

# PSYCHOLOGY FOR LIVING

NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 1997

## *For God So Loved The World*

**IS CHRISTMAS  
A PROBLEM?**

**A "VACANCY" SIGN  
FOR JESUS**

**WINDOW ON  
THE WORLD**

**GIVING THANKS:  
IS IT STILL IN VOGUE?**

**DO YOU  
USE PEOPLE?**



# A PERSONAL WORD

by Clyde M. Narramore

## THANKFULNESS: REASONS AND ROADBLOCKS

ONE OF THE MARKS of a sincere Christian is a spirit of thankfulness. Regardless of the circumstances surrounding his life, he has a fundamental attitude of gratitude.

Over and over God's Word emphasizes the importance of a thankful heart. Psalm 92:1 tells us, "It is good to give thanks to the Lord...." Other Scriptures reinforce this: "Giving thanks always for all things" (Ephesians 5:20); "In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." (I Thessalonians 5:18).

For the believer, this mindset is reinforced by the fact that God created him, saved him, is guiding him daily, and has prepared a place for him in Heaven. This is indeed a solid reason for having a deep, genuine feeling of gratitude!

But not everyone is thankful — *even among Christians*. Some are complainers. When God has given us so much for which to be thankful, why do some people harbor a spirit of ungratefulness?

**There are numerous roadblocks that can interfere with a person's feelings of thankfulness.**

1. *Many people grow up in a thankless home.* As a consequence, they have never learned the importance of being thankful. They were never taught gratitude. Instead they have developed the attitude that "the world owes them a living," and they take for granted the many blessings that are showered upon them day after day.

2. *Even a born-again Christian may not be fully aware of all God has done, is doing, and will do for him.* Neglecting to read God's Word or fellowship with other believers may be what is creating this roadblock. Failure to be thankful is often a spiritual problem. It is difficult to have a thankful attitude when one's spiritual health is not thriving.

3. *Another roadblock to a thankful spirit may result from being too caught up with the events of this world.* As we watch TV or listen to radio or read newspapers we must realize that most of the information is brought to us by unregenerate men and women who do not know



Christ, and therefore, do not have a genuine basis for thankfulness.

4. *Some people find it difficult to be thankful because of tragedy in their lives.* For example, the untimely death of a loved one, or a rebellious son or daughter who refuses to follow the Lord and is now suffering the consequences of his or her own sinful choices. This can be so hurtful to parents that gratitude seems impossible.

5. *Still another roadblock to thankfulness is a betrayal by someone who has been trusted.* Naturally, such an experience tends to make one cynical and paranoid. It's hard to bubble over with thankfulness when you've been let down and disappointed.

6. *Others may find it hard to be grateful because of past unfortunate experiences.* If a child grows up being severely neglected or abused, when he reaches adulthood he may still be harboring feelings of anger. It is difficult to be angry and thankful at the same time. Unless these tragic hurts are resolved, they can leave deep, ugly scars as long as that person lives.

These are but a few of the roadblocks that can prevent a person from feeling thankful. But God makes it possible to overcome these stumbling blocks and have a thankful heart regardless of any negative experiences

that may impact a person's life.

We are now in the meaningful seasons of Thanksgiving and Christmas. As for myself, **I want to praise God and express my personal gratitude for the many blessings He has so graciously given to me:**

✳ First and foremost is my salvation through Christ. I was born again into God's family at the age of eleven. As a consequence, I have been able to sidestep a lifetime of sinful tragedies.

✳ I am thankful for being brought up in a Christian home where I was encouraged in the things of the Lord.

✳ I am especially thankful for good Bible teaching. Not only have I had the privilege of attending Bible-believing churches where the Word of God has been faithfully taught, but I have also been blessed and encouraged by seminary professors and other fine teachers of the Word. How thankful I am for the surety of God's written Word.

✳ I am especially grateful for my wonderful Christian wife, Ruth, and for the 51 years we have had together. As soon as I met her, I realized that she was a precious gem with much talent and a solid knowledge of God's Word. We have walked side by side through the years both at home and in our ministry, and she has filled my life with joy. In addition, Ruth came from a strong Christian family who has been a support and an inspiration to me.

✳ I am thankful, too, for our own Christian family. Both our daughter, Melodie, as well as her husband, Paul, and our son, Kevin, are walking with the Lord. And what a joy it is to know that our little four-year-old grandson, Byron (Yocum), has already asked Jesus into his heart. Especially comforting to me is to work with Kevin as the Vice President of the Narramore Christian Foundation, who in time can assume leadership of this ministry.

✳ I am extremely grateful for the opportunities God has given me to serve Him. I feel both blessed and humbled that God saw fit to use me to help

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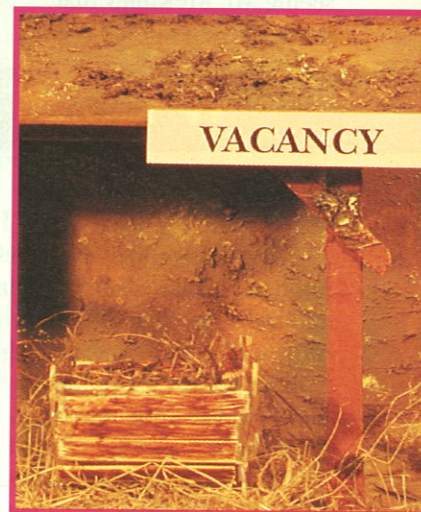


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**T**HE CRISP, COOL MOUNTAIN AIR was invigorating, but the vista

before us was even more awe inspiring. Sparkling in the splendor of a clear sun-bathed sky stood the majestic snow-clad Denali — the “Great One,” as the 20,320-foot Mt. McKinley is affectionately called by native Alaskans.

Flanking Denali — the highest mountain on the North American continent — were other snow-covered peaks, also mighty in their own right. *It looks like a Christmas card*, I mused.

We were fortunate to see “The Mountain,” since on so many days its awesome height is obscured by clouds. The date was August 27th this past summer, but as I drank in the dramatic beauty of the scene, my mind was transported back many years before when we had been in Alaska holding meetings and enjoying some sightseeing with our family.

The children were young at that time. In fact, Kevin was only nine. On that particular trip, we had arrived in McKinley National Park on August 25th — but unfortunately, Denali remained shrouded behind a thick layer of clouds.

Although we missed out on seeing Mt. McKinley that time, it really had felt like

## TO THINK ABOUT

by Ruth E. Narramore



Christmas. There in the lodge stood a tall, beautifully-decorated spruce tree, and Yuletide carols were being piped over the intercom. We discovered that many national parks in the northern portion of our great land traditionally celebrate Christmas in August. So we were in the right place at the right time.

That evening found us at a special park-arranged Christmas service. Joyfully we raised our voices, singing out the glorious message of Christmas.

Then followed the message delivered by the summer chaplain — a student, we later learned, from a notoriously liberal seminary. “There is nothing extraordinary about the birth of Christ,” he blantly affirmed. “In fact, it was a very ordinary birth.”

I squirmed.

“It is wrong to elevate Jesus to a pedestal beyond our comprehension,” he droned. “That is why we must not think of the coming of Christ as something different or unusual. We must understand that the birth of this child was a very

ordinary event.”

*He lies! He lies!* I wanted to shout.

How dare he say the birth of God’s only Son was ordinary — Jesus, whose sole purpose in being born was that He might die

for the sins of mankind!

Glancing at my husband and children, it was plain to see that they, too, were agitated.

At last the young man finished. My heart ached for those who had come needing to be fed, for they had received nothing. I also grieved for the young man who had no message to give.

At the door, the minister smiled benignly, shaking hands with the people as they left. It was now my turn. I knew I could not be silent.

“Sir,” I began, “I have had the privilege of traveling throughout the Holy Land. It was a wonderful experience that helped me appreciate and better understand the story of Christmas. I was impressed with the fact that the birth of Christ was most certainly a lowly birth. Born in a crude, rude stable, it could hardly have been more lowly.”

The young man smiled and

nodded approvingly.

“Lowly, yes,” I continued, “but ordinary, NEVER! When God’s own Son forfeits the glories of Heaven to take upon Himself the form of humanity, accomplishing this by being born of a virgin, it is definitely NOT ordinary. When ancient prophecies are fulfilled in the minutest detail proclaiming the birth of the Messiah — the Savior of the world — it is anything but usual. In fact, it is most unusual.”

I hesitated a moment, but the errant young preacher had nothing to say. His eyes shifted to the floor, and his hands began to fidget.

“When my two children were born,” I continued, “I thought it was the most wonderful thing in the world. Yet, no angelic host announced their arrival, and no brilliantly-lit star led worshipers to the place where my babies lay. Christ had all this and much more.

“The birth of Christ has changed the course of history. Today, 2000 years later, the world is still paying homage to the unusual circumstances of His birth. Even our calendar is calculated from the advent of our Lord.

“No, the birth of Jesus Christ was NOT ordinary. Indeed, it was the most extraordinary event the world has ever known!” □

## WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING

### CONSTANT SOURCE OF HELP

I have been receiving your publications for many years and they have been a constant source of help, especially in my ministry among older adults. Keep up your good work!

Glenn W. Killius  
Clawson, Michigan

### HEARS PROGRAM IN DOMINICA

I have been listening to your radio program for some time. It is a great blessing. Thank you for the booklet *Characteristics of Good Emotional Adjustment*. It has been a blessing and has helped me understand many things.

I would like to encourage you to continue the good work. You are helping lots of people.

Bernard Andrew  
Dominica, West Indies

### BLIND FRIEND ASKS FOR THE MAGAZINE

I surely do enjoy your *LIVING* magazine. Last week I

started reading the article on depression to my Christian friend at the Blind Center. She called the next day and reminded me to bring the magazine.

When are you going to Hawaii again? That’s our favorite place.

M/M Harvey Richmond  
Las Gatos, California





# GIVING THANKS: IS IT STILL IN VOGUE?

The “culture of complaint” is a logical extension of making  
a virtue out of desire.

by Karl E. Johnson

**T**HANKSGIVING is the most *politically incorrect* holiday still on the calendar. Even the usual conscienceless world of retailing is passing it over, placing elves on the shelves immediately after the candy corn harvest. But the problem with Thanksgiving is not just another example of historical revisionism; to think of it as simply one more battle over identity politics is to miss the real problem—a problem that will persist even if the historians do come to consensus on Columbus.

The fundamental question here is really this:

*Whence cometh our goods—our food, and our freedom?*

The Puritans, we are often told, were cruel and prudish folks. Yet it was the Pilgrims, extremists even among the Puritans, who left us this holiday called Thanksgiving. Having survived many hardships during their first harsh winter on the shores of New England, and believing their harvest and good fortune to be a gift from God, a celebration of God's provision was in order. It was, literally, an occasion to express thanks.



But gratitude is no longer hip. In contrast to Puritan times, today's conventional wisdom suggests that we have what we have by means of our rights. Each of us is born into the world with an Accounts Receivable file containing life, liberty, the pursuit of happiness, and, it seems, an ever-increasing assortment of other "goodies" (the right to shelter, the right to die, the right to not be offended, criminal's rights, children's rights, animal rights, and the list goes on).

While we moderns believe we deserve our food and freedom, the Puritans did not. They expressed thanks for their portion; we complain that ours should be bigger. But this is not because we believe in rights and they did not; rather, it is because they understood rights very differently than we do.

In writing that humans are "endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights," Thomas Jefferson located a source from which rights are derived. Jefferson understood that rights must have a foundation. The very concept of human rights has its origin in the idea of the dignity of man, and Jefferson's words rightly acknowledge the debt that all Enlightenment philosophers owe to Judeo-Christianity.

Today, however, rights have been divorced from religious belief. They have become a fundamental value—with a very fundamentalist following. But with no source to support them, doubt over once "self-evident truths" such as the existence of rights, is justified. And even if rights supposedly exist apart from God, the problem of knowing and agreeing on those rights remains.

This is the crisis of postmodernism. In a world without God, the dignity of man is less an empirical reality than a useful assertion. In discussing what constitutes a right, we can no longer be either right or wrong; we may only agree or disagree. Consequently, rights have become just another consumer item—a mere commodity to accumulate in the unrestrained political marketplace.

But there is a great irony here. While supposedly making us more free, the proliferation of rights has just the opposite effect; the real effect of making rights a commodity is that virtue is made obsolete. If one deserves all that one desires, what basis is there for sacrifice or self-restraint? And what occasion is there for gratitude?

Unwittingly or not, a liberation from responsibilities also turns out to be a "liberation" from blessings. It just may be that the more we think of ourselves as deserving, the less "riches" we will find. Consider this: Are we obligated to help neighbors during a flood, or schoolgirls during crisis pregnancies, or should such

dirty work be left solely to the National Guard and the Department of Social Services? If neighborliness and charity are stigmatized as patronizing do-goodism rather than upheld as obligations to suffer alongside those who are already in pain and poverty, we will all give less, impoverishing not only our neighbors but also ourselves. The rewards of a citizen are many, but a client receives only what is owed him.

There is yet another irony in all of this — that it has become commonplace to depict the Puritans as stoic and repressed. While acknowledging they did frown upon certain leisure pursuits, let us not forget that Thanksgiving was a celebration; it was not only a time of solemn gratitude but

also of joyful festivity. The true killjoys are actually today's revisionist "Thanksgiving police" who believe we have nothing to celebrate and nobody to thank. The "culture of complaint" is a logical extension of making a virtue out of desire. Interpreting the right to pursue happiness as the right to be happy has resulted in much unhappiness.

Though it may come as a surprise to the modern mind, true happiness is a companion of gratitude. Theologian Michael Novak has written, "Recognition of the One God/Creator means that the fundamental attitude of human beings toward God is, and ought to be, receptivity. All that we are, we have received from God. This is true both of our creation and our redemption. God acts first. We respond. Everything is a gift. Thus, offering thanksgiving is our first moral obligation." Such a statement is not a sign of low self-esteem. Unworthiness does not require anti-depressants. There is a reason why the Biblical command, "In everything give thanks," begins with, "Rejoice always." Novak understands this. And so did the Puritans.

And so the beef over Thanksgiving comes down to this: Is our food and our freedom a gift or an inalienable right? Like us moderns, the Puritans believed that they had rights. Unlike us, they also believed that rights themselves are a gift from God. Failing to understand this, we fail to give thanks; where there is no gift, there is no gratitude. In a culture where gratitude sounds quaint, a national holiday called Thanksgiving sounds downright obscene. More than just a controversy over identity politics such as surrounds Columbus Day, the problem with Thanksgiving, it turns out, is really a problem of giving thanks.

So don't hesitate to give thanks. It is still in vogue — and always will be! □

***"Everything we are and have, we have received from God. Thus, offering thanksgiving is our first moral obligation."***

Karl E. Johnson lives with his family in Ithaca, New York, where he works for Cornell University Outdoor Education. His Masters degree is in the philosophy of leisure. The above article originally appeared in the *Herald Examiner* (Freeville, New York), a monthly periodical of ideas and issues.



# WINDOW ON THE WORLD

Two statements on the deaths of two prominent global heroines.

by Billy Graham

## LADY DIANA, Princess of Wales

AS I WATCHED the consuming coverage of the untimely death of Diana, Princess of Wales, I was impressed by the unprecedented international preoccupation with the uncertainty and brevity of life. More than any other time I can recall, the global village stopped to reflect — not just on her death, but on our own mortality.

Lady Diana was an international celebrity who provided a window into the human heart, predisposing to the Gospel of Christ many people who otherwise would have been too busy or hardened to hear it.

She also gave us a window on Royalty, who came out at her call from death to show us their humanity. Even now, she continues to add luster to the Monarchy.

I have had the privilege of preaching for Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth and the Royal Family several times — both at Windsor and at Sandringham. On one occasion, Prince William ran into our bedroom, hiding from his grandmother. I thought to myself, and I said to Her Majesty, "Someday he will be King." It was wonderful to see him, his brother, and their father walking among the people and as they read the notes left with the flowers at Buckingham Palace.

At this time of great confusion and pain, I urge everyone to pray for the Royal Family, and for God's comfort in a

loss that will remain with people around the world for many years to come.

## MOTHER TERESA, Queen of Compassion

AS Princess Diana was a queen of the hearts of millions of people, so Mother Teresa was a queen of the spiritual hearts of countless individuals on every continent. We admire both of them in different ways.

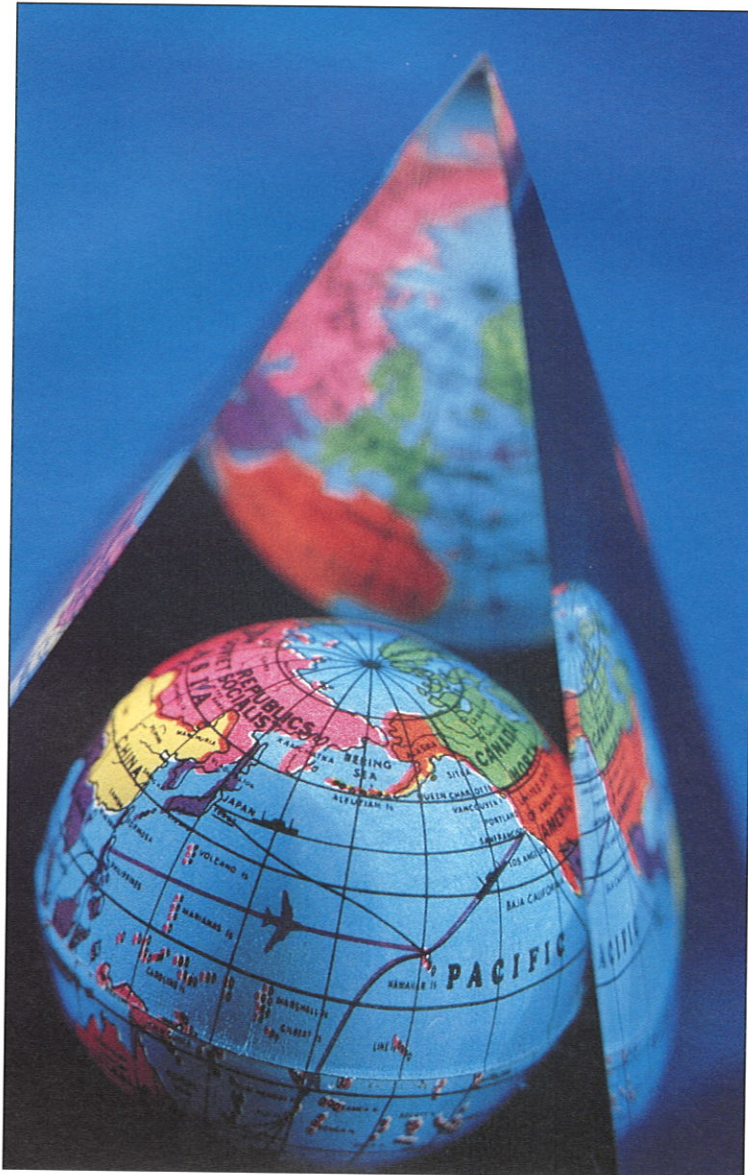
Few people in our time have exempli-

fied so powerfully, and yet so simply, the love and compassion of Christ as did Mother Teresa. I knew her for a number of years, and it was my privilege to be with her on several occasions. The first time was at the Home for Dying Destitutes in Calcutta. I had a wonderful hour of fellowship in the Lord with her just at sunset, and I will never forget the sounds, the smells, and the strange beauty of that place. When she walked into the room to greet me, I felt that I was indeed meeting a saint.

I have also sat by her at banquets and social events. She always spoke with great boldness. I remember when she was the speaker at the National Prayer Breakfast in Washington when, with the President of the United States sitting nearby, she took a strong moral stand on a divisive issue. Later the President said to a few of us, "She's really something! I wish I had a faith like that."

She was one of the most humble and sweetest of God's servants that I have ever known. Her life has taught Christians of all persuasions many lessons of humble sacrifice, vision, and dedication to the Person of Christ. She has taught us the true meaning of love.

The whole world, regardless of religious background, admired Mother Teresa and will miss her. She had a moral and spiritual impact on the world that we rarely see. Her legacy of love and hope will live on throughout history. □





# IS CHRISTMAS A PROBLEM?

It's not what Christmas does to us; it is what we have done to Christmas.

by Vernon C. Lyons



**T**O MANY FOLK, Christmas is a problem. There are too many parties, the Edison bill for December is too high, the neighbor's super decorations turn a residential street into a traffic jam, the mall is too crowded, and there are too many drunk drivers during the holidays.

And what about the unwanted gifts, the crowded airport, the long, tiresome

trips and crabby, sick kids home from school during the vacation time. Sometimes one is almost ready to say, "I don't think I can stand another Christmas!"

But it's not what Christmas does to us; it is what we have done to Christmas. Everything that is disagreeable and undesirable is of our own making and was not present at the first Christmas.

The real Christmas is not a problem but the solution to all problems. At the first Christmas, nobody was drunk, plunged into debt, or deluged with unneeded gifts.

The first Christmas was simply that "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). The



first Christmas was light in the darkness, peace in a troubled world, and salvation for lost sinners.

The first Christmas was Joseph, a carpenter, doing the will of God even when it was very hard.

That first Christmas was Mary, a Galilean peasant girl, accepting God's plan for her, even when it seemed unreasonable.

That first Christmas was God the Father giving His Son when He was under no obligation to do so. And that first Christmas was Jesus Christ leaving the glories of heaven for the gloom of this earth, only because of the love that He had for each of us.

That first Christmas was shepherds

with wide-eyed wonder, worshipping the One who was the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies. It was the wise men opening their treasures, presenting costly gifts to a King who was not yet crowned.

That first Christmas was not of human invention, but a divine intervention with miracles of a star shining, angels chanting, and a supernatural conception in the womb of a virgin. This original Christmas was not one of gluttony and greed, but of glory.

The more we share in the man-made Christmas, the more impoverished we become. But the more we celebrate the original Christmas, the more enriched our lives. Our souls have been shriveled

as we have become enamored with the secular substitute. Christmas is, "For unto you is born this day a Savior" (Luke 2:11).

Observing the real Christmas is receiving Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. It is having inward peace regardless of what's going on in the world. It is having an expressible joy, regardless of the sadness that Satan would heap upon us.

Everyone chooses his own Christmas. Why settle for less than the original? □

*Rev. Vernon C. Lyons has been senior pastor of the Ashburn Baptist Church in Chicago, Illinois, since 1951. Through the years he has also had a ministry in writing, radio and television.*

## LOGOS —THE VOCABULARY OF GOD

"The Word became flesh and dwelt among us...."

by R. F. Smith, Jr.

IT'S CHRISTMAS and Christmas is Emmanuel—"God with us."

The writer of John's Gospel puts it this way, "The Word of God became flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:14). But in the original, John didn't say "Word." He said, "Logos," a term we translate as "Word." There are volumes and volumes written on *Logos*.

To the Greek (for whom John was writing, reformatting the Jewish-based Christian faith into Greek understanding), *Logos* meant the reason of God, the wisdom of God, the mind of God, the power of God.

When John says, *Logos* (or Word) of God became a human being, he's saying about all there is to say about God. He is really saying that the *vocabulary of God* was poured into the human being named Jesus.

The total vocabulary of God—His words, His reason, His mind, His wisdom, His power—were poured into His Son. God's entire dictionary focused in the person of the Carpenter's son. God's language was transported in Jesus.

And from the wooden manger of Bethlehem to the wooden cross of Calvary, onto the stone tomb of Easter, Jesus says: "God loves you. And God is with you."

In more ways than one can ever count, Jesus—the complete



vocabulary of God—says in personal, human terms that God cares, that God is approachable and knows what it's like to be human. He knows what it's like to hurt, to cry, to feel lonely and rejected, to be misunderstood, to be ridiculed, to be spit upon and physically attacked.

And because He knows—because He's "been there, done that"—He says, "I will be with you in whatever valley you are in. I will be with you in the middle of whatever storm is blowing upon your soul. Never again will you walk alone; I am here, now, right with you."

One of the great dangers in our faith pilgrimage is to make God so big that we become befuddled when trying to fit into His life. But when the vocabulary of God was poured into the Baby of Bethlehem, things happened and things changed.

It was as if God were saying, as indeed He did and does: "Don't

ever make Me so big you miss Me. I am big enough to operate a universe; I am small enough to fit into a manger; I am human enough to die on a cross; and I am God enough to overcome any tomb in which you may lay Me."

The vocabulary of God became a person and lived among us. Indeed! And in deed. □

*Dr. R. F. Smith, Jr., is senior minister at Fifth Avenue Baptist Church in Huntington, West Virginia.*



# A "VACANCY" SIGN FOR JESUS



**Have you made room for the incarnate Christ?**

*by J. Grant Swank, Jr.*

**T**HE CHRISTMAS STORY begins with an odd start. It opens with conceit at stage center.

The Roman emperor—regarded as deity—is strutting his stuff one more time. He proclaims a worldwide registration. It is a decree stamped with the emperor's seal: the **WHOLE** world!

There you have it: dust rules earth's domain!

## **Really?**

Compare the peacock prance of Rome's emperor with King Babe in the cow's stable. This is the King who speaks humility in utter contrast to the egocentricity of the so-called god-emperor.

How about you? Beneath the surface, underneath your sophisticated mask, is "God-with-you" because He is dwelling

*within* you? That is what is intended if the Christmas miracle has become incarnate in you.

Finally, there is "...no room for them in the inn." How sad! But that's the way the system's made. That's the way things are in a spiritually fallen world.

World's conceit has no room for Jesus. Bloated Caesars have no room either. Crowded, busy inns around the globe simply have no room for Jesus.

"He came unto His own and His own received Him not." Again, that's the system, the way things have become here in this world. Therefore, we should not be surprised; heartbroken, yes... but not surprised.

However, for those who did make room, their entire lives were completely

renovated by God's eternal Mystery. Take, for instance, Mary. She made room. Joseph, too, made room. Shepherds came and crowding into that tiny stable, made room to worship the Baby Jesus.

By making a place for the Baby, they were blessed. We all remember that scene. It is the essence of the Christmas scenario.

Have you made room for Jesus? Is there a **VACANCY** sign on your heart's door? If so, having made room for the Babe, you are truly blessed... forever!

How long will it take us to learn that while feelings pass, faith remains? God sees the utterly surrendered journey's end from its start. He views Bethlehem from Nazareth's first step.



So eventually "...the days were complete..."

Yes, everything has its finish, its completion. Everything, that is, *except* eternity.

Mary is nine months pregnant; then comes the end. But the end of the pregnancy was just the beginning of this Baby's earthly life.

Compare such a pilgrimage with death's close and eternity's beginning.

It is true that in the consecrated life, it is but one chapter, then another, all penned by God Himself. Believe it, for that is reality.

Finally, "she...wrapped Him...."

How loving of Mother Mary as she cared for the needs of Baby Jesus. Now it is Jesus—no longer an infant—who cares for *you*, a child of His grace. Jesus wraps *you* in love, hope, and finally in heaven. Remember: He has gone to prepare a place for *you*—He really does care!

So it was that Mary birthed Jesus; in that act, God birthed salvation.

Have you been born of God, wrapped in His mercy?

When Mary "laid Him in a manger," it wasn't glamorous. It was in a barn. Some say it was a cave-stall. Call it what you will, it became a "make-do nursery." Yet this manger, the cow's feeding trough, became a holy cradle adorned by smiling angels as God changed *bother* into *blessing*. That's what He does, every time, even in the bleakest of times.

Appearances are not everything. In fact, they are often deceiving. It was the substance that was all-in-all, for inside that Baby's tiny body was God. And for that reason, He became Emmanuel: "God WITH us."

How interesting that while Caesar Augustus has long been gone, King Jesus still lives and reigns—ultimately to spread His royal garb above the New Heaven and New Earth yet to come.

Yet it was Caesar's pronouncement that brought "all to be registered." This was one of life's landmark inconveniences to be sure. Joseph had to close shop. Mary had to pack the bags. A donkey had to wait in the wings.

Yet in the consecrated Christian life,

God always turns burdens into blessings, even the most severe burdens. From that first Christmas we learn that while that Bethlehem trip might have proved troublesome, it eventually led to the soul's triumph.

What does it take to see life that way? Faith! Keep faith in your surrendered life; your story is still "in process."

Bethlehem! That world-changing hamlet. Yet for Mary and Joseph, it must have been spelled "boredom"—monotony to the max.

There was Mary—tired, aching, heavy with Child.

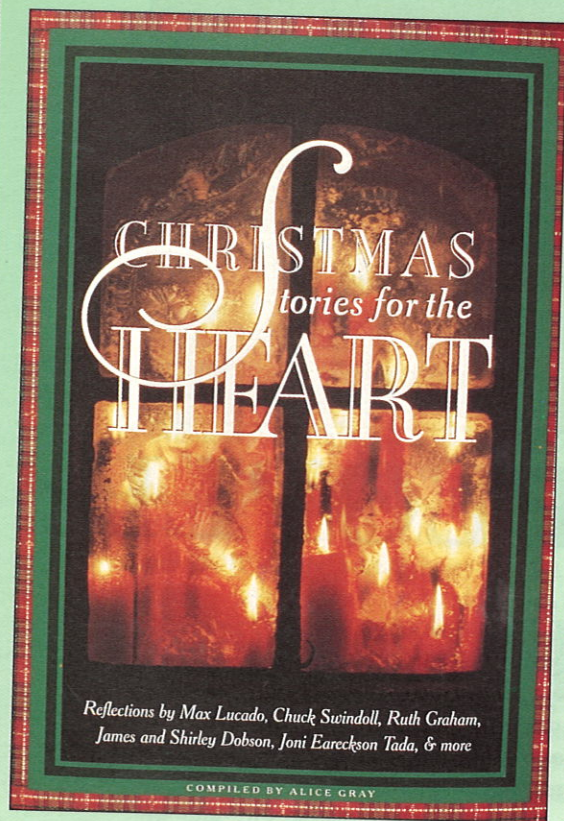
There was Joseph—footsore, weary, and concerned.

On the surface, it was the holy couple who trudged 80 miles southward from Nazareth. Such a realistic bother.

But in that trek, God had traveled light years in pre-history, then through earth's history to birth a Son. Such an unprecedented, one-of-a-kind blessing! □

*Pastor J. Grant Swank, Jr., pastor of the Church of the Nazarene in Windham, Maine, is also a free-lance writer.*

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# DO YOU USE PEOPLE?

Society has led us to believe that love is something to “get.”

*by Joseph Daniels*

**E**VER NOTICE HOW some Christians can stand up in church and sing so lustily, “I Am So Glad That Jesus Loves Me,” yet deep inside feel lonely, unwanted, and unloved?

Some inwardly question the value of life itself, even while they outwardly



## Love, in the Biblical sense of that word, is not something you get, but something you give.

proclaim how wonderful the Lord is. When they are by themselves and start reflecting on their expectations unmet, wishes unfulfilled, or friends who have forsaken them, they can become so depressed they question whether or not love really exists. Past hurts and losses become so vivid they find it difficult to separate themselves from those negative experiences.

One of the major reasons some people know nothing of a genuine love relationship with God or people becomes quite apparent as I listen to patients in my office: They have become the victims of our society's definition of love, rather than understanding and seeking love as it really is.

What do we mean? Society has led us to believe that love is something to "get." We often say we love another because of what the other person has given us or what we expect him to give us. When someone offers us good feelings, expensive gifts, or even attention, we erroneously interpret our appreciation for these things as love. As a result, when the individual ceases to give these things, we may no longer feel loved.

In thinking this way we have reversed a very important Biblical concept. For whereas the Scriptures instruct us to love people and use things, we tend to love things and use people! That's a subtle trick of our enemy, the devil.

Love, in the Biblical sense of that word, is not something you get, but something you give. John the Apostle, put it this way, "This is how we know what love is: Christ gave His life for us. We too, then, ought to give our lives for our brothers" (I John 3:16 *Good News Bible*).

Augustine captured the essence of John's statement and expressed it like this: "What does love look like? It has the hands to help others. It has the feet to hasten to the poor and needy. It has eyes to see misery and want. It has the ears to hear the sighs and sorrows of men. That is what love looks like" (*Quote Unquote*, Victor Books, by Lloyd Cory, p. 187).

Biblical love does not ask, "What can you do for me?" Rather it asks, "What can I do for you?" It gives rather than gets. It looks out for the other person's best interest. When correctly

expressed, genuine love utilizes the mind, feelings, and will to see that the other person becomes his or her very best. While Biblical love is prepared to give all it has for the benefit of another person, it never gives with the expectation of getting some *thing* in return.

Notice how the Bible speaks so loud and clear about the things we should and should not love. John counseled, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (I John 2:15).

Yet, the desire for things has become so strong in our society that the differentiation between love and things has become blurred and confused. We speak of loving *someone*, but in reality what we really mean is that we want what the other person can *give* us: money, sex, prestige, security, and the like. As long as we labor under that false understanding of what love truly is, not only will we never experience the real thing, but we'll pass on to others that same false definition of the meaning of love.

And where does one find a reliable fountain of love that gives meaning and purpose to life and can be passed on to thirsty souls? Nowhere except in God Himself. While we expect and appreciate every expression of affection from fellow human beings, experience has shown that man's needs exceed what we can supply. God understands this and so has offered Himself, "And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love, and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God and God in him" (I John 4:16).

God is in the business of giving love. He has given us the greatest love that could ever be given to mankind. The Bible explains it this way: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

Our world is thirsting for real love. We have a golden opportunity to draw from the inexhaustible fountain and serve it to those dying of thirst. □

*Joseph Daniels, M.D., is a Christian psychiatrist in West Bloomfield, Michigan.*



# SO YOUR GENEALOGY IS FLAWED!

**We can't choose our ancestors, but we can choose to be born again into God's family.**

**by Venus E. Bardanouve**

"Surely *that* outrageous character wasn't in our family line!" We were enjoying discovering ancestors of whom we could be proud, but then we came upon a news report of a great-uncle. As a young cowboy he had ridden with his partner into town one Saturday night. Under the influence of liquor, they began shooting up the town: the sheriff shot them both to protect the townspeople.

I found stories of others whose actions did not bring honor to our family. I sighed, realizing that our line was tainted.

And so is the ancestry of every person who has ever lived. In fact, even Jesus' genealogy—part of which is given in Matthew 1:1-17 and Luke 3:23-38—listed many of His ancestors who were infamous characters.

In Matthew's record of Christ's genealogy, only four women besides Mary are mentioned. All of them — except Mary — have dubious reputations. Both James and the writer of Hebrews tell us that Christ's ancestress, Rahab, was a prostitute in Jericho (see James 2:25; Hebrews 11:31).

Another woman is Tamar who tricked her father-in-law, Judah, into committing adultery with her. From this incestuous relationship Perez was born.

Bathsheba was involved in adultery with King David.

Ruth, although a noble person, was a Moabitess, and Jews were forbidden to marry foreigners.

Some of the *men* in Jesus' genealogy didn't fare well either. David, from whose line prophecy foretold the Messiah would come, after committing adultery with Bathsheba, arranged for the murder of her husband, Uriah, so David could then take her as *his* wife. Some wicked kings are listed too, such as Ahaz and Manasseh, who sacrificed their children in the fire to idols.

Even many of Jesus' ancestors who are revered as Hebrew patriarchs are revealed in the Bible as having "feet of clay." Abraham lied to save his own skin when Egyptian rulers wanted his beautiful wife, Sarah; Jacob was a con man; and Noah disgraced himself in drunkenness.

Only Jesus was sinless.

Why didn't God choose a purer ancestral line for His Son's human heritage? A glance around us will make us realize that no such family line exists in all the earth, "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23, NASB).

The choice for Jesus' human line has flaws. Likewise, there are individuals in every family's lineage who are notorious for their sin. But when it comes to the bottom line, every one of us has inherited a flawed basic nature and a heart that is "deceitful above all things" (Jeremiah 17:9). Even our greatest righteousness is like filthy rags in God's sight. (See Isaiah 64:6).

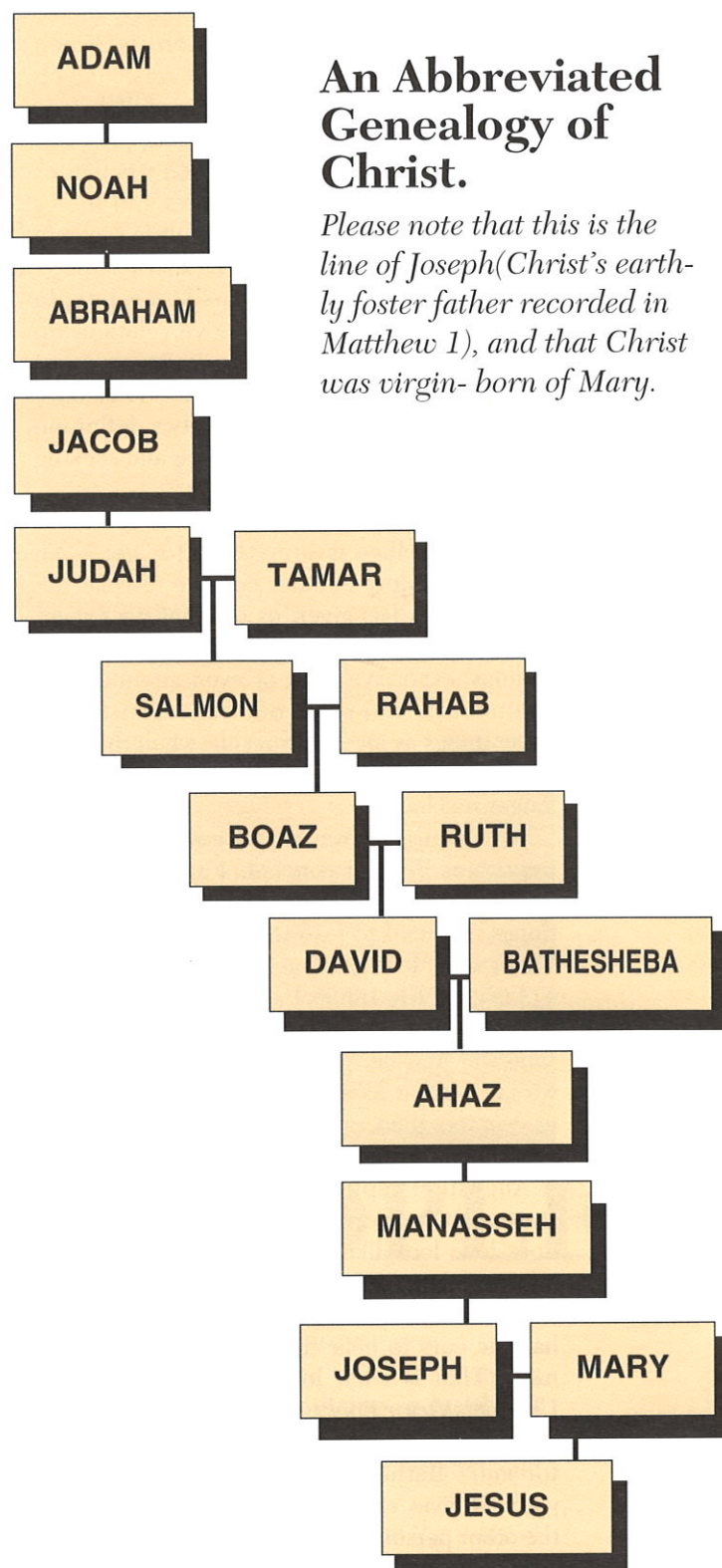
We can't choose our ancestors, but we can choose to be born again into God's family. This we do by accepting Christ's sacri-

fice on the cross, and giving Him our lives to be washed whiter than snow in the blood of the Lamb. □

*Venus Bardanouve is a retired speech pathologist and audiologist, as well as a prolific freelance writer. She and her husband, Francis, live in Harlem, Montana.*

## An Abbreviated Genealogy of Christ.

*Please note that this is the line of Joseph (Christ's earthly foster father recorded in Matthew 1), and that Christ was virgin-born of Mary.*





# MAKING A DIFFERENCE

## by Kevin Narramore WHERE'S DAD?

**W**HAT HAPPENS WHEN children raised in morally-bankrupt homes become adults and then raise children of their own? The answer is, the face of future generations will become even more distorted.

Consider the social changes



*Indian family.*

in the American home over the last 25 years: Teen suicide has risen by 83 percent, child poverty by 48 percent, child abuse has soared by 346 percent. Since 1972 single-parent families have increased 2.5 times until today, 40 percent of the children in America do not live with their fathers. It is not surprising, then, that 70 percent of all Americans report feeling highly stressed. At the latest count, there are 80 million single-parent families, and this number is rapidly expanding.

While these trends are especially true among African-American and Native-American families, family trend researcher, Dr. Richard Gill (1997), notes that the number of broken homes are increasing across all ethnic groups and socioeconomic classes. Today's wounded

family is everyone's problem.

Last summer, I attended a conference in Atlanta, Georgia, called the Congress on the Urban Family. I was inspired by the absolute honesty and humility of the many inner-city Christian leaders in attendance. One of their major conference themes was "Reverse the Curse." The idea centered around Exodus 20:5 "For I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me...", which explains how the sins of the fathers are passed down from one generation to the next. They then become the sins of the sons, and so on, and so on.

On many evenings, participants were on their knees praying and asking God for forgiveness and asking Him to break the dysfunctional chains that were binding their families. It was powerful because they knew the problem is not only "out there" in the world somewhere, but right here among the leaders of our Christian churches.

Not long after the Atlanta conference, I attended a counseling workshop held at a Christian Indian School in western Montana. Again I was struck by the way participants recognized their need to ask God to heal the "father wounds" that have devastated so many fatherless families among our North American Indians.

Dr. and Mrs. Clair (Clara) Schnupp, a Christian psychologist and his wife, spoke about the epidemic of drug abuse, spiritism, incest, unwed pregnancies, and suicide found

among the tribes of North American Indians. In the seminar, the Schnupps reminded us that while recognizing that the enemy is real, "Thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (I Corinthians 15:57). For several days they showed how a person's basic unmet

emotional needs can be restored in Christ through the context of a right relationship with God and a loving support group or a Christian counselor.

The Schnupps' ministry is devoted to sharing the good news of how God can bring healing to hurting Indian families. Over the past year the Narramore Christian Foundation has funded the Schnupps so that they have been able to hold six Christian Family Life seminars among various Indian tribes.

The outcry of our Christian brothers from the inner city as well as those of the Indian nations is for the healing of "father wounds" that have been inflicted upon them. Interestingly, this cry is being echoed throughout the total national Christian conscience. This past October, for example, approximately a million men from across America came to Washington, D.C. to "Stand in the Gap" as Promise Keepers. According to the founder, Bill McCartney, "The absence of responsible men in the home is now wide-



*Dr. Clair Schnupp working with American Indian children.*

ly regarded as the most important cause of America's social decline.... Social problems are moral problems, which basically have a spiritual cause."

Can it be that God is looking for brokenness and humility in America so that a new wave of revival may begin?

When we, as a nation, are willing to seek God's forgiveness and restoration, then the whole family will begin to be restored. This is the way to "Reverse the Curse." □



*Dr. Kevin Narramore holds a Ph.D. in organizational psychology and is Executive Vice President of the Narramore Christian Foundation.*



# HEALTH WATCH

by Eva Hallam Solberg

## WHAT CONSTITUTES AN EMERGENCY?

More than 90 million Americans visit emergency departments each year. Yet, the Journal of the American Medical Association reports that up to 43 percent of emergency department visits are unnecessary.

Understanding what constitutes an emergency and knowing what other options are available help to free emergency departments so they are more available when "true" emergencies arise.

An emergency is any sudden or unexpected illness or injury that requires immediate attention to prevent loss of life or limb. Here are some examples:

- Severe and uncontrollable bleeding
- Severe chest pains
- Shortness of breath or

difficulty breathing

- Severe burns
- Contact with poisonous substances
- New onset of convulsions or seizures
- Spinal injuries
- Head injuries
- Temperature over 103 degrees
- Snake or animal bites

Always be prepared to handle emergency situations. This includes carrying allergy and prescription information with you at all times, as well as your health benefit ID cards. Keep emergency phone numbers posted near your telephones.

(Your Health—  
Huntington Hospital)

## FORGETFULNESS VS. MEMORY LOSS

The following are some of the distinctions between for-

getfulness and memory loss (such as in Alzheimer's Disease): With forgetfulness, the lost idea will ultimately be remembered. The memory can be "jogged."

Forgetfulness is not progressive and does not seriously interfere with daily functioning. However, with profound memory loss, when a thought is forgotten it cannot be retrieved with reminders.

## DIABETIC NEUROPATHY

Diabetes can cause peripheral neuropathy which affects the nerves in the feet, lower legs, and hands. Symptoms range from numbness to sharp, stabbing pain. Studies have shown that long-term strict control of blood glucose reduces the risk of peripheral neuropathy by as much as sixty percent.

New drug therapies and a

technique called electrical spinal cord stimulation (ESCS) are under investigation. ESCS uses an implanted device to stimulate the spinal cord and had good results in a recent study of 10 patients whose symptoms did not respond to other treatments.

(The Johns Hopkins  
Medical Letter)

## HDL CONFUSION

Surveys show that many people expect to find HDL cholesterol on nutrition labels. No food contains "good" cholesterol. It's made in the liver, is found in the bloodstream, and is largely determined by hereditary factors. Losing weight, quitting smoking, exercising, and hormone therapy are some of the ways to boost HDL.

(University of California at  
Berkeley Wellness Letter)



## Living Memorials

My Gift of Love



### TO HONOR THE MEMORY OF: PRESENTED BY:

Lillian Anderson  
Daddy, Mama and Brother  
William Day

Helen Gaeckle  
Luther Heyde  
Tom McGreane

Clyde and Ruth Narramore  
Mae Ellen Joyce  
The staff of the Narramore  
Christian Foundation  
Lila J. Gaeckle  
Marvalene Heyde  
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(Gifts received after October 3, 1997, will appear in the January/February 1998 issue of PSYCHOLOGY FOR LIVING.)

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## COMING NEXT ISSUE

\* Post Holiday Blues,  
And You

\* The Unbroken Heart

\* The Greatest Miracle

\* Three Myths

\* Love Is An  
Action Word

\* The Healing Freedom  
of Forgiveness



# ANSWERS TO YOUR QUESTIONS

by Clyde M. Narramore

## WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

### QUESTION:

*I have seen the statement in your literature and letters, "All behavior is caused, and causes are often multiple." I would appreciate your explaining what this means.*

### ANSWER:

I was in a hotel in Washington, D.C. getting ready to leave for church, when I momentarily turned on the TV and heard a well-known televangelist tearfully confess, "I don't know what made me do it. I just can't explain why I would become involved in such a sin."

As I listened, I reflected that this is probably true of nearly everyone. We act in a certain way, but often we have little understanding as to *why*. Most of us just feel the way we feel, and the way we feel seems normal to us. But to understand *why* we or our acquaintances behave in a certain way is often a mystery to us.

When we say that *all behavior is caused*, we mean there are reasons for the things people do and the way they behave. People don't just "happen" to act or react in a certain way. There are basic causes promoting a person's behavior.

**One major cause for the way we behave may be traced to physiological factors.** Our physical wellness or lack of it affects how we feel, how we think, how we react, and why we do the things we do. The Bible says, "We are fearfully and wonderfully made (Psalm 139:14). Thousands of things going on in our bodies can affect our behavior.

If you and I had no bodies

and were just spirits fluttering around, we wouldn't have to think about physical problems. But, of course, that is not what we are.

One day a middle-aged couple brought their niece to see me. She was about 31 years old and married. The uncle and aunt informed me that their niece was having a serious problem and needed spiritual help.

In spite of the analysis by her uncle and aunt, I became increasingly convinced that hers was *not* a spiritual problem, but rather a physical one. I felt that this young lady may have been suffering with a serious chemical imbalance. So I suggested that she be taken to see an endocrinologist who specializes in such things.

They didn't agree with me, but they *did* follow my suggestion and took their niece to see an endocrinologist. A few months later I was talking with the medical doctor who had seen her. He told me she had been struggling with a severe chemical imbalance, but now that she was receiving treatment, she was coming along fine. She had become radiantly happy, was caring for her family, and teaching Sunday School again.

Through the years I have observed that if a problem is severe and if it has existed for a number of years, there is a strong possibility that it is of a physiological origin.

Of course, when we say that *all behavior is caused*, we must recognize that human beings are also spiritual beings. This means that **their behavior may have spiritual roots...or**

**a lack of them.**

For example, I know a man who had such a serious problem that he was unable to function well. As I came to know him better, I found that he was unsaved. In time I had the privilege of leading him to the Lord. From that point on he had a desire to seek the Lord. He prayed each day, read the Bible, and grew in his Christian walk. Little by little, the problems that had plagued him for years began to be resolved. He was now a "new creation and was living a new life. Day after day God's Holy Spirit who now indwelt him was bringing about remarkable changes in his life. His basic problem was not *physical*, but *spiritual*.

When we use the term "*all behavior is caused*," we think of **a third source of problems — the emotional.** There are basic emotional needs that should be met in the life of every child as he is growing up. If these emotional needs — feeling loved, feeling that he or she belongs, feeling relatively free from fear, and other such needs — are well met, that child usually enters adulthood with wholesome feelings about himself and good attitudes toward others. In other words, he would be quite well-adjusted. If, on the contrary, basic emotional needs were *not* met during a person's growing-up years, he is almost certain to develop problems that will no doubt exist throughout his lifetime — unless he receives special help.

I know a man who as a child was beaten and abused in various ways for many years. Now as an adult, he struggles with feelings of

inferiority and is extremely withdrawn. Today he is plagued with numerous emotional problems that need to be addressed.

So, we see that there are three basic causes for problems that might prevent us from being well-adjusted: the *physiological*, the *spiritual*, and the *emotional*. When we say that "*causes are multiple*" we merely mean that there are usually several causes that combine to make a person act as he does. When a Christian counselor understands these things, he or she is usually able to offer significant help. □

### A Personal Word

(Continued from p. 2)

people through the ministry of the Narramore Christian Foundation. How thrilling that has been...and what a great honor to serve my Lord!

✱ Of course, I am extremely thankful for our faithful, loving NCF staff. They are a vital part of the ministry. I am thankful, too, for the many friends like you who have trusted us, prayed for us, encouraged us, helped us, and stood by us, thus making our work possible. For you, I shall be eternally grateful. We could accomplish very little without your prayers and support.

These are a few of the things for which I am exceedingly grateful. May God bless you throughout this wonderful season — and may your heart be filled with thankfulness every day of the coming year!

*Clyde M. Narramore*



by Lee and Gloria Bendell

## SIGNS: "This is the way, walk ye in it."

**T**HERE ARE TIMES in one's life when the Word of God is expressed in a way that stirs the soul, lifting it to refreshing new heights of understanding and insight. The writings of Marvin Rosenthal bless me in just this manner. Marv Rosenthal has a world-wide outreach ministry based in Orlando, Florida, called Zion's Hope, Inc. He also publishes *Zion's Fire* magazine, as well as numerous books and periodicals.

In his own words, Marvin Rosenthal is "Jewish and twice-born." He tells how when he was fifteen years of age, he was in his mother's luncheonette, and there, next to the soda machine, he bowed his head and invited Christ into his heart asking God to save him from sin and make him His child. Marv explains, "It was so simple, and yet so complex; so free for me — so expensive for God."

For a number of years I have been blessed by his gifted ministry. To share this blessing with you, I have obtained permission to quote portions from some of his books and publications. I trust that Marvin Rosenthal's thoughts and insights on the signs God has revealed to man in His Holy Word will encourage your heart as they have mine:

**"The word 'sign' occurs 119 times in the Bible.** The first usage is in Genesis 1:14. The stars were in the divine scheme of things, intended to be 'for signs and for seasons.' The final usage is in Revelation 15:1 in the context of God's final judgment.

"It may appear obvious, but signs are for seeing; that is, men are called upon to see, look at, behold signs. Signs are intended to be conspicuous, not hidden. The Bible speaks of signs appearing (Mark 24:30), being shown (Matthew 13:22), being accomplished before people (John 20:30), in the midst of people (Acts 2:22), and among people (II Corinthians 12:12). By their very nature, signs are to be public.

**"Signs are also miraculous.** The concept of Biblical signs and miracles is so closely intertwined that sometimes the Hebrew or Greek word usually rendered

as 'sign,' is literally translated as 'miracle.' Often the words signs, miracles, and wonders occur in tandem. Signs were placed by God, as it were, at crucial forks in the road of redemptive history to say to men and women of faith— 'This is the way, walk ye in it' (Isaiah 30:21).

"Centuries later the apostle John, in giving the reason for penning the Gospel that bears his name, wrote, 'And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these (signs) are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His name' (John 20:30-31). John chose a series of miracles from among the many that Jesus performed. These miracles were chosen because they authenticated and substantiated that Jesus was the promised Messiah and Son of God.

"Jesus Christ is the preincarnate (that is, He existed before He took on human flesh), self-existent (has always been, and owes His origin to no one and nothing) Son of God. He is co-equal and co-eternal with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit. But at a precise moment in history, Jesus would be born of a human mother on the planet Earth. The preincarnate (before flesh) Son of man, **He would be both undiminished deity and perfect humanity** — the God-man who alone could meet every need of the human heart.

"But how would men recognize Him when He appeared? How would they know with absolute certainty? How could He be picked out from among the myriads of men who would live and die on the earth?

"Here was a crucial fork in the road of human history, so God would place a sign — not a small placard which could be inadvertently passed by — but a giant billboard, as it were, that all could see. It would be unusual, miraculous, supernatural—something that satanic power could not successfully duplicate. The sign was promised by God more than 700 years before it appeared.... To Israel, God said, 'Therefore the Lord himself

shall give you a sign; Behold (signs were made for beholding), the virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel' (Isaiah 7:14). The birth of a child through a virgin obviously was unique, unprecedented, and miraculous. It would require supernatural power. It would be a bona fide, unimpeachable sign to identify the Messiah and Savior of the world when He appeared.

"And so the long centuries moved agonizingly on, one century after another, one generation after another, and the sign which God had promised did not appear. **And then it happened, as if a dream; but it was real. Earth was visited by heaven!** An angel appeared and said to the shepherds, 'Fear not; for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger' (Luke 2:10-12).

"The sign that God gave was the virgin birth. It was the fulfillment of the words of the prophet Isaiah, 'The virgin shall conceive, and bear a son' (Isaiah 7:14). The shepherds raced to Bethlehem to find the child. And they found Him wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger. When they entered they bowed, they worshipped, they arose, and they left. Before them lay the Son of God because the eternal God was His Father, and the Son of man because the Jewish maiden Miriam or Mary, who knew no man, was His mother (Luke 1:34, 35).

"Seven centuries earlier, the Sovereign of the universe had promised a sign (the virgin birth), a miracle to substantiate that God was dwelling among men. In the little village of Bethlehem, which lies along the patriarchal highway running north and south through Palestine, **the sign was posted for ALL to see."**

May the truth of the Word of God permeate your heart with His signs. □





# OUR WORLD TODAY

by Eva Hallam Solberg

## BURNED GIRL FOR-GIVES SOLDIER

Like many Americans, the Reverend John Plummer was moved by the Vietnam era Pulitzer Prize-winning photo of nine-year-old Phan Thi Kim Phuc, naked and horribly burned, running from a napalm attack.

For Plummer, the photo had special significance. In 1972 he was responsible for setting up the air strike on the village of Trang Bank — a strike approved after he was twice assured there were no civilians in the area.

Feelings of guilt haunted him for many years after he realized he was responsible for the girl's injuries.

In October 1996 Plummer learned that Kim Phuc would be speaking at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C., and met the Kim Phuc there.

"She saw my grief, my pain, my sorrow," Plummer wrote. "She held out her arms and embraced me. All I could say was 'I'm sorry' over and over again. At the same time she was saying, 'It's all right; it's all right; I forgive; I forgive.'"

They talked and prayed, and Plummer learned that she had turned from Buddhism to Christ in 1982. "She is the closest thing to a saint I ever met," declared Plummer.

(Discovery)

## ANTI-PORN COMICS

The American Family Association has produced two comic books designed to warn young readers of the perils of pornography. *God's Quiet Voice: John's Dilemma*, tells of the decision of a young teen not to look at a pornographic

*To be grateful is to recognize the love of God in everything He has given us—and He has given us everything.*

—Thomas Merton

magazine found by his school-mates. This leads to a discussion with his pastor of the importance of pure thoughts and future marriage partners. *The Next Right Thing* tells of the problems of computer/Internet pornography.

These comics can be ordered from AFA OutReach, P.O. Drawer 2440, Tupelo, MS 38803.

(New Creation)

## A "LICENSE FOR LIFE"

Florida's drivers have the option of paying an extra \$15 for specialty license plates featuring endangered animals, club logos, team colors, and other approved designs. The director of Choose Life Inc., has petitioned for approval of a design with the words "Choose Life," but missed the state filing deadline. A bill to waive the deadline is pending.

(Discovery)

## CRUEL TO ANIMALS?

A high school student's award-winning radiation experiment was dropped from a prestigious science competition at the Bay Area Science Fair, San Francisco, because officials believed it was cruel to animals—in this case, fruit flies.

The teenager irradiated about 200 fruit flies, and 30 of the test subjects died from bacterial infections. The high school sophomore called this a

natural death and denied that he was being cruel to them.

(The Washington Times)

## SUPREME COURT NEWS

Ruling that Congress had exceeded its authority, the U. S. Supreme Court struck down the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA) which prohibited the government from "substantially burdening" the practice of religion without a "compelling interest."

The increasing power of the Supreme Court is ironic because the nation's founding fathers originally feared that the High Court would not be powerful enough. "The least dangerous branch of government has turned out to be the most dangerous branch for those who value religious freedom," commented J. Brent Walker of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs.

Rita Woltz, legal coordinator for the Rutherford Institute said, "The Supreme Court has bulldozed the last barrier of protection for religious Americans. After the Supreme Court's reckless decision whereby it emasculated the Free Exercise clause, Congress created RFRA to protect the fundamental right to religious free expression. But now that protection has been lifted, and religious Americans will have to turn to their state legisla-

tures or lobby Congress for a constitutional amendment to protect religious exercise." She went on to say, "The original intent of the Constitution and its framers has been almost completely obscured by this decision. We are now on the verge of true religious apartheid in this country."

Other Supreme Court decisions: The Court allowed Montana to ban abortions performed by licensed physician's assistants. The Court said that states are free to require that all abortions be performed by physicians only.

The Court ruled that states can keep violent sexual predators behind bars, even after they complete their prison sentences, if they are believed likely to commit new crimes.

(EP News Service)

## FILE A LOVE LETTER WITH YOUR WILL

Write a last love letter and file it with your will. In it, say and re-say all the things you have felt for your spouse over the years. Update the letter whenever you wish.

Objective: To overcome the guilt that a spouse often feels over things left unsaid.

(Terrific Tips For Two)

## FINANCIAL MISTAKES PEOPLE MAKE

The biggest financial mistakes people make include paying too much interest on a high credit card balance, not raising the deductible on homeowner's and auto insurance policies to at least \$500, neglecting to write a will, and not putting as much money as possible into a tax-deferred retirement savings account.

(Bottom Line Personal)