

PSYCHOLOGY FOR LIVING

JANUARY-FEBRUARY 1999

**FIRST AND LAST
THOUGHTS**

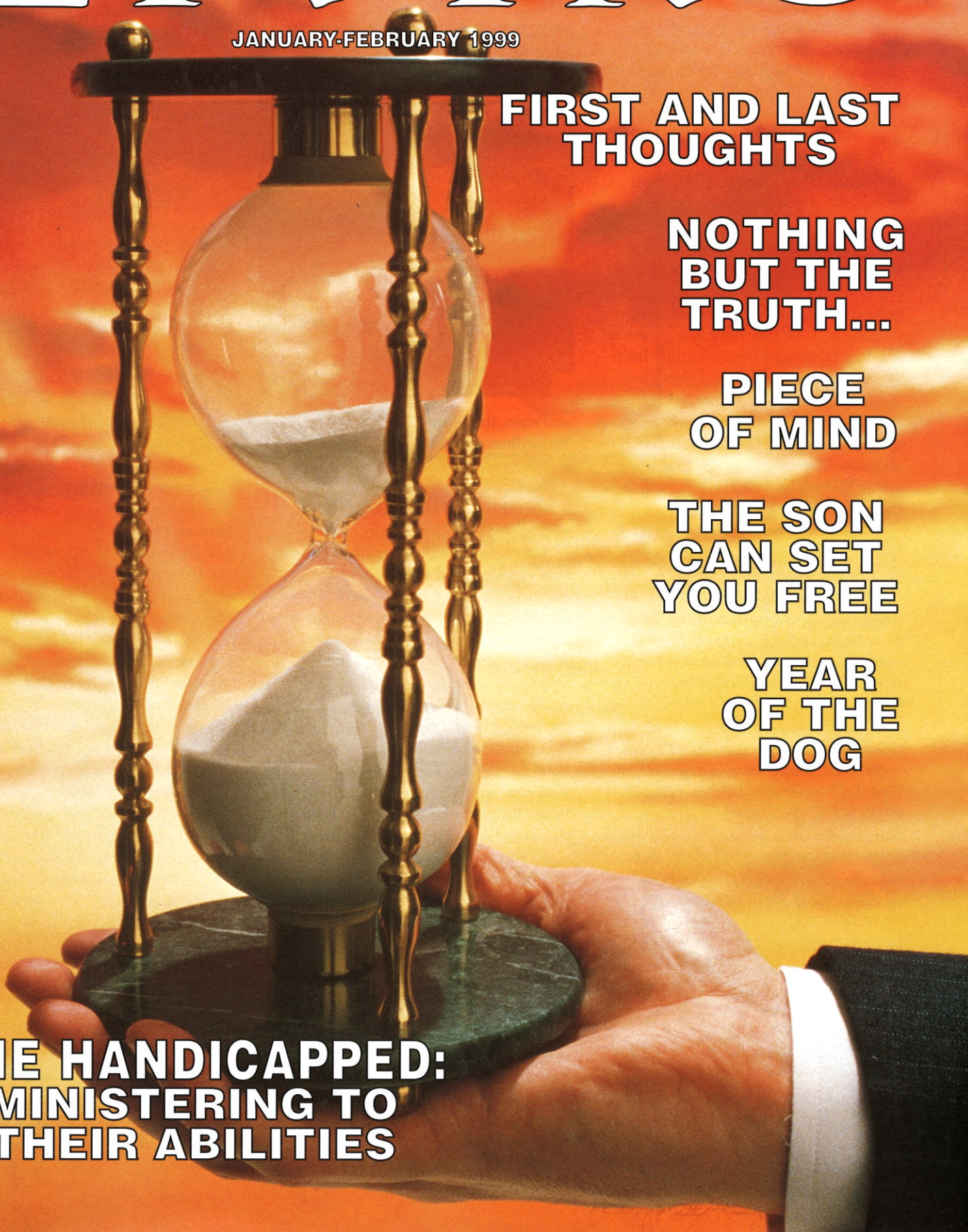
**NOTHING
BUT THE
TRUTH...**

**PIECE
OF MIND**

**THE SON
CAN SET
YOU FREE**

**YEAR
OF THE
DOG**

**THE HANDICAPPED:
MINISTERING TO
THEIR ABILITIES**



A PERSONAL WORD

by Clyde M. Narramore

YOUR LAST YEAR OF THIS MILLENNIUM

AS YOU AND I MOVE into the new year of 1999, we are reminded that we are living in the last 365 days of this millennium.

It sounds rather awesome...and a little scary, doesn't it?

But it's also a great opportunity. As God looks down from Heaven, He is interested in how you and I finish this millennium.

For the unsaved, the last year of this millennium may be a time of riotous living. But they have no guide, no compass, and no direction from the Lord.

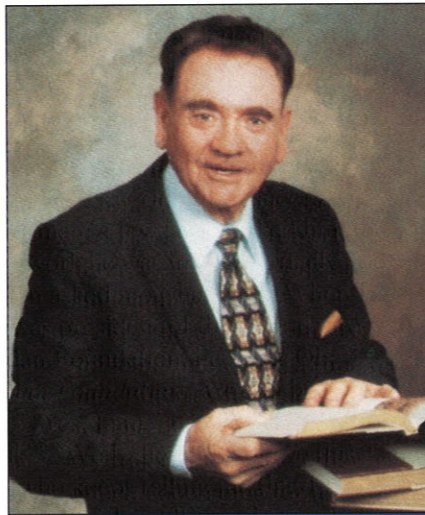
You and I, on the other hand, have so much good going for us. Not only have we been redeemed by God, but He wants to guide us every day. Scripture says, "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path" (Psalms 119:105). He also says, "I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will guide you with My eye" (Psalm 32:8).

What should you and I hold as our special focus during these final days of the present millennium?

First, view this period as one of unusually great opportunity. Great inventions, knowledge, unparalleled communication, and a host of other things are at our disposal. Times are vastly different from even 30 or 40 years ago. And "to whom much is given, from him much will be required" (Luke 12:48).

Second, make sure of your salvation. It is essential to be a member of God's family. This secure position in Christ is the prerequisite for a successful and exciting journey as we finish this important time in history. The Bible teaches, "Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves" (II Corinthians 13:5). After all, we cannot make the journey if we are not on board. Ephesians 2:8, 9 says, "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast."

It is important to realize, too, that regardless of all the world religions, there is only one source of our salvation. We read in I Timothy 2:5, "For there is one God, and one Mediator between God



and men, the Man Christ Jesus." Regardless of what other people claim, this fact remains immutable.

With the complete assurance of our relationship to God we can be used mightily of Him in our daily living.

Third, live each hour of every day in a consecrated manner, always honoring Jesus Christ. This is one of the most important things we can do. Regardless of what other people are doing around us or what is being shown on television or the Internet, we are to be single-minded. We are to live each day in the presence and power of God. We are to think about Him in the morning, at noon, and at night. In short, we are wrapped up in Christ. Only then can we have His special peace and blessing. "You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You" (Isaiah 26:3).

Fourth, live each day with the aim of sharing the "good news" of the gospel with others. We must be alert to the opportunities that come our way to share Christ and His love. Our witness to others will not only help them; it will also strengthen us. Little do we know what spiritual emphasis may have come into the life of the one to whom we are witnessing. Some have not heard the gospel; others have heard a little but do not understand; and others have been witnessed to by numerous people and are

ready to make a decision for Christ.

Not long ago I attended a lecture followed by a dinner. There were eight of us seated at our particular round table. All except my son were strangers to me. During the meal I turned to the man on my left who was evidently a successful businessman, a Jew, and I asked him the type of work he was in. He cordially told me, then asked me what I did. When I said I was president of the Narramore Christian Foundation, he said, "Oh, *Christian Foundation*. Are you born again?" "Yes, I am," I replied. "Why do you ask?" "Well," he said, "I have this friend who keeps telling me that I had better get saved or I'll spend eternity in hell." Then thoughtfully he asked, "What do you think about the necessity of being saved in order to go to Heaven?"

I told him that this question was the most important one anyone could ever raise. I shared with him how and when I was saved and what a difference it made in my daily life. I also encouraged him to take the advice of his "friend" and be born again immediately. We never know when a person may be ready to receive Christ.

Last, be bold in taking a stand for what is right. This is one of the most important contributions we can make to our receding millennium. We should not sit back with our mouths closed, wondering what gross sin we will hear about next. We should speak out against things that are sinful and wrong. God wants to bless His people, but His anger is aroused against groups and nations that ignore Him.

So as you live each day in this millennium's final year, (1) *recognize it as a special time in history*, (2) *be sure of your position in Christ*, (3) *be wholeheartedly committed to God each day*, (4) *be a consistent witness*, and (5) *take a stand for righteousness in this wicked, godless world*.

This, friend, is how you and I should strive to live these precious last days of this second millennium!

Clyde M. Narramore

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STAFF

Founder and President:

Dr. Clyde M. Narramore

Editor:

Ruth E. Narramore

Editorial Assistant and Staff Writer:

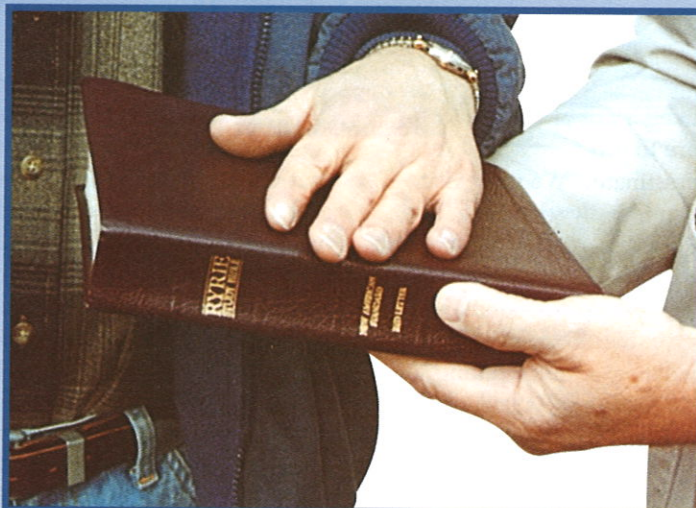
Eva Hallam Solberg

Art Director:

Donald Ensign

Photographer:

Benjamin Burnweit



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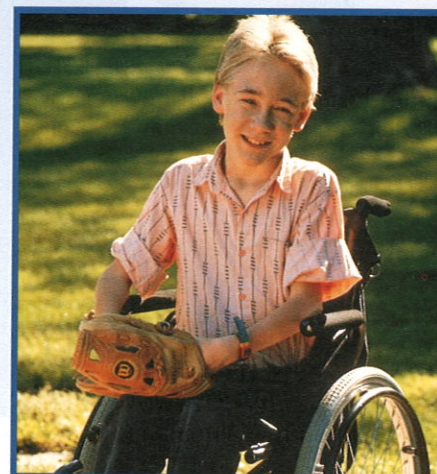
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The Narramore Christian Foundation is a non-profit faith organization dedicated to the prevention and solution of human problems. Dr. Clyde M. Narramore, founder and president, is a licensed Christian psychologist with a doctorate from Columbia University, New York.



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TO THINK ABOUT

by Ruth E. Narramore

AS WE GREET THE DAWN of a New Year and close the pages of the old, we anticipate the future and contemplate the past. This is both natural and necessary. We look ahead and prepare for the future; we reminisce and build upon the experiences of the past. Yet, in all our planning for tomorrow or retrospection upon the successes or failures of yesterday, let us never minimize the vital value of *today*. Indeed, today will be tomorrow's yesterday—another stepping stone in the path of the future.

The Psalmist aptly declared, "This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it." (Psalm 118:24.) What a challenge to realize that each new day is a divine creation and offers opportunities that belong to that day alone! Each day brings its own pleasures—and problems. All too often, however, the menial tasks of everyday living and the troublesome burdens of life dull the luster of the challenge that is ours today. Yet God has promised that "sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof" (Matthew 6:34). He offers strength and guidance for each new day; it is ours for the asking.

Today—not some day: Have you ever noticed that the person who gets things done is the one who does it right away? Yet, how likely most of us are to procrastinate. "We must visit Aunt Emily sometime," we glibly assert. "Let's get together one of these times," we suggest to our friends. We promise the children that we will take a family outing "one of these days." And, oh, how prone we are to pass off our spiritual responsibility with the statement, "Some day I must witness to my neighbor about the Lord." But all too often "some day" never comes. Time slips by and the things we "mean to do" never become a reality.

It is not always easy to break into the daily routine to do that special something. But it is worth it. Such times transform an ordinary day into a memorable occasion. It draws us closer to our family and friends. Instead of dream-



ing, we are doing—and our lives are richer and fuller because of it. Many times, if we don't just "up and do it," a thing will never be done. And it's the things that require some effort

that make life interesting and add fulfillment to everyday living. Strangely enough, it is always what we are going to do tomorrow that seems to entice us. But it is only what we do today that counts.

Today—not yesterday: Someone once said, "If what you did yesterday still looks big to you, then you have done nothing today." Although pleasant memories are a wonderful asset, they should never supplant the urgency of the present. When we fail to recognize current problems and needs, we weaken the future. It is important that we meet today for what it is and stop leaning on yesterday.

Living in the past offers no solution for the present. We cannot alter what was done

yesterday, but we can shape the destiny of the future by what we do today. We should neither be discouraged by past failures nor rest on yesterday's laurels. We cannot ride along on our zeal for the Lord ten years ago—or even last year. Our spiritual status is a day-by-day experience, and if we are to be effective Christians with God's continued blessing on our lives, we must be in touch with Him today.

Today—and everyday: "Redeeming the time, because the days are evil," is timely advice (Ephesians 5:16). Let us spend each moment in such a way that we shall never regret the manner in which it was spent. Time is as much a trusteeship as money, and there are no capitalists. We cannot "invest" it to use in the future, but we can, by God's grace, use it fruitfully now, and reap the blessing and results in the future.

We are held accountable for what we do *today*. Yet we need not meet the magnitude of this challenge in our own strength. God promises to order our steps one day at a time. We must trust Him and follow Him today and each succeeding day as it comes. □

WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING

Y2K BUG

I really appreciated the article by Dr. Kevin Narramore on Y2K. It (Y2K) has been the subject of a lot of discussion, even by the teacher of my 3rd grade grandson! I copied the article for him to take to his teacher. People can become so frightened but knowing our Lord and His Word can bring peace again to our hearts.

I always enjoy *Psychology for Living* and all the resource

material from the Narramore Foundation. Thank you for making these blessings available.

*Barbara B. Sturgill
Chilhowis, Virginia*

REJOICING

We apologize for not thanking you regularly for your excellent ministries. Your magazine and books have blessed our marriage over the past 30 years. I am now eighty-one and my wife is sev-

enty-five, and we are in our 52nd year of marriage. We are rejoicing in God's provision of strength, guidance, and daily blessings.

Your ministry to missionary teenagers is thrilling to us. Thank you for all you do.

*M/M Howard Reinke
Aurora, Ontario, Canada*

KIDS AND VIOLENCE

I always enjoy your radio program so much. The information you gave on kids and

violence was very significant. Thank you, Dr. Narramore, for the good programming, and I especially thank God for having you there.

*Ruben Leduc
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania*

PLAN TO SHARE

As usual, your *LETTER OF BLESSING* is such an inspiration. I plan to make a few copies to share.

*Patricia Roshto
Metairie, Louisiana*

NOTHING BUT THE TRUTH

"Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord, but those who deal truthfully are His delight" (Proverbs 12:22).

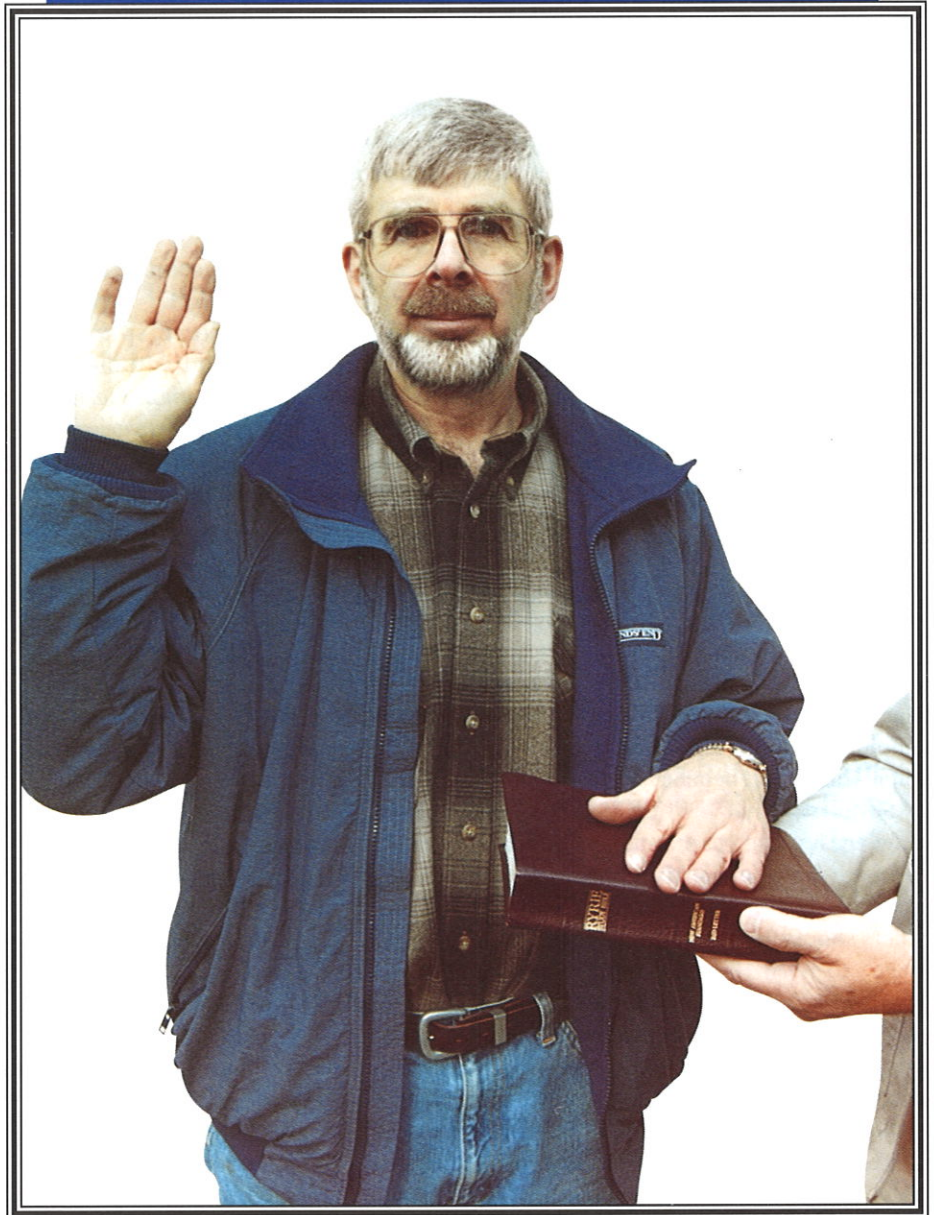
***by John Alan Cohan,
Attorney-at-Law***

AS A LAWYER, I'm in one of the least appreciated professions of all. Attorneys are often distrusted and many people consider them to be liars.

As a Christian, I do not endorse others to withhold the truth. I believe that in the absence of highly unusual circumstances, truth is always preferable to a lie. So I am appalled that so many people today do not regard lying as reprehensible. The notion that each and every person has a moral obligation to tell the truth is becoming eroded. In the Bible there is much evidence that lying is a particularly dangerous sin. Lying is not only an offense against God in virtue of the Ten Commandments, but "he who speaks lies shall perish" (Proverbs 19:9), which means that lying has an internal effect that is damaging to one's soul.

There is much controversy as to what constitutes a lie, and admittedly, there are several species of lies. Some lies are downright reprehensible while others may even be justified. There are some situations where a virtuous person would choose to lie—such as in order to save someone from being murdered by a Hitler who is banging down your door in search of your guest, or in the case of those who lied to bring slaves to freedom with the Underground Railroad before the Civil War. (Also read the story of Rahab in the second chapter of Joshua.)

But just what is a lie, and what kind of harm does lying cause? Simply put, to lie is to make a knowingly false statement to another person. In order to lie, the speaker must be aware that what he is communicating is not true. The speaker's intent is to make a false utterance, not a joke or a cynical remark. If you are innocently mistaken as to some fact but think you are telling the truth, that is not lying. Lying can be in any form of explicit communication, oral or written, or it can be by gestures, or other implied conventions of communicating. You cannot lie to yourself — although deceiving oneself is another matter. A lie



must be directed to another person.

People think that lies come in many colors. Some say that there is a continuum of lies, as it were, with the "worst" lies based on malicious motives, while "harmless" lies are those based on "good" motives, such as giving someone a false compliment or telling your host what a pleasant evening you had when in fact you were bored.

Telling the truth can get you into trouble; we all know that. If a child steals something from his mother's purse and tells the truth, he will be punished. If he lies he might get away with it and be all the richer for his ill-gotten gain.

In certain arenas people have a right to be informed of the truth. We often think this is the case in communications by those entrusted with leadership — whatever their field. It is our national belief that the President, for instance, must tell the truth whenever he makes a statement to the public. Any lack of truth-telling on the part of a leader would run counter to Jesus' words in the parable of the wise manager: "To whom much is given, from him much will be required" (Luke 12:48).

We also expect to enjoy the right to be informed of the truth in communications between an attorney and client, doctor and patient, or in other relationships of a fiduciary nature, as between employer and employee, parent and child, teacher and pupil, trustee and beneficiary, and so on.

Some say that certain professional privileges permit or even require lies to be told: Take executive privilege, for instance. Plato said in the *Republic* that rulers should be given an "executive privilege" to lie if they have some specific good in mind for the public — but that makes little sense today, when we expect our leaders to uphold the highest standards of moral and ethical conduct, both publicly and privately.

There is also the priest-penitent privilege, the psychotherapist-patient privilege, and a host of others. As an attorney, I am obliged by standards of my profession to keep secrets disclosed to me by clients. But does that mean I can lie about it or encourage my client to lie? Not at all. If asked about a privileged matter I can say, "I am not free to comment on that."

"To lie belongs to the unfree, and to speak the truth belongs to the noble."
Stobaeus

I would never coach a client to lie. But many lawyers are perceived to routinely tempt clients into lying. This is not what the attorney-client privilege contemplates. In fact, a lawyer has a professional responsibility to prevent a client from lying, and if an attorney knows that a client has lied under oath, he has a duty to try and stop it or correct the wrong.

Lying can be very subtle. It is possible to lie without actually speaking an untruth. That is, I can spur you into believing a falsehood without actually telling a lie. I can answer a question in an ambiguous way to avoid revealing a truth which I want to keep hidden. You might misinterpret what I say and therefore become deceived — yet I have not formally lied.

Aristotle called the "foolish boaster" someone who pretends to have that which he does not really possess. The foolish boaster makes things up in order to boost his reputation or to gain an undeserved honor. Sometimes the lie is just for titillation — "for its own sake" — with no further gain in mind. The problem for the foolish boaster is that people can often see through his pretense. In the long run lies tend to be found out. Boasting shows a willingness to lie in small matters, and this puts others on notice that the foolish boaster is a "lover of falsehood" who cannot be trusted.

A close cousin to this is the flatterer. The flatterer tells others what he feels would please them in order to curry favor or gain their approval. The flatterer attributes "more than is proper and true" to the person being flattered.

Some lies are aimed to avoid harm to oneself or to others. Lying to save one's skin is dramatically illustrated in the New Testament where Peter thrice denies that he is a "friend" of Jesus (Matthew 26:69-75). Peter lied because he feared being dragged before the Sanhedrin which had

arrested Jesus on the night of His betrayal.

The worst lies are those where the speaker explicitly intends to cause harm to another ("pernicious lies"). An example is committing perjury in order to ruin another. Other reprehensible lies are aimed at gaining an unfair advantage by cheating on a test, lying on a resume in order to get a job, or lying on a loan application. Lies of this kind are damaging to

others as well as to oneself. Indeed, there is an entire body of penal and civil law that punishes the making of false statements for the purpose of gaining ill-gotten advantages.

Aristotle thought that a truthful person is one who is "self-reliant" [authenkas-tos], which has given translators a great deal of difficulty. The Greek root in our word is "authentic." The self-reliant person is authentic because he is not the least concerned about how he will appear to others. Thus, someone who is self-reliant is truthful in that a truthful person shows himself as he really is. And he doesn't have to concoct more lies to cover for previous ones. This is in contrast to the boaster who is so concerned about how he appears that he tries to bolster his image by exaggeration and just plain untruths. He is the opposite of self-reliant.

Why is lying harmful? There are numerous reasons:

1. Lying is detrimental to the well-being of the community. If it were customary for people to be liars, or if lying were tolerated, the entire institution of promise keeping, contracts, vows, and oaths would fall apart. If I borrow your pen and promise to return it when I'm through, we are both partaking of the institution of promise keeping, and on a multiple level this allows for commerce, contracts, social engagements, and myriads of other important dealings. If people live in a society where lying is a frequent occurrence, no one could assume that another is telling the truth.

2. Lies can be destructive to the trust essential to friendships, relationships, and marriages. For the foolish boaster, while it may be fun at the moment, even this kind of lie has undesirable consequences in whittling away the overall mutual trust between people.

3. The baseness of lies is seen

partly in their consequences. In lying you deprive others of the truth, and they then continue in reliance on what you have said, thinking they have a realistic view of the state of affairs involved. The problem is that they base choices, decisions, and actions on what you have communicated to them. This is wrong. Lies, as already pointed out, also serve as a means of gaining an unfair advantage or of skirting one's responsibilities.

4. Lying is more personally damaging to the liar himself than to anyone else. For the foolish boaster, such lies destroy the trust essential to true friendship, one's reputation is forfeited. Also, there is a tendency for liars — even “occasional” liars — to become distrustful of others. A type of psychological “projection” takes over which causes a person to be cynical of others. This makes it more difficult to have committed, long-term relationships.

5. Like other sins, lying can easily spill over into other behavior damaging to oneself or to others. Lying permeates one's character. “Character” is derived from a Greek word [charakter] meaning “engraving.” Character is like an engraving on one's soul. It reveals a per-

son's moral worth. Character evidence is often used in court to prove important questions. It is used to evaluate job applicants, to assess candidates for public office, to evaluate performance in the military, as well as in all ranks of life. That is why it is crucial to teach children at the earliest opportunity to tell the truth, so that it will become part of their character.

Are there “good” lies? Some ethical scholars, such as Kant, would say that a lie is intrinsically bad and is never an act of goodness. But Aristotle described the “self-deprecating lies” of a magnanimous person who wants to be courteous, avoid pomposity, or exercise a kind of humility as acceptable. The Einsteins of the world often give a low evaluation of their accomplishments, which makes them seem more human and puts others at ease. And a lie motivated to perform some overriding act of charity — such as in the Underground Railroad example used above — would seem to be in a sense “good,” but it is still a lie.

There is a saying, “To lie belongs to the unfree, and to speak the truth belongs to the noble” (attributed to Stobaeus). That means that only when

you tell the truth are you completely free; *only then* do you exercise free will. What it suggests is that you are *unfree* when you lie. Indeed, one lie often necessitates another to cover the previous untruth. This can develop into a network of falsehoods that eventually will ensnare you.

Sometimes it takes strength of will to tell the truth. This is not a virtue that automatically kicks in as we grow up. Rather, it is like a muscle which has to be exercised in order to be made strong. The practice of virtue is actually the centerpiece of Christian living. People who are “natural” in their practice of virtues have gotten that way through repeated, consistent upright behavior. That practice is powerful fuel for one's will.

Someone who is a lover of truth, who is truthful even when nothing is at stake, will be even more truthful when something is at stake. No wonder God commands, “Thou shalt not bear false witness” (Exodus 20:16). He means it to be our way of life. □

Mr. John Alan Cohan is an attorney-at-law with offices in Los Angeles, California. He is a freelance writer on moral and ethical issues who desires to foster Judaic-Christian values.

YEAR OF THE DOG

Dogs don't ask how bad your day has been. They accept you as you are, lick your hand, and tremble with excitement because someone they love is back in their world.

by Jack Williams

HAVE YOU NOTICED that people don't send cats to obedience school? Are cats too dumb to learn? Nope, the problem is attitude, not intelligence. Dogs want to please their masters. Cats, on the other hand, please themselves and use you as a scratching post if you cross them.

The fact is, dogs work for a living while cats loaf. Say a burglar creeps through your window at 3:00 a.m. Guess who sounds the alarm and maybe even chomps on a leg? The much-maligned pooch, that's who! Brother Meow, on the other hand, by his silence acts more like an accomplice.

Dogs retrieve and fetch, roll over and heel while cats simply act bored.

Check this out: Dogs rid the world of Jezebel (I Kings 21:23). When Gideon whittled down his army of 32,000, the final test

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FIRST AND LAST THOUGHTS

It is crucial that the mortal mind meshes with the mind of Christ.

by J. Grant Swank, Jr.

WHEN YOU START A NEW DAY, **turn your first thoughts toward God.**

"This is the day the Lord has made, we will rejoice and be glad in it" (Psalm 118:24).

Satan tries to foil your day by climbing into your first thoughts. There is some person you dread having to confront. There is a situation which is filled with nettles. Or perhaps it's a payment that has no money to back it up.

The enemy of the soul knows when to strike. He is aware of timing.

You, too, must be aware of timing. As Satan moves in when your thoughts are half-awake and half-asleep, immediately turn your mind toward God.

If there is one negative thought

that intrudes, immediately surrender it to God. Tell Him that He can carry it, for God has told you that He can: "Cast all your cares upon Him (God) for He (God) cares for you." Then leave the burden-carrying to God.

If there is a second negative thought which intrudes, immediately surrender that second thought to God. Continue with that thinking mode throughout the day. That is the secret for spiritual victory: TOTAL SURRENDER, MOMENT-BY-MOMENT.

If others in your home tend to be negative, kindly explain to them that you would appreciate it if they would verbalize positive, faith-filled words, particularly at the day's start. Explain your *modus operandi*.

As you awaken, take your time getting out of bed. The reason? So you can focus your thoughts clearly on one goal: committing your day to God, initiating the proceedings with heaven in control.

Take one minute to say to God: "I am now giving the hours of this new day to you. I do not want them to be in my control. I want you, my Maker, to be in charge of everything. Therefore, I dedicate this day to you and your plans for every moment throughout the day. May you use me for Your Kingdom by showing me how I can help others. In Your name. Amen."

It is crucial that the mortal mind meshes with the mind of Christ, particularly at the day's dawn. Paul informs us that we *can* have the mind of Christ; therefore, it is up

to our free wills to activate that privilege.

Naturally, it helps the soul to digest some spiritual food along with one's physical breakfast. Therefore, take into your thoughts the messages of the revealed Word.

Continue with these snippets throughout the day. Tuck them into your pocket, lunch box, pocketbook, wallet, slide them underneath your desk pad, tack them to the kitchen curtain, tape them to the car's dash, use them as bookmarks when going off to school.

How the mind thinks throughout the waking hours is the measure of how you will overcome the day's difficulties. "As a man thinks in his heart, so is he" (Proverbs 23:7).

The mind forms itself for each new 24 hours with its first thoughts. Slide them then out of the devil's claw and deposit them into the Father's gracious will.

Last Thoughts

Before going to rest at night, slip into the Word.

The worst thing to do before trying to go to sleep is to bombard your head with the late news. Who needs it? Wars, murders, rapes, bad weather. Who really needs that?

Don't do it.

In the morning when you awaken, the world will still be there. It usually is.

Start the day with God's Good News on your mind. Close the day with God's Good News on your mind.

Therefore, before going to sleep, tuck into your mind I Corinthians 13 or Psalm 91 or Matthew 6:24-34.

Then give to God everything in your life up to the very second that you are breathing. Hand it all over to the Savior — good and bad. Why? Because, to that moment, the Door of the Past has been locked to you forever. You will never be able to get into that room again.

Therefore, put all that is over and done with under the precious, cleansing blood of Jesus Christ. Let Him particularly forgive you of all past sins. He wants to wash them away so that they are forgiven and forgotten. This is gospel.

Do it.

Just as you close the Door of the Past, now open the Door of the Present. With that, rest in God's arms, letting Him carry you into sleep for the night. Picture yourself being cradled by the Father, for that is exactly what He wants to do with your life.

Then, with eyes closed, repeat to yourself the comforting words of Psalm 23. Give yourself that gift as you begin to fall asleep.

Repeat those lines over again, then again. Let the truths of those beautiful promises sink into your soul — way down deep. What a healthy way to begin each night's

rest of mind, body, and spirit.

Let the Door of the Future wait till morning. You cannot get through that door at night anyhow; it is simply not there for you to knock on, let alone, open. Therefore, refrain from playing God.

Consequently as you fall asleep in God, know that He is going to speak to you while asleep. He is the God who does not slumber nor sleep; yet while you are sleeping, He will still be dealing with your life — for your good and the Kingdom's benefit.

Let Him do it.

Do you enjoy music? Then why not listen to some soothing favorites while drifting into rest for the night?

If you awaken during the night, return to picturing yourself cradled by the Father. If you are taunted by fears and dreads, surrender them immediately to the Father. If you are tossed and turned by perplexities, do not try to figure them out in the dark; instead, submit them to heaven as soon as they come into your consciousness.

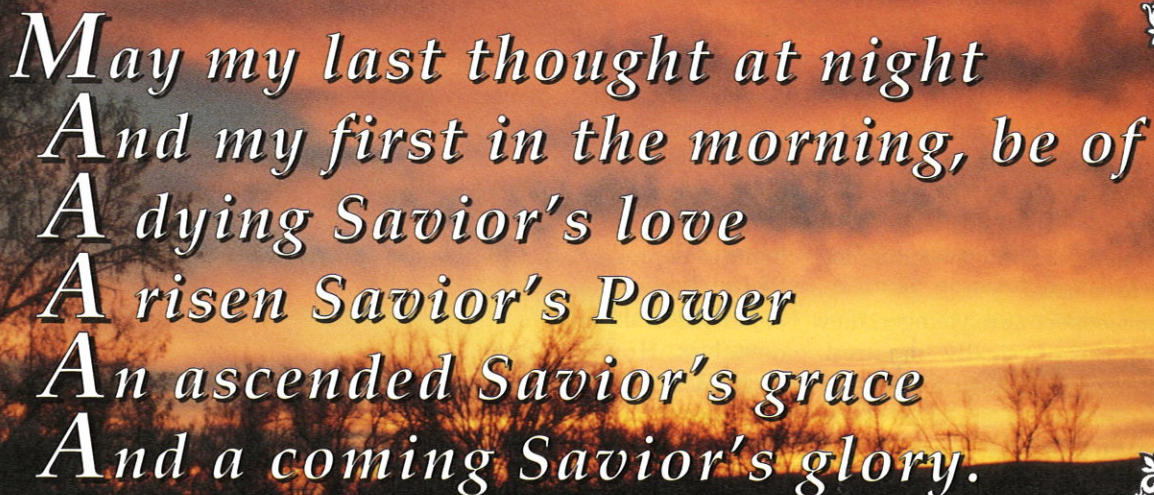
Return your thoughts to Psalm 23. Think through those promises until you return to sweet, peaceful sleep.

The Book of Hebrews, Chapter 4, reminds us that there is rest for the people of God.

Do you experience that rest?

You can. □

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



*May my last thought at night
And my first in the morning, be of
A dying Savior's love
A risen Savior's Power
An ascended Savior's grace
And a coming Savior's glory.*

THE SON CAN SET YOU FREE



Men and women wanting deliverance from their homosexual lifestyles are finding the help they need.

by Muriel Larson

“YEARS AGO,” Lynne Cooper says, “my husband John and I envisioned spending our lives helping people with special needs. But we never dreamed the Lord would lead us into something like the lay-counseling ministry we have now.”

When the Coopers were younger, they worked with the physically impaired. John’s hope was to manage a camp for such persons. Instead, financial pressures sent him into an industrial career.

The Coopers’ desire to help the hurting was directed into church work such as teaching, counseling, visiting, or whatever was needed. Through these endeavors,

they felt God was preparing them for something of His choosing. Looking back, they can now see how He prepared them for a special challenge.

“There were times when we suffered bouts of depression,” Lynne reveals. “We had to learn some basic principles of emotional health, and then practice them ourselves. Honest communication and forgiveness became an important part of our lives. This firsthand experience has proved invaluable to our work.”

The Coopers’ ministry began when Bruce* (who was suicidal) came to them for help. “I want out of my homosexuality!” he exclaimed. “But I don’t know how

to do it. My pastor told me he didn’t understand my problem and couldn’t help me.”

Bruce had often sought help from various churches and organizations, but none of them fully understood his problem. No one could offer any practical means that could help him leave the homosexual lifestyle.

The Coopers saw that Bruce was sincere and earnestly wanted to change, so they determined to do something to help him. They searched for a Christian organization or some person who worked with homosexuals so Bruce could get help and be freed from his aberrant lifestyle. Since they were unable to find anyone near their location of Greenville, South Carolina, the Coopers phoned a church in Atlanta, Georgia, where they were referred to Joel Afman.

“I’ll be glad to help,” Joel responded. He drove 150 miles to Greenville to lead the first support group organized by the Coopers. The Coopers had asked the Lord to give them confirmation that He wanted them to enter a ministry to homosexuals. “We knew He wouldn’t ask us to get involved in work of this kind without equipping us to do it,” said John, “so God sent Joel to teach us. The materials he provided were from a Christian organization called Exodus International and were excellent.

John went to the West Coast on business, and Lynne accompanied him. There they visited the home office of Exodus International. This organization helps homosexuals throughout North America by providing information about starting local ministries and offering literature and teaching tapes to churches.

With support from other ministries, the Coopers launched their own. They began by giving presentations at churches and in prisons, and also had appearances on radio and television. As a result, men and women desiring deliverance from their homosexual lifestyles contacted them for help. Following the example of other Exodus programs, the Coopers offered a variety of services — counseling, support groups, and seminars.

They have found counseling and praying with people to be their favorite part of the ministry. “What a joy to see those in a support group graduate,” Lynne says. “We are thrilled as God continues to unfold life and ministry for them.”

Like a number of others whom the

PIECE OF MIND

Giving you a piece of my mind brings me closer to peace of mind.

by R. Jeanette Harbage

IF YOU SAY, "I'd like to give them a piece of my mind!" you aren't likely thinking of flattery or some encouraging words.

On the other hand, it may be very important for your family or others to have some insight into your thinking on a number of subjects. When someone you love experiences a severe loss of ability to communicate, you feel an urgency to impart something of your feelings, desires, ideals, faith, even regrets, while your mind functions at least reasonably well — while there are still pieces of it to share.

Do you ever consider that you may one day face living without being able to communicate? Or do you avoid discussing the possibility, and hope it never will become your lot? You are mistaken if you think, *It can't happen to me*. A stroke, accident, or a disease may come suddenly or slowly, leaving impairment from minor to extreme.

In many instances through the marvels of modern medicine, life is sustained beyond reason. Probably like most people, I do not wish to have my dying prolonged. I am ready to meet my Lord when the time comes. But I still need to face the fact that there may come a time when I am unable to communicate.



Coopers have worked with, Rick[®] was molested as a child and became entrapped in a homosexual lifestyle as an adult. While in the hospital with a brain tumor, Rick accepted Christ as his Savior. But he still struggled with homosexuality. When Rick's "lover" found help through the Coopers' ministry, Rick saw such a change in his friend's life that he decided to seek help as well. And God freed him too. Today, Rick serves the Lord as a singing evangelist.

Michael[®] had a poor relationship with his father who was unfaithful to Michael's mother. Repulsed by this unacceptable male role model, Michael rejected it by refusing to acknowledge his own masculinity. This left him wide open to homosexual advances. Through the Coopers' program,

Michael realized his problem and faced his feelings about other men. Healing came as he forgave his father and let go of the bitterness that filled him. "This enabled me to receive the masculinity the Lord intended for me and to renounce homosexuality," he states. After a year of growth in the Lord, he fell in love with a fine Christian young lady and is now engaged to be married.

Scott[®] grew up hating his cruel, mentally-ill father. As a young man, he had a strong tendency to be emotionally dependent on other men. When he was dismissed from a Christian music organization, Scott was so shattered that he contemplated suicide.

Then a group from the Coopers' ministry visited his church. A former lesbian told how she had been emotionally dependent upon another woman, and

Dr. Muriel Larson is a counselor and author in Greenville, South Carolina. To contact Exodus International phone 1-206-784-7799.

Names have been changed to protect identities.

My life is no longer a yo-yo, up and down," he says. "Now I get into God's Word, and I talk with Him. Today I am free. Praise the Lord! He does answer prayer. The Son can set you free. He did it for me!"

Jesus Himself declared, "If the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed" (John 8:36). That is the goal of such servants as John and Lynne Cooper — freedom in Christ for everyone. □

THE HANDICAPPED: MINISTERING TO THEIR ABILITIES

Discover the things people can do despite their disabilities.

by Venus E. Bardanouve



IN MY WORK WITH PEOPLE with handicaps, I have learned that most of them have more abilities than disabilities. The Scriptures tell us to "Strengthen the feeble hands, steady the knees that give way; say to those with fearful hearts, 'Be strong, do not fear' " (Isaiah 35:3,4). One of the ways we can do this in our churches is to discover the things people *can* do despite their disabilities — physical, mental, or emotional.

Ten-year-old Joel, severely hard-of-hearing and small in stature, was learning to talk in my school

classroom for the hearing-handicapped, but needed much encouragement. One day the doorknob was loose, so I sent him for the custodian. However, Joel came back instead with a big screwdriver and happily began to tighten the doorknob. From then on, we made him "class handyman." It was amazing how many things we found that only Joel could fix. He now occupied a special position in the class, and "grew taller."

We can put this principle into action in our churches, too. I think of a young man with Down's

matter what your vocation may be. Seek wisdom, not just knowledge. Study Proverbs for some very good advice. Laugh with those who laugh, and weep with those who weep. Remember that a glad heart is good medicine. Show the world whose side you are on!

Don't spend money foolishly. Make a budget and stick with it. Always set aside your tithes, offerings, and savings from your earnings. This comes first. Don't think you must spend money on someone to prove your love for him or her. Your actions, attitudes and words speak louder than your gifts. On the other hand, don't be stingy! Be "quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to become angry."

Read a poem, sing a song, watch a sunset, write a letter, listen to the sea. Tell someone you love him or her. Hug someone who needs a hug. Talk to a friend. Help someone in need. Be honest in all your dealings. Be dependable. Rely on the Lord. Be confident. God has made you a very special person. Identify your strengths and weaknesses, and learn to distinguish between wants and needs. Pray!

Regrets? Yes, everybody has some. I regret not having told you of my love for you more often throughout the years. I regret that at times my expectations of you were too great — a hardship for you — and that at times my expectations were not great enough to cause you to reach your fullest potential. I regret my known and unknown shortcomings. God forgives me; I trust you do, too. Please know, however, how much I have always loved you — and always will.

Giving you "a piece of my mind" brings me closer to peace of mind. Of course, real peace of mind comes from knowing God through His Son, Jesus Christ.

Your "piece of mind" may differ from mine, but don't put off the giving until it is too late to give! □

NOTE: Today, computers can type your message so that it looks like print. At stationery stores "empty" books are also available. Probably few things would please loved ones more than having a "book" from you.

R. Jeannette Hardage is a freelance writer. She and her husband live in Sonora, California.

YEAR OF THE DOG

(Continued from p. 7)

for the select 300 included only those soldiers who alertly lapped water like a dog (Judges 7:5). And to be clear on the matter, "...a living dog is better than a dead lion" (Ecclesiastes 9:4).

Dogs watched over Job's flocks (Job 30:1). There's precedence for keeping dogs in the house and feeding them (Mark 7:28). Men turned their backs on the beggar, Lazarus, but dogs came and licked his sores clean (Luke 16:21).

That's a good track record for the dog, frequently referred to by the more discerning as "man's best friend." Now, let's move on to what dogs can teach us.

A recent issue of *From the Beehive* carried a snappy list titled, "Things We Can Learn from Our Dogs." It included a list of sure-fire canine principles. Here are a few.

"Run, romp and play daily." If that sounds familiar, it's because your doctor told you the same thing last fall when you had your annual physical. Get out of the house, exercise and enjoy life. Nobody enjoys a good romp in the yard more than a dog that's been cooped up in the house (spelled o-f-f-i-c-e) all day.

"On hot days, drink lots of water and lie under a shade tree." Does this dog principle also sound familiar? Doctors usually tell patients to stay out of the hot sun and drink 8-10 glasses of water a day. Dogs have practiced this for a long time and seldom wander far from

cool water or a shade tree. (You may substitute Gatorade and a rocking chair.)

"Be loyal." This dog principle is world famous. A dog never turns tail and runs under the front porch when trouble steps into the yard. He won't bite the hand that feeds him. You can count on him when the bullies in life come looking for you.

We need to do some serious study on this "be loyal" idea. If you think you're somebody important, try bossing around another man's dog. Dogs wrote the book on loyalty and being there for you when everybody else walks out.

"Thrive on attention and let people touch you." That's another universal dog principle. The reason some folks act so antsy is that they bare their teeth and never let people get past their growl. Pat a dog gently on the head and you'll come away with a strange sense of serenity.

There's a special kind of healing that only comes with touch. Our society of law-suits and charges of harassment has lost one of its most priceless qualities — the freedom to be open and transparent.

"When loved ones come home, always run to greet them." Let's hear it for this special dog principle! It's a great way to welcome home Dad, Mom, or the kids. Replace the accusing, "Supper is cold. Where were you?" with, "Oh, I'm so glad you're here!"

Dogs don't ask how bad your day has been. They accept you as you are, lick your hand and tremble with excitement because someone they love is back in their world. All they want is your atten-

tion, a touch, a kind word. They don't complain about the dryer or invite their mother-in-law home unexpectedly.

"No matter how often you're scolded, don't buy into the guilt and pout routine, but run right back and make friends." This dog principle is a pretty good philosophy of life for both man and beast.

Dogs don't hold grudges. They'll forgive just about anything. Maybe that's why when life falls apart with our other relationships, we like to pull a warm dog close and hug him. Hmm, that might work with a spouse, too.

"Never pretend to be something you're not." This dog principle promises to prevent an identity crisis. You see, a dog never confuses himself with a pick-up truck or a blue jay. He knows what he is and who he isn't. He knows his limitations and lives life with his own strengths. In other words, he doesn't chase a cat bigger than he is, because he might catch him.

Dogs know when it's their duty to bark. They don't waste their energy trying to moo, crow, or hiss. The idea here is to know what you can do, and spend your life doing it well. This lowers the frustration level.

Get on board with me here. Let's put the bite on bad attitudes and frolic more in the sunshine. Maybe we should declare 1999 "The Year of the Dog."

Woof! □

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

by Kevin Narramore

NOTHING TO OFFER BUT OBEDIENCE



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

"THAT EVENING THE DISCIPLES CAME TO HIM (JESUS) AND

said, 'This is a desolate place, and it is getting late. Send the crowds away so they can go to the villages and buy food for themselves.' But Jesus replied, 'That isn't necessary — you feed them.'

'Impossible!' they exclaimed. 'We have only five loaves of bread and two fish.' Bring them here,' He said. They all ate as much as they wanted, and they picked up twelve baskets of leftovers. About five thousand men had eaten from those five loaves, in addition to all the women and children" (Matthew 14:20-21 NLT).

In this well-known New Testament story, Christ's disciples were told to feed the thousands of hungry and tired people who had come to hear Jesus teach. Frustrated, the disciples replied that there were only five loaves and two fish available. To feed this multitude was an impossible and unreasonable request! Unperturbed, Jesus took the five loaves and two fish, blessed them, and gave them to His disciples to distribute to the crowd. Amazingly, after everyone had been fed, there were still twelve baskets of food left over!

Why didn't the disciples feel able to follow the Lord's command and multiply the food? Answer: *They thought that since humankind they were unable to do it, then it couldn't be done!* Although it is natural for us to try to figure things out, the Bible warns us to "lean not on your own understanding" (Proverbs 3:5). Many well-

educated professionals, for example, have been taught to analyze problems through the grid of their specialized education but not to think outside their narrow field of secular knowledge. Today, there are countless problems in the world we would like to solve, yet find too overwhelming; hunger, crime, disease, divorce, illiteracy, pollution, terrorism, the spread of secularism in "post-Christian" America, expanding cults and false religions, to name a few. And then there are personal burdens and problems.

As I look at the Matthew 14 story of the feeding of the five thousand, I realize that when we get stumped because we can't think of the answers, we really have nothing to offer God except our obedience. In fact, we stand in the way of God's work the most when we buy into the mistaken belief that our knowledge and personal resources are wholly adequate. In reality, God doesn't need our help, does He? He is the all-sufficient One. Nevertheless, God allows us to participate in His divine work. In fact, He wants our personal involvement. What a paradox of the Christian faith! It's the broken vessels (cracked pots, if you will), that God uses to do the outpouring. Today's Christians, like the disciples, are able to identify

tify plenty of needs. Our first response, however, is to see them as challenges that exceed our capability. We're more prone to retreat than to ask Jesus to enable us to meet those needs. Yet, the Bible tells us, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God... and all things shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6:33). When we finally admit our complete dependence on Him, then His resources will multiply our scant reserves.

Does this mean that we should never try to use our heads to figure out how to handle life's problems? Of course not. Through general revelation God has allowed us to learn aspects of truth in our study of the universe, man, and science. Nevertheless, if we only rely on what is known or can be analyzed, then we miss the opportunity of exercising our faith. Rather than merely taking into account the available, the immediate, and the scientifically obvious — God challenges us to imagine what He alone can do.

Such is the case with Pastor Tommy Barnett who in 1994 founded the L.A. International Church because he felt God was telling him to be a light in the very darkest part of the inner city. Beginning with a church of about 48 people, the ministry is now reaching five to ten thousand per week.

Located in the heart of poverty, hopelessness, and violence, the L.A. International Church is surrounded by 75,000 gang members who actively recruit young children into a life of crime, violence, and drugs. And each night in Los Angeles, several thousand homeless people sleep on the sidewalks. Pastor Barnett and his son, Matthew, have recruited hundreds of volunteer staff members and outside organizations to partner together to change all of this. The church has purchased an old, run-down hospital which now houses their soup kitchen, a group home for runaway, prostitutes, AIDS victims, and former gang members, a job training center and a homeless shelter. The church also offers weekly worship services in over 34 languages!

The L.A. International Church is often called the "Dream Center" by many because it stands as a symbol of what God can do when His children obediently heed His call. I am convinced that those who know the Lord are given a variety of opportunities to do His will by reaching out to care for others and share the gospel with the needy people around them. Like the twelve disciples who wanted to feed the multitude but didn't know how, obeying the Lord sometimes seems impossible. Yet, it is not our own power or intellect which will accomplish great things. Rather, it is in asking God *what to do, where to go, who to see, when to do it*, and *how to accomplish His will* that matters. The why is not ours to ask! □

HEALTH WATCH

by Eva Hallam Solberg

MAKE YOUR OWN INJURY PACK

Make your own frozen gel pack for icing injuries by partially filling a heavy-duty plastic freezer bag with one part rubbing alcohol to three parts water. Seal the bag, then seal it inside a second plastic bag. Place it in the freezer. The gel will remain soft (the more alcohol you use, the softer it will be), making it gentler on injuries than an ice pack.

(Wellness Made Easy)

SPECIAL PHONES AVAILABLE

The phone company makes available equipment for individuals who would benefit because of hearing loss. Equipment is provided free of charge on a loan basis. The phone company will even maintain the equipment.

A wide variety of equip-

ment is available. To obtain the equipment, you merely submit a special form signed by a state-certified physician. For more information or to request the form, contact your local phone company. Pacific Bell 1-800-772-3140; GTE 1-800-831-2585. *(Seasons)*

EYEDROPS THAT GET THE RED OUT

Decongestant eyedrops such as Murine, Visine, or a generic that "whiten" the eyes by shrinking blood vessels can be harmful, and should not be used for more than 72 hours. They can produce acute and chronic forms of redness, known as non-infectious conjunctivitis.

In short: Don't use decongestant eyedrops. If you have dry-eye syndrome, try artificial tears. But see an eye-care professional if the condition lasts

more than a day or two. Dry eyes may be a symptom of some underlying condition, and chronic dry-eye or red-eye syndrome needs treatment.

(UC Berkeley Wellness Letter)

MIGRAINE DRUGS AND HEART DISEASE

While it's true that the typical migraine sufferer — a woman in her thirties — probably has a low risk for heart disease, older men and women with heart disease risk factors (such as high cholesterol or a family history of heart attacks) should be especially careful about using migraine drugs, particularly the older, ergotamine-type medications. For people with known heart disease, nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs such as sumatriptan may be a safer option. It may be wise to take the first dose in

the doctor's office in case a serious side effect, such as chest pain is experienced.

Because some people have clogged arteries without symptoms, be sure to tell your doctor immediately if you ever have chest pain while taking these drugs. *(HealthNews)*

CALCIUM BLOCKS IRON UPTAKE

Calcium somehow interferes with intestinal cells' ability to absorb iron from food. People who need extra iron, such as women in their child-bearing years or anyone who is anemic, may want to limit the amount of calcium they get with their main meals and instead choose calcium-rich snacks. To make sure that calcium supplements don't interfere with iron absorption, it is best to take them before going to bed. *(HealthNews)*



Living Memorials



My Gift of Love

TO HONOR THE MEMORY OF:

Bill F. Billingsley
John B. Davison
John B. Davison

Clarence L. Elliott
Clarence L. Elliott
Virginia Weber

(Gifts received after November 19, 1998, will appear in the March/April 1999 issue of PSYCHOLOGY FOR LIVING.)

PRESENTED BY:

Clyde and Ruth Narramore
Naomi Davison
The staff of the Narramore Christian Foundation
Millicent Russo
Clyde and Ruth Narramore
Robert H. Weber

In Memory of:

Amount

Given by:

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Mail to:

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P.O. Box 661900, Arcadia, CA 91066-1900

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COMING NEXT ISSUE

- * How Can I Help?
- * Are You Successful in Reaching Your Goals?
- * I Will NOT Believe
- * Unexpected Duty
- * The Problem of MK Vulnerability
- * How Is Your Initiative Quotient?

by Clyde M. Narramore

IS SPIRITUAL CONVERSION SCIENTIFIC?

QUESTION:

My grandson is working toward a Ph.D. in science at a prestigious university in Texas. Unfortunately, it seems to have destroyed his Christian beliefs — although I doubt that he has ever been truly born again. Whenever I talk to him about the Lord, he just tells me how spiritual conversion is unscientific. He uses so many big words that I get confused in trying to answer him.

Can you give me some ammunition to use with him that would back up my Christian beliefs?

ANSWER:

I surely can. In these space age days the word "science" tends to cover many Christians into silence. They seem to be overawed by the inference that one who takes a scientific approach cannot put credibility in spiritual conversion. By contrast, a brilliant young Ph.D., a Caltech graduate, stoutly declares, "It's not intellectual suicide to believe the Bible: science and spirituality are not mutually exclusive."

Of course, he is right! What constitutes "scientific"? (Admittedly we could spend months and years on this subject.)

To measure up to the requirements of the "scientific method," certain criteria must be met. What are some of these criteria?

One: A significantly large sampling must be tested. It would not be sufficient, for example, for me to submit that all four members of our immediate family have experienced spiritual conversion. Need I say that nothing in all the world has been so consistently put in the scientific test tube. Millions upon millions in past generations — millions living today — have experienced spiritual conversion.

Two: This testing must be done under a variety of conditions in life. This includes testing people in sickness and health, poverty and affluence, those with high and low I.Q., and persons of all types of temperament.

Three: Sampling must be representative of many races and cultures. That the Gospel meets universal need has been attested by missionaries around the globe. From the most primitive man in his jungle hut to the most sophisticated tycoon in his Wall Street skyscraper, men and women have been transformed as they have become "new creations in Christ Jesus" (II Corinthians 5:17).

Four: Testing must include a variety of geographical and climatic conditions. To test a group of believers in, say, Denver or Mexico City would be inviting the cynic to claim, "It's the altitude." But again it has been amply demonstrated that spiritual conversion takes place on the mountain top, in the valley, amid blistering heat and numbing cold, throughout conditions of drought or flood — and in every geographical location!



NEWS FLASH!

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Five: Testing is representative of all ages. Does spirituality of the middle-aged, the young, the middle-aged, the senior citizens (some in their eighties and nineties) are all "putting it together." No gaps — no lack of communication. What is the common bond? It is the indwelling of the Holy Spirit which comes as a result of spiritual conversion.

Six: Exclusion of extraneous stimuli. By this we mean that the results are obtained solely through the factor being tested (in this case, spiritual conversion). So we need to ask, *Can the same results (namely changed lives), be obtained by any other means: by joining a fraternity or a lodge? Through secular analysis? Worldly education? Through membership in any of a hundred organizations? Can some man-made religious system provide substantially*

all. And it is all scientific! □

Seven: Persistent and consistent results which are measurable. We all know some outstanding examples. Perhaps a classic one in our era is the once-savage Aucas Indians of the South American jungles. Their whole primitive, warring way of life was radically altered when they invited Christ into their hearts and lives.

Only a changed life can produce provable results. Scientific? Yes, spiritual conversion is most assuredly scientific. God, Who threw billions of stars into the sky and Who keeps the unfathomable universe in precise timing and accuracy, has given His Son, Jesus Christ, to die for your sins and mine. God Who created all things has provided salvation for His creatures. He is the Author of all. And it is all scientific!

by Clyde M. Narramore

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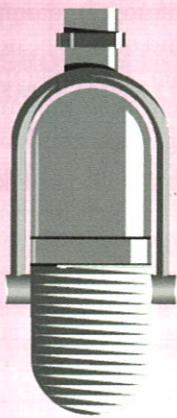
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Two: This testing must be done under a variety of conditions in life. This includes testing people in sickness and health, poverty and affluence, those with high and low I.Q., and persons of all types of temperament.

Spiritual conversion totally meets this test. The new birth experience has come to people in every conceivable circumstance and condition in life.

Three: Sampling must be representative of many races and cultures. That the Gospel meets universal need has been attested by missionaries around the globe. From the most primitive man in his jungle hut to the most sophisticated tycoon in his Wall Street skyscraper, men and women have been transformed as they have become "new creations in Christ Jesus" (II Corinthians 5:17).

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Five: Testing is representative of all ages. Does spiritual conversion work with the young, the middle-aged, the elderly?

Yes. This sampling is especially noticeable in large, public gatherings of Christians. It is a phenomenon of our times: the young, the middle-aged, senior citizens (some in their eighties and nineties) are all "putting it together." No gaps — no lack of communication. What is the common bond? It is the indwelling of the Holy Spirit which comes as a result of spiritual conversion.

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Through membership in any of a hundred organizations? Can some man-made religious system provide substantially

all the evidence adds up to a negative answer. Only one thing known to man can produce the concomitants of regeneration: being born by the very Spirit of God!

Seven: Persistent and consistent results which are measurable. We all know some outstanding examples. Perhaps a classic one in our era is the once-savage Auca Indians of the South American jungles. Their whole primitive, warring way of life was radically altered when they invited Christ into their hearts and lives.

Only a changed life can produce provable results. Scientific? Yes, spiritual conversion is most assuredly scientific. God, Who threw billions of stars into the sky and Who keeps the unfathomable universe in precise timing and accuracy, has given His Son, Jesus Christ, to die for your sins and mine. God Who created all things has provided salvation for His creatures. He is the Author of all. And it is all scientific! □

by Lee and Gloria Bendell

WHAT ARE YOUR SPIRITUAL GIFTS?

God wants you to know your spiritual gifts! (I Corinthians 12:1.) Are you aware of and using your gifts? Sometimes we confuse our gifts with our talents. Ray Stedman in his classic book, *Body Life*, clarifies the difference between gifts and talents:

"It is true that talents such as musical ability, artistic skills, athletic coordination, etc., are also gifts from God. But they are gifts on a physical or social level only, given to benefit mankind in its 'natural' life. Spiritual gifts, on the other hand, are given for benefit in the realm of the spirit, the realm of an individual's relationship to God. The effect of the operation of a spiritual gift is to improve a person in his spirit's enjoyment of the life and love of God — in other words, to bless him.

"Talents, however, deal more with the surfaces of life, and although useful and entertaining, seldom permanently change people as spiritual gifts can do.... Only Christians have spiritual gifts. **It is also possible to exercise a spiritual gift through the channel of a natural talent.**"

The New Testament provides listings or mention of spiritual gifts in Romans 12:6-8, I Corinthians 12:4-11, 28 and 13:1-13, Ephesian 4:11, and I Peter 4:8-11. After listing certain gifts, Paul, under the inspiration of God, states, "All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and He gives them to each one, just as He determines" (I Corinthians 12:11). Our spiritual gifts come from the Holy Spirit and are "distributed according to His will" (Hebrews 2:4). We are to "eagerly desire spiritual gifts" (I Corinthians 14:1).

Ephesians 4:12 and 13 state that the **purpose of gifts** is "to prepare God's people for works of service, so the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God, and become mature." We are to use them for the edification of the church (I Corinthians 14:4,



5; Romans 14:19), for the glory of God (I Corinthians 10:31), for the common good (I Corinthians 12:7), and to serve others (I Peter 4:10).

God's Word tells us "we have different gifts, according to the grace given us" (Romans 12:6), and we are **"to eagerly desire the greater gifts"** (I Corinthians 12:31). Most of us recall the summary at the end of I Corinthians 13 (the love chapter): "And now these three remain: faith, hope, and love. **But the greatest of these is love.**" I Peter 4:8 confirms this conclusion: "Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins."

Paul also assigns great importance to prophecy. "Follow the way of love and eagerly desire spiritual gifts, especially the gift of prophecy" (I Corinthians 14:1). We often focus on the meaning of prophecy as predicting future events. In its broader sense, it means preaching, or the "divine enablement to reveal truth and proclaim it in a timely and relevant manner for understanding, correction, repentance, or edification. There may be immediate or future implications" (from *Network* by Bruce Bugbee et. al.). Scripture adds, "But everyone who prophesies speaks to men for their strengthening, encouragement, and comfort ... he who prophesies edifies the church" (I Corinthians 14:3, 4).

Often our interests or passion can be

discerned by listing those experiences we have particularly enjoyed and those subjects or causes that we like to talk about, particularly in the spiritual realm.

It is also helpful to determine if you are more task-oriented or people-oriented, and whether you prefer to follow a routine (a more structured plan), or work under general guidelines with your options open as you go.

Determining your spiritual gifts can be accomplished by reading definitions of spiritual gifts and then identifying if these best describe you. Then ask others who know you well to go through the same procedure. The *Network Participants' Guide* published by Zondervan helps you follow that procedure with the goal of using your **passion** (interests and experiences), **spiritual gifts**, and **personal style** (task or people-oriented) to determine your most meaningful place of service in the body of Christ. It defines and helps you evaluate their revised list of spiritual gifts which include **administration, apostleship, craftsmanship** (Exodus 31:3), **creative communication** (Psalm 150:3-5), **discernment, encouragement, evangelism, faith, giving, helps, hospitality, intercession** (I Timothy 2:1-2), **knowledge, leadership, mercy, prophecy, shepherding, teaching, and wisdom with mention of healing, interpretation, miracles, and tongues**. It also emphasizes that **"spiritual gifts expressed without love do not have a Kingdom impact."** While *serving* is not on their list, the authors affirm that God's goal is that we use our passion, gifts, and style in **"serving with love."**

Most Christian bookstores carry books which can help you identify your God-given spiritual gifts. **Then follow God's leading in finding where you can use your gifts in service to others for the glory of God!** □

Scripture quotes from N.I.V.

by Eva Hallam Solberg



DISAPPEARING LANGUAGES

Some linguists predict that as many as half of the world's 6,000 spoken languages will be gone within the next 100 years. About 100 of the languages have just one native speaker. Many tongues wither because they are pushed out by common languages such as English or Chinese, which are bolstered by modern communications and transportation. A Yale University effort is being launched to preserve these languages. One researcher states, "When you lose a language, it's like dropping a bomb on a museum." ignites a crisis of faith in which the value of Christianity itself is questioned," he says. (EP News Service)

"The churches that have the most effective ministries to families are the ones that help families become efficient, independent problem-solvers," says researcher George Barma who conducts seminars designed to share the results of his study with church leaders. Rather than merely preaching sermons on the biblical importance of family and offering numerous programs, he believes that the most effective approach is to focus upon encouraging parents and children to become more self-sufficient. This is implemented by recognizing the warning signs of approaching crises and helping family members develop problem-solving skills in a biblical manner. "Our research clearly shows that people do not need more sermons about the importance of family. What they do need is more practical discus-

STOPPING CREDIT SOLICITATIONS

For every offer of a pre-approved credit card, a corresponding inquiry has been made into your credit report at one of the three major credit bureaus. Under a revision of the Fair Credit Reporting Act, credit bureaus are now required to allow you to "opt out" of these pre-approved offers. A phone call will close your credit file to prescreening for two years. To close it permanently, you need to request and complete a form. Here are the toll-free numbers for the major credit bureaus: 1-888-567-8688 and 1-800-353-0809. (Seasons)

ADVICE FOR CARE-GIVERS

About 22 million families are caring for a friend or relative at home, often a patient

Yesterday is history,
Tomorrow is mystery
Today is a gift...
That's why we call it "the Present!"

WHAT CAN I DO?

Here are some activities which supporters of missions have done that were deemed helpful by those missionaries:

- Sending e-mail messages. ● Taking turns writing letters each month.
- One church thousands of miles away from the mission field phoned during a Sunday service. The missionaries heard people pray specifically for them.
- Some churches have allowed their pastors to visit the mission field and minister directly.
- Generosity with giving is always encouraging.
- Reading names of supporters on their monthly financial statements have been an encouragement. (Impact)

INTERNET WEB SITES FOR SENIORS

You can now access Matthew Lesko's books for

THE PERSECUTED CHURCH

A Muslim leader in a country of North Africa had his fifteen-year-old son, Hasan, publicly beheaded for his decision to follow Jesus. Hasan had accepted Christ as his Savior when an evangelist in a nearby city gave him a gospel booklet and shared the gospel with him. He refused to renounce his faith when his father brought him before a council of village elders. His mother and the entire village watched as the teenager was executed. Cry out to God for children who suffer for opening their hearts to the love of Christ. Ask God to use this atrocity to turn many other hearts to Christ in that village. Pray that the father and other Muslim leaders will be convicted of the sinfulness of this act and repent before God. (Brigada Today)

DIRECT ASSOCIATION

A growing body of science suggests a direct association between exposure to pornography and sexual misconduct. (Washington Watch)

ON THE LIGHT SIDE

One of the most memorable prayers Rev. Warren J. Keating of Yuma, Arizona, says he has heard was, "Lord, please make me the kind of person my dog thinks I am." (Faith and Fellowship)

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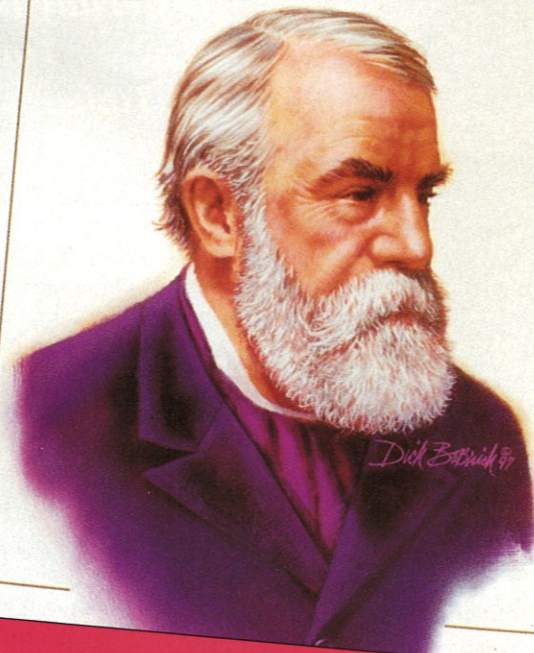


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