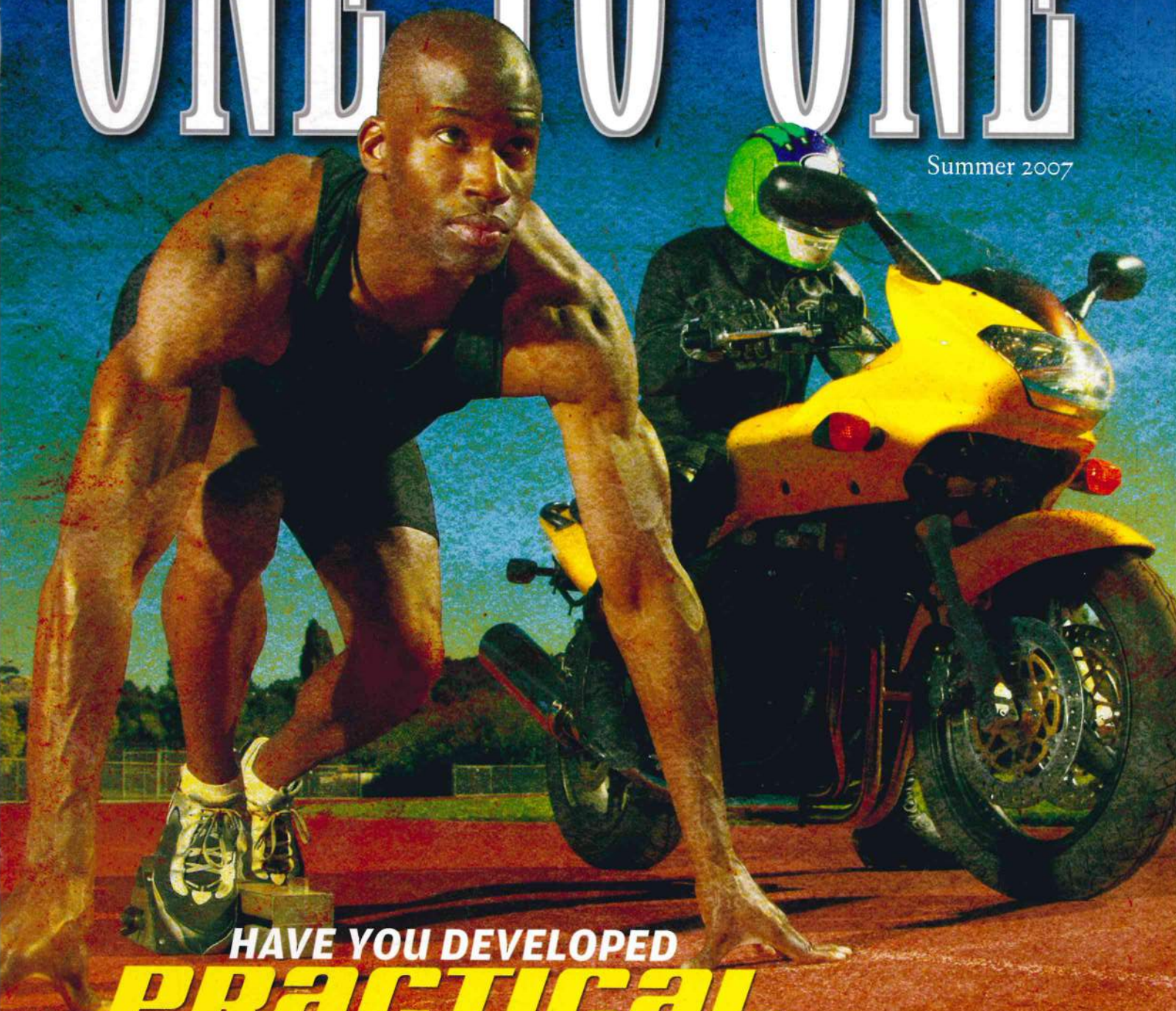


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ONE-TO-ONE[®]

Summer 2007



HAVE YOU DEVELOPED
PRACTICAL
FAITH?

INSIDE:

IN THE SUMMERTIME • EXCEEDING EXPECTATIONS • PETER PAN THE AMERICAN MAN

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ONE-TO-ONE

VOL. 22 NO. 2 SUMMER 2007

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One-to-One™ is a non-subscription magazine supported by the contributions of its readers. Those who contribute to any activity of Charles Simpson Ministries automatically receive a one-year subscription, which is updated with each contribution. If you have questions about your subscription, write us or call us at (251) 633-7900 or (888) 811-2226. If you move, please notify us at least six weeks in advance.

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IN THE summertime

Some people only look at the way things are—some see where things will be

By Stephen Simpson

ONE OF THE GREAT COMPOSERS of the Twentieth Century, George Gershwin, composed these lyrics to accompany a slow, bluesy, atmospheric jazz masterpiece:

“Summertime and the livin’ is easy, fish are jumpin’, and the cotton is high.”

Well, George Gershwin never lived in Mobile, Alabama. In summertime, the living is many things, but “easy” is not always one of them. The temperature is jumping and the humidity is high.

For the record, it is true that the fish are jumping, the water is pretty, the beaches are gorgeous, and the tourists are very happy. As longtime Mobilian Jimmy Buffett once sang, “The weather is here, I

the 1920s, with little more than a machete and a will to help the family survive.

That was, of course, in the days before air-conditioning. Actually, when my dad was a small boy in Louisiana, his family lived in a small trailer that had no electricity or running water or indoor plumbing. The people in the community collected rainwater in cisterns. One lone shell road led into the remote area, located 50 miles southwest of New Orleans.

I’ve heard my Dad say that his days growing up had more in common with the Bible days than they did with life today as we know it in America in 2007. While that part of Louisiana was not necessarily typical of

“Changes are happening even faster and faster, and we need to be ready for what is ahead of us.”

wish you were beautiful.”

I’ve never picked cotton, yet. My dad did, though, and it didn’t sound too easy, to hear him tell it. Life in the South in the 1930s and 1940s wasn’t exactly a picnic. And Dad’s mom chopped sugar cane when she was a youngster in south Louisiana back in

the technology and lifestyle of most Americans 70 years ago, it is a reminder to us of just how much some things have changed in the intervening decades.

And the changes are much more than technological ones. And while I do give thanks every day for air conditioning,



I would not say that all the changes that have happened in our society have been good ones.

My purpose here is not to be nostalgic or to lament the passing of “the good old days,” but to remind us that changes are happening even faster and faster, and we need to be ready for what is ahead of us. Wayne Gretzky, one of the greatest hockey players in history, said that the key to his success was that other players skated to where the puck was—he skated to where the puck was going to be.

How can we anticipate what will happen next? It strikes me that we get to that place by “looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith.” We must be prophetic. But being prophetic is not merely speaking in a loud or trembly voice in riddles or attempting to “read” people. Prophetic is a lifestyle. It is walking daily with the Lord, in hearing His voice—not only believing in Him, but believing Him enough to act on His will.

It is a tangible and practical demonstration of His life in our lives, which draws others towards salvation.

This issue of *One-to-One* is dedicated to all of those who seek after the One who ran the race, won the prize, and is even now praying for you. 121

Stephen Simpson is the Editor of *One-to-One* and Pastoral Team Leader of Covenant Church of Mobile. He is also available for ministry in your city. For more information, contact Betty Duke: bettydukeesm@aol.com or call (251) 633-7900.

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PRACTICAL FAITH?

by Charles Simpson

How to apply the truth of God's Word so that **HIS POWER** can be released in and through your life

❑ DOES YOUR LIFE REALLY WORK? WHAT ABOUT YOUR FAITH—HAS LEARNING ABOUT JESUS CHRIST MADE YOU A MORE PRACTICAL AND PRODUCTIVE PERSON? IS THERE A DISCONNECT BETWEEN YOUR FAITH AND YOUR RESULTS? OR, HAS YOUR FAITH MADE YOU MORE EFFECTIVE?

John Deal's book, *Decisions by the Book*, states that the Bible is the ultimate source of wisdom for making all of our decisions in life. He contends that the Bible is not only a spiritual book but a practical book. There is really no disconnect between spirituality and practicality. The real believer should be effective and that effect will cause the world to glorify our Lord (see Matthew 5:16).

Our great challenge is to demonstrate to the world that faith in Jesus Christ works, and that will make telling the Gospel much easier. There are multitudes whose lives don't work, and they are our mission field. But if our lives do not work, they will say, "Physician, heal yourself."

One reason that many Christians' lives do not work is because they see their faith as simply a means to get to heaven, not a means to bring heaven to earth. Others see faith as a means to get what they want, not a means to become who the Lord wants them to be.



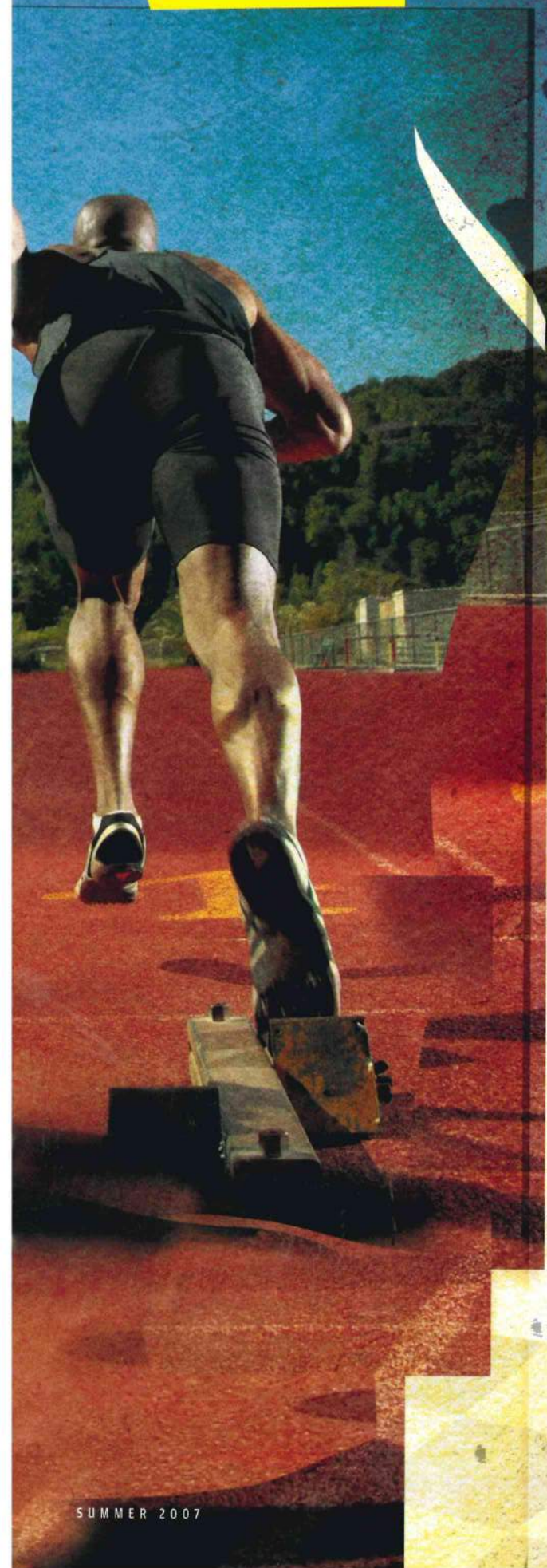
SIN IS IMPRACTICAL

The message of the Bible is that transgressing the com-

mands of God doesn't work—it tears down what we have built up. We call that "sin." Of course, the secular world has trouble using the word sin, but whatever name, violating creation principles is destructive and that is not practical.

The Ten Commandments could be summed up this way: love and honor God, family, and neighbor. The commands are not arbitrary impositions by a mean arbitrary Almighty; they are His counsel to us born out of His desire that our lives should work for us. He loves us—we are His children. But as children often do, often we have to discover for ourselves that His ways are better than ours; our ways lead to destruction. Ignoring or violating His instruction leads to failure. Though it may take awhile for that to be apparent, in the end it does reveal itself.

For example, take the socialist Soviet Union. It was founded on Marx's theories of atheistic materialism. It was to some an exciting alternative to Christian faith. The Soviets violated God, family, and neighbor. Their philosophy grew rapidly, primarily by force, and also among academics who were Utopian idealists, and laborers who wanted more of the wealth. In the end, that philosophy had destroyed untold millions of lives. Was it practical? Absolutely not.



Winston Churchill said, "The problem with capitalism is unequal distribution of wealth. The problem with socialism is the equal distribution of misery."

Misery not only comes to nations who choose a bad path but to individuals who do so as well. Adam lost paradise and let loose consequences upon all generations. We all know of pastors, executives, professionals, craftsmen or athletes whose violations of Divine counsel cost them dearly. Their choices were not practical. Unfortunately, we all make impractical choices.

When life doesn't work, it is easy to become frustrated and angry. Proverbs tell us that anger is a wind that blows out the light of reason. We fly off the handle—then make a bad landing. We get angry at the results of a bad situation, which sometimes exists due to our own bad decisions. We violated some creation principle and didn't like the consequence. We may even become bitter and angry at God.

Life regularly presents us with real challenges that require real answers in order to get real good results. We cannot afford to ignore these challenges. They only grow worse. When Stanley Baldwin was Prime Minister of England in the 1930s, his government ignored Hitler who was gobbling up Eastern Europe. Churchill said of Baldwin that he was, "decided to be undecided and resolved to be irresolute." Indecision only delays the inevitable.

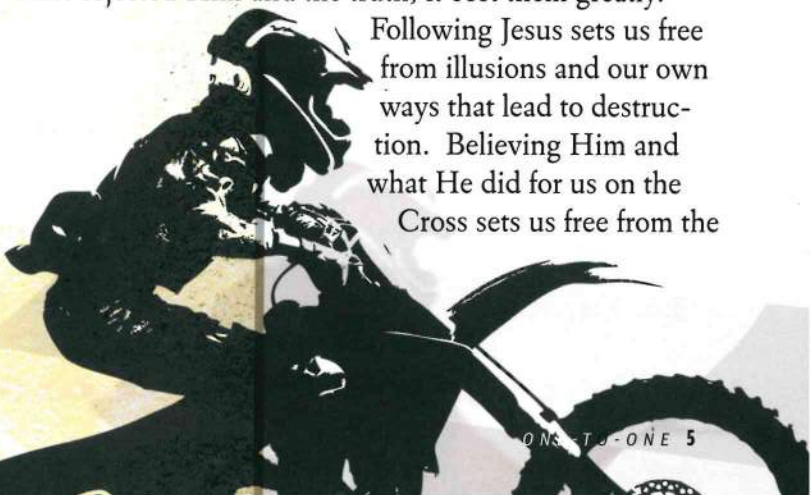
The Bible brings truth to bear on our dysfunctionality. The truth can be painful because it calls for change. Harry Truman, President of the United States was nicknamed, "Give 'em Hell Harry." He responded, "I didn't give 'em hell. I only gave them the truth and they thought it was hell." The truth is not our enemy; it is our best friend and hope. The truth offers to us and to the world amazing possibilities. The practical thing is to learn the truth and apply it to our lives.



POSSIBILITIES

Jesus said, "I am the Truth." Many of His contemporaries rejected Him and the truth; it cost them greatly.


Following Jesus sets us free from illusions and our own ways that lead to destruction. Believing Him and what He did for us on the Cross sets us free from the




guilt of former failure. Because He is eternal, believing Him gives us eternal life. Following Him put us in tune with creation law—the way things work. Because He is the Creator and Owner of our wealth, following His path makes us good productive stewards and allows us to enjoy abundance.

When we learn how to use resources, we become effective in causing them to grow. When we learn how to sow, we will reap. If we eat all our seed, we will fall into poverty and debt. This is “consumerism,” not stewardship, and it is impractical.

Jesus’ teaching prevents problems and His mercy helps us to solve existing ones. His love carries us through problems and His grace forgives the problems that we have created. When we hear and obey His Word, it brings:

 **Health to our flesh** (see Proverbs 4:22; Isaiah 58:110)

 **Light to our path** (see Psalm 119:105)

 **A armor in the day of battle** (see Ephesians 6:14-17)

It is wisdom and discretion for the naïve, comfort for the afflicted, and strength for the weak (see 2 Corinthians 12:9-10). These possibilities are all practical; we ignore them at our peril.

CONSIDER OUTCOMES

Hebrews 13:7 reminds us to follow leaders based on their outcome—the result of their conduct. This principle is consistent with other Scriptures that tell us to promote proven leaders, not merely idealistic ones. Since following them will take us to where they are, we should look carefully at where they are. This is a practical way to choose leaders. It also applies to any theory.

Had nations practiced this principle they could have avoided following Marx, whose life was full of bitterness and rejection, or Hitler whose life was equally disturbed, or following Freud or Nietzsche. None of them was a pattern to follow.

The principle of outcomes goes much further—it goes to religion as well. What is the practical result of a particular faith? What is the practical, moral, and the economic affect of Islam, Buddhism, Taoism, or Christianity? What is the practical result of a particular brand of Christianity? What is the practical result of your brand?

Paul Zane Pilzer said that bad theology is the greatest

cause of poverty. I agree. The economic outcome of an idea is a real measure of its worth—not the only measure, but a significant one. If I told you, “Believe this and it will make you poor and therefore susceptible to disease and other problems,” you would certainly decline. On the other hand, if I said, “Believe this and you will be blessed with peace, joy, and you will prosper,” you would be interested. Your next question would be, “Are you being blessed and prospering?” That is a fair question and the world will ask it of us.

False faith or faith in a false idea, whatever the idea is, will fail in the end. It will fail to make our life function properly; fail to build a righteous, peaceful, joyful, and prosperous culture and it will fail to glorify God. So before we follow an idea or theology we should examine it carefully.

GOOD THEOLOGY—BAD OUTCOME

Is it possible to believe good theology yet get a bad result? To many Christians and others, the word “believe” is a mere academic consent. It is “confessional faith” without obedience.

Example: I now have regular sessions with a physician who is a nutritionist. He tells me how my body works and how I can serve its needs with a proper diet. I believe him and tell him so. “I confess it.” I even “praise” him to others.

However, when I leave his office, if I go and eat improperly, I get a bad outcome. Or, I could become legalistic in attitude, imposing what I have learned on others, while excusing myself. Or, I could say, “I know my physician loves me anyway—unconditionally.” Maybe he does; but I would still get a bad outcome, not because he judged me, but because I did not apply my knowledge practically.

The word “doctrine” does not mean theology, it means practice. Doctrine is what we do, our way of life. Sound theology should produce sound doctrine. In Jesus’ life, we see that what He believed is what He did. That approach will determine our own outcome.

BASE YOUR FAITH

The Bible was written by many different people over many centuries. In most cases, it reveals the lives of the authors. The life of the central character, Jesus of Nazareth, is highly documented. The Bible is not one

man's philosophy or example; it covers most of human history, in collecting the inspired wisdom of generations. The same cannot be said of Marx's *Das Capital*, or *The Sayings of Mao*, or Mohammad's *Koran*.

Another reason that I base my own faith on the Bible is that it has produced outstanding cultures wherever it was practiced—in the Israel of old, around the Mediterranean, and in Europe. Those were not flawless cultures, since people themselves are not flawless. Even their failures have guided us to develop better lives for ourselves.

Having said that, I am deeply concerned about our current Western Culture. The Bible, once foundation for our laws, has come under serious attack from academia, media, and entertainment. Bible-based faith is portrayed as intolerant and bigoted. The truth is that a Bible-based culture gave us the freedom to choose and even criticize. Now, attacks on the biblical positions of faith and family are "chic."

It is my confidence that practicality, not hostility, will win out. The Soviet Union imploded, not because we hated communism, but because our nation stood strong on its principles and tyrannical communism fell apart.

Impractical idealism or false theologies must be managed by tyranny. Tyranny controls what it cannot improve. What does not improve and develop practically will eventually

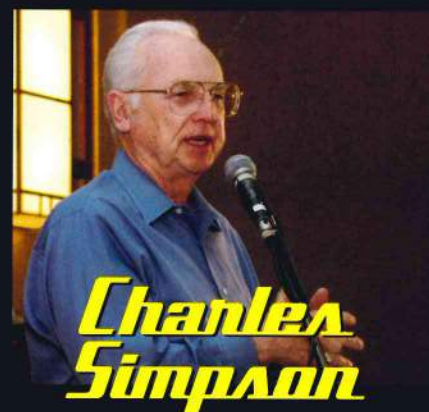
implode—after it has cost many lives. Saddam Hussein got 99% of the "vote" in his last election. But when he was removed, the real condition emerged. Iraq was dysfunctional and had to be ruled by tyranny. Democracy does not work if the prevailing philosophy is erroneous.

True Bible-based faith deals with our real condition. When the population applies practical truth to life, tyranny and most laws become unnecessary. The result is healthy people creating a healthy culture. The economic outcome is apparent.

Our primary task is not to criticize other faiths; it is to live our own faith with strong commitment. We may be called upon to defend ourselves against those who hate us and our values. Indeed we will be. But unless we demonstrate the practical outworking of our faith in our vocations, families, neighborhoods and to the needy, ours will be a hollow defense. Neither self-righteousness, pride, or bitterness will be our salvation, but humility, faith, and obedience will be.

In the end, results win. 121

Charles Simpson is Editor-In-Chief of *One-to-One* Magazine. He ministers extensively throughout the United States and among the nations.



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by Keith Landies



EXCEEDING EXPECTATIONS

How a general contracting firm succeeds in the poorest major American city



MY COMPANY, RESIDENCE ARTISTS, INC., is a general contracting, construction, maintenance, and decorative paint/design company specializing in the restoration of fine homes in the greater Cleveland area. We perform new construction, as well as remodeling and light commercial work. The majority of our customers are in the residential market.

Last year, for the second time in three years, Cleveland was declared "The Poorest Major City in the United States." (*Cleveland Plain Dealer*, August 2006). Nearly one-third of the city's residents (32.4%) are living below the federal poverty level, and no other big city in America had a lower median household income than Cleveland. For those living in the eight counties around Cleveland, median household income actually dropped \$1,778 over the last five years.

Since 9/11, many businesses have moved out of the Cleveland area for financial and tax reasons. As a result there is a smaller influx of "professionals" moving to the city who would need our help. The housing market is very slow.

OUR STORY

Residence Artists began in 1973 as a painting and decorating company and added a construction division in the early 1980s. It is often said that R.A. is Cleveland's only exclusive "one-stop shopping" company, where one can ask for everything from a new home, to a plumber, or a basic exterior paint job by making one phone call. My oldest son, Stewart (a graduate of John Carroll University's School of Business), is the vice-president, and has been in a management role since 1997. He has worked at R.A. since he was 14, both in the field as a painter and as a warehouse manager.

The business is based solely on referrals from existing customers. Our team of workers demonstrates a diversity of skills that sets us apart from the competition. Presently, there are 35 full-time employees, including painters, paperhangers, artists, carpenters, and job superintendents. Combined, these men have over 415 years of experience. Even though they are tremendous technicians in their fields, more often than not, they are complimented on their attitude, cleanliness, dedication, and service. The ability to cater to a client's needs while producing the highest quality product is what makes them truly special.

Because of the high rate of unemployment in the Cleveland

area, there are many “part-time” carpenters, painters and contractors of all kinds who claim to do and be whatever a customer wants from them. This “army” of part-timers also work at a much cheaper rate than companies like ours that have legitimate overhead expenses (health insurance, unemployment, liability insurance, worker’s comp, vacation pay, and other issues).

With that economic picture as a backdrop, the men of our company approach work with an overriding philosophy of service, diligence, execution, thoroughness and professionalism, that cause customers to choose Residence Artists over some who might make these claims—but are not able to do the same type of work. To survive and prosper in this kind of environment, great attention to detail and constant communication are necessities.

A KINGDOM MINDSET

The work philosophy I embody as the owner continued to evolve in the early 1970s, when I first had the unique privilege of being taught by Charles Simpson, Don Basham, Ern Baxter (his classic message on “Divine Arrangement”), Derek Prince, Bob Mumford, and those who surrounded them.

I made a commitment to Christ in 1972 and was blessed to be exposed to these teachers and the biblical teaching of **New Wine** Magazine. During my college years, I worked in the summer hanging drywall and painting. Several customers kept calling me with more jobs to do, so I felt the Lord was opening the door for me to

enter into the trades. Upon graduation in 1972, I went to school to learn how to hang wallpaper. I believe then as I do now that it is a godly attribute to be able to work with one’s hands. The apostle Paul wrote I Corinthians 4:12 “and we labor working with our own hands”.

Also, I have always been convinced that whatever I was doing should be done with excellence. I was the only college graduate at Max Hayes Trade School and the teacher couldn’t understand my being there. He said “but you have a college education” and I replied, “But God wants me to learn how to work excellently with my hands.” The Lord used this man to teach me principles of estimating and how to run jobs in the residential marketplace. He had a great work ethic and we became close friends. I eventually had the opportunity to pray with him before the Lord took him home.

My exposure to work started at a very early age. I was blessed to have a father who woke us up every Saturday morning at 7 AM, regardless of what hour we may have gotten in the night before, with the simple statement “IT’S TIME”. My brothers and I knew what “time” that was—it was time to work. Saturday’s were work days and evenings were work nights at the Landies’ home. As a teenager I didn’t like it, but something was being put into me that I was able to take into

manhood and then extend to others as I went into business.

I’m indebted to my dad for not paying attention to our pleas to be left out of the work projects. He himself had worked three jobs while going to college after returning from WW II. In 2 Thessalonians 3:8, Paul writes that he labored and toiled, **working night and day** that he might not be a burden to any. I’d like to make an encouragement to all fathers and mothers reading this to give your children household jobs and tasks, even if you can afford to have someone else do them. I personally believe you

are doing your child a dis-service by not teaching him how to use the **basic tools** of life such as mops, wash pails, brooms, lawnmowers, shovels, and weed-eaters.

“I believe that it is a godly attribute to be able to work with one’s hands.”

EXCELLENCE IN CRAFTSMANSHIP

In Acts 18:3-4, Paul spoke of his trade, which was that of a tent-maker. The word for “**trade**” in my Bible footnotes told me that in the original Greek language, this is the same word that we use for “**craft**” and it is derived from the word that physicians use. It was a highly technical term and specialized. I found it particularly interesting the Paul didn’t refer to his apostleship as a craft or trade, but instead to his ability to work with his hands to create and make tents, from which he derived income. This work gave him identity and satisfaction.

I am blessed to say that although all four of my children are college graduates, each one has learned to work with their hands and could support themselves as a tradesperson in a craft if need be.

I saw in the early days as I do now that being a “craftsman” is an honorable occupation worthy to pursue and esteemed highly by “God Himself”. Read Exodus 35-36 and see the attention to detail and the incredible craftsmen God assembled to build the tabernacle. Another verse, Proverbs 22:29, says, “Do you see a man skillful in his work? He will stand before kings. He will not stand before obscure men.” This was a foundational scripture for Residence Artists that I built on.

Personally, I believe there are many Christian young people who could flourish in trades if they were encouraged to go in this direction and their endeavors were seen as a godly calling, as valuable as computers, law, and politics. I never miss an opportunity to help a beginner to sow toward his craft with the hope that in due time God will reward him.

WORK AND SERVICE

From the formation of Residence Artists, I was guided by biblical teachings on work and service. Paul Petrie shared in the late 1970s a message on service that became part of our company. He said that it **always costs to serve** and that **service is never free**. My employees and I take on the role of servants. This concept of being a servant to others is not popular in our culture today, but it is one of the aspects that

distinguishes our company from the myriad of others operating in our market. We are servants in a customer's home, there to please them and to do what they ask us to do with all our heart and all our might.

Years ago, Derek Prince's teaching out of Luke 16:10-12 on faithfulness provided a revelation on how to be promoted in the kingdom of God. Jesus said that he that is faithful in a **VERY** little will be faithful in much. The word for **very** in the original language is the same word we use for "minutia" in our speech today. God watches the smallest things. He is the ultimate Detailer.

The Joseph Model taught by Charles Simpson provided insights into God's basis for promotion. It is the seemingly "insignificant" things, not seen by others which God uses as a basis for increase and promotion. God is interested in the "very little" and it is in this arena that growth occurs. First Corinthians 10:31 says, "whatever you eat or drink or **whatever you do**, do all for the glory of God." Colossians 3:23-24 echoes this: "**Whatever** your task, work heartily as serving the Lord and not men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward."

Working through and understanding the "whatevers" of life is a process that can't be rushed. Many trainees and apprentices want rewards **now**, not realizing that God distills your craft the old fashion way; forging your skills through the furnace of time. Over the years, I've had a number of men tell me "If you just made me a supervisor and gave me a big job to do, I'd show you what a good worker I am." I have

found that talk can be cheap. We see in First John 3:18 that we need to "walk the walk" not just "talk the talk".

Derek Prince taught out of First Corinthians 15:46 regarding "first the natural, and then the spiritual" allowed me to not over-spiritualize work, but also awakened me to the fact that there was no such thing as a "Christian" company and that being a Christian wasn't a magic wand that allowed you to get away with an undisciplined, sloppy, performance—quite to the contrary! This teaching showed me that I can't use God as an excuse for incompetence.

Over the years I've met many "get rich quick" Christians who somehow thought having the Christian "title" was their ticket to success.

Oftentimes, these people would get the cart out ahead of the horses and would begin to focus energies on building their own homes, without the proper foundational work in their company "craft" that supports them.

We are reminded by Proverbs 24:27, "Prepare your work outside. Cultivate it, then build your own home." In other words, focus on your trade and gifting. For me, work was not and is not done by a clock or a timetable, but by an affirmation from on high that lets you know when a job is "well done."

This commitment to diligence, service, and excellence guides us in our mission statement:

"Residence Artists is com-

mitted to faithfully steward the resources that we have been given and to perform our services at levels above the expectations of our customers by completing design, construction, restoration, decorative projects, and maintenance tasks with the highest level of personal integrity, technical expertise, and administrative skill."

THE ABILITY TO HEAR

Another scriptural principle that has helped make Residence Artists successful and is a hallmark of what we do goes hand-in-hand with being a good servant is **the ability to hear**. I

encourage all my employees to cultivate a "hearing ear". We live in a culture where hearing is a problem. We are bombarded by cell

phones, computers, email, television, and other distractions. Really listening to a customer's desires and needs is the first step in serving them.

Charles Simpson taught a leadership message where he commented on committing our thoughts to paper, and how important it is to write down fresh ideas so you can get back to it when time permits, and it won't be lost in the next ten conversations.

In choosing a team, once you know if an employee has a hearing ear and the capacity to serve, then it is important to recognize his sphere, his limitations, and the measure in which he can operate (thank you Bob

Mumford for that teaching). As a coach, it is important for me to keep constant oversight of the "whatevers" and make sure all employees are functioning in the "space" where they can best serve both the customer and the company (see also 2 Corinthians 10:13).

In restaurant terms "we are only as good as our last meal." You can do a great job for a customer for years, but if you have one bad project or a job that was incorrectly executed, you are liable to lose them.

CUSTOMER CARE

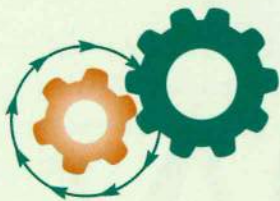
The essential element in any business relationship is **care**. We are in a culture that demands a quick response to be successful. We have a system set up at R.A. to get quick feedback and quick results for whatever customer needs or requests come our way.

After reading this article, it may seem to you that everyone at R.A. works 24/7. Not so. Employees are encouraged to participate in family times, vacations, sports, and other life priorities. But, clear communication of those needs and desires are required so we can both serve our customers and help our worker's families have quality time together.

Regardless of the economy you find yourself in, God is faithful to His Word, His principles, and His promises regarding stewardship, finance, and the workplace. It is with these tools that R.A. has been given the ability to prosper in the midst of difficult financial times. 121

Keith Landies is the owner and President of Residence Artists in Chardon, OH. He and his wife, Diane, have four grown children.

I personally believe you are doing your child a disservice by not teaching him how to use the basic tools of life such as mops, wash pails, brooms, lawnmowers, shovels, and weed-eaters.



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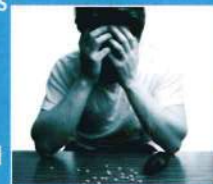
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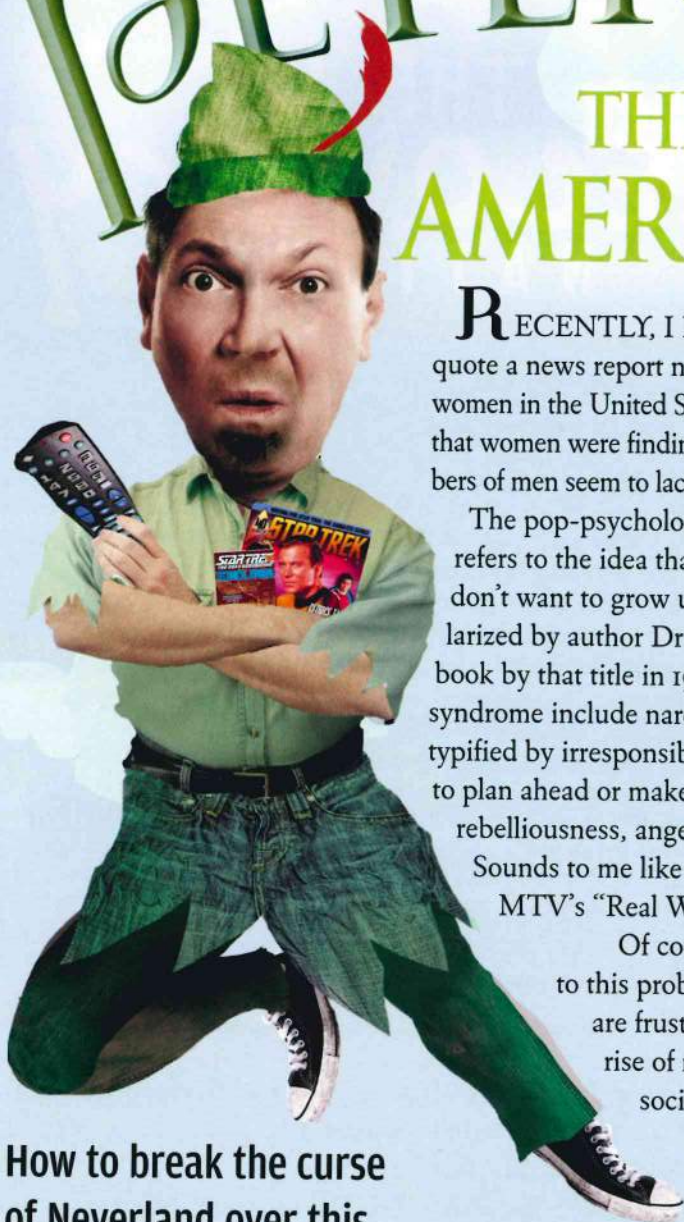
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PETER PAN

THE AMERICAN MAN



How to break the curse of Neverland over this generation

By Stephen Simpson

RECENTLY, I HEARD MY FRIEND PASTOR FELIPE PINOCHET quote a news report noting the dramatic increase in the percentage of unmarried women in the United States. One of the primary reasons cited for this increase was that women were finding it more difficult to respect and trust men—increasing numbers of men seem to lack vision, direction, focus, and purpose.

The pop-psychological term for this is the “Peter Pan Syndrome,” which refers to the idea that many adult men simply don’t want to grow up. The term was popularized by author Dr. Dan Kiley, who wrote a book by that title in 1983. Symptoms of this syndrome include narcissism and immaturity, typified by irresponsibility, refusal or inability to plan ahead or make lasting commitments, rebelliousness, anger, and other problems.

Sounds to me like an everyday episode of MTV’s “Real World” program.

Of course, there is a flip side to this problem as well. Many men are frustrated and confused by the

rise of male-hating feminism, which has been seared into our society with white hot intensity via media, entertainment, advertising, education, politics, and courts run amok.

Sadly, some men’s response to this is to become even more disconnected from reality via wanderlust, substance abuse, promiscuity, pornography, or even violence.

This reality cannot be ignored—the consequences to the long-term viability of civilization itself are dire. Because few of these men become eunuchs, and because many of them are master manipulators, they are able to find the occasional women with

If the Church is to have any relevance at all, it must actively equip and encourage our families for practical success in life. This means, we’ve got to take on the “Peter Pan Syndrome” full force, head-on.

whom they can produce children. Sadly, the ability to create a child does not automatically confer the ability to raise a child.

STOPPING THE CYCLE

This syndrome therefore perpetuates itself, so that increasing numbers of young people are being raised in homes where no father, or father figure, is prominent. Males are growing up with little direction, purpose, or focus, relying upon mother to care for them, feed them, pick up after them, and unconditionally love them. Millions of women heroically attempt to be all things to their children, but the statistical facts indicate that boys and girls both suffer when there is no father figure present.

If the Church is to have any relevance at all, it must actively equip and encourage our families for practical success in life. This means, we've got to take on the "Peter Pan Syndrome" full force, head-on.

Early on in my dad's pastoral ministry, he discovered that large chunks of his time and energy were devoted to counseling women who were struggling desperately with collapsing marriages or bad husbands. He sensed the Lord telling him that the best thing he could do to support women was to reach their husbands with the Gospel of Christ's Kingdom.

STAND UP!

The Church today must strengthen and sharpen its focus on men. Ministries such as CSM and Promise Keepers have had a long-term emphasis on reaching and equipping men to be who God called them to be. This is not to the exclusion or detriment of women; it is for their great benefit.

Yet, many feminist groups have launched scathing attacks on these and other ministries, and upon the very Scriptural basis for reaching men. There is a palpable anger in our society against men, and it is true that many men have abdicated their God-given leadership roles due to gross irresponsibility, abuse, or immaturity. The very word "patriarchy" has become a curse word for many.

But the sin of some does not negate the truth of God's Word for all. For the sake of present and future generations, men and women of God must uphold and encourage the principles of godly manhood and fatherhood. We must train our sons in what it means to be a man, what their destiny is in God, how to be resolute and responsible, how to be servant-leaders, and how to stand fast against the wiles of a spiritual enemy that actively seeks to destroy homes and communities.

It may mean occasionally tearing our young men away from their X-Boxes and off the couch. It may even mean some middle-aged men need to take a step or two away from the *Star Trek* conventions. While we are playing, other religions are reaching and engaging men militantly, and training them for conquest.

Changing the atmosphere in our culture may mean that some ladies need to spend less time watching *Lifetime* (aka the "Men are Evil" TV network) or imbibing in other feminist-inspired endeavors that promote man-hating. The answer to the "Peter Pan Syndrome" is not more male-bashing. When men see and hear someone like Rosie O'Donnell, it only makes them want to run away deeper into their play caves. Mere shrieking and finger-pointing won't get the job done.

Saving the next generation means that men and women of God need to be unafraid of political correctness, to demonstrate biblical standards of manhood and womanhood, and to be willing to step into broken homes and bring wisdom and strength to children who need support. We need to encourage and restore men and women who are hurting. We need to stand together in prayer and believe that the faithfulness of the Lord does indeed endure to *all* generations. 121

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