

PSYCHOLOGY FOR
Living

FALL 2001

**Say
NO To
BURNOUT**

THE MIRACLE OF JESUS' BIRTH: CHRISTMAS BOOKS FOR CHILDREN

Giving Thanks In Difficult Times

By Dr. Clyde M. Narramore

One mark of a mature Christian is a spirit of thankfulness. 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...."



Dr. Clyde M. Narramore

We are now approaching the wonderful seasons of Thanksgiving and Christmas.

But how can we be thankful after the tragic events of September 11? We can be thankful that no matter how horrendous the tragedy, "God is our refuge and strength, our ever-present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear" (Psalm 46:1-2). Although we live in a fallen and sinful world, God's righteousness, love and justice will ultimately prevail.

We can also be thankful for the way God has worked in our individual and family lives through the years. First and foremost, I am grateful to God for my salvation through Christ, whose birth we celebrate at Christmas. I was born again into God's family at age 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. My mother set an example of godliness, and my older brothers set an example of moral living and honesty.

I am thankful for the Bible. I have memorized scripture since I was a boy and its life-changing truths give me stability and strength in times like these. How thankful I am for God's Word. I love it.

I am grateful for my wonderful

Christian wife, Ruth, and for the 55 years we have had together. 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, and they have been a support and inspiration to me. My in-laws have been tremendous!

I am thankful, too, for our own Christian family. Our daughter, Melodie, as well as her husband, Paul, and our son, Kevin, are walking with the Lord and reaching out to help others. And what a joy it is to know that our grandson, Byron, has already asked Christ into his heart.

I am deeply grateful for the opportunities God has given me to be His servant. I feel both blessed and humbled that God has seen fit to use me to help people through the ministry of the Narramore Christian Foundation. Serving the Lord is the greatest honor known to man.

I am thankful for our faithful, loving NCF staff. They are the heart of the ministry. Ruth and I are especially grateful for the new leadership of my nephew, Bruce Narramore, and his wonderful wife, Kathy. They are two of the most capable and godly leaders I have ever known. I wish everyone knew them like Ruth and I do. They are bringing so much to our ministries, and the days ahead for the Narramore Christian Foundation will be unusually exciting.

I am thankful for the many friends like you who have trusted us, prayed for us, encouraged us, and stood by us, thus making these ministries possible. I shall be eternally grateful for you. We could accomplish very little without your prayers and financial support. God will surely bless you for it.

May God envelop you with His love throughout this wonderful season – and may your heart be filled with thankfulness every day of the coming year! ☺

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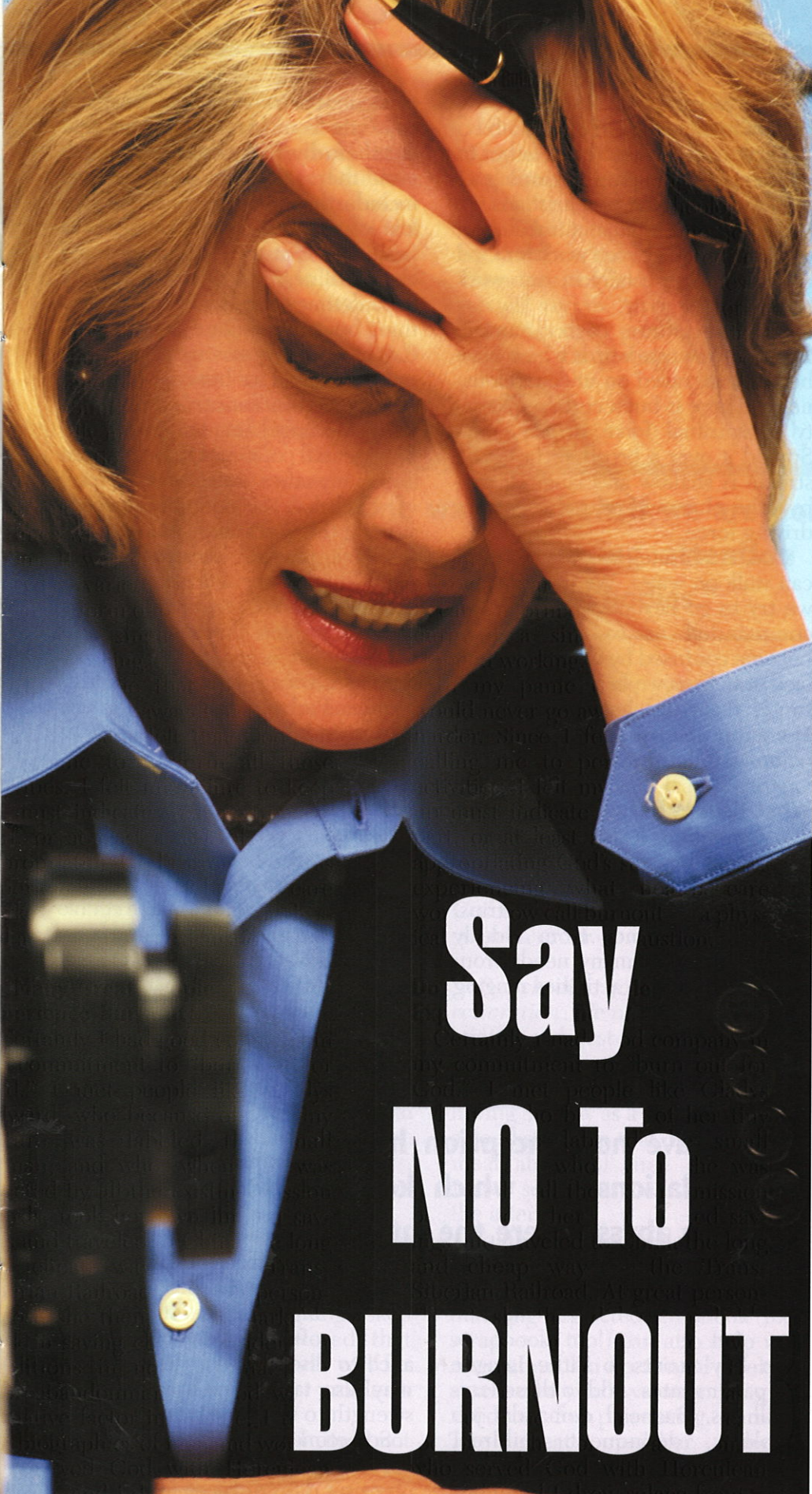
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Say NO To BURNOUT

By Elizabeth Ruth Skoglund

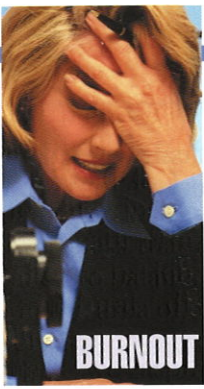
In my undergraduate years, I simultaneously worked toward a university degree along with a year's worth of study at a theological seminary. I held part-time jobs, taught Sunday school, dated my steady boyfriend several times a week and ran the local chapter of InterVarsity Christian Fellowship. I went to church every time the doors opened and drove elderly ladies there on Sunday mornings.

Gradually my body began to deny my assumption that I could somehow walk on water. I started to experience profound fatigue, mixed at times with feelings of anxiety or gloom. It was more than just your everyday variety of tiredness. It became a form of pain. The magical cure of a single night's sleep stopped working.

In my panic that this feeling would never go away, I just pushed harder. Since I felt that God was calling me to perform all these activities, I felt my failure to keep up must indicate weakness on my part, or at least a lack of faith in appropriating God's strength. I was experiencing what health care workers now call burnout — a physical and emotional exhaustion.

Do Many Great People Experience Burnout?

Certainly I had good company in my commitment to “burn out for God.” I met people like Gladys Aylward, who because of her tiny stature was labeled the small woman, and who, when she was rejected by all the existing mission boards, took her own limited savings and traveled to China the long and cheap way — the Trans-Siberian Railroad. At great personal cost, she then did a remarkable work in saving children under war conditions in north China. Her utter abandonment to God was a formative factor in my life. I read, too, biographies of men and women who served God with Herculean strength, and I drew solace from ►



their dedication.

Is It Necessary to Burn Out in Order to Get Things Done?

It is beyond dispute that God used these people in unusual ways. The question is whether the impact of their lives was improved or diminished by their burning out for God?

I first asked this question of myself when I wearily entered the work force. I was reading the biography of Hudson Taylor's daughter-in-law, Geraldine Taylor. She was the chronicler of that great missionary endeavor, the China Inland Mission (CIM), now called Overseas Missionary Fellowship. The CIM looms big in the history of Christian missions since it was the first attempt to reach all of the interior of China for Christ. Because my aunt had been a missionary with the CIM, I had read books about its founder, Hudson Taylor, since childhood.

But as I read a letter from Geraldine Taylor's father to his daughter, my whole approach to missions — and my lifestyle — came under question:

“How well I understand that nervous breaking down from which you have suffered. Let it be a warning. There is a limit you should not attempt to pass in exhausting labors. It is not easy to fix it, but experience shows pretty clearly where it is. I have gone beyond it at times, when all the foundations of life seemed gone. I cannot express what that means and hope that you will never know. Most people have no conception how thin the foundations are which keep them above the abyss, where the interests of life exist no more. Learn to say no to invitations or calls to labour which

destroy the power to labour and the possibility of service.”

This private letter from a father to his daughter was the beginning of my awareness that as Christians we are called to balance, not imbalance, even in the area of our work for God — perhaps especially in our work for Him.

A long time ago Samuel Rutherford wrote words which have become engraved on my consciousness: “There is but a certain quantity of spiritual force in any man. Spread it over a broad surface, the stream is shallow and languid; narrow the channel and it becomes a driving force.”

God is infinite. We are not. He can walk on water. We can't. When we try to go beyond what God has commanded us to do, we can become confused by God's apparent lack of help as we begin to sink. We forget that God has only pledged His support to that which He has commanded us to do.

What Causes Burnout?

Burnout can come easily in our hurried and pressured society. There are simply too many classes to study for, too many business trips, too many demands from elderly parents, and too many needs from children who have activities ranging

of us occasionally encounter what I call “hits from Mars.” We don't create them by bad choices; we can't avoid them; they just happen. They include the death of a spouse, the loss of a home or job, changes in finances, natural disasters and chronic illness.

Sometimes we aspire to something beyond the demands of everyday life. This opens us up to even more potential for burnout. We may be involved in concerns like world hunger, evangelizing the unreached, presidential politics, AIDS, abortion and many other social issues — each of which has the potential for consuming the lion's share of our time. Hobbies, physical exercise and just plain fun can begin to seem impossible when added to all these other demands which the majority of us face.

Burnout can become a status symbol. Perhaps we keep an overly busy schedule to reassure ourselves that we are needed. Low self-esteem and problems with declaring boundaries can lead to burnout, since secure people are more likely to be realistic about their capacities and are better able to draw the line. A child who does not receive enough affirmation at home may overextend at school, trying to get top grades and participate in too many school activities just to be noticed and approved of.

If we view God as a stern “taskmaster,” demanding an excess of activity, we can push ourselves to burnout. Such people feel that they are truly burning out for God. Paradoxically, rather than viewing God as a motivating force in burnout, we often need divine guidance to discern when to say no. It may also take some special divine strength to utter the word no.

Sometimes when we do the will of God, we find ourselves in places of ongoing danger or at least in cir-

“
Most people have no conception how thin the foundations are which keep them above the abyss, where the interests of life exist no more.”

from Boy Scouts to Little League and paper routes. Add to these family illness, financial demands, job problems, delinquent children, home repairs and so on. On top of these everyday responsibilities most

cumstances which militate against rest and recovery. Such stressors can ultimately lead to burnout if they are severe enough or if they are prolonged. For example, a missionary living in a country undergoing a revolution or a teacher in the United States working in the inner city may be operating under an ongoing threat of violence.

There is growing evidence that prolonged stress can cause great harm. Ironically, even the anticipation of danger or the “what ifs” of the future can cause the same physical damage as does stress which results from actual events. To be constantly on guard for your life, to fear physical attack whenever you go out on the street, can cause biochemical defense mechanisms which, if produced on a continual level, are emotionally and physically damaging.

Avoiding Burnout

1. *On the simplest level, it is vital to be able to say no.* No is one of the first words we learn to say as small children, and is probably the first word we are then taught not to say. It is hard to say no to tasks which we long to do and which other people are pushing on us. As a family counselor, I hear all kinds of excuses for not saying no. “There is no one else to do it.” “I enjoy it, so it won’t take a lot out of me.” (My personal favorite!) The less-often-articulated, but at times more honest excuses, are: “I just didn’t have the courage to say no.”

By nature I have a very hard time saying no. For many years I got along by accommodating people and doing almost everything asked of me. When I discovered that burning out was not God’s will for my life, one of my biggest problems was, “How do I say no?”

I quickly learned that I could not wait for people to approve of my saying no. I couldn’t wait for their

permission or for someone else to do the task in my place. I simply had to say no, whether or not anyone but God Himself understood.

2. *Give yourself time before saying yes.* Don’t say yes immediately. There are, of course, times when you will say yes. An opportunity that is too good to pass up will come your way. Or perhaps you will find



One way to know if we are doing too much is by paying attention to the reactions of our bodies.”

God is leading you in new directions.

But it is still difficult to know when we are taking on too much, even after we have learned to say no. Often when I am asked to do something, I ask for time to think and decide. I don’t want to say no immediately because I want to give God the opportunity to show me if a yes is in order.

3. *Schedule your recreation and restoration.* We need to write recreational and rest requirements into our schedules with as much seriousness as we give to anything else. Just having Sunday as a day of no work is a good start. On that day make your meal ahead of time or eat out. Leave some unscheduled hours in the afternoon.

Taking an extra day off every month to go to the beach, having lunch with a friend, or working on that long-neglected scrapbook (men scrapbook, too!) can also help with restoration. An occasional weekend away and a yearly vacation are great antidotes for preventing burnout. The great preacher, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, once said that taking a vacation

was an obligation from God. He knew only too well how fatigue and overwork could destroy a person’s usefulness for God.

4. *Schedule time for the unexpected.* Everything from death, earthquakes, floods and illness to traffic jams, clogged-up plumbing and lost dogs take away from the perfect schedule. If there is no “free space,” such events will turn a neatly planned life into chaos.

5. *Allow time for recovery.* Not long ago someone returning from the funeral of a relative said of his surviving spouse: “She’ll just have to go on now. It’s over.” In another instance an older man sought psychological help because “he was taking too long” to get over the death of his father who had died two weeks earlier!

Grief, loss, trauma: these are occurrences in life that have a long-term impact. People vary; circumstances vary. But it is safe to say that in the case of death, the grief just begins after the funeral. Time is needed to recover from all these events in our lives which are indeed not self-induced but come from outside stressors. If our lives are already over-committed, it is harder to take the time we need for unexpected recovery.

6. *Watch for physical warning signs.* One way to know if we are doing too much is by paying attention to the reactions of our bodies. Falling asleep at the wheel of our car, dozing off in church, being unable to concentrate, or having sleep habits or bodily functions change (such as insomnia, rising blood pressure, aching joints or frequent headaches), may all be symptoms of a schedule that is too pressured.

Burnout, continued on page 7 ►

Recovering the

Bridging the gap between a daughter and her alcoholic father

by Marie Asner

By the time I was born, my father was an alcoholic. He celebrated the news of my Mother's pregnancy after 12 years of marriage by getting drunk; he celebrated my birth by getting drunk; and any day and for any reason, he would get drunk. Amazingly, he was able to hold down a job.

My mother held down many jobs to pay for groceries and a babysitter. My father's salary went for mortgage, car payments and alcohol. I began to do babysitting as a means of spending money for myself, and I held down a series of part-time jobs through high school and college.

I could never depend on my father for anything. If he said he would be at a school function, that meant he wouldn't show up. Confirmation, eighth grade, high school graduation — and he was never there. He was "working," which meant eight hours of work and then hours in a bar somewhere. He embarrassed me so much the one time he did show up, I couldn't bring myself to go to school the next day. It was a fourth-grade afternoon children's program and my father's shift ended at noon. Instead of coming home for lunch and changing clothes, he "drank lunch" and then walked from the bar to the school, coming just after the program started. He fell over chairs finding a seat and then caused such a commotion by pointing and yelling, "That's my daughter," the

principal had to usher him out, amid loud protestations and curse words from my father. I was horrified and left the stage in tears when my classmates began to tease me.

My mother was a music teacher and church organist. She taught me to play the piano and then began sending me to other teachers for lessons in theory and the classics. By the time I was fourteen, I was a substitute organist for several churches in our area. How I would pray that my father would see and hear me play the organ. Time after time I would look out at the congregation hoping to see his face, but it never happened. In fact, because my mother worked so much, there was never a familiar face in the audience — only strangers.

I entered college and



Lost Years

became estranged from my father. I'd schedule my visits home when he wasn't there. As a music major there were many occasions for recitals and concerts. My mother and grandmother tried to attend, and each time I would hesitantly ask, "Could Dad come, too?" To which someone would reply, "Oh, he's probably going to be working then" — or, "He'll try to come; I'm sure he will." But, of course, he never showed up. I think many of my classmates thought my father was dead. He might as well have been. Years passed, and I was about to graduate with a music degree. I had continued organ substitution as a means of financial support while I was in college, and found myself playing at my teacher's churches. At least then there would be someone I knew in the congregation. Near graduation time, my vocal music teacher asked me to play for a small wedding at her church. In organist's lingo, this meant no soloist, no rehearsal and the organist chooses the music.

During the week of the wedding I prayed a special prayer for the bridal couple and then added, "God, all these years I've been praying for my father to hear me play. I'm putting it in your hands now and I'm through wishing for myself. Your will be done." I should have prayed this way years ago — I felt an immediate sense of relief.

That Saturday afternoon turned out to be a sunny day with fresh April breezes and the smell of lilacs in the air. *A special wedding day*, I thought as I entered the church. The prelude music I'd chosen seemed to be agreeable to the people near the organ, and I could see satisfied smiles on their

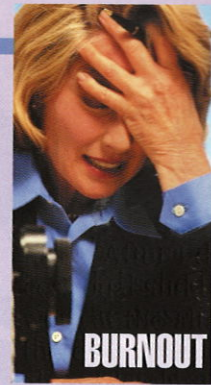
faces. After I'd finished the processional and the bride and groom were at the altar, I looked out at the entire congregation and almost lost my composure. There, at the back of the church, sat my father. I knew immediately he was sober. Years of living with an alcoholic lets you know what "sober" is.

At the end of the service, I walked back to him because he wasn't able to come to me. He was crying. My father told me he had joined Alcoholics Anonymous (A.A.) and had been sober for three months. He did this as a graduation present for me. My music teacher had called him to see if he could attend this wedding to hear me play.

My prayer was answered, but that didn't begin to convey the feelings I had at this time. God touched my father at a time when I finally let go of criticism and despair. Through a sympathetic teacher, God brought us together.

My father lived another four years and then died of damage to his liver caused by excessive alcohol. During those four years we were able to travel and enjoy each other's company as father and daughter, not as protagonists with a bottle of alcohol between us. We were a family. The lost years became just that — lost years — and we lived in the present and the knowledge that God has a plan for each of us.

This was first published as *Sobriety Checkpoint* in *Bounce Back Too*, Horizon Books, Camp Hill, PA ©1998 Marie Asner. ☞



Burnout, continued from page 5

7. *Keep your focus.* Finally, one of the surest ways I know to avoid the pitfall of burning out

is to keep my focus on God. Great work is not ordinarily done in busyness. If, through prayer, Bible study and that inner speaking of the Holy Spirit within us, we truly commit our lives, not only to God's work for us but also to God's time schedule, we will find ourselves living lives of balance. A life lived for God in this way will not lack God's balance or God's supply.

8. *Recognize the need for psychological help.* If you are stuck in a driven lifestyle or have suffered a major trauma like street violence or a devastating tornado, don't hesitate to seek professional counseling. A sensitive Christian therapist can help you understand why you over commit and help you learn to develop a more balanced lifestyle. Don't suffer needlessly.

For most of us who struggle to live a life of balance, it is instructive as well as humbling to remember the words of former Senate Chaplain Peter Marshall after his first heart attack, as related in the book, *A Man Called Peter*, by Catherine Marshall: "Well, Peter," a friend asked, "I'm curious to know something. What did you learn during your illness?"

"Do you really want to know?" Peter answered promptly. "I learned that the Kingdom of God goes on without Peter Marshall." That's a lesson we all need! ☞

Parenting Middle Adolescents

by Bruce Narramore and Vern Lewis

Do you remember when your teenagers were toddlers, about sixteen to twenty-four months of age? Typically, they were becoming much more independent and assertive. They played alone for longer periods, did more things for themselves and first learned to say, *no!* But even though they were moving further away from you, they returned often to take on more emotional fuel or to share their experiences and be encouraged or affirmed. If you weren't available when they returned for emotional support, they could become anxious or depressed.

Sometime between fourteen and seventeen years of age, middle adolescents go through a developmental phase similar to that of the sixteen- to twenty-four-month-old toddlers. They move further away from parents. They start driving or dating or taking part-time jobs. They stand increasingly on their own. But they can also experience a lot of anxiety and depression if they get too far from our loving spiritual and emotional support. Middle adolescents can act stubbornly independent one minute and incredibly dependent the next. They can love you one minute and hate you the next. And they often

want to spend time with their friends or to be left alone. But when they need you, they need you. They feel abandoned or depressed and lose confidence if you are unavailable as a home base for encouragement and support.

One of the greatest challenges facing parents of teenagers is to help our middle adolescents make a smooth transition from childhood dependency to adulthood independency. Here are five guidelines that will help you help your teenagers through this sometimes perplexing stage of life.



Be Present But Invisible

When our daughter, Debbie, was fifteen, she tried out for the high school cheerleading squad. It was an exciting and anxious time. She practiced hard before the tryouts and hoped for this new opportunity to know more kids and have a Christian influence in her large public high school. Selection day came and Debbie was chosen.

When the first football game rolled around, my wife and mother-in-law excitedly anticipated going to watch the cheerleaders. When Debbie heard Kathy's and Mildred's excitement, she made it very clear that she did not want them at her first game. She was nervous about her performance and didn't want them watching every move she made, or "ooing and aahing" over how great she was. Like normal mothers, Kathy and her mom initially felt hurt. But sensing Debbie's discomfort, they skipped the game. At the next game, they sat unobtrusively at the back of the bleachers and quietly watched the girls. When I arrived at the game, I discreetly walked around the cheerleaders at a safe distance and smiled knowingly to Debbie without arousing any of her friends' attention. Then I went to the other side of the field to talk to the fathers of some of the players. From these rather distant vantage points, we watched the girls perform.

My middle adolescent daughter's aversion to public attention from her family reflected her struggle with the main developmental task of middle adolescence. She wanted our interest and attention, but she also needed enough space to feel increasingly adult. When her mother and grandmother got excited about watching her perform, she started feeling childish. This is the reason for our first suggestion for parenting middle adolescents: be present but invisible!

Like Debbie, all middle adolescents want you to watch their athletic or musical performances and be proud of them. But also like Debbie, they don't want to be singled out from their friends by hovering parents.

During school plays or church Christmas programs, children's parents sit near the front and cheer their children on. Parents of adults sit farther back and watch respectfully and quietly. Performing adolescents desire to be treated like adults.

Help Them – But Not Too Much

Above all else, parents of middle adolescents need to find a balance between supporting our teenagers and allowing them to confront their own problems. If your middle adolescent daughter has a conflict with her teacher, don't jump in immediately and try to solve it for her. Help her think through what she can do. Ask leading questions. Suggest that she talk directly to her teacher to try to clear up the misunderstanding. Encourage her to talk to her school counselor or principal or other appropriate person. And if it is something she needs to learn to live with, sympathize with her but tell her we sometimes have to get along with other people's hang-ups. Unless her teacher is doing something unethical or seriously injurious, don't phone or visit the teacher or principal. Doing so would tend to infantilize your adolescent — not to mention the possibility of threatening and angering the teacher.

The Bible gives excellent insights into finding this balance. The apostle Paul wrote that we are to "Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ." Then, three verses later, he makes the apparently contradictory statement, "For each one should carry his own load." What did Paul mean? And why did he give us apparently conflicting advice?

In verse two, Paul used the Greek word *baras*. In verse five, he used the word *phortion*. *Baras* refers to a heavy or oppressive object, whereas *phortion* refers to a normal load or object. In verse two, Paul was saying we are to help others bear their "burdens" — their heavy or oppressive problems. But in verse five, he says each person is to bear his own "load" or portion. Teenagers need your help in times of crisis or urgency but they don't need

you to carry their own normal portion of responsibilities. Balancing your support with opportunities for them to handle their own responsibilities provides the best environment for confident growth toward maturity.

Stay Available

At the same time that middle adolescents want us in the background, they also want us readily available. Even young adults home from college confess to a brief disappointment if they return to an empty house. They can handle your absence, of course, and we don't recommend you sit around waiting for your late adolescents to come home. But middle adolescents need you available, if possible. They need your affirmation of their successes and want you to share in their excitement, accomplishments and discouragements.

Some adolescents who don't experience enough parental support develop a "shadowing," dependent, or depressive lifestyle. They withdraw from most social activities with their age mates so they can stick as close as possible to a parent or another adult. Others who feel emotionally abandoned turn to sexual promiscuity or drugs or alcohol for consolation. Their premature disconnection from parental nourishment leaves them with an unquenchable hunger for love which leads to depression, or which they try to satisfy through sexual encounters, drugs or alcohol.

Teenagers are not so different from spouses in this regard. We all need to be reminded that we are loved, and we all need our loved ones available to express their caring.

Support Adult Responsibilities

For weeks, fifteen-year-old Beth's excitement had been building. She was soon to get her driver's license. Every time the family went out together, Beth wanted to drive so she could practice. She just had to take her driving test the very day she turned sixteen, so her mother, Barbara, took her to the Department of Motor Vehicles. Beth passed her test and, of course, had to drive her ►

mother home. Then she drove off by herself to visit a friend.

For several weeks Beth almost disappeared. Every time her parents turned around she was driving to the store, a friend's house, or a church or school activity. Driving was Beth's way of exercising some newfound "adulthood" and putting a little space between herself and Mom and Dad. Barbara and her husband thought about restricting Beth's activities so that she would spend more time at home, but wisely decided to let her try her wheels, hoping this was just a phase. They didn't let her have the car every time she wanted it, but did try to accommodate her when that was possible.

Sure enough, the newness wore off after a few weeks and Beth started asking for the car only when she needed it. By giving her increasing freedom, Barbara and her husband enabled their daughter to test out some adult responsibilities. This helped her take one more step out of her conflict between dependency and independency and furthered her revision of her image of herself from that of a child to an adult. Beth's parents were practicing a fourth principle for parenting middle adolescents: encourage and allow teenagers to take on increasingly adult responsibilities.

Taking a part-time job is one good way for middle adolescents to take responsibility and keep learning about the realities of life. Although not every middle adolescent should take a job, work can be a maturing experience. It gives adolescents a chance to try out some adult skills and prove they can take care of at least some of their material needs. The Bible says, "It is good for a man to bear the yoke when he is young" (Lamentations 3:27).

If your middle adolescent daughter isn't involved in extracurricular activities and is "goofing off" or not taking her studies seriously, a part-time job may be an especially important step in growing up. In that case, feel free to initiate the idea of a job. Look for a good time to ask her if she has thought about an after-school or summer job. If she quickly rejects the idea, pursue

her gently and tell her you have thought about it and believe it might be helpful to her and the family. Ask her to think it over and see that she takes a serious look at the way she spends her time. You might also tell her it is time that she starts paying for more of her own clothes or helping cover the cost of car insurance as well as getting experience in the workaday world. Middle and late adolescents should not have large amounts of time on their hands or have their parents provide all of their financial needs.

Activities such as taking a part-time job, driving a car, and serving in responsible positions at school and church help teenagers learn that they can cope in the adult world without caving in to their wishes to be dependent. They help reshape their attitudes toward themselves and others so that they can see themselves as more competent and adult.

Give a Gentle Nudge

A public broadcasting station recently featured a nature film that held a fifth principle for parenting middle adolescents. It showed a mother starling teaching her young to fly. The mother perched on a branch with a worm in her mouth and teasingly dangled it toward her brood in the nest nearby. Then she slowly began fluttering her wings to model the mechanics of flight. Soon one of the young birds began to flutter its wings and made its first attempt. The distance was short and the effort awkward, but the first little starling landed safely and received his reward. One by one, the other starlings learned to fly.


Teenagers need the same kind of encouragement to try new tasks. They need some motivation (the worm), a good example (the mother demonstrating how wings work), and the recognition that Mom or Dad will help but won't do the job for them (the worm held at a far enough distance to force them to fly).

Like young starlings, some adolescents are hesitant to leave the nest. Their built-in urge to become independent seems to have been repressed. Whether it is because par-

ents have been overprotective or the children lack confidence in themselves, these teens need an extra nudge to keep them moving toward independence. If they don't get a little encouragement, or if they aren't forced to take a chance now and then, they will fall back to the dependent side.

Sam helped Evan over this developmental hurdle by applying a fifth principle for parenting middle adolescents: give them a gentle nudge. When Evan asked his dad to buy him a used car, Sam agreed to make the down payment and pay half of the monthly payment if Evan would handle the rest of the payment and all of the insurance and other costs. Evan had hoped for more, especially since his best friend's father had just bought him a car. But when his dad held firm, Evan found himself a job and soon was able to afford the car.

A gentle nudge can take the form of encouraging your son or daughter to get a job, repair his or her own car, or try out for a part in a play. You might decide not to increase their allowance so they will have to finance their growing social life with some gainful employment. You might suggest they open their own checking account and balance their monthly bank statement. Or you may require your fifteen-year-old to do a larger share of household or garden tasks. Even having your teenagers set up their own doctor's appointments encourages them to take more responsibility for themselves. Anything that requires them to do for themselves what you used to do, without their feeling abandoned, leads toward healthy independence.

Parenting middle adolescents can be one of the most rewarding experiences in life. Teenagers are beginning to reshape their own distinctive personalities. They are making their childhood spiritual commitments their own. And they are loosening the ties of dependency. Each of these steps can be a little scary. But if we stay lovingly available without being intrusive, we can share great joy in watching them mature. 



In Today's Workplace

By Jonathan M. Olford

Bill, a sixty-three-year-old attorney, sat in my office with his wife of 35 years. Pensively, Sylvia recounted a life full of disappointments. Their income had been good, but she had seen her husband's role as a criminal attorney disappear as his addiction to alcohol, caffeine and nicotine consumed him. Unable to sit for more than a very few minutes at a time, he seemed to devote more of his time to cigarette breaks than work. She had told him to leave their home 35 days earlier, and was not ready to take him back until something changed.

Just having completed his third 28-day substance abuse program, Bill had again committed himself to a life of sobriety. This time, however, a nurse in the program had raised the question, "Have you ever been assessed for Attention Deficit Disorder?" The answer

was no, and that was why they were in my office.

Bill had motor tics, and twitched and rolled his eyes as he attempted to sit before me. He told of his difficulty to stay with a task and to maintain his focus. He learned to cope with this by rising early so that his legal depositions could be dictated, and research could be done in the dark and without the pressures of the office. That kept the distractions to a minimum. Bill also started drinking alcohol since that seemed to temporarily calm some of his nervous energy, make him less self-conscious of his tics, and reduce his inhibitions as he engaged in the demands of his professional life. He was actually using alcohol as a form of self-medication. But his "medication" had led to drunkenness, unpredictability and uninhibited angry outbursts that had all but destroyed any sense of intimacy in his marriage.

Despite everything, however, Bill's wife hung in ➤

there. Sylvia's devotion to her own spiritual development and to her marriage were her mainstays, but she was determined that this time they would get to the bottom of the problem, or she was gone.

Rick sat fidgeting in his chair. As missionaries in the Far East, he and his wife, Barb, had committed themselves to a life of service to God, but here they were at home, frustrated, angry and feeling betrayed. Their idea of what it meant to be part of a team had gone up in smoke.

Barb and Rick felt misunderstood, misrepresented and betrayed by those with whom they had committed to work. Their first few months on the mission field had gone OK, but relationships had slowly deteriorated and now hardly anyone seemed to be speaking. Sure, God's work was being done, they were actively involved in the church they had planted, and the church was growing. But the relationships between the team members had been reduced to next to nothing. Communication was minimal and the quality



Attention Deficit Disorder and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder are no respecter of persons, and they show up somewhat differently in adults than children.”

of the conversations reflected the tension and anxiety that seemed to allow one to cut the atmosphere with a knife.

Confrontations and interventions had been made, but no one was particularly interested in owning his or her own contribution to the problem. So here were Rick and Barb now facing counseling in the United States and attempting to confront the reality that they may not be returning to their “beloved field” of service. Rick was angry and sad, but what was

the underlying problem — what was going on?

Rick's psychological assessment showed that he was impulsive, intellectually inflexible and oppositional. His marriage appeared intact, but he had great difficulty managing conflicts and solving problems. He tended to over-focus on one detail or one perspective and had difficulty shifting his attention away from one way of thinking. This created interpersonal problems that often ended in arguments and hurt feelings. Barb also commented that it was a struggle to live with someone “who always said what he thought and felt.” Further discussion revealed that communication within the missionary team had decompensated partly because Rick never seemed to be quite aware of the impact he was having on others. While it appeared that no one was free of guilt or responsibility, the issues Rick needed to address had to do with his ability to relate and communicate with others in a meaningful and effective way.

As I continued my interview with Rick, I discovered that he had always struggled throughout school and had difficulty focusing his attention.

Both Bill and Rick were suffering from Attention Deficit Disorder.

Attention Deficit Disorder and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder are no respecter of persons, and they show up somewhat differently

in adults than children. Children with ADHD often have academic problems. But in adults with ADHD, they tend to reveal themselves in interpersonal relationships and in the work setting.

Disorganization, distractibility, inattentiveness, excessive worrying, a tendency toward impulsive or addictive behaviors and a lack of awareness of the impact one is having on others are frequent symptoms. Adults like Rick and Bill experience trouble sustaining attention and difficulty completing projects. They tend to be easily overwhelmed by the tasks of daily living and they often struggle to maintain an organized work and living area. Inconsistent work performance can also become the downfall since these intelligent and creative folks often lack attention to detail. In turn, these struggles can lead to depression and poor self-esteem.

Left untreated, ADD/ADHD in adults can be catastrophic. It can devastate parent-child relationships, marital relationships, and work relationships that are essential to everyday functioning. On the other hand, some of the traits of ADHD individuals have a very positive side.

A willingness to engage in risk-taking behaviors and



the perpetual pursuit of greater stimulation not only represent likely ADD/ADHD symptoms, they can also characterize independent, engaging and personable folks who are willing to take risks and constantly try new things. Those traits can be wonderful assets to a person who has to be willing to leave his home country and launch a ministry on a foreign field, or to someone trying to change the world through the legal profession.

Daniel Amen, M.D., a California psychiatrist who consults extensively on ADD/ADHD issues, reports that recent brain imaging studies, or SPECT scans, have shown a clear neurological basis to ADD. When people with ADD try to concentrate, their frontal lobes — the pre-frontal cortex to be exact (which is the part of the brain that controls attention span, impulse control and judgment) — actually decrease in activity. This rises up in stark contrast to people who do not have ADD. When these folks attempt to concentrate, there is an increase in neuronal activity. The fact is that this frontal lobe deactivation helps us understand why children and adults with ADD stir up their environment and seem to be on the prowl for excitement or trouble. If they can get someone angry or upset with them, the turmoil and confusion has a tendency to stimulate their brains and help or enable them to feel more normal.

As Rick and Barb, and Bill and Sylvia respectively, sat in my office awaiting the feedback from their assessments, I felt it was important to begin by encouraging them with the facts. The reality is that everything these men were experiencing was manageable, controllable and treatable. Through the provision of appropriate education on ADHD, psychotherapy directed at the related depression and marital issues, and a focus on developing the skills necessary to function more effectively, they began to gain hope. The use of a psychostimulant (Ritalin; Concerta; Adderall; etc.) and an antidepressant to aid in mood management and to enhance the effectiveness of the psychostimulant proved invaluable to these two men and helped them manage their more impulsive tendencies and increase their self-awareness. Things have now begun to turn around for Rick and for Bill. With proper assistance, ADHD is very manageable, treatable and controllable.

Organizational and business leaders can also be of great help to employees with ADHD. Learn as much about ADHD as possible so you can become an ally to employees wrestling with these traits and characteristics.

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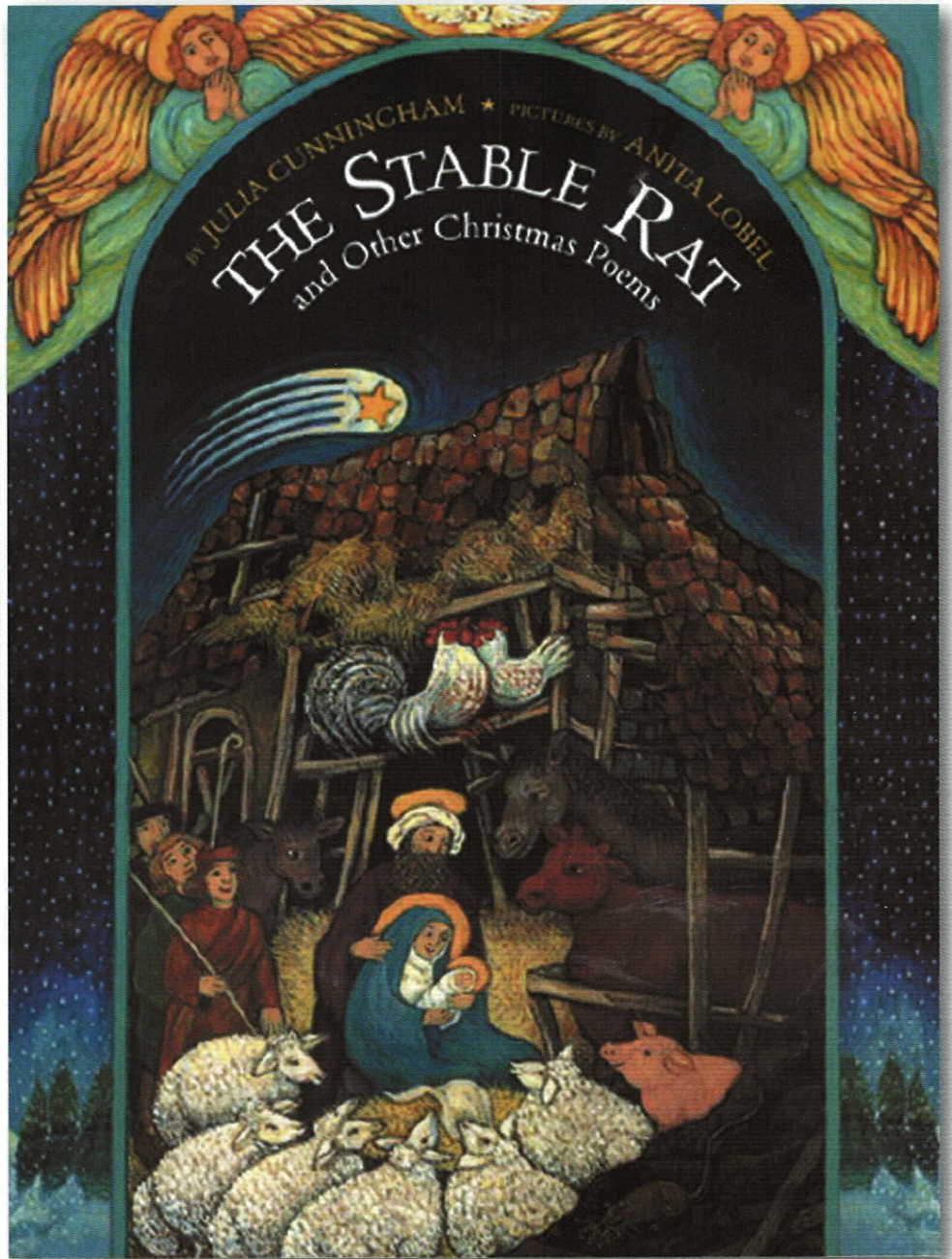
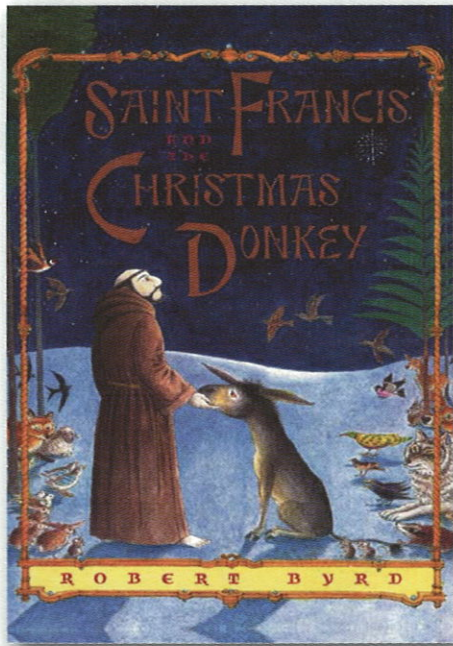
If you suspect ADHD, encourage the staff member to read a good book on ADHD, or seek a medical or psychological consultation from an expert in the field.

You can also help by being willing to adapt their work to their unique strengths and weaknesses. If possible, provide a quiet work area that has a minimum of distractions. Arrange for them to work with people who are easy to get along with. Try to assign responsibilities that fit their strengths and weaknesses. Don't put a highly active, energetic, rather disorganized person in a routine detail-oriented position. Put him in a role of public relations or in another more appropriate role.

With medication, some counseling and support at work, adults with ADHD can be outstanding employees. Learn to maximize their gifts and minimize their weaknesses as these creative, responsive, and intelligent people have much to offer.

Jonathan M. Olford, Psy.D., is the Clinical Director and a Licensed Clinical Psychologist at Link Care Center in Fresno, California. Dr. Olford and his wife, Catherine, were missionaries with the Africa Inland Mission for eight years. At Link Care he provides psychological services to missionaries, as well as to the population of the greater Central Valley of California. He specializes in severe psychopathology, the healing of damaged marriages, Attention Deficit Disorder, and individuals involved in full-time vocational ministry. Dr. and Mrs. Olford and their sons, Jeremy, Justin and Joshua, live in Fresno, California.





Christmas Books

The Miracle of JESUS' BIRTH

for Children

By Kathryn Coad Narramore

Do you get tired of “Santa hype” at Christmas? At Mustard Seed School, a Christian mission school in Hoboken, New Jersey, teachers plan their Christmas celebration very carefully to get around

this December phenomenon. Shanna Pargellis, Master Teacher and one of the school’s founders, says that they combat “Santa hype” by “building up the drama of what is going to happen at Christmas. And what is going to happen, of course, is Jesus’ birth.” Pargellis explains that,

instead of a Christmas tree, the school has a “Jesse tree, a family tree of Jesus.” The ornaments on the tree symbolize people who have been waiting for Jesus, from Abraham all the way up to John the Baptist, Mary and Joseph. And so at Mustard Seed, Christmas has become a long and joyful season, one where students celebrate the coming of the Savior.

Getting adults to look beyond their Christmas shopping lists is hard enough; getting children to see beyond the excitement of presents is even more challenging. Certainly, if left to learn about Christmas from mainstream American culture, children will imagine that Christmas means Santa Claus, presents, and a good meal. We do hear about the “Christmas spirit” sometimes, but it often means giving to “those less fortunate” once a year. Although feeding the hungry and poor is our calling at Christmas and at other times, vague mentions of the “Christmas spirit” still makes the main meaning of the holiday giving and receiving instead of celebrating the coming of Jesus. We need to teach our children the value of generosity at Christmas time and the whole year through. But giving, even gracious and selfless giving, should never drown out the biggest Christmas gift: the first coming of Jesus.

What children will never pick up without focused attention from thoughtful adults in their lives is the true majesty of this holiday, the incarnation, God coming to Earth and beginning life here with few creature comforts and yet with a celebration never seen before or since. Kings and princes did not attend this celebration, but the lowly did. The people (and animals!) who came are the ones that the world often does not see, but that Jesus always makes a point of seeing. And though kings and princes did not come, the very stars rejoiced and angels announced this great birth to those who had ears to hear and eyes to see.

So how can we make Jesus’ first coming to the world a vital part of Christmas for children? Reminders that “Jesus is the reason for the Season” and “Don’t take Christ out of Christmas,” have little meaning to children. Making Jesus a big part of Christmas takes time and thought. Good books are one of the very best ways. They can tell the basics of the nativity story while engaging a child’s imagination and helping him approach the holiday with a different point of view.

The best children’s storybooks about Christmas tell a story of how Christ’s arrival transformed the lowly into the special and beloved, precisely what Christ continues to do in our lives. Children understand what it is to be small and relatively powerless, and they also know how abnormal it is for the great in the world to descend to the level of the small. Children are well equipped to understand the miracle of a king and a Savior being born among animals and their humble keepers.

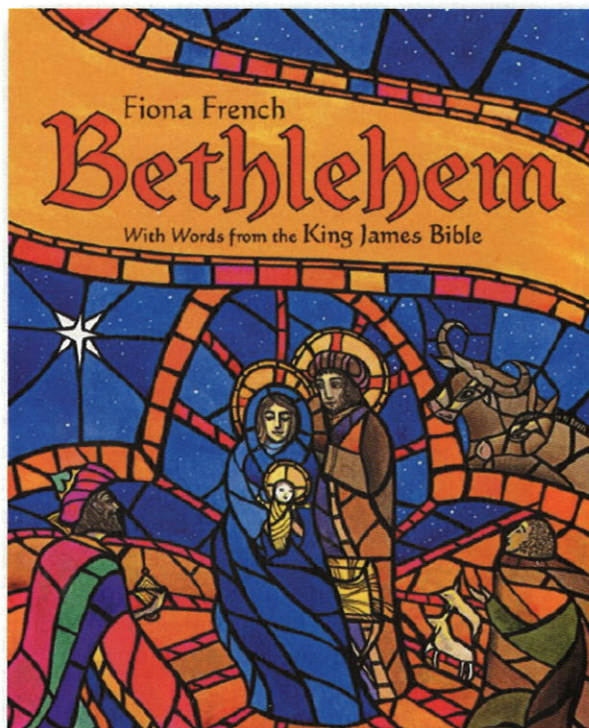
For instance, what was it like to be a scrubby and shunned rat, the lowest of the animals, in Jesus’ Bethlehem stable? Could someone with big ears, a loud braying voice

and a gawky gait actually make an important contribution to the kingdom of God? Could Jesus change someone’s life even when he was a little tiny baby? These are some of the questions that children’s books about Christmas use to help children experience Christmas as a spiritual event. (For the answers to these questions, see below *The Stable Rat and Other Christmas Poems*, *Saint Francis* and *The Christmas Donkey and A Shepherd’s Gift*).

All the books listed below come to the Nativity with a slight twist, an angle that lets young readers peer into the Bethlehem stable and see the often-retold story from a different and unique point of view. So this Christmas, take some time to share the story of Jesus’ birth in a new way; it is a great opportunity to introduce our children to God’s far-reaching love and to let ourselves celebrate God’s greatest gift to the world.

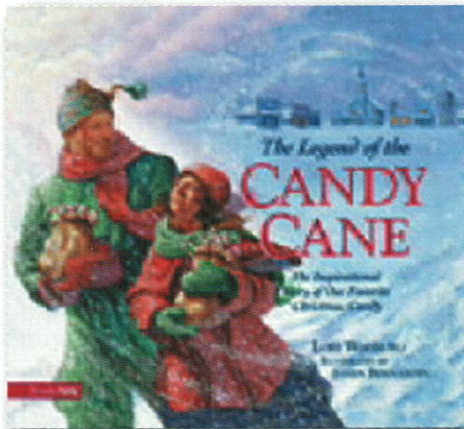
The Stable Rat and Other Christmas Poems by Julia Cunningham, illustrated by Anita Lobel. Greenwillow, 2001. Most children are not used to listening to stories in verse and this might seem a challenge; however, the poems roll easily off the tongue and the illustrations enrich reading the verses.

The title poem is a wonderful story about Jesus’ transforming love. As one might imagine, the stable rat is not an endearing character, and none of the other animals like him or even really know him. They shun him as he tries to approach the Baby Jesus, much as the well-meaning apostles tried to hustle children away from Jesus. The infant reaches out to the rat: “then I saw his hand grope for the shadow/ that was me./ His fingers clutched my tail/ and lovingly he turned me round to see.” Jesus’ touch transforms the rat. He goes from being “a shadow, gray, gray, gray” to being “green and gold and scarlet, haloed by a flame . . . a glory given me.” Other poems feature ►



rejoicing crows, a puzzled sheep, and the first sunrise after Jesus' birth ("such a wakening burst in the morning").

The Star by Ute Blaich, illustrated by Julie Litty. North-South Books, 2001. This nativity story doesn't record the actions of the first Christmas night; this story narrates the meaning of Jesus' birth. We overhear a conversation between Owl, Raven, White Grouse, Sheep and Mouse. In spite of the terribly cold winter, which has left the birds and animals without shelter or food, Owl does not pounce on Mouse, who has wobbled into Owl's path by accident. Owl explains that it is Christmas Eve, the night to celebrate Jesus coming to the world, and that his celebration is to love Mouse. The story ends with a surprise visit to the woods from a father and son who lay out food for the animals as a part of their human Christmas celebration. The dia-



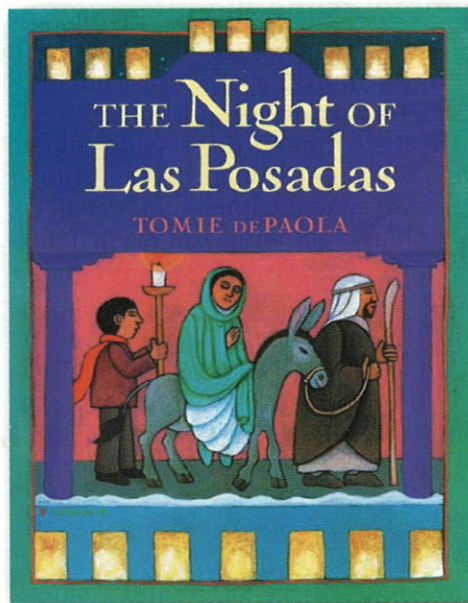
logue sounds natural instead of preachy, and yet it presents a thoughtful Christmas lesson in terms that children can appreciate. The story ends with a vision of what peace on earth might look like: "The moon shone more brightly than before. The animals ate in silence. Mouse walked about near Owl without fear, Sheep crunched carrots, White Grouse and Raven happily pecked at the corn and grain."

Bethlehem by Fiona French, HarperCollins, 2001. This storybook simply takes the words of the

King James Bible and portrays them with compelling stained glass style illustrations. The style is not necessarily familiar to many American children who may worship in modern buildings without stained glass windows. For that reason this book is a wonderful introduction to a great tradition of storytelling often not seen in modern churches. Younger children will especially like the bursts of color and finding the different pictures within the stained glass effects.

A Shepherd's Gift by Mary Calhoun, illustrated by Raul Colon. HarperCollins, 2001. In this story, children get to meet Jesus as both a newborn and a Savior. Having chased a lost sheep into a stable, Matthew, an orphan shepherd boy, finds himself with the newborn Jesus and his parents. When he looks at Jesus he sees the normal beauty of a newborn, but he also experiences a transformation when Jesus looks at him. He feels seen and known by this small baby. When he arrived at the stable he looked after his own interests by quickly claiming the lost sheep as his own, but now he serves the family by fetching water and leaves his sheep and its own nursing lamb as a gift whose fleece will warm Baby Jesus.

Raul Colon's illustrations show the dugout stable and its plainness. To fetch water from the inn,



Matthew pours it from a large earthenware jug into a smaller one to take to the stable, a detail that reminds us of the inconveniences of being born in a stable and how different the world was. There are many wonderful themes here: the lost sheep, Jesus' love for children, God's provision, giving loving gifts, worship, serving others and serving God. This simple picture book will grow on you and your family every Christmas that you read it together.

Saint Francis and the Christmas Donkey by Robert Byrd. Dutton, 2000. The donkey was an important animal in Jesus' life, carrying him to Bethlehem while yet unborn, then to Egypt soon after birth and finally to Jerusalem and to the cross. Byrd's story has two sections, one of Saint Francis' consoling a donkey who is complaining that donkeys have been ill-used, and in the second, the saint tells of the important role the donkey played getting Mary and the unborn Jesus to Bethlehem.

The Night of Las Posadas by Tomie dePaola. Putnam, 1999. Here's another way to hear the Christmas story, one that focuses on Mary and Joseph trying to find a place to stay in Bethlehem. Las Posadas is a Spanish custom celebrated not only in Spain and Mexico but also parts of America as well (this particular story is set in New Mexico). To celebrate Las Posadas, people parade from door to door before Christmas with a Mary and a Joseph trying to find a place to stay. After being turned away from five doors, Mary and Joseph find refuge in the church and the evening ends with songs, cookies and hot chocolate. This year, the couple playing Mary and Joseph is stuck in a sudden snowstorm, but a Christmas miracle saves the celebration. And the story ends with a main character praying that her heart will always be open "so that the Holy Child will have a place to be born."

Long Was the Winter Road They Traveled by J. Patrick Lewis, illustrated by Drew Bairley. Dial, 1997. Written in rhyme with beautiful whole-page illustrations, this book

tells the Christmas story with a very young Mary, a very small baby Jesus, and a very joyous menagerie of animals. Joseph sends out the animals to share the news of Jesus' birth: "A great green rush of Hummingbirds/ Unfolded into flight/ With news of the Nativity/ This thousand-anged

Celebrating Christmas As a Season

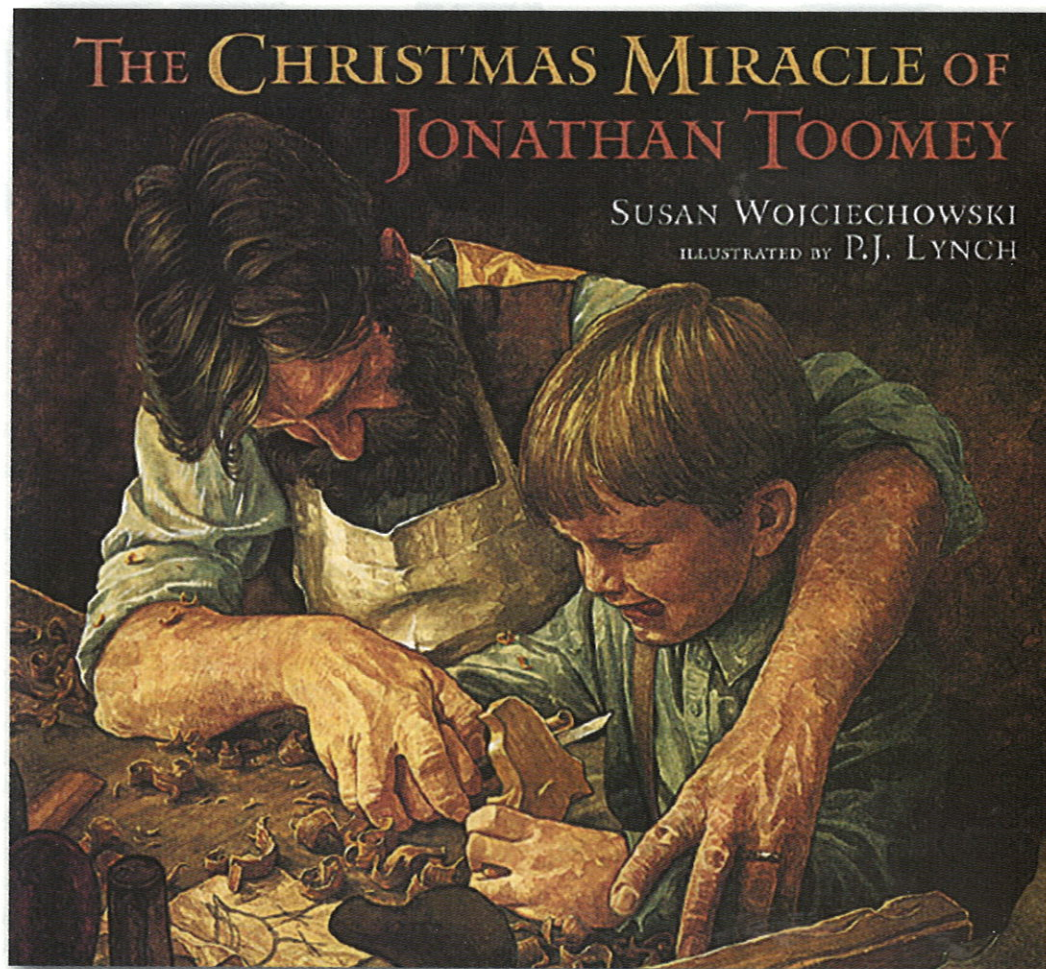
How to fit in all those books into each Christmas? Celebrate Christmas as a season instead of just a day. The twelve days of Christmas span from Christmas Day until Epiphany (January 6), sometimes called Three Kings Day. Reading a book each night as a family extends Christmas beyond the day when the presents arrive and provides time for hearing about Jesus' birth. I know one family who buys a new Christmas book every year and adds it to their collection. There are so many excellent Christmas books that this is easy to do.

Putting Santa Into Perspective:

Santa, Are You For Real? by Harold Myra, illustrated by Jane Kurisu. Tommy Nelson, 1997. Here's a Christmas book that doesn't tell the story of Jesus' birth but does tell us about Christmas and how to celebrate it. Santa Claus often steals Christmas but here is a way to put Santa into perspective without losing the fun he brings on Christmas morning. When a little boy overhears older boys saying there is no Santa Claus, his father tells him about Saint Nicholas, the real person who loved to give gifts anonymously because he loved Jesus.

ight." This book would be great to read as a break from caroling as it conveys the joy of Christmas.

The Christmas Miracle of Jonathan Toomey by Susan Wojciechowski, illustrated by P.J. Lynch. Candlewick Press, 1995. Like Ebenezer Scrooge, Jonathan Toomey is an old grouch who people mock and avoid. The story of Jesus' birth is the catalyst to big changes in his life and heart while carving a nativity scene at the



request of a handsome young widow. Her rather talkative son explains how each carving must look and so conveys the greatness of the Christmas story. The cow is proud because Jesus has chosen to be born in his stable, and the angel is one of God's most important angels. Carving this nativity scene forces Mr. Toomey to meditate deeply on the individual personalities involved in Jesus' birth. Mr. Toomey has a very difficult time carving Mary and

Jesus until he bases them on an old drawing of his wife and son, both dead. And here is the miracle: he is able to grieve his losses and celebrate Christmas again.

The Legend of the Candy Cane by Lori Walburg, illustrated by James Bernadin. Zonderkidz, 1997. This Christmas cane becomes a reminder of Jesus' birth, both how and why He came. The "J" is for Jesus and turned upside down represents a shepherd's staff. The stripes represent the cross, the reason for Jesus coming to the world. We learn this symbolism while reading a story set in 19th century America: only one little girl offers to help a new settler as he sets up a candy shop in an unfriendly pioneer town, and so she is first to learn the story of the candy cane. When the shop opens on Christmas Eve, the whole town has learned the legend and celebrates together. (Also coming this Christmas, *The Legend of the Christmas Tree.*)

Voice The W Within

by Dick Innes

Some time ago I read the following story in *Focus on the Family* magazine about a man who bought a car that had replaced warning lights with spoken instructions from a woman.

In a soft voice, his little woman, as he called her, would say, "Your door isn't closed properly." "Your key is still in the ignition." "Your seatbelt isn't fastened properly."

On one occasion, he recalled how the voice of his little woman said, "Your fuel level is

getting low."

The driver thanked her and, figuring he had sufficient fuel to take him 50 more miles, ignored the voice and kept driving. Soon his little woman repeated, "Your fuel level is low." The longer he drove, the more his little woman repeated her warning.

Getting frustrated, he stopped his car, searched under the dashboard, and found the appropriate wires. One quick jerk and his little woman was silenced. Imagine the look on his face when, a few minutes later, his car sputtered and jerked to a standstill — out of fuel! One could almost imagine a grin on his little woman's face!

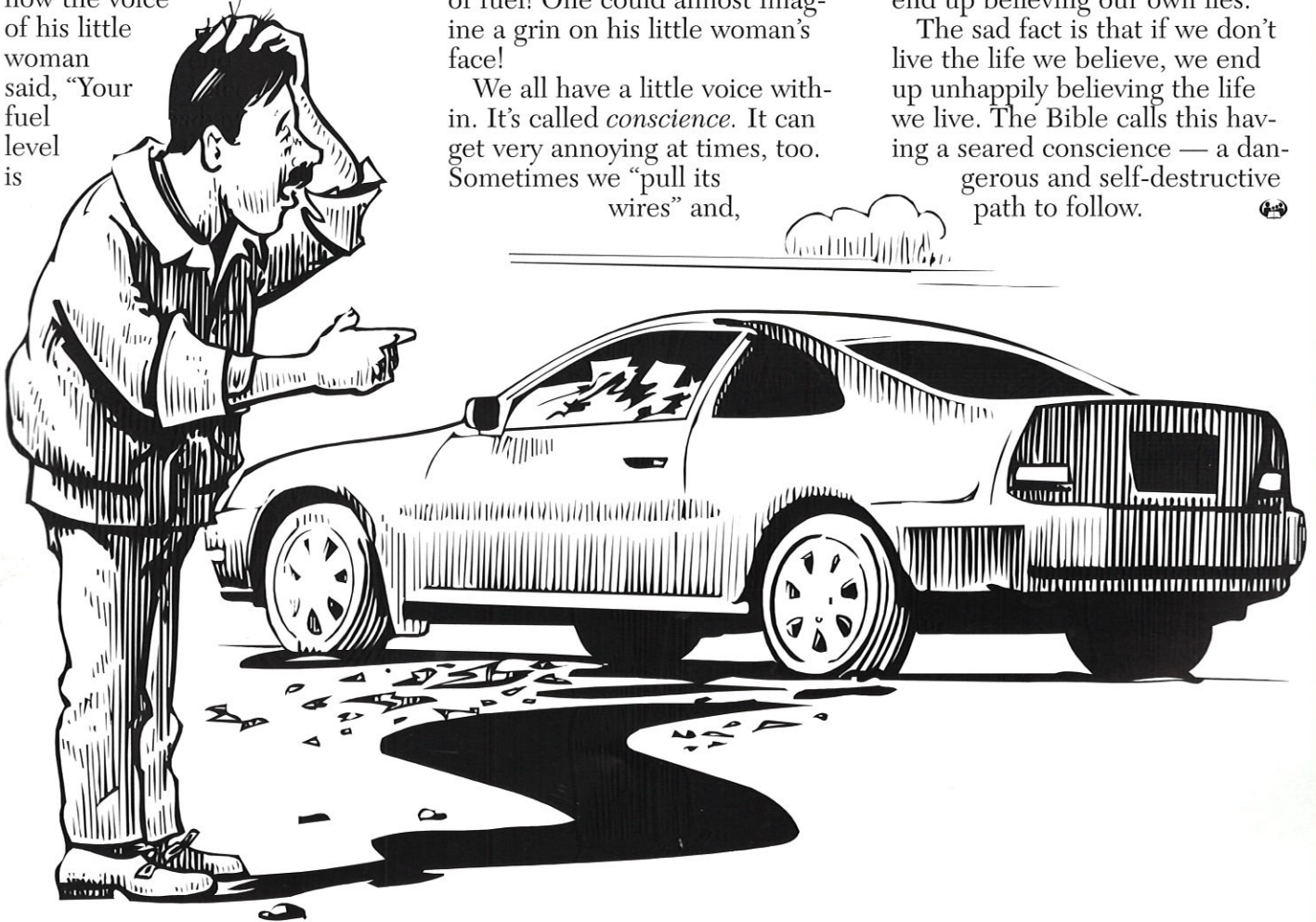
We all have a little voice within. It's called *conscience*. It can get very annoying at times, too. Sometimes we "pull its wires" and,

too late, we discover we are "out of fuel."

One danger when we ignore the voice of our conscience, and don't live according to our convictions, is that our mind experiences mental dissonance or disharmony. Because this is too uncomfortable to live with, we switch off our conscience.

When we do this often enough our mind, motivated by the avoidance of discomfort, does a double take. It not only switches off the voice of conscience but turns on the voice of rationalization and justification. We then end up believing our own lies.

The sad fact is that if we don't live the life we believe, we end up unhappily believing the life we live. The Bible calls this having a seared conscience — a dangerous and self-destructive path to follow.



Six-year-old With Behavior Problems

Q We have a pressing question about our six-year-old son. My wife and I were divorced two years ago, and he now lives primarily with his mother. Within the last two years, he has experienced the divorce between us, the remarriage of both his mother and me, and the birth of a new sibling. Since the arrival of the new sibling, his behavior has gotten worse.

In kindergarten, he had problems listening and fighting. Now in first grade, he does not pay attention in class, interrupts the teacher, and when told to be quiet, he hums while she gives instructions to the class. Then when the assignment begins he will yell out, "Hey Teacher, what am I supposed to do?"

At home with his mother, he refuses to do simple tasks like clean his room, or tries to find a way out of it. On one occasion he refused, and when disciplined, he yelled at his stepfather that he hated him.

His mother wants me to take him to a psychologist because she believes that he must have ADHD. He does have several of the characteristics, except not doing well in his grades at school. I am leery of some of the drugs that children are put on, but my ex-wife is desperate for something to be done.

If you have any information, or if you could refer us to a professional in our area, we would appreciate it.



Bruce Narramore, Ph.D.

Thanks for your letter describing your son's behavior problems and some of your family dynamics. You are correct that several aspects of your son's behavior could be reflections of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. From your description, however, they could also result from the history of tension and major disruption in the family. For example, it is not unusual for an older

sibling to become more "baby-like" or to act up more after the birth of a younger sibling. The unconscious dynamic is usually this: I have been the center of attention, but now I have been replaced. If I act more immature or get into more trouble, maybe I can recapture some of the attention I am losing.

Children are also more distractible when they are unhappy. Since your son has gone through some extremely painful family experiences at a very young age, he may be daydreaming or preoccupied with other things. This could explain his lack of sustained attention.

Some of the problems you describe are also common when children are not consistently disciplined. For example, most children don't do well in cleaning up their rooms. If the parents kindly but firmly estab-



It sounds to me like this boy needs some very good, loving but firm discipline, or else he is in danger of terrifying and controlling the family by his inattention and anger."

lish some consequences, however, and carry them out, nearly all children can learn to be at least moderately responsible in this area. It sounds to me like this boy needs some very good, loving but firm discipline, or he is in danger of terrifying and controlling the family by his inattention and anger.

Finally, I am also wondering about the spiritual atmosphere in your home. If you and his mother both love God and communicate God's love and Christian values on a regular basis, that can provide a stabilizing, nurturing support that your son badly needs.

I do believe you are wise to seek out a psychologist or psychiatrist who can do a thorough evaluation of your son. A competent professional can determine if your son's struggles are due to ADHD, the emotional/relational difficulties in his home, lack of discipline or spiritual training, or a combination of any or all of these.

Although I think medications can be overused, if your son is clearly diagnosed with ADHD, I suggest that you not be afraid to provide him the help that well-monitored medications can give.

In the meantime, whether or not your son has ADHD, he clearly needs lots of verbal and physical expressions of love, regular spiritual nurturing and clear limits, with consistently implemented limits and discipline.

Missionary Renewal In France

NCF Staff Associate Dr. Keith Edwards, and his wife, Ginny, recently traveled to France to help lead an intensive two-week program for missionaries from throughout Europe, North Africa and Central Asia.

The seminar, co-sponsored by the Narramore Christian Foundation and Drs. Larry and Lois Dodds of Heartstream Resources, provides missionaries and other cross-cultural workers an opportunity for rest and renewal in a beautiful mountain setting while receiving free individual or marital counseling and participating in seminars on relationships, stress management and other practical topics.

The seminars and counseling often provide life-changing helps. As one couple said, "Our lives have been dramatically



Dr. and Mrs. Keith Edwards (center) enjoying dinner at the 2001 Missionary Renewal Program held near Grenoble, France.

Children of missionaries enjoy an enriching, refreshing program.

changed, saving our marriage and giving us hope to return to our field of service. I've never heard of a program that meets such a diversity of needs at profound levels. Thank you from a heavy heart made light through your Refresh! Seminar."

Please pray for the Edwards and Dodds as they carry out these vital ministries.



Counseling on Board Ship

How would you like to spend an entire month living with 200 individuals averaging twenty-five years of age from 40 different countries? You would reside in cramped quarters with limited privacy and take all of your meals together. You would often find yourself desiring the same resources at the same time that others need them. During



the day you would be counseling some of these 200 individuals and offering workshops on marriage relationships, maintaining personal balance, dealing with stress, understanding cultural differences

and leading devotional times.

That was exactly the way NCF Associate Dr. Timothy Boyd, and his wife, Anita, recently spent a full month. Dr. Boyd was serving as a psychologist and counselor on board Logos II, the ministry base ship of Operation Mobilization. Dr. Boyd reports: "Life on board is quite intense. Many describe it as a 'pressure cooker.'"

The ship serves as a training and ministry base for missionaries in development. Each crew member has two roles. First, they serve in some aspect of on-ship work (cleaning,

engineering, deck, pantry, etc.) Second, they carry out a variety of evangelistic activities with nationals in the port where the ship is docked. In the middle of pressured schedules and intense multicultural environment, the opportunity to obtain counseling for a variety of relational and stress-related issues was much welcomed by many of the young men and women on board. Anita Boyd provided English tutoring to some of the on-board children and helped lead a Bible study for the ship's mothers.

Serving Missionaries in Thailand

Imagine facing all of the pressures of life you currently face — emotional, family, work, financial, social, and physical illness. Now add to those pressures, living thousands of miles from family and friends in a radically different culture, having to learn a strange language, always being in a minority, and often living under great physical, social and financial pressures. On top of all of this, imagine committing your life to communicate the love of God through Jesus Christ to people who have been entrenched in superstition and false religious beliefs for generations, and whose governments often forbid conversion to Christianity or any open, public worship.

If you are normal and you tackle all of that, you will occasionally become discouraged and feel like giving up. You will feel isolated and lonely because you have few, if any, friends with whom you can share your life. And when your children have a learning difficulty or a social/relational problem, and when you and your spouse have a conflict or misunderstanding, or when you face depression or severe anxiety, you have no place to turn for help.

That is exactly the situation of scores of thousands of missionaries, tentmakers and Christian businessmen and women around the world. Many thousands of these committed men and women are serving God in China, India, Pakistan, Cambodia, Viet Nam and other Central and Southeast Asian countries. In recent years the city of Chiang Mai, Thailand, has become a major support center for these missionaries. Because of its ideal

location just south of China, Chiang Mai is accessible to the most populated non-Christian countries in the entire world. Its wonderful climate and relatively stable government have combined to make it an ideal location for scores of international agencies to establish their regional headquarters. Each year thousands of missionaries spend time in Chiang Mai, and there are now two fine international schools located in the city.

Yet with all of the support available in this city of over one million people, there is not one full-time, doctorally trained psychologist offering services to the missions community!

Bruce and Kathy Narramore recently spent a week in Chiang Mai consulting with mission leaders about ways of meeting the psychological and spiritual needs of the thousands of missionaries in that region of the world. Please pray with NCF's Directors and staff as we plan for the next steps to assist these leaders in developing a fullservice Christian psychological clinic in this vital region of the world.

NCF In Action, continued on page 24 ➤



Dr. and Mrs. Tim Friesen (center) discussing meeting the emotional and family needs of missionaries throughout Southeast Asia.



Meeting of Chiang Mai Missionary Member Care network in Thailand.



Kathy Narramore discussing Member Care issues with members of the Chiang Mai network.



Mr. Harry Hoffmann, chairman of the Chiang Mai Member Care network, with his family.

Tribute Gifts

Would you like us to join you in honoring your loved one? You can send a Tribute Gift or Living Memorial Gift to the ministries of the Narramore Christian Foundation.

Gifts in the Memory Of:

John Serpa
Evelyn R. Stearns

Presented by:

Mrs. Frances Serpa
Robin Brown

Clip out and return with your loving gift.

In Memory of:

Amount: _____
Given by: _____
Name: _____
Address: _____

Send acknowledgment to:

Name: _____

Mail to:

Narramore Christian
Foundation
Address: P.O. Box 661900
Arcadia, CA 91066-1900

HEALTH WATCH

Compiled by Eva Hallam Solberg

Homosexual Activity and Psychiatric Disorders

A study of a large representative sample of the population of the Netherlands indicates that homosexual men and women have a higher than average rate of most psychiatric disorders.... To avoid ambiguity about sexual orientation, the people were judged to be homosexual or heterosexual by their reports of sexual activity in the previous year. Both 35 percent of gay men and 35 percent of lesbians had one or more current psychiatric diagnoses, compared with 21 percent of heterosexual men and 22 percent of heterosexual women. Some 56 percent of gay men and 67 percent of lesbians had one or more lifetime psychiatric diagnoses, compared with 41 percent of heterosexual men and 39 percent of heterosexual women. These differences were statistically significant.

—*The Harvard Mental Health Letter*

Working students and stress

Working more than 20 hours a week during the school year was associated with higher amounts of emotional distress by teenagers, increased use of cigarettes, alcohol and marijuana, as well as earlier sexual activity. (About 18 percent of students surveyed, grades 9 through 12, reported working more than 20 hours a week during the school year.)

—*Mayo Clinic Health Oasis*

Disappointing St. John's Wort

A carefully controlled study of the herbal antidepressant St. John's wort has found that it is barely, if at all, more effective than a placebo in treating depression. The eight-week experiment was conducted at 11 academic medical centers in the United States.... Nearly 27 percent of those taking the herbal extract and 19 percent of those taking the placebo responded at least partially to the treatment (response was defined as an improvement of 50 percent or more leading to a final score below a certain level). That difference was not statistically significant. The rate of remission — almost complete disappearance of depressive symptoms — was 14 percent for St. John's wort and 5 percent for the placebo, a difference considered barely significant.... The authors conclude that St. John's wort has not, or not yet, earned its reputation as an antidepressant.

—*The Harvard Mental Health Letter*

Talking to Someone Who Is Hard of Hearing

Besides speaking louder and more slowly when talking to someone who is hard of hearing, lower the pitch of your voice. Hearing loss in most elderly people primarily involves high-pitched sounds. Talking too loudly may be counterproductive, since it usually makes you raise the pitch of your voice along with the volume.

—*UCBerkeley Wellness Letter*

What's Going On In The Inside?

By Ruth E. Narramore

One of the biggest challenges in the Christian life is making sure that what we say and do is genuine and authentic all the way through – inside and out. We read in I Samuel 16:7 that “God looks on the heart.” He sees right through us and knows what our real intentions are.

You may remember the story about little Bobby who wouldn't sit still. “Sit down, Bobby, and stop running around!” ordered the little boy's father. “You're making a nuisance of yourself.”

While Bobby's parents had been trying to work out the details of an important business deal, the child had been anything but cooperative. Although his father had reprimanded him several times, it did little to alter his obnoxious behavior. Finally his dad had enough.

“Bobby,” he ordered sternly, placing a chair in the corner of the room, “sit here and don't get up until I tell you.”

Bobby pouted, but at least he was sitting quietly. “I'm glad you're being a good boy now,” his mother told him.

But Bobby was still defiant. “Well,” he blurted out, “I may be sitting down on the outside, but I'm still standing up on the inside!”

What was going on in Bobby's inside was very different from his outside.

We may all need to take a look at what's actually going on in the real inside of us. *Are our attitudes Christ-like? Are we self-centered in our desires and plans?* We can easily fool ourselves. I remember once, for example, wishing that a certain situation would have a specific outcome. But as time went on, I began to ask myself, *Is that what Christ would want?* So I prayed and asked God to change my attitude. And He did!

We all live in our own world of personal interests. We have families, certain friends, special plans and desires.

So we tend to focus around our world wanting things our way, even if they are somewhat selfish and self-centered.

But have we looked at things from God's point of view? Are we truly concerned about others? Do we want God's plan to be central in our thinking?

We should remember that God is just as interested in other people and their lives as He is interested in us. Others are just as interested in their



Much of our problem stems from judging people and secretly wishing they would somehow be punished for their negative attitudes and wrongdoings.”

doings and welfare as you and I are interested in ours. And we should be sensitive to this fact.

God wants honesty, not hypocrisy. “Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts, and in the hidden part You will make me to know wisdom” (Psalm 51:6).

Much of our problem stems from judging people and secretly wishing they would somehow be punished for their negative attitudes and wrongdoings. We may act outwardly as though we wished them well. But deep down inside, we may not. In other words, what's going on in the inside of us is different from the way we are talking and acting on the outside. We may very well be looking at things from our own judgmental point of view, rather than from God's perspective. The

longer I live the more I realize that God does not call you and me to set most people straight or punish them. He takes care of that. Our responsibility is to walk well and humbly with our Lord.

How do we become a more genuine, authentic servant of God? We start by becoming aware of our problem. Next, we should talk to the Lord about it. Day by day as we read the Bible, God will impress upon our minds the things we need to change.

The Word can convict our hearts if we are open to God's intervention. “For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart” (Hebrews 4:12).

Then as we pray earnestly, He will, through His Holy Spirit, bring about

the changes. Before long we will be cleaning house – both inside and out!

Let us examine ourselves to be sure we are keeping God's commandments in our hearts. For when our hearts are right, our actions will be spiritually valid ... and we will “find favor in the sight of God” (Proverbs 3:4).

Indeed, our inside feelings and attitudes should match those which come across to friends, and they should all be in accordance with the eternal Word of God!~



Ruth Narramore

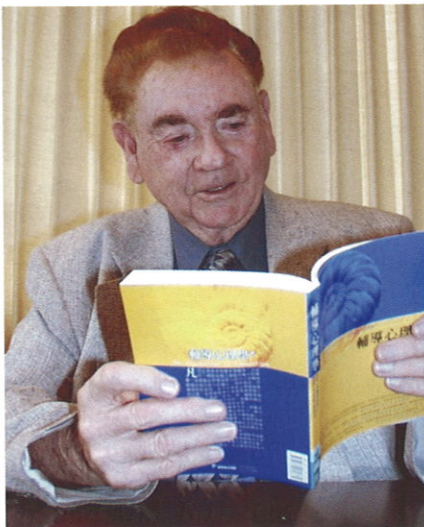
New NCF Associate Staff in Kenya

Dr. Roger Brown, a Christian psychiatrist who coordinates the work of the counselors at Tumaini Counseling Center in Nairobi, Kenya, has recently agreed to serve as an Associate Staff member with the Narramore Christian Foundation. Tumaini is the most comprehensive on-field psychological clinic for missionaries in the world, serving missionaries from more than 20 African nations. Dr. Brown will continue with his full-time ministry at Tumaini, as well as consult with NCF regarding the development of Christian Psychological Services in other areas of the world.



Psychology of Counseling Translated Into Chinese

Dr. Clyde Narramore's book, *The Psychology of Counseling*, has just been translated into Taiwanese and published in Hong Kong. The book, which has sold over 100,000 copies in the U.S., will be of special interest to pastors and other Chinese Christian leaders who are often the only person to whom Chinese Christians can turn for encouragement, support and counseling. Dr. Bruce Narramore's book, *Help! I'm a Parent*, has also been translated into Chinese.



LETTERS

I've just received the Summer issue of *Psychology for Living*, and noted the new variety of authors and subject material. It started with something new for us older people (I'm eighty) and something new with adolescents - early, middle and later. Also for young mothers who sometimes say, "I thought I had heard everything."

I have shared every issue through the years with family and friends. Sometimes the issues came back to me and I shared them again. Deep down I am a pack rat, but this kind of material needs to be read and reread and used; it is ageless.

Thanks for all your help through the years. I've benefited many times over, but didn't let you know before how you've helped me.

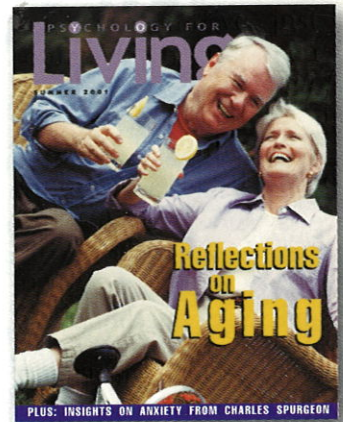
—EF, Oklahoma

I wanted to tell you how inspired I was to read Ruth Narramore's article, "Pearl Harbor - the Untold Story." It was beautifully written and illustrated with the American flag, the bird and the Japanese flag. I really like this issue (of *Psychology for Living*). It has so much in color. Your page is beautiful.

—DMG, California

I want to thank you for the help your magazine has been. I started getting it before the children were born. Now our daughter is an engineer with a wonderful family, and the other daughter is a medical doctor and will be getting married soon. They both have good self-esteem and love the Lord. I went through a divorce and single parenting when they were young, but my girls turned out great.

—Mr. and Mrs. R.H., Oregon



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