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THE SWORD AND TRUMPET monthly magazine is a faith ministry directed by a Board representing various constituencies of the Mennonite Church. It is committed to defending, proclaiming, and promoting the whole Gospel of our Saviour and Lord, Jesus Christ, as revealed in the Holy Scriptures. It emphasizes neglected truth and contends for "the faith which was once delivered to the saints." This publication exposes and opposes doctrinal error which compromises that faith and leads to apostasy.

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than the 450 worshipers of Baal. Mark Fakkema wrote:

Secular instruction is a blunt denial of the centrality of our God. It is the "image" disowning his "Original." It is worse than that. Secular instruction marks a rebellion against the Most High in the field of education. Not only has the Creator been banished from His creation but God has been dethroned and man has been enthroned.<sup>7</sup>

Let me remind you that the way you answer the following two questions greatly determines the way you educate.

**What is truth?  
What is the nature of man?**

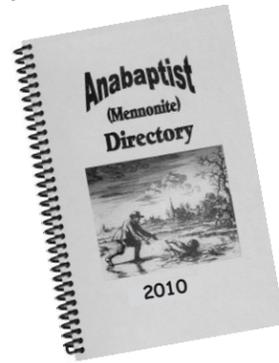
Do not underestimate the power for good or evil of these two questions and their subsequent answers. The mission of education is the orderly transmission of truth from one generation to the next. As Christian educators, we are privileged to

hand the torch of eternal truth to children and young people who will become the leaders of tomorrow. ■

1. John Dunphy, "A Religion for a New Age," *The Humanist* 43, No. 1 (January/February 1983): 26.
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3. Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*. Personal correspondence.
4. Mark Fakkema, Foreword of *Christian Philosophy and Its Educational Implications, Book 1* (Grand Rapids: National Association of Christian Schools, 1952).
5. J. Dickie, *John Witherspoon, Patriot*, MS. (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Historical Society Archives, n.d.), 6.
6. Paul A. Kienel, "Keeping the Main Thing the Main Thing," *Christian School Comment* 26, No. 5 (Colorado Springs, Colo.: Association of Christian Schools International, 1995).
7. Mark Fakkema, *Christian Philosophy and Its Educational Implications, Book 3* (Grand Rapids: National Association of Christian Schools, 1954), 63-T.

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# Person of the Month:

## *Lewis Josephus Burkholder*

**(1875-1949)**

Lewis Josephus Burkholder was born to Abraham G., and Elizabeth Ressor Burkholder (Abraham's second wife), on June 15, 1875, near Markham in York County, Ontario, northeast of Toronto. There were eleven children altogether—six from the first family and five from the second. Of the five, Lewis was the oldest with three younger brothers and a sister.

“L. J.” Burkholder was converted at the age of 16 under the preaching of J. S. Coffman and was subsequently baptized on May 18 of 1892.

Brother Burkholder did not have the advantage of a high school education but he was able to attend Elkhart Institute for one year.

At the “ripe old age” of 20, Lewis was ordained as a minister for the Cedar Grove church in Cedar Grove, Ontario, on January 12, 1896. As a result of the ordination, Brother Burkholder decided not to be a farmer. He purchased acreage from his father near his home, on which to build a house of his own. This became his home for life. Throughout his lifetime “L. J.” did carpenter work, cabinetry, watch and clock repair, and weaving.

Lewis J. Burkholder and Lucetta High, of Vineland, Ontario, were married May 22, 1904, when Lewis was 28 years of age. God blessed their marriage with the birth of a daughter.

In 1906 the Ontario conference established and opened the Ontario Mennonite Bible School which Brother Burkholder wholeheartedly supported—becoming one of its first teachers in 1907 at the age of 32. He was apparently interested in the ongoing work of the conference because in 1917, at the age of 42, he became one of the officers of the Nonresistant Relief Organization which did much relief work in Ontario through the Mennonite Church.

Sadly, after only nineteen years of marriage, Lucetta died on June 4, 1923.

In May of 1925, at the age of 49, “L. J.” married Emma Meyer of Markham. God blessed this second union with the birth of a son.

A man of vision, Lewis Burkholder was quick to see the great value of the summer Bible school movement and was one of its first great supporters. Being mission-minded, Brother Burkholder had a hand in helping to organize the Ontario Rural Mission Board. He served the Mission Board in many ways besides being its president. As a result of the Mission Board's outreach, Lewis met the Ammon Mast family, who lived near Clarence Center, New York. This was the beginning of new life in the Mennonite Church in that area of New York State.

In the broader church Lewis J. Burkholder served for many years as Ontario Conference moderator and was also assistant moderator of Mennonite General Conference for one term.

*(continued on page 5)*

# Lack of Knowledge

*"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge" (Hosea 4:6).*

by Larry Warren

**W**e have all been concerned about our nation's financial deficit, but we are facing something more serious, and that is a knowledge and commonsense deficit.

God's Word says at "the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased." This prediction has been fulfilled in our lifetime. We have witnessed what some have termed "an explosion of knowledge." With such knowledge availability why do so many lack knowledge, and the common sense to apply the scant amount they have?

A few years ago some of our national leaders and educators became alarmed over the dumbing down of each new generation. Efforts were made to reverse this dangerous trend, but they did not even slow it down. This dumbing down of our society is throwing civilization in reverse and conditioning us for a global dictator.

Some of the villains in this drama are the teachers' unions, and administrators who oppose higher performance mandates, and which protect incompetent teachers.

To compound the problem, the good teachers must work with the most spoiled, undisciplined generation known to man. Minds, young and old alike, are like a saturated sponge that has sopped up the dregs of Hollywood and all of the rest of the subculture. Heads are too sluggish to absorb knowledge that has weight or substance. Their attention span is so short they can only absorb a range of information offered in a short sound bite.

The problem increases once students reach the institutions of higher learning.

Lazy habits, drugs, alcohol, sex, and a curriculum that amounts to a politically correct crusade, dulls the development of their mental skills that should alert them to see they are forging the chains of their own enslavement.

One well-known educator said, "Educational institutions created to pass on to the next generation the knowledge, experience, and culture of the generations that went before them have instead been turned into indoctrination centers to promote whatever notions, fashions, or ideologies that happen to be in vogue among today's intelligentsia."

The arch villain behind this is the zealous propagation of a new worldview, which is not new at all. It is as old as Satan who was the architect of the Tower of Babel, the first world order. Satan cannot unite the world behind him until he has diminished the intellectual capacity of the masses so they can no longer think for themselves. With the help of the controlled news media he has almost accomplished that. His plan will be fully realized when the masses have become mental idiots to the point they allow themselves to be wards of a universal welfare state. Such a state will be a world order not managed by a benevolent Sovereign, but a Luciferian Dictator whose hands will drip with blood.

Like a dark shadow, this delinquent attitude toward knowledge has fallen upon the Church. As knowledge and common sense have diminished in the world, so they have decreased in the Church as well. Basic truth that was once seen by all

true believers has grown dim, or paled beyond recognition.

To draw a crowd of religious people, the preaching must be entertaining, without protracted, pointed, exposures of sin and its eternal punishment. The music must cause the emotions to soar, and be void of any theology.

You can measure a person's spiritual depth by the books they read and the music they listen to. If every true Christian knew they would have to lay down their life for Christ sometime within the next six months, I daresay their books of choice would not be religious fiction involving romance and adventure. They would probably be on their knees with *Fox's Book of Martyrs* in one hand and an open Bible in the other. For some it would be the first time in their life they spent some sweet hours in prayer. Their soul would long for the most intimate relationship with God they could possibly have in this life. They would want the farthest-reaching knowledge of Him that would be possible for one to reach in this world. Job had that deep hunger for an intimate knowledge of God. He said, "I will fetch my knowledge from afar, and will ascribe righteousness to my Maker." The lack of this deep hunger to know God intimately has left many Christians like those in the world, who are subject to deception and manipulation.

Many sing, "I dare not trust the sweetest frame, but wholly lean on Jesus' name." However, in real life they are so lazy they let others chart their spiritual course and do their thinking for them. They look to the scintillating personalities who set the religious tempo of whatever group or groups they identify with. Thank the Lord for the spiritual pastors, evangelists, and leaders God has blessed us with, but we must realize there are many today who are not spiritual. Those with a knowledge and commonsense deficit are easily influenced and led astray by these individuals.

In my lifetime I have seen more than one group that was once clean and had the glory and blessing of God, slowly change as

the telltale signs of compromise began to appear.

Liberals who were forceful and persuasive in their preaching were elevated. What they said was impressive, but what they did not say was alarming. One well-known evangelist said, "I am not as much concerned with what some preachers are preaching, as I am with what they are not preaching." If every fresh sin with a new face is looked on with silence by the ministry, it will soon be practiced by the people. The silence of the ministry adds to the knowledge deficit in the church.

The liberal element in the church will make an effort to crowd out those who dare preach the whole truth. Preachers' meetings, camps, and conventions will feature an old-fashioned preacher who will be faithful to name sin, and not in a funny, passing way. The straight shooters are tolerated in order to please the old-fashioned folks, and secure their financial support. However, they are then yoked up with a preacher who is soft on sin, whose eloquence and personality capture the emotions, but diminish the range of information needed to live a holy life, and be prepared to meet God in eternity.

It has been said, "People are born ignorant (that is lacking knowledge), but they are not born stupid (that is senseless)." You have a God-given sense of your responsibility to cultivate a knowledge of your Creator and what He requires of your life. A lack of desire or discipline to be mindful of God's will and your spiritual development, will make you a spiritual dunce. You will not be capable of sensing the dangers and pitfalls that lie in wait for you as you journey toward Heaven. Stop following the sheep and start following the Shepherd, for the whole flock might go over the precipice. Live in God's Word and with His abiding presence in your heart, learn to be sensitive, and responsive to His leadings. Jesus said, "I am the good Shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine." ■

—Reprinted by permission from *The Evangelist of Truth*, July 2010.

## **From the Editor's Desk**



Paul M. Emerson

**GUEST EDITORIAL**

### ***It's the Roots That Produce Fruit***

by Leroy Gehman

Anyone involved in gardening can tell you without serious consideration that the reason for gardening is the production of fruits and vegetables. Some very useful spiritual lessons can be learned from gardening.

When our children were growing up, we had lots of energy and lived on a small farmette. We decided to plant strawberries (three acres at one point) and to operate a pick-your-own project.

At start-up, experienced growers told us that you should always cut off all blossoms the first growing season. Being somewhat uncertain about such a delay of fruiting—having to wait a whole year for fruit after planting—seemed to be rather unnecessary.

As beginners, we took the advice of the experienced berry growers and proceeded to cut off all the blossoms that appeared the first year. They said that if you want sizeable and quality fruit, you will want to allow the plant to develop a strong root system which will support a healthy plant and produce a gorgeous crop of

beautiful berries the next year. We went along with that idea and the first year's fruit was very luscious and abundant, proving their counsel to be reliable.

In many ways, the lessons learned from growing strawberries is so applicable in our instruction of beginners in the Christian life. A newborn Christian with the joy and vigor of new life in Christ will naturally want to be involved in the fruit-bearing process. Not a bad idea. That's what being a Christian is all about, is it not?

Let's observe God's instruction and teaching to Israel in the tabernacle worship system. It soon becomes apparent that the development of spiritual roots is essential for the quality of fruit that God expects. He taught them the very same strategy that strawberry growers use in the production of quality fruit.

God's strategy is spelled out in the following four steps of growth and maturity that lead to the kind of fruit He looks for in His people. A fruitful relationship with God began with:

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1. *Confession and cleansing from sin* by identifying with the sin and offering an animal sacrifice of blood at the brazen altar for forgiveness.
2. *Worship and adoration of God* was expressed by a reverent respect in keeping the Sabbath day as a day reserved for rest and the worship of God.
3. *Fellowship and harmony with the people of God* was expressed by participation in the annual gatherings to celebrate the feasts of the Lord. (Christians today find their fulfillment in fellowship by participation in the Communion service and other occasions that strengthen the inner life.)
4. *Service and obedience was rendered to God* when men served in the priesthood or became leaders in the tribes of Israel, fulfilling specified roles in moving the tabernacle from place to place in their journeys through the wilderness.

A new Christian thrust into a Christian service project or mission program will be lacking the support of a well-developed and mature spiritual root system. Let's be sure that persons wanting to serve the Lord have first developed the necessary roots: confession of sin (the New Birth), are engaged in the worship of God, and are an asset in the fellowship of believers before placing them in responsible places of service in the program of the church.

It behooves us in the church today in our New Testament teaching program to follow the pattern God taught His people in the tabernacle system of worship.

An abundance of quality fruit can be expected from persons who have developed a deep and mature spiritual root system. ■

—Reprinted with permission from *Keystone Mennonite Fellowship Messenger*, July-August 2010.

## — LEWIS JOSEPHUS BURKHOLDER . . . cont'd from page 1 —

For a number of years "L. J." was an evangelist in Canada as well as the United States. The Lord used Brother Burkholder not only to seek out the lost and preach the Gospel to them but also to look for men who would give themselves to the work of God's Kingdom.

For a while he acted as bishop for the York County district to help them through some difficult problems.

Lewis loved history so it was no surprise that he authored the book, *Mennonites in Ontario*.

In 1939 Burkholder suffered a slight stroke which eventually caused blindness and a weakening of his body. He preached his last sermon at his home church of Cedar Grove on December 31st of that year, at the age of 65.

A preacher for 44 years, Lewis J. Burkholder could not have had such a full and rewarding ministry had his family not stood behind him in his many endeavors.

After nineteen years of marriage, grief entered the Burkholder family once again. On April 14, 1944, Lewis' second wife, Emma, passed away. Brother Burkholder was then age 69.

On September 28, 1949, at the age of 74, Lewis Josephus Burkholder passed away at his home in Ontario and arrived at his new home in Heaven.

— Gail L. Emerson

# THE SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS



*A Devotional Commentary*



by David L. Burkholder

## *Introduction to Quarter's Lessons*

The lessons for the fall quarter—September, October, November—are under the general theme of “The Inescapable God.”

September's lessons are from the Book of Exodus: God's call of Moses, His Covenant with the children of Israel, the folly of idol worship, the promise of God's abiding presence. October's and November's lessons are from the Psalms, showing how God sustains (October) and protects (November) His people.

God is high and holy, and we must respect and treat Him as such. Yet He is also concerned about His people and reveals Himself as a compassionate and benevolent Personage. We see expressions of these principles in His dealings with Moses and the children of Israel, and through the musings and praises of the psalmists.

We should allow these lessons to teach us anew these principles and to develop a deep appreciation for the mighty God who cares individually and corporately about His children.

A lesson theme and key text verse(s) will be found at the end of each lesson.

A book I have found helpful in understanding the events surrounding the exodus is: *The Exodus Case* by Lennart Möller, © 2008, available from Vision Publishers, P. O. Box 190, Harrisonburg, VA 22802, or [www.vision-publishers.com](http://www.vision-publishers.com). I recommend it for your consideration.

## SEPTEMBER 5, 2010

### *God Calls Moses*

Exodus 3:1-6, 13-15

When God has a job to do He always calls a man to work for Him. God's people, the Israelites, had been in Egypt for 400 years and part of that time in bondage to the Egyptians. They had cried to the Lord for deliverance and He had heard them. Now it was time for God to act on their behalf. And He needed a man. That man was Moses.

Moses is one of the most intriguing char-

acters of the Old Testament. He was born in slavery, saved from certain death, raised by Pharaoh's daughter, educated in the wisdom of Egypt and, likely, heir to the throne. But he was a Hebrew and he maintained an affinity with his people (read Exodus 2).

Forced to flee Egypt due to his misplaced zeal in defending his fellow Hebrews, he ended up in Midian, outside Egyptian territory. There he became a shepherd, caring for the flocks of his father-in-law Jethro. For forty years Moses had time to contemplate on his life, his relationship to God, and his usefulness to his people. No doubt he figured that in his former act of indiscretion he had

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eliminated any possibility of further useful service to his nation.

But then when he was 80 years old, God called him to productive service for Him on behalf of His people. While Moses was tending sheep on the backside of the desert near Mt. Horeb, God called. God arrested Moses' attention by a miraculous sight—a bush on fire, yet not consumed. When Moses turned aside to more closely observe this spectacle, God spoke. Moses was instructed to keep his distance and remove his shoes. This was holy ground. God was present.

The first thing God did was to identify Himself as the ancestral God of the Hebrews. He was the One known and worshiped by the patriarchs and known also to Moses as the God of the Hebrews. Moses feared to be in God's presence and covered his face in reverence and awe. This was the first personal encounter between God and Moses, but in the next 40 years that would become more commonplace. God and Moses spoke often (see Deuteronomy 34:10).

Moses was no doubt thrilled at God's intention to deliver His people from the bondage they were enduring in Egypt (read verses 7-12). However, when God pointed His finger at Moses and said I am sending you to bring my people out of Egypt, Moses balked. His first question was, "Who am I?" Then he asked, "Who are You?" Moses wanted an understandable identification of the One sending him to Pharaoh and to the Hebrews. Again God identified Himself as the God of their fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. But He also identified Himself as the One and eternal God, the I AM, the God who IS.

As we read further we see how Moses argued with God against this assignment. But God got His man. Moses, with Aaron, went to Egypt and allowed God to use them in a mighty way to exonerate His name and deliver His people.

#### **For thought and discussion**

1. Moses went from the palace to the pasture. Quite a letdown, to be sure. What thoughts do you suppose went through

his mind those forty years herding sheep? Discuss.

2. Why do you think God waited so long to deliver His people from Egypt? Discuss.
3. Why was Moses so reluctant to accept God's challenge to deliver His people?
4. Think deeply and carefully about the call to leadership and the lessons we can learn from Moses' experience. Perhaps some discussion.
5. Does God always get His man? What happens when we refuse God's call to service? What happened to Moses?
6. Muse on the God who IS. Let your imagination run.

*Lesson emphasis:* The necessity of a careful and positive response to God's call to leadership.

*Key verse:* 15

## **SEPTEMBER 12, 2010**

### ***God Establishes a Covenant With His People***

Exodus 20:1-11

Some very significant events had taken place between last Sunday's text and today's. Moses and Aaron had gone to Egypt and confronted Pharaoh with God's demands. God had visited devastating plagues on Egypt for their refusal to let Israel go. The exodus had taken place. Israel had crossed the Red Sea on dry ground. They were now far separated from their settled life in Egypt and beyond the clutches of the Egyptians. They were free people, but what was to become of them now?

God had a purpose for these people, a purpose begun with the calling of Abraham many centuries earlier. Now, with their deliverance from bondage, He was setting the stage for another dramatic step in His plan. God had caused His people to multiply in Egypt. Now, prior to their entry into the land promised long before to their ancestors where they would live permanently, God's design was to form them into a self-governing

nation with Himself as the head.

A nation needs laws to govern the actions of its citizens. So here at Mt. Sinai, or Horeb (see Exodus 3:1 and 12), God proceeded to give them a set of basic laws to govern both their relationship to Himself and the interactions among themselves (read Chapter 19 for context). Here God gave Israel ten laws covering the full range of human behavior. The first four (today's text) dealt with their relationship to God, the other six with their relationship to one another.

It would appear from Exodus 19:9 and 20:19, 22 and Deuteronomy 4:12 & 13 that initially God spoke directly to the people. However, due to their great fear of God's awesome display of power, they requested Moses to be their intermediary and pass on God's word to them (see 20:19).

Before God spoke the commandments, He identified Himself as the Lord God who had brought the people out of Egypt (see Deuteronomy 6:4). They had observed that His power was far above the power of any other so-called god or any human power. Therefore He was to stand alone in their loyalty and their worship. He was the great, unseen God (Deuteronomy 4:12). He was not to be represented by any man-made object.

This God is jealous of His people's respect and adoration. He is intolerant of rivalry for men's affection. Those who deny Him and reject His overtures will see the effects of their rejection in subsequent generations. God does not hold children guilty for the sins of their fathers, but the effects of the father's sins do affect their posterity. The other side of the coin is that God's blessing of the faithful also extends far beyond the immediate recipients.

God is also jealous of His holy name and will visit judgment upon those who misuse it or take it lightly. All of these prohibitions and restrictions were an attempt to convey the holiness of God and the responsibility of His people to hold Him in the highest regard and to secure their unrivaled loyalty.

In the creation God established the prin-

ciple of six days of labor and one of rest. God set apart one day out of seven for complete cessation of work and of rest for man and beast. It is a day for the rejuvenation of body and mind and of worship and reflection on the greatness and goodness of God. Again, its purpose is to turn man's heart toward God and His great power and providence.

God now had a nation and they had governing laws. They were set to move on toward the Promised Land.

### **For thought and discussion**

1. Be sure to understand clearly God's purposes for the children of Israel and how all the events of their history fit into His complete plan.
2. Reflect on the folly of mixing loyalties between God and gods. Where does that ultimately leave one?
3. Why did God put the laws governing relationship to Him first, ahead of interpersonal relationship laws? Discuss.
4. We normally think of swearing as taking God's name in vain. Are there other ways as well?
5. Perhaps here would be a good place to re-evaluate your keeping of the day of rest. Are adjustments in order?

*Lesson emphasis:* To take seriously God's person and the laws He has given to govern man's relationship to Him and to his fellow men.

*Key verses:* 2 and 3

## **SEPTEMBER 19, 2010**

### ***God Abhors Idolatry***

Exodus 32:1-10

In last Sunday's lesson God established His covenant with His people Israel and gave them the laws by which to relate to Him and to each other. In the intervening chapters up to today's lesson, God gives Moses a more detailed explanation of those laws in terms of personal interactions between the people. It also includes the

establishment of the feasts, the reading of the Covenant to the people and God calling Moses up to the mountain where He gave detailed instructions for the building and furnishing of the tabernacle. God also directed Moses to hallow Aaron and his sons to be priests for the people in their relationship to Him.

Moses was on the mountain with God forty days and nights, receiving instructions and writing down God's commandments. The people, waiting below, became restless and began to wonder if Moses was ever coming back. While Moses communed with God, they were listening to the deceptive voice of the tempter. The situation that developed was but another case of their failure to trust God and His word (see Chapter 16).

So the people came to Aaron, the second in command, and *told* him what they wanted him to do: "Make us gods which shall go before us." God had gone before them in a pillar of fire and cloud since their departure from Egypt. And they had recognized Moses' leadership as God's servant and spokesman. But they were impatient to keep moving toward the Promised Land. And now Moses had seemingly deserted them.

Aaron should have known better, but he went along with their ill-advised plan and told the people to bring him their golden earrings. These earrings were likely booty from their plundering of the Egyptians when they left Egypt (see 12:35, 36). Then Aaron, in direct violation of the first three commandments and God's prohibition against gods of gold (20:23), cast a golden calf. (See his lame excuse in verses 19-24 of Chapter 32.)

The people, who had previously pledged undivided fealty to God (see 19:8; 24:3, 7), now turned away from Him and gave their loyalty to a dumb idol. Did they really, truly believe it was the golden calf which had brought them out of Egypt (v. 4)? How dumb can people get, to place such responsibility on an inanimate idol?

It appears as though Aaron, in an

attempt to still honor the true God in some way, proclaimed a feast to Him on the morrow. However, the people turned the feast into a licentious party devoid of any worship or recognition of God (see 1 Corinthians 10:6, 7).

God could not stomach this gross departure from Him and the denial of all He had done for this people. In fact, He disowned them and shifted their proprietorship to Moses (v. 7). He was ready to destroy them for this great act of unfaithfulness, this slap in the face, and make of Moses a great nation. God does not look lightly upon the sin of His people. And were it not for His mercy we would all be consumed by His wrath.

Moses, ever the humble servant of God and leader of His people, pled with God to forestall His threat of destruction and not sully His great name among the heathen or deny His promise to the patriarchs. God abhors idolatry and the sin of idolatry does bear its consequences. (Read the rest of Chapter 32.)

#### **For thought and discussion**

1. What kinds of people are suitable for leadership? We have examples of several kinds in this lesson and its context. Discuss.
2. What usually happens when the people lead the leaders?
3. The children of Israel had observed many demonstrations of God's power and deliverance in the months prior to today's lesson. What made them so easily turn away from God and give their loyalty to an idol? Do we do things like that even today? Discuss.
4. Discuss the advantages of plural leadership. Is there also a downside?
5. Idols come in more than one size or shape. What are some threatening idols in our day?
6. Verse 10 should serve as a clear warning not to trifle with God's clear commands.

*Lesson emphasis:* The absurdity of turning from a living, benevolent, and caring God to a god of our own making.

*Key verses:* 9 and 10

**SEPTEMBER 26, 2010**

***God Promises His Presence***

Exodus 34:1-10

Today's text tells us (vv. 6, 7) of God's mercy, compassion, longsuffering, love, and forgiveness. This stands in contrast to the wrath He pronounced (32:10) against His sinning people in the episode of the golden calf. God is not fickle and He did visit judgment upon the people for their great transgression of His laws. However, upon Moses' intercession, God forgave Israel and gave Moses orders to proceed to lead the people on toward the Promised Land. God had withdrawn His presence from them because of their sin, but now promised the presence of His angel to go before them to lead the way and to drive out the inhabitants of Canaan.

After atonement had been made for the sin of the golden calf, Moses requested confirmation of God's promised presence on their journey toward Canaan. God granted that request and also gave Moses a rare glimpse of Himself (33:12-23).

Once these issues were settled, God again called Moses up to the mountain to renew the Covenant and to write again the Ten Commandments on tables of stone. God had told Moses to hew two new tables of stone to replace the ones he had broken in his anger over the people's sin. He was to bring them with him when he again met God on the mountain. He was to go alone and a safe perimeter was to be maintained around the foot of the mountain. God's holiness dare not be breached.

There on the mountain the Lord descended in a cloud and talked with Moses. He identified Himself as the same God who had spoken to Moses at the burning bush, the I AM. God also proclaimed His attributes: merciful, gracious, longsuffering, good, truthful, forgiving. But He would not overlook sin, the consequences of which may extend for generations.

Moses' response to God's presence and his awareness of His holiness drove him to

worship. Moses also pled again for God to go with His people, to forgive their sin, and accept them as His special people. Moses recognized the obstinacy of the people and their proneness to sin. However, because of that he felt even more the need for the presence of God as they moved toward the land of promise.

God's response was that He would renew His covenant with them and "do marvels" among them the likes of which had never been seen before on the earth. These works of the Lord were to be a witness to the people surrounding them of the power and greatness of their God. In all likelihood God was referring to what He would do in driving out the inhabitants of Canaan to make a place for His chosen people to dwell permanently (see Joshua 2:9-11).

With God's presence and Moses' leadership the people of Israel were now ready to embark on the next stage of their journey toward nationhood, the march toward Canaan.

**For thought and discussion**

1. Contrast God's mercy and His wrath. What is necessary to stem His wrath and obtain His mercy?
2. Reflect on God's patience and mercy toward Moses as evidenced in verse 1.
3. Moses was a mere mortal. He sinned. Yet notice the special privilege God granted him (v. 5) and the special relationship they enjoyed (Deuteronomy 34:10). What did this mean to God? to Moses?
4. Don't fail to notice the ongoing effects of sin from generation to generation as noted in verse 7. Discuss the effects of such as can be observed today.
5. Does God still do things today of which men stand in awe? Examples? The purpose? Discuss.

*Lesson emphasis:* God is merciful and forgiving, but we dare not presume upon His mercy.

*Key verses:* 6 and 7

# Newslines . . .

by Hans Mast

incidents events occurrences facts illustrations episodes committees vignettes proceedings problems  
experiences crises adventures transactions meetings tragedies scoops reports conferences happenings  
bulletins questions reports affairs dramas encounters personages actions tidings et cetera

## News Snippets

“[T]he National Institutes of Health (NIH) [an arm of the U.S. federal government], has so far awarded \$1.44 million in federal funds to a project that, among other things, is estimating the size of the population and examining the “social milieu” of male prostitutes in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam.”

—Excerpt from *CNSNews.com*, <http://j.mp/9B8S7b>

A new study shows that marijuana use, which has long been known to reduce schizophrenia symptoms in the short-term, actually worsens the schizophrenia condition in the long-term and can actually cause schizophrenia in mentally healthy marijuana users.

—*LiveScience*

Animal smuggling can be a lucrative business; a man was caught at Cairo airport smuggling 50 chameleons and eight foxes (all alive, of course) in a suitcase to Thailand.

—*AP*

“The United States has discovered nearly \$1 trillion in untapped mineral deposits in Afghanistan, far beyond any previously known reserves and enough to fundamentally alter the Afghan economy and perhaps the Afghan war itself . . . The previously unknown deposits—including huge veins of iron, copper, cobalt, gold, and critical industrial metals like lithium—are so big . . . that Afghanistan could eventually be transformed into one of the most important mining centers in the world . . .” This could either bring peaceful prosperity or simply increase the stakes for violence. —Excerpt from *The New York Times*, <http://j.mp/cYqYTB>

Mosab Hassan Yousef is the son of the

founder of Hamas, the fundamentalist Islamic terror organization that runs the Gaza Strip in Palestine. Yousef became a Christian through someone inviting him to a Bible study. He then fed Shin Bet (Israel’s equivalent of the FBI) information about planned Hamas terror attacks, saving hundreds of lives. He fled to the US and has been speaking in churches giving his testimony and talking about Islam. The Department of Homeland Security was planning to recommend that he be denied political asylum because his association with Hamas made him a security risk. Twenty-two U.S. House Representatives wrote letters to DHS and thousands of Christians prayed and DHS reversed its recommendation. If Yousef were to be deported to Palestine, he would most certainly be assassinated. He wrote a book (*Son of Hamas*) about his experiences which I am planning to read and perhaps review.

—*Washington Times*, Joel Rosenberg’s *Flash Traffic*

A 14-year-old was arrested for kidnapping for trying to help a child find its mother in a store.

—*Orlando Sentinel*

When his mom was rendered unconscious by a seizure and the car started drifting across the median toward oncoming traffic, an eight-year-old boy unbuckled himself from his car seat in the back, crawled over the seat, and steered the vehicle out of oncoming traffic. Only a week before, the mother had discussed with her children what they should do in the event she had a seizure while driving, and the young man executed the instructions perfectly.

—*ParentDish.com*

A teacher at a private Christian school in Florida who was fired for an extramarital

pregnancy is suing the school for unlawful discrimination. —MSNBC

A newly-wed lady in the midst of a stroke was being carried into the ER by her husband of four days and they had their way barred by a Chattanooga, TN, policeman trying to arrest them for running a red light and evading police. He later arrested the husband, but the charges were dismissed and the officer has been placed on leave. Authorities advise the public to call 911 in case of emergency to arrange for a police escort to meet you on the way to the hospital. —WRCB Chattanooga

A Central Asian evangelist was going door to door sharing the gospel in a Muslim area; the first man he shared with got angry and told him to go away. However, this evangelist's pastor told him to go back to that house again. The Muslim man's five-year-old daughter was playing by the gate, so he began to share the gospel with her. The Muslim came out of the house with a big stick to beat the evangelist, but the girl cried out, "Papa, stop! Don't hit him. You must listen to what he says and start going to church every Sunday." Her father dropped the stick and started crying. She had been deaf and mute from birth.

—Pioneers.org via Kuepfer Kronicle

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### **Egyptian Police Beat Blogger to Death**

An Egyptian blogger, Khaled Said, was dragged out of an internet café in Alexandria by Egyptian police and beaten to death on the sidewalk. This was because he was preparing to release a video that showed policemen splitting the spoils of a drug bust. The official report (and the secondary investigation and secondary autopsy) declares that he died while trying to swallow a bag of drugs, which is belied by the post-mortem images (<http://j.mp/bbOptG>—warning, brutal images) of his battered body and accounts of witnesses.

In recent years, the internet has helped publicize police corruption, torture, and abuse. Videos of officers sexually abusing

and torturing people, and photos of battered people have caused furors in the past. Human rights groups say that police torture, abuse, and detention without charges happen on a very regular basis in Egypt; it is only the occasional story that comes to light because of photographic evidence or blatant, public beatings. There have been very few prosecutions of police officers for abuse; the sexual abuse and torture case mentioned earlier resulted in a three-year sentence for the main officer involved; after serving about half that sentence, he returned to work with the police.

—Source: *Christian Science Monitor*, AFP

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### **Amish Farming Draws Government Scrutiny**

“LANCASTER, Pa. — With simplicity as their credo, Amish farmers consume so little that some might consider them model environmental citizens.

“ ‘We are supposed to be stewards of the land,’ said Matthew Stoltzfus, a 34-year-old dairy farmer and father of seven whose family, like many other Amish, shuns cars in favor of horse and buggy and lives without electricity. ‘It is our Christian duty.’

“But farmers like Mr. Stoltzfus are facing growing scrutiny for agricultural practices that the federal government sees as environmentally destructive. Their cows generate heaps of manure that easily washes into streams and flows onward into the Chesapeake Bay.

“And the Environmental Protection Agency, charged by President Obama with restoring the bay to health, is determined to crack down. The farmers have a choice: change the way they farm or face stiff penalties.

“Runoff from manure and synthetic fertilizers has polluted the Chesapeake Bay for years, reducing oxygen rates, killing fish, and creating a dead zone that has persisted since the 1970s despite off-and-on cleanup efforts. But of the dozens of counties that contribute to the deadly runoff of nitrogen and phosphorus, Lancaster ranks at the top. According to EPA data from 2007, the most recent available, the county generates

more than 61 million pounds of manure a year. That is 20 million pounds more than the next highest county on the list of bay polluters, and more than six times that of most other counties.

“. . . plain-sect dairy farmers . . . own more than 50 percent of Lancaster County’s 5,000-plus farms.

“Last September, [EPA officials] visited 24 farms in a pocket of Lancaster County known as Watson’s Run to assess their practices. Twenty-three of the farms were plain sect; 17 were found to be managing their manure inadequately. The abundance of manure was also affecting water quality. Six of the 19 wells sampled contained E. coli bacteria, and 16 had nitrate levels exceeding those allowed by the EPA.

“Persuading plain-sect farmers to install fences and buffers underwritten by federal grants has been challenging because of their tendency to shy from government programs, including subsidies. Members neither pay Social Security nor receive its benefits, for example.”

—Excerpts from “Amish Farming Draws Rare Government Scrutiny” (<http://j.mp/d9xhJ8>) in *The New York Times*

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### **Ethnic Attacks in Kyrgyzstan**

“Beginning one week ago, thousands of young Kyrgyz men rampaged through parts of southern Kyrgyzstan (a Central Asian country in the former Soviet Union) with weapons and torches, attacking ethnic Uzbek neighborhoods, burning homes and stores, and, according to reports, beating, raping, and killing Uzbek residents. The official death toll is over 200, though officials have indicated it may be ten times that number. The attacks lasted for several days, setting off a massive rush to flee the violence—an estimated 400,000 Uzbeks fled the region in the last week, heading to larger cities or the Uzbekistan border. It remains unclear exactly what instigated the attacks, or who exactly was the organizing force behind them. Kyrgyzstan’s interim government suggested loyalists of recently-deposed former president Bakiyev were behind the attacks. Though the recent vio-

lence seems to have ebbed, instability remains in Kyrgyzstan, with Uzbeks barricading their neighborhoods and taking their defense into their own hands.”

—Excerpt from “Ethnic attacks in Kyrgyzstan” (<http://j.mp/c2qtbZ>) on *The Boston Herald’s* blog *The Big Picture*; I suggest you visit the link to see the pictures first hand.

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### **Israeli Ultra-Orthodox Jews Protest School Integration**

“Dozens of Israeli men were in jail . . . after ultra-Orthodox Jews staged their largest protest in 10 years in support of parents who defied a supreme court ruling on school integration.

“Around 100,000 angry ultra-Orthodox Jews rallied in Jerusalem . . . in protest at the court’s decision to jail a group of parents of European origin, or Ashkenazis, for refusing to send their daughters to a school with Jewish girls whose families originate from Arab countries, known as Sephardis.

“The 35 fathers who turned themselves in at Jerusalem police headquarters on Thursday evening were taken to . . . prison . . . to serve an initial two-week jail sentence for contempt of court.

“The issue erupted when the court intervened in a dispute at the ultra-Orthodox school in Immanuel settlement, where parents from the strictly observant Slonim Hassidic sect of Ashkenazi Jewry refused to let their girls attend classes with girls of Sephardi descent.

“‘Ashkenazi parents do not want their daughters to study with students who are less observant, who are likely to watch TV or the Internet. They want to protect their children from bad influences,’ said Meny Schwartz, the director of an ultra-Orthodox radio station.”

That sounds very Mennonite; I sat beside a 19-year-old ultra-Orthodox young man on a five-hour bus ride in Israel and he kept expressing amazement at how similar my upbringing and family life (as a conservative Mennonite) was to his upbringing and family life.

—Excerpts from “Israeli ultra-Orthodox Jews in jail after demo” (<http://j.mp/cluAkN>) in AFP

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# The Dangers of Anti-Groupism

by Denny Kenaston

**A**nti-groupism stems from many different things, and many are the reasons that you may say, “Pheew, Mennonites . . .” or, “Ugh, Baptists . . .” There may be many different reasons why you have developed an attitude against some group—whatever name they might have, I warn you, there is real danger behind that attitude!

It could be that you had a traumatic experience with a certain group in your past church life. One occasion that comes to my mind is a young man that went through a church split. Church splits are not good—certainly an unfortunate experience. Usually when there is a church split, somebody gets hurt; young people are often confused and don’t understand what is right and who they are supposed to follow. So they get hurt.

In the case I am thinking of there was a young man who got hurt in a church split. So his attitude was, “Mennonites, puh . . . I don’t ever want to see another one. I never want to hear of one. And I am never going to a Mennonite church again as long as I live.”

He had a traumatic experience in his life, and he developed an attitude that is detrimental to his spiritual life. He is half shipwrecked already because of his attitude.

You may have been hurt in a past church situation where someone dealt with you in a wrong way. Perhaps they were too hard on you, and sort of kicked you around spiritually. Possibly you were even driven away or excommunicated from that church. Because of that, you

may have developed an “anti-group” attitude.

Sometimes people grow up in a church setting that says, “This is the way we do things around here. We have the right way, and if you want to get to heaven, you do as we say and get baptized into the church, and everything will be alright.” Then someone wakes up to see that error exists in the church, and that salvation is by following Jesus, not simply man-made rules. Often the immediate reaction is to develop an attitude about “that church” that taught them wrong things all their life.

Or maybe you were in a group that took an extreme position about some truth in the Bible. Because of that extreme position—after all, taking things to extreme is false doctrine—you developed an anti-group attitude.

Consider the pendulum. When a pendulum is pulled to one side and released, it swings to the opposite side almost as far. How often we overreact to error, just like a pendulum! When we see something that is wrong, our natural tendency is to swing to the other side. In our zeal to get as far away from the error as we can, we often end up in another error on the opposite extreme.

But praise God for the balancing of the Word and of other brothers and sisters, and of those gentle promptings of the Spirit of God! I think most of us could testify of where our attitudes swung too far one way on some issue and God had to bring us back to moderation.

In my own experience, I went through

one of those traumatic church experiences. In reaction, for a time I wrote off everything from my past church experience. All of it! I said in my mind: *They hurt me. They have ruined me. They have taken care of my future opportunities to minister. They must be totally wrong.* At that point, I quit witnessing and wrote off all my past church experience.

That is what I call anti-groupism. Of course, we all have different groups that we may have reacted against, but the principle is still the same. God was very gracious to me in my experience. He was patient with me in my experience. He was patient with me until the pendulum came back—truth was looked at properly and balance was restored. God worked out all of the anti-groupism that was in my heart towards those people, and I thank God for that. People are sometimes shocked when I tell them that I now relate well with those who treated me wrong. It is all because that anti-group attitude got worked out of my heart.

There are several dangers in anti-group attitudes. Let's look at them closely:

- ***If you hold those “anti” feelings in your heart, you will not be able to help the group you oppose.***

It is God's will that we reach out to those within our circle of influence. Each one of you has a circle of influence from your past, into churches that I do not, and God wants to use that influence. But if you harbor “anti”—which signifies “opposed to, against”—attitudes, you will NEVER be able to minister to those people. We want to stand against the attitude that says, “I am against those people that I came from.”

What is very interesting to me is that often the very people that we hold attitudes against are the ones we want to reach out to the most; yet we cannot do it because of our attitude. When we reach out to them, they sense the attitude and

refuse to receive what we have to say. In reaction, they then will sometimes begin to “throw things back.” And I realize that this reaction of theirs will sometimes come even if we approach them in a pure way, but too often we carry an anti-group attitude towards the group we have left. So we then justify ourselves and quote Paul's words, “I go to the Gentiles . . .” It is pretty hard to have a burden for people, if you are disgusted with them for what they did to you in the past. It is hard to pray for them.

Paul had several reasons to have an anti-Jewish attitude. After all, he had been deceived by them, being told by them that they had the right way, the only way. Paul believed this, so much so that he hounded Christians to death for turning away from Judaism. Yes, he was deceived; he had plenty of “reason” to react against it. After he found faith in Jesus Christ, the Jews chased after him, wherever he went, causing him trouble. His name was well-known among the Jews, but in a negative way: they stoned him; they argued with him in public places; they had him thrown into prison; but not only that, he was even called by God to the Gentiles, so that he could have easily said, “Jews . . . huh . . . I am done with 'em! I've had enough of them! Somebody else can minister to them; I am called to the Gentiles.”

Just listen to Paul's heart in Romans 9:1-3: *“I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh.”*

Accursed from Christ for the sake of my people—what an amazing attitude! There was apparently no pendulum in his life. He kept the spirit and attitude of Christ; he still loved them. Even though they criticized him and persecuted him, he would not allow that anti-group attitude to rise up in his heart. In Chapter

10 of the same letter, we can read some more of Paul's heart for the Jews: *"Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, . . . have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God."*

We can hear the burdened heart of Paul as he ponders his people. We cannot sense any reactionary spirit in these verses, but rather a pure, sweet desire that the Jews would come to the light and understanding that he himself had come to. Even though Paul did say those words, "I go to the Gentiles," we need to hear his heart in the spirit in which he spoke them. It is not wrong to say those words and mean them, but may we have the same attitude that Paul had!

When the time came for Paul to return to Jerusalem, he could joyfully submit to the Jewish customs and do things that he knew were not necessary for salvation. Had he had an anti-Jewish attitude when James came to him and said, "Paul, I want you to shave your head and go on a fast so that while you are here in Jerusalem there won't be any trouble," what do you suppose his response would have been? He may have spouted out something really "holy," like, "I am free from the Law; I don't have to do those things!" There were a lot of Scriptures he could have quoted to James. But his love for these people, his people, caused him to act without any "anti" reaction.

So we see that the first and foremost danger of an anti-group attitude is that we cannot help the ones we oppose; they will not receive what we have to say if they sense that attitude in us.

***• An anti-group attitude will cause you to do things that will offend those very people.***

You will not consider them when making choices in your life. Paul was not that

way. His testimony was, "To the Jew I am going to be like a Jew; and to the Greek, a Greek." Paul did not have an uncaring, inconsiderate attitude when it came time to making choices. No, he did not compromise (not that he would take part in their ungodly ways to win them), but he did consider and think, "Is this going to cause hurt among those people? Is this choice going to further the Gospel among the Jews?"

If you have, for example, an anti-Amish attitude, you will not think like Paul did. In fact, even if someone would try to suggest the idea of submitting to "those people's" ideas, you would immediately come up with one of those "righteous" answers. There are times, of course, for those "righteous" answers, but I challenge you to consider what your attitude is, and ask yourself at decision time: "Will this hurt my opportunity to speak to those people? Is this worth doing?" After all, it may be more than just "that group" you are dealing with; "that group" may include those who are your brothers or sisters in the Lord.

Hear the words of the Apostle Paul: "If meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend." Consider how an "anti" attitude will blind you to this principle. You will make choices—buy things, go places, wear clothes, and do things—that will offend those you are trying to win.

***• An anti-group attitude will hurt the next generation.***

Perhaps you have already heard the words coming from the mouth of your children . . . words that made your conscience twinge. The next generation is at our mercy. They are making evaluations based on our attitudes. It has been said—and it is very true—that what we do wrong in moderation, our children will do in excess. Ponder that!

Maybe for you it is simple, "Ugh, Mennonites . . ." but for your children, that

little sigh may cause them to write off the whole Anabaptist movement and cause them to become wholly Evangelical. If we have a reactionary spirit toward a certain group of people or a certain set of principles, our children will react even stronger than we have.

Have you ever heard the words from some of “those people,” such as, “Watch where you are going, you will lose your children”? These are words given from observation—wise words! Well, the answer is not necessarily to return to the old group, because, yes, there were likely valid reasons for leaving. But let’s develop a Christlike attitude toward them, not a reactionary one.

• ***An anti-group attitude will cause you to throw away truth—pitch it!***

We have all seen people who have reacted and thrown away beautiful truths, because “such-and-such a group hurt me and taught me wrong. I am getting away from them!” It causes people to go from a church with strong authority—perhaps too strong—to completely abandon the idea of authority in the church. It causes people from a church where there was strong brotherhood accountability, to no church at all. These folks may not even believe that there is a church, and they stay at home.

Of course, the oncoming generation gets hurt tremendously for this. The hills are filled with these “individualists,” people who cannot find anyone anywhere to fellowship with—no one they can agree with. What causes this? Many times it was a bad experience in the past with a group that perhaps abused church authority. I recognize that there are people who are in an area where no good options exist, but I speak to people who are not even seriously looking for a church anymore.

People also react from churches that focus primarily on the outward, and they leap into the error that says the outward doesn’t matter; only the heart matters.

In the process, many powerful Bible truths get thrown out the door. The Scriptures say, “Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand.”

What happens is, because of our “anti” attitude, we develop a blind spot. For example, take the subject of clothes. You may hear someone saying, “Clothes! I am sick of hearing about clothes! I am sick of ‘plain suits and cape dresses!’ ” So the whole “clothes” thing gets pitched out . . . and blindness comes over that person. And we stand back amazed at what those people end up doing. This all stemmed from that “anti” attitude—reactionism.

• ***An anti-group attitude fosters pride and deception.***

Here’s how it happens . . . remember that pendulum. We say, “They are wrong, and I am right. And I have got to prove that I am right, and they are wrong.” This whole attitude is not good for us. An attitude that says, “We are right, we have the answers, we have found it . . . and they are all wrong!” will foster pride in us.

I remember a preacher once saying, “We don’t need revival; we already have revival!” Now, I had been in a number of their church services, and I had not observed revival among them. It seems that man honestly thought they had revival. However, spiritual pride had arisen in his heart and had so darkened his heart and apparently his mind, convincing him that they were right, even when they were wrong. May God help us! May He keep us from such proud reaction!

There was once a church that took some firm stands against apostasy—biblical stands—and they were right to do that. God blessed them for it. But spiritual pride came in, and now that same church is so convinced that they are right, they say, “It has got to be done exactly like we do it, or it is not right.”

Slowly but surely, an attitude begins to develop in the congregation, "We are IT. This is THE place, the place where everyone needs to be." We must be on guard so we do not begin to think we are better than others. God help us! This is how an "anti" attitude develops into spiritual pride.

• ***There exists a danger of building a fellowship around "anti" attitudes.***

Have you ever had "fellowship" like that? "Fellowship" centered around "them" and what "they" said and what "they" did, and what's happening "over there"? Have you ever spent a Sunday afternoon like that? Well, I have, and it is NOT very edifying. What a terrible foundation to build a church upon! But it happens. The bottom line is: Fellowship based on others' faults will not build the church. If you find it really easy to open up about "those people" and start shooting from the hip at "them," I encourage you to just cleanse your heart of all that. Such talk will cause you shipwreck. Let's talk about Jesus!

Examine yourself and ask, "Do I have an anti-group attitude?" If you cannot discern your own heart, then just ask a couple of honest people that know you well. They can tell you!

If you have found that you indeed are infected, here is how to come clean:

You need to acknowledge it. This is the first step. You need to forgive those who did you wrong, if you haven't. The anti-group attitude is there because you got hurt or misused.

You need to open your heart up and retain anything and everything that was good in the group you came from. Some are so reactionary that they will not even consider a truth if "that group" also believed it.

You need to purpose to overcome those attitudes, because they will haunt you for a long time if you harbor them.

We need to remember the Lord Jesus,

who came unto His own, but His own did not receive Him. How did He respond to those who did not receive Him? He laid Himself on the cross and died for them! This is the attitude that God would have us foster towards our background.

Anti-groupism has been a real hindrance to the furtherance of the Kingdom of God, and a real hindrance to the perfection of the saints. Overreaction has shipwrecked many a soul, and blinded many others. May we be on our guard! ■

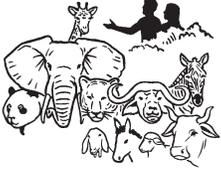
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**IQ PROBLEM? . . . cont'd from p. 19**

mean we are more intelligent? One of the keys to advances in technology are periods of uninterrupted time (no major wars or other catastrophic events that significantly alter demographics) in which we're able to study, make observations, and accumulate data to build on prior achievements, but an accumulation of knowledge and data does not necessarily indicate an increase in intelligence.

Finally what indications does the Bible give concerning the abilities of early man? Genesis 4:18-22 records that by the seventh generation, man had developed animal husbandry, musical instruments, and tools or instruments of brass and iron. If not before, we know there was shipbuilding technology by the time of the Great Flood as Noah built the ark as God commanded him to. As I mentioned earlier, in the next article we'll take a closer look at some of the evidence pertaining to the intelligence of ancient civilizations. As we do so I believe we'll find that man was very intelligent right from the beginning. ■



## *Beginning Issues*



# **Did Ancient Man Have an IQ Problem?**

by John Mullett

The general consensus of our day holds that man is continually progressing in a direction from a primitive existence to an increasingly advanced civilization. This view is largely (and naturally) influenced by evolutionary thought. This view is reinforced consistently in many different ways including various forms of media. From TV commercials to movies, we see visual reinforcement of brutes with clubs and stone tools in a manner that portrays them as little more than glorified apes. If this view of ancient man is accurate, we should be able to look through historical evidence and see a pattern of development in the artifacts to support this view. A closer look reveals a startlingly different story. With the possible exception of the last century, the artifacts suggest the opposite may be true.

Evidence from various ancient civilizations suggest levels of engineering unmatched by anything in our world today. Advanced technology has been found in artifacts in the form of batteries, complex sea navigational devices, time-keeping/calculating tools, and even spark plugs. There is also strong evidence for flight in the form of solar-powered hot air balloons some two thousand years ago. In next month's article I'd like to look at

some of these OOPArts (Out of Place Artifacts) and other findings in more detail. In this article, though, let's see what a biblical view would look like before we try to interpret the evidence.

What should we expect our world (and its history) to look like from a biblical perspective? If we begin with the Bible—and more specifically Genesis—with the introduction of death to the world through Adam's sin (the Fall) wouldn't we expect to find a world that began well (perfect at creation), but is currently degenerating? Natural law supports the biblical view in that the second law of thermodynamics and entropy tell us all things move from order to disorder when left without intervention. We see degeneration all around us, including humanity's genetic pool in the form of shorter life spans along with inherited and new diseases as mutations (genetic mistakes) accumulate over time. If we're degenerating physically, and all of creation has been affected (Romans 8:20), does it not make sense that humanity's overall mental capabilities could be decaying as well? Were not our whole beings affected by the Fall? The leap in technological advances we've experienced over the last century is truly amazing, but does it  
*(continued on page 18)*

# The Battle to a Beautiful Mind

## *Waging War Against Lustful Thoughts*

by Ed Buch

A lustful thought is like a torpedo, cruising relentlessly, silently, under the water, straight toward the hull of our ship. Unless we take instant evasive action, we're in trouble. Eventually that thought will strike.

We tend to minimize the impact. In fact, most of us believe we're spiritually stalwart enough to take a few hits. But the truth is we can't afford to let any lustful thoughts into our minds. We can't let them linger, even for a few seconds. That little opening is all the Enemy needs; he is very adept at slithering in through the smallest of openings. He knows how to exploit that one little opening until it is a gaping hole in your spiritual armor.

If I sound like I'm speaking from experience it's because I am. I've had to learn these things the hard way.

Most of us know what it's like to finish committing some act of sin, say masturbation, and then immediately begin to question ourselves: How did that happen? What went wrong? I was doing fine, then all of a sudden, IT happened. Be assured, IT began as a tiny, silent thought in your mind.

We tend to pay little attention to the thoughts that come into our minds. Some come and go so quickly we couldn't voice them or act on them if we wanted to. But others linger. Some entice and tantalize. Some are sinful. Some are so blatantly sensual that we would be massively ashamed to have them played on a screen for others to see.

For those who have once given over to sexual sin, it is these lustful thoughts in particular that seem so hard to overcome. Long after men (or women) stop acting out

sexually, they still admit to having a seemingly constant battle with lustful thoughts. Some will give up and eventually backslide into their former sexual sins. But others will press through to the victory that is found in Christ Jesus.

Let me assure you: There is victory in Jesus Christ over impure thoughts!

To be frank, the major problem on the road to victory over lustful thoughts is that we don't really want them to go away. There is still that thing in us—that desire for sin—that welcomes a lustful thought now and then. We want to relive the excitement and pleasure of past trysts—even if only for a few minutes in our minds. But yielding to such temporal pleasure has far more devastating consequences than we realize.

I've also learned that success doesn't come in the form of some secret formula that stifles lustful thoughts, or an end-around play guaranteed to produce instant victory. There is no such shortcut that I'm aware of. Lustful thoughts are overcome one by one, thought by thought.

I realize that doesn't have much appeal to the pop-Christianity crowd. But that's the way it is. It's not a glamorous walk down the fashion-model runway; it's hand-to-hand combat in the trenches. Such battles are the proving ground of your proclamation of faith. Are you willing to fend off those pesky lustful thoughts and fill your mind with Jesus?

If you are really serious about this battle, there are several things you must do to assure victory. The first is what I refer to as "breaking the trance." When lustful thoughts start to arise in your mind and fantasies

begin to swirl around, you need to do something outwardly to break that momentum toward sin. The situation you're in is likely too conducive to lustful thoughts, and something needs to immediately change. If you're watching television or using the computer, turn it off. I find it helpful to get up and take a short walk, even just a walk around the house is often enough to help me get my thoughts redirected.

Colossians 3:5 says, "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry." What does this mean? It means to stop feeding that thing. Any living thing that is not fed will eventually die, or at least lose its power.

Secondly, PRAY! We neglect the weapon of prayer far too often. The truth is, you and I don't have what it takes to win the battle against lustful thoughts and the sin they will lead us into. You need help from outside yourself; you need the Lord's help. The Word of God instructs us to take our thoughts captive (2 Corinthians 10:5), and the best way I know to do that is to pray. It is impossible to pray and think lustful thoughts at the same time. Prayer is also the means by which we appropriate the power to overcome sin.

If you lack the discipline to pray, then call a family member, a friend, or a spiritual mentor who can pray with you. Humble yourself and confess your need for prayer to overcome these lustful thoughts. Such humility opens the door for God's favor. Remember, God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble (1 Peter 5:5).

Third, get serious about applying the admonition given by the Apostle Paul: "Be not conformed to this world" (Romans 12:2a). Too often our homes are filled with the very things that stimulate lustful thoughts because we've conformed to the world's standard in what we allow into our homes. Need I even mention television as the obvious source of much that makes provision for our flesh while crushing our spiritual life? But don't stop there. Take a closer look at

those catalogs and magazines filled with glossy advertising based on sensual appeals. Could they be one of the reasons your battle with lustful thoughts seems so unwinnable? A good housecleaning could go a long way toward making your home the sanctuary you need it to be to escape the onslaught of sensual propaganda the world hurls at you.

But ultimately, these three steps will not produce lasting victory over lustful thoughts. They will help in the short term, but they need to go hand in hand with a long-term transformation of your mind.

Romans 12:2b goes on to say, "But be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." Be transformed? What does it mean to have a renewed and transformed mind?

A transformed mind is one that draws its thoughts and motives from an increasingly vibrant relationship with God. Any time you "put off . . . the old," you must also "put on the new" (Eph. 4:22, 24). Hollow and deceptive fantasies need to be replaced by something more wonderful. If you do, the Scriptures promise that you will "be renewed in the spirit of your mind" (Eph. 4:23).

A new and transformed mind is filled with thoughts of Jesus and His love as it was revealed on the Cross. A transformed mind meditates day and night on the life and power available through His Word. A transformed mind causes the flow of your life to be reversed, so that instead of everything flowing toward you—your wants being preeminent and your desires being catered to—things are flowing toward others. You must come to a place where you are truly putting others ahead of yourself. In the same way you once gave over to lust, you must be given over to meeting the needs of others.

God wants to renew and transform our minds. He wants to transform our ugly, self-centered, lust-filled minds and give each one of us a "beautiful mind," one that truly pleases and glorifies Him. ■

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## Counseling From the Word

# Top Ten Counseling Mistakes

by Garrett Higbee and Robb Besosa

In our efforts to bring truth and grace as a ministry to hurting people we have found ten key mistakes we have made and desire to avoid. These principles also shape our ministry philosophy:

### **Common Counseling Mistake #1: *The Past Is a Pothole to Be Avoided***

For fear of sounding Freudian or hoping not to give the counselee the idea that the past is determinative, many Christian counselors give little credence to the counselee's childhood, family dynamics, or long-term history. We have found that by listening carefully to their history and probing with heart-exposing questions, we are able to get valuable heart-shaping information. By reflecting on the shaping influences of the past and reframing the language of the counselee, we can speak the truth in love much more clearly and sensitively into their life and soul. Looking at the past is useful and important, not because we are looking for blame or excuse but to hear heart themes as they emerge through multiple stories. They now sense we know them better, care more empathetically, and we have the distinct advantage of planting a pivot foot into their worldview, all the while keeping our other foot planted in a solid biblical worldview. Having an advocate in the room is invaluable both as an intercessor and for accuracy of perspective. The advo-

cate also serves as a note taker to capture the key truths to be shared for application later. David Powlison does an excellent job of getting at some heart-probing questions in his article on x-ray questions.<sup>1</sup>

### **Common Counseling Mistake #2: *Going After the Obvious Too Soon***

Aha! My acute discernment gift and the painfully obvious fear theme in the paperwork lead me to believe fear of failure is the issue! I will ask leading questions about fear, give him great fear-bursting homework, and two verses on fear to memorize (to perfection) for next week. Although we may be on the right track, it is important how we approach these issues and help the counselee view fear. We could set the counselee up to tell us what we want to hear and fail to focus on the greater heart issues—i.e., self-sufficiency, need for approval, etc.

### **Common Counseling Mistake #3: *Your Problem Is Sin—Stop It!***

The “psychologized” counselee is often resistant to being told their disorder is really just sin. If the counselee has bought into the world's label already, they will almost certainly be resistant to calling their behavior sin. It is very unlikely that significant change will take place if the counselee is told to simply repent of sinful behavior,

stay renewed (more time in the Word), and stop worrying about gaining others' approval. A more winsome and effective approach is like Christ's ministry with the woman at the well (see John 4). Our goal is to get the counselee to see himself through the lens of Scripture, to think of himself as God views him and his problems, and to feel God's conviction and comfort as he peers intently in the mirror of God's Word.

**Common Counseling Mistake #4:  
*Only Addressing "Fruit Issues  
and Resulting Consequences"***

We sometimes are tempted to be the answer man by focusing on symptoms and common conflicts with problem-solving techniques, or we find ourselves putting out our counselee's latest fire (their perceived crisis of the week) rather than performing invasive heart surgery (who is running this session anyway?). We might come up with two great proof texts to help a presenting problem but we are potentially in the danger of straining gnats. We need to go after the root issues of the heart and not continue to focus on symptoms.

**Common Counseling Mistake #5:  
*Making Homework More Like  
Jumping Through Hoops***

We can sometimes give the impression that homework is a competition. In the case of really hurting counselees, one size does not fit all. Great homework assignments for one person may fail for another . . . consider Proverbs 18:13 and Ephesians 4:29 as you assign "learning opportunities."

**Common Counseling Mistake #6:  
*Keep Your Distance;  
It May be Contagious***

When someone is really overwhelmed it can be hard to know how to be around them. "Do I act formal or try to cheer them up?" "Do I keep a professional distance?" "If I get too close I may not be able to speak with authority." We find that if we take the attitude that the ground at the cross is level and Christ is present in the counseling

room, as is the Holy Spirit, then we can be ourselves, share our family news and struggles, use humor, and even give a comforting arm around the shoulder to let them know we do not fear them or their "disorder."

**Common Counseling Mistake #7:  
*Assigning "More of the Same"***

"Mature Christians" can be told to read and memorize Scripture all day long with little effect. It is not that the Word of God is ineffective; it is that their hearts are dull, hardened, or dead. We need to find out why their hearts are wandering and always anchor them back into relationship and emphasize their identity in Christ. An effective way to bring about a fresh perspective resulting in hope and change is to emphasize the abiding relationship with Christ when approaching prayer, the Bible, or spiritual disciplines. At Twelve Stones, we talk a lot about "being" and assign more meditation than memorization when folks are in crisis. Meditating in Scripture like Psalm 16:11 (joy in the presence of God/abiding), and being close with Christ, Proverbs 23:26a ("Give me thine heart . . ." a father saying this to his son, like God says to us). Many people within the church come to counseling with much more biblical knowledge than they are currently applying. We must point them to the bridge between knowing and doing . . . meditation (Psalm 19:14: my words = espoused theology which is what I know, my meditations = lived theology which is what I do). An option for homework might be to read Andrew Murray's book "Abide in Christ"<sup>2</sup> and assign Chapter 1 which is a masterful weaving of John 15 and Matthew 11:28-30.

**Common Counseling Mistake #8:  
*Much Effort, Little Prayer***

It is easy to get stuck in counseling. We often remind each other that we cannot work any harder than the counselees or we will get frustrated and hopeless. We need to place them at the foot of the cross in prayer and in action during the counseling time with them, not just before and after. That

might mean taking a break and going on a prayer walk, asking the advocate or a spouse to pray, or giving them an assignment and calling it a day . . . but going away to pray ourselves or get counsel from a trusted mentor to gain perspective before going back in. We cannot tell our counselees to trust God in their crisis while we lean on our own skills, effort, and Bible knowledge (John 5:39). More Bible knowledge only falls upon a hard heart; prayer is often the only way to furrow the soil so the Word can take root (Matthew 13, parable of the sower).

**Common Counseling Mistake #9:  
*Act Like You Are Above Their Sin  
or Subtly Patronize Them***

Counselees need to be able to get to the place of conviction by the Holy Spirit, but I am afraid we often make that harder by quietly judging them in our hearts. This may come out very subtly in the way we avert our eyes, change the subject, or even how we ask questions. Most of us know of someone in our lives that have “played the Holy Spirit” instead of placing us in the hands of God for that work. If appropriate, this is a great time to share your own testimony, or even personal struggles, in the session. We often cite 1 Corinthians 10:13 as we share common struggles to build trust. As counselors we must always consider why any sin would seem too heinous for us to relate to. If you are tender from

being sinned against in a similar manner, or struggling with similar sin issues, you might need to refer the counselee to another biblical counselor.

**Common Counseling Mistake #10:  
*Sending Your Counselee Back Into  
the “Loneliness” of the Congregation***

We need to realize that our interactions with counselees are often deeper and more intimate than any they have ever experienced or certainly than is normal in their daily lives. We have asked them to get real and to walk more closely in community than ever before. Most of their peers will not have had this experience and may be less inclined to be as serious about a biblical worldview or abiding in Christ daily. This is why an advocate, a small-group member, or a trusted friend should be invited in to the counseling. If it is not possible for them to be a part of the entire counseling process, then at least inviting them to a bridge session would be helpful. You need to hand off the counselee to the church in a very intentional way. Community will be key to a counselee’s continued growth. ■

1. Powlison, David, (1999, fall). *X-ray questions: Drawing out the whys and wherefores of human behavior.* The Journal of Biblical Counseling, 18(1), pp. 2-9.

2. Murray, Andrew, (1979) *Abide in Christ.* Whittaker House.

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## *I Can Do Anything I Want*

by James K. Nolt

“I can do anything I want and get away with it.” I recently saw this brazen statement on somebody’s shirt. Was it intended as a joke, or as a philosophy of life? What do you think of this statement?

Can people get “away with it”? Yes. People get away with many things as far as human authority is concerned. Some peo-

ple are very clever and deceitful. They endanger others’ lives by their wild driving, yet they never get fined. Some cheat on their wives or husbands and cover up their sin. Others steal and accumulate goods and are never arrested. Some attain positions of authority and apply their unjust rules to everyone but themselves.

Worse yet, throughout history, dictators have reigned viciously and oppressed people for their personal advantage. Evil men captured slaves and ruthlessly forced them to labor. I cringe to think of the agony that people have suffered at the hands of those who feared neither God nor man and thought, “I can do anything I want and get away with it.”

Even “decent” people sometimes are only conscious of earthly authorities. They assume that if the earthly authorities did not catch them, they got away with it. In other words, it is okay to speed, to lie, to cheat, and to do what they want as long as they don’t get caught. Many times, their misdeeds only last so long. Sooner or later, authorities finally catch at least some violators of the law.

But other people are never caught on this earth. People look front, back, left, and right. “Nobody is watching; we can do it!” They do it! And they “get away with it.” But they forgot to look up! “Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? Saith the LORD” (Jer. 23:24a). They forgot the all-seeing eye of God, and they forgot that they will someday answer to Him. This attitude has existed for a long time. In fact it began back in the Garden of Eden when Eve and Adam apparently thought they could deliberately disobey God and get away with it.

“Thou God seest me” (Genesis 16:13). God sees everything we do. That is a very fundamental Scriptural truth—so basic and yet so profound, so simple and yet so life-changing. “O LORD, thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compassed my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways” (Psalm 139:1-3).

Not only does God see everything, but He is a God of vengeance and of justice. The old adages still apply: “You can’t do wrong and get by.” “Be sure your sin will find you out.” “You reap what you sow.” We are accountable to God for everything

we do. Those who “got away with it” in the eyes of men will not do so in the eyes of God. “For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil” (Ecclesiastes 12:14).

Even those who serve God can forget this basic truth. Moses ignored God’s directive and struck the rock instead of speaking to it. The Lord told him, “Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them” (Numbers 20:12b). David thought he could commit immorality with Bathsheba and “get away with it.” “But the thing that David had done displeased the LORD” (2 Sam. 11:27), and God punished David for his sin.

And today Satan would have us believe that a little sin won’t matter or that our thoughts will not affect our actions. But we cannot play with sin and get away with it. “But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death” (James 1:14, 15). “For nothing is secret, that shall not be made manifest; neither any thing hid, that shall not be known and come abroad” (Luke 8:17).

Jesus came as the Lamb of God to save the sinners, but the time will come when every knee shall bow before the Lord Jesus Christ. See Philippians 2:9-11. Men and women of all eras will be there—those who lived the fruit of the Spirit and those who practiced the works of the flesh (“Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revelings”). James 5:1-5 describes the judgment of rich oppressors who misused and took advantage of others. Those who served God voluntarily on this earth will joyfully bow, but those who thought they

*(continued on page 27)*



# Song of the Month

Douglas A. Byler, Music Editor

*“ . . . singing with understanding!”*

Guest Editor

## The Light of Lights Our God Is



by Benjamin M. Good

**Lyrics:** I was musing one day this winter about God’s love for us and His call for our response to that. God desires our love toward Himself, and He asks that it be demonstrated by keeping the commands He has revealed to us in Scripture. One of these commands is to love others. Jesus once reminded His followers that the two greatest commands are “Love the Lord thy God with all thy heart” and “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself” (Mark 12:30, 31).

The lyrics for this song were distilled from the epistle of 1 John. The Apostle John was one who was privileged to be in Jesus’ “inner circle,” and he understood the commitment Jesus demanded from His followers. He was someone who understood truth firsthand, although he seems to have been a relational/heart-type person. He was known to be the disciple who, probably more than once, was “leaning on Jesus’ bosom” (John 13:23), and it seems he understood something about the love of Jesus more than some of the other disciples did. It was out of this understanding that John penned his epistles, laced with admonition and encouragement on the subject of love. The epistle of 1 John informs us of our relationship and responsibility to God,

the one who is light, and says we must live in that light. Living in God’s light results in us obeying Him, which in turn compels us to love and forgive our brothers. John is clear that only when we do the will of God as commanded, can we claim to have a relationship with Him. In turn, we are promised eternal life, where our relationship with God will be everlasting.

**Music:** I attempted to shape this melody line with the average congregation’s learning curve in mind. The song was written to be used as part of the repertoire on a Sharon Mennonite Bible Institute choir tour. Both the melody and harmony parts needed to be learned quickly by congregations in each service, yet remain meaningful to the choir members for the duration of the three-week tour. The melody introduces the “re-mi-fa” sequence in the first line, then uses this sequence again in lines two and three as it builds toward the climax in line three. The harmony parts complement the melody, while being singable and unassuming.

I hope you find this little song both enjoyable and inspirational to sing!

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SWORD AND TRUMPET

# The Light of Lights Our God Is

From 1 John 1 and 2

BENJAMIN M. GOOD, 2010

BENJAMIN M. GOOD

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## — I CAN DO ANYTHING I WANT . . . cont'd from page 25 —

could get away with their sins will be forced to bow and to face their deeds and the consequences. “And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment” (Hebrews 9:27). “And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works” (Revelation 20:12).

To have one’s life book opened is a dread if he has lived in sin. But for the true Christian, it is a joy. He doesn’t want to get away with it; he wants God to see his deeds. He wants Him to keep renewing

his heart so that he finds joy in doing God’s will. He aims to do what Jesus did: “I do always those things that please him [God the Father]” (John 8:29). He wants to let his light shine before men; he wants to cause others to glorify the Father in heaven, he wants to “bring forth good fruit.”

If I accept Jesus Christ as my Saviour and Lord and allow God to change my heart and desires, then I want to do what God wants me to do. Then indeed *I can do anything I want . . .* and be rewarded for it in this life and in eternity. ■

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## Sermon of the Month



Each month we will feature a Biblical sermon in this column. We would like to emphasize expository preaching and ask our readers to submit good expository sermons for consideration. Please send typewritten copies by “snail mail” or E-mail to: Editor, Sword and Trumpet, Box 575, Harrisonburg, VA 22803; [swandtrump@verizon.net](mailto:swandtrump@verizon.net).

### *Christ's New Commandment*

by Charles H. Spurgeon (1834-1892)

*“A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another” (John 13:34, 35).*

Many of you, I do not doubt, have heard the story of Archbishop Usher<sup>1</sup> and Mr. Rutherford;<sup>2</sup> but it is so appropriate to this subject that I cannot help telling it again. The archbishop had heard of the wondrous power of Rutherford's devotion and of the singular beauty of the arrangement of his household, and he wished to witness it himself; but he could not tell how to do so until it occurred to him that he might disguise himself as a poor traveler. Accordingly, at nightfall, he knocked at the door of Mr. Rutherford's house and was received by Mrs. Rutherford. He asked if he could find lodgings there for the night. She answered, “Yes,” for they entertained strangers. She placed him in the kitchen and gave him something to eat. It was a part of her regular family discipline on Saturday evening to catechize the children and the servants. Of course, the poor man in the kitchen came in among them.

Mrs. Rutherford put to all of them

some questions concerning the commandments; and to this poor man, she put the question, “How many commandments are there?”

He answered, “Eleven.”

“Ah!” she said, “what a sad thing that a man of your age, whose hair is sprinkled with grey, should not even know how many commandments there are. There is not a child above six years old in our parish, who does not know that.”

The poor man said nothing in reply, but he had his oatmeal porridge and went to bed. Later, he rose and listened to Rutherford's midnight prayer. He was charmed with it, made himself known to him, borrowed a better coat from him, preached for him on the Sunday morning, and surprised Mrs. Rutherford by taking as his text, “A new commandment I give unto you.” [He commenced] with the observation that this might very properly be called the *Eleventh Commandment*. By-and-by, the archbishop went on his way; he and Rutherford had

1. **James Usher or Ussher** (1581-1656) – Anglican Archbishop of Armagh, Ireland, and professor of divinity at Dublin.

2. **Samuel Rutherford** (1600-1661) – Scottish Presbyterian theologian, author, and Commissioner to the Westminster Assembly.

been refreshed together. It *is* the Eleventh Commandment. If the next time we are asked how many commandments there are, we answer, “Eleven,” we shall reply rightly enough.

But why is it a *new* commandment? Is it not included in the ten? You know how our Lord approved the lawyer’s summary of the Ten Commandments: “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself” (Luke 10:27). How is this a *new* commandment then—“That ye love one another”?

**It is new, first, as to the extent of the love.** We are to love our neighbor as ourselves, but we are to love our fellow-Christians as Christ loved us. That is *far more* than we love ourselves. Christ loved us better than He loved Himself. He loved us so much that He gave Himself for us, so that now no one of us is to say, “I am to love my friend, my brother, my fellow-creatures, as I love *myself*,” but to interpret Christ’s command thus, “I am to love my fellow-Christians even as Jesus Christ Who died for me has loved me.” This is a nobler kind of love altogether to the love that we are to manifest to our neighbors. That is the love of benevolence,<sup>3</sup> but this is a love of affinity<sup>4</sup> and close relationship. [It] involves a higher degree of self-sacrifice than was enjoined by the Law of Moses . . .

**Next, it is a new commandment because it is backed by a new reason.** The old commandment was backed by this declaration: “I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage” (Exodus 20:2). The Israelite was to obey that law because of the redemption that God had wrought for His nation in Egypt. But we are commanded to love one another because Christ has redeemed us from a far

worse bondage than that of Egypt, and with a far costlier sacrifice than the offering up of myriads<sup>5</sup> of paschal<sup>6</sup> lambs. “Christ our passover is sacrificed for us” (1 Cor. 5:7). He has brought us out from under the iron yoke of sin and Satan and has broken our bonds asunder. Our enemies have pursued us, but He has destroyed them at the sea, even at the Red Sea. He has redeemed us with His own heart’s blood, and therefore His new commandment comes to us with the greatest possible force, “That ye love one another as I have loved you.” It is a new commandment because of the extent of it and because of the reason by which it is supported.

**It is a new commandment also because it is a new love, springing from a new nature and embracing a new nation.** I am bound as a man to love my fellow man because he is a man. But I am bound as a regenerate man to love my fellow Christian still more because he also is regenerate. The ties of blood ought to be recognized by us far more than they are. We are too apt to forget that God “hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth” (Acts 17:26). By the common tie of blood, we are all brethren. But, beloved, the ties of grace are *far* stronger than the ties of blood. If ye are really born of God, ye are brothers by a brotherhood that is stronger even than the natural brotherhood that enabled you to lie in the same cradle and to nurse at the same breast; for brothers according to the flesh may be separated eternally. The right hand of the King may be the position accorded to the one, and His left hand may be the position assigned to the other; but brothers who are truly born of God share a brotherhood that must last forever. They who are now brothers in Christ shall always be brothers.

It is a very blessed thing when we are able to love one another because the

3. **love of benevolence** – love shown regardless of the character of the one who receives it.

4. **affinity** – kinship; family likeness.

5. **myriads** – vast numbers.

6. **paschal** – Passover.

grace that is in any one of us sees the grace that is in another and discerns in that other, not the flesh and blood of the Saviour, but such a resemblance to Christ that it must love that other one for His sake. As it is true that if we are of the world, the world will love its own, so is it true that if we are of the Spirit, the Spirit will love His own. The whole redeemed family of Christ is firmly bound together. Born of God ourselves, we keep looking out to see others who have been “born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible” (1 Peter 1:23). When we do see them, we cannot help loving them. There is a bond of union between us at once . . . You are allied to God. Therefore, you must have fellowship with all others who are allied to God, whether you like it or not . . .

**Beloved friends, this is a new commandment because it is enforced by new necessities.** Christians ought to love one another because they are the subjects of one King, Who is also their Saviour. We are a little band of brothers in the midst of a vast multitude of enemies. “Behold,” said Christ to His disciples, “I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves” (Matthew 10:16). If you are true Christians, you will not have the love of worldlings:<sup>7</sup> you *cannot* have it. They will be sure to ridicule you and call you fools, hypocrites, or something equally uncomplimentary. Well then, *cling the more closely to one another*. Whatever opposition you meet with outside, let it only weld you into a firmer unit [with one another]. We are like a small company of soldiers, in an enemy’s country, strongly garrisoned by the vast battalions of the foe, so we must hold together. We must be as one man, banded together in closest fellowship, as our great Captain bids us. God grant that the very fact that we are found in an enemy’s country may result in making us more completely one than we have ever been before!

When I hear a Christian man finding fault with his minister, I always wish that the devil had found somebody else to do his dirty work. I hope that none of you will ever be found complaining of God’s servants who are doing their best to help on their Lord’s cause. There are plenty who are ready to find fault with them . . .

**Further, dear brethren, this is a new commandment because it is suggested by new characteristics.** In our fellow men, there *may* be something lovable; but in our fellow Christians, there *must* be something lovable. Suppose they are only newly born to God—for my part, I hardly know of a more beautiful sight than a newborn Christian. I like to hear the prayer of the one who is just converted. There may be . . . mistakes and imperfections in it, but that does not spoil it. A lamb does not bleat in quite the same tones that a sheep uses. Yet a lamb is a very beautiful object, and one likes to hear its feeble notes. There is a beauty about the lambs in Christ’s flock as well as about the full-grown sheep. There is nothing more lovely to be seen in the whole world than an aged believer, who has lived very near to God. How calm the old gentleman’s spirit: when he begins to talk about the things of God and to testify concerning the love of his Lord, how charmingly he talks! There is *much* that is beautiful about all true Christians, so try to search out their excellences rather than their defects. If we are ourselves in a right state of heart, we are all the more likely to admire that which is good in others . . . There is a beauty about your friend that there is not about yourself. Do not be always gazing in the looking glass: there are fairer sights to be seen than any you will find there. Look into your fellow Christian’s face; and as you see anything there that is the work of the Spirit, love him because of that.

*(continued on page 32)*

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7. **worldlings** – those absorbed by worldly pursuits and pleasures, not by spiritual matters.

# “Command Your Children to Observe to Do”

by Wilmer S. Martin

“Set your hearts unto all the words which I testify among you this day, which ye shall command your children to observe to do, all the words of this law” (Deuteronomy 32:46). Moses gave this instruction to all Israel right after he had finished writing the Book of the Law and had taught them his farewell song of testimony. Moses’ departing admonition to the families of Israel is relevant yet today. We need to determine to guide our children to an understanding and observance of the “all things” of the Word of God.

This responsibility is focused on our homes. Here we endeavor to “bring them up” to walk in the paths of truth and right. We as fathers have the specific responsibility to direct our homes according to the teaching of Scripture. We are called to make sure our children understand that the Bible gives guiding principles on how to serve the Lord. Thankfully we are not alone in this work. Our church and schools greatly aid us in this worthy cause.

As parents, we are the first influence that our children experience. And our children are one of our greatest responsibilities. From this perspective, childrearing should have priority. Anything else we endeavor to do in life should not impede this most important mission.

“Set your hearts” shows us where this great work begins—within our own hearts. Only if we are fully convinced of truth can we successfully pass it on to our children. We do well to take inventory of our own spiritual life. Am I keeping God first in my life? Are my material pursuits and interests in step with spiritual priorities? Am I relating to my children in a way that they understand how important they are to me and to God as their heavenly Father?

The word *command* helps us understand that this is an imperative, not merely a suggestion. Some may see this word as harsh and authoritative. But in the framework of a loving Christian home, healthy relationships and accountability can best flourish where obedience is expected and required. This is enhanced by confirming what is right and by providing loving discipline for disobedience.

*Command* also recognizes that Father stands in a place of authority with enough knowledge and understanding to fulfill this responsibility. He is able to control himself and give directions to others. He knows what his goals are and has a plan for reaching them.

What are my goals for my children? Do I want them to be the best-behaved children in school? the most conservative in our church? the most likable among their peers? or the most successful in their projects? Or, above all, do I want them to come to know God as their personal Saviour and guide in life?

The phrase *observe to do* implies a carefulness to make sure it happens. Both parents and children need to cultivate an awareness of what it takes to be obedient to the Scriptures. We teach our children to honor the principles of the Word by a practical obedience and observance in our own lives.

*Observe to do* also implies teaching the many practical lessons and jobs in everyday life. First, the child watches the parent. Then the parent does it along with the child. Then the child may do it on his own while the parent gives encouragement and assistance as needed. The final goal is for the child to do the project on his own without assistance. We desire that our children

develop their own beliefs and values for the time when we are no longer by their elbows.

Our children may be hearing what is right. We may be demanding a strict observance to what is expected of us in our settings. Yet we may be failing our children by not truly letting the purifying work of the Word guide our own choices and responses while at home. Do our children notice a difference in our self-control or response to difficulty when we are at home versus when we are with brethren?

As human fathers we do fail at times. Let us be humble enough to admit that to our children. We will greatly aid them in observing to do the “all things” of Scripture if they see the sincerity in our desire to follow God’s directives.

Our children usually notice differences between what our home requires and what other homes in our setting require. We need to be honest when our children ask about these differences. We must help them understand that there are various applications to Bible principles. We should explain why we have decided that our family will follow certain home rules as practical guidelines to a Scriptural principle. However, we do need to be careful that we do not imply that some of our brethren are not serving the Lord as carefully as we are. This could teach our children to be judgmental of others’ faithfulness according to small variations rather than sincere obedience and fruitfulness.

As fathers, we need to help our teenage children understand that certain liberties will have detrimental consequences. We should welcome discussions with our teenagers. Sincere questions deserve a proper answer. If our only answer is an abrupt “Because I said so,” we will weaken our parental authority and hinder their understanding of the real answers. Maintaining relationships and open communication with our children will help these exchanges to be edifying.

Surely our goal should be to guide our children to an understanding and observance of the “all things” of the Word of God. “For it is not a vain thing for you;

because it is your life: and through this thing ye shall prolong your days in the land” (Deuteronomy 32:47). Let us pray that we would be faithful in our parental responsibilities. May the faithfulness of future generations be prolonged because of our resolve to “command [our] children to observe to do.” ■

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## CHRIST'S NEW COMMANDMENT

... cont'd. from page 30

**Once more, this is a new commandment because it is a preparation for better prospects than we have ever enjoyed before.** We who believe in Jesus are going to live together in heaven forever and ever, so we may as well be good friends while we are here. We shall see each other there in one common glory and be occupied forever in one common employment: the adoration of our Lord and Master. The remembrance of this truth ought to break down many of the barriers that at present exist in society . . . I can also bear witness that I have often learnt more in an hour’s conversation with a godly poor man, than I have learned from an educated man who has known but little of the things of God. Never judge men by the clothes they wear, but by what they are in themselves. It is a man’s heart; and above all, it is the grace of God that dwells within the man’s heart that you and I are to prize and love. May God help us so to do! ■

—From a sermon delivered at the Metropolitan Tabernacle, Newington, on Lord’s Day evening, April 4, 1875, reprinted from *Free Grace Broadcaster*.

**Charles H. Spurgeon (1834-1892):** Influential English Baptist; his collected sermons fill 63 volumes and stand as the largest set of books by a single author in the history of Christianity; born at Kelvedon, Essex, England.

# Philosophy of Christian Education

by Paul A. Kienel

The *Collier's Dictionary* defines the word *philosophy* as “a study of the fundamental principles of a particular branch of knowledge.” That is exactly what this is about—the study of “fundamental principles” of Christian school education.

You will discover that there is a “wide world of difference” between Christian school education and education that is non-Christian. It is essential that you understand the fundamental principles of what makes Christian education truly Christian. What are its distinctive characteristics? How should the Christian philosophy of education translate to the classroom? the curriculum? student activities? future careers?

No one, for long, acts in opposition to his or her beliefs. There is a strong relationship between your value system and the consequent behavior patterns of your lifetime. What you believe makes all the difference in the world. And what you believe as an educator greatly affects the way you teach young people.

The distinctive difference of a Christian educational philosophy is evidenced in every area of school life. However, for introductory purposes here, the fundamental differences can be illustrated in how two basic questions are answered: **What is truth?** and **What is the nature of man?**

A writer in the *Humanist* magazine made the following statement:

I am convinced that the battle for humankind's future [the mind] must be waged [and won] in the public school classroom by teachers who correctly perceive their role as the proselytizers of a

new faith: a religion of humanity that recognizes and respects the spark of what theologians call divinity in every human being. These teachers must embody the same selfless dedication as the most rabid fundamentalist preachers, for they will be ministers of another sort, utilizing a classroom instead of a pulpit to convey humanist values in whatever subject they teach, regardless of the education level:

preschool day care or large state university. The classroom must and will become an arena of conflict between the old and the new—the rotting corpse of Christianity, together with all its adjacent evils and misery, and the new faith of humanism, resplendent in its promise of a world in which the never-realized Christian ideal of “love thy neighbor” will finally be achieved. . . . It will undoubtedly be a long, arduous, painful struggle replete with much sorrow and many tears, but humanism will emerge triumphant. It must if the family of humankind is to survive.<sup>1</sup>

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“No person can consistently behave in a way that's inconsistent with the way he perceives himself.”  
—Neil T. Anderson

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The statement above refers to the greater Christian community as “the rotting corpse of Christianity, together with all its adjacent evils and misery.” Humanism is a direct affront to Christ and His followers. Therefore, it becomes a threat to those who are followers of Christ. Consequently, Christian parents have become more and more disenchanting and alienated from a public school system which has adopted the philosophy of humanism. In response, many of them have sought educational institutions

which reflect and encourage their traditionally held beliefs and values.

This book clearly presents Christ who must have preeminence in all things (Colossians 1:8), especially in the hearts and minds of children. It is like a challenge in medieval times when a knight in armor threw his armor-plated glove, or gauntlet, on the ground and dared his foe to pick it up. Picking up the gauntlet meant you accepted his challenge. This book is an attempt to do just that. We accept the challenge, by God's grace, to push back the darkness of humanism and allow the sun-

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light of Christ's love to penetrate the heart of students and others who may not have experienced personal salvation through faith in Christ, who is the Saviour of the world.

Humanism is easily defined. It is a man-made attempt to elevate man above God. The well-known German humanist philosopher, Georg Hegel, said, "Man's laws are superior to God's laws."<sup>2</sup>

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"And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church; who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; that in all things he might have the pre-eminence."  
—Col. 1:17, 18

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His simple statement is the very essence of humanism. It is the idea that man is supreme over God. As far back as the Garden of Eden, when Satan persuaded Eve to eat the forbidden fruit, the first attempt was made to elevate humans above God. Satan spoke to Eve, "For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil" (Genesis 3:5). In other words, Satan was telling Eve she would know what is right and wrong. She would be independent of God, doing things her way instead of God's way.

Humanism, doing things man's way, is the oldest struggle known to man. Humanism was at the base of the first sin. It continues today as the struggle over who has final authority—man or God. Whose WILL will prevail? The act of conversion to Christ is a surrender of one's will to God's

will. When Jesus prayed to His heavenly Father in the Garden of Gethsemane, He prayed, ". . . not my will, but thine, be done" (Luke 22:42). Surrendering one's will to God's totally contradicts humanism. The theme song of the humanist is "I Did It My Way." The theme song of the Christian is "I Surrender All." There is a world of difference between the two belief systems.

There is also a world of difference between the answers given to two major philosophical questions which are fundamental to all educators. The way one answers these two questions in particular greatly determines the way one educates the next generation of children.

### *What Is Truth?*

This is the first major philosophical question which is fundamental to all educators. You recall in John 18:38 that Pontius Pilate asked Jesus, "What is truth?" Jesus did not answer Pilate directly; but only a short time before, as Jesus prayed to His heavenly Father in the garden, He had said, "Thy word is truth" (John 17:17). Christian school educators believe that the Bible is what it says it is—**the truth**. Dr. Roy Lowrie, Jr., one of the great Christian school educators of the recent past, often said, "The Bible is not on trial in a Christian school." It is the infallible point of reference for our own lives first and then for the lives of our students. The Bible is also the standard for all academic subjects. If some portion of a school textbook does not square with the Word of God, we simply say the textbook is in error on that point and that the Bible is correct. Our students must see us affirming the authority of the Scriptures. We must demonstrate our belief that there is no higher truth than Biblical truth. This is a fundamental principle of Christian school education. Staying true to the truth is the main thing for Christian school educators. Mark Fakkema, an early pioneer of the modern Christian school movement, wrote:

Truth is not necessarily truth because it is regarded as such by contemporary scholarship. By way of verifying His statements, our Lord did not appeal to the recognized leadership of His day. Our Lord constantly quoted Scripture as His authority. God's Word is the test of all truth. All teaching that is expressive of God's Word is true. Teaching that is not expository of the Word is falsehood. Philosophical thought must not only look to Scripture for support but it must be Scriptural in its whole outlook. So likewise one's evaluation of philosophical thought must not only claim Scriptural support but must be Scriptural in all its claims.<sup>3</sup>

The following was written in an issue of *Christian School Comment*:

It is amazing to me how many non-Christian colleges and schools quote John 8:32, "... the truth shall make you free," in their logo or school crest. The only truth which that Scriptural passage refers to is Biblical truth. Sadly, the educators in those secular educational institutions think the word "truth" in their logo means "man-made truth," or truth produced by human intellect. What an unfortunate distortion of the real truth.<sup>4</sup>

To secular minds, truth is the product of human reason, experience, and analysis. They actually believe that there is no higher point of reference for truth than man himself. Man, of course, can discover truth. We are continually amazed when we look at the accumulated wisdom of mankind and at the intellectual frontiers of the human mind, but we must never forget that God created us. It is an affront to God when we, the created ones, presume to elevate our physical and intellectual achievements above the intellect of God. The Apostle Paul wrote, "Hath not the potter power over the clay?" (Romans 9:21). The potter, God, indeed has all power and is in every way superior to us, the clay.

### ***What Is the Nature of Man?***

If you have taken traditional graduate courses in education, you have heard pro-

fessors lecture about the "spark of goodness" in every child. They even talk about an "inner light" or flame. They often say the role of a teacher is to draw out the "inner goodness" by fanning the flame or "inner light." They honestly believe that mankind is basically good. Their words are almost identical to the preceding "gauntlet statement" by the writer of the opening *Humanist* magazine article. He wrote, "... a religion of humanity (note the word, *religion*) . . . respects the spark of . . . divinity in every human being." This is a major doctrine of humanism. It is also the underlying precept of the modern New Age movement.

Every human being learns, in the course of common nurturing, various characteristics of goodness (e.g., helping the elderly across the street), but we mortals do not come into this world basically good. The prophet Jeremiah wrote, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" (Jeremiah 17:9). No less than the Apostle Paul wrote, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). We come into this world needing a Saviour. We acquire goodness only by the grace of God. This is shocking news to the secular mind.

In the mid-1700s in Scotland, the difference between the views of the nature of man were illustrated by an incident that occurred in Greyfriars Church in Edinburgh. In a morning discourse, Dr. Robertson, a leader of the moderates, declared, "So beautiful is virtue, and so strong is man's natural love of it, that were virtue

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"When man lives apart from God, chaos is the norm. When man lives with God, as revealed in the incarnation of Jesus Christ, the hungers of the mind and heart find their fulfillment. For in Christ we find coherence and consolation as He reveals to us, in the most verifiable terms of truth and experience, the nature of man, the nature of reality, the nature of history, the nature of our destiny, and the nature of suffering."

—Dr. H. Ravi Zacharias

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personified to descend from Heaven, all the world would fall down and worship.” Later that afternoon conservative preacher Dr. Erskine had an opportunity to fill the same pulpit. “Virtue personified did indeed once come into the world in the person of Jesus Christ,” said Erskine, “but instead of wor-

shiping, the world crucified Him—so little love has the world for virtue.”<sup>5</sup>

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“If religious books are not widely circulated among the masses in this country, and the people do not become religious, I do not know what is to become of us as a nation. . . .

If truth be not diffused, error will be; if God and His Word are not known and received, the devil and his works will gain the ascendance; if the evangelical volume does not reach every hamlet, the pages of a corrupt and licentious literature will; if the power of the Gospel is not felt through the length and breadth of the land, anarchy and misrule, degradation and misery, corruption and darkness, will reign without mitigation or end.”

—Daniel Webster

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Why is the question “What is the nature of man?” so important to education? The answer is: If you believe that Johnny is innately good, it affects the school’s daily operation and especially the school’s curriculum. It affects policies on classroom and playground discipline. It also impacts how you teach what is right and wrong. To the non-Christian educators who believe in the innate goodness of Johnny, Johnny cannot sin because they say, “How can a student sin when he is his own authority on what is right or wrong?” Therefore, you cannot discipline a student for sin. You can only discipline a student if he or she harms property or another student. The “innate goodness of mankind” philosophy leads to “value-free” or “value-neutral” education. “Children should make up their own minds,” they say. “Who are we, as

adult educators, to tell a student who is born good what is good? Only the student can determine what is good.” *Sin* is not even referred to, because sin is a Biblical tenet—which is off-limits to the world of non-Biblical education.

This kind of thinking is not new to this generation. Note this Old Testament

verse, “In those days there was no king in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes” (Judges 17:6). A Russian writer who is a Christian wrote, “Where there is no God everything is permissible.”<sup>6</sup> All of this stems from an educational philosophy that claims that the basic nature of mankind is good.

Because we, as Christian educators, accept the Biblical precept that our students become good only through Christ, we then have an added responsibility that non-Christian educators do not have. Our prayer and our mission should be that those students in our classrooms who have not experienced personal salvation will see Christ in our lives, hear of Christ in our words, and see the love of Christ in our countenance to the extent that they, like us, will become His lifelong disciples. A paraphrased *Living Letters* edition of the Bible presents Luke 6:40 as follows: “A student when he is fully trained will be like his teacher.” To a true Christian educator the spiritual well-being of students is “priority one.” As valuable as a solid academic curriculum is to the next generation, it is not the source of spiritual redemption. Education, by itself, will not redeem society. Education will improve a community of people, but goodness and spiritual transformation only come by faith in Jesus Christ. Paul, writing to the Romans, said, “Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus” (Romans 3:24).

Human paganism has been practiced in various forms over the centuries but paganism is still paganism. Non-Christian educators who attempt to elevate man above God are reminders of King Ahab and his 450 prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel. God’s prophet, Elijah, spoke to the crowd and said, “How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him” (1 Kings 18:21). Secular education, or education “without God,” is pagan. It is an open denial of God’s truth. It is no less pagan