

The Magazine **LIGHT**

For Faith & Family

Making Marriage Last

By Putting Your
Spouse First

WITH STEVE AND ANNIE CHAPMAN

PLUS:

**Who Defines "Family,"
God or Society?**

**Is Your Marriage a
Contract or a Covenant?**

**Should Government
Penalize the Working
Poor for Marrying?**



THE ETHICS & RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION OF THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION

the Children?

OUR VISION

An American society that affirms and practices Judeo-Christian values rooted in biblical authority.

OUR MISSION

To awaken, inform, energize, equip, and mobilize Christians to be the catalysts for the biblically-based transformation of their families, churches, communities, and the nation.

In the *American Psychiatric Diagnostic and Statistical Manual*, pedophilia is defined as "a recurrent intense sexually arousing fantasy and urges or behaviors involving sexual activity with a prepubescent child." Sex between an adult—heterosexual or homosexual—and a prepubescent child is pedophilia. In a significant number of these cases within Roman Catholicism, however, it is not sex between an adult and a prepubescent child that is at issue; it is sex between a male

priest and an adolescent boy. This is homosexual child molestation, not pedophilia. This problem within the Catholic Church has been greatly multiplied by the fact that they have a significant minority within their priesthood who by their own admission are homosexual.

Homosexuals are concerned that they have a massive public relations problem on their hands, and homosexual activist groups are doing everything they can to keep a lid on

this information. A recent *U.S. News & World Report* article says that gay groups are "freaking out" over the progression in news coverage of this sex scandal.

While pornographers and homosexual activists would prefer we look the other way, we must let nothing get in the way of protecting children. God has entrusted them to our care, and we can be sure that He is not looking the other way. ❶

Do you know?

A CHANGED LIFE BEGINS WITH A CHANGED HEART

God loves and values you so much that He sent His only Son to die a torturous death on a cross for your sake. In accepting His Son as your Lord and Savior, your sins will be forgiven and eternal life will be yours. He loves you that much.

How can you know Jesus Christ?

- ▲ Realize that you are not in control of your own future and admit that you, like all mankind, have fallen far short of the glory of God. All of us are sinners. Our works gain us nothing before God (Isa. 64:6; Rom. 3:23).
- ▲ Come humbly to God, seeking a personal relationship with Him by trusting in His Son who took upon Himself our sins so that in accepting Him we could have eternal life (Rom. 10:13; 5:8).
- ▲ Know that once you have confessed your sins before God in accepting His Son as your Lord and Savior, He will forgive you and you will have a relationship with Him that cannot be broken (John 3:16).
- ▲ Share your decision to accept Christ with others. Search the Scriptures for wisdom and trust in the power of the Holy Spirit to live a life worthy of your calling as a child of the King!



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Modeling a Lasting Marriage

PASSING THE LEGACY OF A HAPPY HOME TO YOUR CHILDREN



Steve and Annie Chapman—singers, songwriters, speakers, authors, spouses, parents. Twenty-eight years of daily partnership in marriage and ministry combined with the experience of parenting two children to adulthood has given this couple a wealth of insight into the challenges of Christ-honoring family life. Their music, books, and seminars have helped parents all over America fulfill their most important mission in life—passing the baton of faith to their children. The Chapmans spent time with us recently to talk about themselves, their family, and their new books—10 Things I Want My Daughter to Know (by Annie) and 10 Things I Want My Son to Know (by Steve).

The Magazine: How did you two meet?

Steve: Annie and I met back in 1963 in the halls of Central Junior High School in Point Pleasant, West Virginia. We were twelve years old. She was a dairy farmer's daughter, and I was a city slicker.

Annie: We didn't start dating until 1974, though. We dated a week, got engaged, and married three months later, which we didn't want our children to know! We'd known each other all those years, of course.

The Magazine: Within two years of your marriage, your first child, Nathan, was born. How did that change your lives?

Steve: It's the grace of God that men, especially first-time dads, have nine months to get ready. It's like driving down the interstate at 70 miles an hour and somebody drops a brick wall in your lane. Life as you know it is about to change. Boy, it changed for us. We were having a great time as a couple. We'd play tennis all night long or go out for a pancake snack at midnight. And then, when Nathan came along, all that changed. Our decor even changed. The wooden telephone line spool we'd been using for a

dining table and the four milk-crate chairs went to the curb to be picked up by the trash collectors or another young couple with Early Orange Crate decor. The spare bedroom lost its "hippie pad" feel. We replaced the burlap curtains with some nice ones with bears. We borrowed a beautiful crib and found a mobile at a garage sale. Those changes—as drastic as they seemed at the time—were only a shadow of the changes we would face.

That March morning when Nathan finally arrived brought the most sudden and sobering of the changes I would have to face. I realized "our" care for him wouldn't be as easy as it had been. He had been silently mooching off Annie's meals and staying quietly out of sight—well, sort of. But no more! From now on, I shared the responsibility of caring for him. Being a dad had to be voluntary and deliberate. The things we had to do just to make sure he would be alive at the end of each day were mind (and body) boggling! Keeping him fed, cleaned, clothed, and comfortable became full-time employment for two adults.

When Nathan was an infant, I focused mainly on taking care

of his body and his belly. It was about the time he started walking and talking that I consciously added the responsibility for his spiritual growth to my list of "daddy duties." You know, the slate of a child's heart is blank when we get him or her. Somebody's going to write on it, and I wanted it to be me. Looking back, I'd say that being a parent has been the most challenging, the most inspiring, the most fulfilling, the most frustrating, and the most humbling thing I've ever done.

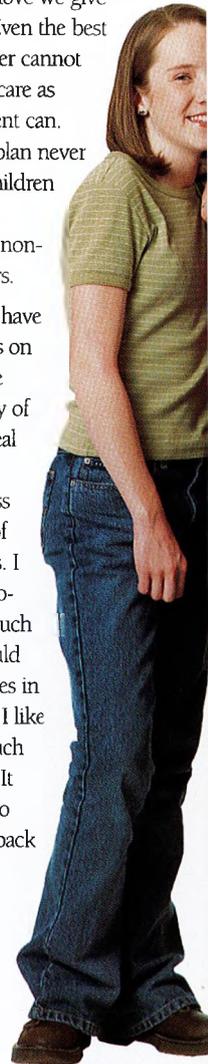
Annie: You know why it's so difficult? It's because parents are builders of little temples where God Himself wants to dwell. When you consider that as your task, then absolutely nothing can compare in its importance. Any career, any opportunity—nothing is as important as the job of building those little temples. No wonder it's so hard! And no wonder it's so fulfilling, because it's the most important thing we'll ever do.

The Magazine: What do you see as one of the most challenging issues facing parents today?

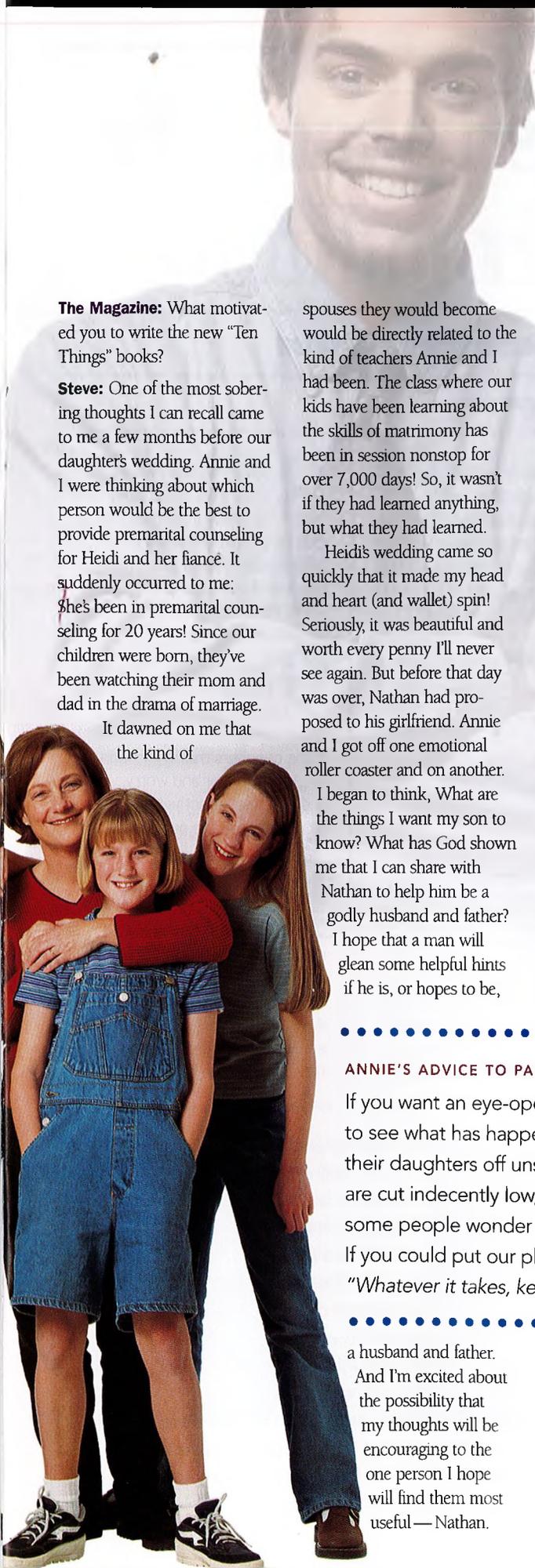
Annie: I believe many parents are abdicating their primary role as caregiver to others and are causing children to have

difficulty bonding to any given person. The most important aspect of parenting is the unconditional love we give our children. Even the best daycare provider cannot truly love and care as much as a parent can. God's original plan never intended for children to be raised in groups and by non-family members.

Steve: Parents have so many claims on their time these days, and many of those things steal from the time needed to assess the condition of their own souls. I think many people have lost touch with what should be their priorities in life. That's why I like to spend so much time outdoors. It gives me time to reflect and get back in touch with God and His creation. It gives me time to think about my priorities.



Light's cover photo (inset above) is from Steve and Annie Chapman's CD, "Long Enough to Know," available at www.steveandanniechapman.com.



STEVE'S ADVICE TO PARENTS OF SONS:

I would say to parents to encourage their son to see his wife's needs as more important than his own. If he can live with that attitude, and with Christ at the center of his marriage, he'll have a happy home.

The Magazine: What motivated you to write the new "Ten Things" books?

Steve: One of the most sobering thoughts I can recall came to me a few months before our daughter's wedding. Annie and I were thinking about which person would be the best to provide premarital counseling for Heidi and her fiancé. It suddenly occurred to me: She's been in premarital counseling for 20 years! Since our children were born, they've been watching their mom and dad in the drama of marriage.

It dawned on me that the kind of

spouses they would become would be directly related to the kind of teachers Annie and I had been. The class where our kids have been learning about the skills of matrimony has been in session nonstop for over 7,000 days! So, it wasn't if they had learned anything, but what they had learned.

Heidi's wedding came so quickly that it made my head and heart (and wallet) spin! Seriously, it was beautiful and worth every penny I'll never see again. But before that day was over, Nathan had proposed to his girlfriend. Annie and I got off one emotional roller coaster and on another.

I began to think, What are the things I want my son to know? What has God shown me that I can share with Nathan to help him be a godly husband and father?

I hope that a man will glean some helpful hints if he is, or hopes to be,

Annie: My book starting forming in my mind when Heidi was in college. She would come home and tell me about her friends and the lives they were leading, and I realized what an unmentored and unmothered generation these girls really are. And she went to a Christian college!

If you want an eye-opening experience, go to the mall on a Friday night. Every parent of a teenager or a pre-teen needs to go, just to see what has happened to young girls. Evidently parents are dropping their daughters off unsupervised. Their clothes are skin tight, their pants are cut indecently low, and boys have their hands all over the girls. And some people wonder why girls have low self-esteem and low self-worth! If you could put our philosophy of parenting in one sentence, it would be "Whatever it takes, keep them out of the mall!" Think about

are biblical principles that apply to every choice we make—how we dress, who we choose for a mate, how to handle money, and how to be a godly mother, to name a few.

The Magazine: A great deal of both books concerns what you want your children to know about marriage. Can you summarize that for us?

Steve: I would say to Nathan to see his wife's needs as more important than his own. If he can live with that attitude, and with Christ at the center of his marriage, he'll have a happy home.

Annie: Heidi lives in a time when women have been taught to look out for themselves. I would like for her to remember the poem we've had in our kitchen for the last 25 years. It says, "We believe a man and wife would have a better married life if they would try out-serving one another. For

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ANNIE'S ADVICE TO PARENTS OF DAUGHTERS:

If you want an eye-opening experience, go to the mall on a Friday night to see what has happened to young girls. Evidently parents are dropping their daughters off unsupervised. Their clothes are skin tight, their pants are cut indecently low, and boys have their hands all over the girls. And some people wonder why girls have low self-esteem and low self-worth! If you could put our philosophy of parenting in one sentence, it would be: "Whatever it takes, keep them out of the mall!"

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a husband and father. And I'm excited about the possibility that my thoughts will be encouraging to the one person I hope will find them most useful—Nathan.

whom this generation uses as a role model—Brittany Spears. Her key audience is eight- and nine-year-old girls, and she is basically walking pornography.

I wanted to arm mothers and daughters—and Heidi—with the knowledge that there

deeper love is felt when what is done is not for self but when it's done to satisfy the other." +

For tips from *10 Things I Want My Daughter to Know* by Annie Chapman and *10 Things I Want My Son to Know* by Steve Chapman, see pages 6-7.



10 Things I Want My Daughter to Know

GETTING HER READY FOR LIFE

BY ANNIE CHAPMAN

1 Choices Not Circumstances.

Life is not a matter of circumstances, but of choices great and small. I want my daughter to build her life on the rock-solid foundation of Christ. I want to share with her the basics of discernment and the best ways to make life choices.



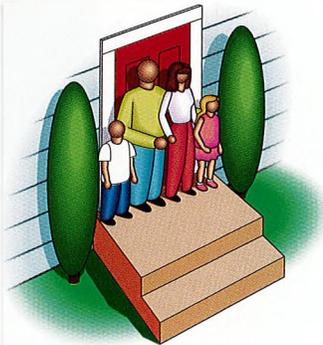
2 Beauty or Beast?

We must not allow our standards of modesty and discretion to be subject to the whims of fashion or popular culture. I want my daughter to know she needs to be the best representation for her Creator in her appearance and demeanor.



3 Pure in Heart and Body.

I want my daughter to listen to God's warnings concerning those who give their lives over to sensuality. I want her to know that God created her to walk in a responsible, morally pure manner and that her body is the temple of the Holy Spirit.



4 Marvels of Marriage.

I want my daughter to know that being a wife to a godly man is the highest honor and calling she could experience. As a help-mate, she is part of a God-ordained team.

5 True Motherhood.

Today's mothers have been told they can pay someone to feed their babies, diaper them, and keep them occupied. I want my daughter to know that love cannot be bought and there is no job, position, or opportunity that remotely compares to the importance of being a mother.



6 Chicken 101.

I want my daughter to know God holds in high regard the work she does as a homemaker. He

sees each act of service, whether great or small, as an essential part of creating an atmosphere of love and protection in the home.



7 Money Really Matters.

I want my daughter to know how to handle money. She needs to equip herself with biblically sound financial knowledge, cultivate a simple, childlike trust in God as her provider, and fight the human tendency toward greed.



8 Mercy for the Mean.

I want my daughter to know that while difficult people will always be around, God's Word gives the help we need to deal effectively and peacefully with them.

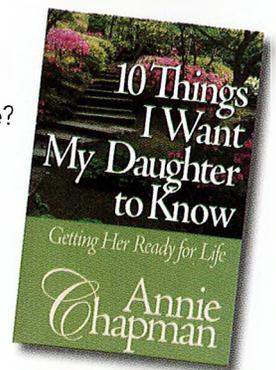
9 Courageously Facing Fear.

I want my daughter to know courage is not optional. If she conquers the temptation to give in to fear and worry, she can deal effectively with all other renegade emotions.

10 A Shining Finish.

I want my daughter to find her significance in the joy of serving and pleasing God. I want her to know that living her life devoted to Christ is the greatest legacy she can leave to those who come after her.

WHAT A BLESSING GOD HAS GIVEN YOU... A DAUGHTER! As you think about her future, what values and life skills would you like her to have? How can you help her become a woman of God? Drawing on her own experiences, the wisdom of God's Word, and insights from other mothers, Annie highlights 10 essential truths and how to share them with your daughter. Speaking from her heart, Annie candidly reveals the ups and downs of motherhood to help you navigate the sometimes tricky yet always fulfilling role of "Mom."



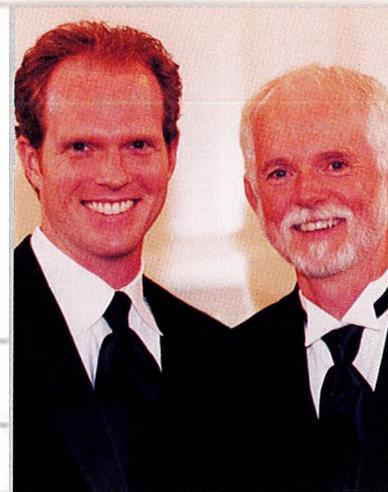
BKDAU (178 pages)

\$9.99 ea.

10 Things I Want My Son to Know

GETTING HIM READY FOR LIFE

BY STEVE CHAPMAN



1 You Will Always Be Mine.

I want my son to know my love for him is unconditional. I claim him as my son in spite of the fact that, just like his dad, he was born a sinner.



2 Proof of My Love.

There have been times when my verbal offerings of love were ineffective in motivating him to good behavior. I want my son to know the sure proof of my love for him had to sometimes be shown through the administering of discipline.



3 Good Work.

I want my son to know that his work—both his good deeds and his occupation—have the potential to bring glory to God. I want him to be numbered among those whose labors God honors because they honor God with the works of their hands.



4 Choosing the Right Hero.

Television and movie heroes do not stand the test of time. I wanted my son to understand that the real Savior of mankind was not born in Hollywood, but in Bethlehem.

5 First Comes Love.

I want him to understand that while being attracted to the female form is as natural as breathing, one of the greatest and most important challenges he will face is to rightly relate to the marvelous creation called woman.



6 Then Comes Marriage.

My life with Annie has been exceedingly and abundantly joyful. I want my son to know if he allows his two "roads" to join—his walk with the Lord and his life with his wife—the truest of bliss is his.

7 Then Comes Son with a Baby Carriage.

I want my son to know that leading him into a relationship with Jesus was the first step in making him a "building" where God would care to dwell. When he has laid the foundation of Christ in his own children's hearts, he must be very careful how he builds on it.



8 The Guard.

I want my son to know that God's divine jealousy for those who wear His name extends even to him. Because of this incredible blessing, he must remain on-guard against the enemies that would profane the excellency of our Savior's holy name.

9 Bogeys and Birdies.

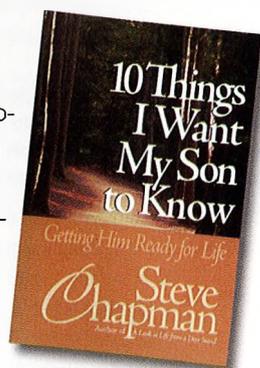
While I may have done some things right, there are areas where I know I faltered and failed. I want my son to know that all I did for him as a father was motivated by my deep love for him.



10 Little Sayings with a Lot of Truth.

Through the years, there have been a handful of proverbs that have altered the course of my life. I want my son to know that he can often find an orchard of wisdom in the tiny seed of a sentence.

FATHERHOOD . . . WHAT AN AMAZING GIFT FROM GOD! Being a dad requires love, humor, wisdom, and nerves of steel. Steve shares his top-10 principles drawn from the Bible's wisdom and practical experience that helped him raise a son dedicated to the Lord. Whether you're just starting out on the "papa" road or have traveled part of the distance, you'll appreciate the practical information, hands-on suggestions, and often humorous examples Steve shares to help you raise a son who will be a man of God and a man of honor.



BKSON (175 pages)

\$9.99 ea.

DEFENDING THE FAITH, DEFINING THE FAMILY

Dr. Richard Land, host of For Faith & Family Radio and president of the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, took time out of his busy schedule to write the book his listeners have requested. The book, also titled For Faith & Family, gives this insightful thinker a chance to share his heart regarding the issues impacting marriage and family life today. As always, you can count on Dr. Land to address these concerns from a scriptural perspective that brings clarity to the shadowy places where society has blurred the lines between right and wrong. It was our privilege to talk with Dr. Land about his book. —the Editors

Talk to us about the critical role of the family in the culture.

The family is an institution that God crafted, and I don't believe man will ever find an adequate substitute. God's plan is for family life to benefit every member. The adults grow spiritually and emotionally within the security of a lifelong relationship. And studies consistently show that children who are reared in stable, intact families do better in every social and behavioral category, whether it's academic achievement, graduation rates, or marriage.

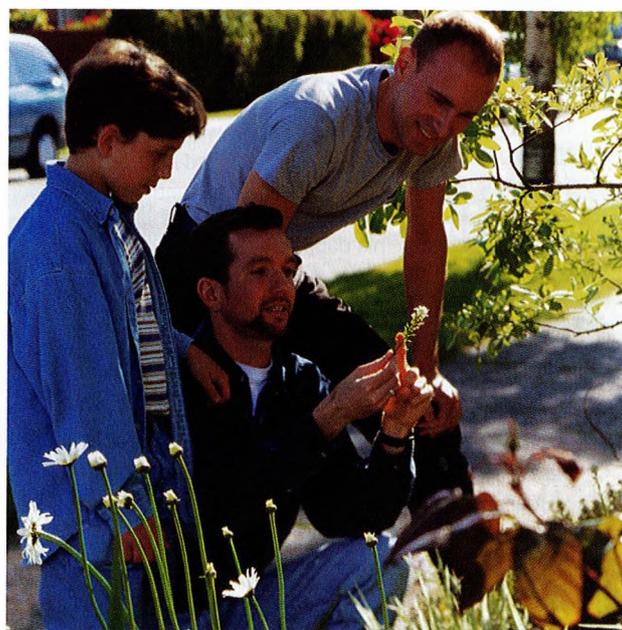
In your book, you make clear that the family is under attack today like never before. How is the family being threatened?

It would probably be a shorter list to name the ways it's not under attack, but one of the most devastating threats is the attempt to redefine "family." There are some who say that a family is whatever group of people live in the same house and call themselves a family—whether it's two homosexuals, three lesbians, unmarried heterosexuals, or a communal group, all with or without children.

God created the family, and He has the authority to define it. Scripture says very plainly that it starts with a husband and a wife and includes their children. There are extended families that include grandparents, or an orphaned cousin, or an aunt who never married, but these groups almost always are formed around the mother/father core.

Well-meaning social workers and family counselors often attempt to solve the problem of family fragmenta-

The family is an institution that God crafted. Scripture says very plainly that it starts with a husband and a wife and includes their children.



THE NEW FACE OF "FAMILY"? Though culture may attempt to redefine the family, there is no question that God's plan is the best plan...and His plan is for family life to benefit every member through a committed, lifelong relationship between one man and one woman.

tion by claiming there is nothing wrong. They want to describe what is as normal instead of what God intended as normal. This is a recipe for disaster.

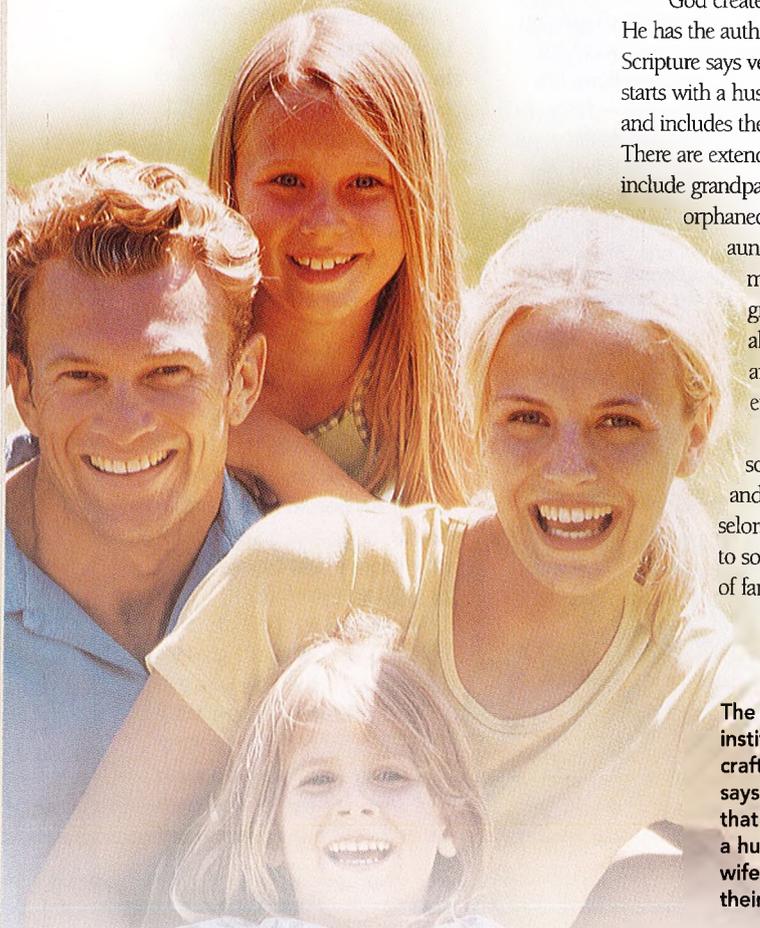
The problems facing American families appear to be most often a result of the state of the culture that surrounds them.

It definitely is difficult to have a stable marriage and family life today. I think about what it was like when my grandparents were starting their families. Most Americans lived in rural areas, and they married people who lived in the same community and came from a similar background. They had the support system of an extended family—whether they wanted

it or not. There was no horrific spiritual and emotional pollution coming into their homes through the television set and across the Internet. All of that has changed.

In the book, you emphasize that much of what is wrong with the culture at the dawn of the twenty-first century is rooted in the sexual revolution of the past few decades.

I have lived through a radical change in our culture. At its core is the idea that if it feels good, do it. The culture argues that we need to get rid of the repressions of the lifelong commitments that were expected in the past and practice "free love," which is neither free nor love. It's very



CULTURAL VALUES CAN SHIFT BACK IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION

"Within your sphere of influence, do what you can to encourage healthy family formation and healthy family maintenance. We all must work to mend damaged marriages, repair broken marriages, and make good marriages even better."

costly, and it's simple lust. Love as God defines it, even sexual love, desires the good of one's spouse, not the exploitation and damage that occur in revolving relationships.

Many Christians want to bury their heads in the sand and ignore what is going on in society, hoping the dangers and threats to their families will just disappear.

I understand the strong temptation to do this. When you look at society and its negative influences, the problems seem overwhelming. You seriously consider building a moat around your family and drawing up the bridges. The plan is to hunker down in the bunker and hope to survive.

There are problems with that. First, it doesn't work.

There's no way to keep society from influencing you and influencing your children. God created us as social creatures. We are going to be impacted by what we see, what we hear, and what people around us do. You cannot totally insulate and isolate yourself from society.

Second, it's unbiblical. The Bible tells us we're to be in the world but not of the world. It tells us we are to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world. As a Christian, you can't take your light and hide it in a bunker. When I was a little boy we sang, "This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine. Hide it under a bushel? No! I'm gonna let it shine.

Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine."

We could amend that to say, "This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine. Hide it in a bunker? No! I'm gonna let it shine." Jesus said, "You are the salt of the earth, you are the light of the world. Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your father which is in heaven." They can't see your light if it's hidden away somewhere.

In war, infantry soldiers who come under fire must quickly take cover deep in the bunkers they have hewn in the earth, but eventually they have to return the fire or they run a high risk of being overcome by the enemy. In the same way, failure to "fight" back at those who are tearing at the foundations of society will mean certain doom for the family.

Do you have a parting word for those who are willing to take up this charge?

Within your sphere of influence, do what you can to encourage healthy family formation and healthy family maintenance. We all must work to mend damaged marriages, repair broken marriages, and make good marriages even better.

Remember that if American society can shift so drastically in the wrong direction, it can shift back in the right direction. That's my prayer and my goal, to energize Christians to go forth and take this country back from the grip of evil and to have a society that once again reflects the values of the Old and New Testament. ☩

Don't lose your family to the culture.

The cultural assault on the home is fully engaged. At stake is the heart and soul of America. In his new book, *For Faith & Family: Changing America by Strengthening the Family*, nationally syndicated radio host Dr. Richard Land identifies timeless principles from God's Word for changing America from the inside out — one family at a time.

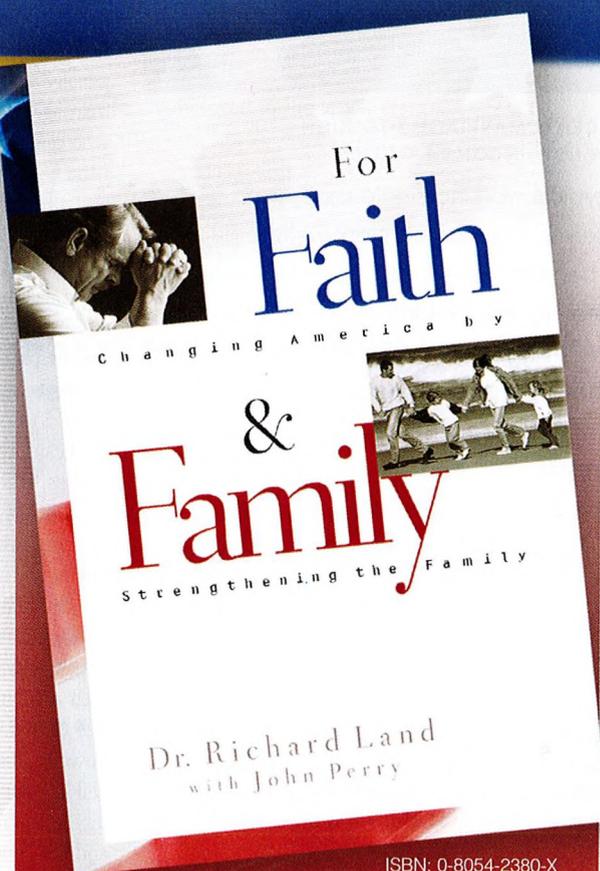
"He has written an easy to read, but profound to ponder, challenge to the family in our contemporary world. For those interested in the survival of our social order, to say nothing of the Christian doctrine of the home, *For Faith & Family: Changing America by Strengthening the Family* by Dr. Richard Land is imperative reading."

Dr. Paige Patterson
Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary
Wake Forest, North Carolina



Available June 1 Retail Price: \$22.99
Call **800-475-9127** to order your copy today.

Also available in For Faith & Family's Culture Response Kit (see page 23).

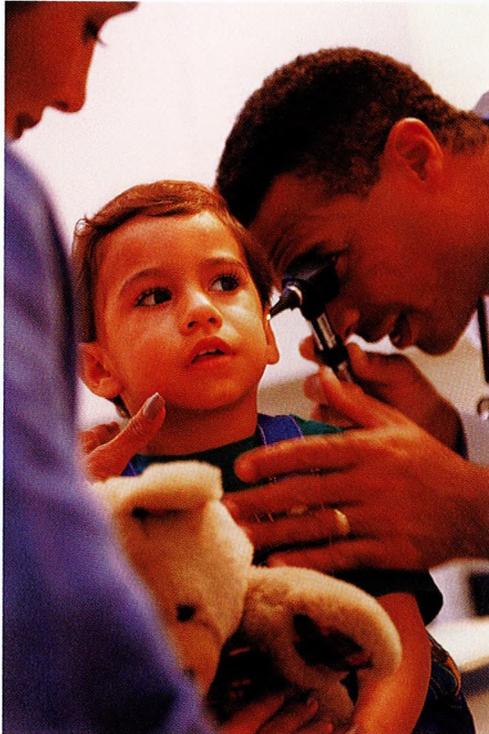


ISBN: 0-8054-2380-X

Sound Social Policy?

HOLD THE POOR HARMLESS FOR MARRYING

BY PATRICK F. FAGAN



PRICE OF MARRIAGE TOO HIGH FOR LOW-INCOME FAMILIES

A typical working single mother on welfare receives a combined work-welfare package of benefits worth about \$14,000 per year. Marrying the children's father, who has a low-paying job of \$15,000 per year (well below poverty level), means his earnings will be counted against her welfare eligibility. As a result, her benefits will be eliminated immediately or cut drastically. Many in this situation choose not to marry rather than risk losing critical health care benefits and other basic necessities for their children.

"The Fragile Families Study, conducted by Princeton and Columbia universities, found that 83 percent of parents with out-of-wedlock children are romantically involved with each other and that most of them want to marry."

—Patrick Fagan in "Marriage: Next Step for Welfare Reform," a *Knight-Ridder/Tribune News Wire* column

Recent survey data from Princeton University shows that most (83 percent) out-of-wedlock births are not to "single" mothers but to unmarried "couples": 50 percent of them cohabit, and 50 percent see each other three to four times per week. About 70 percent of these couples are interested in marriage, yet marriage among the poor rarely happens because for decades Congress has placed a massive penalty on marriage—a penalty that takes away 15-25 percent of total family income per year. The equivalent "hit" would be \$12,000 per year for a middle class couple who each earned \$30,000 when they got married. What effect would that penalty have on middle-class marriage? Among the poor, who cannot afford such a penalty—such a tax—it has virtually wiped out marriage. Sound social policy?

For example, a typical working single mother on welfare receives a combined work-welfare package of various means-tested aid benefits worth about \$14,000 per year: Medicaid, child care, food stamps, and an EITC (Earned Income Tax Credit). Suppose this single mother has a boyfriend (often the father of her children) who has a low-paying job earning \$15,000 per year. If they remain unmarried, their combined income will be \$29,000. If this couple marries, however, the father's earnings will be counted against the mother's welfare eligibility, and her benefits would be eliminated immediately or

cut drastically—somewhere in the range of \$5,000 worth. Guess which most choose? They cohabit or stay together a few times a week—a most unstable family arrangement for children. Sound social policy?

If they are not married,

and marriage among the poorest of the poor has virtually disappeared in some areas—thanks to government regulations. Sound social policy?

About 81 percent of children in the poorest fifth of our population live in single-parent fami-

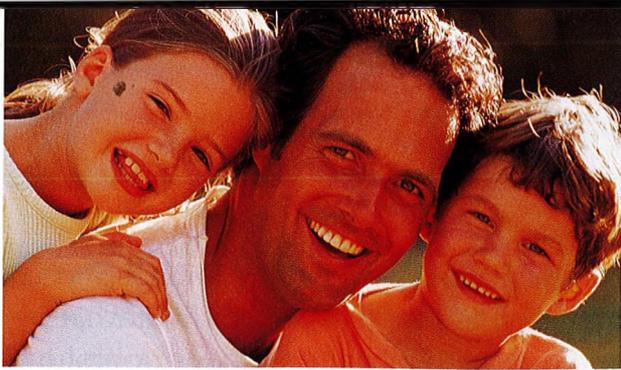
"For decades, the welfare system has penalized the poor and working poor for making the socially responsible choice of raising children in the context of marriage. Low-income families would often lose their welfare benefits and be kicked out of public housing if parents chose to marry. Now the time has come for the welfare system to reverse some of this damage. Nothing in the welfare reform proposals currently before Congress would either mandate marriage or trap people in abusive relationships. Instead, the funds will go to innovative community-based programs in the states that have a track record of success in increasing marriage rates among low-income families."

—Matt Daniels, Executive Director, Alliance for Marriage
www.allianceformarriage.org

government counts this couple as two separate welfare households, each qualifying for welfare of different kinds. If they marry, they become one household and their combined income is above the threshold that qualifies the mother and her children for welfare benefits. Thus marriage works not to increase their income but to reduce it, typically by about 20 percent. The poor are well aware of this reality. A poor man working for close to minimum wage comes to see himself as a financial burden rather than an asset to his family. His would-be bride (most frequently the mother of his children) definitely sees marriage to him as a big step down financially. This is the way Congress now treats their marriage to each other. Over the last few decades this has become a vicious cycle,

lies. Because of the long-running penalty against marriage, government is responsible for much of the fatherlessness among the poor. In turn, it is responsible for much of the social decay that has followed in our inner cities: crime, addiction, out-of-wedlock teen births, welfare dependence, and school failure.

Professor Andrew Cherlin of Johns Hopkins University recently released a study showing that welfare reform is not increasing marriage among biological parents, but it is increasing cohabitation and the formation of stepfamilies. For children, these fragile family structures result in higher rates of infant mortality and illness; lower verbal IQ, academic achievement, and job attainment; increased depression, anxiety, and suicide; decreased control of anger and



MARITAL STATUS PLAYS KEY ROLE IN CLOSE FATHER/CHILD RELATIONSHIPS

Fathers who live with their children are more likely to have a close, enduring relationship with their children than those who do not. The best predictor of father presence is marital status.*

sexual impulses; increased juvenile crime and drug use; increased out-of-wedlock birth; and an erosion of community life. Sound social policy?

Congress is considering the next round of welfare reform, and it is time to stop penalizing marriage among the working poor. One simple way to counterbalance the marriage penalties would be for Congress to require all states that take federal welfare monies — every state — to issue to those who get married a second document, a “hold harmless order” that would instruct all agencies to “hold this couple harmless for marrying.” Should that happen and be combined with President Bush’s new

proposals to spend about \$300 million per year to encourage stable, healthy marriages, this new round of welfare reform could become a strategic shift in social policy: working to build the institution of the family rather than weaken it. It should have happened decades ago. It is more than time to do so now, and it is time for the church to demand minimum justice for the poor who want to marry. Sound social policy. ①

Patrick F. Fagan is the William H. G. FitzGerald Fellow in Family and Culture Issues at the Heritage Foundation in Washington D.C.

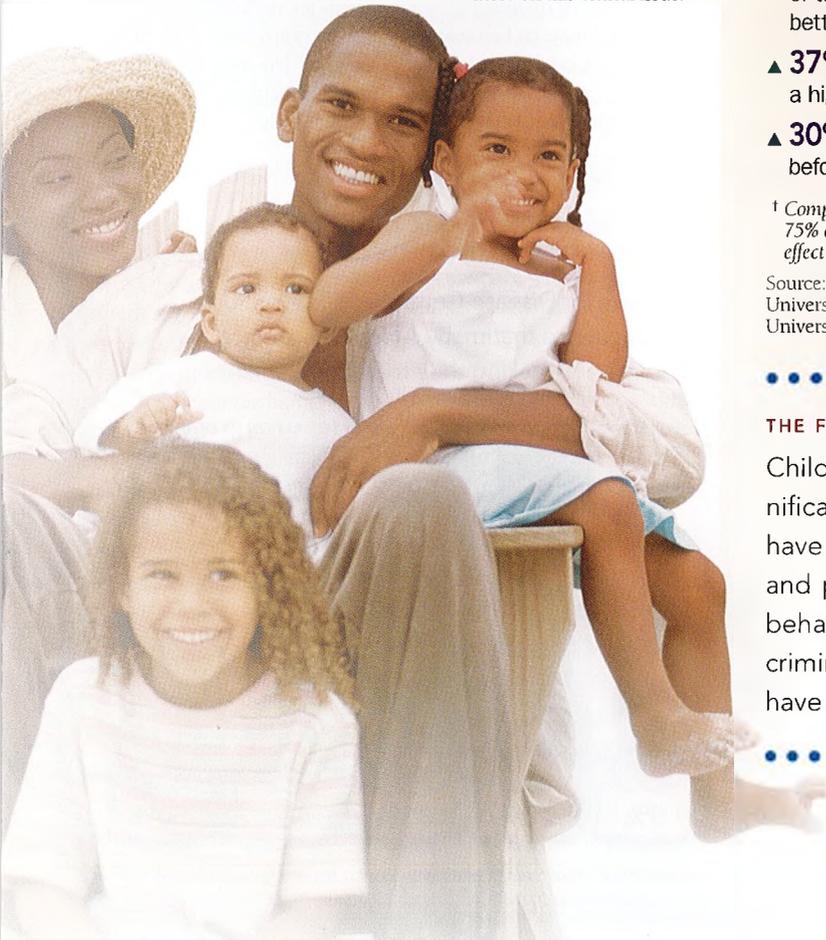
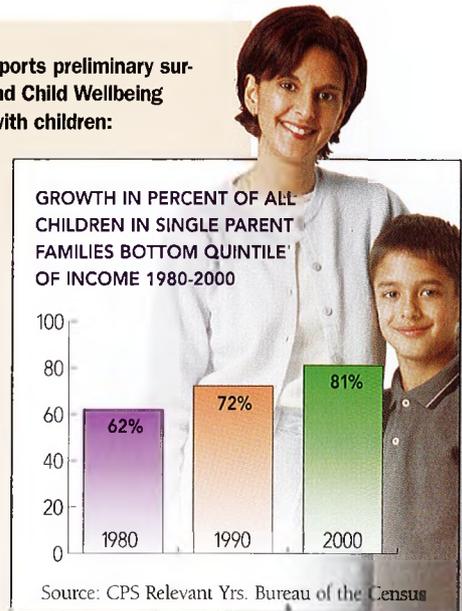
Visit the Heritage Foundation Web site (www.heritage.org) for more on this critical issue.

The National Fatherhood Initiative reports preliminary survey data from the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study of 2,670 unmarried couples[†] with children:

- ▲ **50%** of unmarried parents lived together when their child was born. Another 33% were romantically involved but living apart.
- ▲ **80%** of the fathers were involved in helping the baby’s mother during the pregnancy, either financially or in other ways (such as transportation).
- ▲ **73%** of mothers and **88%** of fathers reported that the chances that they will marry the baby’s other parent are “50-50” or greater.
- ▲ **64%** of the mothers and **75%** of the fathers agreed with the statement “It is better for children if their parents are married.”
- ▲ **37%** of the mothers and **34%** of the fathers lack a high school degree.
- ▲ **30%** of the fathers were unemployed in the week before their child was born.

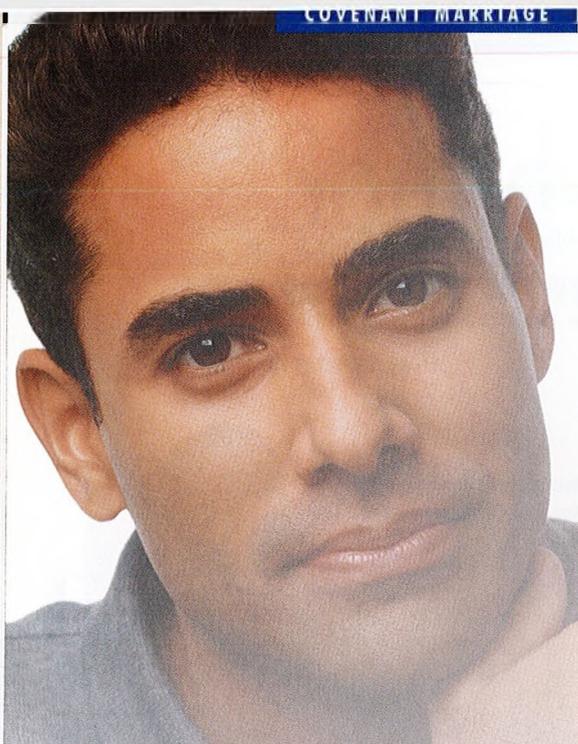
[†] Compared to a nearly perfect response rate from mothers, only 75% of fathers responded to the survey, resulting in a selection effect that most likely inflates the above percentages for fathers.

Source: The Center for Research on Child Wellbeing (Princeton University) and the Social Indicators Survey Center (Columbia University), August 2001.



THE FATHER FACTOR

Children with involved, loving fathers are significantly more likely to do well in school, have healthy self-esteem, exhibit empathy and pro-social behavior, and avoid high-risk behaviors such as drug use, truancy, and criminal activity compared to children who have uninvolved fathers.*



“I’ll meet you

Have you ever found yourself saying those words to your spouse? Marriage is contractual in nature. The problem with it is that what we think of as a covenant mentality can easily creep into any marriage, robbing a couple

IS YOUR MARRIAGE A CONTRACT OR A COVENANT?

America has become a contract-oriented culture, and we as Christians have bought into the mentality that all binding agreements, including marriage, are contractual in nature. We tend to think of marriage—life’s most serious and sacred relationship—in terms of conditions, limits, rights, and even “outs.” To our modern way of thinking, marriage is a social contract governed by the state and negotiated between two sovereigns who share the same bed.

But biblical marriage, as God designed it, is radically different. It’s not a contract; it’s a sacred blood covenant witnessed and guaranteed by God himself. It is unconditional, unlimited, and unending. A covenant marriage is more about trust than terms, more about character than convenience, more about giving than receiving. It is intended to be a reflection to the world of the very character of God.

Perhaps you’ve heard the word *earnest* used in the context of a business deal. Generally speaking, to be “earnest” about something means to be serious about it, but not necessarily sold out to it. A buyer wanting to purchase a house will give a small amount of money to the

seller as an indication of his or her seriousness in binding the sale. This is called “earnest money,” and the fact that it has to be put up at all indicates that the contract is born out of suspicion and distrust. The parties don’t know each other or trust each other, so they set limits on their liability and responsibility. It’s no surprise that contracts bound by cash are easily broken and walked away from. A covenant, on the other hand, is bound by character. It is both serious and sacred and calls for a sold-out commitment. No “earnest money” is necessary. When you are bound by covenant, you refuse to walk away.

A contract says, “Let’s make a deal.” You agree to do certain things over a specified period. For instance, you purchase a car and sign a contract that obligates

you to pay a specific amount of money each month for a certain number of years. If you fail to keep up your end of the bargain, your car can be repossessed. A covenant, by contrast, says, “Here is your gift.” You give freely, without conditions and without expecting anything in return. What is given cannot be taken back. It stays in place regardless of the performance of the person on the receiving end.

God’s covenant of salvation is the perfect example. We receive forgiveness of sin through Jesus Christ as a free gift. It is not earned, and it cannot be unearned. And thank God for that! If God operated in our lives on the basis of contract, we would all be doomed. Personally, I have broken many promises to God. I have defaulted hundreds, if not thousands, of times. I have not kept up

my end of the bargain. If God were a contractual God, I would have no hope and no future. What about you?

A marriage may begin by contract, but if it’s going to have the best chance of succeeding, it must be sustained by covenant. A contract is about legalities and leverage; a covenant is about love and loyalty. The vowed love of covenant is not dependent upon circumstances or responses and remains in effect until death. As Samuele Bacchiocchi notes in *The Marriage Covenant*, “It is this covenant foundation that will motivate us to seek God’s help in trying again to make successes out of our marriages—even when our needs are unfulfilled and our relationships seem to be sterile or sour.” No other commitment runs so deeply or binds more permanently.

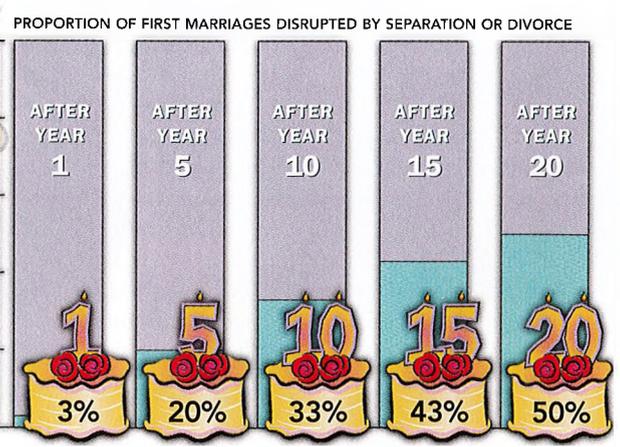
This article was excerpted with permission from *Covenant Marriage: Staying Together for Life* (Howard, 2002) by Dr. Fred Lowery, senior pastor of First Baptist Church in Bossier City, Louisiana. Dr. Lowery has performed approximately 300 covenant marriages. For information on ordering this book, see page 22.



Marriage and divorce statistics have drawn the attention of those in the health care field because “marriage is associated with a variety of positive outcomes, and dissolution of marriage is associated with negative outcomes for men, women, and their children.”

MAKING MARRIAGES WORK NOT A PRIORITY FOR MANY AMERICAN COUPLES

A Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report confirms that many Americans are not committed to making their marriages work.



Data: “First Marriage Dissolution, Divorce, and Remarriage: United States,” Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, May 31, 2001

in the middle.”

se? This phrase, among others, relates to terms and conditions; and how we talk will eventually show up in our actions. A contract is the opposite of the blessings and benefits of doing marriage God’s way.

CONTRACT OR COVENANT?

CONTRACT ATTITUDE

You had better do it!
What do I get?
It’s not my responsibility.
It’s not my fault.
I’ll meet you halfway.
I’ll be faithful for now.
It’s a deal.
I am suspicious.
I have to.

COVENANT ATTITUDE

How may I serve you?
What can I give?
I’m happy to do it.
I accept responsibility.
I’ll give 100 percent.
I’ll be faithful forever.
It’s a relationship.
I am trusting.
I want to.

The Big “I”

The modern approach to marriage is to focus on personal rights and needs. Questions like, “Am I getting what I deserve from this relationship? Am I getting my needs met?” are the tell-tale signs of a marriage that is based on contract rather than covenant. Spouses tell themselves, “I deserve to be happy”—and as long as they’re happy, they think it doesn’t matter if they forsake their vows and break their promises. Marriage today is all about the big “I.” No-fault divorce, a sex-obsessed media, liberal courts, and an idolized youth culture all send the same message: “If the relationship ceases to give me what I want, if it gets tough, or even if it just gets boring, I can walk away and start over.” After all, marriage is a contract, and contracts are made to be broken, right?

Prenups and Postnups

Perhaps the most significant evidence that marriage is largely viewed as a contract is the increasing prevalence of prenup-

tial and postnuptial agreements. These are full-blown contracts that, along with no-fault divorce, stand as the blatant legal enemies of covenant marriage. Prenups and postnups say in effect, “We know this marriage won’t go the distance, so let’s spell out right now who will get what when it ends.” What bride or groom could feel secure going into marriage with such a pessimistic prognosis?

The truth is, nuptial agreements and covenant marriage are mutually exclusive concepts. If you base your relationship with your spouse on a prenup or a postnup, you do not have a covenant marriage. You have a legal contract—that’s all. And a legal contract will do little to help your marriage survive in the long run.

Watch Out!

Recently a man told me of his plans to divorce his wife of thirty years. “My wife is a good woman and has always worked hard at making me happy, but she just can’t do it anymore,” he said. “It’s time for me to

move on and find somebody who can make me happy. I know God wants me to be happy.”

Clearly this man viewed his marriage as a contract, not a covenant. But before we think too harshly of him, we need to recognize that every marriage—even one that begins in covenant—faces the subtle danger of degenerating into contract over time. If we are not vigilant, we may begin to frame our own marriages in contractual rather than covenantal terms. Have you ever said one of these things to your spouse?

“I’ll do my part if you’ll do yours.”

“I’ll meet you in the middle.”

“If you’ll do this, then I’ll do that.”

“Marriage is a fifty-fifty proposition.”

“That’s not my role.”

These phrases relate to terms and conditions; they’re contractual in nature. And the problem is that what we think and how we talk will eventually show up in our actions. A contract mentality can easily creep into any marriage—including yours and mine.

“Believing that marriage is a covenant intended by God to be a lifelong relationship between a man and a woman, we vow to God, each other, our families, and our community to remain steadfast in unconditional love, reconciliation, and sexual purity, while purposefully growing in our covenant marriage relationship.”

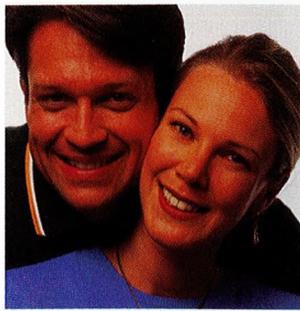
—THE COVENANT MARRIAGE VOW

Covenant is the heart of marriage, and sacrifice is the heart of covenant. Marriage is the closest bond possible between two human beings, and the cost of that extraordinary closeness is nothing less than the sacrifice of your whole self. If you leave sacrifice out of your marriage covenant, you have only the shell of empty ritual. Apply it, however, and you have the potential to revolutionize your marriage.

How About You?

I hope you can say that your marriage is a permanent covenant between you, your spouse, and God. If it’s not, now is a good time to upgrade! Don’t waste another day living as if your marriage were nothing more than a legal contract to be easily broken. Make your marriage a covenant marriage, and begin today to enjoy the blessings and benefits of doing marriage God’s way. 📖

you've been asking



How far should Christians go in utilizing reproductive technologies to achieve pregnancy?

Increasing numbers of couples are experiencing infertility. There are many reasons, including that women often wait until after age 35 to have children. Delaying childbirth can have negative consequences on a



woman's fertility, thus increasing numbers of couples who find themselves pursuing assisted reproductive technologies.

The Genesis account reminds us that one of the fruits of marital union is children (Gen. 1:28; 2:24). Procreation is God's good and gracious gift to humankind.

Generally speaking, reproductive technologies that enhance or assist procreation between husband and wife may be viewed as good. Artificial insemination using the husband's sperm, for instance, is biblically defensible. However, reproductive technologies that replace or substitute for marital union are suspect. For example, surrogacy and artificial insemination using donor sperm or eggs are highly questionable biblically because they bring a third party into the procreative union.

Embryo freezing and cloning also should be resisted.



What does a Christian Life Committee do?

A Christian Life Committee is a group organized for the purpose of making others aware of moral, social, religious liberty, legislative, and public policy issues and informing them of how they can stand for biblical values regarding those issues. These committees also are known by other names: Community Impact Committee, Citizenship Committee, Salt and Light Committee, etc. The three tasks of a CLC are:

- ❖ **Study.** Identify social and moral issues to which the congregation needs to respond then gather information and resources related to those issues.
- ❖ **Educate.** Bring appropriate issues and concerns to the attention of the congregation in a variety of ways, including informational displays, announcements, telephone chains, etc.
- ❖ **Act.** Provide the church with resources and strategies for action.



For more information, call 1-800-475-9127 and mention that you saw this feature. We'll send you a complimentary copy of the ERLC's Christian Life Committee Manual.

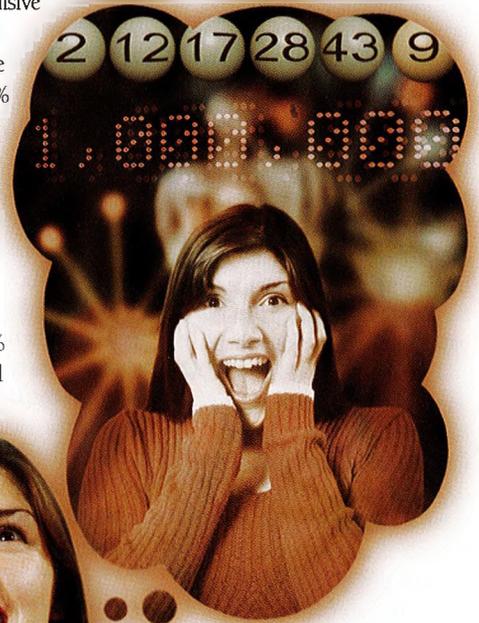
How can spending a few dollars a month on lottery tickets hurt me or anyone else?

Following are a few reasons why Christians should not support a lottery:

In spite of what their promoters say, lotteries are an inefficient way to raise money. The percentage of sales remaining after prize payouts, administration, and promotion is surprisingly small and generates very little actual revenue. Taxes actually have risen much faster in lottery states than non-lottery states.

Lotteries cause government to prey on its people, especially the poor. States target advertising toward their poorest citizens, knowing that people in lower income brackets spend more per capita on lotteries than people with higher incomes. One lottery rented billboards in some of its poorest neighborhoods and advertised with the slogan "This could be your way out."

You are supporting an activity that causes people great harm. Organizations such as Gamblers Anonymous report that many of their members are addicted to the lottery, and experts conclude that lottery sales are actually dependent on compulsive gamblers. (In one survey of compulsive gamblers, 22% divorced because of gambling, 40% had lost or quit a job due to gambling, 49% stole from work to pay gambling debts, 63% had contemplated suicide, and 79% said they wanted to die.)

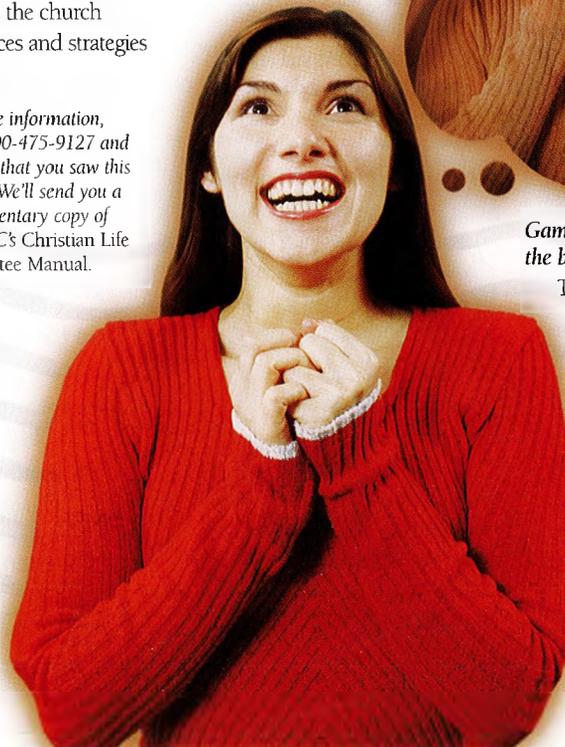


Gambling is contrary to the biblical work ethic.

The Bible teaches that we are to live by our own work, not by exploitation of others (Eph. 4:28).

Gambling entrusts one's welfare to blind fate rather than divine providence.

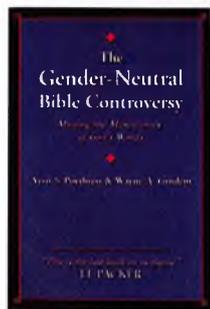
Isaiah warned that such practices lead to destruction (Isa. 65:11-12).





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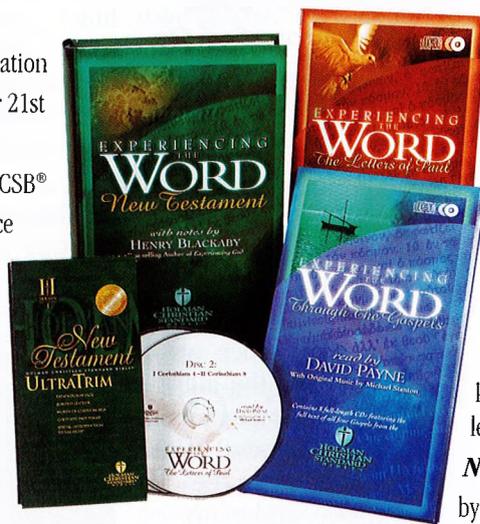
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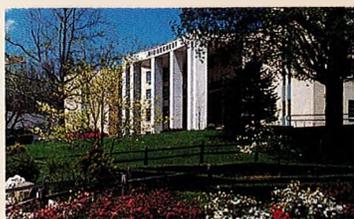
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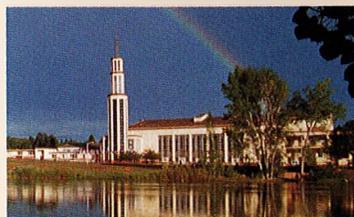
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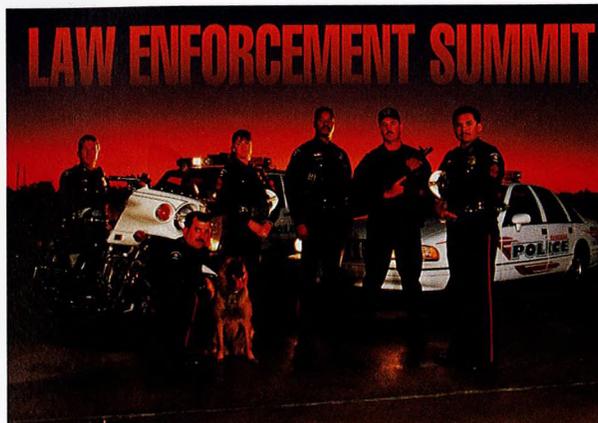
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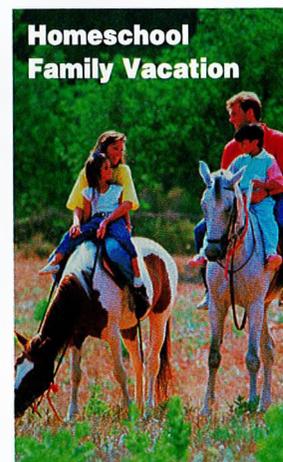
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and women in their local law enforcement agencies. Enjoy building a relationship over lunch, introducing them to this event, possibly sponsoring their attendance. Mostly, let them know just how much they are appreciated. To register, call LifeWay Ridgecrest Conference Center at **1-800-588-7222**.



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GREAT GRANDMOTHER CALLS "NEARSIGHTED" CHRISTIANS TO ACTION

BY DWAYNE HASTINGS

You would think that at age 88 Inger Hogan would be quietly enjoying her golden years, but instead the grandmother of thirteen and great-grandmother of one is busy seeking ways to sound the alarm to rouse Christians to action. And, while this Champion for the Faith admits to being "very perturbed" about the gains made by ungodly forces in the culture, she is enjoying the fight.

"I don't think God expects us to just sit here with our arms folded and not do anything about what is happening in our country," says Hogan, a member of Tri-City Baptist Church in Conover, N.C. "Churches should be concerned about the issues and not just sit back and hope for the best. We've done enough of that," she insists.

Hogan, who is most concerned about cultural issues such as abortion, the homosexual political agenda, and students' right to express their faith in school, says if she didn't have such a strong faith, she would be very upset at the sordid state of the culture in the twenty-first century.

And she refuses to buy into the arguments of some that Christians have no business in public policy. "My heart is in this," she says. "If you love the Lord and you love your family, I can't imagine burying your head in the sand and refusing to hear about what is happening around us.

"Christians who think we don't have any problems are nearsighted," she stresses. "God doesn't expect us to sit back

and wait on Him to do it all. There needs to be an effort on the part of all of us to deal with these things."

Hogan is convinced her message of action needs to be heard in every church across the U.S.: "I think they should wake up. One church isn't enough; it should be done in all the churches that are interested in saving our country.

"We have to stay awake; we have to stay alert in order to do God's work," Hogan continues, saying the fight is God's fight and that He expects His people to be standing up for His principles of living. "I realized if I didn't do something, it might not get done."

Hogan said her interest in moral and cultural issues was jump-started a couple of years ago when she heard about the issue of partial-birth abortion. She says when she heard about the procedure used in late-term abortions, "It bothered me something awful." She admits wishing she had gotten involved years ago, but she isn't letting her age slow down her efforts. She claims Philip-*pians 4:13 — I can do all things through Christ Jesus who strengthens me* — in her efforts to rouse Christians to action.

"This is not from me — I know the Holy Spirit is steering me," Hogan concludes. And to hear the conviction in her voice, you know it isn't happenstance that God tapped Hogan to lead this charge. 

Inger Hogan would love to hear from other Christians who are confronting the culture. Write to her in care of Tri-City Baptist Church at P.O. Box 40, Conover, NC 28613-0040.



Inger Hogan and her pastor at Tri-City Baptist Church, Ruffin Snow, offer the following suggestions to help churches stand up and make a difference in the culture.

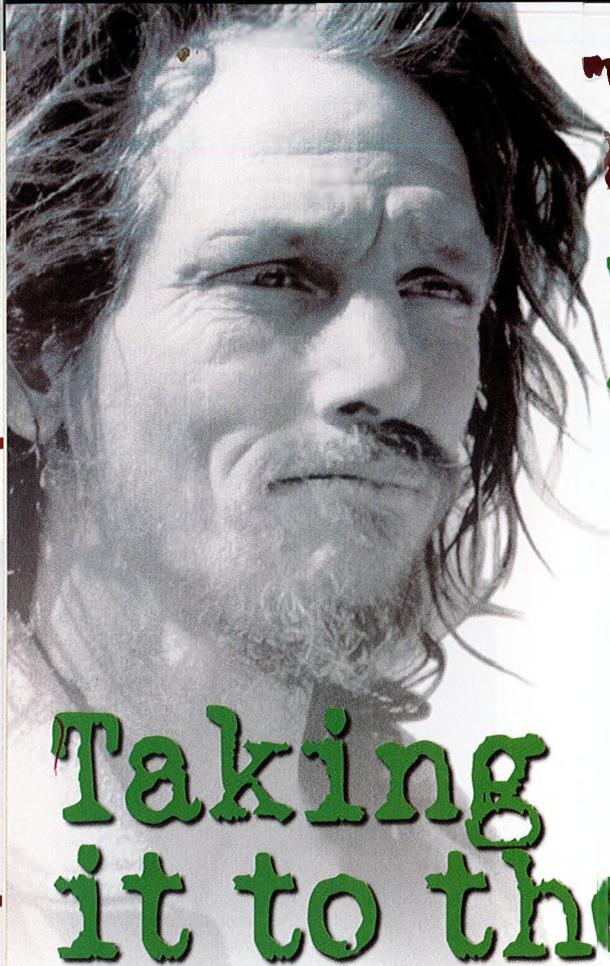
- ❖ Pray and urge your congregation to pray for God's will to be done in electing officials who take strong, clear-cut biblical stands on the issues.
- ❖ Make every effort to encourage citizens to register to vote.
- ❖ Ask the Lord to give you messages to preach on moral issues such as abortion, the homosexual political agenda, and students' right to express their faith in school.
- ❖ Make use of Bible-based resources on the issues available from the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission. Encourage church members to subscribe to *For Faith & Family's Light* magazine.

"The values forfeited by Christians are those that had given a true spiritual edge to their lives . . . Instead of an intense focus on their core attributes as believers, most Christians have settled for a second-class faith commitment, mouthing the words and doing some of the overt acts of obeisance, but partitioning their heart into religious and nonreligious chambers. Like a cancer, the nonreligious chamber continues to eat away at the religious, reducing the magnitude and significance of the religious side."

VALUES ABANDONED BY CHRISTIANS

- ❖ radical obedience
- ❖ church loyalty
- ❖ accountability
- ❖ discipline
- ❖ theological purity
- ❖ elder care
- ❖ family spirituality
- ❖ patience
- ❖ holistic stewardship
- ❖ submission to authority
- ❖ diversity
- ❖ persecution
- ❖ biblical knowledge
- ❖ salvation by grace alone
- ❖ holiness
- ❖ confession of sins

From Boiling Point by George Barna and Mark Hatch, Regal, 2001



"We look at them as individuals as a common, but not defining,

Taking it to the Streets

Dallas Life Foundation Shares the Gospel with the Homeless; Offers Help and Hope **BY TOM STRODE**

About 25% of "street people" have jobs but don't earn enough or haven't been taught the discipline of paying for food, clothing, and shelter. "Home" for many may be a bus, a train station, a car, or a bridge underpass. The number of homeless persons grows 20-40% yearly. More than ever, they are families with small children. Workers with the Dallas Life Foundation recognize the plight of the homeless and are doing their best to get these people off the streets and restore their dignity.

Michael Ward walked into the Dallas Life Foundation in April 2001 hoping to find a place to get some sleep and stay for two or three days while awaiting a bus ticket home to Houston.

More than a year later, Michael is still there—and glad he is.

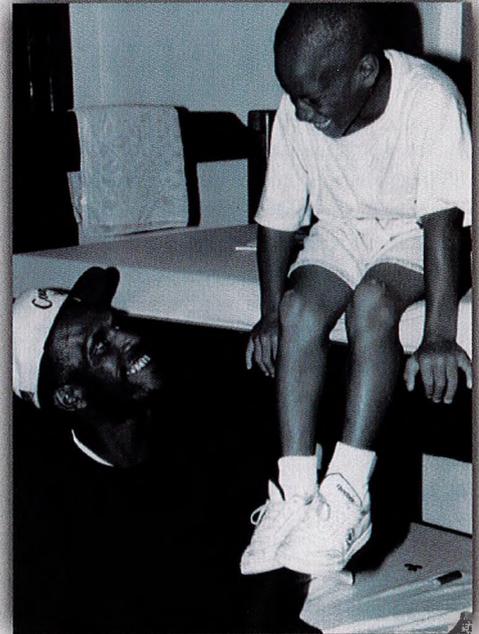
Michael is one of thousands who find help and love at the foundation each year. The Dallas Life Foundation provides meals; it served nearly 320,000 last year. It provides shelter; its beds were occupied more than 117,000 times last year. It seeks to restore men and women to meaningful roles in society. And it shares the saving grace of Jesus; 542 professed faith in Christ last year, and 503 were baptized. By mid-April this year, more than 350 had been baptized.

"We are continually preaching the Lord Jesus Christ to them," DLF Executive Director Ray Bailey says. "We believe that is the only way for them to get their lives in order."

For Michael Ward, 51, it was that message that made the difference in his life. He went to the foundation desperately seeking change. He had begun using drugs again after the mortgage company for which he worked transferred him from Houston to Dallas. He lost his job. Finally, he left even his clothes where he was staying and, without any money, got a ride downtown from a gracious bus driver. He checked into DLF, got some sleep, and went to the chapel service that night.

There he heard the worshipers sing "Because He Lives."

"It just touched me," Michael recalled. "It gave me some hope."



Housing space has been designated for family residences for clients in the Quality Life program. These are fully furnished rooms and/or cubicles where children can live and play in safety.

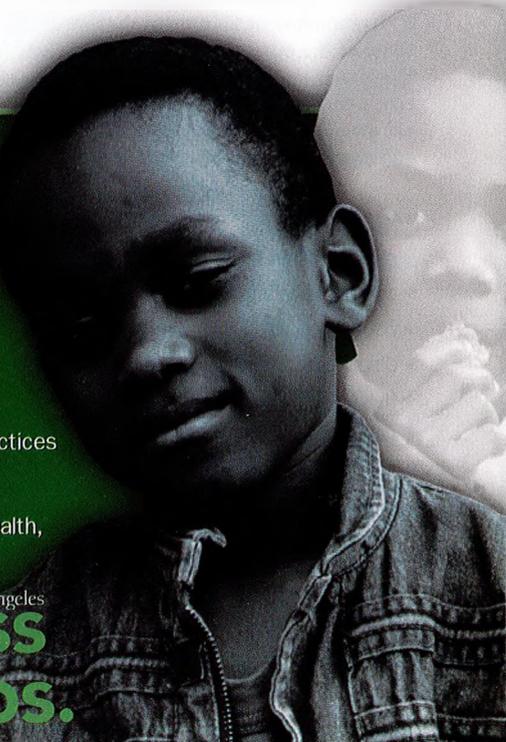
He recommitted his life to Christ that night. After chapel, he learned about DLF's drug-recovery program. He entered it and completed the required 60 days. Lonnie Barnett, director of DLF's recovery program, suggested Michael take classes to become a licensed drug counselor. He is scheduled to complete his class work this semester at Eastfield College, do a practicum, and take his exams in order to receive a license.

PEOPLE ARE HOMELESS FOR A VARIETY OF REASONS:

- ❖ Job/Income loss
- ❖ Decline in affordable housing
- ❖ Lack of education or skills
- ❖ Abuse/Domestic violence
- ❖ Abandonment/Deterioration of family
- ❖ Substance abuse/Other addictive practices
- ❖ Mental/Physical illness or disability
- ❖ Years of institutional living (mental health, drug treatment, prison, foster care)

Source: Union Rescue Mission of Los Angeles

25% of the homeless have jobs.



with 'homelessness attribute.'

Breakthrough Bible Study focuses on common issues faced by the homeless. ►

Michael has worked as a counselor in DLF's recovery program while attending school. He teaches classes and Bible studies. A man with little hope barely a year ago, Michael is now the assistant director of that program and one of DLF's biggest promoters—for obvious reasons.

"The substance program not only treats drug addiction, it treats the whole person," says Michael, who came into a saving relationship with Jesus at age 12 but later became a drug abuser. "When our clients come in and I do an assessment on them, I tell them, 'Nothing is concrete except one thing, and that is we believe Jesus Christ is the solution.'"

DLF is needed "because it brings [people] to Jesus. And that is what we're trying to do—bring them to Jesus," Michael says.

The foundation has been proclaiming the Gospel of Christ since 1954, when Robert Key founded it as the Dallas Rescue Mission. It changed names and locations as the years passed. In 1990, First Baptist Church of Dallas adopted DLF as a ministry under the leadership of its pastor, W.A. Criswell, who died in January at age 92.

"He had wanted to help the homeless for years," Bailey said of Criswell. "He really was concerned about the needs of the homeless and helping the homeless come to know the Lord and get their lives straightened out."

DLF is a separate, nonprofit organization, but First Baptist contributes \$90,000 a year to the foundation and members of the church make up three-fourths of the board of directors, Bailey said.

First Baptist's Inner-city Chapel operates in the DLF facility, and church members and Criswell College students are among those who teach and work at the foundation through the chapel's ministry. The chapel holds Sunday School as well as worship services Sunday morning and evening. It also conducts services two nights a week.

"We really feel that it's an integral part of our ministry," said Lanny Elmore, First Baptist's associate pastor of mission ministries.

Through the years, the ministry has grown into the largest emergency shelter in Dallas. It is located adjacent to the city's convention center in a former warehouse with 135,000 square feet.

During its history, DLF has transitioned from a ministry to "feed them and preach to them," as Bailey puts it, to one seeking to help people regain a significant role in society. "What we really try to do is take them and rehabilitate them and get them off the street," says Bailey, 67, a former pastor who became DLF's operations director in 1979 and its executive director in 1999.

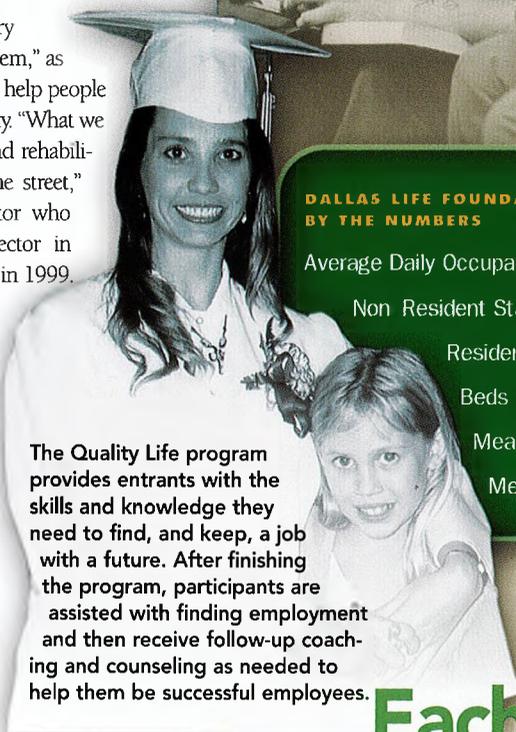
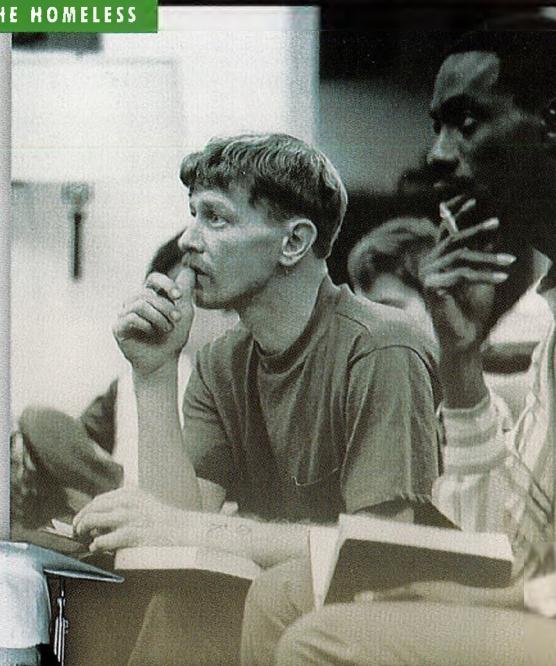
The foundation seeks to accomplish this not only through Bible studies and discipleship classes, but also through job training in areas such as food preparation and security, through literacy and other educational courses, and through counseling on personal finances.

DLF recently started a program, The Bridge, to help people successfully move out of the homeless lifestyle. In the program, a church in the Dallas-Forth Worth area adopts a person living at the foundation and works with the person and DLF to help him or her make the transition to a new home and job.

The shelter is seeing more families, primarily women with children, and tries to protect the family unit as it does its work. It has 51 rooms for families so that parents and their children are able to stay together. DLF has preschool childcare and numerous activities for children as well as drug and alcohol prevention programs for young people and a library for children and adults.

Looking back on his 23 years at DLF, Bailey says, "I sense that there is a greater need now than when I first started, because then we took in people who wanted to be on the street." Now there are a "lot of people who are first-time homeless," he says.

The reasons people find themselves on the street are many, but there is no question these individuals are grateful for the ministry of care offered by the Dallas Life Foundation. ☺



The Quality Life program provides entrants with the skills and knowledge they need to find, and keep, a job with a future. After finishing the program, participants are assisted with finding employment and then receive follow-up coaching and counseling as needed to help them be successful employees.

DALLAS LIFE FOUNDATION BY THE NUMBERS

Average Daily Occupancy	324
Non Resident Staff	15
Resident Staff	22
Beds per Year	117,179
Meals per Day	650-850
Meals per Year	319,966

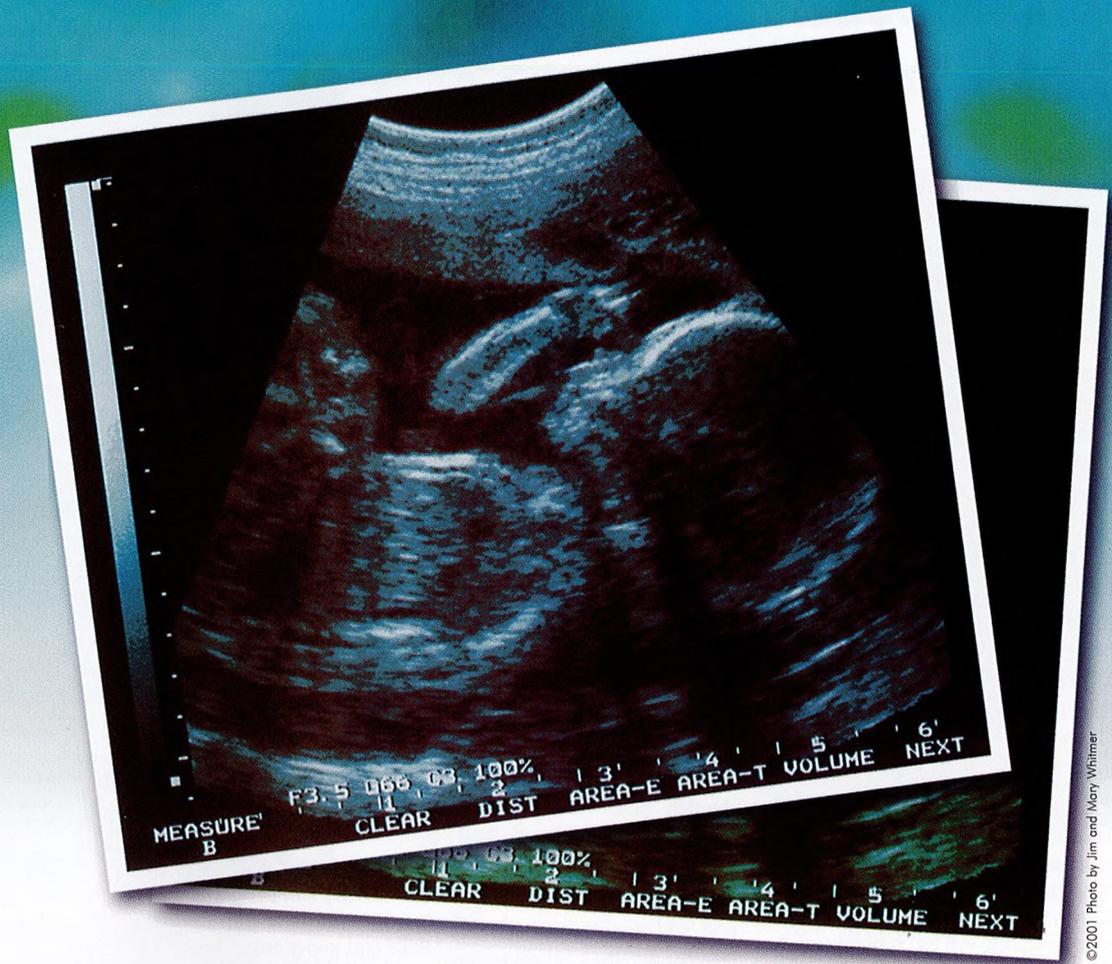
Each year, the number of homeless people grows

WHAT ARE THE PREDOMINANT ISSUES HOMELESS PEOPLE FACE?

- ◆ Discrimination and ridicule by others in society.
- ◆ Safety from outdoor elements and violent streets.
- ◆ Health problems like tuberculosis, AIDS, and malnutrition.
- ◆ Legal issues related to probation, child support, etc.
- ◆ Breaking the lifestyle they've been accustomed to and believing that their situation can change.

More than ever, the homeless are families with small children.

Photos are courtesy of the Association of Gospel Rescue Missions, of which the Dallas Life Foundation is a member. The AGRM is comprised of 265 member missions in 48 states. For more information about the work of the AGRM or a mission in your area, visit www.agrm.org.



©2001 Photo by Jim and Mary Whitmer

The Miracle of Life

*For you created
my inmost being;
you knit me
together in my
mother's womb . . .
your eyes saw my
unformed body.*

PSALM 139:13-16

An unborn baby's heart begins to beat twenty-one days after conception. At seven weeks she sucks her thumb, and sometime between nine and ten weeks, this tiny wonder squints, swallows, and makes sounds. During her sixteenth week of development, her fingerprints are completely established.

At the moment of conception, every piece of the unborn child's genetic puzzle is in place—a miraculous blueprint of life.

Modern ultrasound machines provide a window into the womb, confirming Scripture's portrayal of God's amazing creation. When given a glimpse of the life within them, *nearly 100 percent of the women in a crisis pregnancy choose life.*

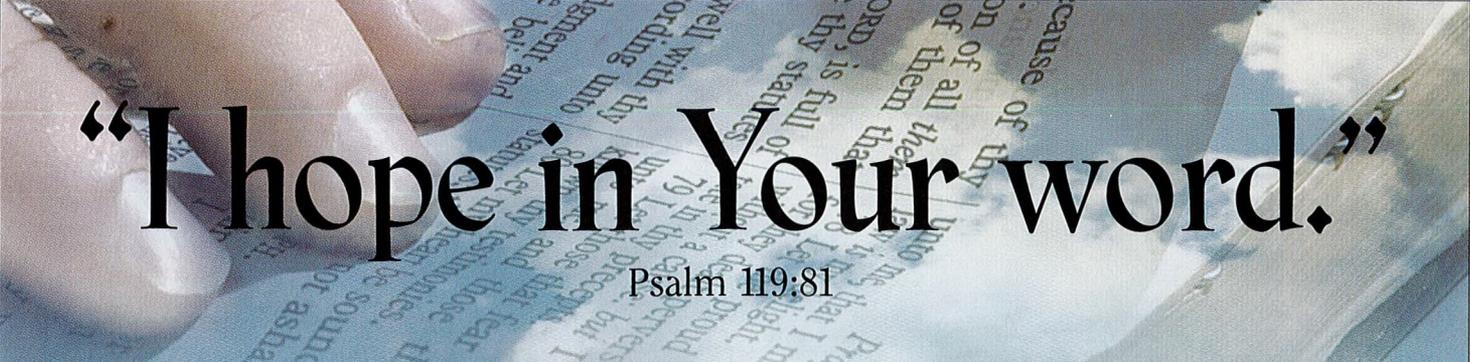
However, not all crisis pregnancy centers can afford ultrasound machines, which range in price from \$12,000 to \$24,000. The Psalm 139 Project provides precious resources for evangelistically-oriented centers to purchase them.

Psalm 139

PROJECT

It's all about saving lives.

Please send your tax-deductible gifts to: Psalm 139 Project ■ c/o The Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission ■ 901 Commerce Street, Suite 550 ■ Nashville, TN 37203
1-800-475-9127 ■ www.Psalm139Project.org

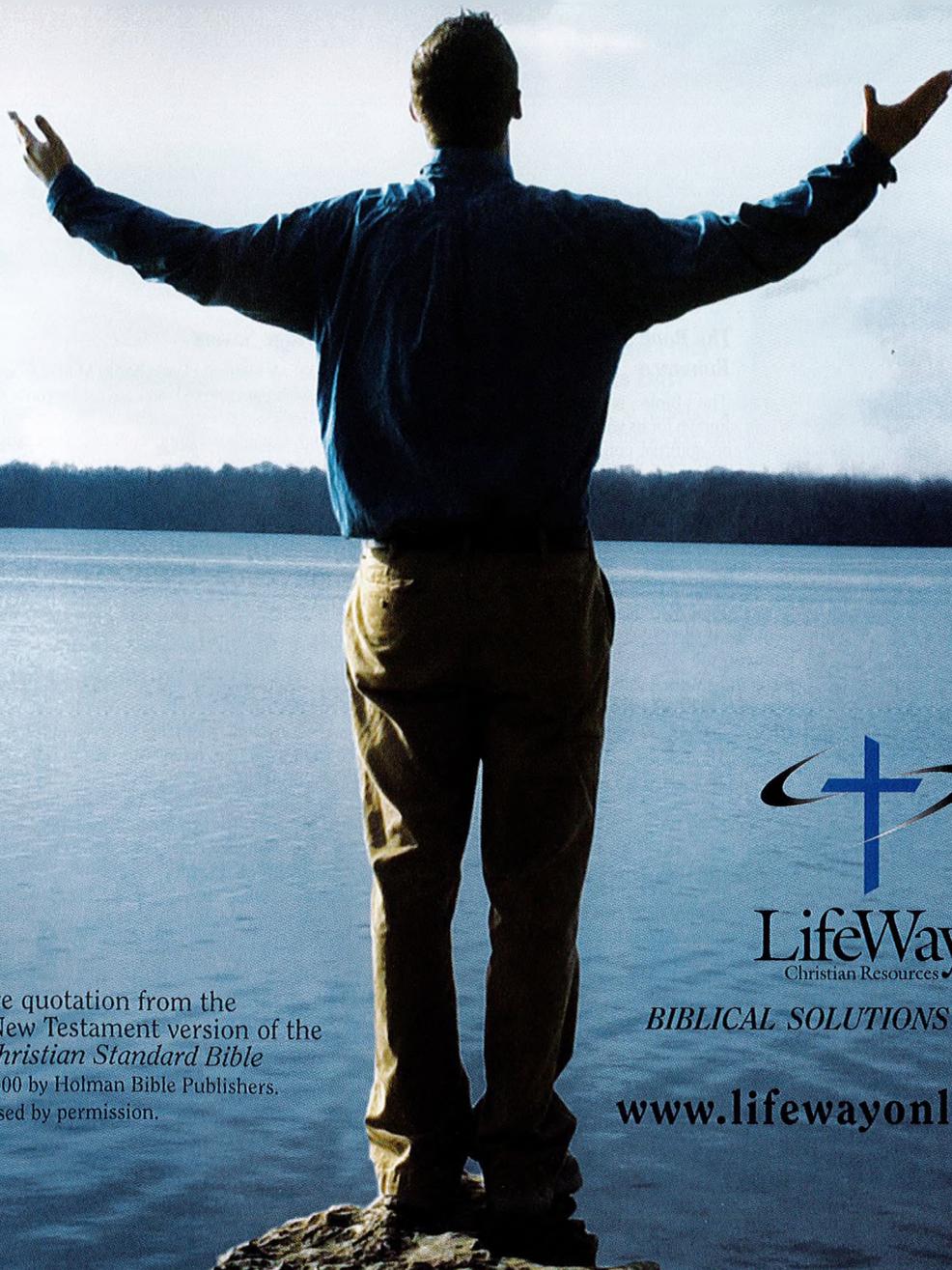


“I hope in Your word.”

Psalm 119:81

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Building Strong Marriages

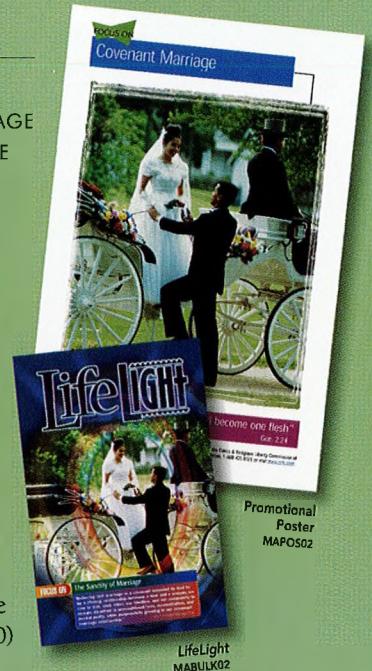
The book of Genesis describes the creation of human relationships—both God with humans and humans with each other. God intended for these relationships to be permanent. His plan was for the man and woman to live in the garden in fellowship with Him indefinitely. He presented Eve to Adam as a lifelong partner, which Adam affirmed in Gen. 2:23. Genesis 3 describes the disintegration of those relationships, and the rest of the Bible—Genesis 4 through Revelation 22—describes God's relentless work to restore humanity to the relationships He intended.

It was not happenstance that the first institution established by God was marriage, for it is the basis of a strong society. Unfortunately, marriage is under assault from many sides. Divorce is rampant even among Christians and threatens our culture's very foundations. It is imperative that we redouble our efforts to build strong marriages.

Covenant Marriage is the focus of the June edition of For Faith & Family's Culture Response Kit featured at right.

COVENANT MARRIAGE CULTURE RESPONSE KIT CONTENTS*

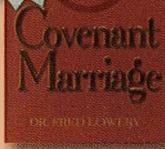
- Bible study and sermon helps
- LifeLight handouts (qty: 100)
- Book: *Covenant Marriage* (see description at left)
- Full-Color Promotional Posters (qty: 2)
- Covenant Marriage Fact Sheets (qty: 10)



MAKIT02 (monthly subscription) \$24.95

Individual hits are available for \$29.95.

Culture Response Kit PREMIUM



Covenant Marriage

A new movement is spreading across America, bringing hope to existing marriages and new guidelines for marriages yet to be; Dr. Fred Lowery, in this courageous and insightful book, shares with you

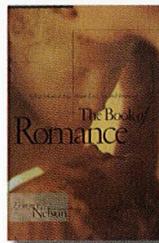
the principles of the Covenant Marriage Movement. Every marriage faces storms and struggles that can lead to failure: unexpected changes, personality conflicts, money problems, and misguided expectations. This book provides real answers through chapters such as "The Difference between a Contract and a Covenant," "Learning How to Manage Conflict," and "What to Do When Marriage Is Not What You Expected." The principles, power, and pattern for a covenant marriage will help you and your spouse stay together for life.

BKCOV (256 pages)

\$19.99 ea.

The Book of Romance

The Bible is well known for its wisdom on spiritual concerns and righteous living, but it also can guide us in matters of dating, courtship, and marriage. Tommy Nelson digs deep into the Song of Solomon and what it says about the Bible's most passionate lovers. As you learn about their relationship, you'll discover how you too can experience the deep emotional, sexual, and spiritual satisfaction that God created to be enjoyed in marriage. See Tommy Nelson's audiocassette series on the *Song of Solomon* at right.



BKROM (224 pages)

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The Five Love Needs of Men and Women

Taking the adage "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure" to lofty heights, Dr. Gary and Barbara Rosberg attack marital miscommunication and lead readers into a better understanding of what their spouse needs and how to meet those needs.

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Pure Sex

Ed Young gives the biblical perspective for sex as God intended it—within the framework of marriage.

BKPUR (224 pages)

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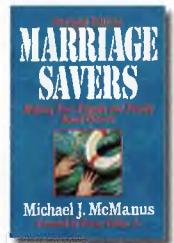


Amounts shown are suggested donations.

Marriage Savers

Michael McManus's classic book, *Marriage Savers*, is filled with concrete, biblical advice for those who are serious about saving marriages. New material in this revised, expanded edition includes: three ways churches can help the separated to reconcile, three strategies to help the divorced heal their wounds, a proven strategy to reduce the divorce rate in stepfamilies, and the great influence a couple with a strong marriage can have if they are willing to mentor others.

BKMAR (346 pages)



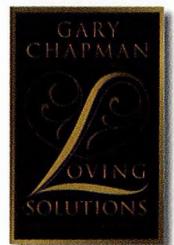
\$14.99 ea.

Loving Solutions: Overcoming Barriers in Your Marriage

Remember how close the two of you were when you first fell in love? Then years passed and things you thought would get better with time developed into major problems. Like many couples who want to honor their wedding vows, divorce isn't an option. Yet you feel as if you are stuck in a miserable marriage with no hope for improvement. Gary Chapman wrote this book for people who want their marriages to work but haven't been able to find the answers. The book doesn't offer a quick fix but does present workable solutions based on Chapman's vast counseling experience.

BKLOV (215 pages)

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The Song of Solomon: A Study of Love, Sex, Marriage and Romance

Love, sex, marriage, and romance can give us great joy and satisfy our deepest desires and needs, but such desires also can turn on us and plunge our lives into pain. Has God given us these needs, yet failed to give us guidance through what can be treacherous ground? Tommy Nelson says no, God gave us an entire book: *The Song of Solomon*. Nelson speaks candidly and humorously in twelve 30-minute sessions that address attraction, dating, courtship, intimacy, conflict, romance, and commitment. A study guide is included.

CSSONGSET (6 audiocassettes, 1 study guide)

\$34.95 ea.

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A Vision for the Future

A positive vision of the future is important. A person or nation with no hope for the future will live in despair. By looking at the negative, Proverbs 29:18 asks us to consider the alternative—where a vision exists, the people thrive. Only Christians have the vision of a people whose God is the Lord.

When committed, informed Christians live out their beliefs in their homes, their communities, and in the public square, they bring the truth of God to the moral issues of the day. We must plant our feet firmly and reassert the time-tested, life-changing Christian values that have made the United States a great nation. We must share our vision with others and be the citizen Christians God wants us to be. He has promised to empower us with wisdom and strength for this work. He is waiting for us to make ourselves available to Him.

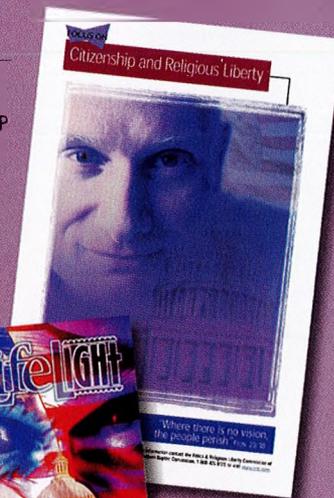
Christian Citizenship is the focus of the July edition of For Faith & Family's Culture Response Kit featured at right.

CHRISTIAN CITIZENSHIP CULTURE RESPONSE KIT CONTENTS*

- Bible study and sermon helps
- LifeLight handouts (qty: 100)
- Book: *For Faith & Family* by Richard Land (see ad, page 9)
- Full-Color Promotional Posters (qty: 2)
- Christian Citizenship Fact Sheets (qty: 10)

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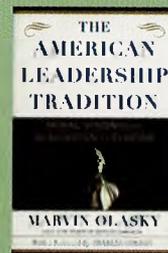
Individual kits are available for \$29.95.



Christian
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American Leadership Tradition

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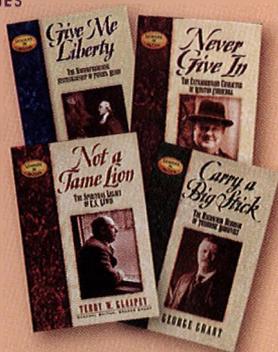
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BKROO (203 pages) \$14.95 ea.

Never Give In

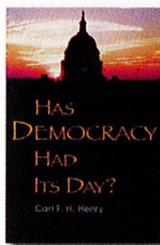
This inspirational biography examines the character of Winston Churchill and proves to be an inspiring portrait of a truly great leader who understood what it meant to "never give in."

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Patrick Henry was a brilliant orator whose love of liberty, won at any cost, fueled the fire of the American Revolution. This book allows the reader to see why Henry's love of liberty gave him the courage to stand in the face of tyranny and prevail.

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A look at whether a democratic society can continue to exist when the religious underpinnings that have made freedom possible have been abandoned.

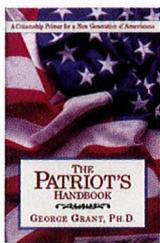
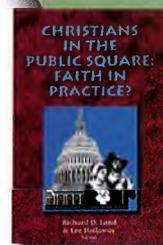
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These messages from the 1996 ERLC (then the Christian Life Commission) seminar offer solutions to some of today's critical issues and help define the Christian's role in the nation's public life.

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These key documents of U.S. history help Southern Baptists be the type of citizens the Word of God instructs us to be (Rom. 13:1-7). *Foreword and commentary by Richard Land.*

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Building a Foundation for Life

You Can't Hide
from God

BY DWAYNE HASTINGS

In Florida where I grew up, it seemed like the summer days would never end. The sun would stay up long into the evening. When my parents finally said it was time to come inside for the night, the sounds of my friends still playing outside would call me to my bedroom window to watch and think about ways I could sneak back out to play just a little longer. But I never did.

When my Mom would tell me "for the third time" to make my bed and pick up my clothes, I'd think about ways I could sneak away to a place where beds were never made and dirty clothes littered the floor. But I never did. (I did find that place years later when I went to college.)

When my brothers and sister and I would have to go to the doctor's office to get a shot, I'd think about ways I could sneak out of the waiting room and run away so fast that the nurse could never catch me. But I never did.

When I didn't raise my hand in class but the teacher still called on me for the answer (and I didn't know what she was talking about because I hadn't done my homework), I'd think about ways I could sneak out of that classroom and run all the way home to hide under my bed. But I never did.

Many times I wanted to run away — not very far — just far enough so I could have or do what I wanted.

We all love freedom. God made us so that we can enjoy and grow in the liberty He gave us. Yet sometimes we follow our heads and not our hearts, and we go too far. We stray out-of-bounds. We get curious and go places where we think God can't see us.

We think we know better than God, so we disobey Him and think He doesn't know. We are happy for a little while, but then we don't feel so good about what we have done. Yet God never leaves us.

Please don't let her call on me. Let her call on Michael. He knows the answer, he always knows. If she calls on me, I'll run home and hide under my bed...



We can't run so far away that He can't find us. We can't hide from Him under a bed or in the closet. Because of His great love for us, He doesn't want to be far from us. Even when we don't deserve it, God stays by our side, ready to welcome us back.

In the Bible we read about great men like King David, Peter, and even Jonah who tried to sneak away from God because they thought they knew a better way. They all discovered they couldn't hide from Him, and the blessings they enjoyed when they followed Him were better than anything they could have imagined.

Bible truth: You can't hide from God.

Bible verse: Psalm 139:7-10

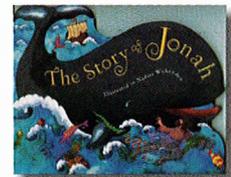
RECOMMENDED READING

The Story of Jonah

Whimsical, full-color illustrations combine with simple, rhyming text to bring the story of Jonah to life for preschoolers. Children will learn the importance of obedience as Jonah tries to run away from God and comes face to face with disaster on the stormy sea. They'll love turning the pages of this large board book shaped like the fish that swallowed Jonah and hearing the delightful text:

God said to Jonah, "I'm getting quite mad
From watching those people who do things that are bad.
Go there and tell them to listen to me."
But Jonah said "No way!" and ran off to sea.

To enhance the story's main points, the book closes with thoughtful questions and a closing prayer for adults and children to share. Tyndale Kids, ISBN 0-8423-6055-7



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