantee parents' rights, which are in effect in every state even though they are virtually ignored. Then we can work to pass state laws that

1. Clearly define the term *child abuse*. Present laws are so vague that people who spank their children even mildly or who teach them at home can be accused of abuse.



Christians have already ceded too many rights to the state and its "experts." Can we afford to be silent anymore?

2. Revoke requirements for doctors, teachers, and others to report abused children, which violate the sanctity of the professional-client relationship, and put professionals in the position of being faced with a criminal charge if they don't report a client. Such requirements also discourage people from seeking help if they need it.

3. Eliminate confidentiality of hot line calls, which would minimize false calls. The caller's identity could remain confidential unless his testimony was needed in court.

4. Require social workers to screen hot line calls and to investigate only the valid ones.

5. Require social workers to notify parents of charges against them and immediately set up an interview with parents and children.

6. Ensure due process for parents accused of child abuse—that they are informed of their rights if arrested, and that they are innocent until proven guilty, instead of guilty until they can prove themselves innocent.

7. Require social workers to remove a suspected parent, not the children, from the home; or if the children must be removed, place them with friends or relatives, not in an impersonal or unsupervised foster home, and allow them to communicate with their parents and the family's minister if requested.

8. Make hearsay unacceptable as evidence.

9. Ensure that religious belief is not considered a sign of mental incompetence.

10. Require that investigative interviews of both parents and children be videotaped to prevent overzealous prosecutors and

social workers from coercing parents or prejudicing children.

We can also work with our churches to support the accused whether they are innocent or guilty. Underwager says that in all but one of the hundreds of cases he has worked with, church members and officials invariably shunned parents accused of child abuse, assuming they were guilty until proven innocent. The Church, he stresses, is the only institution that can effectively minister healing and forgiveness.

Above all, we must not remain silent. "Negative media publicity and a lawsuit are always possible," Besharov explains, "if the child is subsequently killed or injured, but there is no critical publicity if it turns out that intervention was unneeded."

Christians have already ceded too many rights to the state and its "experts": the right to raise our children the way we want, the right to teach them what we want, and the right to discipline them the way we believe the Bible tells us. Can we afford to be silent anymore? □

Footnotes

¹Glenn P. Joyner, "False Accusation of Child Abuse—Could It Happen to You?" *Woman's Day* (May 6, 1986), p. 30.

²LeRoy G. Schultz, "The Social Worker and the Sexually Abused Minor: Where Are We Going?" (paper delivered at the first National Conference on the Victims of Child Abuse Laws, November 1985), p. 2.

³Joyner, op. cit., p. 32.

⁴Schultz, op. cit., p. 1.

⁵"Child Abuse 'Liability Explosion' Summary and Background," National Association of Social Workers, news release (1986), p. 6.

⁶Allan C. Carlson, "Family Abuse," *Reason* (May 1986), p. 40.

Diana Scimone is an editorial assistant for New Wine.

For more information: Victims of Child Abuse Laws (VOCAL), P.O. Box 8536, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55408; (612) 521-9714.

THE WORD

A look at Saul, David, and Solomon

Three Kings of Israel

We are studying the Old Testament from three viewpoints: the Kingdom principle, God encouraging man to live under His rule; the incarnation principle, God demonstrating His nature through faithful men and women; and the Spirit principle, God acting in human affairs by the power of the Holy Spirit.

This month we study a significant period in Israel's governmental history: the formation of the Hebrew kingdom. It got off to a shaky start with Saul, grew stronger under David, glorious under Solomon, and ended in division, tragedy, and destruction. The kingdom during this period forever colored Israel's understanding of the kingdom of God.

Israel's transition from a scattered tribal confederacy to a full-fledged, united kingdom occurred with much difficulty over a long period of time. An important figure during this time was the prophet Samuel, the last of the judges and the first of the great prophets. He was the medium of God's rule and word to the people. Although he knew the people were making a mistake when they asked God for a king, he nonetheless presided over the founding and shaping of the Hebrew monarchy.

Saul was the first king of Israel. He was an imposing man who "from his shoulders and up he was taller than any of the people" (1 Sam. 9:2 NAS). Initially he even had the anointing and power of God on his life (see 1 Samuel 10:1, 6, 10). But he was not God's choice; rather he was His concession to the people's desires. Sometimes God lets us have what we so earnestly want. Saul was successful as long as he was humble and dependent upon

the Lord. When he became self-confident and began to take matters into his own hands, however, he failed miserably, and finally wound up taking his own life.

But God had His choice waiting in the wings. It was David, a man after His own heart. God didn't choose him because he never did anything wrong, but because he was quick to repent when God confronted him with his sin. David saw that his sin had not only caused him trouble but had also grieved the heart of God (see Psalm 51). He was the human prototype of God's King, and God incarnated much of His own nature in David.

Second Samuel is the book of David's reign. The first twelve chapters chart his rise and success, and the last twelve detail his decline and failure. In the middle of the book, David's sin with Bathsheba is recorded. Although he was repentant and God forgave him, he had to live out the consequences of his sin, which affected his ministry and family.

The glory of the kingdom under Solomon was an earthly illustration of the glory of the kingdom of God. Solomon was the outstanding earthly incarnation of God's wisdom; wisdom was his sole request of God, and God gave him many other things because of that choice (see 1 Kings 3:12-13). The most powerful demonstration of the Spirit of God in Solomon's reign came at the dedication of the temple when the glory of the Lord so filled the house that the priests had to get out!

Saul, David, and Solomon alone presided over a united Israel; at Solomon's death the kingdom was divided and later destroyed.

GENERAL READING ASSIGN-

MENT: 1 Samuel chapters 1-31; 2 Samuel chapters 1-24; 1 Kings chapters 1-11

FIRST ASSIGNMENT: Read 1 Samuel chapters 2-3, 8.

1. Why was God displeased with Eli?
2. Why did Israel accept Samuel's ministry and authority?
3. What was the real significance of the people's demand for a king? How did God try to dissuade them from that choice?

SECOND ASSIGNMENT: Read 2 Samuel chapters 2, 5-7.

1. Why wasn't David king of all of Israel from the beginning?
2. The ark was a symbol of the glory of the presence of God, so why did God strike down Uzzah, who only seemed to want to be helpful? How did the people transport the ark, and what did this have to do with it (see 1 Chronicles 15:11-15)?
3. Why didn't God allow David to build the temple (see 1 Kings 5:34)?

THIRD ASSIGNMENT: Read 1 Kings chapters 3, 11.

1. What were the conditions of God's continued blessing upon Solomon's reign?
2. Compare the examples of Solomon's wisdom in 1 Kings 3:16-28 with the gifts of wisdom and knowledge in 1 Corinthians chapter 12.
3. Why did Jesus compare Himself with Solomon in Matthew 12:42?
4. What were two of Solomon's contributions to the splitting up of the kingdom, according to 1 Kings 11:1-8 and 12:1-4?

WASHINGTON WATCH

Politics and the Bench

The surge of controversy surrounding recent nominations to the federal bench signals that the selection of judges will become an increasingly contentious issue for the rest of President Reagan's term.

Since his election in 1980, Reagan has appointed more than 260 federal judges to the bench, which is one third of the federal judiciary and includes two of the nine justices on the Supreme Court. Because they are appointed for life, those judges will have an impact long after the end of the Reagan presidency.

In recent months, the confirmation process has spawned an increasingly stark, ideological confrontation between the President and several key senators. The nomination of Jefferson B. Sessions III for federal district court judge in Alabama is a case in point. Sessions, a U.S. district attorney, was recommended for the judgeship by Alabama Senator Jeremiah Denton. Although his qualifications were solid, the Senate Judiciary Committee rejected Sessions' nomination after a rancorous fight centering on remarks he allegedly made, remarks his opponents characterized as racially insensitive.

A review of testimony before the committee gives a different impression from the isolated quotes that dominated the national press reports. An array of judges and civil rights lawyers from across the political spectrum recommended Sessions for the bench, and testified that he had an excellent record on civil rights cases as a U.S. attorney. Sessions' rejection pivoted on a few contested remarks, and ran counter to the basic testimony the committee heard.

Bob Hardy, a spokesman for Senator Denton, argues that Sessions was the target of distortions and innuendos. "The allegation of racial insensitivity was completely untrue," Hardy says. "Sessions is a young conservative lawyer, and he was rejected purely for political reasons."

The Sessions case indicates that judicial appointments will be a source of continuing conflict for the rest of Reagan's term. The outcome of that confrontation is tremendously important, and will affect the composition of the federal judiciary for the next generation.

Pornography Report

Before the report by the Attorney General's Commission on Pornography even hit the street, shock waves were being felt throughout the ten-billion-dollar pornography industry.

On April 10, Southland Corporation announced the removal of pornographic magazines from its forty-five

hundred company-owned 7-Eleven stores. In recent months, twelve thousand stores nationwide have stopped selling magazines such as *Playboy*, a sudden and massive reaction to the slow and pernicious spread of pornography throughout our society. A lawyer for *Playboy* ruefully declared, "Never before in the history of our country have so many stores stopped selling so many publications in such a short period of time."

Both supporters and critics of the attorney general's commission have pointed to its report on pornography as a motivating force in those changes. The report by the eleven-member commission is indeed influential. Arguing that there is often a causal relationship between pornography and sexual violence, the report has pushed the need to control pornography back into the forefront of the public debate. The subsequent attention has led many retailers to pull magazines from their shelves.

The report calls for tougher prosecution using existing laws and tougher penalties for repeat violators. Perhaps more importantly, it reveals the threat pornography poses and helps mobilize a broader public opposition to its merchandisers. As recent months have shown, consumer pressure will be the quickest and most effective way to restrict pornography.

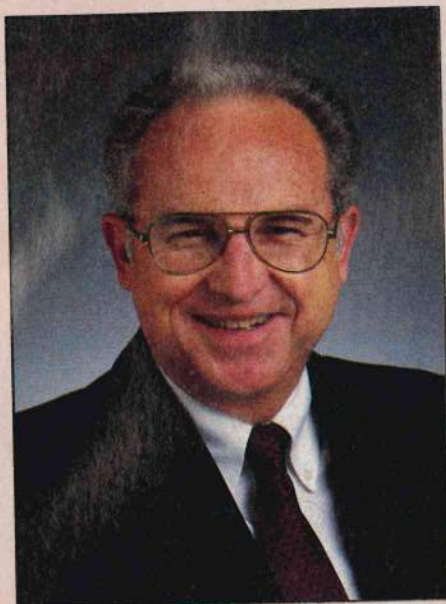
Upjohn Boycott

Many prolife groups are joining hands in a boycott of the Upjohn Company, a pharmaceutical supply firm active in the production and marketing of prostaglandins used in abortions.

Upjohn currently markets three prostaglandins used as abortifacients in second-trimester abortions, an enterprise that brought the company eight million dollars in sales in 1983. A leader in the development of chemical abortifacients, Upjohn was also the first corporation to market those drugs. In addition, it has supervised extensive research in prostaglandins that potentially could be used for self-administered abortions.

There is a considerable incentive to develop an abortifacient that will "privatize" abortion. *Business Week* has estimated a worldwide market of one billion dollars for a prostaglandin that would enable widespread, self-administered abortions. Although Upjohn claims to have terminated research on such a drug, it is willing to sell a prostaglandin that could be used to induce early abortions.

Right to Life of Michigan, the organizer of the boycott, has called on Upjohn to end all sales of prostaglandins used exclusively as abortifacients and to supervise the sales of its other prostaglandins so that they are not used in the research or production of abortifacient drugs. □



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Oklahoma City	Mon., September 15 7:30 P.M.	Central Plaza Hotel Junction of I-40 and I-35
Denver	Tue., September 16 7:30 P.M.	Clarion Hotel at the Denver Airport
Baltimore	Sat., October 11 7:30 P.M.	Quality Inn-Towson 26 South Exit Baltimore Beltway
Atlanta	Sun., October 12 6:00 P.M.	Atlanta Marriott Gwinnett Place , North I-85 at Pleasant Hill Road
Orlando	Fri., November 7 7:30 P.M.	Orlando Expo Centre Downtown Orlando
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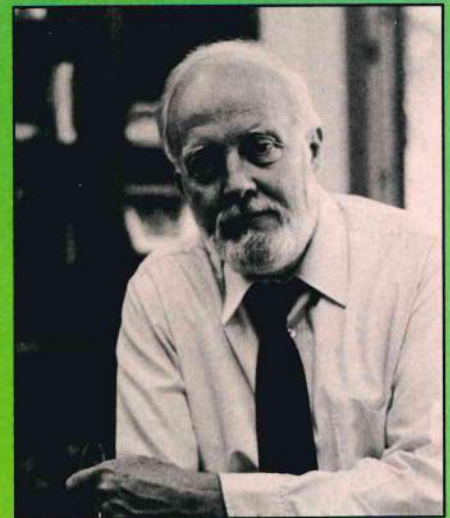
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Author - Don Basham

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THE WAY I SEE IT

"But we've always done it that way!"

How Many Cats Are Tied to Your Bedpost?

by Don Basham

You have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to the traditions of men" (Mk. 7:8 NIV).

When Christians are faced with a choice between religious tradition and new spiritual experience, more times than not they choose the tradition over the new experience. Remember how the scribes and Pharisees were so terribly offended when Jesus healed the man with a withered hand on the Sabbath?

Then Jesus asked them, "Which is lawful on the Sabbath: to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?" But they remained silent. He looked around at them in anger and, deeply distressed at their stubborn hearts, said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." He stretched it out, and his hand was completely restored. Then the Pharisees went out and began to plot with the Herodians how they might kill Jesus (Mk. 3:4-6 NIV).

The scribes and Pharisees had long since forsaken their sacred responsibilities as stewards of the commandments of God to create a thousand and one picky rituals and regulations that obscured true righteousness and laid impossible burdens upon the common people. Trapped by their own precious traditions, they sought to murder Jesus because keeping those traditions had become much more important than meeting human need.

Properly observed, traditions can enrich our heritage and strengthen our ties with the historic family of God. But held too tightly or too long, they may end up as substitutes for the revelation that first inspired them and stand in the way of the next thing God wants to do.

I once read about an anthropologist who, while studying a primitive South American Indian tribe, discovered a strange custom. Before they went to the temple to worship, every family that had a cat tied it to the bedpost. No one seemed to know why, and nothing in their current religious practice suggested any reason for the strange custom. Nevertheless, all the natives agreed it was important. "It is part of our sacred tradition," they insisted.

Only after weeks of research did the anthropologist discover how, in earlier times, the Indians had brought fresh fish to the temple and placed them on the altar as an offering to their god. Because the village cats kept jumping on the altar to steal the fish, the priests ordered them to be tied up during temple worship. In later generations the practice of offering sacrificial fish was abandoned in favor of a purer form of worship, but the worshipers kept right on tying their cats to the bedpost.

The way I see it, when God blesses His people with fresh revelation, we may have to abandon certain traditions and rituals that no longer contain spiritual reality. Jesus said that new wine calls for new wineskins (see Matthew 9:17).

But because new wine threatens to burst old wineskins, we often decide to keep the old familiar skins and throw out the new wine.

Even when we begin to accept new revelation, we often maintain some of the old traditions and rituals that it renders obsolete just because "we've always done it that way." We forget that every sacred tradition began as the innovation of some band of spiritual pioneers that was hearing a new word from the Lord.

As creatures of habit, Christians tend to be conservative. That can become a problem because, as one definition points out, "a conservative is one who believes that nothing should ever be done for the first time."

Even after years of ministry to Christians with many differences in doctrine and tradition, I still encounter new and unfamiliar forms of worship and ministry that run roughshod over pet traditions of my own. *That can't be right! I've never seen it done that way before!* I feel like saying—until I see the Holy Spirit blessing His people.

Then I have to repent and ask God's forgiveness, and untie one more cat from my bedpost.

How many cats are tied to your bedpost? □

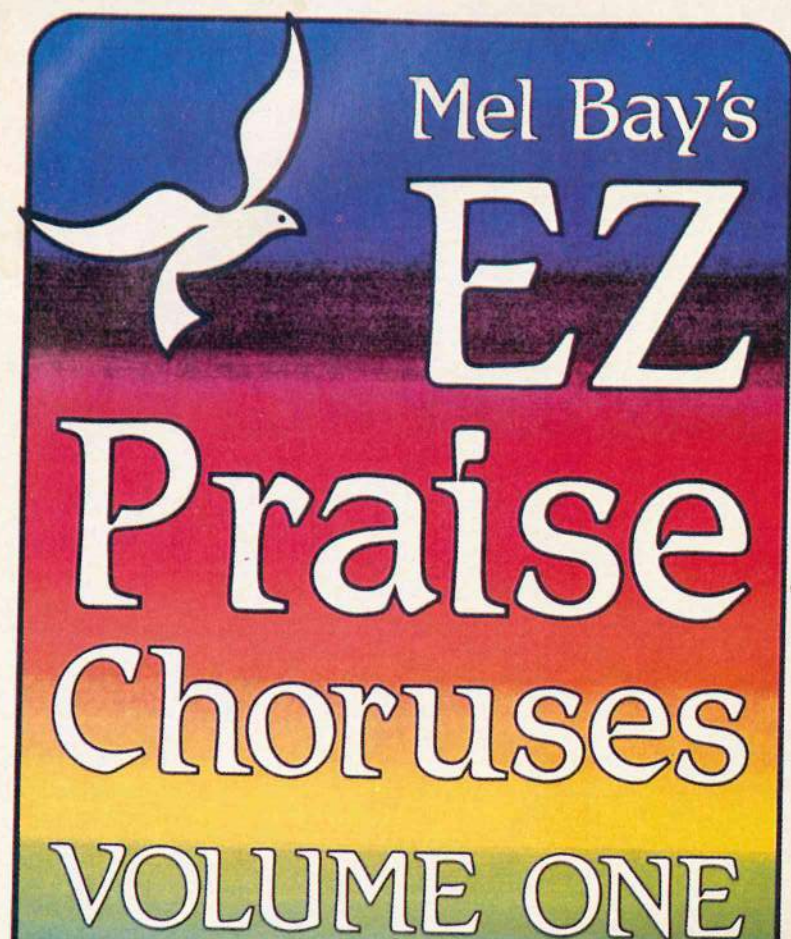


Don Basham is chief editorial consultant for New Wine.

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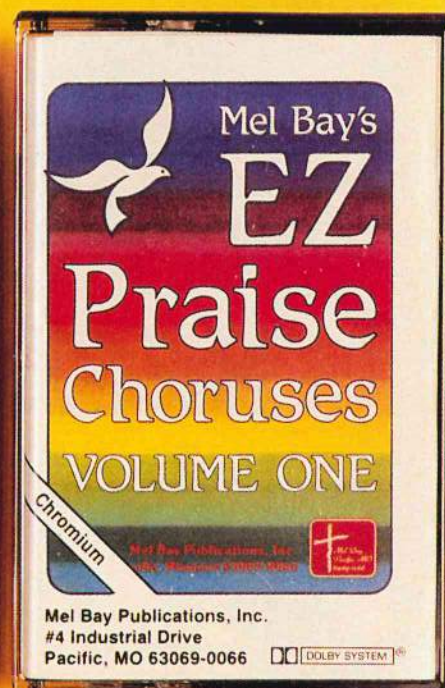
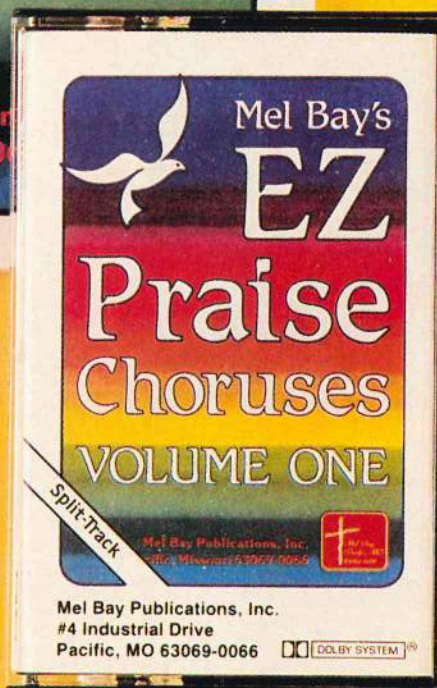
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