

GOD'S REVIVALIST

November 2015

and Bible Advocate





about this issue

COMMUNICATION IN MARRIAGE

We began 2015 with a special issue of *God's Revivalist* dedicated to "Protecting Marriage," which dealt with topics such as preparing properly for marriage, understanding each other, issues related to boundaries and control, and when to get marital counseling and what type to get.

In some of the issues which followed, there were special sections dedicated to marriage-related themes: marriage and money (March); marital conflict (April); and forgiveness (May).

In this issue, we finish the series with a focus on communication in marriage. In "Communication" (p.5), Marilyn Muir discusses negotiating communication difficulties between husbands and wives. Renowned counselor and author H. Norman Wright discusses how "Positive Communication In Marriage" (p.7) is very effective when encouragement of one's spouse is the main focus. In "Negative Communication" (p.8), Nathaniel Tucker notes that couples often recognize that there has been a "hole" in their marriage—a place where conflicts invariably go and where nothing productive is accomplished. He gives some helpful steps to take to get out of "The Hole" and to stay out of it. And finally, counselor Andrew Graham in "Help for Couples in Distress" (p.10) describes how the Speaker-Listener Technique can be used to talk through sensitive issues in marriage. This is especially critical since emotions tend to run high during such discussions.

It has been some time since the Supreme Court's 5-4 decision declaring gay marriage legal in all 50 states. I am sure most of you have read many articles on both sides of that issue. One blog post we read seemed to offer some good suggestions for Christians to consider when crafting their response to this decision. You will want to read "Gay Marriage and the Church's Response" by Darrell Stetler II (p.19).

Of course, this issue also gives a report of Homecoming 2015 (p.22). If you were unable to make it to that event, see what you missed, and mark your calendars for next year!

Enjoy the issue! —KF

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the president's page



ARE CHRISTIANS REALLY DIFFERENT?

by Michael R. Avery, President

Believe it or not, the question posed in my title has been challenging for the Church to answer in practical, concrete ways! It has struggled to find balanced answers that keep it from falling into the ditch on either side of the question. When it overemphasizes uniqueness and separation, it falls into the ditch of reclusion and isolation. When it overemphasizes relevance and contextualization, it succeeds in filling up churches with people who have not experienced real gospel transformation. Both extremes produce the same result—no real transforming impact of the surrounding culture.

However, the Bible makes it quite clear that true Christians are not only distinct from non-Christians, but also distinct from those who are merely religious (Matt. 6:1-8). The most definitive statement Jesus ever gave on how truly different an authentic Christian is and how that difference is lived out in concrete terms is found in the Sermon on the Mount. The sermon is filled with illustrations that contrast authentic Christians with non-Christians. In doing this, Jesus contrasts two sets of values, two kinds of disciples, two kinds of righteousness, two kinds of spiritual exercises, two motives for obedience, two masters, two paths, two trees, and two foundations. He primarily compares the Christian view with the world's view (those who don't know God) or the Christian view with the view of those who are merely religious (rule and tradition keepers who have no real relationship with God).

BEING DIFFERENT IS ESSENTIAL

The New Testament makes the case that authentic Christians are indeed different and that difference is fundamental. The greatest eras in the life of the Church have been when the line between the Church and the world was the most distinct. I fear today's Church has forgotten this principle. Christians certainly live *in the world* but they are *not of the world*. When the Church

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make a difference, they
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becomes the same as the world, the Church loses its unique ability to be a change agent.

HOW ARE CHRISTIANS DISTINCT FROM THE WORLD?

Different in what they value (Matt. 5:3-12). One example of this is that the Christian values true humility while the world despises it. To the world, the humble person lacks self-confidence, self-expression, and the mastery of life.

Different in what they seek (Matt. 5:6; 6:33). The Christian seeks after God's Kingdom and His righteousness. The world seeks fashion, longevity, wealth, status, power, and publicity.

Different in what they store up (Matt. 6:19-21, 25-33). The Christian stores up the kinds of things that have permanent value. The world stores up treasure that is passing away and has only temporal value.

Different in whom they serve (Matt. 6:24). Jesus makes it clear that when it comes to material and spiritual things, either your material things become your god, or God is God of your material things. You can't serve both! The world serves the god of the material while the Christian lays all his material things at the feet of his God.

HOW ARE CHRISTIANS DISTINCT FROM PEOPLE WHO ARE MERELY RELIGIOUS?

True Christians are utterly distinct from those who are merely religious. In the Gospels you see anger by Jesus toward the institutionalized religion of the Pharisees. However, when Jesus gets around sinners, He is patient and kind. When He gets around merely religious people, He is severely direct and critical. The reason for this lies in the difference between the two. Even though the Christian and the merely religious person may look much the same on the surface, there is a significant difference between the two.

Different in the way they impact people (Matt. 5:13-16). Christians are attractive to and attracted to the kind of people that live in the darkness of sin. They run to bring the light of Jesus to the dark places of society. Christians are willing to engage the decay of the world with the salt of the gospel and their personal involvement. However, merely religious people are turned off by and alienated from these same people of darkness and decay. They put their light "under a bowl" while pulling their righteous robes about themselves lest they actually interact with these kinds of people.

Different in the way they position themselves to other people (Matt. 7:1-5). Merely religious people see their own sins as a speck of dust and the sins of others as a huge plank. Christians see their own sins as a plank and others' sins as a speck of dust. In other words, the merely religious feel superior to others while Christians understand their need of constant grace.

Different in their concerns for holiness (Matt. 5:17-6:6). The merely religious are concerned about externals while Christians are concerned about the heart. The merely religious seek conformity to the letter of the law while Christians seek to obey not just the legal aspect of the law but also the ethical side or the "spirit" of the law. The reason for this is that the motive for obedience is different. Merely religious people are motivated by the need for rule-keeping and the fear of others while Christians are motivated by a love for God and His Word. Merely religious people let what others think become more important to them than what God thinks. In the end they become performers for the audience (others) rather than living lives solely for the glory of God. It is no wonder that Jesus charged the religious for having such a distorted view of Scripture. The Christian, however, filters everything through the law of love.

Different in their relationship to God (Matt. 7:13-29). As previously mentioned, a Christian and a merely religious person may look much the same on the surface. They both may be orthodox in doctrine, passionate in service, moral in behavior, and socially useful. Each builds on a foundation, bears fruit, and claims to be on the path to heaven. But one's foundation is firm while the other's is faulty. One's fruit is pure while the other's is poison. One is on a path toward life while the other is on a path toward death and destruction. The key to the difference is found in Matthew 7:21-23: "*Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.*"

If we want to know for certain that we truly are Christian, we need to look at ourselves in detail and ask these questions:

- Can I claim for my actions and attitudes something essentially distinct and not found in non-Christians?
- Is the difference more than just "not being like non-Christians," but rather a positive conformity to the image of Christ?
- Is this difference something that can only be explained in terms of a life-changing relationship to the Lord Jesus Christ?

The fundamental issue that Jesus points out so clearly in the Sermon on the Mount is that if Christians are going to *make* a difference they must *be* different. However, it is not a difference just for the sake of being different, but a difference that comes from *knowing* and *being known* by Jesus! ■

Communication *by Marilyn Muir*

Silence reigned. Perfect silence—except for those few breaths of wind sweeping through the remaining leaves on the trees, the soft drizzle of rain spattering in the late fall woods, the drumming of a woodpecker, and the nasal yank of a nuthatch. We sat only feet apart from each other on the deck, but neither said anything for a long time. It was peaceful silence—relaxing and enjoyable.

Another instance found us riding in silence except for the hum of wheels spinning against the pavement mile after mile after mile. Our minds were full of our own various thoughts, but there was no need to talk. We simply enjoyed one another's company while we allowed each other time to mentally sort through all the busyness of the previous weeks.

In both of these instances we were communicating. As we sat on the deck in the woods our eyes made contact. He winked once. I winked once. He winked each eye. So did I. For moments we played an advancing Simon®-type game of repeats until his eyes twinkled merrily, and we laughed. On the road, covering many miles, we communicated companionship through hand squeezes.

However, not every silence has created such a calm atmosphere with all the subtle communication nuances. At times there have been tensions almost thick enough to cut with a knife—unutterable pain produced by the lack of understanding, and no one but ourselves to blame—because we were each too stubborn to break the silence.

Although we have had thirty years to hone our communication skills, we still must work at it. We have communicated dissatisfaction, unhappiness, and disappointment through the silences, for lack of knowing just what

to say or for fear of hurting each other with words that might cut, since neither of us was in a pleasant mood.

One of those situations occurred not terribly long ago. How can two people who have lived together for such a length of time not learn clear, if not perfect, communication? Experience has convinced me that while learning to navigate the complex “art of communication” is critical, especially early on, it is more important to learn that life patterns change with time, the things we communicate are built over time, and the amount of time we actually spend communicating fluctuates drastically in our increasingly busy lives. Through the various phases of life we have found ourselves struggling to communicate properly. As a result, stress can enter the relationship. Stressful times have a way of erasing from our memory, or at least blurring, lessons previously learned—and, sadly, that often hinders good marital relationships.

Communication is what we choose to make it. Since men and women communicate in very different ways, a strategy for a continually growing relationship must be a priority—always. We must understand each other as completely as possible to enable our relationship to function in unity.

The state of unity between husband and wife is the foundation for peace and stability in the marriage and in the home. The Spirit of God is not easily sensed in an atmosphere of conflict, so not only is a solid, satisfying relationship with one's spouse a priority, but the impact of this relationship on children is crucial. Children are sensitive, and if they feel unrest between their parents, they will find it hard to learn trust and obedience where spiritual security is



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not present. If parents fail to solidly weave this security into the shaping of their children, it will be difficult for children to transfer faith in their parents to a grounded faith in the ever-loving God—a God who communicates with them.

The steps to understanding one another vary from couple to couple, but it is worth the work it takes to discover your communication needs/patterns. And it will be work! Often there will be much misunderstanding in the attempts to comprehend the differences in male and female communication. But work carefully and thoughtfully until you understand one another. If this becomes tedious, have patience and perseverance.

One important part of communication is simply listening to what the other is saying. The challenges to doing so tend to be different for the sexes. If she cares enough to remember what he says (his needs), she will find herself wanting to serve him, even if it doesn't make the most sense to her. One may discover the way to effective communication by listening, observing, asking specific questions, and probing until answers are found. If he asks her direct questions (her needs), and she finds it hard to express herself because it seems selfish, she still needs to use the specific words that best say exactly what she means. He cannot be expected to know what she is thinking when he can't read her mind.

Even in the context of unity, couples must constantly be on guard to communicate well with each other. Not doing so can be catastrophic with broken communication leading to broken relationship.

Therefore they must...

- Remind one another of one's own needs.
- Seek the best ways of communicating with each other.
- Determine not to allow communication to break down.

There are some situations which call for heightened awareness and carefulness of communication. Let me give three.

When situations are tense, communication can also be tense. It is best, especially during tense times, to speak softly and positively when communicating. "A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger" (Prov. 15:1 ESV).

When communication is unclear, it is easy to become impatient with the one you love. When we put the interests of our spouse ahead of our own wishes and desires, our daily living becomes more meaningful. In the area of communication this often finds each one catering to the known needs of the other. She may give him more concentration time and sit quietly as he shares not so many words, and he may give her more listening time as she shares with many words.

When people are over-loaded with duties, communication can break down. The other may especially feel the need of time together, but will not seek it out,

Words of Wisdom for Ladies

Allow your husband his quiet concentration time without resenting this non-communicative trait. He should not need to give voice to every thought.

Remember that men can be sensitive (yes, they can be fragile and can be hurt) and unintentionally insensitive (they are unaware of how their communications may hurt others). If you feel bothered by either of these concerns, approach him in a kind, non-critical manner with questions about what you don't understand. Have a gentle, non-judgmental spirit or he may be unwilling to share something he fears you may not accept.

Words of Wisdom for Gentlemen

Initiate conversation in ways that show you are interested in your wife and wish to share your thoughts, feelings, and emotions with her. She should not have to beg for your attention or companionship. Women's emotions may swing widely.

Remember that something which does not bother your wife one day may definitely bother her the next day. When this happens, she needs the security that you will care for her the same and treat her with gentleness.

and the relationship becomes stressed. There is never a good excuse to not communicate. Even a few minutes taken to come to an understanding of where each one is will be well worth the time and will prevent complications in the relationship. It would do us good to remember that the Creator took time each day in the Garden to communicate with His creation, and He knew them so well! It should certainly be our priority to daily communicate lovingly and effectively with our spouse.

If we find ourselves in conflicts not easily resolved, we should communicate forgiveness and love, and a determination to work it out. Never retire for the night without first coming to a peaceful agreement. Otherwise each will be thinking inaccurate thoughts of the other, dissatisfaction will ensue, and selfish thoughts could lead down a long road of unhappy isolation.

Self-giving and thoughtful consideration of how to interact in loving, generous, and holy ways leads to good communication. ■

Marilyn Muir (GBS 1984-85; 87-88), GBS Music Division office manager, is married to Daryl Muir (BRE '86) who is the GBS assistant dean of men.

+Positive Communication *in Marriage*

by H. Norman Wright

After more than 40 years as a counselor, I've learned to ask couples, "What do you like about the way your spouse communicates?"

One man explained that he needs to hear continual affirmation that he's a good father and husband...even if he doesn't quite measure up to all of his wife's desires and expectations. He wants to be given physical affection and assurance that she's glad she married him. Sometimes he even worries about that issue.

A wife told me that she appreciates that her husband listens without trying to fix things and supports her in pursuits that make her a better person and draw her closer to God. She said he frequently encourages her and carefully chooses his words.

What do these comments have in common? Both people expressed their need for encouragement.

We have the power to build a healthy marriage by offering our spouse encouragement rather than criticism. This form of positive communication involves some basic habits: being intentionally gentle, listening intently, and validating our spouse. Through encouragement, we can bring about change, growth, and the fulfillment of potential. We awaken the feeling, "Someone believes in me!"

You may think of encouragement as praise and reinforcement, but it's more than that. Praise is limited; it's a verbal reward. Praise emphasizes competition, has to be earned, and is often given for being the best. Encouragement is given freely. It can involve noticing something in a person that others take for granted or affirming something that others notice but never think of mentioning.

Encouraging your spouse through positive communication can change his or her entire approach to life. Here are some tips to help you become an encourager so your spouse can become all he or she was meant to be.

Gentleness

One of the character qualities of an encourager is gentleness. This quality means that when you discover

where another person is vulnerable, you're not hard, harsh, or forceful. When you discover a tender, sensitive place in your spouse, you protect it rather than step on it.

The opposite of encouragement is criticism. That's usually destructive, but critical people often say they are just trying to remold a spouse into a better person by offering some "constructive criticism." Too often, criticism demolishes. It doesn't nourish a relationship; it poisons. Criticism that is destructive accuses, produces guilt, intimidates, and is often an outgrowth of personal resentment.

Remember that every time you have a thought—and before the words come out of your mouth—you have an opportunity to evaluate how you use the power of what you say. Consider this paraphrase of Ephesians 4:29: "Watch the way you talk. Let nothing foul or dirty come out of your mouth. Say only what helps, each word a gift" (The Message). Could what you say to your spouse be thought of as a gift? It could be if you choose words of encouragement.

Intentional listening

True encouragement involves the art of listening. It means paying attention when your spouse is sharing with you and listening in a way that lets him or her know he or she is heard. You can show you're listening by putting down what you're working on, looking at your partner, and repeating in your own words what you understood him or her to say.

Validation

Encouragement also includes letting your spouse know, "You matter to me." You intentionally rephrase negatives into positives by identifying strengths and focusing on efforts and contributions instead of failures or things that weren't done well. Encouragement recognizes your spouse as having worth and dignity in spite of imperfection. This means that you find something of value to recognize in your spouse, even when he or she can't see it. Encouragement builds up your (p12)➡

“Effective communication is much more than just talking and listening...It is an experience.”¹

Can you draw a triangle, square, circle, and a rectangle? Of course you can. But would you be able to describe these shapes to another person? Again, you are probably confident that you can. Truth be told, however, it isn't really that easy. An exercise that counselors use to illustrate this involves couples sitting back to back. One draws some basic shapes on a piece of paper. Then, while they describe what they have drawn, their partner attempts to recreate that on a separate piece of paper.

When the couples finish, they compare the two pictures. There may be a few similarities, but there are probably more differences. Many people believe that they are good communicators and they assume that the other person is hearing them and understanding them. However, this simple exercise quickly demonstrates that we are not as effective as we thought.

What about all of the vagaries of everyday communication? Understanding is even

more difficult in these instances. While we may be looking directly at each other, we still miss much of the meaning. We too quickly jump to a particular conclusion, and rather than asking clarifying questions, we resort to “filling in the blank” to interpret what we hear—for example: “They did this because_____.” “They think I am_____.” “If they would_____, I would_____.” When we do not effectively communicate, either by failure or refusal, we force others to arrive at a conclusion that we might not have intended. This sets the stage for “destructive communication.”

WHAT IS DESTRUCTIVE COMMUNICATION?

Our world is filled with the by-products of destructive communication. They show up in news headlines daily—bullying, assaults, riots, and looting, international tensions, wars...this list goes on and on. But destructive communication also can wreak havoc in churches, families, all kinds of relationships, and, yes, in marriages. It

destructive COMMUNICATION™

HOW TO STOP IT
by Nathaniel Tucker



seems no one is exempt from this blight on peaceful, meaningful dialog. Let's look specifically at the relationship between destructive communication and marital conflict.

Couples should recognize the erosion of the protocols of polite discourse and stop and address them—as a couple. Sadly, they often do not. Conversations seem to just “take their own course,” ending up in the same place—destructive communication.

Over time, a couple begins to see that there has been a “hole” in their marriage. This is the place where conflicts invariably go. Nothing worthwhile or productive is accomplished there. Instead of resolving important issues, even bigger problems are created and are accompanied by more upset feelings. Trying to solve anything in “The Hole” is like trying to put out a fire with gasoline! In the heated moments in “The Hole,” emotional reactions alter the chemistry of the body and mind. People resort to saying things they later regret. The damage from the discussion of the problem can be far worse than the problem itself and further inflame the issue.

FIVE THINGS THAT CAN HAPPEN IN “THE HOLE”

1. Blaming.² You blame the other person for causing the situation. “You make me angry!” or “You ruined our entire vacation!” or “You frustrate me!”

2. Name calling. What may begin with describing your spouse as “insensitive” or “selfish” can quickly evolve into critical name-calling—“You are uptight!” or “You're such a slob!” or “Idiot!”

3. Defending (justifying your actions). You try to defend yourself or prove that the other person is wrong. Such as, “That's your problem!” or “What about when you did...” or “You're wrong!” or “You never do it right.”

4. Avoiding. You shut down, walk out, pretend it's not important, minimize, dismiss, or simply fail to listen and understand what the other person is saying (often referred to as “the silent treatment”). The irony of this tactic is that it requires substantial emotional energy! What if you exerted the same amount of effort to reconnect and interact with the spouse who you are pushing away?

5. Disqualifying the other person. This essentially says, “You have not experienced what I have, therefore you do not have the right to tell me what I need to do.” Expressing such a statement tells others that their opinion, feelings, and experiences are not as valuable as yours. It also does not properly consider that the other person, through wisdom, chose NOT to have some experiences!

HOW NOT TO END UP IN “THE HOLE”

First, develop an awareness of when you are headed for “The Hole.” If you have been there before, you already know what it looks and feels like. Good news—it is not necessary for your marriage to experience this again! Stop moving in the direction of “The Hole” by showing mutual

respect and give yourself a “time out.” In order to accomplish this, you will need to do the following:

- Agree on a “time out” signal—this could be a specific word or a gesture.
- Agree that both parties must stop whenever the signal is invoked.
- Both must take responsibility to allow the system/process to work.
- Purpose to come back from the “time out” with positive solutions to the present difficulties.
- Look for helpful resources during the “time out”—such as a quiet walk, prayer, Scripture, or godly counsel.
- Take time, but not too much time—it may be a few minutes or several hours, but no longer than necessary. It is best to take care of matters in the same day the problems occur.
- Agree on a specific time and place to return from the “time out.”

Once you have returned, revisit the real needs and issues. Do so with a commitment to relate to each other only in a way that is in the best interest of the other. This lessens the emphasis on the conflict, builds an environment of trust, and changes the perception of the conflict. Next, have an honest conversation—describe behaviors, express feelings, and share requests for desired behavior from each other. Then, together identify some workable options to resolve the conflict. Finally, act on what you both have agreed to do.

CONCLUSION

Your marriage is worth fighting for, not something to fight about. God has no intention for you to live your marriage in “The Hole.” If you are experiencing conflict, there is hope. You can agree to get out, and better yet, learn to stay out. Take courage. God will help!

“He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings” (Psa. 40:2). ■

Nathaniel Tucker has been involved in pastoral ministry for 28 years while concurrently serving as chaplain, principal, missions director, and on various boards and committees. He is currently serving at the Pollina Avenue Holiness Church in Fort Gratiot, Michigan.

1. Rozelle, Jack. *Christian Counseling*, 4th edition. ICI University, 2001.

2. The concept of “The Hole” and items 1-4 are from the work of John Grey at <http://healingcouplesretreats.com/ending-the-vicious-cycle>.

Help For Couples In Distress:

by Andrew Graham

“Where do you want to go to dinner?” “When is your dentist appointment?” “How much money is in our checking account?”

Many couples have mastered the art of communication when it comes to logistics. They can comfortably discuss what happened today and what is planned for tomorrow. They can plan vacations, home repair projects, and whose turn it is to drive for the carpool.

Yet, real communication can be a struggle for many couples.

Sensitive topics are

avoided. Thoughts and feelings are kept hidden, unexpressed because doing so is a risk. “Is she really listening?” “Does he really care about what I think?”

When couples seek out professional intervention, the motivation is often because they aren’t able to navigate the sensitive issues where emotions run high.

There’s Help!

One strategy used by Christian professional counselors in working with couples with relationship distress is the “Speaker-Listener Technique.” The technique comes from a bestselling book, *A Lasting Promise: The Christian Guide to Fighting for Your Marriage*. In that resource, the authors—a group of counseling professionals—provide the structure that helps many couples to work through the sensitive discussions that they’ve been avoiding.

The beauty of the technique is that professional training or guidance isn’t required to put it into practice.

The Ground Rules

It’s important to remember that only one person can speak at a time. You can’t listen to your spouse if you’re both talking at the same time. It’s important to establish the rule that *the Speaker has the floor*. Each person will take turns as the Speaker—but only one at a time. When one is the Speaker, the other is the Listener.

Discussions on sensitive issues can turn into monologues where one person

holds the floor for too long. Therefore, a second rule is to *share the floor*. The Speaker may need to express his/her views and emotions—but each needs to validate the other by allowing the same opportunity.

A third ground rule is that this technique is geared toward helping couples to talk about sensitive issues. At this point, there’s *no problem solving*. That’s another goal for another time.

It can be easy for couples to stray from the objective of the discussion. When using this strategy, it is important to *stay on topic*.

For the Speaker

Someone has to be the first Speaker—most often it is the person who has requested the discussion. As they share their views on the subject, it is important that they don’t make assumptions about the views or motives of their spouse but *speak for themselves*. This is best done by using “I statements” to reflect their point of view: “I feel stressed out about how much money we’ve been spending lately on eating out.”

The objective is to express thoughts and feelings in a way that is understood by the Listener. Just as a missionary needs to keep thoughts brief to allow a translator to work with manageable amounts of content, the Speaker needs to *talk in small chunks*—only a sentence or two at a time before stopping and giving the Listener the opportunity to reflect before assuming the role of the Speaker.

For the Listener

Too often during important conversations about sensitive issues, spouses talk past one another. While one is talking, the other isn’t adequately listening because they are busy preparing their response.

The Speaker-Listener Technique

They are hearing—but aren’t listening. To combat that dynamic, it’s crucial that Listeners understand that listening is their only task while the Speaker has the floor. When the Speaker pauses, the Listener will then reflect on what was heard and only then revert to the role of Speaker.

Before saying anything else, the Listener-turned-Speaker first *paraphrases what the Speaker has said*. Not only does the Speaker feel affirmed by being heard, but this gives a chance for correction if necessary so that both spouses now understand what the Speaker was trying to convey: “What I hear you saying is that you’re concerned about money and you feel that we’re spending too much on eating out. Is that right?”

The Listener needs to *focus on the Speaker’s message* and to push back any temptation to rebut. As previously noted, this is not the time for problem-solving. Any disagreement can be expressed (appropriately) once the Listener and Speaker switch roles. The Listener is tasked with showing respect for the spouse’s perspective despite disagreement—otherwise there is a disincentive for the Speaker to share real thoughts and feelings about sensitive issues in the future.

Additional Reflections

It is important to devote the time and emotional energy to complete this process well. If one spouse would like to discuss a sensitive issue and the other doesn’t, the one who doesn’t should have the right to delay the discussion—but they then also have the responsibility to schedule that discussion: “Honey, I don’t think I can work through that issue right now. Can we talk about it on Saturday evening?”

No, the Speaker-Listener Technique isn’t appropriate for

basic logistical conversation: “Honey, I won’t be home until 6:30 p.m. this evening.” “What I hear you saying, dear, is that you’ll be late tonight.” But for sensitive issues that have been long-avoided, it can be a marriage-saver.

The Strategy in Practice

Her (speaker): “Honey, I’m afraid that we’re concentrating so much on our ministry that we aren’t spending enough quality time with our children.”

Him (listener): “You’re concerned that we are neglecting the priority of raising our kids because we’re so busy with ministry, is that right?”

Her (speaker): “Yes, that’s right.”

Him (speaker now): “I feel that God is opening doors for us right now and that we need to be sensitive to that.”

Her (listener now): “It sounds as though you feel we need to pay closer attention to listening to God’s voice about His plan.”

At this point, both spouses have been able to express their thoughts on the topic. Both know that the other concentrated on listening to what they had to say without planning a rebuttal. They feel affirmed and cared for—and that their

fully-understood views have been heard. Now they can work toward problem-solving.

Too many couples simply avoid difficult conversations because they don’t have the tools to talk through them. The Speaker-Listener Technique helps them to listen, paraphrase, and support without problem-solving or advice-giving. ■

POSITIVE COMMUNICATION continued

➡(p7) spouse. It focuses on any resource that can be turned into an asset or strength.

Exceptional couples understand how their strengths and weaknesses help them become better people. While no spouse wants his or her mate to have shortcomings, none of us is perfect. Even if we're working to overcome our flaws, our partner is going to become frustrated with us from time to time. In such times, it's a mature spouse who can see the opportunity for growth.

Encouragement Through Listening

One of the greatest gifts you can give your spouse is the gift of listening. It can be an act of connection and care, but far too many people only hear themselves talking. Few listen. If you listen to your spouse, he or she feels, "I must be worth hearing." If you ignore your partner, his or her thought could be, "What I said wasn't important," or, "He doesn't care about me!" Here are some tips to help you become a better listener.



Stay focused. When someone else is talking, most of us are concerned about what we're going to say when the other person stops talking. This is a violation of Scripture because James 1:19 tells us to "be quick to hear, slow to speak" (NASB).

Watch your body language. When you communicate face to face with your spouse, your message is made up of three parts: content, which is only 7%; tone of voice, which is 38%; and nonverbal communication, which is 55%. What does this mean in your marriage? When your spouse shares with you, make sure your body language communicates openness and listen with your eyes because that's as important as listening with your ears.

Be aware of gender differences. How we listen needs to be tailored to the person speaking. Women tend to give more response and feedback while they're listening. Their responses aren't necessarily agreement; they usually mean, "I understand" or "I'm connecting with you." Men say less when they listen, and their feedback usually means, "I agree with you." A woman often learns that when she's listening to a man, he may not need as much feedback as a woman would. When she listens quietly to a man, he may respond with words like, "Thanks for really listening to me. It helps me keep my mind on track when I'm not interrupted." On the other hand, when a man listens to a woman, he may need to remind himself to give her verbal reassurance that she is being heard. ■

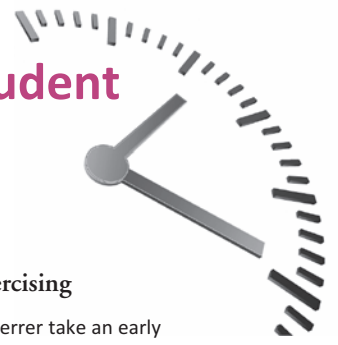
Dr. H. Norman Wright is a grief and trauma therapist serving on the staff and faculty at the Talbot School of Theology (Biola University). He is the author of many books, including Communication: Key to Your Marriage. This article appeared on www.focusonthefamily.com and is used with permission.

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a Day in the Life of a Student

Hollie Kessen, Aurora, Indiana (senior, music)



14
years old

Age at which she chose GBS for her future college. She recalls making a journal entry about her intention while returning home from a revival service featuring Don Davison.

3
generations

of Kessens have attended GBS, including both parents and all of her siblings.

25
family pets

The Kessens have had 8 canaries, 7 fish, 2 dogs, and 8 cats. Hollie's favorite was her cat Junior.

3.99
grade point average

marred only by a single A-minus in English Composition.

80%
of talking time

spent with friends discussing homework. Only 1% is spent talking about boys.

30+
hours of reading

during the summer to prepare for fall semester. Hollie wants to understand the material before she begins classes each fall.



6:10 a.m. Exercising

Hollie and Maricka Herrer take an early morning walk before meeting their prayer group in the chapel.

7:30 a.m. Practicing Flute

After a quick breakfast, Hollie is off to Room 100 in the Music Hall for a couple hours of practice.



10:00 a.m.
Enjoying a
Favorite Class

This semester that class happens to be Piano Pedagogy taught by Dr. Jana Pop.



1:15 p.m.
Cleaning the Music Hall

Hollie's on-campus job includes emptying trash cans, dusting pianos and furniture, and cleaning the carpets and bathrooms.

6:00 p.m.
Practicing With
Chamber Group

After supper, Hollie rehearses with members of her small chamber group.

7:00 p.m.
Studying in the Dorm

Hollie studies for about two hours before turning in around 9:30. She admits that some may find it a bit "weird" that she actually loves homework!





RESERVE TICKETS NOW FOR 2015 CHRISTMAS PROGRAM

Both Elizabeth Jarrett and Carter Stuart run retail shops on the same street with a statue of Carter's grandfather between them. Elizabeth, a faithful Christian, and Carter, a religious skeptic, have a very different take on things. It is not until Carter discovers unknown events from the past that he comes face to face with the reality of Christ and Christmas.

"Rescued at Christmas," adapted from the original Christmas

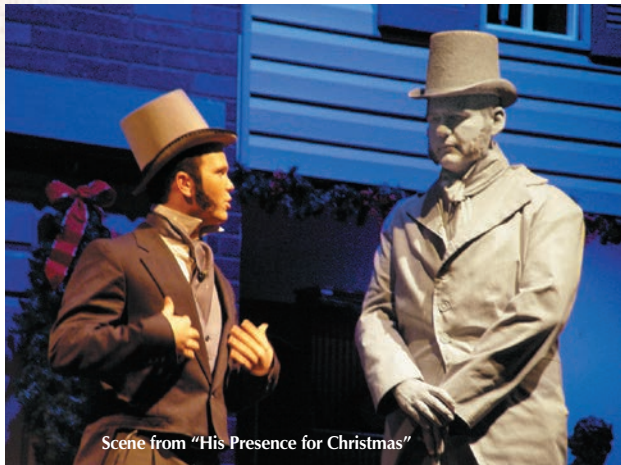
drama "His Presence for Christmas" (GBS 2008, Ray McCrary), is set during a Christmas season in the 1890s. The 2015 musical drama, produced by the Division of Music, will be staged in the Adcock Chapel on December 11 (7:30 p.m.), 12 (3:30 p.m.), and 13 (6:00 p.m.). Festive prelude music will begin forty-five minutes prior to each performance. A combined

choir, orchestra, and cast of actors come together in the production.

TICKET INFO: Phone and email orders will not be accepted.

Tickets for small groups (5 or less) may be ordered by going to www.gbs.edu/christmas-program. Print those tickets and bring them with you for entry.

For large groups (6 or more), after the fifth ticket, the cost is \$5 per ticket. Please send payment by mail along with name of purchaser.



Scene from "His Presence for Christmas"

Mail orders and large group payments should be addressed as follows: Christmas Program Ticket Request, God's Bible School and College, 1810 Young St., Cincinnati, OH 45202. Include a self-addressed, stamped envelope and indicate the date you prefer and the number of tickets needed. Please contact

REVIVALIST FAMILY

On these pages, we feature items about GBS alumni, significant events scheduled throughout the "Revivalist Family," and brief news notes from across the Holiness Movement.

BIRTH



To **Elizabeth (Schenck) (BA '03) and Darrell Stetler II (BA '03)**, a son, **William ("Will") Isaac Schaper**, born September 18 at the Children's Hospital, Oklahoma City, OK. His third name is in honor of Will's great-grandfather, late GBS faculty and board member Melvin Schaper, who recently passed away (see October 2015 *Revivalist*). Will was welcomed by siblings Grace (11), Darrell Lee III (9), Heath (7), Caleb (5), and Gideon (2). Darrell pastors the OKC Bible Methodist Church and is the founder of www.sermonsubscribe.com.

MARRIAGE



Heidi Rebman (BA '15) to Stephen Nelson (BA '12), August 15, Washington County Fairgrounds, Cambridge, ID, Rev. Ken Carpenter officiating. Stephen works for Rumpke Waste and Recycling. Heidi works in cafeteria services at GBS.

NOTICES

The classic **Free Methodist/Wesleyan Methodist hymnal of 1910** has been republished and the first edition sold out. There is discussion concerning a second printing. Anyone interested in this project or advancing it should write Rev. William Sarber 6626 East Wayne Road, Cooperstown, PA, 16317 or call (814) 789-3855.

the ticket coordinator at (513) 721-7944 if you do not plan to use your tickets.

No seats may be saved at any time. Late entries and re-entries will be allowed only with the assistance of an usher. Childcare and a designated "nursing mothers" room will be available. A freewill offering will be received at the close of each performance.

SING OUT MT. AUBURN

The inaugural "Sing Out Mt. Auburn" was held Saturday, October 24, 7:30 p.m., at the Mt. Auburn Presbyterian Church. It was designed to bring together the churches of Mount Auburn in a singing event. The GBS College Choir and musical groups from other Mt. Auburn churches participated. A reception with light refreshments was held immediately following the concert. 📌



Kansas City College and Bible School is excited about their shorter name. They changed their DBA (doing business as) name to **Kansas Christian College**. KCCBS remains their legal name. 📌

GBS Presidential Search

- ★ Submit an Application
- ★ Submit a Recommendation

We value the opinions of our readers. You probably have thought of someone who you think would be a good fit for the position. Let us know. We appreciate your help!

Apply or recommend at: www.gbs.edu/presidentialtransition

JOB OPPORTUNITIES

Assistant to Institutional Advancement (beginning January 2016). Manage administrative support for Advancement Office; maintain monthly giving, matching gifts, and planned giving records; plan alumni events, annual phonathon, etc.

Aldersgate Christian Academy Principal (beginning July 2017). Provide strategic vision for the academy; supervise the general operation of the high school and elementary departments; ensure satisfaction of the approval standards of the State of Ohio, etc.

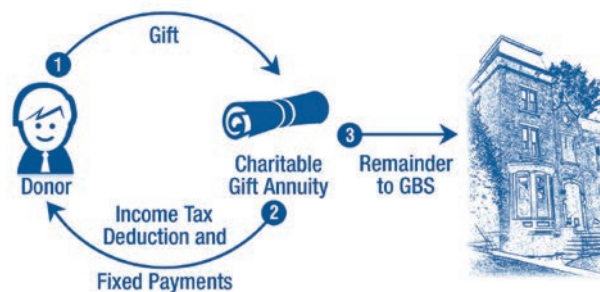
For more information visit: gbs.edu/employment-at-gbsc.

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Dear Phil



choices of fathers, if shared by their descendants, result in God’s lovingkindness being poured out in an unlimited generational cascade—to “a thousand generations.”

What does this mean for adoption? First, it isn’t true that the children of sinners will necessarily share the punishment of their parent’s sins. Thus, it also isn’t true that the adoptive parents of the children of unbelievers are destined to share in such punishment. Rather, adoptive Christian parents have a great opportunity to help their children break the chain of sinful choices and begin a new line of choices that reap God’s favor and blessing.

What about sinful tendencies being inherited from parents? Parents’ sins are not planted in their children in such a way that they cannot avoid committing the same sins. In fact, Ezekiel explicitly states that a child of a wicked person can observe a parent’s sin and choose not to follow in those footsteps (Ezek. 18:14-17).

Nonetheless, it is a common observation that there are often remarkable similarities in character between parents and children, even in orphans or adoptive children despite a lack of social interaction with their biological parents. The reasons for this are not clear. However, each person is ultimately responsible for his or her own choices (Ezek. 18:20). The fact that God offers forgiveness for sin, iniquity, and transgression (Exod. 34:7) means that no one is fated to repeat their parents’ sins. We can all, by God’s grace, return to love and obey God and thus avoid sharing in and being punished for our parents’ sins. ■

Blessings,
Philip

A. Philip Brown II is a member of the faculty in the Division of Ministerial Education at God’s Bible School and College.

PARENTS’ SIN AND ADOPTION

If parents’ sins are planted in their children and passed on to the third and fourth generation, what about adoption? Won’t the adoptive parents have to inherit those along with the child? In light of this, should we adopt? —Sharon

Dear Sharon,

Four Old Testament texts discuss the sins of fathers and their impact on the third and fourth generations: Exod. 20:5; 34:7; Num. 14:8; and Deut. 5:9. In each of these texts God says that He “visits” the iniquity of the fathers upon the third and the fourth generations. The verb translated “visits” when followed by the preposition “upon” and the word “iniquity” consistently means “to punish” (Isa. 13:11; 26:21; Jer. 25:12; 36:31; Lam. 4:22; Amos 3:2). In other words, God seems to say that He punishes the third and fourth generation for the sins of the father.

But does God really punish people for what their parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents did? The answer is yes and no. First the “No.” God explicitly commands that children are not to be put to death for the sins of their fathers (Deut. 24:16). God reiterates this principle in Ezekiel 18:20 “The person who sins will die. The son will not bear the punishment for the father’s iniquity, nor will the father bear the punishment for the son’s iniquity; the righteousness of the righteous will be upon himself, and the

wickedness of the wicked will be upon himself.” So, no, God does not punish innocent descendants for their forefather’s sins.

Now for the “Yes.” The key to understanding what God means is found in the last phrase of Exodus 20:5 and Deuteronomy 5:9: “of those who hate me.” The phrase “of those who hate me” modifies not just “the fathers,” but also “the second, third, and fourth generations.” For example, imagine a sinner whose children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren choose to follow in his sinful footsteps. That would make four generations of people who hate God, i.e., who do not love and obey Him but commit iniquity (Deut. 7:9-10; 2 Chron. 19:2).

God punishes each person for his own sin, but when a generational pattern of hating God develops, God also punishes later generations for former generations’ sins as well. The principle seems to be that by choosing the sinful path of previous generations, they were essentially participating in that same sin and thus become partakers with them in their punishment as well.

But, don’t miss the positive side of these verses! The righteous



MANKIND'S BASIC PROBLEM

by Allan P. Brown, Chair
GBS Division of Ministerial Education

Scripture: *"All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all" (Isa. 53:6).*

Introduction

Since the Fall, all humans, apart from Jesus, are born in a sinful state and condition which some theologians call "original sin." They use this term because this sinful state and condition (1) is derived from the progenitor of the human race, Adam; (2) is present in the life of every individual from conception, and cannot therefore be regarded as the result of choice; and (3) is the inward root of all the actual sins that defile the life of each human.¹

There are other terms used to describe this sinful state and condition: "inbred sin," "inherited depravity," or "carnal nature." Isaiah indicates that mankind's basic problem is "self-centeredness." He says, "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way." According to Isaiah, the reason mankind goes astray committing acts of sin is because of an in-born sinful state and condition of self-centeredness—we want our own way!

Before the Fall: Humans in the Image of God

What were humans like before the tragic Fall? Genesis 1:27 says, "God created man in His own image." Deuteronomy 6:4 provides a clear starting point for understanding the image of God: "Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one" (see also Isa. 44:6). The God in whose image mankind was made is one God, and there is no other. Yet, in the unity of His being, the one God reveals Himself to us as three distinct persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Further, God reveals that within the Triune Godhead, each Divine Person is holy and relates to the other Divine Persons in love (Lev. 11:44; 1 John 4:8). The early Church spoke of the triune relationship of our one God as a holy relationship of mutual indwelling, mutual self-giving, and others-oriented love. In other words, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit relate to each other in mutual self-giving, others-oriented, holy love. The Father loves the Son and the Spirit, the Son loves the Father and the Spirit, and the Spirit loves the Father and the Son. There is no competition between the three Persons, but only a holy, harmonious, mutual indwelling and self-giving. This is the God who made mankind in His image.

It seems reasonable to assume that since Adam and Eve were made in the image of God, they instinctively knew how to reflect the relationship enjoyed by the three Persons of the Triune Godhead. They instinctively loved God with all their heart, mind, soul, and strength, and each other with a holy, self-giving, others-oriented focus that seeks only the other person's highest good.

Like Jesus Christ, who best reflects the image of God in mankind (Heb. 1:3; Col. 1:15), Adam and Eve's pre-Fall relationship with God was characterized by a joyful, total submission, for their lives were fully yielded to His control. As they walked with God and learned of Him, their conduct was completely righteous. Their crowning privilege and supreme joy was intimate fellowship with Him. And because Jesus defines eternal life as knowing God (John 17:3), they had eternal life.

Further, their relationship with God brought with it an enlightened understanding of spiritual things. Their emotions were enkindled with love and appreciation for God, and their wills were wholly inclined to do His will. They intuitively and intellectually knew truth and perceived the inherent rightness of the arrangement.

Without a doubt, Adam and Eve felt loved, accepted, and secure in God's love. Their worldview was God-centered, and they were emotionally balanced because they lived with no guilt. They were of the same mind, of the same love, united in spirit, and intent on one purpose: loving God supremely and each other with a holy, self-giving love. They did nothing from selfishness or empty conceit. With humility of mind each regarded the other as more important than himself (Phil. 2:2-3).

After the Fall: the Image of God Marred

As a result of Adam's deliberate disobedience to God, the image of God in mankind was severely damaged and their relationship with God was severed. Choosing to reject God's lordship over their

lives, self-centered desires usurped His place. Their rebellion against God resulted in ungodly character and unrighteous behavior (Rom. 1:18).

Adam and Eve discovered, because of their broken relationship with God, that the supreme source of joy and satisfaction was missing from their life. They now no longer loved God with all their heart, mind, soul, and strength. They had forfeited eternal life and were spiritually dead in trespasses and sin (Eph. 2:1). The absence of God's sanctifying presence in their lives resulted in the darkening of their understanding, the deadening of their emotions, and the degrading of their wills (Eph. 4:17-18). Mankind no longer intuitively and intellectually knew truth. Thinking themselves to be wise they became fools (Rom. 1:21-22).

Further, they no longer felt loved, accepted, and secure in God's love. Making self the supreme source of reference, Adam and Eve felt self-conscious, unaccepted, and insecure. Guilt and fear caused them to hide from the presence of God and expressed itself in self-defensiveness (Gen. 3:8-10).

Tragically, they no longer had "the mind of Christ." No longer reflecting the true image of God, Adam became a self-loving, self-defensive, self-protecting leader. Eve likewise became a self-loving, self-defensive companion who now desired to rule over her husband.² Competition, self-centeredness, and pride now ruled in their hearts.

Transmission and Consequences of Self-centeredness

The impact of Adam's tragic Fall on the human race resulted in our frantic but futile search to find meaning and lasting satisfaction through personal achievement, self-gratification, fame, money, music, sex, power—not realizing that meaning and lasting satisfaction can be found only in a personal relationship with the Creator, and in that relationship the image of God can be restored in our lives (Ecc. 12:1).

Because of Adam's sin, all humans are born spiritually dead and are by nature the children of wrath (Eph. 2:1-3). We have neither the saving presence of God in our lives, nor the knowledge of His ways. As a result of our self-centeredness, we reject the One whose face we are supposed to seek and in whose light we are supposed to live.

Martin Luther expressed the depraved condition of mankind very graphically when he defined it as "the heart turned in upon itself." We turn to ourselves in an effort to find what we need. Turning away from the Source of all that is good, we turn inward and try to live life out of our own resources and for ourselves.³

As a result, all types of evil become possible. Jesus said that from such a self-centered heart proceeds "evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, deeds

of coveting and wickedness, as well as deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, and foolishness. All these evil things proceed from within and defile the man" (Mark 7:21-23). Because of the Fall, all of the natural propensities, needs, and potentialities of mankind are twisted in an egocentric and sinful direction.

Paul frequently refers to this condition of self-centeredness as living "in the flesh." In contrast, Christians live "in the Spirit." He writes, "The flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another" (Gal. 5:17). They are in opposition because the Holy Spirit, like Jesus, will not operate independently of our heavenly Father, whereas the chief characteristic of the "flesh" is self-centered independence from God.

Paul further says that the person who has his mind set on the flesh cannot please God, is hostile toward God, and will experience spiritual death (Rom. 8:6-8). Jeremiah, using a slightly different metaphor, says that the very center of man's depraved being, the heart, is "more deceitful than all else" and "desperately sick" (Jer. 17:9). Apart from the grace of God, fallen humanity has no other choice than to find their identity in their self-centered existence.

God's Twofold Cure for Sin's Twofold Problem

Paul tells us that at the moment of the new birth, we put off the "old man" and put on the "new man" which is "created in righteousness and true holiness." Subsequently, we are being "renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created" us (Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10). The restoration of the image of God in us has begun.

As we walk with God, however, we begin to discover competing loyalties vying for our affections. To our dismay, we discover there are times when we want our own way more than we want God's way. If we yield to these self-centered desires, we grieve God and sin. We know that God has all the grace necessary to enable us to make the right choices, but we also desire to be delivered from our predisposition to self-centeredness. We cry out to God and ask Him if He has a cure for what the Apostle James calls "double-mindedness" (James 4:8). To our delight, we discover that He does! It involves another step in restoring in us the image of God that occurs after the new birth. ■

Next: Can Christians Be Set Free from Self-Centeredness?

1. Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2014, p.244.

2. See the term "desire" in Gen. 3:16 and compare it to the same term in Gen. 4:7. "Desire" in these two contexts means "the desire to rule over" or to "exercise mastery over."

3. Dennis Kinlaw, *We Live as Christ*, Francis Asbury Press, 2001, p.32.

GAY MARRIAGE

and the Church's Response

by Darrell Stetler II

"We can pass all of the laws we want and talk about public policy until we run out of air, but until our society stops thinking of queer people as deviant or corrupt or sinful or in any way less than non-queer people, nothing is going to change."

This was a post from the *Huffington Post's* Gay Voices editor, even before the proverbial ink had dried on the 5-4 Supreme Court decision that proclaimed same-sex marriage to be legal in all 50 states.

But did you catch what this editor was saying? True freedom for the LGBT (Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender) community can only be found when Christians stop thinking that members of this community are sinful. Their fight only stops then. This is what insightful Christians have understood: this court decision was never the "final" battle—it was the first one.

So what is there for Christ-followers to say in light of this? How should Christians respond? Let me suggest a few things:

1. Love, Love, Love

We have to show and demonstrate the love of God toward those in the LGBT community in every way possible. Love demands that we treat them with respect—treat them as we would want to be treated. I would gladly bake a cake for a gay couple. I would not do it for their wedding, but I would gladly bake a cake for them...and cookies. And mow their lawn. And feed their dog while they're gone on vacation. And have them over for barbecue.

Love also demands that we tell them the truth. Sexual activity outside of marriage is wrong. However, we need to let God prompt us at His right time and pray that He will give us the right words to say and the right spirit.

2. Deep, Humble Repentance

We have devalued marriage as a society and as a Church. The divorce rates within our walls have been higher than they should. Guidance on married sexuality has not been clear and holistic, and has not adequately helped people of faith cope with the results of the Sexual Revolution. We have not provided the tools of



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NOVEMBER 2015

conversation, the authoritative teaching about the blessings of sexuality in God's intended boundaries.

Pornography use is rampant within the Church, and few are really addressing it. Some man (or woman) in your church is trapped by pornography, and has wrestled with the private pain and guilt for years, not knowing whom they could tell. Another has found pornography on their spouse's phone or laptop and has no idea how to respond, and is suffering in silence. When was the last time you heard a sermon which frankly, lovingly dealt with this issue and offered guidance, grace, and hope?

We have failed to adequately deal with abuse and molestation with grace and truth. We have been largely unsuccessful in facing the brokenness that occurs to victims and helping them to heal. We have also not confronted the perpetrators with conversations necessary to lovingly and justly deal with their sin.

We are not qualified to deal with homosexuality with a "thou shalt not" unless we are willing to also face the myriad sexual dysfunction and fallout of all kinds of sexual brokenness that is wreaking havoc in our culture.

We owe a time of heart-searching prayer and repentance to the God who created sexuality and ordained it for the joy and pleasure of mankind.

3. Simple, Humble Disobedience

When locked in a jail cell in Birmingham, Alabama, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. penned this question: "One may well ask: 'How can you advocate breaking some laws and obeying others?' The answer lies in the fact that there are two types of laws: just and unjust."

Dr. King was basing his argument on the standard legal maxim which originated with the influential writer of the early Church, St. Augustine: "An unjust law is no law at all." King concluded that while one had "not only a legal but a moral responsibility to obey just laws," one conversely had "a moral responsibility to disobey unjust laws."

Personally I am in agreement. An unjust law based on a code that is out of harmony with the moral law calls for disobedience. Therefore, I will pledge publicly to stand with God's moral law knowing that it may bring hardship. It may mean going to jail. It may mean losing tax exempt status. Whatever is necessary.

This isn't meant to be mean or harsh. It's conviction—the same kind of conviction that led Dr. King to choose jail rather than obey unjust Jim Crow laws.

4. Recapturing Biblical Marriage

Marriage did not start as a regulated, state-officiated institution. It started as a spiritual, God-regulated covenant. So, maybe it is time for the Church to get out of the civil marriage business. The Church would instead only administer "covenant marriages," properly defined as a union before God and witnesses, which only the Church could administer.

Maybe this should be worked out by a consortium of Christian denominations who could convene a conference and consider these things:

- That churches will no longer marry individuals in the civil sense.
- That churches will only administer "covenant marriage," which is a union before God and

witnesses, which only the Church can administer.

- Determine the following:
 - * The requirements for "covenant marriage" before it will be administered, in keeping with our high view of its lifelong nature.
 - * How "covenant marriage" will be regulated and administered by the included churches.
 - * How to deal with couples that come to faith while in civil marriage only.
 - * How divorces in covenant marriages would be dealt with.

If couples want civil marriage for the tax deduction that it brings, fine. They can take care of that at the local courthouse. However, if they want to be married in the eyes of God and His Church, they will need to participate in "covenant marriage."

Maybe this is unrealistic, and even unenforceable. But at least it is an idea that seems to make sense. To me, it recaptures the purity and glory of the holy sacrament of marriage and gives a great opportunity for teaching about the "profound mystery...about Christ and the Church" (Eph. 5:32 NIV).

So, amidst the change and uncertainties of our culture, I remain hopeful that the greatest days of the Church of Jesus Christ are ahead. When wickedness and brokenness abound, there is no lack of opportunity to preach a glorious, saving, healing, restoring gospel! ■

Darrell Stetler II (BA '03) is the pastor of the Oklahoma City Bible Methodist Church. He and his wife Elisabeth (Schenck) (BA '03) live in Oklahoma City with their six children.





student focus

SATANIST SCULPTURE

A one-ton statue of the Satanic idol Baphomet was unveiled in Detroit to the disgust of Christians in the area. According to Satanic Temple spokesman Lucien Greaves, the statue of the horned goat with children on either side would “also have a functional purpose as a chair where people of all ages may sit on the lap of Satan for inspiration and contemplation.”

The location of the statue opening was a secret, but protesters still located the event and hundreds of protesters went there to pray for intervention in the city. The statue will now be stored out of public view until the Temple can find it a permanent home.

SCIENCE CONFIRMS BIBLICAL ADAM AND EVE

Molecular geneticist Dr. Georgia Purdom explores the historicity of Adam and Eve in a newly-released documentary, “The Genetics of Adam and Eve,” explaining that modern findings in the field of genetics confirm the Bible’s teachings that all humans descended from an original couple. Additionally, the research also shows that the common human female ancestor of us all (biblical Eve) lived within the biblical timeframe of several thousand years ago and that humans and chimps do not share a common ancestor. In fact, there are many differences in their DNA that completely under-

mine the possibility of shared ancestry. Dr. Purdom is now a researcher and speaker for the Christian apologetics ministry Answers in Genesis.

CHILDREN SHOULD HAVE TWO PARENTS

More than 90% of those polled in most nations believe children should have two parents. The country with the lowest percentage of those who agree is Sweden (47%), while the next two lowest percentages are for the United States (63%) and Canada (65%). Egyptians are the most likely to believe this (99%). (*The World Family Map 2014*)

THOUSANDS TURN FROM ISLAM TO CHRISTIANITY

As the Islamic State tries to overrun Syria and Iraq, thousands are reportedly turning away from the extremist values and finding Jesus. There are even reports of some Islamic State fighters telling stories of meeting “a man” who healed them. They then come to accept Jesus.

The community typically marks Muslims who convert to Christianity as outsiders. Some are killed for their newfound faith. A humanitarian worker told *The Christian Post*, “A decade ago, we would all hear when even one Muslim came to Christ in Lebanon or Syria. Now there are so many we cannot keep count.” ■

DWIGHT CROSLY has always attended Christian schools, and his dad was his principal all the way through! He spent the first fourteen years of his life growing up on the Hilltop while his parents were administrators of the K-12 academy. He came to Christ at a very young age and, as he grew older, God seemed to be leading him back to GBS as a college student. Since returning to campus, Dwight says Christ has made a radical change in his life. His friends describe him as a natural leader and an outgoing and fun person. Dwight is preparing to be a minister. He says that GBS has been instrumental in guiding him not only to think biblically, but also to gain the hands-on experience necessary to prepare him for future ministry. He appreciates the privilege of traveling for the college on its public relations teams, making contacts and being able to sing and preach. Dwight’s desire is to share God’s Word and lead others to Christ. ■

Seventy-five percent of our students receive some form of financial aid which enables them to attend GBS. If you would like to support students with financial needs, you may send a gift to:

Student Fund
God’s Bible School and College
1810 Young Street
Cincinnati, OH 45202

or give online anytime at
www.gbs.edu/givenow



GOD'S BIBLE SCHOOL & COLLEGE HOMECOMING

OCT. 9-10
2015



Homecoming 2015, October 9 and 10, was a very special time of reconnecting for GBS alumni. The weekend kicked off with a welcome dinner in the Miller-Deets Student Center attended by both alumni and students. The décor was reflective of the "Alumni Around the World" theme.

A new feature for 2015 was a 30-minute band concert under the direction of David Hartkopf that preceded the 7:00 p.m. program. After a video welcome, an alumni quartet kicked off the evening followed by a multi-media presentation honoring 25 and 50-year graduates. The 2015 Alumnus of the Year Award was presented to Rev. Walter Hedstrom honoring his many years of service and leadership. The Staff/Faculty Award was presented to Debbie Byer for her 10 years as Food Service Supervisor. The students responded to her award with an enthusiastic standing ovation!

The College Choir, under the direction of Tim Crater, was at their best as they shared two wonderful songs. It was great to welcome back to the hilltop David (50-year graduate) and Francis (Sones) ('64) Fuller, who beautifully sang two of their standards. After an update from President Avery, a video was shared featuring alumni greetings from around the world. The evening program was capped off with a Dr. Larry Smith interview regarding the soon-to-be-released official history of GBS: *A Century on the Mount of Blessings*. A special children's program, "Solid Rock: Building a Foundation of Faith," featuring songs, stories, games, and a snack ran parallel with the evening's program.

After the evening program, everyone enjoyed the perennial favorite "Graeter's Ice Cream Social." The first ever "Best of GBSC Talent" provided hilarity that appealed to both young and old. The evening wrapped up with a time of singing around the grand piano in the Adcock Chapel.

Saturday's events were full of excitement and reconnection. We were honored to host a breakfast for our 25- and 50-year reunion graduates. Alumni were able to enjoy campus and Cincinnati tours, and a dorm open house. Finally, our signature event—the 1810 Street Festival—was a smashing success!

You will not want to miss Homecoming next year. It is not too early to "save the date." Homecoming will be held October 14 and 15, 2016. You will not want to miss it! ■



THOUGHTS for the quiet hour

by Sonja Vernon

WHITEWASH

"Because, when the people build a wall, these prophets smear it with whitewash, say to those who smear it with whitewash that it shall fall! And when the wall falls, will it not be said to you, 'Where is the coating with which you smeared it?'"
—Ezekiel 13:10b-11a,12 ESV

I first heard of whitewash from Tom Sawyer and his popular fence. I envied Tom for having an entire fence to paint. What a canvas! Now that I'm older, I care less about whitewash's creative potential and more about its aesthetic capabilities. In short, whitewash improves appearances by covering what is really there. And while painting an old fence may be fairly safe, concealing some truths can be deadly. When I first read this passage, my mind was drawn to our present culture. It's easy to look around and see ideas and beliefs with destruction at their core that have been repackaged as both innocuous and desirable. But before we start feeling smug, let's look inside. We in the Church are champions of whitewash. We know the lingo, how to dress, which writers to quote, which pet projects to support. And layer after layer the whitewash is applied as we neglect the simple, day-to-day practice of faithfulness and never allow the truths we profess to transform us from the inside out. Why is our society swallowing such mind-boggling fallacies? Because we in the Church haven't been the body of Christ in a world dying to see Him. Why are we shocked when sinners sin? We should be more appalled when a Church that professes to know Jesus looks nothing like Him. It's time for transformation and rebuilding...not whitewash! ■

Sonja Vernon is Dean of Women at God's Bible School and College.

Clockwise from bottom left—Debbie Byer receives the Staff/Faculty Award. An alumni quartet sings (Mark Foster, Jeff Jones, Mark Going, Jeff Case). Alumni Matt and Joy Barnett sing, accompanied by the College Choir. Guests enjoy a meal and fellowship. Fifty-year Graduates L-R: David Fuller (Frances Sones Fuller '64), Larry W. Dinkins, Herbert Matheny, Ed Highlander, Della (Boas) Dolan, Marilyn (Bramble) Osborne, Donna (Saunders) Downs, Alvin Downs. Rev. Walter Hedstrom is named "Alumnus of the Year." Twenty-five-year Graduates L-R: Cheryl (Blankenship) Gillespie, Tim Forsee, Mark Going, Kimberly (Mullen) Funkhouser, Kevin Lavy, Doyle Mahan, JerriAnn Colvin, Deron Fourman, Kevin Moser, Paul Probst, James Kessen. Dean staff serve hot-dogs and hamburgers at the 1810 Street Festival.



GOD'S BIBLE SCHOOL & COLLEGE



Dear SBS Family,

Thank you for your generous support of our annual Phonathon! Your gifts enabled us to exceed our goal and raise \$121,358. These funds help provide student scholarships and facilitate our Work Study Program - making it possible for many of us to attend God's Bible School and College. Thank you for investing in a worthy cause!

Sincerely,
SBS Students

