

PSYCHOLOGY FOR LIVING

JULY-AUGUST 1999

**TEENAGERS
TURNED
TO VIOLENCE**

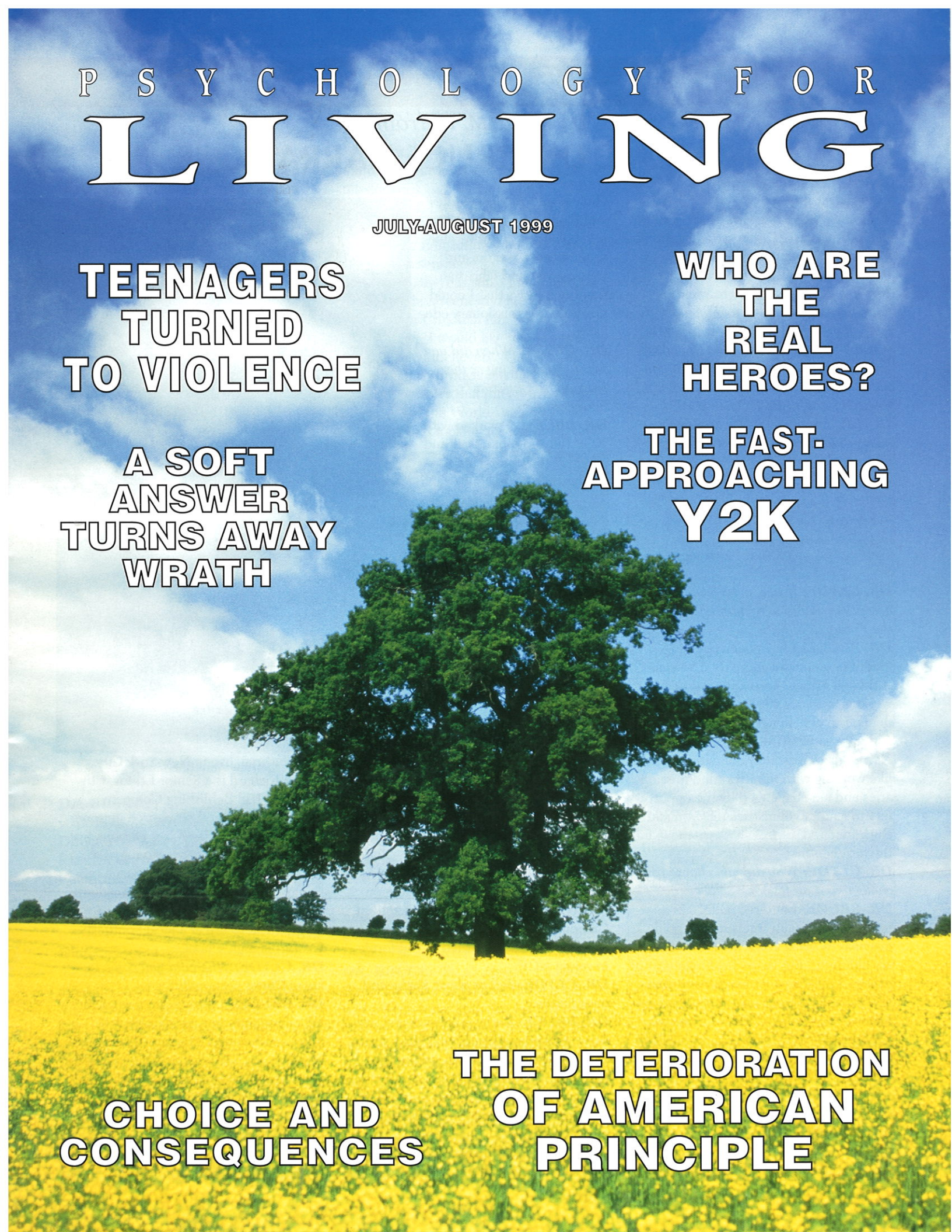
**A SOFT
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**THE FAST-
APPROACHING
Y2K**

**CHOICE AND
CONSEQUENCES**

**THE DETERIORATION
OF AMERICAN
PRINCIPLE**



A PERSONAL WORD

by Clyde M. Narramore

WELCOME DR. BRUCE NARRAMORE

Dear Friends,

My wife Ruth and I are so pleased that our nephew, Dr. Bruce Narramore, has agreed to assume the Presidency of the Narramore Christian Foundation. Bruce is one of America's outstanding Christian psychologists and he has worked with NCF in former years. He was the founding dean of the Rosemead School of Psychology and has authored many books including *HELP! I'M A PARENT* and *FREEDOM FROM GUILT*. Bruce also has years of experience administering the Rosemead School of Psychology at Biola University. He is a gifted, creative, Christian leader. We want you to get to know Bruce and his lovely wife, Kathy. They are a fine, dedicated couple.

Clyde Narramore

DR. CLYDE: Bruce, what caused you to accept our Board's invitation to become the President of NCF?

DR. BRUCE: I have been teaching graduate school for more than 25 years. Although I have thoroughly enjoyed working with our Rosemead doctoral students, I felt challenged by the breadth and international outreach of the Narramore Christian Foundation. I also like working with ministers and missionaries and am challenged by the opportunity to lead the ministries that you and Ruth founded, especially as we move into the next century.

DR. CLYDE: Why did you choose psychology as a profession?

DR. BRUCE: I entered college as a mathematics major interested in going overseas to teach at a school for missionary children. But in my freshman year of college I took my first psychology class and loved it. Before long, I changed my major to psychology. Then I came to California to study at Westmont College. I spent quite a bit of time with you and Ruth on weekends and in the summer, and I began to see what a huge need there was around the world for practical, Christ-centered counseling and psychology. After I graduated from Westmont, I took graduate work in both clinical psy-

chology and Biblical studies and theology. I saw that as a psychologist I might be able to minister to pastors and missionaries and Christian families in ways that I could never do as a missionary educator.

DR. CLYDE: When did you first begin working at the Narramore Christian Foundation?

DR. BRUCE: I worked with NCF full-time for a year and a half after finishing my master's degree in psychology at Pepperdine University.

Then, after finishing my Ph.D. at the University of Kentucky in 1967, I returned to work full-time with NCF until we founded the Rosemead School of Psychology in 1970.

DR. CLYDE: What was your role at NCF during that time?

DR. BRUCE: I directed our Christian counseling center, made radio broadcasts with you, wrote articles for *LIVING* magazine, answered correspondence, lectured, and counseled at our seminars for ministers and missionaries and business and professional persons, and served on the Administrative Committee and as Executive Vice President.

DR. CLYDE: While attending the University of Kentucky, something else significant happened in your life. Right?

DR. BRUCE: Yes! I met my future wife, Kathleen Rice, while working on my doctorate. Kathy was on the staff of Campus Crusade and we were married the year before I returned to California to rejoin NCF.

DR. CLYDE: Tell us about Kathy and your family.

DR. BRUCE: Kathy is a wonderful, sensitive, Christian woman who has a strong commitment to her family and is also actively involved in ministry. Similar to your wife and Billy Graham's wife, Kathy was born in China where her parents were missionaries. For the past 12 years she has served as Missions Pastor at the church where we attend. In that role she



Dr. Clyde Narramore welcomes his nephew, Bruce Narramore, as he rejoins the NCF staff.

travels throughout the world encouraging and counseling the more than 40 missionary families whom our church supports. Kathy has also worked with me in writing several of my books and co-authored a book with Alice Hill on Christian friendship titled *KINDRED SPIRITS*.

DR. CLYDE: Tell us about your children.

DR. BRUCE: Our son Richard, and his wife Kathryn, live in New York City where Richard is a Senior Editor with McGraw-Hill Publishing Company. They are active in their church in upper Manhattan. Our daughter, Debbie, just finished a two year term serving as a dorm parent and teaching teenage missionary children at Rift Valley Academy in Kenya. She is currently teaching English Literature at a local Southern California high school.

DR. CLYDE: When did you come to know Christ personally?

DR. BRUCE: I grew up in a small farming community in Arizona, about 40 miles southwest of Phoenix. I trusted Christ as my Savior when I was about ten years of age. Before I graduated from high school, I knew that I wanted to be involved in full-time Christian ministry.

DR. CLYDE: What do you think are some of the most important qualities for Christian psychologists?

DR. BRUCE: First, they need a strong personal relationship with Jesus Christ and a strong commitment to the authority of the Bible and its relevance to our daily lives. *Second*, they must be sensitive to others and be kindly and patient when working with those who are struggling with emotional pain. Good therapists are not in a rush to "fix" things. They are willing to take time and listen deeply. *Third*, they need to help counselees face things that are difficult, but they must do it gently and with love. *Finally*, they should be hopeful and optimistic. When people are struggling, they need a counselor who knows that by God's grace, they can grow and change and cope with any difficulty.

DR. CLYDE: Tell us briefly about the founding of the Rosemead School of Psychology.



Clyde and Ruth Narramore (left) with Kathy and Bruce Narramore.

DR. BRUCE: I remember well sitting in your office in 1968 with the Board of Directors of NCF. Although we had founded Christian counseling centers in California, Arizona, and Pennsylvania, they were still not accessible to the vast number of people who needed Christ-centered counseling. Our NCF Board of Directors voted unanimously to found the Rosemead School of Psychology to meet the need for well-trained Christian psychologists around the world.

DR. CLYDE: Has the Rosemead School of Psychology met that need?

DR. BRUCE: Rosemead has graduated over 600 doctoral level psychologists who are now practicing in 40 states and several foreign countries. We even have three alumni serving overseas as full-time missionary psychologists.

DR. CLYDE: What vision do you have

for NCF's ministries?

DR. BRUCE: I believe the Foundation has a special opportunity to serve many groups.

◆ *First*, I want to see us continue our ministry to the sons and daughters of missionaries.

◆ *Second*, I would like to see us expand our ministry to pastors and missionaries by reinstating intensive two and three-week seminars.

◆ *Third*, there is still a great need for practical Christ-centered literature and teaching for Christian families.

◆ *Fourth*, I would like to see a greater outreach to unbelievers. One way we can do that is through establishing an Internet ministry that puts much of our literature on the World Wide Web for anyone who is looking for help with their

daily problems.

◆ *Fifth*, I would like NCF to increase its role in training Christian doctoral students who will minister overseas.

◆ *Sixth*, continue to expand our crisis counseling and consulting services to missionaries around the world.

DR. CLYDE: Do you have any special requests of our NCF friends?

DR. BRUCE: By all means. I have three: *First*, let us know if there is any way we can serve you. *Second*, pray regularly for the ministries of NCF. *Third*, partner with us by supporting NCF financially.

DR. CLYDE: Bruce, it is a real pleasure to have you join us. I feel certain that the Lord has brought you to us and that He has important things for you to do for the Lord through the channel of NCF. God bless you, Bruce. □

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FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

"The Lord is my Shepherd ...
"He leads me ...
"He leads me in the paths
of righteousness"
(Psalm 23:1, 2, 3).

In this — one of the best known passages of Scripture — we have the assurance of being *led* by our loving, heavenly Shepherd. What confidence is ours when we recognize the security offered "the sheep of His pasture" in this divine arrangement!

Sometimes as we look back, we can see the clear paths of God's leading in our lives. Twenty years ago, God nudged me in the direction of becoming editor of *Psychology For Living* magazine. It was not a position I sought, but it was definitely the place of service where God was leading me.

When our children were young, I was the kind of old-fashioned Mom who didn't want to be any place other

TO THINK ABOUT

by Ruth E. Narramore

than at home caring for my family. But when the need arose for someone to serve the Lord as director of publications and editor of PFL, Kevin was in college and Melodie was in graduate school. They both added their encouragement to God's nudging: "Go ahead, Mom! If God is opening this door for you, you ought to walk through it."

Thus began a very fulfilling, happy 20 years in which I worked even more closely with my husband in the ministries of the Narramore Christian Foundation.

The wonderful part was the assurance I felt knowing that I was in God's will. But just as



in the 23rd Psalm David describes the various situations through which the Lord leads, so our Shepherd leads us today. Now after 20 years, the Lord has brought to

NCF a godly, gifted man to assume the publication division of this ministry, Dick Innes. (See p. 8 in the June issue of *Special Insight*.) We have known Dick for many years and are cognizant, not only of his talent, but of his wholehearted commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ. We feel confident that Dick is God's servant for this area of our NCF ministry at this time.

I will still be working closely with the publication

department and will continue to have a column in the magazine. And my co-workers on the NCF staff will always be part of my "family." However, with the burden of the responsibility no longer upon me, I will have more time to do personal writing and pursue other areas of interest. I praise the Lord for sending us Dick Innes. It is an answer to prayer.

There will undoubtedly be changes. That is to be expected, and it is right. I approve of God-directed progress, as I'm sure you do, too. So please support Dick Innes with your prayers and encouragement as he heads up the literature ministry of NCF. And give him a sincere Christian welcome as he takes over as editor beginning next issue.

How wonderful to have the Lord as our Shepherd. He leads! □

WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING

WWWD?

How refreshing was Dr. Kevin Narramore's article in *Psychology For Living*, "WWWD — What Would Walt Do?" But, while refreshing because we agree, it is also distressing what Disney executives are doing to the company. This is similar to the example our nation has felt from the behavior of those in high offices of influence.

God bless all of you who work for Him at NCF.

Kathlyn Flaten
Meridian, Idaho

GRATEFUL GRAND-MOTHER

I want to personally thank you for talking to me regarding my grandson's situation. Not everyone of your stature would be willing to talk to just

a grandmother really concerned about her grandson and having nowhere to turn.

L. B.
Ft. Pierce, Florida

Ed. Note: No one is more important than a grandparent.

IT TOUCHES MY HEART

I want you to know how much your ministry on the radio means to me. It touches my heart to know that you are helping MKs and that you are reaching out to so many.

Gina Williams
Newark, New Jersey

ONLY 500 AIR MILES AWAY

Greetings from Austria. We live and serve the Lord in serious days! Only 500 air miles

away from us a terrible war is going on. A million people now have no home, no water, and no food! May the Lord have mercy and build His church through it all. How we pray for the return of Jesus!

Thanks for your magazine and other literature. They are great!

Grace Reid
Carinthia, Austria

LOOKING FOR ADVICE

I listen to your radio program every day and really appreciate all that you are doing to help families. We are looking for advice and wisdom to help us.

Mrs. B. Newcomb
Richmond, Virginia

EVERY WORD

I want you to know that

your magazine is a real blessing and that I read every word. Then I give it to my daughter-in-law to read. For further blessing, I then give it to a ministry which sends literature to local pastors, schools, and evangelists in foreign countries, mainly the Philippines.

Ruth and Bill Price
Hummelstown, Pennsylvania

A MILLION THANKS FROM AFRICA

Your publications reach us here in Africa. They have helped to increase my in-depth knowledge of the Bible. A million thanks for your unrelentless services and may the Lord bless you and the team.

E. K. Mendah
Cameroon, Africa

THE FAST-APPROACHING Y2K

The objective is to avoid panic without neglecting preparedness.

by Vernon C. Lyons

SIX MONTHS FROM NOW, JANUARY 1, 2000, as we close out the old millennium and begin the new, experts have warned that we could be faced with a global disaster.

Most people have worshipped at the altar of technology and will discover they have a tricky god. Computers that have not been properly programmed will jam and crash. The general impact could be similar to any disaster such as a flood, fire, tornado, or blizzard, except that each of those is local, but *this will be global*. The objective is to avoid panic without neglecting preparedness.

When these natural disasters occur, there are often problems with food shortages, available drinking water, transportation, and electrical services. Add to this banking problems resulting in a shortage of available cash.

The experts agree that there will be problems, but disagree about the severity and the duration.

Three levels of disaster may be forecast. **Level one** is that *the trouble will be slight, resulting in numerous inconveniences and disruptions, but lasting not more than a month*. **Level two** would be *moderate, with greater difficulty that would plague us from*

two to three months. **Level three** is a *worst case scenario which projects the problem up to six months or even longer*. And this would hit us in January, the coldest month of the year.

Millions upon millions will be especially vulnerable six months from now as we enter the new millennium. This will include most who have been born after World War II. These are the ones who knew nothing of the depression hardships or of war rationing and deprivation.

In America since World War II we have had an escalating economy and

have enjoyed a maximum of convenience and soft living. It could be rough on those who have not known a "day of trouble" (Psalm 27:5).

This could be especially difficult for those who are already having a hard time. We are enjoying a strong economy and there are plentiful jobs. If someone is struggling in this delightful environment, what will he do in a time of disaster? If one cannot manage now, what will he do then? People who are in debt now may be in dire difficulty. The Scripture says, "The rich rule over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender" (Proverbs 22:7). So it's important that you pay off your plastic. Get out of debt!

Also, people with low coping levels will be vulnerable at this time. Extraordinary circumstances call for high levels of flexibility and adaptability. If you have a hard time adjusting in normal circumstances, how will it be when times are abnormal? The Scripture says, "If you have raced with men on foot and they have worn you out, how can you compete with horses? If you stumble in safe country, how will you manage in the thickets by the Jordan" (Jeremiah 12:5)?

It is not only good sense, but Biblical to prepare for the future (Proverbs 6:6-8). (If you are still perplexed as to what you can do, see sidebar for some helpful, practical advice on how you and your family can be prepared for this possible catastrophe.)

The best preparation is spiritual preparation. You want to be in the right family, God's family, and "to all who received Him (Jesus), to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become the children of God" (John 1:12). The heavenly Father cares for His children. The words of our Savior are clear that those who know Him and follow Him always have what is needed (Matthew 6:19-34).

David lived through wars, disasters, revolution and exile, but toward the end of his life said, "I was young and now I am old; yet I have never seen the righteous forsaken or their children begging bread" (Psalm 37:25).

Those who know the Lord and love Him not only survive, but thrive — even in the midst of disaster. □

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

BASIC Y2K PRECAUTIONS FOR THE HOME



THE COMPUTER FAILURES that will result from the Y2K problem may be devastating or prove to be nothing more than a temporary annoyance. Nevertheless, it would be prudent to stay informed on the latest Y2K scenarios and plan to take some advanced precautions.

Suggestions:

1. Make duplicate copies of important paper work and store them in a safe location.

These might include:

- Insurance policies, stock certificates, bonds, monthly and quarterly statements

from all financial investments

- Birth, marriage certificates, passports, SSA cards, etc.
 - Deeds for property, mortgages, etc.
 - Automobile registration and driver's licenses
 - Credit card, bank, personal loan, and similar statements
 - Tax returns and proof of income for the current year
 - Utility bills
 - School and education records for your children
2. Presume that you may not have access to an ATM or your money in the bank, and that merchants will not accept credit cards and checks. Your paycheck and other monthly income may also be delayed. Keep enough cash on hand to pay for all your daily expenditures for a month or more.
 3. Assume bills you pay in the beginning of January will be delayed or possibly lost due to problems with the banking system. Pay all your important bills by December 20, 1999: the mortgage, rent, car payment, taxes, etc. that are due in January. Keep copies of the checks prior to mailing them. This will protect you against having to pay late fees or default on your mortgage.
 4. Assume that the transportation system that brings food to the grocery store breaks down and panic buying clears the shelves by late December, 1999. Stock up on water, canned food, and dry food such as pasta, rice, beans, and crackers. Store enough to feed your family for at least three weeks. Keep on hand everything you might need if you had to go a week or more without electricity. Make your priorities heat, food preparation, light, and waste removal.
 5. As a worst-case scenario, if you live in a densely populated area, consider making arrangements to temporarily spend weekends with friends or relatives outside the city. Highly populated areas have a greater potential for riots and disease.
 6. If you anticipate needing any medication for medical, optical, or dental services, arrange for check-ups and prescriptions well ahead of December 1999.
 7. Investments: Reduce equity exposure. In particular, eliminate high risk investments such as emerging markets, real estate investments, and commodities. Increase your asset allocation in government securities such as treasury bills, money market, Swiss francs, and U.S. dollars. Limit bank deposits to \$100,000 per institution.

Recommended Internet Y2K web sites: *Note: If you do not have a computer with a modem, visit your local library or ask a friend to look these up for you and print a copy of the key pages.*

www.cbn.org/news/stories/Y2K-links.asp (Christian Broadcasting Network)

www.cfcministry.org (Christian Financial Concepts)

www.year2000.com (Y2K Information Center)

Y2K — A Christian Perspective, by Shaunti Feldhahn, Multnomah Publishers.

Remember... "Greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world" (1 John 4:4). □

WHO ARE THE REAL HEROES?

They are the men and women who refuse to compromise the truth.

by Joan Clayton

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER OF HEBREWS talks about the great heroes of the Bible. In that "Hall of Faith" were great men and women who knew the things they believed in were waiting, even though they could not see them with their natural eyes.

We learn so much from these godly patriarchs. Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, and David, among many others, were men who trusted God and held onto their faith in the midst of extremely harsh circumstances.

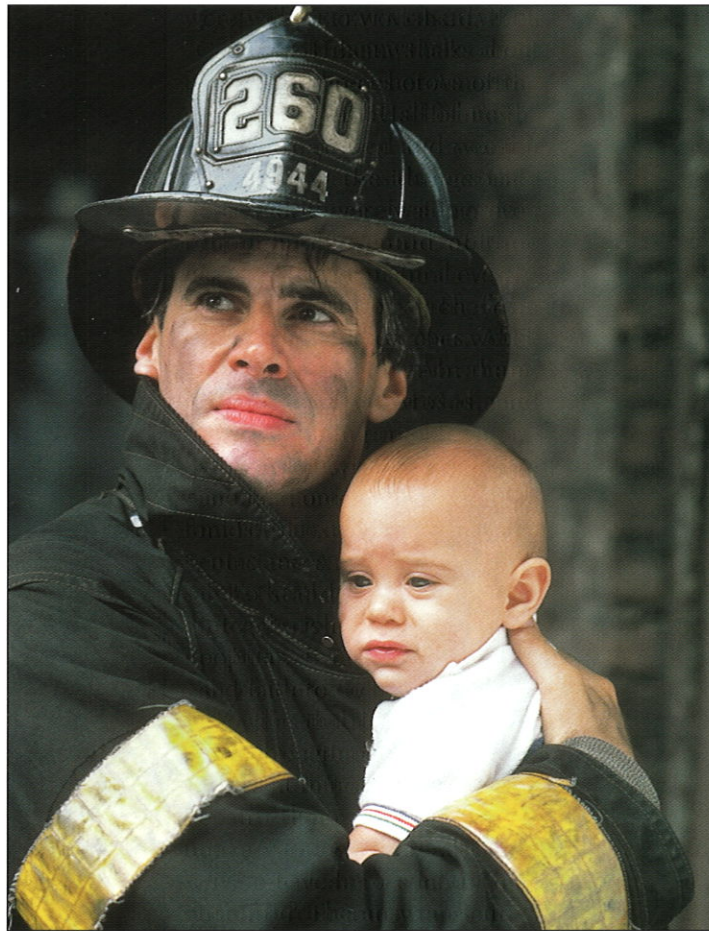
To stand for honesty and integrity is not always easy or popular. It takes real courage and faith to do the right thing, knowing that life isn't always fair. Strength of character does the right thing anyway.

Are there any real heroes today? Indeed there are. And do we have heroes in our own country? The answer again is yes. I submit to you that they are those millions of Americans who are God-fearing people who strive to do right and live by His Word. They are the ones who go to work every day, who live by godly principles, and who believe in honesty, truth, and honor!

You will find these people helping others. You will see them at the voting polls. You will see them volunteering in community service. You will see them teaching Sunday School. You will see that fireman or policeman going the extra mile, often putting his or her own life at risk. You will find these unselfish people in the armed services in defense of a country they believe in — a country many have died for, to preserve a nation founded on Biblical principles.

The "real heroes" are the ones who have made this nation "the land of the free and the home of the brave." *These men and women refuse to compromise the truth.* These men and women take a stand for accountability, responsibility, and honesty. These people are the real patriots!

The American dream has been fulfilled by so many who



were willing to work hard, the "Good Book" being their compass. These heroes of America are not guided by selfishness. They are guided by a conscience that sets aside personal desires for themselves in order to pursue the good of the nation as a whole.

Yes, dear Christian friends, you are my heroes. You work and plan and dream. You strive to do right for God and country. You are decent, hard-working people who love America and what it stands for. You are everyday, unpretentious Americans who salute the flag, pay your taxes, go to church, and help your neighbor.

You are the backbone of this nation. You keep this country together. Please don't ever give up, because your godly living is not in vain. May we all keep striving to leave a country for our children and grandchildren that is worthy of the lives

of the many who have died to protect it.

Hebrews 12:12 in *The Living Bible* admonishes us to not lose heart: "So take a new grip with your tired hands, stand firm on your shaky legs, and mark out a straight, smooth path for your feet so that those who follow you, though weak and lame, will not fall and hurt themselves, but become strong."

Keep on! Take a stand for righteousness! Never give up, because in the end we will win — and that victory will last forever!

May we all be included in that great "Hall of Faith Fame" listed in Hebrews 11.

Great people follow a great God! "Godliness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people" (Proverbs 14:34 TLB).

Keep on working to keep America great. You are the "real heroes!" □

Joan Clayton, a retired school teacher, lives with her husband in Portales, New Mexico. She currently writes a column for the Portales News-Tribune and is also a freelance writer.

CHOICES & CONSEQUENCES

Joyce Petersen
Liberal Studies

Joni Pettikas
Nursing

Rick Pickering
Rec./Camping Administration

A psychologist remembers people who, when subjected to the heat of life, responded in one of two ways.

by Norman Thiesen

EVERY NOW AND THEN I get into a nostalgic mood and browse through the annual of the Christian college I attended some years ago. As I take it from the bookshelf in my office, it invariably brings back some wonderful memories of college life that seem in some ways like another lifetime. (I'm sure that's one sign of aging!)

I usually go to the senior section first and find my graduation picture. The young man in the picture has a lot more hair and is much better looking than I remember him to be! I often sit and reflect on the dreams and hopes that he had for his life at that time.

Then I page to the picture of my old girlfriend. She was the first real love of my life, and it broke my heart when our relationship ended. Then I play that game of "What might have been." *What if I had married her? What if I had taken*

a different major? What if I had made some different choices? How would my life be different today?

Then I page through the annual and recall old friends and acquaintances. This one is a successful pastor, this one an M.D., this one serves on the mission field, this one became an outstanding Christian layman, this one has just published another book, and this one is a professor at a Christian college. These friends and acquaintances of those years past have made many contributions to the church and to God's kingdom.

My memories of life at that Christian college are plentiful and positive. They are good memories of crazy times, stupid escapades, growing personally, spiritually, and academically. All of these experiences have accumulated to help make me the person I am today.

But I have a number of unanswered

questions concerning some of my other friends and acquaintances of those years. I heard that one fellow was jailed for crimes involving child molestation. Another received a doctorate and lost his faith. Another died of AIDS — the result of an active gay lifestyle. Another abandoned his young family to do his own thing.

What went wrong with these friends? I doubt seriously there was a single cause. I also doubt that any great or significant event precipitated their unbiblical behavior. But something must have occurred to cause them to disregard the great Biblical education they had received. In quiet times of reflection, I pondered these issues.

Some might attempt to explain these events by just saying there are not enough rules anymore. But I remember plenty of rules at that school in those days. Or some might claim that these

behaviors are the result of "liberal" theology. But I recall that at that time these individuals were some of the most conservative on campus. Others may claim that this evidences a lack of Biblical knowledge. But that particular college required that all of its students have a major in Bible, even if they also took a major in something else. And all of them had wonderful exposure to Biblical truth in mandatory chapels.

Then what went wrong?

I have developed a theory. As theories go, it's not necessarily infallible, but it does help explain some things for me.

There are few guarantees in life. In fact, we often say there are only two — death and taxes. But I believe that there is another: *heat*. Life provides us with plenty of heat. Heat comes in many packages. For some it comes in a genetic package. Many get up each morning and look in the mirror and dislike intensely what looks back at them. I always wanted to be 6'4", play sports, and look like Robert Redford. God decided to have me strike out on all three! Many struggle with the genetic material they were given. For some, this provides a great deal of heat in their life.

For others, it's the family or environment they were raised in. Any reflection on their past provides them with nothing but memories of abuse, disapproval, or rejection. Because of those rough times, they are still experiencing heat.

For others, there are negative circumstances. Natural disasters like floods, tornadoes, earthquakes, and fire are sometimes a part of their experience. There are also social crises like crime, unemployment, and illnesses. Individuals in these circumstances may experience heat.

Then there are the mistakes we ourselves make in life. These often bring about unwanted consequences. I periodically counsel with individuals who are struggling with the aftershocks of their own errors, mistakes, and sin. That's heat!

My theory can be illustrated by wax and clay. An interesting fact about wax and clay is how they respond to heat. If you expose wax to heat, it melts. Upon observing this, one might say that the

heat caused the clay to harden and the wax to melt. But that comment would not be factually true. It is the composition of the clay that causes it to harden, and it is the composition of the wax that causes it to melt.

There are occasional statements in

Only as we become pliable can God make us a thing of beauty in the likeness of His Son.

Scripture that I refer to as "Biblical unbelievables." These are passages that we intellectually affirm because we are evangelical Christians, but if we were really honest, we find them to be somewhat unbelievable or impossible to actually do. One of my favorite Biblical unbelievables is James 1:2. "Count it all joy when you encounter 'heat' in your life." Now, how often do we praise the Lord for *heat* in our lives? In my observation, most of us gripe and complain about having to experience difficult times.

I don't like heat. Most people don't. But I have gained a greater understanding of the text because there is a positive aspect to heat. Heat does accomplish something. If you didn't know whether a substance was wax or clay, you could easily determine its substance. Bring enough heat into the picture and it would soon become apparent which was the clay and which was the wax. The heat of the flame, like the heat in life, is meant to reveal the substance of which we are made. When the heat of life hits us, we can respond in one of two ways. We will either harden, or we will melt. The benefit of that heat is that it reveals our true substance.

I do not know what events occurred in the lives of some of my college friends. But I do know there was heat in their lives—possibly in ways that I would never understand or ever realize. For some reason the heat in the lives of some of my classmates led them to a hardening process rather than a melting process.

In the book of Exodus we see God putting the heat on Pharaoh. This He did in the form of plagues in an attempt to bring Pharaoh to willingness to let God's people, the Israelites, go. But instead of melting before God, Pharaoh hardened his heart. That was his choice and it ended in destruction.

It is important to realize that each new day we are facing choices that determine the material which makes up our composition. Seldom are these choices big, but rather small, and often appear inconsequential. But over time, these decisions have a part in our becoming who we eventually are. Often

one of the main contributors to our destiny is the way we respond to the *heat* events that continually confront us in life. Always remember, God does not test us to destroy us, but to refine us and make us more pliable in His hands. Only when we become pliable can God make of us a thing of beauty in the likeness of His Son.

One of the main aspects of sanctification is to remain "soft and pliable" before God. Once wax is melted, it can be molded into any form or shape. In order to be "conformed unto the image of Christ," we must first be melted. Heat is an essential part of the process. Count it all joy when the events of your life get hot, because then you will have the opportunity to do some honest reflection: *Is this event causing me to harden or to melt?* If you do not eventually observe a melting process, that ought to be a big, clear danger signal concerning your spiritual life.

My nostalgic walk down Memory Lane reminded me that **life's choices lead to consequences**. My response to heat has led me where I am today. My response to the heat of life will lead to where I will be tomorrow. God's goal in the process is that I always remain like wax.

Sow an act, reap a habit.

Sow a habit, reap a character.

Sow a character, reap a destiny! □

Norman Thiesen, Ph.D., is the director of a counseling program at Grace University, Omaha, Nebraska. He also counsels part-time in the Grace Counseling Center, an arm of the University outreach.

TEENAGERS VIOL

Why in the world would students ruthlessly murder their s

by S. Bruce

"SCHOOL MASSACRE" and "DAY OF TERROR" screamed newspaper headlines reporting the carnage in Littleton, Colorado. It was the day two armed teenagers killed 12 fellow students, a teacher, and themselves, and wounded 23 more. That four-hour siege at Columbine High School southwest of Denver, Colorado, was the most violent day in the history of United States education.

We are shocked that such carnage can happen in America, let alone in towns like Littleton, Colorado. We sorrow for the young people whose lives were cruelly ended. We grieve for families who have lost a parent, children, friends, and neighbors. And in the middle of the shocking horror of these seemingly senseless tragedies we ask, "How can this happen?" "What went wrong?" While there are no pat answers, there are several common characteristics of children and adults who commit such murderous acts.

Recognize that teenagers who kill are unhappy. They feel alienated from others, odd, different, or left out. Emotionally, they feel unloved and they have not developed the capacity to form healthy emotional relationships, usually not even within their own families. Consequently, they do not care for other people. They are spiritually either disinterested, rebellious, or con-

fused, and they are extremely resentful and angry. Their anger comes from feeling hurt, wounded, rejected, or abandoned.

These teenagers have lost or failed to develop a regard and respect for other people, and they tend to live in their own worlds, either with a few fringe friends, or in their fantasies, secret thoughts, and plans. Although they occasionally turn to violence without any warning, there nearly always are serious danger signs and symptoms. Those include increasingly bizarre thoughts and feelings, serious drops in grades, preoccupation with thoughts of death, desires for revenge, feelings of persecution, grandiose thoughts, and identification with fringe groups, guns, and violent historical figures.

Given this mixture of painful feelings and confused thoughts, all it takes to trigger an explosion is one serious trauma or rejection, one final bit of ridicule, one song glorifying violence, one horrible movie example, or one "friend" to egg them on to action.

In light of the deep mental, emotional, and spiritual confusion of adolescents who turn to murder, what can concerned parents, teachers, and other adults do?

First, be alert to danger signals. Most typically, children who turn to violence have shown signs of maladjustment for many years.

Without frightening parents, since we are talking about very extreme situations, we do need to be sensitive to our children's needs and to respond whenever we see indications of significant distress. Here are some danger signs that might point to violence:

- Frequent loss of temper (several times a week)
- Vandalism
- Repeated physical fighting
- Trouble controlling anger
- Angry bravado and threats to hurt others
- Plans on how to hurt others—even if they seem unrealistic
- Withdrawal from friends, family, and normal activities
- Resentful feelings of being the underdog or of not being respected
- Feelings of being mistreated or persecuted
- Increasing use of drugs and alcohol
- Strong interest in, or fascination with, guns
- Interest in violent magazines, movies, videos, and hate organizations
- Increased risk-taking behavior
- Association with violent or threatening groups
- Suspicious, hateful attitude toward all authority
- Carrying a weapon

If you have a child who shows any of these symptoms, do seek professional psychological counseling. While most



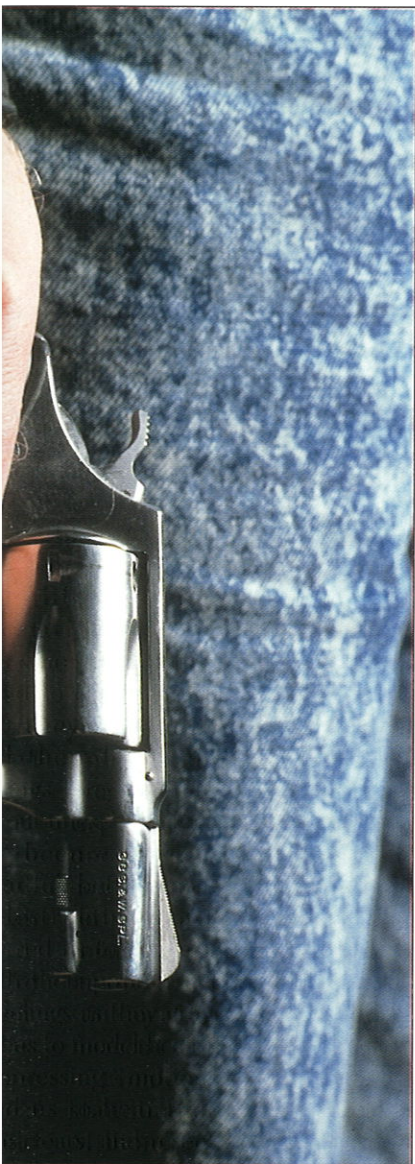
will never turn to physical violence, if you see any of these warning signs, realize they are your child's way of crying for help. Don't ignore his cry.

Sometimes these problems will be naturally outgrown, but more often they become even more deeply ingrained

TURNED TO VIOLENCE

hoolmates and teachers? What can be done to prevent it?

Narramore



with time. Professional therapists can help identify the problems and tune in to your child's hurts and needs.

Second, and still within your own family, commit yourself to building the most happy, loving, and spiritually sensitive home

possible. Children who feel loved and who enjoy spending time with their parents and siblings, and who have come to love God and know Him through Jesus Christ will not turn to juvenile crime. Violence almost always, among other things, reflects some rupture, lack, conflict, pain or struggle within the home. Thus it is important that parents stay involved and remain emotionally connected with their children on a daily basis.

Third, help your children develop a healthy emotional life and good communication skills. Teenagers who murder have not learned to control their emotions. They have either repressed their hurts and angry feelings for years until they burst out unexpectedly, or they have been expressing them in hurtful, but less completely destructive ways. Children need us to be sensitive to both their positive and negative feelings as they grow. They need us to model healthy ways of expressing emotions. They need us to hear their hurts, pains, fears, and resentments. And then they need us to help them find acceptable ways of managing their strong emotions.

Fourth, know your children, their friends, and their activities. It is far too easy, in this day of two wage earners, for parents to be unaware of the company their

children are keeping, the material they are finding on their computers, the magazines they read, and the music they hear. The entertainment field is a billion dollar industry. This powerful, secular, and often violent influence can dominate nearly every aspect of a teenager's life. Parents need to recognize this destructive source and minimize it in their child's life. Equally important, we need to involve every child and teenager in wholesome activities.

Sometimes teenagers have even built bombs and drawn up plans for violence right under their parents' noses in the family home. Concerned parents need to take extra effort to know their children well and to keep track of their activities and their friends.

Fifth, do your part in your local community. While violent tragedies can never be totally abolished, the more we can reach out to needy and hurting children, the less likely these tragedies are to occur. Offering your time and love and talents to a fatherless or motherless child can be a richly rewarding experience. Taking time with a neighborhood child, or a child or youth from church, or a friend of your son or daughter, tells them that someone cares. And never forget that at the root, children and teenagers who murder believe that no one

really cares for them.

Sixth, encourage your local schools and churches to take preventive action. Church leaders and school teachers, counselors, administrator and students, all need to be alert to teenagers that display the warning signs listed above.

Too often, threats and accusations or fascinations with violence are ignored or dismissed because we think they are "just talk." We need to take these signals seriously. Many lives can be saved if fellow students and responsible adults will act on their concerns rather than assuming that nothing serious will happen.

Seventh, financially support organizations that help needy children, teens, and hurting families. There are many fine organizations, including many Christian ones, that are reaching out across America daily. If you do not have the time or the training to become personally involved with needy youth, you can at least help with your financial resources.

Finally, pray. America is standing at a crossroads. Millions are suffering from emotional and spiritual poverty. Only God's intervention can touch the lives of enough people to turn the tide that is lashing our nation through the deterioration of the family, our move from Biblical values, and our tendency to live our Christianity in isolation from the needy world around us. □



A SOFT ANSWER TURNS AWAY WRATH

I marvel at the effectiveness of a calm and quiet approach to rage.

by Calie Middleton

BECAUSE OF MY HISTORY of on-the-edge rage, the proverb, "A soft answer turns away wrath" seemed to me like an impossible accomplishment.

However, I had not considered the power of God to change lives, especially mine. My reservoir of rage, accumulated from a childhood of neglect, boiled over when I was confronted with situations reminiscent of my unstable history. I often assumed that people were angry with me and would respond with anger, only to discover they were *not* angry. My assumption was a holdover from the past. I expected others to respond in the present like my family had responded to me in the past, and I reacted as though they had.

On one occasion, a woman in a Bible study and I disagreed. Her comments seemed unkind. I rebuked her, and she immediately apologized. However, I believed the entire group was angry with me, and I lashed out throughout the evening at various individuals. Four days later as I thought through the situation, I realized that no one was angry with me,

even though I had believed they were. My angry response to situations reminiscent of the past was habitual, not based on reality.

Since that powerful realization and through counseling and prayer, I have observed the life-changing power of God working to confirm in my relationships and circumstances the wonderful truth, "A soft answer turns away wrath."

Iwork at a Christian homeless shelter and recovery program. There are unending confrontations and conflicts. I am often called upon to be the arbitrator in these conflicts. I marvel at the effectiveness of a calm and quiet approach to the rage which is vented as women confront each other.

On one occasion two women were screaming, yelling, and threatening each other. One woman was grieving for her son who was in a coma in a local hospital. The other was a grandmother who was seeking shelter with her daughter and four grandchildren. This women had misunderstood the grief displayed on the other's face. She believed she was being

judged. The two women would have come to blows if God had not prepared an ex-rageoholic to arbitrate. I separated them and proceeded in the midst of raw emotions to speak quietly and softly to each woman. One insisted she had not provoked the other while the other continued to threaten, accuse, and blame. I listened and continued to speak softly. The louder each became, the softer I spoke, marveling at my composure and the truth of God's Word. The conflict was resolved without a harsh or boisterous word on my part.

Many other conflicts have been resolved with similar soft answers. Each time I marvel at the wisdom of this godly advice. Truly, "a soft answer turns away wrath" (Proverbs 15:1).

I marvel even more how God has transformed a woman of rage into a woman with a gentle, quiet spirit who is able to promote His peace in conflicts. If He can do it for me, He can do it for you. □

Calie Middleton lives in Anderson, California.

THE DETERIORATION OF AMERICAN PRINCIPLE

Indifference and immorality abound on every hand.

by Hugh Robert Horne

OUR NATION IS BEING ENVELOPED by a cancer which is slowly but surely ravaging its ideals and eating at its very vitals. Today in America we have:

1. **Policy without principle:** Because it has become necessary for us to deal with godless countries who have no scruples concerning right and righteousness, we often find ourselves dipping our banners. We are guilty of stooping to the level of some of their infamous tactics in order to accomplish our aims.

2. **Wealth without work:** We are being enveloped by the false philosophy that we can get something for nothing. The Bible says, "The soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing; but the

soul of the diligent shall be made fat" (Proverbs 13:4).

3. **Industry without influence:** America has been attempting to buy her way, and in many instances the countries she has helped have turned against her and now hold her in utter contempt.

4. **Comfort without conscience:** Great multitudes, including many Christians, are quick to enjoy their comforts at the expense of others. They are not willing to pay their way (taxes to sustain) to the government, nor are they willing to share the burdens of carrying the Gospel of Christ to the world.

5. **Comprehension without character:** Men have grown in knowledge with each succeeding generation. Knowledge

is increased many-fold; but indifference and immorality abound on every hand — even in high places.

6. **Service without sacrifice:** Such service is half-hearted and is of little effect.

7. **Science without sagacity:** Science has advanced almost beyond our ability to fathom; yet some of our greatest scientists have missed the most important aspect of all — God and the wisdom which only He can give.

Pray as never before for the spiritual health and revival of our nation. Without it, we are headed for destruction. Yet, all is not lost. God hears and answers the fervent prayers of His righteous people (James 5:16b). □

ICE CREAM IS GOOD FOR THE SOUL

"Is God mad at me?" the boy asked.

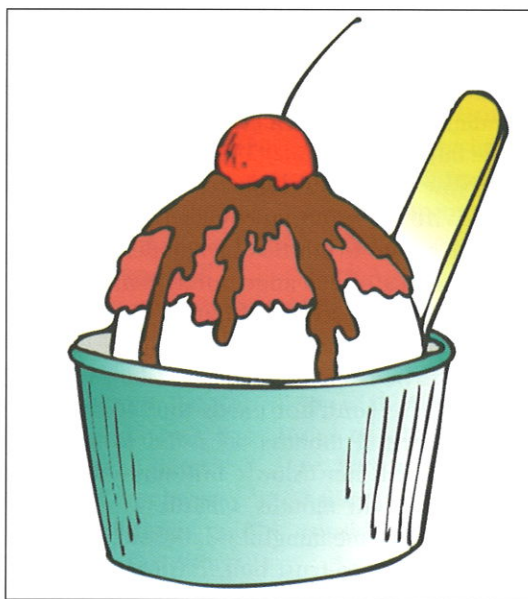
by Mike Atkinson

LAST WEEK I TOOK my children to a restaurant. My six-year-old son asked if he could say grace. As we bowed our heads, he said, "God is good. God is great. Thank you for the food, and I would even thank you more if Mom gets us ice cream for dessert. And liberty and justice for all! Amen!"

Along with a few chuckles from some of the other customers nearby, I heard a woman remark, "That's what's wrong with this country. Kids today don't even know how to pray. Asking God for ice cream! Why, I never!"

Hearing this, my son burst into tears and asked me, "Did I do it wrong? Is God mad at me?"

As I held him and assured him that he had done a terrific job and God was certainly not mad at him, an elderly gentleman approached the table. He winked at my son and said, "I happen to know that God thought that was a great prayer."



"Really?" my son asked.

Then in a theatrical whisper the gentleman added (indicating the woman whose remark had started the whole thing), "Too bad she never asks God for ice cream. A little ice cream is good for the soul sometimes."

Naturally, I bought my kids ice cream at the end of the meal. My son stared at his for a moment and then did something I will remember for the rest of my life. He picked up his sundae and without a word walked over and placed it in front of the woman. With a big smile he told her, "Here, this is for you. Ice cream is good for the soul sometimes, and my soul is already good." □

Mike Atkinson is Internet director for Youth Specialties. He and his wife, Stacy, have eight children. They live in El Cajon, California. The above article is reprinted from Mikey's Funnies, a daily e-mail publication.

ANGRY FATHER

Nothing crushes a child's spirit like a father's anger.

by Clair Schnupp

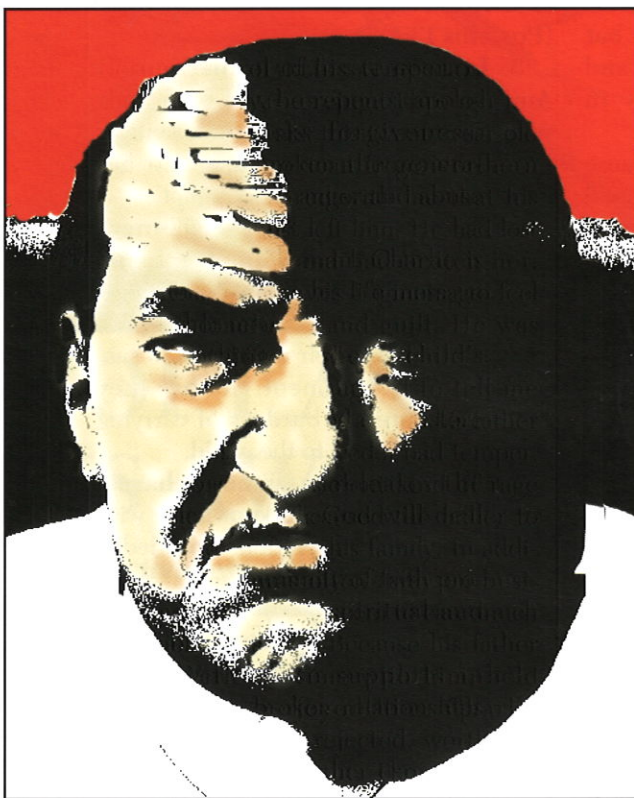
CHARLIE SAT IN FRONT OF ME crying. Through his tears, this twenty-year-old Native American from Northern Canada shared with me that his wife had just left him. He had lost his temper and had beaten her. Now Charlie was beginning to feel his loneliness and guilt. He was angry, bitter, and afraid.

Charlie proceeded to tell me that when he was a child his father had often displayed a bad temper. It was not a violent kind of rage but one that caused the father to withdraw from his family. In addition, he was often away on business. He didn't seem to care much about his son. Because his father never took time with him, held him, or enjoyed him, Charlie came to feel rejected, worthless, and incompetent. The only time he felt strong and masculine was when he was angry. Charlie came to see me because he loved his wife and wanted to be reconciled with her.

I also felt sadness and anger for Charlie and his childhood losses. As he wept, I could see the hostility toward his father etched on his face.

Finally the time came when it seemed right to ask Charlie if he was ready and willing to forgive his father. After a struggle, Charlie prayed and was able to forgive his father. At the same moment, he felt as though the arms of God were embracing him. A sense of belonging, worth, and confidence overwhelmed him. Charlie had dealt with the root of his problem with anger.

Charlie then became part of a men's group that met weekly. They understood him and his hostility problem. Prayer, caring, and Bible studies helped Charlie grow as a man of God. In this group he



learned to dialogue and interact without losing his temper. The other men drew Charlie to manhood, restoring the masculinity that had been crushed by his hostile father.

Now began the long road to rebuild his wife's confidence. Charlie had to demonstrate to her that he had dealt with the causes of his anger problems. She would need to see that Charlie was now a man among men, that God's Spirit was going to be demonstrated in his daily life.

Charlie sent her cards and letters. After several months he asked to have dinner with her. Slowly but surely over the next eight months, Charlie was able to rebuild a meaningful relationship. His wife learned to trust him. Intimacy grew between them and their marriage was restored.

Today Charlie and his wife have three lovely children. Charlie is able to handle conflicts without

losing control of his temper. If he gets angry, he repents, apologizes, and asks forgiveness. Charlie has broken the generational pattern of anger and abuse in his family line.

As a restored man, Charlie is now able to share his life message with other men:

- ◆ Nothing crushes a child's spirit like a father's anger.

- ◆ The love of God can restore a crushed spirit.

- ◆ Forgiveness releases the offender to God; God will deal with him.

- ◆ The community of faith provides support for spiritual and emotional healing.

- ◆ With these supports in place, other broken relationships can be restored.

When a father expresses anger, it directly affects the child's innermost being. Anger is a direct violation of the child's dignity. It does the opposite of what a father's loving relationship does. The longings and legitimate desires for approval, acceptance, and understanding are cut off. The child gets the feeling of being disconnected, and self-hatred, fear, mistrust, and bitterness begin to grow. (1) The lack of a loving father-child relationship, (2) a father's irritability and anger, and (3) an absent or abandoning father all negatively affect a child's self-image. Any of these predispose a child to deep-seated anger and hostility directed at his father, self, family, world, future, or God. □

Clair Schnupp, Ph.D., is Director of Northern Youth Programs and serves as counselor and workshop leader to the aboriginal people of Canada, U.S. and Central America. To learn more about Dr. Schnupp's work, see p. 3 in the June issue of Special Insight.

by Kevin Narramore

WHY DOES CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION MATTER?

Part 2 of 2



TALK WITH PEOPLE who can trace their ancestry back to the Revolutionary War, and you may sense some sadness and disappointment in the ethnic and cultural changes that have taken place in America. Then talk with those who have escaped from unbearable dictatorships, dire poverty, or war-torn third-world countries, and you will get an entirely different perspective. America is still the land of opportunity — not just for Anglo-Saxons but for people of every race and color. Because of this diversity, cross-cultural communication is a vital necessity if we are to pull together as one nation.

Not only do our nation's immigrants become the recipients of a better way of life politically, socially, and economically, but in this country they have opportunities to hear the gospel of Christ which is foreign to the religions in many of their homelands. In many respects, the mission field has now come to our own shores. We have the opportunity to be a spiritual blessing to those who are seeking better lives in the U.S.A.

But this quality of life "upgrade" is not all one-sided. Immigrants and persons of color are also the backbone of America's service economy. By the time the mostly white "baby-boom" generation retires — guess who will be working to pay for their benefits? You guessed it — a rainbow world force. Approximately 75 percent of those now entering the labor force are visibly racial-ethnic

minorities and women. The economic viability of businesses will depend on their ability to effectively communicate with and manage a diverse workforce.

Many elderly white Americans in retirement homes will also be receiving help each day from ethnic-minority service providers. Having respect or disrespect for another culture is something that others can sense a mile away. Wouldn't you like to get along with the person who gives you your shots and baths every day?

How to relate cross-culturally: Your credibility and whether or not you make a favorable impression on a culturally different person very much depends on whether you are perceived as showing respect, sincerity, and effort. To accomplish this takes some time and trial, but here are some broad suggestions:

First, face your lack of familiarity with other cultures by admitting it, and ask a culturally different person for help in increasing your understanding. Show a sincere desire to learn. The worst mistake you can make is to pretend that you know all about their culture. Showing respect will go a long way.

Years ago when I was working as a consultant to the Westin Resort in Hawaii, I had the pleasure of interviewing hundreds of employees from five or six different cultures. One of the first things I said to each interview group was, "As you can see...I'm not Hawaiian. And since I grew up on the mainland, my life experiences have been quite

different from most of yours. And folks, I don't want to presume to understand many things about your work experience and wonderful and unique cultures. So I'd like to ask you a favor. Would you please help me to better understand what it is like to live and work here at this resort?" By asking for their help and patience, I was able to learn a lot about Hawaiian life. And when I repeated back what I had understood them to say, they felt listened to and appreciated.

Effective cross-cultural communication means not only listening with accuracy, but showing gestures which are appropriate to the culture. It is claimed by communication specialists that nonverbal communication is 70 percent of the message while what is verbally expressed may only be 30 percent. A gesture, tone, posture, facial expression, or type of eye contact can communicate a message which is much more profound than anything that is said.

Most Caucasians, for example, tend not to stand as close to others in conversations as Latin Americans, Africans, Black Americans, Indonesians, Arabs, or French. When European-Americans put their feet on top of the desk it is often a sign of relaxation or informality. Yet Latin Americans, Asians, and Moslems may consider it as rudeness.

American Indians often use an indirect gaze when listening or speaking to others. Asian Americans, however, tend to avoid eye contact with a "high status" person. Caucasians

tend to use greater eye contact, while African Americans show strong eye contact when speaking but much less when listening. Caucasians show a manner of expression that is often objective and task oriented. African Americans, on the other hand, tend to show more emotion and feeling and speak more loudly.

As you can see, differences in styles have the potential for creating misunderstanding. If you spend enough time with persons who are culturally different and you have an open mind, an interesting thing will begin to happen. Over time, you will feel increasingly more comfortable with another person, and he will feel the same way with you.

Although it is important to be aware of unique cultural differences, let me end with a solid, universal principle. All human beings have a common human experience which is trans-cultural. It stems from the fact that God has given us a natural consciousness of right, wrong, and a sense of God or higher being. Obeying Christ's two greatest commandments is one of the best ways to relate cross culturally:

1. **Vertical.** Love the Lord your God with all your heart and soul and mind.

2. **Horizontal.** Love your neighbor as yourself. Some call this the Golden Rule.

If in doubt, when dealing with a person of a different racial and cultural background, ask yourself, *How would I like to be treated in the same situation?* □

Kevin Narramore, Ph.D., is the son of Dr. and Mrs. Clyde Narramore. He lives in Irvine, California.

HEALTH WATCH

by Eva Hallam Solberg

ANIMAL BITES AND INFECTION

Bites from dogs and cats are becoming increasingly common as more people are owning pets and some are favoring more aggressive dog breeds. Most people are aware of the physical injury a bite can cause, but infection is also a real danger.

All bites from animals, domestic or wild, are potentially serious. Even bites that look superficial can sometimes involve damage to underlying nerves, tendons, and blood vessels, or become infected with streptococci, staphylococci, or other infection-causing bacteria. Dog bites to the face and neck are dangerous because of their proximity to major blood vessels. Bites considered to be at especially high risk for infection are: those from cats,

regardless of location on the body; any bite on the hands or feet; puncture wounds; wounds involving joints, tendons, ligaments, or bones; and bites occurring 12 or more hours before receiving medical attention. (*Health News*)

UP AND ABOUT WITH SCIATICA

The latest studies give strong evidence that bed rest, traction, or hot or cold compresses are not beneficial for sciatica. Staying active helps keep back-pain sufferers from becoming too debilitated while they recover. Some doctors may prescribe specific exercises or physical therapy for people with sciatica, but simple activities such as walking are also helpful.

About 5 to 10 percent of people with sciatica eventually undergo surgery to relieve a

herniated disk or to remove the portion of the bone that is compressing the sciatic nerve. But surgery isn't for everyone with herniated disk problems either. Many people have this condition but are free of back pain or sciatica. MRI scans show that for most patients, the herniated part of the disk shrinks over time.

Coping with any back pain can be frustrating, but people with sciatica can be reassured that they can be up and about without fear of making their condition worse.

(*University of Washington*)

WELLNESS FACTS

Buckle up!

Drivers who don't wear safety belts are only one-third as likely to use car restraints for their young children as are drivers who buckle up. Since drivers not wearing seat belts

are also more likely to take other risks when driving, children traveling with them are at a higher risk for injury. About 60 percent of children killed in car crashes are not buckled in, though there often are child safety seats in the cars.

As we get older—

As people age, they burn fewer calories because of a variety of physiological and lifestyle changes, often resulting in increased body fat and loss of muscle. A recent study of 32 inactive men (aged forty-six to seventy-six) in Maryland found that all it takes is the equivalent of a brisk daily walk (about 1.75 miles) to balance energy intake and energy needs — thus greatly reducing the risk of becoming overweight and the well-known health risks associated with this.

(*UC Berkeley Wellness Letter*)



Living Memorials



My Gift of Love

TO HONOR THE MEMORY OF:

Agnes & Herbert Fliess
Will Hayden
Mary Audrey Laidig
Mary Audrey Laidig
Mary Audrey Laidig
Mary Audrey Laidig
Mary Audrey Laidig
Mary Audrey Laidig
Mary Audrey Laidig
Mary Audrey Laidig
Grover Weldon
Grover Weldon

PRESENTED BY:

Laura Jean Nader
Gail and Ivan King
The Lowell Berkey family
The Carroll Bontrager family
Mary L. Buesching
Steven and Jane Hostetler
Duane and Jo Laidig
Norman and Martha Madden
Robert and Doris Polk
Dave and Maria Schmit
Pat and Susan Warner
Toby and Lemerle Capalbo
Clyde and Ruth Narramore

(Gifts received after May 14, 1999, will appear in the September/October 1999 issue of *PSYCHOLOGY FOR LIVING*.)

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COMING NEXT ISSUE

Boundaries In Marriage

Walls

Sloppin' Through Life

Why Do Christian Kids Leave The Faith?

Winning Over Worry

Why Johnny Can't Sit Still

by Clyde M. Narramore

HOW CAN I RECOVER FROM CHILDHOOD SEXUAL ABUSE?

QUESTION:

How can a person get over the loss of self-respect, the loss of God's love, the loss of parent love, and the loss of self-hood? You see, I was sexually abused numerous times when I was a child. The suffering seems to get worse each year.

DISCUSSION:

OF ALL THE ABUSES, sexual abuse is perhaps the most devastating.

You can be emotionally abused by your parents and brothers and sisters as they scream at you, tear you down, or ignore you. Scars from emotional abuse usually last for a lifetime.

But sexual abuse is even worse. It violates a person's self-respect, her or his feelings of worthwhileness, and one's personal sense of decency. Furthermore, it is usually caused by someone who is supposed to be loving you, protecting you, and meeting your needs.

It would be bad enough if the perpetrator was a stranger. However, in sexual abuse this is seldom the case. It is nearly always committed by a member of the family or a close personal friend.

When a child suffers sexual abuse, it causes that child to feel sinful and guilty. Children also feel that their parents do not care or love them, or if they were to tell their mother or father this "secret," they would be punished or accused of lying. So to whom does a child go? Parents are not emotionally close, and even God seems far away.

During the year that I served with the Attorney General's Task Force on Family Violence, I was amazed at the amount of sexual abuse going on in some families.

I was also impressed with the fact that a child can experience this type of abuse but as time goes on, it may fade from his consciousness. However, the devastation may remain. Many things that now bother adults are not understood because they have been submerged.

The following are several suggestions: As a person who was sexually abused as a

child, it is important that you find a Christian counselor who can help you deal with this problem. Phone our office for a referral if you wish. Openly share about the abuse with your counselor.

But there is more! You say in your question that because of your unfortunate experiences, you are suffering from "the loss of God's love." Let me assure you that **you can never be lost to God's love.** He *always* loves you, *always* has and *always* will. Nothing that ever happens to you can alter that fact. Furthermore, God considered you of such great worth that He gave His Son to die for you. In God's love-letter to you — the Bible — you will find the greatest help of all. So diligently consider God's viewpoint on the following eight "P's." They will help you overcome your negative feelings about yourself.

1. **Position:** You have a wonderful position in Christ. You are an heir and joint heir with Jesus (Romans 8:17). You are "accepted in the Beloved" (Ephesians 1:6). Regardless of your past, God has now given you the highest of positions.

2. **Pardon:** The pardon you received when you came to Christ is eternal. God says in Isaiah 55:7 that He will "abundantly pardon" you. In I John 1:9 we read, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness." God has taken care of your guilt.

3. **Prayer:** As a child of God you have a hotline to God Himself. He's always available, and the line is never busy. In prayer, your emotions can be healed. You may never have been listened to when you were a child, but now you have the undivided attention of your heavenly Father. John 14:13 says, "And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do...." God is eager to listen to you.

4. **Provision:** When you were growing up you may have developed feelings of insecurity and unworthiness. But now as a believer you can be sure of this: "My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus"

(Philippians 4:19). Regardless of past abuse, you can now claim your identity as one who is the apple of God's eye. He wants to provide for you.

5. **Peace:** Sometimes we ask ourselves, *Where can we find peace?* The Bible says that in the last days "nation will rise up against nation." But amid all the turmoil, you as a born-again believer, can have personal peace. This comes from a close relationship with the Lord. Christ is your peace. This gives you hope regardless of your past.

6. **Purpose:** Unfortunate experiences in childhood can put you on a lifetime detour. But devotion to Christ gives you real purpose — both long and short-term. "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths (Proverbs 3:5, 6). This overcomes the purposeless feelings produced by abuse.

7. **Power:** A reasonable amount of ability and power makes you feel good about yourself. But abusive experiences in childhood can leave you feeling degraded, worthless, and powerless. So remember that God tells us, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13).

8. **Place:** Deep down, every person needs to feel there is a place for him. But because of devastating experiences while growing up, you may feel isolated. Your sense of belonging has been betrayed. But as a person consecrates his life to Christ, he knows there is a real place for God's children on earth, plus a place prepared for them in Heaven. *This is the essence of belongingness.*

So each day as you travel hand-in-hand with the Lord Jesus Christ, may these eight "P's" become a part of your life. Gradually, you'll take fewer and fewer cues from the negative experiences of your childhood, and you will live anew by these wonderful eternal truths.

Praise God for the freedom that is ours through God's eternal Word! □

by Lee and Gloria Bendell

HELPING THOSE WHO HAVE LOST THEIR SPOUSE

What do you say to someone who has just lost his or her spouse? If the person is a Christian, we often remind them of Scripture passages. We tell them their loved one is *"absent from the body and, ... at home with the Lord"* (II Corinthians 5:8). We remind them of the words of Jesus who promised, *"I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me shall live even if he dies"* (John 11:25). We assure them that their loved one is with God in heaven where *"He shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there shall no longer be any death; there shall no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain ..."* (Revelation 21:4).

For some, however, even the truths of Scripture do not minister to their needs. They are hurting, often in shock, and are unable to truly comprehend the Scripture we quote with helpful intent.

A close friend who suddenly and unexpectedly lost his wife shared, "It's different and far more devastating than losing your parents!" Another good friend who lost his wife after a long illness wrote, "The most upsetting thing in life is the death of a spouse. But we should not be surprised that it happens. One or the other is going to go first.... She went first and I felt lost. I didn't know where I was. How much is gone when death claims a spouse? Almost all of you is gone! You have to re-identify who you are. I'm willing to acknowledge that when my dear wife died, I didn't want people to talk to me about the Scriptures. Many did ...but the people who helped me the most were the ones who were just *there!*"

This is especially true after the funeral is over and during the weeks and months that follow. As one person put it, "Stop sending sympathy cards and send encouragement cards." Of course, each person's circumstances and needs are different. For some whose spouse endured a long illness, the death of one's spouse is difficult but at the same time, a release from the demands of constant care and concerns. For others, the sense of loss can result in deep depression or even strong



anger. In her classic book, *ON DEATH AND DYING*, Dr. Elisabeth Kubler-Ross states, **"Guilt is perhaps the most painful companion of death."** She quotes wives and family members who commonly say, "If I had *only* sent him to a doctor earlier," or "I should have noticed the changes and encouraged him to seek help." Dr. Kubler-Ross adds, "Needless to say, a friend of the family, a family physician, or a chaplain can be of great help to such a person by relieving him or her of this unrealistic reproach and by giving the assurance that he probably did everything possible to obtain help."

The physical health and emotional well-being of persons who have suffered loss also contributes to the length of their recovery process. Often, the extended care prior to death has worn down the caregiver — or the shock of an unexpected death has thrown the surviving spouse's physical and emotional status out of kilter.

One of the great blessings for some is having children and grandchildren nearby who can pour out Christian love to the surviving spouse. As one close friend shared, "I don't know what I would have done without the comfort and caring of my family." Yet, for many who do not have family, or where distance or strained relationships prevent this help, friends can be a rich resource.

What can we as Christian friends do for the one who has suffered the loss of a spouse? As mentioned earlier,

one way is just to **"be there."** Realize that loneliness may be that person's greatest problem, so arrange to spend time together. **Acts of kindness and thoughtfulness** also demonstrate our love and concern. Bringing food, flowers, books, sending an encouraging note or card or helping with needed tasks, and doing these acts of kindness many times over an extended period will truly reveal your love and friendship. Remember, too, that hurtful feelings of loss are especially difficult on holidays, birthdays, anniversaries, and the date of the loved one's death a year or two later.

One of the most significant ways to help someone who has lost a spouse is to **encourage that person to talk through his or her feelings.** Some people prefer a close personal friend with whom to share; others find help in a "grief group" at church or a hospital; still others have such depth of hurting that they need the professional help that a Christian psychologist or psychiatrist can render. Holding feelings in and trying to "go it alone" may only lengthen the time a survivor needs to recover and get on with life.

At an appropriate time, spiritual encouragement can also be offered. We all have to acknowledge that God's timing is perfect. He loves us all, and **He wants the best for each one of us. God has a place and purpose for you!** *"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, 'plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope'"* (Jeremiah 29:11). Perhaps this difficult loss is preparing the survivor for a new ministry: *"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort; who comforts us in all our affliction so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God"* (II Corinthians 1:3,4). **While family and friends can help, ultimately only as the surviving spouse draws near to God and seeks His leading, will he or she experience comfort, hope and healing.** □



OUR WORLD TODAY

by Eva Hallam Solberg

OUTREACH IN CHINA

Church leaders in China are reaching out to young intellectuals. In the past, they have been alienated from the church and Christianity. This was partly due to the fact that Christianity was considered a "mass religion" of the poorly educated. The makeup of the church in China is changing, especially in larger cities.
—*The Church Around the World*

THE BABIES' REVOLUTION

Neglected children in Romania's state-run institutions are finally reaping the benefits of new child-welfare and protection reforms that put the responsibility for child care back in the hands of the family and the community.

Romania's World Vision national director calls it the babies' revolution. The old, communist-era structures of centralized direction and control are being replaced with community-oriented, locally-controlled services. "The real promise of these reforms is that World Vision's work can shift from treating symptoms to dealing with preventing child abandonment, reducing institutionalization, and breaking the cycle of despair and poverty," the director says.

World Vision has teams of expatriate medical professionals providing therapy for developmentally-delayed children as well as training for orphanage staff members. More than 600 orphaned children have been reunited with their families, and over 50 others have been placed in foster care homes. Some 150 children have been adopted by Romanian families.

—*World Vision Today*

True peace is not the absence of war but the presence of God.

—*Our Daily Bread*

FAMILY FILMS MOST PROFITABLE

A study by the Dove Foundation has found that although Hollywood produced 17 R-rated films for each G-rated film between 1988 and 1997, the average G-rated film produced a 78 percent greater return on investment than the average R-rated film.

Copies of the study were distributed to studio executives throughout the movie industry.

The production of R-rated films has increased from 99 in 1994 to an all-time high of 169 in 1997. Since the MPAA rating system was introduced in 1968, nearly 60 percent of all films released by Hollywood have been rated R.

—*EP News Service*

FORCED OFF THE BUS

A woman from Seattle, Washington was forced off a public bus because she and another passenger discussed "religion." She had to walk nearly a mile along a busy highway in driving rain. The woman was five months pregnant at the time.

The Rutherford Institute is filing a lawsuit on her behalf for violation of her civil rights. John Whitehead, president of the Institute said, "Over 40 years after Rosa Parks was told to sit at the back of the bus because of her race, two people talking about their religious beliefs on a bus are

forced to get off. It doesn't look as though we have come very far towards a society of tolerance and diversity."

—*EP News Service*

QUESTIONS CHILDREN ASK

The question most children and young people in Germany want to ask Jesus Christ is, "Why do You let evil things happen?" A survey by the German magazine, *Parents*, interviewed 1,823 children ages seven to seventeen at 70 schools, asking them, "If Jesus were here today, what would you tell or ask Him?"

Questions about evil led the list, followed by questions regarding why there are rich and poor people in the world. Nearly half would ask Jesus to do something for the unemployed, one-third would ask how the world was made and what God looks like.

One ten-year-old pupil said, "I would ask Jesus if He wanted to be my friend."

—*Contact*

CREATIVE INTELLIGENCE

A very important aspect of successful intelligence is creativity—the ability to go beyond the given to generate new and interesting ideas. This usually happens when the crowd goes one way and you go another in an attempt to find a better way to accomplish a goal.

Doing things differently often comes at a price, however. Those who seek new solutions usually encounter barriers. You can develop *creative intelligence* by:

- ▶ Actively seeking out and planning to become a role model. Recall the teachers who most influenced you. They probably weren't the ones who crammed the most content into their lectures, but rather those whose ways of thinking and acting served as models.

- ▶ Questioning assumptions and encouraging others to do so, too.

- ▶ Taking sensible risks and encouraging others to do the same.

- ▶ Allowing yourself and others to make mistakes. Creativity comes with a price, but the result is worth the risk.

Practical intelligence is the ability to translate theory into something useful, and abstract ideas into practical accomplishments. To develop *practical intelligence*:

- ▶ Recognize your pattern of strengths and weaknesses.

- ▶ Strengthen those skills in which you excel.

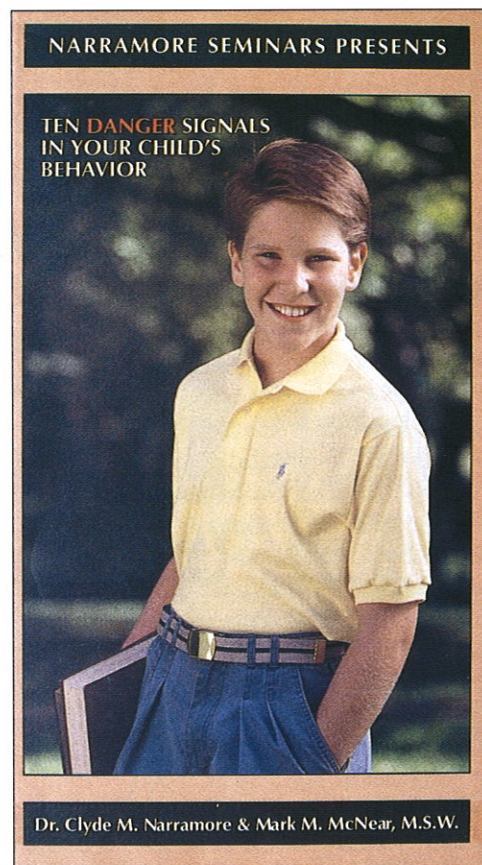
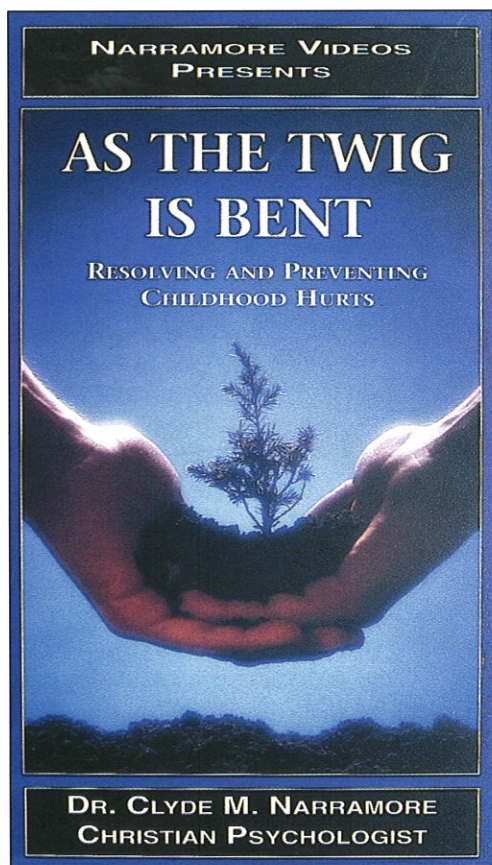
- ▶ Think positively.

(*Bottom Line Personal*)

MICROWAVES

If you bought your microwave oven after 1971, and if it is in good condition, and if you have followed the instructions in the manual, leakage of microwave radiation should be of no concern. Also keep in mind that if you stand 20 inches away while the oven is running, you will get 100 times less radiation than at two inches.

(*UC Berkeley Wellness Letter*)



TWO VIDEOS THAT BRING YOU LIFE-CHANGING INSIGHTS

AS THE TWIG IS BENT

Resolving and preventing childhood hurts

This excellent video identifies your basic emotional needs, then enables you to evaluate how well they have been met in your own life.

Dr. Clyde M. Narramore, well-known Christian psychologist, has presented this message to thousands of lay people as well as to ministers and missionaries who have taken seminars at the Narramore Christian Foundation.

Basic emotional needs of children must be met on a daily basis if they are to become well-adjusted adults. This 28-minute video, *AS THE TWIG IS BENT*, brings a lifetime of insight!

TEN DANGER SIGNALS IN YOUR CHILD'S BEHAVIOR

Some childhood problems are not severe, but others are. Dr. Clyde Narramore points out ten danger signals which you can't afford to overlook. The recent tragedies at Columbine High and other schools spotlight the urgency of being aware of potential problems in a child's behavior.

This video is especially helpful for parents, teachers, youth leaders, and all who work with children. By detecting problems early, you may be able to change the direction of a child's life.

Show *TEN DANGER SIGNALS* at home, church, Sunday School, clubs, and retreats. **Invaluable!**

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