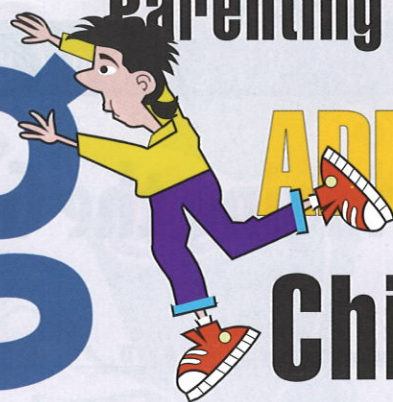


# PSYCHOLOGY FOR Living

JANUARY / FEBRUARY 2000  
Nov. Dec. 1999

Parenting the  
**ADHD**  
Child



**Marriage Myths:**  
Coping with Unspoken  
Expectations

**Faith &  
Mental Health**

**Love Is  
Not Enough**





# Bridging the Generation Gap

by Bruce Narramore, Ph.D.

One of my favorite psalms (Psalm 89) boldly announces, "I will sing of the Lord's great love forever; with my mouth I will make your faithfulness known through all generations."

*Think of it: God's faithfulness extends through all eternity from one generation to the next, and to the next — forever! There is no end to His faithfulness. He wants each generation to experience His faithfulness!*



Bruce Narramore, Ph.D.

This issue marks the beginning of the Narramore Christian Foundation's effort to communicate God's faithfulness to another generation. For many years, our artistic format has been designed primarily for the World War Two generation and Baby Boomers. But now most of our generation have weathered many seasons of the family cycle, reared our children, and many of us are even enjoying our grandchildren!

Our children and grandchildren have become accustomed to new tastes in art, color, design, and yes, even in the music that we love! To reach these younger generations with the good news of God's faithfulness in their personal, spiritual, emotional and family lives, we need to package those truths in slightly different ways. To do that, I have asked our staff to produce a new look for *LIVING* magazine. We will retain the same great content, and the same great features, and we are increasing *LIVING* by another four pages so that we can give you even more practical, Christ-centered, potentially life-changing articles.

But we are packaging it in a new, livelier format. We have redesigned *LIVING*'s front cover and logo, changed some of its layout, and in general asked, "What can we do to make *LIVING* leap off the coffee table and into the hands of many more thousands of people who long for practical, insightful, Biblically-based insights for daily living?"

This will create wonderful new opportunities for you to partner with us in getting out the word about *PSYCHOLOGY FOR LIVING*. Now, with this new look and during this holiday season, it's a perfect time to make sure that your friends and relatives have a chance to look at *LIVING* in its new format. I would like to challenge you to have copies sent to your pastor, your dentist, your physician, Christian educators, young married couples, and many others who could be helped spiritually and emotionally by the great articles in *LIVING*. If the new look in this and future issues is a bit different from previous ones, remember this: underneath an updated cover and design, you are going to find even more wonderful content and exciting reports of God's working around the world. We want to bless you even more as we also extend our ministry to younger generations. Thank you for understanding and for partnering with us. If you have any comments and suggestions please let us know.

*Bruce Narramore*

PSYCHOLOGY FOR  
**Living**  
NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 1999

## IN THIS ISSUE

- 3 The Big Marriage Myth  
by Les and Leslie Parrott
- 4 Does Faith Affect Your Mental Health?  
by Philip Yancey
- 6 Living Beyond Divorce  
by Sharon Marshall
- 10 Parenting The ADHD Child  
by Grant L. Martin
- 12 Why Love Is Not Enough  
by Bruce Narramore
- 14 NCF Global Expansion  
An Interview with Drs. Kelly and Michelle O'Donnell
- 17 Ask The Counselor  
by Bruce Narramore
- 18 To Think About  
by Ruth E. Narramore
- 19 Health Watch  
by Eva Hallam Solberg
- 20 Reflections  
by Clyde M. Narramore
- 21 NCF News & Update
- 23 Don't Miss The Silence  
by Dick Innes

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# The Big Marriage Myth

by Les and Leslie Parrott

Tom and Laura came to see us just nine months after their wedding. They had swallowed the happily-ever-after sugar pill whole and were now feeling queasy. "Before we got married we couldn't bear to be apart from one another," Laura confided. "We did almost everything together, and I thought that's how it would be in our marriage, even more so." She paused for a moment and continued: "But now Tom needs more space. It seems like he is not the guy I married."

Tom quietly rolled his eyes at this. Laura kept talking: "He used to be so considerate and thoughtful before we were married...."

"Oh, and I'm a total slouch now?" Tom interrupts.

"Of course not. You — or maybe *we* — are just different now."

Nervously twisting his wedding band, Tom looks at Laura: "Marriage isn't what I expected either. I didn't expect it to be a big honeymoon or anything. I just thought you would try to make life a little easier for me. Instead, when I come home from the office, all you want is to go out or ...."

"I make dinner every night for you," Laura interrupts.

Surprised by their display of unrestrained emotion in front of us, they stop silent and look to us as if to say, "See, our marriage isn't what it's supposed to be."

Tom and Laura entered their marriage partnership believing that happiness would abound. They had heard that marriage was hard work, but they didn't expect it to be a 24-hour seven-day-a-week job.

The belief in a happily-ever-after marriage is one of the

most widely held and destructive fables. But it is only the tip of the marital-myth iceberg.

Plaguing every unsatisfied marriage is a vast assortment of myths about what marriage should be, and paramount among them is the myth that says: "We expect the same things from married life."

## Conscious and Unconscious Expectations

What we anticipate seldom occurs, what we least expect generally happens — especially in marriage. Saying "I do" brings with it a host of conscious and unconscious expectations that aren't always fulfilled.

Neil and Cathy, a couple in their late twenties and married for four years, both had a clear image of what life together would be like, but they never discussed it. They, like most newlyweds, simply assumed the other had the same picture of marriage in mind. Nothing, however, could have been farther from the truth.

**Cathy:** "I expected married life to bring more stability and predictability to our lifestyle. To me it meant working in the garden together."

**Neil:** "I wanted our marriage to be exciting and spontaneous, not a ho-hum routine. To me it meant riding a motorcycle together."

As far back as early childhood, Neil and Cathy began dreaming of how married life would be. They grew up in homes where parents modeled "married life." They read books describing loving relationships. They watched television shows depicting scenes from marriage. For years they had fantasized about life after crossing the threshold. With little effort, each formed an

Continued on page 9 ➡



**The roles played by our parents will not be our roles. Writing our own script makes both feel like we are building our own marriage.**



# Does Faith Affect Your Mental Health?

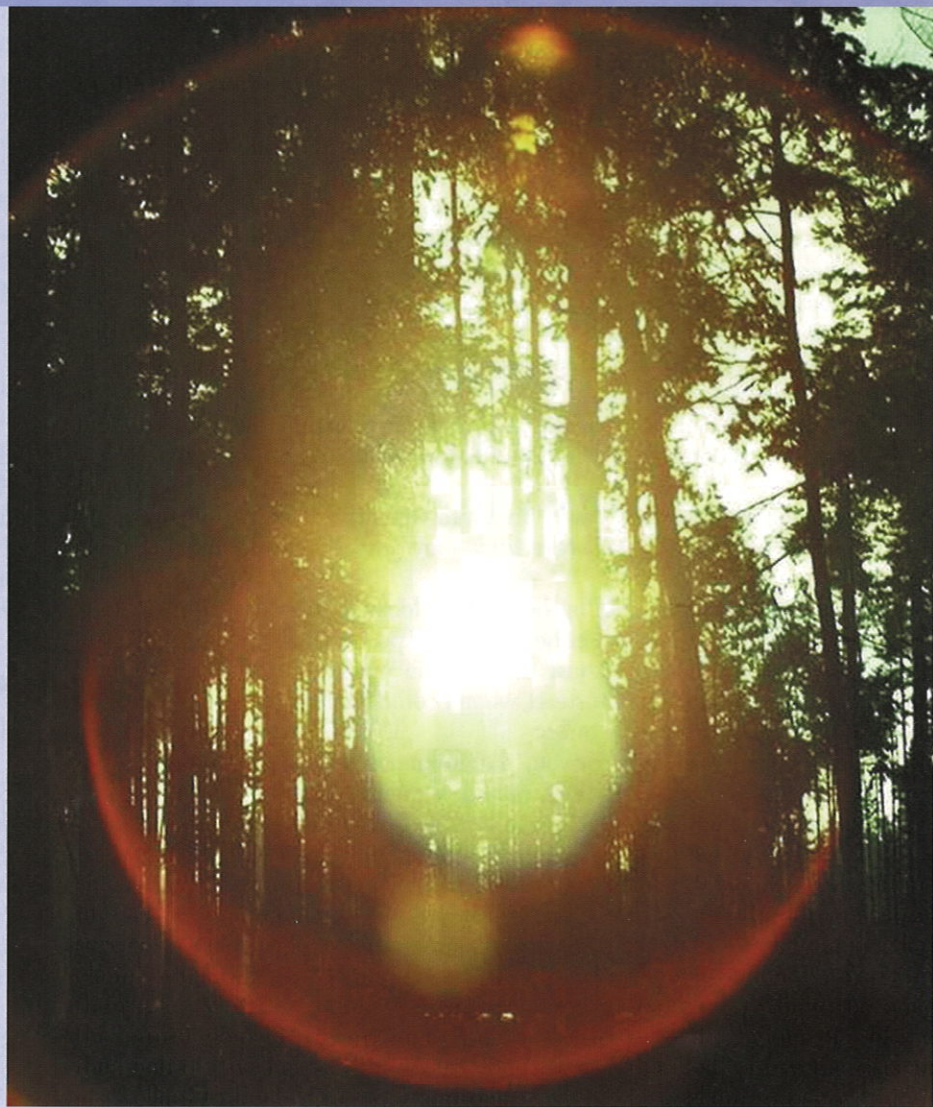
by Philip Yancey

When Dr. David Larson was training for a career in psychiatry, faculty advisers warned him, "You'll harm your patients if you try to combine your Christian faith with the practice of psychiatry. It's clinically impossible." Instructors insisted that religion usually harms a person's mental health.

*Does research confirm that notion?* Larson wondered. *Or is it a myth passed around in secular academic circles?* His curiosity led him on a quest he has followed for 15 years. He spends much of his time poring over academic journals and obscure research reports, pondering "negative curvilinear variables" and other data, seeking clues into how religion affects mental and physical health.

Right away Larson noticed that most research studies ignored the subject of religion altogether. This seemed odd since 90 percent of Americans believe in God, 40 percent attend religious services weekly, and a large minority claim religion is "very important" in their lives. Could the omission reflect the antireligious bias of the field? Less than half of psychiatrists and psychologists claim to believe in God, and one survey found that 40 percent regard organized religion as "always, or usually, psychologically harmful."

Even though modern surveys tended to avoid explicit questions on faith, Larson found that some had asked basic questions about religious involvement. He examined these findings, then broadened his search to include anything that might indicate the ef-



fect of Christian commitment on health. What he found shocked him. A sampling:

- Regular church attenders live longer. Religiousness markedly reduces the incidence of heart attack, arteriosclerosis, and high blood pressure.
- Religious people are less likely to abuse alcohol, and far less likely to use

illicit drugs. Conversely, one study found that 89 percent of alcoholics had lost interest in religion during their teenage years.

- Prison inmates who make a religious commitment are less likely than their counterparts to return to jail after release.

- Marital satisfaction and overall



well-being tend to increase with church attendance; depression rates decline.

- Religious commitment offers some protection against one of the nation's greatest health problems: divorce. People who attend church regularly are more than twice as likely to remain married.

- Protection against divorce is important for the following reasons:

- Divorce dramatically increases the likelihood of early death from strokes, hypertension, respiratory cancer, and intestinal cancer. Astonishingly, being divorced and a nonsmoker is only slightly less dangerous than smoking a pack or more a day and staying married! (Should divorce summons

papers come with a Surgeon General's warning, too?)

Divorce also disrupts mental health, especially for men. The suicide rate for white males goes up by a factor of four with divorce and they have 10 times the probability of needing psychiatric care.

Divorce takes a devastating toll on children. Proportionately twice as many criminals come from single-parent homes. Indeed, family structure proves more effective than economic status in predicting a life in crime. Children from broken homes are more likely to do poorly in school, abuse drugs, and attempt suicide.

In short, Larson found that religious commitment, far from causing health problems, has a pronounced effect on reducing them. "In essence the studies empirically verify the wisdom of the book of Proverbs," he says. "Those who follow Biblical values live longer, enjoy life more, and are less diseased. The facts are in; we need to get the word out." As a consultant to the National Institute of Mental Health and a fellow of the newly formed Paul Tournier Institute (sponsored by the Christian Medical and Dental Society), he seeks to do just that.

When I first met David Larson, I

was in the process of co-authoring a book with Dr. Paul Brand, then president of the International Christian Medical and Dental Society. He told me of a conference he had attended in Arizona in which representatives from the Public Health Service, including the Centers for Disease Control and the Food and Drug Administration, met together to discuss health trends and to set priorities for new programs. During the conference, he kept a running list of all the behavior-related problems on the agenda and the time devoted to each: heart disease and hypertension exacerbated by stress, AIDS, sexually transmitted diseases, emphysema and lung cancer caused by cigarette smoking, fetal damage stemming from maternal alcohol and drug

**Those who follow biblical values live longer, enjoy life more, and are less diseased. The facts are in; we need to get the word out.**

abuse, diabetes and other diet-related disorders, violent crime, and automobile accidents involving alcohol. These were the endemic, even epidemic concerns for health experts in the United States.

It occurred to Brand that a comparable gathering of experts in India, where he had worked for many years, would have dealt instead with malaria, polio, dysentery, tuberculosis, typhoid, and leprosy. After valiantly conquering most of those infectious diseases, the U.S. has now substituted new health problems for old, many of which stem from lifestyle choices.

The Public Health Service conference was taking place in Scottsdale, Arizona. That state's neighbor to the west, Nevada, ranks near the high end

on most mortality tables, while its northern neighbor, Utah, ranks near the bottom. Both states are relatively wealthy and their citizens well educated, and they share a similar climate. The difference, studies suggest, is probably explained by lifestyle factors. Utah is the seat of Mormonism, which frowns on alcohol and tobacco. Family ties remain strong in Utah and marriages tend to endure. Nevada, in contrast, has twice the incidence of divorce and a far higher rate of alcohol and tobacco consumption, not to mention the unique stress associated with gambling.

Dr. David Larson, who lives near Washington, D.C., believes such facts should influence public policy. "Decision makers can't be expected to write laws that reflect Biblical values," he admits, "but I've found they do respond to two things: 1. staying alive, and 2. saving money. We know beyond doubt that divorce, for example, hurts all parties and costs society dearly; shouldn't

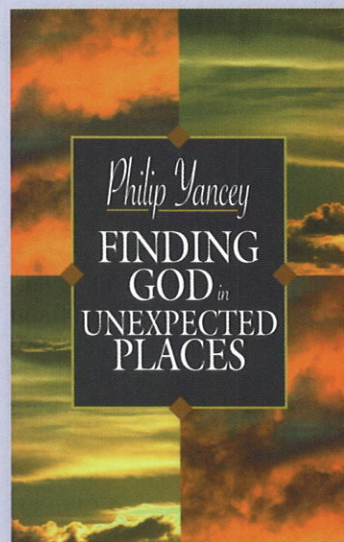
public policy somehow favor stable marriages?"

Larson points out that the key factor is the degree of religious commitment, not any particular affiliation. Dedicated Mormons, Jews, Catholics, and Protestants all manifest improved health. The psychoanalyst Carl Jung wrote:

"I have treated many hundreds of patients, the larger number being Protestants, a smaller number Jews and

not more than five or six believing Catholics. Among all my patients in the second half of my life...there has not been one whose problem in the last resort was not that of finding a religious outlook on life. It is safe to say that every one of them fell ill because he lost that which the living religions of every age have given their followers, and none of them has really been

Continued on page 8 ➡





# Living beyond

## Failure!

The word rang in my ears every time I closed my eyes. My life was so shattered that I didn't think even God could use me anymore. I was divorced; and even though I didn't want it and sought God's help and worked hard to save my marriage, divorce was spelled "sin" and "failure" — and even, in my mind, "anti-Christian."

The past year had been devastating. As often happens, the tragedy of divorce was surrounded by multiple problems, each of them traumatic. Just prior to our separation we had lost our second child. In the year that followed, turning that separation into divorce, I was forced to sell my home and relocate, and now I couldn't even find a good job; teachers were in oversupply. I worked in five or six part-time positions simultaneously, endeavoring to gain financial independence and support my four-year-old son.

Guilt became a dark cloud that shadowed my days and plagued my nights with fear. I felt like such a failure to God. I didn't believe in divorce, but it had happened to me. Me—the poor kid whose faith in God's ability to supply had bought an education in a Christian college. The kind of person who had wedding and baby announcements engraved with notes of praise, telling the world that "I serve the King." I, one known for integrity!

As I mourned my lowly state, voices from my past mocked me in condemnation. So often throughout my life my friends or high school students would say, "Please pray for me. I've always admired your faith."

My faith! What a sham! What was faith when your life was shattered? Where was God when the pieces fell apart? Feelings of defeat, frustration, and hopelessness raged inside me. I wished I had

been a little quieter about Whom I served so people wouldn't look at me now and have an excuse to laugh at God.

Yes, I still believed. Oh, yes, I was still God's child. But I was His broken, defeated child, and my concept of the way God cared for His children didn't include brokenness, overwhelming sorrow, or defeat. So I held on to the disciplines of my faith in order to gain stability, and walked through my days...weeks...months, carrying a heavy load of guilt because my life wasn't a glowing example of God's providence. There were times when I even felt hypocritical for attending church because I didn't "feel" like I worshipped.

Now it was time to do my taxes. Because of the divorce and sale of the house, I needed professional help even though my income was meager. With some hesitation, I hired a former co-worker

**“Yes, I still believed. Oh, yes I was still God's child.”**



# DIVORCE

by  
Sharon Marshall

with whom I had shared my faith in a natural, positive way.

Probably seeing me in this condition — divorced, bereaved, and out of work, I told myself, will be acknowledging to him that God isn't able to care for His children in the manner I once had believed was true.

We chatted, and I actually enjoyed renewing his acquaintance once I got over the emotional hurdle of getting there. As he finished my tax report, he felt he needed to explain my tithe on an attached statement to the I.R.S. With my income, giving was surely to be questioned — I hadn't made enough to cover my bills, let alone to allow for contributions. He said, "I'll put in a statement that your church requires you to give ten percent and that you have receipts; then I'll need to name your church. That way they won't be as likely to audit you."

I responded, "Oh, I don't *have* to give at all. The ten percent is Biblical, but optional. My church sanctions a tithe, but it is not required."

His eyes widened. He was probably thinking, *The girl's gone nuts! She doesn't have enough money to live on, and she's giving away what little she has. She just doesn't seem to understand the gravity of her situation.*

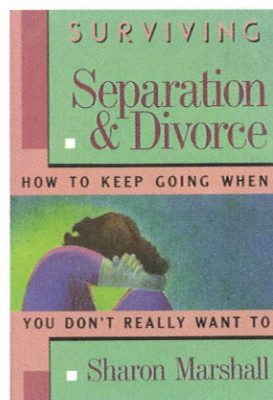
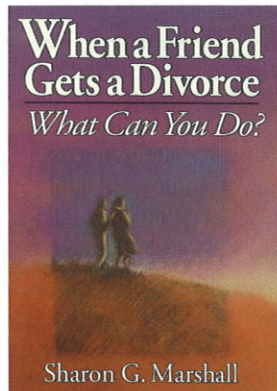
I was thinking it, I know. Once again, I felt like a failure. I was tithing, I was going through the motions of worship and faithfulness to God, and what did my life have to show for it? A divorce. A financial struggle. Odd jobs. Instability. It didn't make sense to go deeper into debt than I already was, just so I could pay a tithe that the church didn't require.

Strange as it may seem, I didn't even know at that time why I tithed and why I continued to attend services that usually left me feeling empty. Perhaps it was a way of holding onto a former ritual at a time when all of life seemed nonsensical. I didn't feel great about it, either; my mind was full of doubts and questions. But when I didn't have enough to pay my bills anyway, it didn't seem wise to also be indebted to God. And if I didn't go to church, I would have to spend another day behind four walls. And if I didn't talk to God, I wouldn't have anyone to talk to most of the time. So I continued going through the motions of worship, day by day, step by step, often out of obligation to a young boy for whom I, alone, was now responsible.

Every year, as taxes were done, our "tithe scenario" continued. My friend never once belittled me, but his natural curiosity began to grow. He asked other questions because the tithe always brought up

the fact of my faith. I continued to feel stupid and hypocritical because my life and my faith didn't match. I wondered sometimes if I was actually an embarrassment to God.

One year, my friend asked if losing a baby and going through divorce had strengthened or weakened my faith. In years past I would have quickly responded that God's grace was always more than adequate. But through my trials, I had learned something about honesty — with myself, with others, and with God. So I answered him truthfully: "The experience of losing a child, even though it hurt terribly, was one of



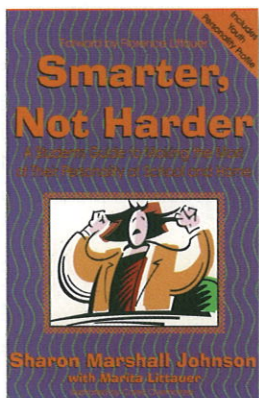
the most faith-strengthening experiences of my life. God's comfort was everything I had believed it to be. But the divorce almost shattered both me and my faith. I'm still struggling with it."

Then the year came. It was God's number — seven years from my original conversation with my accountant and shortly after he had attended a book party for the publication of the first book I wrote,

*Justin, Heaven's Baby*. God had, indeed, healed me of my divorce. I stood before him a "whole" person again, happy and content.

It was the first year I could hand him only one wage statement, for I no longer had to moonlight in order to pay bills. The salary was not great, but it was definitely adequate. He glanced at my wage statement — my *one* wage statement — for a moment in silence. Then he said, "Wow, Sharon. Watching your life would make one believe that God takes care of those who honor Him." His spontaneous comment reminded me that God had, indeed, been with me, loved

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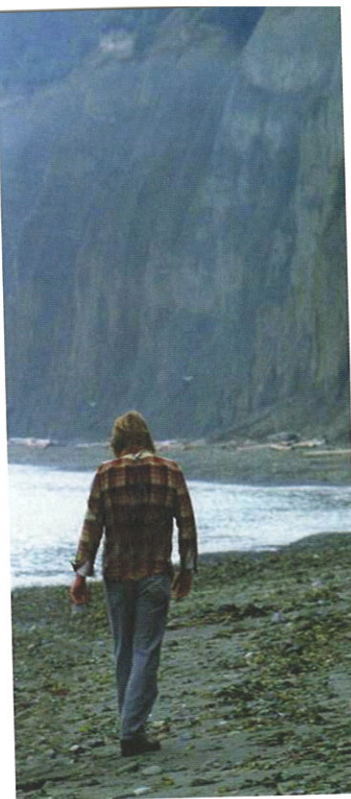
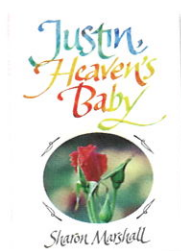
## ➤ Divorce Continued from page 7

me, and comforted me, even in my darkest hours when I thought I was alone. I began to realize that those long days and weeks when I did what I felt had to be done were not wasted by God. He had brought me slowly and steadily into healing and growth.

I had not found the job I thought I wanted as a teacher, but He opened a better door; today I train teachers. I thought that through the failure of my marriage, I had thrown away the goodness God brought through Justin's life. Today people are encouraged as they read his story in *Justin, Heaven's Baby*. I thought my other son would be disadvantaged because I had to work and raise him as a single parent. Today he is a healthy, normal sociologist and my heart's delight. It was unhealthy guilt I bore over my life's situations; it was I, not God, who had labeled me "failure" and judged my life "hopeless."

Hearing my friend's words reminded me of my growth. I finally had accepted the fact that trauma and struggle are a part of everyone's life. Those who watch us when life falls apart are not watching our circumstances; they already know about heartache and crises. They are not even watching our immediate reaction, for they know that most people, after a loss, become bitter, temporarily depressed, confused, or cynical. They also know that many never fully recover, and they want to know if God makes a difference in the long haul. They want to know if, with God's help, we can really become better people through our trials and that we can learn from our mistakes. They want to know, in the long haul, if we can rise above disappointment, anger, and confusion to live a joyful, abundant life.

My greatest struggle was giving God permission to use my divorce for His kingdom. I was so afraid He would exploit my tragedy. Oh, how little I actually knew about the God I had served since childhood! Today I find deep personal satisfac-



tion in helping others heal from their wounds. I give grief-recovery seminars dealing with all aspects of loss. And God has seen fit to use two additional books I have written: *Surviving Separation and Divorce* and *When a Friend Gets a Divorce*. I count it pure joy to write in order to help others become whole. Those things that I so feared would destroy my life have actually enriched it.

God does not often bring us through our heartaches with instant healing for our emotions and instant replacements for that which we have lost.

Usually through our hindsight we discover that He has taken our seemingly futile efforts — our willingness to put one foot in front of the other...our offering of sorrow...our faithfulness — and transformed it. He really is working in all things — including hardships — to bring good out of them and to help us grow! In the long haul, He makes our end better than our beginning. I can't yet comprehend how He did that for Job, but I *can* affirm that He has also done it for me! 🙏

Sharon Marshall Johnson lives in Laguna Niguel, California. She is the owner and director of SCORE: a program that helps high-risk students prepare for college or careers. She is also the Coordinator of Divorce and Grief Recovery at her local church. Visit Sharon at <http://www.score-ed.com>

## ➤ Religion Continued from page 5

healed who did not regain his religious outlook."

According to Larson, it would be difficult to concoct a better recipe for health than Paul's nine-word prescription given in Galatians 5: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Paul playfully comments, "Against such things there is no law." In view of Larson's findings, perhaps we should add a footnote, "To promote such things, there should be a law."

I have my doubts whether any amount of empirical data will persuade the U.S. Congress to enact legislation along the lines Larson's research suggests. As a nation, we seem far more interested in preserving the right to destroy ourselves. However, the findings do hint at an approach that may prove useful to the church in the twenty-first century.

In the not-so-distant past the American church and state recognized many of the same values: sacredness and digni-

ty of human life, sexual fidelity, family stability, discipline, moderation. Increasingly, those values have been drifting apart, and the church may not be able to stop that trend in a secularized society. But we can strive to fulfill Jesus' original challenge: to serve as the salt of the earth, the light of the world, a city on a hill.

Although we may not convert the whole hill, we need not be ashamed of erecting a different kind of city on the landscape of our troubled planet. As the research clearly shows, what is "good" in the moral sense, in the city of God, is also good in the pragmatic sense, in the city of man. To paraphrase philosopher John Locke, Christianity makes sense in this world as well as in the next. 🙏

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idea of what it would and should be like to live as a married couple.

Consciously and unconsciously, Neil and Cathy each painted brush strokes on their mental canvases. But it never occurred to either of them that the other would be working from a different palette. They simply *assumed* their life-long partner would work with complimentary colors and similar styles.

The first year of marriage, however, revealed sharp and unexpected contrasts. What Cathy thought of as security, Neil thought of as boring. They valued many of the same things, but with different levels of intensity. Cathy painted carefully with delicate pastels, Neil painted boldly with primary colors.

## The Twin Engines of Incongruous Expectations

Most incongruous expectations fall into two major categories: (1) unspoken rules and (2) unconscious roles. Bringing both of them into the open can save years of wear and tear on a young marriage.

# Unspoken Rules

### Unspoken Rules

Everyone lives by a set of rules that are rarely spoken but always felt. This becomes painfully obvious to most newlyweds when they return home to their family with their new spouse. At least it did for us.

One Christmas we flew from Los Angeles to Chicago to be with our families. The first night was at Leslie's house. As was her family's custom, she woke up early in the morning to squeeze every possible minute into being together with family. I, on the other hand, slept in. I expected a slower, easier pace during the holidays. That's the way it was at my house.

Leslie interpreted my sleeping as rejection. She felt I didn't value time with her family: "It's embarrassing to me," she told me. "Everyone is up and eating in the kitchen. Don't you want to be with us? Don't you love me?"

Leslie's intensity took me by complete surprise: "What did I do? I'm just catching up from jet lag. I'll come down after my shower." I had broken a rule I didn't know existed, and Leslie discovered a rule she had never put into words. Both of us felt misunderstood and frustrated.

Needless to say, unspoken rules become more vocal when our spouse "breaks" them. We both had our own ideas about what was acceptable, and it never occurred to either of us that our expectations would be so different. We became irritated by the other's unspoken expecta-

tion and frustrated that the other did not live by the same rules.

Since our first Christmas we have learned to discuss our secret expectations and make our subtle rules known. We have also helped the couples we counsel to become more aware of their unspoken rules to keep little problems from becoming big ones. Here is a sampling of the rules we have heard from other couples:

- Don't interrupt another's work.
- Don't ask for help unless you're desperate.
- Don't call attention to yourself.
- Don't work too long or too hard.
- Don't raise your voice, ever.
- Don't go to bed before cleaning the kitchen.
- Don't talk about your feelings.
- Don't buy dessert at a restaurant.

### Unconscious Roles

The second source of mismatched expectations involves the unconscious roles that you and your partner fall into, almost involuntarily. Just as an actor in a dramatic performance follows a script, so do married couples. Without knowing it, a bride and groom are drawn into prescribed ways of being that are a mixture of personal dispositions, family backgrounds, and marital expectations.

Mark and Jenny ran into their unconscious roles head on. They saved three days after returning from their honeymoon to get their new home in order before returning to work. They arranged furniture, organized their closets, and thought about hanging pictures. Both were excited about establishing their home together. But that's where the trouble began. Each of them looked to the other to take the lead, but neither did. They simply followed the script they inherited from their family of origin. Jenny's dad, you see, was a fix-it kind of person with a decorator's eye. He had all the right tools and was handy around the house. Her mom simply assisted him when needed. Mark's dad, on the other hand, was a busy executive who hardly knew how to replace a burned-out light bulb. In Mark's home, it was Mom who organized the house. She hung the pictures and arranged the furniture. Needless to say, Mark and Jenny took their "assigned" roles as husband and wife and wondered why the other wasn't pulling his or her weight.

Of course, there are an endless number of unconscious roles husbands and wives fall into. But if you are like most couples, you will try to follow a script that was written by the role models you grew up with. Being aware of this natural drama is often all it takes to save you from a

Continued on page 22 ➡

Here is a sampling of the rules we have heard from other couples:

- #1 Don't interrupt another's work.
- #2 Don't ask for help unless you're desperate.
- #3 Don't call attention to yourself.
- #4 Don't work too long or too hard.
- #5 Don't raise your voice, ever.
- #6 Don't go to bed before cleaning the kitchen.
- #7 Don't talk about your feelings.
- #8 Don't buy dessert at a restaurant.



# parenting the ADHD attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder child

by Grant L. Martin

Julie and Jeff sat in their car for a few minutes after leaving Dr. Howard's office. The report on Julie's lap indicated clearly that Danny had ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder).

As the rain beat down on the roof of their car, Julie thought, *This is not happening to my child. You must be wrong.*

Jeff gripped the steering wheel until his knuckles were white. His thoughts turned more to anger: *Why didn't Danny's teacher say something last year? What's wrong with these doctors that they didn't find this out earlier?*

"What's going to happen to Danny?" Julie asked wistfully. "Is he going to be frustrated his whole life? What are we going to do? At least now that we've talked to Danny's doctor, we know what's wrong and why he's not like the other kids."

"Yes, I suppose he's right," Jeff said. "It does help to know what the problem is. Now maybe we can begin to help Danny."

Julie and Jeff were asking the same questions and having the same feelings as most parents when they learn their child has ADHD. There is a sense of relief mixed with questioning, concern, and frustration.

If you find out your child has ADHD, don't be in too big a rush to run out and make all sorts of changes. Take some time to process your own feelings and reactions first. Let God know how you feel and talk to some trusted friends or family members about the situation. There is "a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance" (Ecclesiastes 3:4). And yes, there is every reason to have hope. But before you can start helping your child, you need a little time to come to peace with your own questions and reactions. Once you have done that, here are some suggestions for helping your child:

- *Be sensitive to your child.* Most children will be confused, discouraged, or upset when they learn their ADHD diagnosis.



Parenting the  
ADHD Child,  
Part II



They might think there is something terribly wrong with their bodies or brains. Or they may want to use their diagnosis as an excuse, saying, "I can't help myself. I have ADHD." Just like you, they will need time to adjust to the diagnosis and its implications. Your child needs a lot of special understanding and encouragement at this time. Although most children feel relieved — because now they know why they have struggled so much — they need hope for their future

● *Explain ADHD simply.* One of your most difficult tasks is to explain ADHD to your child. Without an explanation he will conclude he is either a "bad" child or that he is dumb or inferior.

He needs to know that you realize he has a difficult time sitting still, stifling interruptions, and keeping his mind on a job. And he needs to know his academic problems are not his fault. Tell him you understand he is doing the best he can, but that he has a problem which makes it hard for him to concentrate and get his work done.

Your explanation needs to be simple and phrased in word pictures your child can understand. Tell him that every person is unique and that we all have specific strengths and weaknesses. Some people have certain parts

of their brain arranged in such a way that they can't see very well. These people wear glasses to allow them to view their world more clearly. Other kids have teeth that need straightening. They wear braces and retainers to correct their teeth so they can eat correctly, play the horn, or whistle.

You might tell a primary-age child something like this: "Danny, your mother and I want you to know what Dr. Howard told us about why it is so hard for you to listen to your teacher and get your schoolwork done. Everybody has little highways in their body, and they have things that work like tiny little cars to carry messages to their brain. If your teacher is telling you how to do a problem, these little 'car-like' things called axons have to travel fast to get all the messages to your brain. Danny, your body doesn't have enough of these little cars or cells. So when the teacher talks to you, all of her ideas don't get to the right

place in your brain. In fact, sometimes these little cars run out of gas and never get to the brain at all. However, maybe another message *does* get to the brain, like a noise in the room or a bird outside the window. Because these messages don't require you to concentrate so much, it's easier for them to get to the brain. They don't need as many cars. Then what happens is that you pay attention to the broken pencil or bird outside, and miss what the teacher is saying. This isn't your fault. It's just the way your body works."

It's important to let your child know he is not the only one in the world with this problem. There are probably lots of kids in his school who also have attention deficit. If someone else in his extended family has the same problem, share this fact also. There are many parents, teachers, and very successful people who have attention problems. Above all, convey your total love and acceptance for your child just the way he is.

Your comments will serve as a departure point for discussing how the entire family, and his doctor and his teachers are going to work together to help manage the effects of attention deficit.

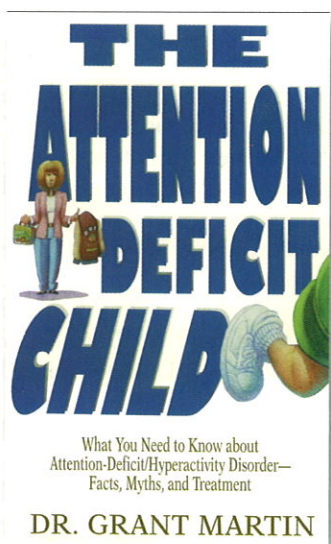
● *Focus on what your child CAN do, not on what s/he can't do.* Your child may have difficulty concentrating while reading to himself, but does much better when listening to someone read aloud. Rather than force silent reading, which leads to frustration, let your child learn new information by reading to him, listening to a book on tape, or watching a videotape.

● *Remember the big picture.* Schoolwork is important, but a child's love for God and his emotional and social adjustment is more important. Be thankful for all the things that are going well in other parts of your child's life.

● *Teach and model that mistakes don't equal failure.* An ADHD child may tend to see his or her mistakes as huge failures. You can model, through good-humored acceptance of your own mistakes, that errors can be useful and can lead to new solutions. Mistakes and problems are not the end of the world. When your child sees you taking this approach to your mistakes and the mistakes of others, s/he can learn to view his or her mistakes in the same light.

● *Reward the process, not just the product.* It is important to acknowledge the effort toward a goal as well as the achievement of the goal.

● *Communicate the concept that this is a family effort.* Yes, your child has to take responsibility for doing her chores, com-





# Why

by Bruce Narramore

Several years ago I returned home from a series of meetings on the East Coast. By the time I arrived home, it would be nearly 10:00 P.M. As I was still on Baltimore time, it felt more like 1:00 A.M. I was extremely tired and anxious to get home and to bed.

Just as I reached the front door, I heard an awful crash and one of the chil-

dren crying. I opened the door and there were Dickie and Debbie, both crying, on the floor with an overturned coffee table between them. This wasn't the kind of welcome I needed!

My first impulse was to yell, "What's the matter with you anyway? I just got home and already you are fighting!"

Fortunately I got my wits about me when I realized what had happened. I had been gone for a week and the children had both missed me and had been racing to the door to see which one would greet Daddy first. They were running to get my love. In their haste they tripped over the coffee table.

As soon as I realized this, I sat down on the couch and said, "Dickie, come here." As he sat on my lap I said, "Son, how would you like me to take you to school tomorrow morning? We could go to McDonald's for breakfast on the way." Immediately his face brightened. "Oh, boy!" he exclaimed as he jumped up and headed on his way.

Then I called Debbie, "Climb up here on my lap, Honey," I said. And she did. "How about on Friday morning, you and I go out for breakfast? McDonald's or Denny's?" "Denny's," Debbie replied and was on her way.

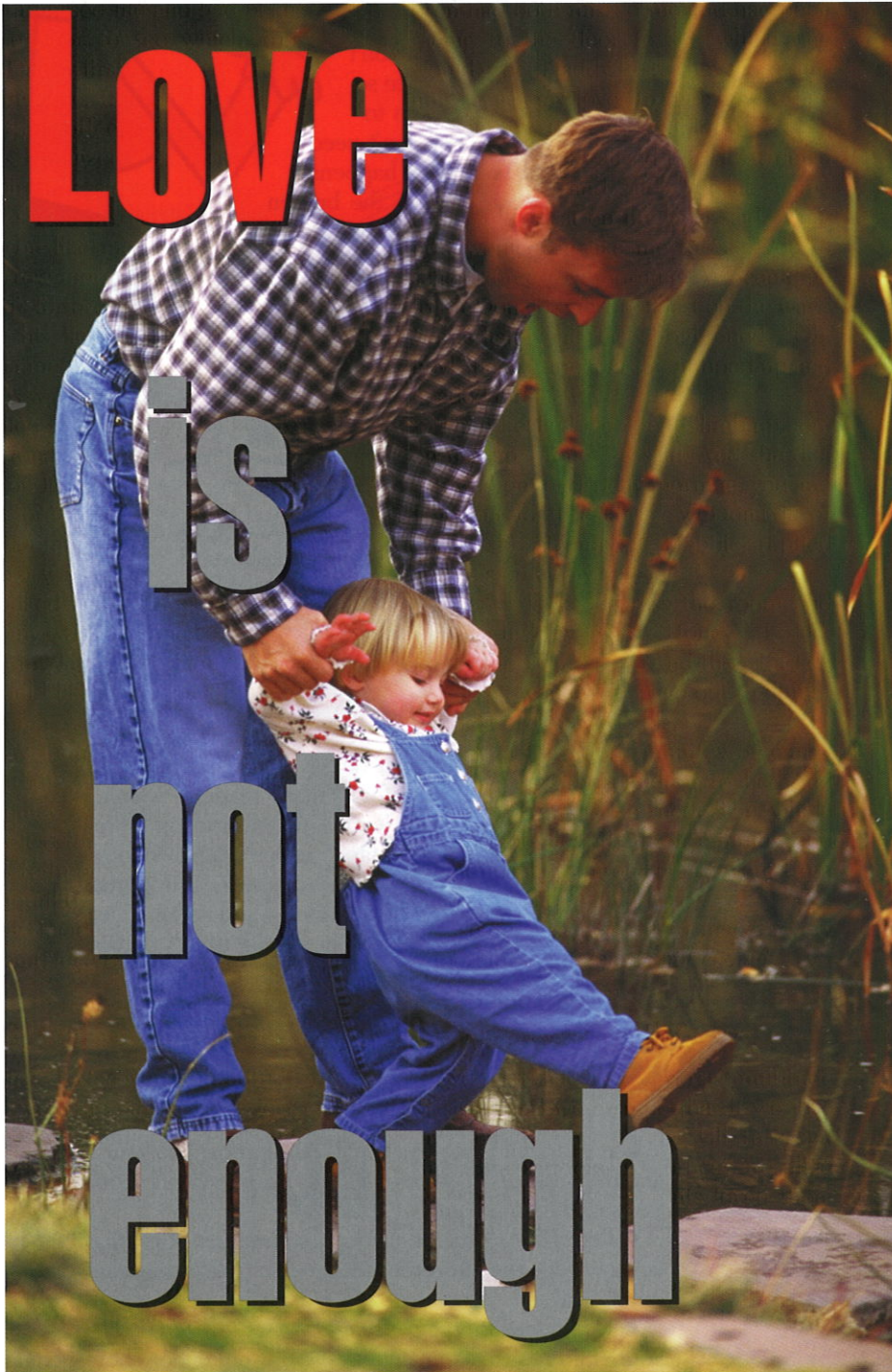
Then I looked across the room and saw Kathy, my wife. "Honey," I said, "come sit on my lap!" And then I asked her if she would like to go out to dinner the next evening.

After a few more minutes of family time, we put the children to bed and peace and quiet returned. The whole episode took less than ten minutes, and the atmosphere in our house went from chaos to tranquillity.

I share this incident to make a very important point: *love is not enough.*

## Feeling Loved Versus Being Loved

We read that "love covers a multitude of sins," and we assume that if we love our children, everything will turn out fine. But psychologists' offices are filled with people whose parents loved them — but the love never got through. *It isn't enough to love our children. Our love must be expressed and communicated in ways that our children understand and accept.* Like water on a plant, it must soak into the soil of their lives before it





does any good. Children need a deep awareness of their belonging. They need to feel that they are an integral part of our families. They need to be listened to. They need to have their wishes and feelings taken into consideration. They need our time. And most of all, they need to see from our actions that they are our top priority.

### When Children Feel Unloved

When I speak of children not feeling loved, I do not necessarily mean they are walking around reflecting on how lonely and unloved they are and contemplating some drastic action like suicide. Most children who lack a deep sense of love and acceptance express this in more subtle ways. Some feel depressed. Some become constantly noisy and restless, wondering what to do. Some become smart alecks or showoffs. Some become hostile and belligerent. And some seek from other sources the love they feel they are *not* getting at home.

One parent, reflecting on her teen-age years, told me, "My mother was a single parent and had little time to notice me or to listen. Consequently, I would do anything to be accepted, especially by my peers. It turned out that the way I could be most accepted was by becoming promiscuous. For years I was accepted mainly because I was sexy. I devoured any kind of attention, so I

**Even the most loving of us can fall into a busy routine that unknowingly robs our family of times of real togetherness and love.**

continued my loose sexual activity."

Another person who felt she couldn't communicate with her father, wrote, "I became boy-crazy at fourteen and realized a loved feeling from a man for my first time. From then on, I lived from one date to the next. I accepted a substitute for love—belonging to a steady—instead of learning to love.

"Unfortunately, I have carried this vacuum into my marriage. I deeply want to be loved, but I have trouble accepting it—even when it's there. I keep busy to keep from getting too close because I'm

afraid I will be hurt again. I want to learn to love and be loved, but I don't know how to begin."

### Loving Versus Showing Love

Our children's feelings of loneliness and isolation usually have their roots in two sources: the *amount* of time we spend with them and the *quality*. "Quality" boils down to our ability to listen sympathetically to our children, to value their ideas and feelings, and to enjoy our times together. A simple but helpful formula is Time + Understanding + Enjoyment = Feelings of Love.

Even the most loving of us can fall into a busy routine that unknowingly robs our family of times of real togetherness and love. We have a bundle of responsibilities at work or at home, and the only time all our paths cross at once is at mealtimes or briefly on the way to church.

There is nothing inherently wrong with these activities. But somehow they have gotten out of hand and are robbing us of the single most important thing a family can provide: a deep sense of belonging and the feeling of being loved and understood. The Bible says, "If anyone does not provide for his relatives, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever."<sup>1</sup>

Love that is hidden in our hearts or largely unexpressed is not sufficient. The Bible doesn't just tell us, for example, that God loves us as his children. It tells us he loves us so much that he put his love into action. He "so loved the world that he gave his Son."<sup>2</sup> We need to communicate our love through our actions, through spending quality time with the ones we love, by listening to and accepting their thoughts and feelings, taking an active interest in their interests and activities, and affirming them through our words. We all need to be told we are loved.

Several years ago Kathy and I sat down to think through our relationship with our children. We loved them very

much and wanted the best for them. But Kathy and I also tend to be very active, busy people. Since we didn't want to wake up twenty years later and say, "What happened? We loved our children but something went wrong."

To keep this from happening we evaluated our priorities and came up with a couple of solutions. Kathy decided to cancel a seminar she was about to teach

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on parenting! She saw that it would be impossible to give our children the time they needed while, at the same time, she was busy helping other mothers relate to their children. And I decided to find some way to relax and unwind at the end of a day and still do fun things with the children.

About this time some friends told us about Lego blocks. So Dickie and I went downtown, bought our first batch of Lego blocks, came home, and started building. At first I felt a little awkward getting on the floor and playing blocks with my children. *After all*, I thought, *I am a Ph.D. psychologist. I work in a think factory. Isn't this a little beneath my dignity?* But I soon realized I was enjoying playing with blocks. In fact, I found I could relax and unwind better at the end of a hard day's work playing blocks with my children than I could watching the six o'clock news or reading the newspaper!

### The Fruits of Showing Love

Since then I have learned to really enjoy my children. I must admit that it did not come easily. I grew up on a farm in Arizona where there was not much playtime. My father would get up early to feed the cattle or do other chores before breakfast. Then he would put in ten or twelve more hours of work. After school and in the summers my brother and I

Continued on page 18 ➞



# NCF Global

An Interview with  
Drs. Kelly and Michele O'Donnell

**T**he Narramore Christian Foundation recently took a major step forward in its ministry to members of the worldwide missionary community. Drs. Kelly and Michele O'Donnell, missionary psychologists living near London, England, have agreed to serve as NCF's International Missionary Member-Care Representatives. Kelly and Michele have been serving as full-time missionaries for the past ten years. In this interview, Dr. Bruce Narramore and the O'Donnells discuss the O'Donnells' new role with NCF and their work with missionaries around the world.

**Dr. Bruce:** Kelly and Michele, we are so pleased that you will be partnering with NCF in providing care for missionaries and others in crisis overseas. Please tell us about your ministry.

**Kelly:** We work as psychologists in missions. We do crisis intervention, team building among missionaries, teaching on family life, devotional speaking, and consulting with personnel departments. Most of our services are to missionaries and mission leaders working in the Muslim, Hindu, and Buddhist worlds.

**Dr. Bruce:** Why do some missionaries need counseling services?



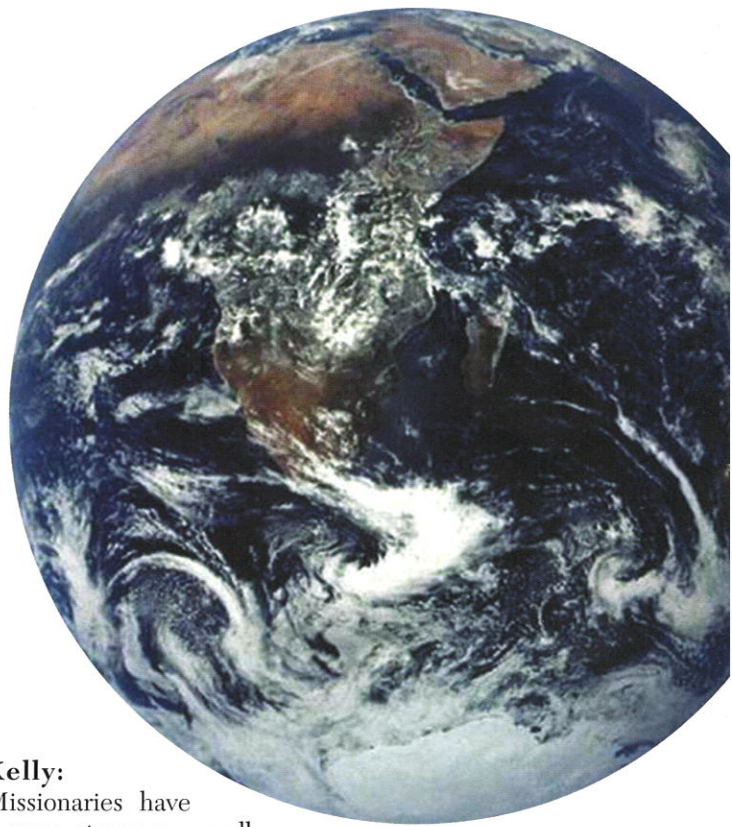
**Missionaries are human, just like the rest of us. They are not "stainless steel saints." Problems in living, even among the most robust of missionaries, are a part of missionary life.**



Dr. Michele O'Donnell

**Michele:** Missionaries are human, just like the rest of us. They are not "stainless steel saints." And their task is daunting and demanding: to establish viable communities of Christians where they have never existed before. Problems in living, even among the most robust of missionaries, are a part of missionary life.

**Dr. Bruce:** What are the major stressors on missionaries?



**Kelly:**

Missionaries have the same stressors we all do: work, finances, family responsibilities, illness, loss of loved ones, interpersonal conflicts, etc., plus several others. Imagine having all the stresses you have now and facing them thousands of miles from home in a foreign culture with a different language and different customs, and on a small budget dependent on people thousands of miles away!

**Michele:** Then throw in the pressure of working daily without the conveniences of home (electricity 24 hours a day, supermarket shopping, reliable travel) and the pressures of working with people in total spiritual darkness. Throw in an occasional political upheaval where you might have to flee for your life, and you have a pretty good picture!

**Dr. Bruce:** What are some of the most common adjustment problems missionaries experience?

**Kelly:** Maintaining one's spiritual life, adapting to another culture, and discouragement are usually right up there at the top.

**Michele:** Then there are also children's issues. Missionary children have the same kinds of emotional, behavioral and discipline problems as most children, but they are often compounded by social isolation or cross-cultural issues. Missionaries also have to decide whether to home school, send their children to a national school, or away to a boarding school.

**Kelly:** For many missionaries, even their actual work and workload is extra stressful. For example, where does one get a manual and mentors for planting a church among an isolated unreached group in Northwest China? Resources are scarce. One does not just turn on the television, go down to the park to jog, go to a home Bible study or church service — there is no church — or pop into a pastoral counselor's office in order to get advice or spiritual and emotional support! Missionary life can be lonely and difficult. Sometimes missionary personnel just want to talk to someone from the outside who can listen



# E x p a n s i o n

with compassion and objectivity and offer sound advice when requested.

**Dr. Bruce:** *Do you remember how we first became acquainted?*

**Kelly:** Yes. For me, it was in your office on the Biola University campus in California in 1978. I was sweating profusely as you interviewed me for admission to Rosemead's doctoral program in clinical psychology! You subsequently became my academic advisor. After entering Rosemead, we turned to you and Kathy for some input about working with mission agencies as psychologists. Michele also took courses from you and got to know Kathy while she was working on her doctorate.

**Dr. Bruce:** *How did you decide to commit your lives to missionary service as psychologists?*

**Michele:** I was brought up in Europe off and on, as my father was part of NATO. We had missionaries coming to our house regularly, and both my overseas experience and my contact with missionaries influenced me. Then in the 1980s while working on my doctorate at Rosemead School of Psychology, I also conducted group counseling with the ministers and missionaries who were taking seminars at the Narramore Christian Foundation. Meeting Kelly also fanned the desire to use my training on behalf of mission personnel.

**Kelly:** During college, I wanted to be both a psychologist and a missionary. But I didn't know how to do that. It seemed like an either/or proposition, but I sensed a call to do both! While I was in graduate school at Rosemead, I participated in several short-term missions projects in Mexico during breaks. Talks with several Rosemead faculty helped me see ways in which a ministry in missions and psychology could intertwine. At the end of the day (as they say over here in the UK), we just knew as a young couple (married in 1985) that we had to find some strategic ways to take what we were doing as Christian psychologists and apply it overseas in the support of missionaries. In the words of one of my Rosemead professors, "If not you, then who?"

**Dr. Bruce:** *Do you charge for your services?*

**Michele:** No, we live by faith, just like all missionaries. We want to identify with our missionary clientele by living on faith and exposing ourselves to the same kind of lifestyle and experiences they have.

**Dr. Bruce:** *Can you share with us a recent need that God has called you to be involved with?*

**Kelly:** Kosovo is the most recent example. What a tragedy! We were on the phone and e-mail for weeks consulting with mission personnel in Albania, giving them some brief training

on providing crisis-trauma care for people. In this case, virtually a whole population of people had been significantly traumatized due to having been forcibly displaced, punctuated with killings, rapes, torture, and other acts of brutality.

We quickly formed an ad hoc group, and arranged to send in some Christian mental health professionals to train Albanian church members and to aid mission workers in basic crisis response.

**Michelle:** The type of mass violence seen in Kosovo, and even more recently in East Timor, is certainly not new to world history. Even worse things have been happening in many places, especially in sub-Saharan Africa and Asia.

**Dr. Bruce:** *How has your relationship with NCF developed recently?*



**During college, I wanted to be both a psychologist and a missionary. But I didn't know how to do that. It seemed like an either/or proposition but I sensed a call to do both!**



Dr. Kelly O'Donnell

**Kelly:** Dr. Kevin Narramore was really influential in connecting us more with NCF. In 1994, Kevin talked with Michele and expressed interest in learning more about what we were doing and possibly supporting some of our member-care projects. Kevin later visited me in Geneva in 1996, and over the last few years, NCF has supported eight of our member-care trips into places like Thailand, Central Asia, North Africa, and the Middle East. We would not have been able to go to many of these places without the help of NCF.

When you accepted the presidency of NCF, we started discussing ways of working more closely, to help get qualified mental-health professionals and member-care specialists overseas for special needs. It is like a happy reunion, with a strategic and timely purpose. We believe that many from distant places will come into our Lord's kingdom as a result of our working together on behalf of the missions community.

Continued on page 16 ➞



**Ministry:** When we look at the world of need, and observe the relatively few missionaries that are working among the 2 1/2 billion least evangelized, we are filled with conviction to reach and support missionaries taking risks and going into areas where the gospel has historically been the most neglected. This includes countries that are predominantly Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, and Chinese, as well as various tribal groups. Most of these peoples live in geographical locations lying outside of "Western" countries between the 10th and 40th latitudes north, stretching from North Africa to the east coast of Asia. Missiologists call it the 10-40 window

**Michelle:** We live near Oxford and it is a stable, orderly community. The countryside and villages are beautiful. Although the language is a bit different, the girls adapted quickly. The London airports are convenient for our work, and there are many opportunities for the children — music lessons art, sports, etc. Our girls, Erin, age ten, and Ashling, age six, are now living in their fourth country and really enjoy playing with both the British and expatriate kids.

**Dr. Bruce:** *What is your vision for your future*

**Dr. Bruce:** We are excited to have you working with us on these strategic projects. I think our readers would also like to know a bit more about your personal lives! What is it like working and rearing

**Dr. Bruce:** *Exactly what will you be doing with NCF?*

**Kelly:** We will be using our network of missionary administrators and member-care personnel to call for the immediate services of Christian psychologists overseas. Then we will work with NCF to identify mature Christian psychologists who can leave their practices long enough to fly overseas and conduct the crisis counseling or assessment and consultation that is needed.

**Expansion** Continued from page 15

● *Take care of yourself.* Most ADHD children are high-maintenance kids. The constant advocacy, attention to details, remediation efforts, and patience needed for a child with attention disorders can wear down the best parent. There will be days when you are at your wit's end and you will feel like giving up and trading in the family minivan for a one-way ticket to Australia! Find some time for yourself. Talk with a friend and maintain your sense of humor. Laughter is good for the soul. Your home needs to be safe, supportive, and fun. Do all you can to become that kind of parent and your child can learn to feel great about himself in spite of his attention problem!

the amount of TV.

● *Keep to a regular routine.* Children with ADHD need a predictable schedule. Try to keep daily events such as bedtime, meals, and homework on a definite schedule. Be firm about limits and consistent about enforcing them. Use that time to expose and encourage your child to follow other pursuits. Limit

**A is the action step of SODA.** The final step is to act on the solution. Implement the idea. Set a plan into motion and then evaluate how the solution works. If

### **D stands for decide.**

Brainstorm possible options or solutions to the problem. Help each other find ways to solve the problem.

different? O is for options.

**S stands for stop and examine the problem.** What is going wrong? What needs to change or be handled

with attention and learning challenges will have to learn to deal with frustration and disappointments. You will need to foster problem solving at an early age. I have taught families to use the SODA approach for problem solving.

so hard she gives up in the process.

- Encourage problem solving at every opportunity. Children

best cheerleader your child will ever see!

- Be realistic in your expectations but don't push him or her

relationships are truly what is important.

pleting homework, and putting out her best effort. However, your child is not in this alone. Everyone will work together to make school as successful as possible. Pray together and work on projects as a family. Emphasize family traditions, stories, and legacies to help keep the problem of attention deficit in perspective. In the larger scheme of things, family, faith, and loving



by Bruce Narramore

## Question:

*I have so much anger toward my parents that I don't know what to do. They have ruined my life. Is there any way to resolve this without confronting them personally? I would hate to get into another big brawl with them. They wouldn't listen anyway.*

## Discussion:

Since there are no perfect parents and no perfect children we all enter adulthood with at least a few resentments. You seem to feel, however, that you have experienced much more than the normal amount of hurt and that it has done serious, lasting damage.

The single most important thing to remember is this: While your parents may have acted toward you in hurtful ways, and while you may have been severely damaged, you do not have to continue to let that ruin your life. God has created us with a marvelous potential to survive and even grow through painful, hurtful circumstances. Now that you are an adult, you can begin taking steps to repair the damage done to you during your formative years. It won't be easy and it may take a long time, but you can do it! The Apostle Paul put it this way: "I can do everything with the help of Christ who gives me the strength I need" (Philippians 4:13). Here are some suggestions to start that healing process.

**First**, admit your anger and face it honestly. You are already doing that so you are on your way.

**Second**, identify the reasons for your anger. I suspect that you are already well aware of why it is that you resent your parents.

**Third**, accept responsibility for your feelings. While none of us were responsible for our upbringing, we are now responsible for how we deal with our emotions in adulthood. We can hang onto resentments, or we can choose, with God's

help and others, to resolve them. Taking responsibility for our angry feelings includes recognizing that retained resentments don't help us, or anyone else. They can wreck our marriages, sabotage our friendships or work relationships, distort our experiences with God or be taken out on our children. As one sage put it, "He who harbors a grudge should dig two graves." (One for the person we hate and one for ourselves since our anger will destroy us too!) That is why the Bible encourages us to "get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger" (Ephesians 4:31).

**Fourth**, face the pain and hurt beneath your anger. Anger usually serves a defensive/protective function. When we feel unloved, for example, or overprotected, or excessively controlled, we may hold onto our anger because that is easier than facing our painful feelings of being rejected or unloved. Explore the emotional pains beneath your anger with an understanding friend or a therapist, as well as share them with God. Going through your pain with another person has a two-fold benefit. It soothes the pain and it gives you a new, corrective experience. That is, a friend who cares for you and accepts you as you struggle with your emotional hurts and resentments not only makes your pain a little less, but it actually gives you a different type of relationship than the one you had with a hurtful parent. This helps change the way you think and feel about yourself and others. It also models for you the way God loves and encourages and forgives you in the middle of your struggles.

Some people find it helpful, like David did in certain Psalms, to write out their feelings. You might write a letter to your parents expressing all your hurts, disappointments, sadness, and feelings of anger. Then tear the letter up or burn it. The purpose of the letter is not to communicate with your parents but to put your feelings into words. Or you can write a letter to God, or simply tell Him precisely how you feel in prayer. Facing and experiencing your pain is a crucial step toward healing.

**Fifth**, grieve the loss of the happy childhood you longed for as you were growing up and the things you missed because you were denied it. Mourn that loss as much as if one of your parents had died or someone you loved very much had passed away. Just as it takes a long time to work through the grieving process after the death of a child or a life-long marriage partner, or a divorce, so also grieving over an unhappy childhood takes time. Allow yourself to cry over the positive things you missed and the negative things that happened. Face your true, healthy sadness. Don't rush this step because it is key to getting over your resentment. Until you grieve your losses, you will continue to hang onto your resentments. You will try (through your words or in your mind) to force your parents to admit their failures and to change. That would be nice, but it puts you in a helpless, dependent position that God does not intend. It makes your happiness dependent upon someone else being different! That never works.

Childhood losses which have never been worked through plague our entire adult lives. A girl who has been repeatedly criticized by her father, for example, may look to her husband to restore her good feelings about herself in marriage. But that only makes things worse because a mate cannot solve our childhood wounds. And when he/she doesn't, we become angry or resentful at him/her, much like we did toward our parents. We cannot have healthy adult relationships until we have processed the sadness and pain from our childhood and have become emotionally separated from our parents. Only then are we ready to "cleave to our mates" (Genesis 2:24) in a healthy, mature fashion.

**Sixth**, recognize your own sinful and hurtful patterns and accept God's full forgiveness and acceptance of you. The Bible says that we are to forgive others as Christ has forgiven us (Colossians 3:13). Once we understand and accept God's forgiveness, it becomes easier to forgive others. We

Continued on page 21 ➡



# "Show Us The Father ..."

by Ruth E. Narramore

We sat at the dinner table on Sunday discussing the excellent sermon our pastor, Dr. Gordon Kirk, had preached in the service that morning. The topic involved the attributes of God as our Heavenly Father. In his message Dr. Kirk explained that God has no body such as we have because He is a Spirit.

"It seems difficult to think of relating to a person who isn't a physical being as we are," I said.

The others agreed.

"But," I continued, "that's one reason God sent His Son to be born of a woman — to take on a physical form."

That's it exactly! We needed to see someone with flesh and blood in order to identify in our humanness. Jesus met that need.

Although God had planned it this way from the beginning, the unfolding of the event became the greatest miracle of all time. It began when a devout young virgin was approached by the angel Gabriel who surprised her with the tidings that she was "highly favored among women." He went on to tell her

that she had been chosen by God to become the mother of the Savior of the world. This would involve no physical relationship with a man, but God would father the child in His own miraculous way.

Mary accepted this — but not many others did, including Joseph, until God sent a special messenger to enlighten him. As far as Mary's part was concerned, it was the physical birth of a human child. Although this event had all the earmarks of a divine happening — fulfillment of prophecy, angelic host, and a remarkably special star, it was also very mundane — birth pangs, delivery, and the care of a newborn infant. The God-man had arrived on earth!

Christ's physical attributes were an inheritance from His mother, Mary. His divinity came from His Father. Because Jesus was human He could become hungry, weary, and suffer physical pain. Through it all, however, His divinity transcended His humanity.

It's one thing to communicate with someone via telephone or correspondence, but it doesn't take the place of seeing that person face to face. Once

while Jesus was sharing with His disciples, Philip broke in, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us" (John 14:8). To this Jesus explained that He and the Father were one and the same. The character of God was revealed through His Son. God's plan is for Christ to "show us the Father."

Why did God arrange for Christ to come to earth as a tiny baby? Jesus could have arrived as an adult ready to begin His ministry. But no! God thought it vitally important that His Son identify with the human race from the very moment of conception. God sees the babe in the womb, the infant, the toddler, and on through every stage of life as a time for divine involvement with humans. Does this speak to abortion? I think so. To terminate human life in any stage of development is to flout God's prerogatives.

I'm so glad Jesus came in human form. Most of all, because He paid the penalty for our sins to redeem us for eternity. But beyond that, it is the only way we could ever relate to and have fellowship with God, our Heavenly Father.

Thank you, Lord, for Christmas! ☞



Ruth E. Narramore

## ☞ LOVE

Continued from page 13

were expected to do our share. Dad was understandably tired after a full day's work and didn't feel like throwing around a football, working on a jigsaw puzzle, or playing the latest fad game.

When I became a parent, I began to follow this same style. As I began seeing my children's need for time with me, I had to work at making time. I learned to cut out extraneous activities or drop

some things that I was doing in order to spend more time with the children. And in the process, I learned some very important lessons.

To begin with, I found out that I was a workaholic and needed to learn how to relax and enjoy life. I found out that playing with my children enriched my life as well as theirs. And I found that my marriage was strengthened by family fun.

When Dickie and Debbie played on local soccer teams, I helped coach (even though I knew absolutely nothing

about soccer at the time) so I could be involved in their activities. We also played indoor games together and talked a lot and enjoyed each other's company.

The mutual enjoyment families share together, however, is only one of the blessings of learning to enjoy each other. When children are enjoying themselves and feeling loved and accepted, they do not have to turn to misbehavior for attention. When we feel the real thing — love — then we don't need to look for a substitute — attention.

Happy children with a true sense of belonging are much less likely to get into difficulty than children whose parents are too busy to spend quality time with them regularly. They will also develop a deep sense of being loved that will last them a lifetime and will even carry over to their relationship with God.

I know you love your children. But do you consistently express it in ways that they see it, experience it, and allow it to soak in day by day?

1. I Timothy 5:8, NIV
2. John 3:16.



Compiled by  
Eva Hallam Solberg

## Writing therapy

Researchers assigned 107 people with moderate-to-severe asthma or rheumatoid arthritis to write for 20 minutes, three days in a row, either about their most stress-



ful life event or their plans for the day.

Four months later, nearly half of the people who had written about stressful life events — most commonly the death of a loved one — had improved markedly, compared with only a quarter of those who wrote about mundane topics. Those with asthma who improved had measurably better lung function. In the arthritis group, responders had significantly less joint pain and swelling.

"Anyone with a chronic disease who tries writing therapy has little to lose, and just might do themselves some good," says the associate editor of this publication who is a physician.

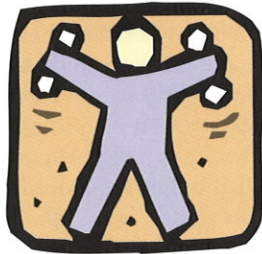
(*HealthNews*)

## Exercise and Physiology

Exercise affects many brain chemicals (notably serotonin, dopamine, and norepinephrine) that influence mood. It also boosts endorphins, opiate-like chemicals released by the

body, which have been linked to an elevation in mood. An exercise program can also help the body adapt to the physical/psychological effects of stress. Some experts think that even something as simple as the rise in body temperature caused by exercise can have a tranquilizing effect, as can the repetitive rhythms of the activity.

A boost in self-esteem and a sense of control and accomplishment often accompany progress in an exercise program. Some people who start exercising may benefit from the social contact, while others may prefer activities that allow them to be alone. Exercise may also help people sleep better



(provided it isn't done right before bedtime) as well as lose weight if they're overweight, both of which can improve mood.

Exercise cannot replace psychotherapy or medication, especially if one is severely depressed. People who are mildly or moderately depressed should choose an exercise plan that's realistic and practical. They need to find activities that are pleasurable.

(*UC Berkeley Wellness Letter*)

## Thyroid & Your Mood

It is wise to make sure your thyroid gland is in good working order. The American Thyroid Associa-

tion recommends that all adults aged thirty-five and older undergo thyroid testing every five years. An underactive gland can trigger depression.

Because the thyroid gland affects the body's metabolic rate, things such as body temperature, heart rate, muscle strength, and mood can be affected when the thyroid goes awry.

A simple test that measures the amount of thyroid-stimulating hormone (TSH) in the blood can confirm or rule out an underactive thyroid.

(*Health After 50*)

## Family Issues & Mental Illness

The relationship between mental illness and family is a complicated and interconnected one. When the family system is disturbed, individual members may develop their own symptoms. Also, their own vulnerabilities may be triggered.

Living with someone who has a mental disorder — someone who is emotionally ill — is never easy. No matter what the illness, there is always guilt, anger, and con-



fusion. Yet no stress is so extreme as to bring on a psychotic episode on its own.

Most mental disorders are responsive to treatment. But good results cannot happen if care is not sought.

## What is Psychotherapy?

Psychotherapy, or "the talking cure," is a valuable, widely used method of treating psychiatric disorders, emotional distress, and the problems of everyday living.

Psychotherapy is a process in which a caring, mutually trusting relationship develops between a person who is suffering and a psychotherapist who possesses the training, skill, and motivation to ease



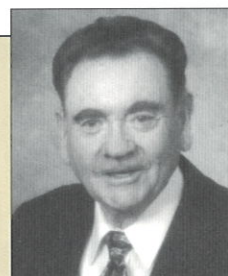
that suffering. Within a special and specialized human relationship, the person is heard, understood, and comforted. His choices, decisions, and feelings are considered and discussed, and he is offered insight and, at times, guidance. Usually, in time, he discovers that he actually feels better and is able to proceed with the business of life (work and relationships) with greater vigor, efficacy, and satisfaction.

As a person develops greater insight into himself and more understanding of the way he operates, many of his thoughts, feelings, and behaviors naturally become modified, and he will likely be able to manage the demands of everyday living more effectively. When psychotherapy is successful, it enhances feelings of pleasure, joy, and competence.

(from *Johns Hopkins Family Health* ©1999 by The Johns Hopkins University, published by HarperCollins).



# Buttermilk and Kisses



Dr. Clyde M. Narramore

by Clyde M. Narramore

When our grandson Byron was a little tyke, he attended preschool. In fact, we went to his “graduation”—cap and gown and all. A year later he graduated from kindergarten. So by the time he entered the first grade, he was pretty well educated!

What a contrast to my early years. In our ranching community there was no kindergarten, so a child could not begin school until he was about six years of age; then he entered the first grade.

Was that so bad? No, not especially—at least not in my case. I was learning a lot around our farm, and since my five brothers and one sister were older and in school, my mom and I were home alone and she was able to show me a lot of love and affection.

One day when I was about four or five, I came into the kitchen and saw my mother standing at the table churning cream so that we would have fresh butter. In that part of the country there still was no electricity because there were so few people. So she was turning the churn by hand.

“Here, stand on this

**Well, this is not like regular milk. It's a little sour and you have to learn to like it.**

chair,” Mom said, “and you can see better. You know, this is like a miracle. We’re churning this cream and in just a few minutes it will separate and we’ll have both butter and buttermilk.”

This was exciting to me. Sure

enough, the butter began to gather and soon a big ball appeared in the churn. Then my mother took the buttermilk, strained it, and put some in a glass with a little salt and drank it, saying, “Oh, this is so good!”

“I want some too, Mommie,” I said.

“Well, this is not like regular milk,” she explained. “It’s a little sour and you have to learn to like it. So I’ll give you just a little taste.” Then she poured a small amount in a glass, and as I drank it, she gave me a sweet kiss on the forehead.

“I want more!” I said.

“OK, you can have a bit more,” she said. So she gave me just a little more and as I drank it, she gave me another kiss. Then she would hug me and say, “You know something? You’re such a wonderful little boy that I wish I had forty more just like you!” I thought to myself, *Forty brothers, that would be wonderful; we could play a lot of games.* I never doubted her statement. I felt that she was really in earnest. I suppose if I heard that in my childhood once I heard it a hundred times: “I’d like to have forty just like you!”

This little ritual happened many times. And even today, years later, whenever I drink buttermilk I seem to feel my mother’s kisses! You know how

it is: you taste some potato salad or smell a flower or you have some other experience, and suddenly it takes you back ten,

twenty, or even fifty years ago when something happened that had to do with potato salad, or flowers, or whatever. Long-forgotten experiences can remain tucked away and have an influence on our behavior, positive or negative, for years to come.

These childhood experiences may be forgotten but are influential nevertheless. In fact, professional counselors spend much of their time uncovering some of these painful experiences. Eventually the client may suddenly recall a traumatic experience of childhood, or perhaps a whole series of them. As he examines them carefully, he can see how they have caused him to have severe feelings of hostility, or insecurity, or jealously, or some other negative trait. With careful guidance by the counselor, these negative feelings can be changed so that the client is able to feel and act differently.

A few years ago I was driving down a freeway in Southern California and I began to think: *I wonder if Mom really meant it when she used to say she wished she had forty little boys just like me.* But by that time it really did not matter because I had assimilated all those wonderful feelings inside—feelings that I was worthwhile, that I was loved, that I was accepted, and that it would have been so nice if there had been forty more just like me!

A basic emotional need of every person is to be loved! Undoubtedly, one of the most serious tragedies in childhood is growing up not feeling loved and not having anyone to love. Kids can do without most “things,” but they don’t do well without love.

As adults, we should also realize that many of our friends and associates have never had much love and affection as they were growing up. When we realize this, it will help us to better understand their behavior, and we will be more likely to reach out and encourage them.

In short, they’ve never had buttermilk mixed with kisses!





realize that our parents aren't the only hurtful people! We, too, are in need of forgiveness.

**Seventh,** make a commitment to grow into forgiveness. I say "grow into forgiveness" because some Christians try to force forgiveness while they are still angry and resentful. Real forgiveness of major hurts takes time. It is a process. Tell God that you want to become strong enough to face the pain of your childhood, give up your hope of remaking or changing your parents, and become a solid, confident, healthy adult. Then tell God that as a part of that process you would like to become a more loving, forgiving person. As you grow emotionally and spiritually, you will gradually find yourself being less resentful and more willing to forgive.

**Finally,** you ask if it would help to confront your parents now. That is an individual matter. You seem clear that with your parents, confronting them could just create another "big brawl." If that is all that would happen, I don't recommend it! On the other hand, when an adult has been abusive to a child, it can be a centering, solidifying experience for the adult child to talk directly with the parents. If you decide to do that, don't do it out of your anger and desire for revenge. The Bible calls us to "speak the truth in love" (Ephesians 4:15). If you don't feel loving, at least you can speak the truth in an honest, nonattacking way. Don't expect your parents to understand and ask for your forgiveness. The chances are very slim that they will do that. Instead, directly and as kindly as possible, share the hurt and the damage you experienced with the goal of being honest and speaking the truth. You are doing this more for your own integrity and for the sake of honesty than you are to motivate them to change. It may also help to tell your mother and dad that you are dealing with the damage, and that you are not asking anything from them. You just don't want to go through life acting like things were fine when they were not.

If you take these steps, over a period of time you will find yourself feeling much better about yourself, less resentful to your parents, and able to move on to what God has in store for you in the future. God wants to use even your terribly hurtful experiences to ultimately bring you good (Romans 8:28-29).

(You may submit questions for Dr. Bruce Narramore to answer by addressing them to *LIVING*, PO Box 661900, Arcadia, CA 91066-1900.)

## NCF NEWS & UPDATES



### Wedding Bells

This holiday season will mark a special event in the family of Dr. Bruce and Kathy Narramore. Their daughter, Debbie, will be married to Mr. Paul Hewitt on Saturday, December 18, in Southern California.

Debbie and Paul met five years ago in Swaziland, Africa, where they were serving on a summer missions team. Paul is in full-time ministry to college students with InterVarsity Christian Fellowship at the University of Illinois. Debbie teaches English literature at Ontario High School in Southern California. After a brief honeymoon the couple will be making their residence in Champaign, Illinois.

Congratulations, Paul and Debbie!

### Serving in China

Did you know that a program in Christian counseling is being developed in China? This January Dr. Bruce Narramore and his wife, Kathy, will be traveling to China where Bruce will be teaching a class on "Guilt, Anger, and Forgiveness in Christian Counseling."

The Hong Kong Baptist Theological Seminary is beginning a Master of Arts degree in counseling and has asked Dr. Narramore to serve as a consultant. To our knowledge, this is the only Christ-centered program in Christian counseling in the entire nation of China!

Kathy, who was raised in China as the daughter of missionaries, will be speaking to Chinese missionary leaders on "Caring for the Missionary Family." Her meeting is sponsored by the Hong Kong Association of Christian Missions.

Please pray for a safe trip and a meaningful ministry for Bruce and Kathy Narramore. They will be departing for China on January 7 and returning to the U.S. on January 23.

### Passing the Baton

After 34 1/2 years of outstanding, dedicated ministry through the Narramore Christian Foundation, Mr. Russ Rigg is leaving his position as NCF's Vice President of Finance.

Russ will continue serving part-time as NCF's Trust Officer, coordinating annuity and trust agreements with supporters of NCF's ministries. Thanks, Russ, for your wonderful contribution to this ministry!

Replacing Mr. Rigg as NCF's Vice President of Finance is Mr. Craig Scoon. Craig joins NCF after serving as Controller and Finance Director for LIFE Ministries for the past ten years.

Craig and his wife, Becky, and their children, Rachel, Sarah, and Caleb, live in Pasadena, California, close to NCF's international headquarters.

Welcome aboard, Craig. We are pleased to have you on NCF's ministry team!

### Ministering to Ministers

In November, Dr. Clyde Narramore will be ministering in Sacramento, California to approximately 1,000 pastors at the annual Pastor's Conference for the California Southern Baptist Convention.

Dr. Narramore will speak three times, focusing on: "The Man of God's Personal Life," "The Man of God's Pastoral Life," and "The Man of God's Preaching Life." Do pray for Dr. Clyde and Ruth as they minister.



## Prisoner Commends Videos

☒ Your videos have given me a great deal of insight into my personality and behavior. I especially like the way you explain the relationship between the physical, psychological, and spiritual and how one area can affect the other. In this prison setting, anger is something a person has to deal with constantly — his own and others. Your video, *Understanding Yourself and Others*, has a lot of information on how to cope in a situation such as this. It should be a course offered and recommended by the Corrections staff. It could really help so many.

I thank God for your ministry and devotion to dealing with everyday problems.

**P.C.  
Easterling Correctional Facility  
Clio, Alabama**

*Note: NCF regularly distributes Dr. Narramore's videos free of charge to chaplains at correctional facilities.*

## Wish We Had a Million Dollars

☒ Praise God. Wish we had a million dollars to give you for your wonderful ministry! We love and appreciate you.

**Louise and Ray Cromer  
Columbia, South Carolina**

*Thanks for your kind words, Louise and Ray. We wish you had that million, too! We would put it to work in a hurry!*

## Disappointed

☒ I am truly disappointed that NCF continues to print articles in *Psychology for Living* which state that the year 2000 is the beginning of the new millennium. The first paragraph of a recent article states this. Actually, the year 2000 is the last year of this millennium, and 2001 is the first year of the next. Please don't perpetrate this so-common error.

**E. R. Emerson  
Cumberland, Maryland**

*Oops. You're right. We stand corrected. But who wants to wait a whole additional year to celebrate the new millennium?*

## Fond Memories

☒ Your publication, *Psychology for Living*, has been a blessing to our home for many years. I'd like to make the article concerning Y2K from the August issue available to the families of our congregation.

My wife and I have fond memories of attending your seminar for ministers and missionaries in 1992.

We appreciate hearing Dr. Clyde on radio and we are happy for Dr. Bruce and his willingness to continue the work of NCF.

**Luke B. Bucher, Pastor  
Myersstown, Pennsylvania**

*Thanks, Rev. Bucher. Of course, you have our permission to reprint this article for your congregation. It's our pleasure to reach out through LIVING as well as seminars for pastors, missionaries, and MKs.*

## Living Memorials

### To Honor The Memory Of:

Mary C. Bailey  
Walter Hugh Carder  
Lee M. Lyons  
Martha Trabue

### Presented By:

Mrs. Rebecca B. McQuarry  
Lynn Molchan  
Ann and Red Evans  
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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

## Marriage

Continued from page 9

disappointing drama. Once you are aware of your unconscious roles, you can then decide to write a new script together.

Mark and Jenny, amazingly, went through their first year of marriage without ever hanging a single picture. Their prescribed roles prevented it. Not until they were in counseling did Mark and Jenny become aware of their stalemate and make a decision to change their unconsciously assigned roles. As Jenny said, "Writing our own script makes me feel like we are building our *own* marriage and not just being robots." Mark and Jenny were finally "leaving" their parents emotionally and beginning to "cleave" to each other in new and unique adult ways.<sup>1</sup>

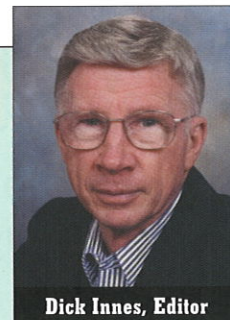
The expectations you bring to your partnership can make or break your marriage. Don't miss out on the sterling moments of marriage because your ideals are out of sync with your partner's. Don't believe the myth that you and your partner come with the same expectations for marriage. Instead, remember that the more conscious your expectations, the more likely they are to be aligned with reality. And the more likely you are to fulfill them.

1. See Genesis 2:24

Les Parrott III, Ph.D. & Leslie Parrott, Ed.D. are co-directors of the Center for Relationship Development at Seattle Pacific University and authors of *Saving Your Marriage Before It Starts, Becoming Soul Mates* and their new book, *Relationships*. Visit Les and Leslie at [www.RealRelationships.com](http://www.RealRelationships.com)



# Don't Miss the Silence



Dick Innes, Editor

by Dick Innes

In his book, *A Room Called Remember*, Fredrick Buechner tells about the great snowfall in New York City in the winter of 1947. At first it seemed no different from any other snowstorm. The flakes gently floated down without any wind to drive them. All day they fell. Gradually the sidewalks, parked cars and buildings were covered with a blanket of white. Streets became slushy. Shopkeepers were out with their shovels trying to keep clear a path to their doors. And the snow kept falling. The plows couldn't keep ahead of it. Consequently, the traffic nearly came to a standstill. Businesses closed early and people did their best to get home before nightfall.

By the next morning, bustling New York was a totally different city. Abandoned cars were buried. Nothing on wheels could move. Skiers glided gracefully down Park Avenue. The most striking transformation, however, was the silence. The only sounds were muffled voices and the ringing church bells. People listened because they couldn't help themselves. And our world rarely listens anymore—whether in New York or Toronto, London or Los Angeles, Sidney or Singapore — unless a crisis of sufficient magnitude thrusts a

wrench into the wheels of our high-speed, technological society and forces us to a standstill.

**Night falls on Christmas Eve.  
The last shop closes.  
All the hullabaloo stops.  
Everything is silent—  
for one brief day.**

Except, perhaps, as Buechner points out, business increases to a frenzied pace. Canned carols blast out over the din of traffic. Bells jingle. Red-robed Santas freeze in Chicago while their counterparts fry in Melbourne. Then, suddenly, night falls on Christmas Eve. The last shop closes. All the hullabaloo stops. Everything is silent—for one brief day.

As Christmas rapidly approaches, may I encourage you to pause for just a moment and hear God's Word: "The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel—which means, 'God with us.'"<sup>1</sup>

And again, "An angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, 'Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.'"<sup>2</sup>

For the last two thousand years,


Christmas has come every year as a constant reminder that God has not forgotten us. So take time to listen. Don't miss the silence. Be still and hear the true message of Christmas which, above all, is a call to remember that God has not forgotten us, but is vitally involved in the affairs of mankind. On that very first Christmas, God Himself, in the person of His Son, Jesus, came to earth to save us from our sins.

Sadly, one of the great tragedies of our time is not that God has forgotten us but that so many have forgotten God.

On the same day that Alexander Solzhenitsyn, the Russian-born Nobel Prize winner, was presented with the Templeton Foundation Prize for Progress in Religion by HRH Prince Philip at Buckingham Palace, he addressed many of Britain's leading political and religious leaders, including the Archbishop of Canterbury.

"Over half a century ago," stated Solzhenitsyn, "while I was still a child, I recall hearing a number of older people offer the following explanation for the great disasters that had befallen Russia: 'Men have forgotten God, that's why all this has happened.'"

"And if I were called upon to identify the principal trait of the entire twentieth century, I would be unable to find anything more precise and pithy than to repeat: 'Men have forgotten God.'"

So this Christmas, let those of us who name the name of Christ do all that we can to help others hear the silence and *remember* the true meaning of Christmas. 

1. See Matthew 1:23 (NIV).

2. See Matthew 1:20 (NIV).





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