

A lush green forest with a waterfall and a stream. The scene is captured in a long-exposure style, making the water appear soft and blurred. The forest is dense with green foliage, and the overall atmosphere is serene and natural.

PSYCHOLOGY FOR
LIVING

MARCH-APRIL 1998

**TWO
EASTERS
—TAKE YOUR PICK**

**THE
RESURRECTION
NEWS**

**THE DARKNESS
OF DEPRESSION
AND THE ROAD
TO RECOVERY**

**RESTORATION
THROUGH
RECONNECTION**

**THE FELLOWSHIP
OF SUFFERING**

A PERSONAL WORD

by Clyde M. Narramore
CHRISTIAN ACTION

SOMETIMES WE GET SO BUSY in our work for the Lord that we don't take time to look back and see the wonderful things God has been doing.

In this issue of *LIVING* I would like to highlight for you, our partners, some of the opportunities God has given us to serve Him during the past year.

Calls for Help: Each day people phone us for help with their problems. Some calls are referred to me. I enjoy this because I have the opportunity to deal directly with a person. I listen carefully and ask questions in order to understand precisely what the situation is and why it has developed. Then we discuss it and I offer suggestions.

Literature: As you may know, we produce three publications: (1) the *LIVING* magazine, (2) a compact publication, *SPECIAL INSIGHT*, and (3) our monthly *LETTER OF BLESSING*. In addition, we are continually writing new booklets and revising and editing others.

People use our literature in many ways. We are often asked for larger quantities of booklets to distribute at women's retreats, men's fellowships, or other special groups.

Several Christian organizations request volumes of our booklets to send to the people who contact them. For example, the Billy Graham organization has been using some of our materials for years. We also send literature to prison inmates.

Videos: We have ten videos on vari-



ous topics designed for individuals and groups. Families, churches, Bible-study groups, and colleges use them. With each video, a *Discussion Guide* is enclosed.

Radio: Radio is a wonderful medium for reaching many people. A number of stations carry our broadcast, *LIVING*, and many listeners write or phone for further help.

The Distinguished Service Award: During this past year we wrote over 3,000 licensed Christian psychologists asking them to nominate a colleague who was rendering unusual service for the Lord. We received 100 nominations. From those we selected a number whom we considered the most outstanding and sent information about each of those candidates to a panel of Christian leaders.

From this list, the panel then voted for the six they felt were especially remarkable and most deserving of recognition. We then sent a beautiful personalized plaque of recognition, along with a significant monetary gift to help and encourage each one to continue his or her unusual service for the Lord.

We pray that this project will cause many Christian psychologists to consider creative ways to reach out and provide healing to many hurting people beyond their own offices and classrooms.

Crisis Counseling and Special Projects: Space does not permit us to tell you about all of the projects which we have helped sponsor during the past 12 months. We have received many calls for help, especially from foreign mission organizations. In such cases we contact a dedicated Christian psychologist and usually fund his or her transportation to go to that country to aid in the crisis facing that missionary organization. We have helped to send Christian counselors to Asia, Central Asia, Indonesia, Japan, New Guinea, Cypress, Africa, Mexico, and Canada, and God has blessed.

I trust this brief recap of NCF's activities this past year will encourage your heart and help you understand how *important* your prayers and gifts are in meeting the needs of our hurting Christian brothers and sisters.

Clyde M. Narramore

Pictured below are a few of the gospel quartets who will appear at The Great Western Quartet Convention to be held in Fresno, California, May 7-9 where I have been invited to present a seminar. Do pray that we will be an unusual blessing and a practical help to the large numbers who will attend. —CMN



PSYCHOLOGY FOR LIVING

March-April 1998 Vol. XL No. 2

DEPARTMENTS

- 2 A Personal Word
- 4 From The Editor's Desk
- 4 What People Are Saying
- 14 Making A Difference
- 16 Health Watch
- 16 Living Memorials
- 17 Answers To Your Questions
- 18 Insights And Sharing
- 19 Our World Today

FEATURES



5 RESTORATION THROUGH RECONNECTION

BY LARRY CRABB

Something came out of me that reached the tender part of Kep's soul with healing power.

8 THE FELLOWSHIP OF SUFFERING

BY VINCENT TABER

"... and weep with them that weep"
(Romans 12:15).

10 THE DARKNESS OF DEPRESSION AND THE ROAD TO RECOVERY

BY JUDITH HAYES

Seeking professional help is a sign of your commitment to change and grow.

12 THE RESURRECTION NEWS

BY JACK WILLIAMS

When the stone was moved on the third day, it forever vindicated Job's faith and Jeremiah's tears.

13 TWO EASTER — TAKE YOUR CHOICE!

BY VERNON C. LYONS

The facts may be the same, but our perception of them may vary widely.

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TO THINK ABOUT by Ruth E. Narramore



OUR DAUGHTER AND I were talking on the phone one day when her little boy (our grandson, then about three) started to cry. "What's the matter, Byron?" his mother asked. "I hurt my toe, Mommie. I hurt my toe!"

Looking at it she saw that it was nothing serious. "I'm so sorry, dear," Melodie said soothingly.

"But I hurt my toe," he continued to wail.

"I'm sorry about that, Byron. I'm talking on the phone to Grandma. Here," handing him the phone, "why don't you talk to Grandma?"

Since Byron always enjoys telephone conversations with his grandparents, he took it eagerly. "Grandma," he said, "I hurt my toe."

"Oh, I'm sorry about that!"

"Yes, I hurt my toe,"

"I know it must hurt, Sweetie. Let me kiss it for you." With that I began smacking into the phone.

The next thing I heard was Melodie exclaiming, "Byron! What ARE you doing?" Taking the phone back she told me that

Byron was trying to put his toe into the receiver. I laughed as I explained that I had been "kissing" the offending toe. Interestingly, we heard no more complaints about the hurting toe so my kisses must have done their healing duty.

What we do when we kiss a child's hurts is to offer empathy and emotional support. This is something every human being needs...not only as a child, but all through life.

And this is what Christ needed that night just before His betrayal in the garden grove of Gethsemane. The twelve disciples had just finished eating the Passover meal with Jesus, and He had revealed to them what was shortly to take place. But it was doubtful that they really took it in.

It was a heavy time for Jesus. If ever He needed the love and support of His disciples, it was then. So in the

midst of His anguish and despair, Jesus asked three of His closest friends to go with Him — Peter, James, and John. Going a little further into the garden He asked them

to support Him by staying awake and watching while He prayed. It was a time of agonizing over the horror that would soon be upon Him.

But our Lord's closest earthly companions let Him down. Instead of giving Him the emotional support He asked for, they slept. Even after Christ had awakened them, they were too drowsy to stay alert. So they went back to sleep — not once or twice, but three times. But even in the heaviness of this situation, Jesus was thinking about the well-being of His disciples. Addressing Peter, He said, "Keep alert and pray. Otherwise temptation will overpower you" (Matthew 26:40).

Then His betrayer

arrived...and gave Him, not a kiss of love, but of death. If ever there was a nefarious inside job, this was it. One of His own disciples had turned against Him to do this dastardly deed.

Jesus was taken; He was bruised, beaten, spit upon, cursed, and nailed upon the cruel cross of Calvary. But where were His disciples, His close friends in this, His time of deepest grief and sorrow? They were in hiding, frightened for their own lives. Only John remained near the cross, and he was the last person Christ spoke to before His death. Even God deserted Him (Matthew 27:46), since Christ was the bearer of our sin and God and sin cannot coexist together.

So Christ died alone. ALONE!

But that's not the end. Three days later, Jesus broke the bonds of death, sin was absolved, and Christ arose! And because of His triumph, we never need to be alone for He has promised, "Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:20). □

WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING

I LOOKED IN THE MIRROR

I have been helped so much by listening to *Psychology For Living* on the radio.

It has caused me to look in the mirror to see my own needs and shortcomings so I can do something about them. God bless you.

*Grace Nicoletti
City Island, New York*

BLESSED BY LIVING

I love your magazine, *LIVING*, very much. My husband and I are always blessed read-

ing it from cover to cover.

Please accept our enclosed gift to the ministries. We pray that God will continue to richly bless you.

*Verena Diefenbacher
Crysler, Ontario, CANADA*

HEALED WITH THE HELP OF "HEALTH WATCH"

I had an ear problem which has been troubling me for years. I thank the Lord that through your magazine I found the road to healing. I used the advice suggested in the May/June

'97 "Health Watch." Thank the Lord for your ministry that helps the whole person — physically, emotionally, and spiritually.

*Latu S. Damu
San Francisco, California*

SERVING CHRIST FROM ECUADOR

I am the Operations Director for the English Language Service at HCJB World Radio in Quito. Thank you for the ministry and message of *Psychology For Living*. It is a blessing to be able to partner with you to

reach our world for Jesus Christ!

May many blessings come your way as you continue serving our Lord through The Voice of the Andes.

*Allen Graham
Quito, Ecuador*

LOOKS FORWARD TO MAIL

I look forward to your *LIVING* magazine every time it's due to arrive in the mail. As soon as it comes, I start reading it.

*Mrs. John Van Wyk
Sioux Center, Iowa*



RESTORATION THROUGH RECONNECTION

Something came out of me that reached the tender part of Kep's soul with healing power.

by Larry Crabb

THE CLOCK ON THE BACK wall of the hotel conference room announced it was 9 p.m. exactly. I closed the session in prayer and stepped down from the platform.

It was Thursday evening. The week-long seminar, a day and a half from ending, was going well.

As I left the auditorium, I remember feeling powerful. I was teaching well. The audience was attentive. Several had expressed what God was doing in their hearts through the teaching. I felt good.

Our habit was to grab a light snack in the hotel before turning in. But as my colleague Dan and I reached the elevator, he pressed the button to take us to our floor. "We're not going to the restaurant," Dan announced.

"Why not?" I objected. "I'm hungry. I want to eat."

"I'll tell you why when we get there, but you and I are going to the room." It didn't require much discernment to realize something was wrong.

"Sit down," he instructed a few minutes later. He then took a deep breath and as gently as he could said, "Rachael phoned while you were speaking tonight. Kep has been expelled from Taylor. She wants you to call."

Three short sentences. Knife-thrusts into my heart.

Kep, our older son, twenty, was nearing the end of the first semester of his junior year at Taylor University. Ken, seventeen, was on the same campus as a freshman.

When Kep was born, I gave him to the Lord and vowed to do my part in steering him in good directions, to fill his mind with the truth of God. I prayed

the same prayer two and a half years later when Ken arrived. No parent worked harder to do it right: prayers every night; stories with a Christian point before they went to sleep; Saturdays given over to swim meets; afternoons to basketball games and karate lessons; annual father-son birthday meals (at the restaurant of his choice) when I asked each boy the same 12 questions, recorded his answers, and discussed them at the next year's birthday meal as a way of exploring development; a special thirteenth birthday trip with each son to introduce him to adolescence, complete with illustrated lectures on the birds and bees, return trips to the same fun spot on their twenty-first birthdays to launch them into adulthood.

When our boys were six and eight, I bought an overhead projector for family devotions. (How many dads have done that?) Old Testament survey, New Testament survey, basic theology, book studies — we did it all. Discipline was consistent, including spankings followed by hugs and prayers. *What went wrong? What didn't I do?*

There was no lack of fun times. I once built a stand for Ken to sell a hot dog and lemonade lunch for fifty cents. He made twenty-one dollars. I spent thirty-seven.

When Kep showed the first signs of clear rebellion, I recall screaming at God: "What else do you want me to do? I've done everything I know!"

I also screamed at my wife. We were driving out of the parking lot of the Warsaw Health Food Store on Center Street when Rachael said, "Kep has his SAT exam tomorrow. What do you think he's doing right now in the parking lot outside the basketball game?" I pounded my fist on the dashboard of our car and yelled, "Why can't you let up on him?" She later told me that she felt blamed for all the trouble. Her words: "You made me feel that it was all my fault because I gave birth to him."

I hurt my wife. Deeply. That kind of pain doesn't easily disappear. What words could I say, what deeds could I do that would have the power to soothe that pain, to touch the deepest part of her soul with healing love? How does a husband connect with a wife he has damaged?

During Kep's most difficult years, from fourteen to twenty, I grounded him, prayed for him, prayed with him, took long walks with him, bought him a car that I later sold as punishment. I remember using the well-worn line of frustrated parents: "I will not tolerate this kind of behavior while you are living under my roof."

When he was eighteen I told him that unless he committed himself to living by my standards (which I represented as God's), I would give him one hundred dollars and require him to leave our home.

I told him I loved him, I listened to him when he wanted to talk, I made firm decisions after taking his perspective into account, trying to give latitude wherever I could. I did everything I knew to do. Nothing reached him.

I know of nothing more agonizing than to watch someone you love move in a bad direction while feeling absolutely powerless to do anything about it.

What else could I have done? *What else?*

When he began his third year at Taylor, I purchased a small

home on the outskirts of the campus for Kep to move into with several of his friends. Rachael and I helped clean dirty floors and cabinets, and shopped garage sales for sofas, beds, and desks.

I had such good dreams. My son would get involved in spiritual leadership on campus, the home would be a gathering spot for Bible studies, Kep would meet a wonderful Christian girl, take her to Ivanhoe's for ice cream after bonfire rallies before big games, and graduate with a bright future and a beautiful fiancée.

Maybe I was dreaming the wrong dreams.

But they seemed so right. I knew exactly what my son should become. I had no thought of *releasing* him, I wanted only to *control* him, to reduce him to someone predictable. I had my dreams. I'll never forget the time he turned to me during his last year of high school and said, with fury in every word, "You couldn't bear the thought of your son not going to college."

It was in that off-campus college home that Kep got into real trouble. And now he was expelled.

I called Rachael. I called Kep. I called the airlines. The first flight available was the next afternoon. I lay on my bed, decided to go ahead and present the Friday morning lecture — it was on parenting — and then reflected on what I was facing.

The first of two profoundly strange experiences happened that Thursday night. As I lay on the bed, I was overwhelmed by the phrase, "This is an opportunity." Dan asked how I was feeling. I replied, "Calm. Something's going on that's bigger than I, but I'm a part of it." I didn't cry. I slept well.

The next morning, after giving my lecture (which was difficult), I flew home. Rachael and I held each other and cried. But they were not tears of despair. We sensed this was an opportunity that God intended to seize.

The closeness we felt bridged some of the emotional

There's nothing more agonizing than watching someone you love move in a bad direction while you feel powerless to do anything about it.

gap between us, but there was still much more to do. Healing takes time. It still continues, as it will in all of us till we're "home."

I drove the hour and a half trip to Taylor through Indiana farmland on quiet country roads. God was near as I talked with Him: "Lord, I've done everything I know to do, but I've not reached my son. And I can't reach him now. I don't know how. So I'm asking You to let him see Christ in me. Nothing will change him but a taste of what his heart most deeply wants. He needs to meet You. Give Yourself to him through me, please!"

When I greeted Kep, the second strange experience took place. I wasn't angry! *I really wasn't angry!* I didn't have to control my temper or watch my words. Something from deep within me poured out toward my son through unremarkable words. I simply said, "How can I help?"

I recently discussed the happenings of that time with my younger son. Ken said, "I remember how mad you were when Kep got into trouble in high school. You wouldn't talk to anyone for weeks. That was the hardest thing for me. But I watched the way you handled Kep when he was kicked out of Taylor. It was different. And I felt included."

It was within the next few days that the prodigal came home. And I mean far more than the fact that Kep returned to our house. Here's how Kep expressed it: "I did come back to the Lord, but first I came back to you."

The father who so many times before demanded repentance angrily, manipulatively, self-dependently, now invited repentance. Kep's heart turned away from pleasures that left him empty and turned toward something better, something that didn't merely numb the ache in his soul but actually touched it. He felt the hope that he might know the joy of being wanted, accepted, liked, of having someone believe that he had something to give that could impact others with delight.

That was a turning point in Kep's life. Why? Just as something came out of Jesus to heal the woman with the issue of blood, something came out of me that reached the tender part of Kep's soul with healing power. Could that really be true? If so, what was it?

For years I had been so powerless. Why? Was it God's sovereign plan to reach my son? Of course. Had I learned the secret of releasing power earlier, would our family have been spared the heartache of rebellion? I don't know.

But one thing I do know: A power was released

through me that had never been as fully released before.

Could it happen in your relationships? What would it take to release the power God has placed in your heart toward just one other person in your life? Perhaps a distant, cold wife that you've not been able to reach? Maybe a neglecting husband who thinks he's loving you well and hasn't a clue that your heart is

aching for something more, something different. It might be a son or daughter who has trouble making friends, a teenager who won't communicate, an adult child who has sealed her heart so you cannot touch it. Or it could be a friend, a person you know who is struggling.

Releasing the power of God

through our lives into the hearts and souls of others requires that we both *understand* and *enter into* a kind of relating that only the gospel makes possible, a kind of relating I call *connecting*. This kind of relating depends entirely on deep fellowship with Christ and then spills over onto other people with the power to change their lives, not always on our timetable or in the ways we expect, but as the sovereign Spirit moves.

The story I've told about Kep happened in 1988. The work God began in his heart during those difficult days has continued. He is married to the woman we've prayed for since the day he was born, a beautiful godly young lady who is everything we hoped for and more. He works hard; he wants God's will for his life; he is involved in an excellent church. The miracle of the New Covenant has taken place: his heart is inclined toward God.

Only two things, have ever changed the human soul: the *fall* and *grace*, the power of Satan and the power of God. And God is infinitely more powerful. Nothing is stronger than grace. Satan doesn't have any. God is defined by it.

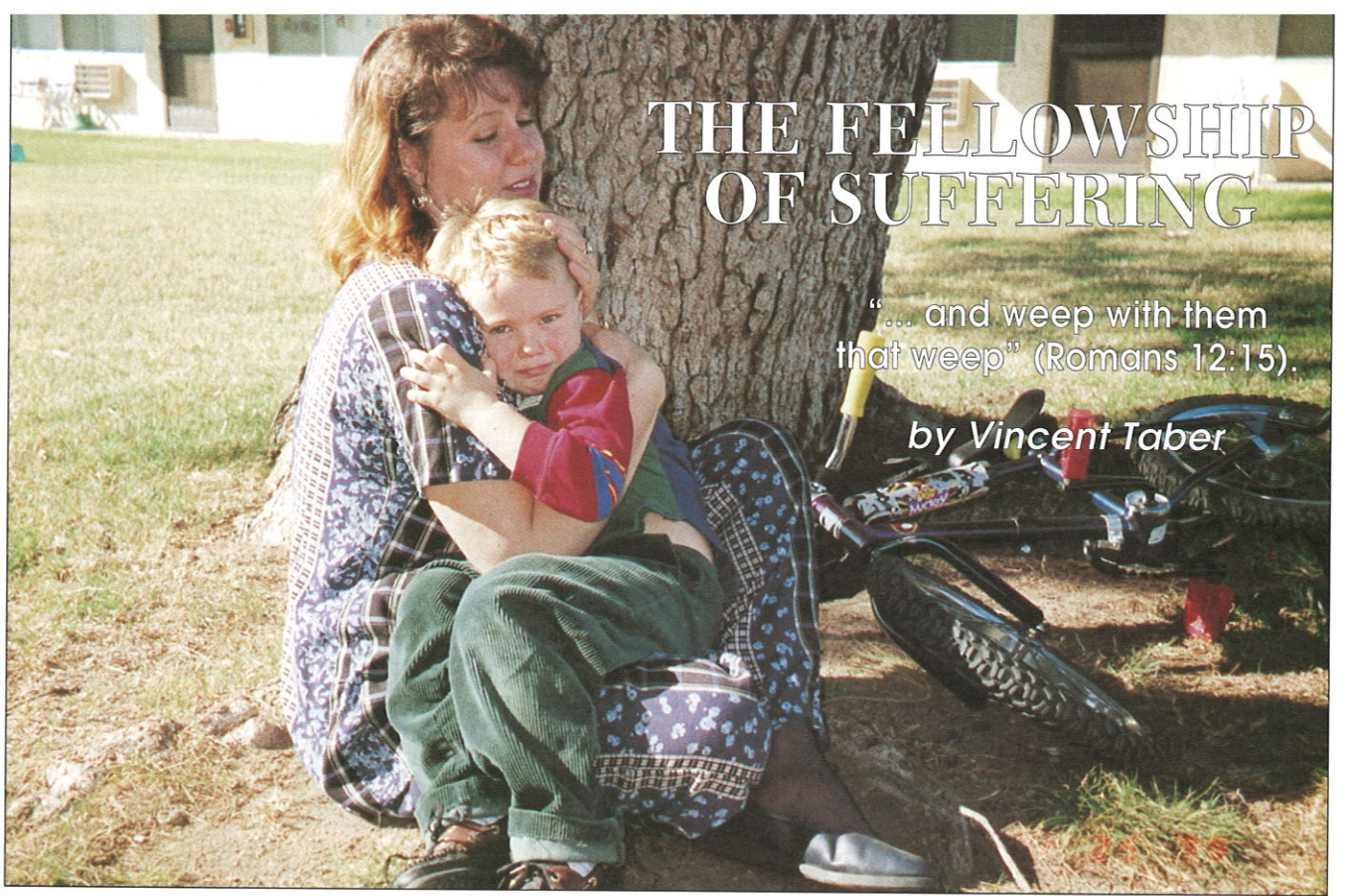
Kep's life was changed. So was Ken's. Mine was too. And Rachael's. But so much more change is needed.

There is a power within the life of every Christian waiting to be released, a power that could help someone connect more intimately to the heart of Christ.

We haven't yet dreamed big enough dreams of what we could mean to one another. Maybe it's time. □

Releasing the power of
God through our lives
into the hearts of oth-
ers requires a kind of
relating that only
Christ makes possible.

Larry Crabb, Ph.D., has been a licensed psychotherapist for over 25 years. He is currently professor of graduate biblical counseling at Colorado Christian University. The above article is excerpted from his latest book, *CONNECTING*, published by Word Publishing, ©1997. All rights reserved. Dr. Crabb and his wife live in the Denver, Colorado, area.



THE FELLOWSHIP OF SUFFERING

“... and weep with them that weep” (Romans 12:15).

by Vincent Taber

THE TINY GIRL RUNS TO HER PARENTS. She is screaming and in tears. A yellow jacket has stung her on the ankle and she is writhing in pain. She runs to her parents because she doesn't quite know what to do with what she is feeling and somehow, she knows that they will help make the pain go away.

The little boy has just tumbled off his bicycle. He looks through the tear in his jeans and is frightened by what he sees. Pain now joins his fear as he runs toward home and the comfort he knows awaits him there.

Strange, isn't it, that the simple words, “Let me kiss it and make it better” seem to suffice when seconds before it sounded as if catastrophe had broken loose.

For each of these children there is something special happening in this moment that is much larger than the event itself. What is it? Are they merely responding out of a learned behavior?

No! There is a powerful transaction taking place between parent and child that is working at a much deeper level than a stinging ankle or a skinned knee. There is a partnership in pain, a fellowship of suffering taking place that has the power to soothe and heal the wounding of the soul.

These two children are very young — perhaps three or four years of age, but this is not the first experience they have had with pain, nor will it be the last. They, of course, don't know this at the time, nor should they. It would not be possible at their young age to comprehend the larger significance of the circumstance at hand. Yet, the very present and available safe place to which they run is building into their lives an experience out of which is forged a foundational truth. It will be essential for them to possess this truth if they are to deal with the harsh realities of a world that stands ready to inflict its cruel ways upon them, bring-

ing even deeper injury to the soul.

Think of the great disadvantage children suffer in facing life when the safe place to bring their pain does not exist for them.

One friend told me that after falling off his bicycle as a child, he was terrified to return home because the incident happened in a place he had been forbidden to ride. His fear was not unfounded as, sure to form, his father greeted him with the words, “You got what you deserved,” and then hit him with a strap and sent him to his room.

Sadly, this is the experience of too many among us. Children who have been cheated in this way often end up in their adult years obsessing over their pain, always sharing but never quite trusting the offer of a truly caring heart, or they go to the opposite extreme developing a hardness toward their pain that denies them the privilege of fellowship in their own and another person's suffering.

There are others who, in spite of this deprivation, rise above the circumstances of their personal history. They have learned to enter into what I choose to call a partnership of pain and a fellowship of suffering. And they refuse to be caught in a victim mentality that would otherwise keep them from this healing balm.

I have asked many people if they feel that as they grow older, their need for a safe place to share their pain diminishes. No one has denied the need — in fact, most have said they feel the need increases. But when I have asked, “Where do you find that safe place as an adult?” most say, “We haven't found it yet.”

I am aware that this response is an initial reaction that will moderate itself upon reflection. Thankfully, we have periodically found someone who *does* care and who has been genuinely interested in our pain, has taken the time to understand it and found a way to ease its heavy weight

within us. Hopefully, we have *been* that safe place for someone else we care about and love. But we should not dismiss our basic reaction without reflection as to why it emerged as our initial response.

I believe it is born out of a longing deep within the soul to find or recapture the healing virtue of that powerful transaction experienced between parent and child in the safe embrace of each other's arms. We long to experience and recover this partnership of pain and fellowship of suffering that contains and confers a meaning that is larger than itself.

Injury, and the pain that accompanies it, brings a multiplicity of thoughts and emotions into play. The stinging ankle and skinned knee are the least of what is happening to the child. These are outward, visible wounds that heal very quickly. Inwardly, however, where thoughts and emotions remain out of sight, there is the possibility for embarrassment, shame, guilt, disapproval, punishment, fear, failure, and a host of other arrows capable of piercing and wounding the innermost self.

And the truth forged in that mutual, respectful embrace of parent and child in the moment of crisis is a truth God wants us to experience in our relationship with Him. He longs for us to have that deep longing within our soul met in the warm, mutual, and respectful embrace between Heavenly Father and child.

Not every embrace is healing or redemptive. God does not coddle, pamper, smother, abuse, or patronize us with His embrace. When He embraces us in our pain, He does so with deep respect and integrity for who we are. His embrace is affirming, reassuring, non-judgmental, and with understanding. For this reason, when we allow God to embrace us in our pain His embrace has such healing virtue.

Furthermore, in order for an embrace to be truly transactional, it must be reciprocal. When the child runs into the safety of a parent's arms, the hug is mutual. The parent embraces the child and the child embraces the parent. Parents feel the child's pain as though it were their own, and in an inexplicable way, it is their own. A child experiences the power of this transaction without understanding it. As adults, we are able to understand how our own pain is an invitation to identify with someone else's pain, thus making it a true partnership, a genuine fellowship. It is in this partnership and fellowship that knowing is experienced and intimacy is fostered. When we allow God to embrace us in our pain, He welcomes our embrace in return. God hurts for us takes on our pain as His own. It is in this mutual embrace between God and ourselves that we are able to experience God in a closeness that can come to us in no other way.

For example, when someone turns his or her back on us and walks away from a relationship we have valued, our heart aches with pain. We feel rejected, devalued, powerless, abandoned, and maligned. And then we

remember the many experiences of our great High Priest when He lived here on earth.

"He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces He was despised, and we esteemed Him not" (Isaiah 53:3 NIV).

**When God embraces us
in our pain, He does so
with deep respect and
integrity for who we are.**

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing" (Luke 13:34 NIV).

As we identify with Christ in His suffering, we come to know Christ and love Him in

a deeper way. The Apostle Paul expressed this as his own desire: "I want to know Him, and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in His sufferings..." (Philippians 3:10 NIV).

A young man talked with me recently about the frustration he was feeling when dealing with the indifference he encountered in his ministry. He was fearful that if this attitude persisted, it would influence his motivation and hinder his work for the Lord. We talked about the frequent and similar experiences Jesus encountered in His ministry, visualizing moments in His life as they may actually have happened. As we were considering a particular moment in the life of Jesus where indifference was rampant, my young friend looked at the empty chair beside him as though Christ was sitting there; then with an understanding gesture of his hands and a shrug of his shoulders, he said, "You, too!" Something significant happened in the fellowship of suffering that released him from his fear and restored his will to press on toward the goals he had set for his ministry. In saying "You, too!" he had experienced the powerful transaction of that warm, respectful, mutual embrace between the God of Heaven and himself.

There *is* a safe place to take our pain.

"Therefore, since we have a great High Priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we do not have a High Priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are, yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in time of need" (Hebrews 4:14-16 NIV).

We need to *be* that safe place for each other, and especially for the countless children who, because of their life circumstances, are unaware that such a place exists. We are best able to express the mind and heart of God when we recapture, and then share the healing virtue of that powerful transaction experienced between parent and child—the safe embrace of each other's arms. □

Dr. Vincent Taber is Director of the Southern Connecticut Christian Counseling Center, Inc. of Fairfield, Connecticut.

THE DARKNESS OF DEPRESSION AND THE ROAD TO RECOVERY

Seeking professional help is a sign of your commitment to change and grow.

by Judith Hayes

THERE I SAT IN A POPULAR COFFEE shop, feeling depressed and a bit embarrassed that I was feeling sorry for myself. I had a lunch date with a lovely older woman from my church. I was hoping to find an empathic listening ear and a quick remedy for my chronic feelings of sadness, discouragement, and hopelessness. Even before I left home that day I kept asking myself, *Can a truly born-again Christian be so depressed?*

After all, I'm supposed to be a "new creature" in Christ. Those thoughts and self-doubts haunted me as I drove to the restaurant.

My attractive lady friend sat across from me — the vision of maturity and confidence. I felt fat, bloated, menopausal, and despondent. While I sipped on a cup of tea fearing to ingest more calories, my older friend freely ate a piece of chocolate cream pie. I hung onto every word she said. She was kind and wanted to empathize — and yet I felt alone and frustrated. She tried to give what she felt was good advice, but her words rang shallow and void. My polite friend was far beyond the middle-aged, menopausal, empty-nest years of her life.

With the best of intentions, she suggested I do the following: (1) lose weight, (2) exercise more, (3) be more positive, (4) serve others in need at church, (5) eat better foods, (6) take hormones, (7) get prayed for, (8) read my Bible more, (9) pray more myself, and (10) snap out of it!

As she shared her suggestions and remedies, I felt my heart sinking deeper into my chest and a wave of nausea flowed over me. I didn't *want* another magical list of do's and don'ts. For years I had tried many things on the list. Some of those remedies brought temporary relief, but none brought a cure.

As I look back on my life, I'm not sure



when or how my struggle with mood swings and depression began. It wasn't like the start of a migraine or a bad stomach-ache. I do know it was a subtle and gradual emotional descent. Sometimes it felt like an eternally gloomy day, even when the sun was shining. Other times it felt like a heavy weight on my chest that I couldn't roll away.

All I knew was that I felt helpless and overwhelmed by my melancholy moods, and I had to wait for them to pass to feel relief. Even food seemed to change during those periods of depression. Either it tasted bland and flavorless, or I craved foods like chocolate, sugar, and salty foods to temporarily comfort me. My sleeping habits also changed during these bouts. Sleep became either a compulsive escape from reality, or an elusive consolation.

Depression is a difficult topic for many people to discuss openly and honestly. Even though we are living in a time when it is acceptable to discuss almost any personal issue, society in general (and many Christians in particular) hesitate to admit their own experiences and struggles with emotional illness.

If you are acquainted with some of the feelings and symptoms I've described, then you are familiar with the plight of depression. But it's not hopeless, nor is it the end!

How can we tell the difference

between clinical depression, or a bad mood, or a sad day? Let's look at some of the symptoms of depression, both physical and emotional: (1) Apathy/not interested in doing anything, (2) diminished interest in even pleasant activities such as eating, hobbies, or sex, (3) significant weight loss or gain without dieting, (4) sleep disturbances — either insomnia or oversleeping, (5) agitation, (6) fatigue/loss of energy in spite of sufficient sleep, (7)

feelings of worthlessness and excessive guilt, (8) indecisive/inability to think, (9) feelings of hopelessness and isolation, and (10) recurring thoughts of death or suicide. If you are experiencing a number of these symptoms on a daily basis or on a recurring cyclical basis, you may be suffering from clinical depression, as I was.

My journey towards healing has been long and at times, very painful. How could I admit to Christian friends that I felt so hopeless and sad I wanted to die? How could I tell my family who had always seen me as a strong survivor, that I felt so tired and emotionally paralyzed, I no longer wanted to cook, go to church, clean my house, or even get dressed each day? I had been trying to do it all, be it all, take care of everyone, and be "Superwoman."

Nevertheless, my emotional symptoms began to take more and more control of my life. I agonized silently over my depressed state. I worried that I harbored some unknown sin in my heart, or just didn't love God enough!

My solution was to run to the mature spiritual leaders at our church for prayer. With caring hearts they prayed for me, and I departed hoping that I was finally cured. But within days my symptoms returned and my anxiety level heightened. I felt like no one understood or seemed to care. Some days I wanted to run away and be anonymous.

But what I really needed was someone to tell me that help was available.

I finally learned that I didn't have to be ashamed to reach out and talk about depression or ask for professional help. I knew that the "truth" would finally set me free, so I pressed through my pride and fear.

What I did next made an immense difference in my mental and emotional health, relationships, and even my walk with God. My husband and I prayed for wisdom and made an appointment to see a psychologist. At least in the privacy and safety of my psychologist's office, I could share my volatile mood swings, outbursts of rage, frequent periods of deep, unexplainable sadness and crying spells. I could be real and transparent, not fearing judgment, rejection, or abandonment. My knowledgeable psychologist identified the symptoms and suggested I see a medical psychiatrist to evaluate the medications I was taking.

I didn't want to see a psychiatrist! I heard that only truly crazy people had to go for that kind of help. But I went. The psychiatrist agreed that I was suffering from a combination of anxiety and depression, which he believed was caused by an inherited chemical imbalance. He prescribed an appropriate anti-depressant, and immediately took me off the allergy pills I had been taking which could cause manic episodes when mixed with other drugs.

As I continued researching the subject of depression, I discovered that many women suffer from clinical depression for two reasons:

1) We feel we must *do it all* to be a successful wife/mother/employee/friend/and even Christian. We do not know how to say "no" and to rest.

2) We suffer from a modern state of isolation from other women as daily companions and confidants. Because so many women are in the workplace and also raising families, it leaves little time for female friendship and fun recreations such as cooking or baking together, shopping, chatting, or even praying together. Women also have a natural tendency to ruminate and worry about the problems and frustrations of life. In contrast, most men are "solution-oriented." They see a problem and go into problem-solving action. They skip over the worry and guilt that tend to affect many women.

Yet, those suffering from depression

— both men and women —often have real concerns about seeking professional help. The following are some obstacles that these people must overcome:

1) **What will people think?** Even though times have changed and the stigma of obtaining help from mental health professionals has lessened, it can still cause anxiety for many people. PLEASE remember that it's not a shameful secret! You're not crazy for seeking the guidance and assistance of a trained professional. If you are truly concerned about what your friends or family members will think, don't tell them! Why deny yourself a valuable source of help because you fear the opinions of others? Seeking professional help is a sign of your commitment to change and grow!

2) **It's too humiliating to talk about my private problems.** Know that it is normal to feel uneasy about discussing intimate details of your life, but the right therapist should make you feel comfortable and you won't feel embarrassed for long. You will develop mutual respect.

A therapist has a unique advantage over your close friends and family members. He/she can provide an "objective perspective." But you must determine to be as open, real, and transparent as you can. Your counselor will not be shocked or betray or reject you.

3) **How can I be sure I'll be helped?** First of all, give yourself a fair chance! Studies show that it takes 30 days for a human being to change a habit, so give therapy at least 30 days (four weekly visits). Although therapy can be emotionally painful as you face your feelings, issues, and conflicts that have caused your problems, be brave and hang in there. The pain will pass.

The outcome of therapy is not only the result of a competent empathic therapist, it also depends on your attitudes, motivation, and willingness to change. Change can be frightening, but it will take your cooperation and hard work to grow through your pain toward positive change.

For those who are unfamiliar with the variety of therapists, counselors, and mental health professionals, let's discuss the options:

Psychologist— These are therapists who have earned doctoral level degrees (Ph.D. or Psy.D.). They have taken from four to six years of graduate studies and several more years in supervised clinical

training. They must also pass an exam for special licensing in order to practice. A psychologist may be a good choice for treatment of emotional problems like depression.

Psychiatrist— These are medical doctors trained and specializing in the treatment of mental and emotional illnesses. They can also prescribe appropriate medications such as anti-depressants.

Licensed Marriage/Family/Child Counselor— These counselors have at least a master's degree in clinical counseling/psychology. They also have two years of graduate level training. In California they must also have had 3,000 hours of supervised clinical experience with patients before taking the rigorous licensing exam.

If at all possible find a therapist/counselor who is a born-again Christian.* A few years ago they were scarce, but now there are many throughout the nation. Be sure, however, to choose someone who fits one of these professional categories, and is licensed! Theoretically, anyone may call himself a counselor or psychotherapist, which is a legally unprotected title.

Remember that *change takes time* and occurs most often in small, gradual steps. Try not to sabotage your own therapy. Be honest, even if your therapist doesn't always agree with you. Don't blame others in your past or present for your problems. Face them with your counselor's guidance. Give therapy a fair chance to work!

As a Christian, I am not minimizing the amazing power of prayer! I also believe in God's miraculous ability to heal. But I've learned during my journey toward healing that my spiritual life does not preclude the fact that I am a vulnerable, fragile human being. I am body/soul/spirit, and God loves and cares about all facets of my complex being. Now I know that when my soul is ailing, God can lead me to seek out the proper care and healing. □

* The Narramore Christian Foundation maintains a referral service that can provide you with the name of a Christian psychologist or licensed counselor in or near your area. Phone 1-626-821-8400.

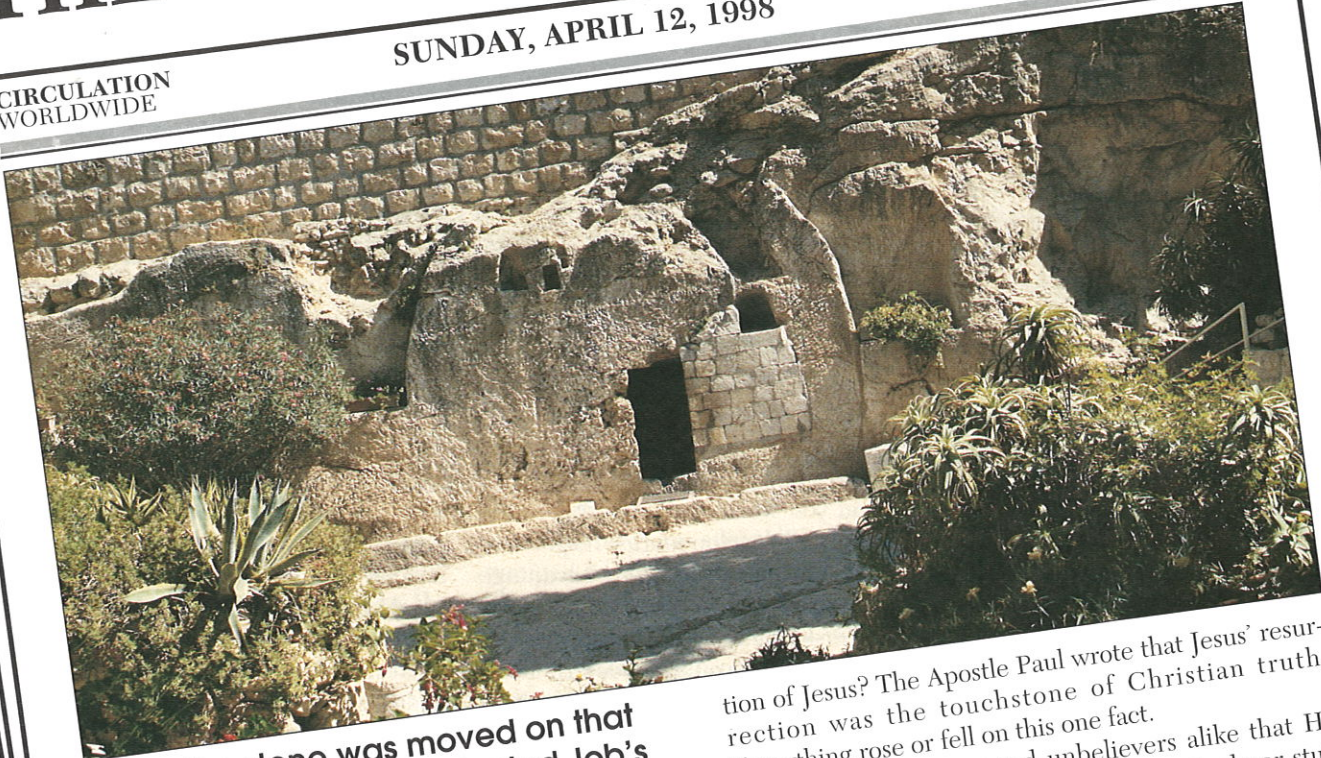
Judith Hayes is a free-lance writer with many published articles. She lives in Chatsworth, California.

THE RESURRECTION NEWS

FREE

SUNDAY, APRIL 12, 1998

CIRCULATION
WORLDWIDE



When the stone was moved on that third day, it forever vindicated Job's faith and Jeremiah's tears.

by Jack Williams

THE BAD NEWS CAME FRIDAY when Roman soldiers rolled a large stone to seal Jesus' tomb. The good news came Sunday when behind the stone the living Rock of Ages stirred. With a shrug of His shoulders on the third day, Jesus divided time, crushed the tempter, and led captivity captive. He was alive!

Before dawn that Sunday, those who had died in faith from Adam to the repentant thief just hours earlier, moved en masse with Jesus from Paradise to Heaven. It was the greatest exodus ever seen by man.

The long line stretching from Eden to Noah's flood through Babylon and the flashing swords of Rome, stepped upward — the heroes of faith along with the anonymous faithful known only to God. When the stone was moved on that third day, it forever vindicated Job's faith and Jeremiah's tears.

This was the Great Gettin' Up Morning seen dimly by prophets and poets, the promise that allowed generations to die in faith, trusting in the unseen hand of God. It was resurrection day.

Just how important is the literal, physical resurrec-

tion of Jesus? The Apostle Paul wrote that Jesus' resurrection was the touchstone of Christian truth. Everything rose or fell on this one fact.

Jesus told believers and unbelievers alike that He would rise from the dead. He never flinched nor stut-tered when saying it. He wagered the truth of all He taught on this one great act — He must literally rise from the dead.

It was the resurrection of Jesus that His enemies feared most (Matthew 27:63-64). The first lie told after the resurrection was that it never happened and that His disciples stole the body away: it was a desperate lie by desperate men. Early that Sunday, money changed hands and the lie rewrote history for some (Matthew 28:12-15).

But within days, hundreds, then tens of thousands believed the resurrection truth. Terrified disciples stepped from hiding to preach fearlessly. Resurrection power opened jail doors in Jerusalem, started churches in Antioch, sent missionaries to Asia Minor, and ultimately conquered the mighty Roman Empire.

The issue was a simple one, really. If Jesus did not rise from the dead, Christianity could be relegated to the scrapheap of man-made religions.

But the Christians sang a new song. They preached a new message. God had come down to earth as a man. He had lived among us, walked with us, talked to us,

died for us, and rose from the dead to save us. There had never been a message like that.

After Jesus' resurrection, nothing was ever the same again. Not in Israel, not in Rome, not in all of creation.

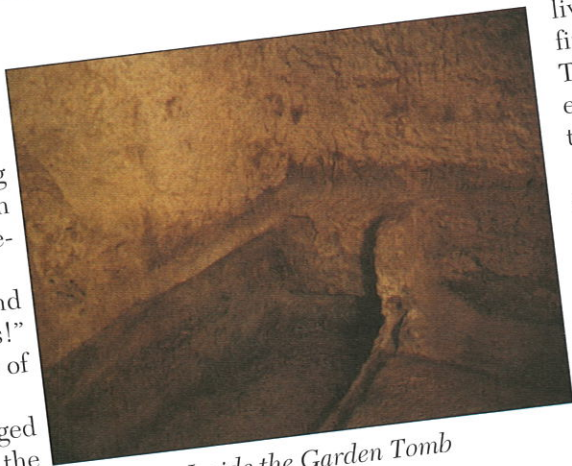
"He Arose!" Christians sing, and cynics shudder. "He Lives!" Christians preach, and the powers of darkness retreat.

Critics cannot explain the changed lives, the different attitudes, or the salvaged homes. They rush to press with books to disprove the resurrection. They hoot at faith to embarrass believers. But every Sunday morning, a hundred million voices across America lift as one, "He Lives!" and the agnostic has nowhere to run.

Fanatics may twist the truth. Enemies may ridicule it. The unconcerned may ignore it. But rising above it all, the resurrection shouts hope from every church door; it reverberates in every hymn; it rolls across the nation like the sunrise.

We are a people inexorably tied to the resurrection. America has many agendas today, but the original purpose that called men to these shores was the freedom to worship. They came to the New World because of the resurrection truth.

The resurrection is as fresh and new and powerful today as it was that Sunday when Mary wept outside the tomb. Their



Inside the Garden Tomb

lives were no more changed that first day than ours can be this day. They finally stopped trying to explain the resurrection and began to live in its power. So can we.

There is one Name above all others, and there is one truth that shines brighter than the rest. That truth is the resurrection of Jesus.

Without the resurrection, there is no Great Commission. Without the resurrection, there is no Upper Room power. Without the resurrection, there is no Ascension, and there can be no Second Coming to

right the wrongs of history.

Jesus said of Himself, "I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore. . . and have the keys of hell and death" (Revelation 1:18). No one tried to debate that point with Him.

Perhaps the greatest truth of all, as far as we are concerned, is that the resurrection is more than a doctrine; it is a Person. Jesus said, "I am the resurrection. . ." (John 11:25).

That's not bad news; that's good news. That's the resurrection news! □

Jack Williams is editor of CONTACT, the official magazine of the National Association of Free Will Baptists in Antioch, Tennessee.

TWO EASTER — TAKE YOUR CHOICE!

The facts may be the same, but our perception of them may vary widely.

by Vernon C. Lyons

IT IS INTERESTING how two people can look at the same event and come up with two different conclusions. It is all a matter of perspective, or as I often put it, "Everyone looks at the world through his own knothole."

The facts may be the same, but our perception of those facts may widely vary. On that first Easter morning, there was only one set of facts: the Savior arose, the stone was rolled away, and the tomb was empty.

Perspective — The soldiers who guarded the tomb had their own perspective on what had taken place. There were those who thought that the disciples would

come and steal Christ's corpse (Matthew 27:64), so they went to Pilate who said, "Take a guard, go make the tomb as secure as you know how" (Matthew 27:65). They "made the tomb secure by putting a seal upon the stone and posting the guard." The only witnesses in the whole world of the actual bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ were those soldiers who guarded the tomb. They were real humanists. They thought they could control the situation because they believed there could be no supernatural intervention.

Then came the earthquake and the angel from heaven who rolled back the stone and sat on it. We read that the

guards were so afraid of Him, "they shook and became like dead men" (Matthew 28:4). They were terrorized.

The other group that came to the same tomb were not strong soldiers but women (Matthew 28:5-8). They were told not to be afraid and invited to inspect the empty tomb.

They were presented with the same set of facts and yet, instead of being fearful they were "filled with joy" (Matthew 28:8) as they ran to tell the disciples.

The same facts! A tragedy for the guards but triumph for the women. Terror for the guards but joy for the

(Continued on p. 15)

by Kevin Narramore

THE PERSECUTED CHURCH

—Responding to the S.O.S.—
**Do We Really Understand that
 Thousands of Christians Will Be
 Killed or Imprisoned This Year?**

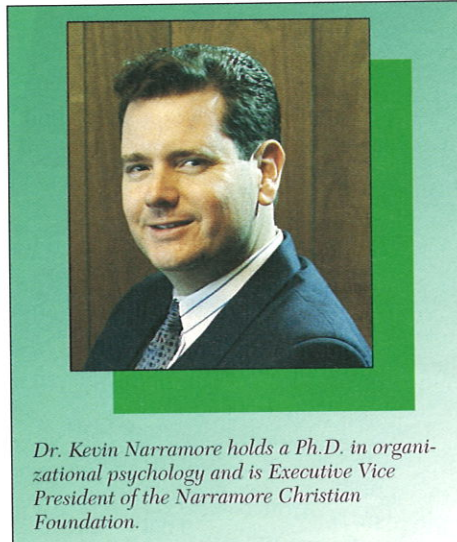
I'M NOT GOING TO RECITE a string of heart-wrenching stories about Christian families who are being attacked, torn apart, imprisoned, sexually assaulted, or even sold into slavery. If you heard about last September's International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Christian Church, then you know the Christian community is no longer unaware or silent. Yet, many believers still don't realize the magnitude of the world-wide attack on Christians today, or what they can do about it.

A Brief Review of 1997:

Eastern Europe: The Russian government has passed a new law revoking almost all rights of religious groups that had been in Russia for less than 15 years. Macedonia proposed a similar law. In Bulgaria, certain Protestant churches face revocation of their legal recognition if they continue to evangelize. Various factions within the former Yugoslavia are responsible for religiously motivated genocide of Bosnia Orthodox Christians. In Uzbekistan, authorities have confiscated 25,000 copies of the New Testament in the Uzbek translation. There, a Baptist teacher charged with conducting illegal church services faces a possible three-year prison term.

Middle East: In Saudi Arabia, conversion to Christianity is a crime punishable by death. In Pakistan, so-called blasphemy laws regulating religion have been used to harass, intimidate, and punish Christians. More than 500 blasphemy cases are currently pending in Pakistani courts—many involving Christians. One young believer, Anwar Mosih, has been jailed for five years on false charges of blasphemy against Mohammed. Other Christians accused of blasphemy have been murdered by angry mobs.

Professing Christians can lose their property, be fined, imprisoned, or exiled. In Iran, Christians have faced widespread



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persecution including death sentences and unexplained murders of Christian leaders. In Istanbul, a grenade was thrown into the courtyard of an orthodox church—the third attack in four years.

Africa: Sudan's Islamic influenced "holy war" of extermination against Christians has included state-sponsored kidnapping, enslavement of southerners, and denial of permits for church-building in Khartoum. In Nigeria, the group "Islam in Africa" threatens to harm or kill Christians that don't leave the Muslim regions of that country. In Egypt, congregations have been required to secure presidential permission prior to constructing or repairing churches. Coptic Christians in southern Egypt continue to be targeted by armed Islamic militants.

East Asia: In China, Protestants are being forced to register with state-sanctioned religious bodies or face dissolution. Members of the Christian underground "house churches" face harassment, surveillance, and detention because of the Communist intolerance of "feudal superstition." Three Chinese "house church" leaders received prison sentences totaling six and a half years last October 30th. In Indonesia, a Catholic priest was tried by Muslim leaders on charges of harboring student radicals.

Latin America: In Cuba, a leader of an independent Christian organization was sentenced by the government to four

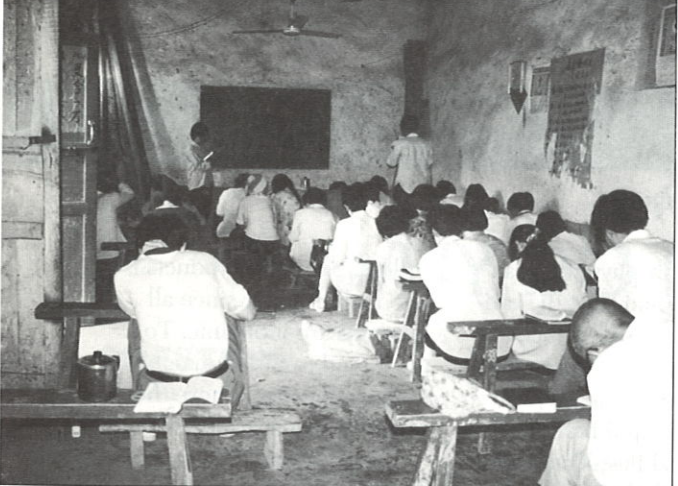
years in prison because of his attempt to obtain legal status for his ministry. Numerous American missionaries have been killed or kidnapped in Columbia and Panama. In Mexico, four evangelicals — three teenagers and a middle-aged woman — were killed and their bodies chopped into pieces in Aurora Chica of Mexico's Chiapas state. Authorities believe that "traditional" religious authorities were behind the attack.

Why are so many Christians suffering for the cause of Christ — particularly in Africa, the Middle East, Central and South Asia? Over the past few decades, the greatest number of new followers of Christ are not in the Western world but in the "third world" where non-democratic regimes are often controlled by a rigid, clerical class.

For example, the last thousand years of world history (from the Crusades to the Gulf War) are a reminder of the ongoing conflict that the world's second largest religion, Islam, has with Christianity and the Western world.

Today the Islamic population of the world is over one billion and expanding, especially in Africa. Devotion is incredibly intense from daily prayer to pilgrimages to Mecca, the holiest city of Islam. While many Islamic countries are developing modern economies, most have not adopted Western-style democratic institutions which uphold the freedom of speech and religion which are a part of basic Judeo-Christian values.

A few years ago Dr. Sam Huntington wrote a fascinating article in the magazine, *Foreign Affairs*, called "The Clash of Civilizations." Dr. Huntington made the argument that in the aftermath of the cold war, the underlying root of most global conflicts will be more cultural than political. The Muslim world, for example, extends all the way from Central Asia to Sudan to Indonesia, subsuming several different countries with different politics but common cultural-religious roots. Islamic extremists, who find their greatest support among those living in areas of poverty and despair, are very angry with



Underground church in Asia.

Martyrs is a non-profit missionary organization working with persecuted churches in more than 50 countries. They provide practical assistance to oppressed Christians, and inform Christians in the West about ongoing persecution. Contact Tom White or Steve Cleary at 918/337-8015. *Open Doors* is an international, evangelical ministry founded in 1955 by Brother Andrew to help persecuted Christians around the

world. Contact Mike Yoder at 714/752-6600.

A Theology of Suffering? It's not only the missionaries serving in Morocco, but anyone who wants to live a godly life will be persecuted. Philippians 1:29 tells us, "It has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for Him" (NIV).

The reality of suffering, however, is balanced with the promise of rewards for those who face persecution: "Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love Him."

James 1:2-4 explains how suffering can lead to spiritual maturity. We are comforted in II Thessalonians 1:5-7 in that when Christ returns, God's justice will be fully realized.

In the meantime, let us remember our persecuted brothers and sisters in other lands just as though we ourselves were suffering. Hebrews 13:3 reminds us to "remember those in prison as if you were their fellow prisoners, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering" (NIV).

Then, as your awareness of Christian persecution increases so that you become an informed citizen of the world, remember what Ephesians 6:12-18 says about the true enemy: "For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand... and pray in the spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all saints"(NIV). □

Two Easters

(Continued from p. 13)

women. Yes, there are two Easters, or at least two ways of looking at it, and you can take your choice.

Program — Just as perspective determines how you see something, the program determines how you live. No sooner are the women on their way to see the disciples than "some of the guards went into the city and reported to the chief priests everything that had happened" (Matthew 28:11). Then the chief priests and the elders devised a plan which included bribing the soldiers to tell that "His disciples came during the night and stole Him away while we were asleep" (Matthew 28:12, 13).

The Chief Priests, the elders of the Jews, and the soldiers all knew the facts. They knew Christ was raised from the dead. It was, "We know it is true but we choose to act contrary to the facts." They deliberately chose to lie. Deception became the program for these unbelievers as they spread a message not founded in fact.

Contrary to this, the disciples (Matthew 28:16-20), in spite of their doubts, accepted the resurrection as solid fact and built their lives on the truth. In fact, most of them gave their lives in spreading the message of the risen Redeemer to the inhabited world.

Nothing has changed. Everybody has the same Bible which tells of the same Jesus who was virgin-born, sinless, died on the cross to save us, rose from the dead, ascended into Heaven, and is coming again.

Amazingly, a majority of people would rather believe a lie and program their lives contrary to the facts. A minority accept the facts, trust Jesus Christ as Savior, and put their lives at His feet for willing, joyful service.

Yes, there are two Easters. You can take the historical facts and run them through your own sieve and come up with anything you want and live accordingly. Or you can accept the truth as set forth in Scripture and spend the rest of your days here and all eternity in Heaven rejoicing in your risen Redeemer. □

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.

by Eva Hallam Solberg

ALUMINUM AND PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

Don't take an antacid that contains aluminum if you are taking any prescription drug without first consulting your doctor or other health-care provider. The labels on such antacids warn about possible drug interactions — notably reduced absorption of the prescription medication.

(University of California Berkeley Wellness Letter)

FOCUS ON ANXIETY

Results of National Institute of Mental Health focus groups have found that people with anxiety report:

- ✓ Suffering for years before seeking help.
- ✓ Knowing the behaviors or anxieties they experienced were different from those of others.

✓ Seeing a number of medical and mental health professionals before receiving a correct diagnosis.

✓ The best thing about receiving a diagnosis was the relief of knowing they were not "crazy."

✓ The best benefit of treatment was "getting one's life back."

✓ The worst thing about undiagnosed anxiety disorders was the inability to do what one wanted to do in life.

"There is more than one path to an anxiety disorder, including genetics, an immunological reaction, or a traumatic experience," says Dr. Steven Hyman, director of the National Institute of Mental Health. Each is amenable to treatment — usually some combination of medication and behavior-modification therapy.

Most family physicians can now identify and treat the various anxiety disorders (such as Generalized Anxiety Disorder, Panic Disorder, Phobias, Obsessive-compulsive Disorder, and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder), or make a referral to the appropriate mental health professional.

(Health After 50)

OUR SOIL DEPLETED OF MINERALS?

The idea that American soil has been ruined for growing food is a figment of the imagination. According to the director of the Cornell (University) Nutrient Analysis Lab, improved farming methods and fertilizers have made our soil richer than ever. The claim that fertilizers contain synthetic minerals as opposed to the "organic" ones found in

colloidal mineral products is also meaningless, since all minerals are inorganic. To a plant, and to the human body, it doesn't matter where the minerals come from.

Plants just won't grow in depleted soil. Vitamins in foods are created by the plants themselves. Minerals — such as phosphorus, potassium, iodine, calcium, copper, iron, selenium, fluoride, molybdenum, and zinc — must come from the soil. If the soil lacks any of these, fertilizers compensate. Climate, weather, amount of sunlight, and other factors also affect overall nutritive value. But if the fruits and vegetables you buy look healthy, you can be certain they contain the nutrients they should.

(University of California Berkeley Wellness Letter)



Living Memorials

My Gift of Love



TO HONOR THE MEMORY OF: PRESENTED BY:

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Bill and Zola Day
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Mary Tell
Martha Trabue

Joyce A. Gann
Peggy and Bill Johnson
Clyde and Ruth Narramore
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(Gifts received after January 29, 1998, will appear in the May/June 1998 issue of PSYCHOLOGY FOR LIVING.)

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COMING NEXT ISSUE

*Prayer For
A Childless Mother

*Grandma's Music

* Please Come Home

* Play Weddings

* Working Through
The Past

* Fathering:
Commitment to Being
A Spiritual Leader

by Clyde M. Narramore

WHY DO I BLAME MYSELF?

QUESTION:

Why do I continually blame myself when anything goes wrong? Whenever I make even a little mistake, I get upset and tell myself that I'm dumb and stupid!

Now my kids are picking it up and saying the same things to me and to themselves. It makes me feel terrible. Would you please discuss this?

ANSWER:

Many people put themselves on a guilt trip. And there are reasons for this. Obviously, you were blamed a great deal as a child and grew up feeling you were no good and could do nothing right. Consequently, you developed negative feelings about yourself.

Other negative experiences such as having parents who paid little attention to you, or being raised in an environment of domestic strife, may also have caused you to reach adulthood thinking of yourself as worthless and unloved. The result is that you now feel insecure and uncertain of yourself.

Being aware that you have this problem is the first step in resolving it. Recognize that it was not God who called you stupid and made you feel guilty. There were others in your childhood that gave you these unfortunate labels. It may have been your mother or father, or maybe even both. Or perhaps it was spawned by a sibling — a brother or a sister. Undoubtedly they were unhappy, unfulfilled, and you were there to get the brunt of their negative feelings. You can be sure, however, that these

impressions you were given of yourself are not true. They were planted in your thinking by those who had unresolved problems of their own.

The best way to overcome the negative feelings you hold of yourself is to get them out in the open and talk about them. Most of all, talk to the Lord and tell Him exactly how you feel; ask Him to give you His confidence. Be sure, also, that you read God's Word on a regular basis, then meditate on it throughout the day. God can give you insights that can reverse the negative input that impacted your life as a child.

Realize that since God has created you in His image, you have unusual worth. Remember also that God loves you and values you so greatly that He sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to take away the blame for all your sin. That's how important you are to God. A close walk with the Lord will help you develop a more positive attitude toward yourself. But this, of course, takes time.

As for your children, when you develop a more adequate self-image and react to difficulties with greater poise, they will show you more respect. Explain that continual self-negation is not a healthy attitude, and ask them to help you overcome it. As you change your view of yourself, your children will undoubtedly react favorably to the difference they see in you.

The following is an inventory which will help you gain a clearer picture of your emotional and mental well-being.

Read each statement carefully. Then place a check mark by those in which you need improvement.

1. What kind of image do I hold of myself?

- I am not overwhelmed by my own emotions — by my fears, anger, love, jealousy or worries.
- I can usually take life's disappointments in stride.
- I have a tolerant attitude toward myself as well as others; I can laugh at myself.
- I neither underestimate nor overestimate my abilities.
- I can accept my own shortcomings.
- I have a good measure of self-respect.
- I feel able to deal with most situations that come my way.
- I get satisfaction from simple, everyday pleasures.

2. What are my feelings about others?

- I am able to give love and to consider the interests of others.
- I have personal relationships that are satisfying and lasting.
- I expect to like and trust others, and take it for granted that others will like and trust me.
- I respect the normal differences I find in people.
- I do not push people around, nor do I allow myself to be pushed around.
- I can feel I am part of a group.
- I feel a sense of responsibility to my neighbors

and fellowmen.

3. How do I meet the demands of life?

- I do something about my problems as they arise.
- I realize that when I make an error, it is because I am human, and no one (except Christ) is perfect.
- I accept my mistakes as an opportunity to learn.
- I accept my just responsibilities.
- I shape my environment whenever possible, and adjust to it whenever necessary.
- I plan ahead, but do not fear the future.
- I welcome new experiences and new ideas.
- I make use of my natural abilities.
- I set realistic goals for myself.
- I am able to think for myself and make my own decisions.
- I put my best effort into what I do and find satisfaction in it.

It would be a good idea to go back over this list and mark it once more. Then every day as you read the Bible, look for passages that apply to these items. This is one of the best ways to reprogram yourself. If some of these areas are rather serious, you would do well to seek professional help. God uses Christian psychologists to help people.

As you live each day for Christ, read His Word, and obey Him, you will come to recognize your great worth and value to God. This will influence the way you feel about yourself. And your self-image will improve!

by Lee and Gloria Bendell

WHAT DOES EASTER MEAN TO YOU?

CHRISTMAS IS UNDOUBTEDLY the biggest holiday celebration of the year (especially for stores).

However, much of the gaiety revolves around Santa Claus, parties, shopping, giving and receiving gifts — rather than celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ. As important as Christmas is to Christians, when God sent His only Son into the world evidencing His love for all mankind, Easter is actually of even greater significance to those of us who are believers.

What does Easter mean to you?

Hopefully, it's not only bunny rabbits, Easter eggs, or dressing up for the "Easter Parade." Instead, it ought to be a time to focus on the meaning of Christ's death and resurrection. This should be a time when we personally recognize that "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures" (I Corinthians 15: 3, 4).

Those who question the miracle of the resurrection attempt to disregard the testimony of eyewitnesses in the verses that follow: "He (Jesus) appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. After that He appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom remain until now, but some have fallen asleep; then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles; and last of all, as it were to one untimely born, He appeared to me also" (vs. 5-8).

Paul poses the question, "How do some among you say there is no resurrection of the dead?" (vs. 12). Then he reasons, "But if there is no resurrection of the dead, not even Christ has been raised; and if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is vain, your faith also is vain" (vs. 13, 14). **Our faith in Jesus Christ hinges upon that glorious Easter morning when Jesus Christ rose from the dead.**

Furthermore, our faith in the resurrection of Jesus Christ is also an essential part of our salvation. In Romans 10:9, 10,



Paul clearly tells, "If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and **believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead**, you shall be saved; for with the heart man believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation."

Looking again at I Corinthians 15, we read that as believers, not only is the resurrection of Jesus Christ the foundation of our faith, but it is the basis for the belief in our own resurrection after physical death: "But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep. For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive" (vs. 20, 22).

What will our resurrection experience be like? While much is a mystery, God's Word does reveal a portion of what our new identity will involve: "In the resurrection they (we) neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are like the angels in heaven" (Matthew 22:30). In Romans 8:18 Paul writes, "For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us." Then again we read, "For we know that if this earthly tent which is our house is torn down, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens" (II Corinthians 5:1). Paul sums up his feelings by saying, "I am hard-pressed from both directions, hav-

ing the desire to depart and be with Christ, for that is very much better" (Philippians 1:23). And in II Corinthians 5:8 he writes, "We are of good courage, I say, and prefer to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord."

When those of us who are believers give up our lives here on earth, **we will be ushered into the glorious presence of Jesus Christ.** We will not become angels, but we shall be like the angels in our new bodies (Luke 20:36). The Bible tells us we will reign with Christ for a thousand years (Revelation 20:4), and then spend eternity in a new heaven and a new earth (Revelation 21:1) where there will be no more death, mourning, crying, or pain (Revelation 21:4).

Perhaps the personal meaning of Easter is best summed up by the words of Jesus: "After a little while the world will behold Me no more; but you will behold Me; because I live, you shall live also" (John 14:19). The Gaithers have put these words to music, which we can sing with gusto— not only on Easter, but every day of the year.

God sent His Son — they called Him Jesus.

*He came to love, heal and forgive;
He lived and died to buy my pardon.
An empty grave is there to prove my Savior lives.*

*And then one day I'll cross the river,
I'll fight life's final war with pain;
And then as death gives way to vict'ry,
I'll see the lights of glory — and I'll know He lives.*

*Because He lives, I can face tomorrow.
Because He lives, all fear is gone;
And because I know He holds the future,
My life is worth the living, just because He lives!*

Bill and Gloria Gaither □

All Scripture is quoted from the N.A.S. version of the Bible.



OUR WORLD TODAY

by Eva Hallam Solberg

DEPRESSED CHILDREN

The National Institute of Mental Health in Bethesda, Maryland, estimates that more than 1.5 million American children under eighteen are seriously depressed. And the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry puts the number at more than *twice* that estimate.

In a study of 69 children and adolescents at the University of Texas, a large percentage of those children displayed their anger and depression through improper behavior at school or at home or both. The conclusion: Most of the time, a bad child is really a sad child. (*San Gabriel Valley Tribune*)

DIGITAL CABLE TELEVISION

The new technology of digital cable television (DCT) promises to usher in a new era in communications. The transition from analog to digital technology will occur over a period of several years.

DCT will provide the means to link previously separate activities. Interaction with viewers for teaching, counseling, prayer, and other ministries will enhance and change the way communication, marketing, and distributing of products takes place. With a digital box and an easy-to-use remote control device, viewers will have the ability to easily interact with all of these media.

"DCT will provide a marvelous way to bring the gospel to people throughout the world....None of us can do this alone. We must work together, especially as we

Jesus lived that He might die, and died that we might live!

—Henrietta C. Mears

enter the digital era," said David Cerullo, president/CEO of The Inspirational Network in Charlotte, North Carolina.

Within five to ten years it is projected that 75 percent of all American homes will be fully equipped to utilize all digital functions.

(*Religious Broadcasting*)

SEXUAL ACTIVITY AND CHURCH

Boys and girls who regularly attend church are two-thirds less likely to engage in sexual activity in their teens. Regular church attendance halves the probability that a woman will have a child out of wedlock.

(*Robert Rector in National Review*)

CRIME TRENDS

The nature of crime is changing, according to a professor of the Department of Criminology, Law, and Society, University of California, Irvine. There is a trend toward establishing more severe penalties. He says robbing another person is becoming more difficult because people no longer carry large amounts of cash; instead, they use credit and debit cards. Even stores handle less cash for the same reasons. The trend seems to be away from personal toward

more sophisticated crime, involving computers and technology. Despite increased security, computer crime will continue to grow because upcoming generations will be more adept at manipulating computers. (*Avenues*)

NO MORE PROCRASTINATION

Change procrastination into action by challenging yourself to get a task done in less than a half-hour...and then committing yourself to an even shorter time period for the next task.

Or promise yourself that you will start working on a project for just ten minutes and then quit if you get bored.

Reward yourself for completing parts of any project — perhaps by taking a walk, spending a few minutes reading an article that interests you, or taking another type of short break. But be sure your "break" isn't longer than your work period.

If you continue to have trouble getting started, figure out why. You may need clarification or help from someone else.

(*Bottom Line Personal*)

SHOULDN'T DECENCY BE THE DEFAULT SETTING?

"If there is software already in existence that can filter out

smut and pedophiles, then why not install this software in all computers? That way, it will be the smut merchants and their customers who have the burden of using special software to get what they want, instead of leaving this burden on parents trying to protect their children....

"When people can be sued for slander and libel, or jailed for inciting a riot, why is free speech given such an extreme interpretation that children must be sacrificed on the altar to it?"

"As Supreme Court Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes put it, freedom of speech does not include the right to shout 'Fire!' in a crowded theater. It certainly should not be stretched to include entrapping children."

(*Thomas Sowell in San Gabriel Valley Tribune*)

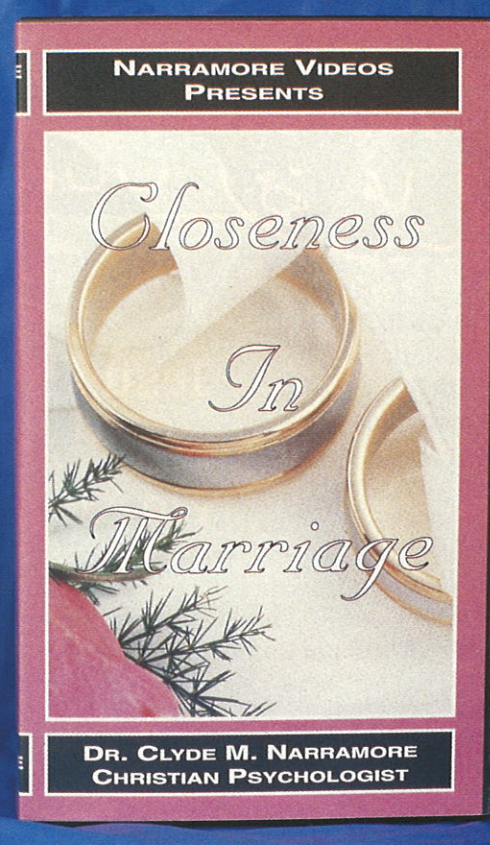
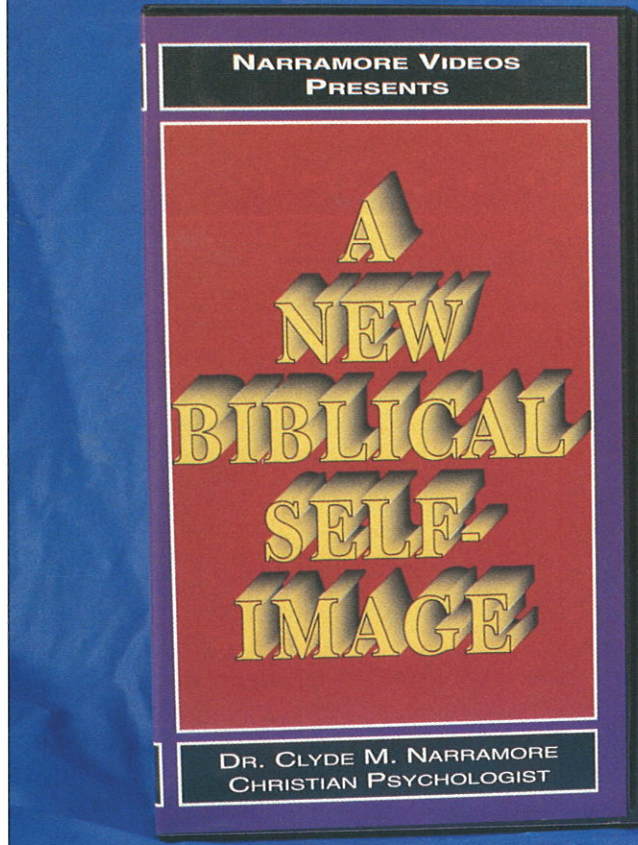
FROM FASHION CRITIC TO BARBER

The religious police of Afghanistan's Taliban government have gone from being fashion critics to being barbers. In addition to beating women in the street who are not dressed modestly enough, the Islamic extremists have been reported to be using long knives to give haircuts to men whose hair is too long.

While hair is to be short, beards must be long. Men have been ordered to grow beards, and some have lost their jobs for trimming their beards in violation of Taliban edicts.

The Taliban, who now control 90 percent of Afghanistan, are enforcing a strict version of Islamic law.

(*EP News*)



TWO VIDEOS BY DR. NARRAMORE WITH INSIGHTS TO CHANGE YOUR LIFE

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We all develop a self-image while growing up. We then reach adulthood with a concept of ourselves that affects nearly all we say, think, and do.

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CLOSENESS IN MARRIAGE

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One of the greatest joys in life is having a happy Christian marriage. To achieve this, husbands and wives need to develop a dynamic relationship which enables them to be at their best with their family, in the community, at church, and in the workplace. All this adds up to a fulfilling marriage and is a deterrent to divorce.

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Helpful Discussion Guide Included With Each Video

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